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21: M-2686

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To: Igor Ansoff
From: T. I. Edwards
Subject: TEAMWORK IN CONFERENCES: A REFERENCE AND AN EXAMPLE

Date: 30 June 1952

M-2686

Copies To: J. R. Goldstein, Staff, Washington Office

SYLLABUS ON NEGOTIATION TECHNIQUE

This is to call your attention to the attached syllabus prepared by Professor W. Barton Leach of the Harvard Law School, a Brigadier General in the USAF Reserve, who has been involved, directly or more frequently as an advisor, in high-level negotiations between the Army Air Forces (and later) the U. S. Air Force and other services and agencies since 1941. This syllabus was prepared for use at the Air War College where he has lectured on negotiation technique since 1947.

The attached syllabus was circulated to major Air Staff agencies a few weeks ago with a forwarding letter signed by Colonel Dave Burchinal, Secretary to the Air Council. The letter contained a reminder that there had been recent instances in which USAF officers had failed to represent their service effectively through poor preparation or bungling during conferences. It urged all officers who represent the USAF in conferences with representatives of other agencies to study this syllabus to learn how to conduct themselves in conferences where important matters are at issue.

REASON FOR THIS MEMO

After the RAND Staff meeting of 16 June at which there was discussion of the formation of a RAND team to work cooperatively with Air Force personnel on reduction of the vulnerability of SAC operations, I did a little thinking about some of the problems the RAND team might encounter. I can think of several. I'm more confident than some members of the RAND Staff that all these obstacles can be surmounted.

Make no mistake about it. The SAC bureaucracy is well organized. They know exactly how to deal with individuals sent to Omaha as emissaries from Headquarters USAF or RAND or any other alien organization. As long as Air Staff officers are so stupid as to send representatives singly to Omaha, (and to HqAMC, by the way) to bargain with an entrenched and well-organized bureaucracy on their own grounds they are going to continue to lose—to lose on issues and to lose prestige.

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If RAND should send a collection of individuals to Omaha to deal with as sensitive a topic as this, they may do no better than HqUSAF does. RAND analysts organized as a team could do the job satisfactorily, I think.

If I seem to be preoccupied with the SAC bureaucracy and have nothing to say about SAC operational personnel with whom RAND analysts have repeatedly dealt, it is because I suspect this time the RAND team may have to deal with SAC bureaucracy before it can get to the SAC operators.

I have two suggestions to offer on procedural matters to maximize the effectiveness of the RAND team in dealing with SAC personnel. The first is, that all members of the RAND team should be asked to read the attached syllabus. I would be inclined to suggest that anyone who does not accept the principles of conduct in conferences discussed therein might turn out to be a liability in conferences with the SAC bureaucracy. The other suggestion is that I think you, and members of the RAND team, might be interested in the following notes on a conference, in February of this year in the Pentagon, between a party sponsored by the British Joint Services Mission and USAF officers. Perhaps you will regard this, as I do, as constituting a fairly good analogy with one of the situations the RAND team might encounter. I regard it as an example of good conference management.

The topics discussed at this conference; e.g., USAF policy for the wartime deployment of fighter aircraft and the performance of rockets at high altitude, were classified Secret. This fact determines the classification of this memo.

Let me first try to deal with a possible criticism of the little story that follows. In part, it is a narrative account of a conference. To this extent, I believe you could get substantially the same story from almost any of the forty people present. The usefulness of this story as an analogy turns on the interpretations I have put on the dialogue. Necessarily, this is personal and I'm sure most of the forty auditors would not volunteer these interpretations. If, however, the Britishers present talked to you as plainly as two of them did to me, in private discussing this very conference, I think you'd probably be led to much the same interpretations that I've set down here.

INTERPRETATION OF A BRITISH-USAF CONFERENCE ON EMPLOYMENT OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

Objective of the British Joint Service Mission: The British wished American cooperation in developing certain types of fighter aircraft to implement a different tactical doctrine than the one the USAF has promulgated. As a group, and as individuals, they could expect to be handicapped in dealing with USAF planning and operational officers and with American technical people, most of whom could be expected to state they were bound by USAF

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doctrine and, however interesting they personally might find British suggestions there really was nothing they, as individuals, could do about it.

To achieve their objective, the BJSM needed to loosen up the USAF without impairing the ability of their team to work, subsequently, in cooperation with USAF planning, operational, and technical personnel to the fullest extent possible. It would be unacceptable either to:

- a. accept USAF tactical doctrine for the employment of fighters as immutable and to try to get USAF people to talk, anyway; or to
- b. win a stubbornly-contested argument on principles and then try to trade ideas with USAF people who were left resentful by loss of a public debate.

Make-up of the BJSM team: It was headed by a RAF Air Commodore (equivalent to a BG). Ordinarily this would mean that in conferences with USAF agencies, military protocol requires that the USAF would head their party with a Brigadier General, at least. Agreement reached with officers below General Officer rank is interesting and even encouraging but altogether inconclusive (for reasons set forth by Bart Leach).

The team of 10 or 12 was composed of officers and a few civilians from the Admiralty, the Royal Air Force, the British Army and (possibly) the Ministry of Supply. (I have names and status in Washington but I do not have them at hand as I write this.) The lowest-ranking officer present was a RN Lieutenant. I talked to him and I'd consider that in experience, intelligence, and poise he was at least equivalent to most USN Lieutenant Commanders. More typically, ranks corresponded to Lieutenant Colonel (or by Pentagon standards, INDIAN or WORKING LEVEL).

