
“Wargaming as a Catalyst for Innovation”

Or

**Stress, Paranoia and Cheating:
the Three Furies of Innovative Wargaming**

Draft Speaker’s Notes – revised 28 August, 2015

Connections 2015 Conference

**National Defense University, Ft. Lesley J. McNair, Washington DC
July 27, 2015**

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Abstract

The senior leadership in DoD and in the wargaming community are jointly responsible for the failure of wargaming to produce innovative results and for implementing solutions to correct this failure. Innovation cannot be guaranteed nor scheduled, but the probability of obtaining it can be increased by stopping inappropriate senior leadership interference with wargame design; recruiting players who are impatient with conventional wisdom and known for breaking rules, slightly paranoid, compulsive and very smart; severely stressing the players by making the game hard to win by playing according to conventional wisdom and by imposing career risk on the players for losing; and by encouraging players to break the rules in order to win.

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THE INNOVATE WARGAMING MISSION

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

The SECDEF, DEPSECDEF and SECNAV have demanded wargaming that produces innovative solutions to future strategic national security problems.¹ Specifically they want innovative results from wargames that supports pursuit of “an innovative third offset strategy” and helps “avoid operational and technological surprise”.²

A strategy and capability set that provides competitive advantage does not guarantee either safety from attack, or success if we are attacked or if we attack. A strategy based on claims that such competitive advantages are undefeatable and then relies on that to deter, is brittle since nothing is undefeatable. It will work until it does not, and then we are caught by surprise. Our enemies (“competitors who have not yet attacked us”) will, given the choice, avoid attacking us or our allies against what they perceive as our strong points or when they believe the advantage lies with us. They will endlessly try to circumvent the advantages and introduce surprise. The likelihood is that we will either preemptively attack, end up in accidental war by incompetent diplomacy (ours, theirs or both), or be surprised by an enemy attacking us against our weakness in whatever strategic form is best to the enemy’s advantage in the enemy’s judgment. Reducing the likelihood of surprise and its consequences when (not if) it occurs seems to be the focus of our leadership’s interest.

Our strategy and innovation must not only reduce the probability and effect of any surprise and deter the potential enemy, but also must allow us to absorb what surprise occurs, hold the enemy at bay and adapt and surge back to victory if we are attacked. We cannot guarantee to avoid operational or technological surprise – that is why it is called “surprise” – what we can do is be innovative in reducing the probability and scope of the surprise in order to maintain competitive advantage. A problem is that in a future war against a high end adversary, defeat may occur before we have time to adapt and surge back to victory, in which case innovative solutions must include how to drag the war out to give us time. However it is worth noting that

¹ “The Defense Innovative Initiative” (SECDEF Memo Nov 15, 2014), “Wargaming and Innovation” (DEPSECDEF Memo Feb 9, 2015) and “Wargaming” (SECNAV Memo May 5, 2015)

² DEPSECDEF Feb 9, 2015

adversaries using hybrid warfare and insurgency techniques also drag out time for themselves, but in these cases their objective is to slowly escalate without triggering an effective adaptation and surge back by the US and to avoid having to face US strengths head on. Our current enemies appear to be successful at the asymmetric technique of extending a war to gain political maneuver space, presumably having learned from the swift conclusion of Operation Desert Storm.

But What Is Innovation? There is a wide range of innovative definitions of innovation in the literature and in use.³ My interpretation of innovation is that it is the successful application of new combinations to important problems producing results of significantly large value discovered by novel methods. This somewhat abstract view (it does not list what is being combined, nor the types of problem being addressed) allows one to focus on requirements for something to be innovative and to dismiss what is not innovation. This will be necessary because, based on experience with past calls for change from senior leadership; the current demand for innovation will generate a large number of proposals which are nothing more than the re-packaging of old and routine approaches and methods.

Innovation is not just the introduction or discovery of something new – that is discovery. If there is no large increase in value generated by the approach, or if the problem is not important, then no one cares and innovation has not occurred. Although multiple small increments in value are important over the long run, an approach that generates small increments is not the kind of innovation being sought. If the approach does not make use of new combinations or does not involve a novel method, then one is already on a path to achieve the value and thus again the approach is not innovative. This introduces the notion that at some time after innovation has occurred it becomes routine and is thus no longer innovative. Innovation is not only a never ending process; it also involves creativity and thus is extremely difficult to achieve with large bureaucracies, especially if the innovation effort is being lead (or worse, managed) by the established bureaucracy. If top leadership hands over the innovation effort to middle-management then the effort will slowly fail.

