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Wargaming Approaches for Varied Warfighting Functions



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Wargaming Approaches for Varied Warfighting Functions

IDA Ideas host Rhett Moeller spoke with Akar Bharadvaj, Rachel L. McVicker and Rosemary K. Tropeano about all-things wargaming at IDA. In this episode, they explain why wargames are useful, reveal the complexities designers must consider when developing games, and provide an overview of several types of wargames that IDA produces. Akar is an Assistant Director of the Joint Advanced Warfighting Division (JAWD) at the Systems and Analyses Center (SAC), an IDA-operated federally funded research and development center. There, he leads interdisciplinary teams of wargame designers and expands IDA's institutional wargaming expertise. Rachel designs operational wargames in JAWD, and Rosemary designs intelligence wargames as a researcher in the Global Dynamics and Intelligence Division of SAC. By creating and facilitating wargames, Akar, Rachel, Rosemary and their teammates support our government sponsors through a hands-on, engaging exploration of complex geopolitical and national security issues.

[Begin transcript]

Rhett Moeller: Hello listeners, I'm Rhett Moeller and I'm the host of IDA Ideas, a podcast sponsored by the Institute for Defense Analyses. You can find out more about us at www.IDA.org. Welcome to another episode of IDA Ideas. Today's episode revolves around the idea of preparing for the future. What we're about to discuss helps leaders at all levels within our government and military come to grips with complex events in an engaging way. Today I'll be talking with several [members] of our research staff: Akar Bharadvaj [and] Rachel McVicker, both from the Joint Advanced Warfighting Division, and Rosemary Tropeano of the Global Dynamics and Intelligence Division. And today we'll be talking about wargaming.

Wargames enjoy a long pedigree. From India's chaturanga, the 1,500-year-old precursor to today's game of chess, to the Prussians' Kriegsspiel of the 1700s and 1800s, wargames have helped planners prepare to handle challenging situations by exposing them to real-time obstacles and allowing participants to react in an environment that removes many of the pressures of the real thing. To help me in this discussion, we've invited our experienced research staff to join us. And before we launch into all-things wargames, I'd like it if you would each tell me a little bit about yourself.

Akar Bharadvaj: Hello, my name is Akar Bharadvaj. I am an Assistant Director within the Joint Advanced Warfighting Division. I've been at IDA for a little over three years at this point, and I mostly work on wargames, on logistics, and I see to related issues.

Rhett: Great. Rachel?

Rachel McVicker: I'm Rachel McVicker. I've only been at IDA for about one year now, almost exactly to the date, but I've been doing wargaming for a number of different shops for almost four years in total. I tend to focus on operational-level wargaming and ally-and-partner wargaming.

Rhett: Great.

Rosemary Tropeano: I'm Rosemary Tropeano. I'm part of the Global Dynamics and Intelligence Division. I've been at IDA for about two years, and I tend to focus on intelligence gaming as indicated by my division. I came to IDA from ... [the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering], where I did a lot of emerging technology gaming.

Rhett: Excellent. Well, I'm glad you're here with us. Let's get started. Wargaming, it's a word that presupposes some things, and I think our audience may have a general idea of what it is. However, there's a lot of depth here, and not every wargame has to do with war. Akar, can you tell us more?

Akar: So, at its most basic level, wargaming is creating a synthetic environment that gives players an alternate sense of agency that lets them make decisions and see the results of decisions of other players to try to work through some difficult problems in a much simpler way than they might ... in real life. ... The big cliché about wargaming is that it's better at creating questions than creating answers. Wargaming is part of a larger cycle of research that also includes analysis, modeling and simulation, and other techniques. So, a wargame is not the end of the discussion, it might be more of the beginning of one, and it helps you explore a topic rather than find firm answers about a topic.

Rhett: Great. So, there may be lots of questions that our listeners have. That's what wargaming is. What isn't wargaming?

Akar: Wargaming is not meant to be a predictive tool. It's usually not meant to be super quantitative. It's meant to be more qualitative, though there is a lot of data that goes into it. It's not meant to predict the future. It's certainly not with one running a wargame once. You can't say, "This wargame ended in this result, and that's why we can say this will happen in real life." That's absolutely not what wargaming does. It's more[so] ... taking a topic and creating an exploratory environment that helps you understand the challenges better that you can then potentially address down the road.

Rachel: I also think one thing to add to that is that wargames are not simulations, and a lot of the games that we do lean very hard into abstraction. And so, an exercise is very different

than a wargame. A command post exercise where you're actually playing with real equipment and ships or running through an actual problem set is not typically what we consider wargaming.

Rhett: Right, so it's good to have all three of you at the table because we're getting three different points of view and even from different divisions, which I find refreshing. What does IDA do with wargaming?

Akar: IDA uses wargaming to address all sorts of topics related to national security, defense and other issues. We basically run the entire wargaming process from top to bottom. That includes scoping, design, testing, development and then actual execution. And then analysis post-execution. So, we do all of those steps and we do so in several divisions across IDA and in several different ways. We have a pretty broad set of tools we use. A lot of ... organizations have a handful of systems they keep reusing. A lot of our systems are more bespoke to specific problem sets.

