

THE “REAL” QUESTIONS

During the conference, one of the staff members of the Army War College remarked that the “real” questions were not being asked. When we queried about what the real questions were, we were given a list quickly jotted on a piece of paper. Our immediate response was that we didn’t feel the opportunity existed for asking the “hard” questions – our term for issues that need to be put on the table but that doing so is frightening. We call this phenomenon the elephant sitting in the middle of the table that no one will acknowledge or address.

We have added to this list ourselves since attending the conference. However, we are certain that lots of you have questions that you believe were not asked or that are being avoided – the hard questions that take courage to ask and the elephants that mean taking risks to acknowledge.

Please join in as we explore the **Elephants Blocking Our View**.

Why is there a reluctance to ask difficult or potentially embarrassing questions?

Why are we reluctant to upset other people's rice bowls or to “call the baby ugly?”

What is it about our culture creates such a strong fear of making mistakes?

Why do we change directions so quickly when problems arise or the direction gets difficult? For example:

1993-95	Army of Excellence
1995-97	Army After Next
1996-98	Force XXI
1998-2001	Army in Transition

Why do we seem to ignore the handwriting on the wall about the need for revolutionary culture change?

When are we going to seriously consider the possible increased efficiency and effectiveness of a unified military force?

What are we doing today to attract and retain the type of recruit the Army of the future will require?

Why do we only focus on the new technology for the future soldier which equal only ½ of the equation. How are we going to recruit and retain them given the fact that they have a very different value set than the three previous generations?

Why do we keep putting new wine into old wineskins?

Why do we have to wait until there is a crisis or our backs are against the wall before we give serious consideration to change?

Will one smart enemy commander who defeats a unit causing considerable casualties be able to disrupt an entire transformation policy?

What happens if we are wrong?

Why no discussion of future strategic environment?

What about technological surprise? The "Dreadnought Effect?"

Have we become more of a fighter pilot culture than a soldier culture?

Why do we not give serious consideration to asymmetries – gender exploitation, strategic terrorism and its effects? Will they defeat us?

What will be the nature of warfare in the future – ships, planes, and tanks or something that does not yet exist?

Are the current force structures obsolete?

What changes need to be made in the way we think about training and educating soldiers if the future warrior will more resemble a fighter pilot than a traditional soldier?

What if Admiral Owen is right about future warfare? Are his comments more reality-based than we dare dream possible?

Do we have a common vision for the Army after Next?

What do we need to be doing now to prepare future soldiers to practice leadership and to think strategically?

When are we going to give up our notion that only after we have been in service 20+ years are we qualified to think strategically?

What is true strategic thinking?

Do we really need three separate service academies?

What about lateral entry from civilian life for specialties other than law and medicine? What are the benefits? What are the consequences?

With our forces shrunken some 40% in 10 years, why are there still the same number of flag officers and why are the headquarters still so large?

What are the organizational impediments to change that must be overcome within the Army?

Will we have the courage to get past our personal agendas to bring about true transformation?

To what do we become blinded by giving "right answers" rather than exploring possibilities and asking hard questions?