³ Operational definitions of “innovation” range from Schumpeter (“The Theory of Economic Development” Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press 1934) to the more recent IBM Global CEO Study (“Expanding the innovation horizon”, Somers NY, IBM 2006) and continue to be generated. No doubt earlier and later definitions also exist.

What are the Characteristics of an Innovative Game? In order to answer this question, we should ask “what are the characteristics of an innovative person?” We probably want innovative people designing and playing the wargame, but more importantly the answers to this latter question may give us insights into characteristics of an “innovative game” – i.e. one that produces innovative results. A large literature base seems to agree that some combination of creativity, intelligence, open-mindedness and a lack of patience with barriers, rules, standards and conventional wisdom are pre-requisites for innovation.⁴ The problem is that several of these attributes are explicitly discouraged by military organizations and civilian bureaucracies, and since the leadership of these organizations tends to be promoted from within we can expect these attributes to be rare among those leaders. People who believe this statement to be true about others while believing they are an exception are more likely wrong than not.

People believed to be extremely creative with genius level intellects obviously score high on intelligence tests. More surprising however is that they also score high on a variety of psychological tests designed to identify compulsiveness and paranoia.⁵ These people are very smart, never give up, and always suspect there is something important they do not know and which will damage them if they do not find out. So we are looking for the characteristics of a game that, in a person, would correspond to intelligence, compulsivity, and paranoia, and for methods to design such characteristics into wargames.

Key Mission Phrases: There are three key phrases to which we must pay attention: “innovative results”, “future problems” and “strategic problems”.

1. Innovative results: Wargames that have innovative designs or use innovative methods, while interesting to wargamers, are not the objective. It does not matter how innovative is the wargame design if the results are not innovative, and conversely it does not matter how un-innovative is the wargame design is so long as the results are innovative. Furthermore, there is no obvious reason why a wargame with an innovative design should produce an innovative

⁴ “The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity”, James Kaufman, Robert Sternberg (Eds), Cambridge University Press 2010

⁵ See for example “*Creativity and Psychological Health*” by F. X. Barron (Van Nostrand 1963) for a discussion of elevated scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and “*Genius, The Natural History of Creativity*” by H. J. Eysenck (Cambridge University Press 1995) for a discussion of the psychoticism scale of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire.

insight, solution, or result. Sponsors and designers should focus on the reasons why a wargaming design will increase the likelihood of innovative results.

The objective is a set of wargame techniques that significantly increase the probability that wargames will produce innovative results.

- 2. Future problems:** We are interested in wargaming the future in which surprise dominates – not the past nor the present. There is a vast literature on the difficulties of predicting the future, and on peacetime militaries’ penchant for rapidly replacing the techniques they used to enter a war with the ones they used for winning (assuming the fight is against a tough enemy and not a hapless one – aka “live fire training against live targets”). The wargaming community must add to its art the ability to explore the future in an analytically credible fashion.⁶ It cannot rely on “futures studies” or the opinions of ad hoc collections of officers (military or civilian) engaging in “brainstorming” or “discovery panels” to produce scenarios and research questions; these are inputs to a game, not a game design.⁷

The objective is a set of wargame techniques that focus on the principles of adapting to surprise ahead of actual combat, rather than attempting to predict and wargame the unpredictable details of the future surprise.

- 3. Strategic problems:** We are interested in wargaming strategic to high operational problems, not tactical or low-operational situations. There is a school of thought that claims strategic insight can be gained from rolling up many tactical analyses. While interesting and popular amongst some wargamers, this bottom up approach at best surfaces emergent behaviors but does not explore top down strategic thinking, especially that kind of innovative thinking that bypasses enemy tactical or strategic strengths – the development of hybrid warfare and a focus on nuclear weapons by Russia springs to mind. Furthermore strategy plays out over many years and includes all instruments of national power applied to all components of the

⁶ I make the somewhat arbitrary distinction between “wargaming community” to mean those who design and implement wargames, and the player community to mean players. Obviously there are individuals who belong to both communities.

⁷ For example sponsors should consider not dictating scenarios (such as the official Defense Planning Scenarios) for wargames (since the DPS probably won’t actually occur) if they want innovative results. It may be that a DPS is required and that innovative results come from the wargame, but the use or non-use of a DPS must be driven by the objective of the game to produce innovative results, not by a bureaucratic imperative.

global system – we do not have time to wargame enough tactical engagements to fill the gaps between strategic level decisions.

