

Naval War College Review

Volume 57
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 17

2004

Effects Based Operations: Applying Network-centric Warfare in Peace, Crisis, and War

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Recommended Citation

Barnett, Roger W. and Smith, Edward A. Jr. (2004) "Effects Based Operations: Applying Network-centric Warfare in Peace, Crisis, and War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 57 : No. 2 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol57/iss2/17>

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implement such a recommendation. While a draft policy was drawn up in 2001, it has yet to be promulgated, pending the formation of greater institutional links among various Indian ministries with responsibilities in this area. The Ministry of Defense was tasked to initiate such an interministerial coordinating body, but so far the policy has not been formalized. Even without such a public policy, India is moving ahead with enhancing its maritime security in all its spheres.

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Smith, Edward A., Jr. *Effects Based Operations: Applying Network-centric Warfare in Peace, Crisis, and War*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense Command and Control Research Program, 2002. 545pp. \$20

“Effects-based operations [EBO] are coordinated sets of actions directed at shaping the behavior of friends, foes, and neutrals in peace, crisis, and war.” This definition is offered in Edward Smith’s long, tortuous study, *Effects Based Operations*. Substitute the terms “speeches by the president,” “negotiations by diplomats,” or “economic sanctions” for “effects-based operations,” and the emptiness of this definition becomes all too evident.

The major difficulty with this work, however, lies in the following passage: “The very nature of military competition should make it clear that would-be foes will attempt to exploit any warfare niche in which they believe the United States and its allies cannot successfully engage. Logically, these would-be foes will see exploitable niches wherever

network-centric and effects-based operations are least applicable. Urban and guerrilla warfare, counter-terrorism operations, peacekeeping efforts, and hostage rescues are just a few examples.” With this statement, Smith has gratuitously undermined the importance and value of effects-based operations (dragging network-centric operations along in the process), for those “niches” constitute the shortlist of operations U.S. military forces will be undertaking for the foreseeable future.

This is a complex and ambitious book, which progresses from a general discussion of EBO through chapters that illustrate the relationship with network-centric operations, discuss operations in the cognitive domain, and describe how complexity factors into the picture. Toward the end of the book an operational example is offered before some general conclusions are reached.

Effects-based operations, we are repeatedly reminded, focus on the mind of man. The “effects-based strategy is conceived and executed as a direct assault on the opponent’s will and not a by-product of destroying his capability to wage war.” Just what the “opponent’s will” constitutes is not clearly addressed. Is it the will of the soldiers in the field, the will of the civilians supporting the effort, or the will of the leadership? The differences in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM are noteworthy. The will of the Iraqi armed forces was quickly broken, as they threw down their arms and fled. But was the will of Saddam, of the brothers Hussein, or of the Iraqi resistance broken? How can one confidently determine a change in will, and how can one be totally sure that the change is permanent? No

theory is offered to help the reader understand how to break the will of fanatics.

In a long, intricate work there are bound to be contradictions, but when they cut to the core of the argument, they become disconcerting. For example, one reads: “In effects-based operations, therefore, actions and their effects are not and cannot be isolated. They are interrelated.” But later the author writes, “If those disproportionate effects are to shape behavior in the direction we want, however, we must figure out first how to trace the path of an action to a certain effect, and then how to plan the right actions to set the chain in motion.”

None of this means that effects-based operations should not be pursued—only that Smith does not have it quite right. Better, one should think carefully about EBO in terms of *objectives*. Rear Admiral Henry Eccles provided in these pages over twenty years ago the key insight in this regard: “The objectives represent ‘the effect desired,’ what one is seeking to achieve by the use of military force.” Eccles guides one to the recognition that the selection of objectives provides the desired effect—hence the basis for effects-based warfare. Of course, one can select objectives for which the effects either are monumentally difficult to achieve or can never be clearly determined. To change the will of, say, Osama Bin Laden falls squarely in this latter category.

Unfortunately, the publisher of this book did not do Smith or his readers any favor by printing the text in a sans-serif font in a fully justified format. There is a reason why books and newspapers use serif fonts—“kerning” of letters and words makes them significantly easier

to read in small type sizes. The book also lacks an index, which makes finding items quite a feat, and the footnotes do not correlate with the text.

Effects Based Operations is presented in the first person plural. Employment of the first person plural has two serious drawbacks—consistency and advocacy. On some pages “we” takes on at least three separate meanings—U.S. decision makers, the author himself, and the author and his reader. In other places “we” appears to refer to the U.S. Navy, and elsewhere to U.S. military forces. This proves rather confusing for the reader, who is continually challenged to discern to whom the author is referring. Use of the first person, moreover, gives this book the tang of an in-house, partisan staff study rather than a dispassionate analysis.

Finally, the bibliography is thin, omitting such important works as General David Deptula’s *Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare* (Aerospace Education Foundation, 2001) and Paul Davis’s *Effects-Based Operations (EBO): A Grand Challenge for the Analytical Community* (RAND, 2001).

All in all, this book was a disappointment, weighed down by its length, its complexity, and its many flaws.

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Voorhees, James. *Dialogue Sustained: The Multi-level Peace Process and the Dartmouth Conference*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002. 470pp. \$24.95