Division of duties within the BJSM team: The Air Commodore played the role of moderator. He did not involve himself in any discussion of controversial points. Matter of fact, when one of his officers had carried a line of questioning about as far as it was prudent to go, the Air Commodore intervened with two or three questions on a different topic. These elicited information on minor points of operational doctrine; phraseology indicated he merely wanted to improve his understanding; psychologically, this relaxed the pressure on their hosts; and (whether this was prearranged signal I don't know) it was followed by a completely different train of questioning by the Interlocutor.

The Interlocutor was a Wing Commander (equivalent to a Lieutenant Colonel). I imagine he had spent formative years of his life playing forward on soccer teams (to judge from physique and manner). (If he had grown up in this country he would have been a natural third baseman.) The RN Navy Lieutenant said the WingCo was an ardent follower of Stephen Potter; spent much of his time and the time of the team working on ploys. The questions he propounded were loaded; obviously they had been thought out and stacked in advance, and they were bluntly worded. In military circles,

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this is OK if it is done right. The controlled aggressiveness of the WingCo was appropriate. In advance, the odds would have been in favor of letting such a man carry the load. Americans aren't likely to object to the direct approach, especially from a person to whom it comes naturally. On the other hand, suppose their hosts (and potential collaborators) did find his questions annoying; after all, damage had been done by only one member of the party. Supposing worst came to worst, the offending member of the team could be turned out to graze in a bar while the unoffending members of the team could settle down to their intended tasks.

The balance of the team were prompt to respond with information or technical data when they were called on. They asked no loaded questions. They played the role of fully-informed, interested, and potentially cooperative technical and operational people. They were present in adequate number and rank and they represented all the important agencies that would participate in the actions under discussion.

SCENARIO

Opening gambit: The Interlocutor asked, Is the U.S. Air Force really committed to all-weather fighter capability as a design principle?

Response: Yes

Ploy No. 2: Am I to understand that the USAF proposes to station its fighter-type aircraft at air defense bases and to employ them there (after D-Day) until the threat of Soviet bomber attack has diminished and then to deploy at least part of its fighter-type aircraft to overseas bases for tactical purposes?

Response: Several minutes of conversation whose import was: Substantially correct.

Ploy No. 3: What do you consider to be the lesson of Korea as to the ability of the several kinds of fighters and interceptors to live in the same air that MIG-15's fly in?

Response: Only the F-86 has a show.

Ploy No. 4: Do you think the F-86D could survive?

Response: Sure.

Ploy No. 5: If the current F-86's are no more than even matches for current MIG-15's, why do you think that an F-86 burdened with several hundred pounds of AI radar would be any match for the then-current successors to the MIG-15 carrying no such impost?

Response: (in effect) We never thought of it that way.

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Ploy No. 6: If an F-86D couldn't compete with unencumbered fighters, what show would your two-seater interceptors have against enemy air superiority fighters?

Response: Embarrassed evasion.

Ploy No. 7: In view of all this, does your fighter design and fighter deployment policy make sense?

Response: Doesn't look like it.

It was at this point that the Air Commodore stepped in and called his dog off. It was at this stage in two other trains of questions that he intervened. One additional train of questioning began with the Interlocutor asking: What is the nature of the Soviet bomber threat against which you are designing your all-weather fighters? Without using up paper to try to reproduce the sequence of loaded questions, the object was to show that no one present had any idea of how one can reason from bomber tactics and from the vulnerability of specified bomber aircraft (considered as targets) to deduce the kind of armament a fighter aircraft ought to carry. Whenever any USAF officer attempted to make a stand, the Interlocutor would ask him: Do you think an interceptor thus armed would be any match against an enemy fighter? That stopped him, cold.

Things got so bad that Group Captain Dixie Dean came to the rescue of the faltering Americans and supplied them with the only solid defense of the USAF position that was offered during the conference period. Afterward, Dixie Dean set up individual conferences for the BJSM personnel with the USAF personnel who could really explain the USAF position on armament.

The BJSM team sprang another series of questions built around the proposition that the air-to-air rockets proposed for high-altitude interceptors have never been tested above 35,000 feet. There is serious reason to doubt that rockets would be stable, aerodynamically, in the rarified air of much higher altitudes. This led to the payoff question: Is it prudent to design your high-altitude interceptor around an untested weapon under these circumstances?

CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT VERSUS GAMESMANSHIP

If I have correctly transmitted the course of three lines of questions (asked almost exclusively by the Interlocutor) and the effect these questions had on the USAF members of the conference, all this might sound like a technical and tedious form of gamesmanship.

The objective of conference management (unlike gamesmanship) is not to leave your potential collaborators embarrassed; it is to open the way to a collaboration otherwise not possible. The BJSM did everything they could

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to minimize the embarrassment of their hosts (as I've tried to indicate)... Dixie Dean is the RAF Interchange Officer. Administratively, he reports to BJSM. Both during the conference and afterward, he rallied to the defense of the Americans. He took his colleagues to private conferences which he arranged with the American armament personnel who should have been invited to the conference in the first place.

PAYOFF: DID IT WORK?

It did. The Recorder, a USAF officer, let me read the Memo for Record he wrote for his Director. He described it to the General as a satisfactory conference, recounted fairly plainly the major course of the discussion and sugar-coated only two items of the ones listed above:

- a. Obviously he made no mention of how badly the USAF team had been outclassed.
- b. He weaseled on the supposed aerodynamic instability of rockets at high altitude. If you pondered the implications of what the Recorder wrote on this point, this is one of the implications you could derive from it.

It worked because the members of the BJSM team were able subsequently to fan out to persons selected in advance by Dixie Dean with the sanction of the Director to whom the Memo for Record was written and with the USAF sufficiently opened up by the conference to be receptive to the alternatives the British wished to discuss.

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