The objective is a set of top down wargaming techniques that introduces innovation explicitly at the strategic level across all instruments of national power.

WHY DO YOU WANT IT?

The SECDEF’s overarching desire is to “put the competitive advantage firmly in the hands of American power projection over the coming decades ... as we deal with more limited resources”⁸ and a rapidly changing geostrategic and technological landscape. The creation by nations and organizations, who by any measure currently used are militarily inferior to us, of new ways of waging war which put us at a strategic disadvantage drives the need for innovation. Hybrid warfare invented and implemented by Russia in the Ukraine, combined with crude nuclear posturing, begs the question whether this is practice for something larger. The failure of the US to respond to the purchase trajectory of the Chinese Military, and the failure of US strategy in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Iran, etc drives home the mismatch between our strategic thinking and the realities of the modern world, and hence the need for innovation in the way we think – wargaming has the potential to assist us in this endeavor.

This, however, is an explicit objective; it does not explain the existence of the demand signal for innovative wargame results. We must also consider the implication that wargaming is not innovative and has failed to deliver, or at least we must consider the perception on the part of our leadership that this is the case. It would be all too easy and pointless to claim that wargaming as currently done is innovative and that we just need to communicate its benefits to senior leadership (or slightly adapt it) or that senior leadership needs to pay attention to wargaming for all to be well. It is my belief that not only has wargaming failed the DoD, but that the blame for this lies equally at the doorsteps of the wargaming community and senior sponsors of wargaming. Senior leadership in the DoD and within the wargaming community must work together; wargamers to change the way they design and execute wargames, and senior DoD leaders to support the expert wargame designers they have hired.

⁸ SECDEF Nov 15, 2014

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE IT?

There is no shortage of innovative methods for wargaming. There is however a shortage of evidence and logic that these approaches do in fact increase the probability of innovative results from a wargame. In addition, since wargaming is an intensely social activity, the cultures of those involved (sponsors, players, wargame designers and implementers, various chains of command) have more influence on creating or overcoming obstacles to producing innovation than do the presence or absence of specific wargaming techniques. Therefore solutions to producing innovative results will lie in techniques that address culture. The literature on the pathologies of wargaming, or how wargaming can fail, includes detailed descriptions of how senior sponsors and the wargame profession jointly contribute to those failures.⁹ However, for the purposes of the current mission, it is only necessary to consider obstacles that interfere with production of innovative results by wargaming (other failure modes, while important, can be dealt with elsewhere). We need to understand root causes in order to create a sustainable wargaming culture that produces innovative results. I suggest that the root cause obstacle to wargaming producing innovative results is a malign combination of cultural and institutional forces within the cultures engaged in wargaming:

Senior Leader Interference: All too often sponsors, senior players and the wargamer's chain of command interfere with the wargame design based on their erroneous belief that they know how to design or execute wargames better than the professional wargamers hired to design or run the wargames. Not only are most senior leaders unqualified to design wargames or impose their ideas on wargame design or execution, they also, due to their seniority, erroneously believe that they are in fact qualified.¹⁰ For example, I have watched a senior leader in the game director's chain of command and the action officer of the sponsoring organization override the vigorous, analytically based objections of the game director and insist on game design changes in the middle of a major war game. The result was loss of information critical to the sponsor's

⁹ "Pathologies of War Gaming and What to Do About It", Stephen Downes-Martin, Michael Martin, Robert Rubel, Christopher Weuve, Naval War College Briefing February 18, 2004. "Wargame Pathologies", Christopher A. Weuve, Peter P. Perla, Michael C. Markowitz, Robert Rubel, Stephen Downes-Martin, Michael Martin, Paul V. Vebber, CNA report D0010866.A1 September 2004. "Wargaming For the Sponsor, Not by the Sponsor", Stephen Downes-Martin, MORS Special Meeting 16-18 October 2007

¹⁰ See "Your Boss, Players and Sponsors: The Three Witches of Wargaming", Stephen Downes-Martin, Naval War College Review 2014, Vol 67, No. 1, pp 31 – 40 and references contained therein for a detailed explanation and justification of these claims.

objectives and inability to correlate information from before the change with that obtained after the change, leading to a serious reduction in the final value of the game products for the sponsor.

Avoidance of Embarrassment: There is a commonly observed phenomenon of sponsors resisting the design of games that risk showing the weaknesses of their favored concepts and ideas, and of resisting game analysis that indicates such weaknesses exist. This generates an observed willingness by some players to take game decisions that support their communities and avoid testing or exposing the weaknesses of their communities' favored concepts and ideas. For example, in one recent senior level wargame that was designed to explore the consequences of two competing concepts, the leadership from a specific Service explicitly ordered the cell staffed by officers from his Service to avoid decisions that would expose the weaknesses of that Service's preferred concept. Unfortunately the game was designed in such a way that each service cell was unable to explore the downsides of the opposing concept, and so the result was a comparison of advantages with no embarrassment for anyone.

Inappropriate Career Risk: The DEPSECDEF rightly calls for a "culture that embraces experimentation and tolerates dissent and risk taking".¹¹ While many wargames do encourage players to take risks in the game, many junior military players believe they are under career pressure based on their game performance. They believe that their game decisions will be frowned upon by their leadership if this leads to "game loss" or embarrassment for their military community. This pressure is not present for senior officers who are sometimes observed exploring multiple game COAs despite their sometimes catastrophic game results on the correct grounds that this is informative. A corollary to this is that officers who game lose but do so while playing according to doctrine and established procedures, i.e. that are playing it safe and not being innovative or exploratory, are not held to account.

Wargames Not Taken Seriously: At a deep and fundamental level wargames are not taken seriously. Even if when playing to win or "losing the game" or playing innovatively or going the sacred cows of their community the careers of players are not at risk, it is also true that players' careers are not held at risk when their wargame decisions deliberately avoid supporting the game objectives by playing it safe or failing to play innovatively by acquiescing to pressures

¹¹ DEPSECDEF Feb 9, 2015

to avoid embarrassing their communities.¹² In what other part of an officer's career is lack of performance not followed by career risk?¹³ Note that here, "performance" means playing to support the game objectives, not necessarily winning the game and definitely not playing to avoid embarrassing one's community, service or superiors. Furthermore, wargame designers compound this problem with a fundamental design error when they base their designs on the idea that wargames need to be enjoyable and explicitly safe from career risk to persuade officers to play. Since when was it a requirement that all required professional activities be "enjoyable" before we can expect officers to participate? Being professionally satisfying and constructive is a requirement, but being enjoyable is a "nice to have if possible".

WHEN ARE YOU ROTATING OUT OF HERE?

This question is normally asked of sponsors to determine how long one has for the project, from start to the sponsor communicating the wargame results to his or her audience. In our case the question deals with the sustainability of any changes the wargaming community institutes to generate innovative results. The responsibility for sustainment rests equally with the wargaming community and our senior military and civilian leadership (SECDEF, DEPSECDEF, and SECNAV). The latter must take steps to ensure that any innovative changes survive their leaving their current appointments. This cannot be done by the wargaming community. However, the wargaming community must ensure that the changes they propose have substance and are feasible. Unfortunately, proposals for cultural changes with substance will be both actively resisted and slow-rolled as people wait for the attention of the SECDEF, DEPSECDEF and SECNAV to move on, or for them to physically rotate out. The first requirement for sustained change is the rapid and directive support for change by senior leadership within their communities.

¹² By "career risk" I mean the same kind of institutional response that would occur if an officer showed the equivalent lack of performance or failure to support the intent or failed to show innovation in other professional activities, given that the results from a serious wargame should have serious consequences for future combat or deterrent success.

¹³ Game designers and game implementers are at career risk should they fail to perform at designing and producing good games. Why are players immune from career risk for lack of performance when playing?

A PROPOSED APPROACH TO PRODUCING INNOVATIVE RESULTS

I propose four key approaches to game design aimed at dealing with the cultural obstacles identified above.

Burn the Witches. Sponsors must have the courage to support games that focus on their objectives, even at the risk of embarrassing them or their communities, and to avoid interfering with the game design. Senior players must be recruited to play the game as designed. The game designer's chain of command must back the designer and support the design. Their role is to support the game, its designers, implementers and the players while protecting them from outside interference. Burning the witches – supporting the wargame experts against inappropriate senior leadership interference – requires honesty on the part of senior leaders and courage on the part of the game director and removes a major set of obstacles to innovative results.¹⁴

Recruit the Right Players. Wargames are notorious for being pick-up games, low on the priority list even of their sponsors. Instead, sponsors must assist in identifying players that satisfy the wargame designer's selection criteria for players, and then direct those individuals to play. The required criteria for players are not ones that necessarily enhance the promotion of an officer: highly intelligent, willing to break boundaries and rules to get the job done, impatient with conventional wisdom, compulsive, and slightly paranoid.

Put Players under Stress. Too much stress reduces performance as does too little. There is a sweet spot specific to individuals where there is enough stress to enhance performance. The most obvious and currently missing stressor in wargames is career risk, which also has the most direct and crass link to a player's professional motivations. We want to put player careers at risk when they "play it safe". This includes senior players. Although contentious, this proposal simply states that game players are expected to support the objectives of the game, not the hidden (or not so hidden) agendas of their communities, in the same way that they are expected to perform in other areas of the careers and are at career risk if they fail to perform in these other areas. They are not expected to win, nor to avoid game losses of equipment or lives; they are expected to play as innovatively as possible in support of the game's objectives and without concern for community or senior leadership embarrassment. Players and sponsors must have

¹⁴ Stephen Downes-Martin 2014

career skin in the game to the same level as the wargame designers and implementers for the games to be taken seriously.

The wargame designer and the military community share the responsibility here. The wargame designer makes the problem of winning the wargame too hard to win by non-innovative means (it might also be too hard to win by being innovative), and the military community are responsible for taking the game seriously in that players are under career pressure to be innovative in order to win, so that playing becomes stressful for the players. Design into the game information that implies the adjudicators are manipulating the players and that there is vital information the players need but do not have to add paranoia to the stress. This forces the players to be innovative to win by breaking preconceptions and established rules. Subtlety is required by both the wargame community and the sponsor's community in balancing game stress, performance and career pressure in a way that is reasonable but productive.

Encourage Cheating by Players. We don't want rule followers, people who protect themselves by playing to doctrine or conventional wisdom, or who play to avoid embarrassing their communities, we want players willing to break boundaries and explore innovative ideas and approaches – i.e. players willing to break the current rules in order to win. First, games exist for players to win or lose. But we want to reward players for playing innovatively while not punishing them for losing, while simultaneously using the desire to win as the motivator. So it is the game designer's responsibility to design a game that is hard to win by simply following doctrine, and at which one risks losing by avoiding game decisions that avoid embarrassing anyone or by playing safe (according to doctrine or conventional wisdom).

How do we get innovative rule breaking behavior by the players? We pressure them to cheat. Why? Because breaking the rules of conventional wisdom and doctrine is incredibly hard for people to do when their lives are not at real risk, they have to be encouraged to deliberately cheat even if they are not aware they are cheating. Cheating provides the possibility of getting us “successful application of new combinations to important problems producing results of significantly large value discovered by novel methods” – i.e. innovative results – where the novel methods are whatever the players did to cheat.

So how do we get them to cheat in the right way? Note that in most cases of intellectual fraud three characteristics are present: the activity is not precisely repeatable (true of combat and

wargames), those involved believe they already know the answer (true of many senior officers and civilians) and those involved are under career pressure.¹⁵ The first two items are true of most officers. Add the third item – place players under serious career risk – and they will look for ways to break the rules to win.

An added advantage is that player cheating will force game designers to become innovative in producing games that apply pressure to cheat but block off attempts by the players to simply circumvent the game mechanics. However, even these attempts (successful or not), provide innovative insights. For example players who engage in illicit sneaker-net negotiations between cells or who find ways of spying on the deliberations of the adjudicators indicate the value of, or need for, or vulnerability created by, previously unconsidered communications or espionage channels, and provide the game controllers with more avenues for stressing the players and encouraging paranoia.

There will be a temptation by sponsors and designers to reduce the career pressure in order to encourage participating by making the game easy (or even enjoyable) to play. Resisting this temptation is key; the game must be stressful and hard to play, forcing the players to look for ways around the problem other than those expected ahead of the game by the sponsors and designers. This does not contradict the earlier proposal of recruiting senior players to play the game as designed. Senior players must not attempt to use their positional authority to change the game design, but they are pushed to cheat by the stress induced by the game and the career risk they are under. This will not guarantee production of innovative results, but it will increase the likelihood.

Don't Drive over the Cliff. Where a wargame goes depends on tension between the players¹⁶ and the game control, and the job of game control is to maintain the ability of the players to be creative and innovative while simultaneously avoiding pathological breakdowns. If the above proposals for innovative wargaming are followed, there are three potential pathologies

¹⁵ Note that we are not talking about financial fraud, but intellectual fraud. See *“On Fact and Fraud: Cautionary Tales from the Front Lines of Science”*, David Goodstein, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010). Goodstein is vice provost of the California Institute of Technology. See also *“When Scientists Sin”*, Michael Shermer, *Scientific American* 303, no. 1 (July 2010), p. 34, available at www.scientificamerican.com/.

¹⁶ Players include the Adjudicators for a discovery game since the Adjudicators make decisions that affect the game trajectory. See *“Adjudication: The Diabolus in Machina of Wargaming”*, Stephen Downes-Martin, *Naval War College Review* 2013, Vol 66, No. 3 for a detailed explanation.

that must be managed by wargame designers (who I advise to be slightly paranoid when thinking about and dealing with the players):¹⁷

Not all novel ideas are valuable. Rex put the question this way: “First, how do we balance efforts to promote innovation with the need to generate useful innovation, and therefore filter out other novel, but unproductive, ideas? After all, not all innovation is good: the Edsel, the Apple Newton, and New Coke were all “innovations.” They were also failures. The F-35 and the Littoral Combat Ship are innovative too, but will they turn out to be the right sort of innovation?”

As Peter Perla has made clear in many of his publications and talks, “wargaming is not analysis”.¹⁸ One has to analyze the results of the wargame (preferably of many wargames) and combine that analysis with other forms of analysis to determine the possible value of investing in novel ideas that might have surfaced from a wargame. In the same way that one should not simply resist a new idea because it contradicts conventional wisdom; neither should one accept a new idea simply because it does.¹⁹ Analysis is required.

Keep control of the asylum: Rex put the question this way: “Rule-breaking psychotics, I suggested, are sometimes just rule-breaking psychotics. How can one separate those bright, atypical innovative personalities who add unique value to games from those who might adversely disrupt game play?”

We are not looking for clinically psychotic players, but rather for mildly paranoid. It is probably advisable not to assume that our military and civilian organizations are free of true psychotics, and so pre-game surveys of potential players and discussion with the game sponsor and chains of command to which players belong should be aimed at identifying the mildly paranoid (atypical innovative personalities) that are desired.

¹⁷ These are based on challenges and questions raised by Professor Rex Brynen (Political Science, McGill University) at the Connections Conference and the discussion that followed, and are reported by him on PAXsims: <https://paxsims.wordpress.com/2015/07/27/connections-2015-day-1-aar/>.

¹⁸ Page 164 of “The Art of Wargaming”, Peter Perla, USNI 1990.

¹⁹ As Michael Shermer and Pat Linse point out in “The Baloney Detection Kit” (Skeptical Society) “Heresy does not equal correctness”.

Sometimes cheating is not useful. Rex put the question this way: “Similarly, when are “cheaters” useful challengers to the status quo, and when are they simply lost in win-at-all-costs “gamer mode” and actually undermining game objectives?”

It is the job of the game designer to encourage and exploit cheating (in order to generate true challenges to the status quo) in such a way that “win at all cost gamer mode” satisfies the objectives of the game. In addition post game analysis should also be aimed at identifying such people and tagging their game behavior appropriately. However, just because a player is a psychotic play to win at all costs personality does not mean the ideas generated are bad (or good), they must be analyzed.

SUMMARY

The senior leadership in DoD and in the wargaming community are jointly responsible for the failure of wargaming to produce innovative results and for implementing solutions to correct this failure. Innovation cannot be guaranteed nor scheduled, but the probability of obtaining it can be increased by:

Burning the witches: Senior sponsors, players and the wargame designer's chain of command are not wargame designers (even if they were once). They must not inappropriately interfere in wargame design or execution, but must support the wargame designer and director when appropriate.

Recruiting the right players: Sponsors must support the wargame designer's selection criteria for players and direct them to play: i.e. players who are impatient with conventional wisdom and known for breaking rules, slightly paranoid, compulsive and very smart.

Stressing the Players: Wargame designers must make the game hard to win if playing it safe or playing according to conventional wisdom and doctrine, and wargame execution must imply the game is unfair.

Encouraging Cheating: Wargame design must encourage players to break the rules in order to win, and the sponsors must impose career risk on the players for losing.