Rhett: Good, I'm glad you brought up tools that you can use to create wargames and what's involved with the process. And that may be a separate topic, but I figured [that] at least an overview would be a good idea.

Rachel: I think the best tool for a wargame is dice. We often get pushed to design technical games that use these really big models and sims, which are sometimes really useful for postgame analysis or game injects, so they are a useful tool for wargaming, but sometimes Excel and a couple of twenty-sided dice are what you need to achieve the ends you're going for.

Rosemary: I'm a very big fan of using Excel for wargames, just because you can put a lot of those quantitative values into Excel and have it run some calculations and have it help manage all of the information in the game. I use it a lot to manage ... positions of units for what's happening in the game.

Rhett: Excellent. And I know that in addition to that, you have ... some mental stimulation through a, a chatroom that you run about wargaming. And I think being able to try other games and see what elements they have, what new approaches they have to approximating real world events, might be a way of improving your own products as you work with sponsors.

Akar: We ... borrow a lot of mechanics from the commercial gaming world, mostly ... historical games, but a lot of games also ... a lot of weird ones, ... including role playing games, which I believe Rosemary's going to talk about in a few minutes. So, we like to play a lot of games. It keeps us sharp and helps us think more creatively about different problems. I do some work in the commercial gaming space as well on the side. So, it's a good way to stay creative.

Rhett: Absolutely — drawing the inspiration from outside sources. So that raises some questions in my own mind [about] some of the things that you've said. So, how do you take, for instance, [a circumstance in which] a sponsor has a specific issue that they want to deal with? How do you take that idea and then turn it into mechanics that you can then put into a tabletop experience or something that allows your sponsors to play around with it.

Akar: So, I generally think about wargaming in terms of abstraction, and I think it's an art of abstraction. ... Basically, we often talk about a spectrum between fidelity and playability. The idea is, if it's very faithful to a real-world model, then it has a lot of information in it, and that typically makes it very complex. And oftentimes players, if I throw an hour-long rules explanation at them, they all just start falling asleep and they don't learn anything from the experience. So, you need to strike that balance well. And I think we use an iterative design process here, and that typically bounces back and forth between fidelity and simplicity. So, we'll have one iteration that's too simple, and we'll be like, 'We need more data in this.' And we'll have another one that's too complicated, ... [and we'll say,], 'We need to abstract it a bit.' Typically, the way to design a good wargame is to start scoping it well from the very beginning, which is often challenging working with sponsors, because oftentimes they want everything, and you can't do everything in a wargame. So, we find ... a specific, prioritized list of essential questions and make sure that we hit the most high-priority ones. And if anything else falls by the wayside, we can ignore that. So, for instance, if we're doing a log (a logistics) game, combat might be less important and maneuver might be less important. If you have a game about those topics, then logistics might be less important. You can't have full, high-fidelity models of every aspect of the problem, you need to target it a bit.

Rhett: Sure, that makes absolute sense.

Rosemary: Yeah, with working with sponsors, another good thing, like you said, starting from the beginning with scoping, is that sponsors will usually have a very real-world problem that they want to look at, and that problem has a lot of aspects to it that are not going to be handled within the game. ... For example, I do a lot with the intelligence community, and a lot of their questions come down to things like personnel training, ... manpower [and] budgeting, and those are not necessarily gameable topics when they're looking at questions like, "How should we provide intelligence support to this combatant command in this sort of condition," where yes, having the right personnel is going to be part of the problem, but if your focus in the game is on a process, those aren't questions that I can include in the game. And so talking through the sponsor of which are the questions that we really want to represent in this model, and which ones are going to be handled by postgame analysis, so that you're getting after only the most gameable problems.

Rachel: And then even when you do narrow down to your essential question, if your essential question is about logistics or ... the actual combat of a war fight, the way that you represent that may also need to give in to more playability or greater abstraction. So, in a ... combat game where missiles are flying, the chance that a missile hits its target or the damage yielded could be conducted in a model or it could be determined from a model, but sometimes in games you don't have time to rerun a model. So, run your model beforehand, and then we will develop combat results tables that yield an element of randomization to our games where I can determine the most likely result, the least likely result and dedicate them all a certain probability, and then roll dice to determine what's gonna happen in the game to allow things to move forward where gameplay has been pushed forward in a way that is realistic enough that we are going to meet analytic and educational objectives without causing negative learning, but I have not detracted from the game by forcing everything to be hyper realistic.

Rhett: Makes sense. Well, I think that gives us a very good foundation for the topic. From what I understand, each of you has experience with different types of wargames, and so I thought we would spend some time talking about what makes each one of your areas of focus particularly interesting or unique. For instance, Rachel, can you tell us about operational wargaming?

Rachel: So, operational wargaming is probably what most people are picturing when they think about wargaming. When I run into people and they ask me what I do for a living, I say that I make hyper realistic versions of risk. And that typically generates the right image in someone's brain of what a more operational-level wargame is. They tend to be very force-on-force, they don't look at tactics, we are not moving individual tanks. Sometimes we're moving full divisions, full corps, we might be looking at force posture writ large if we're playing at a high operational level. We tend to play with kinetics, we tend to play with maps, just so that people can move and see forces and see the operational art at play within a game. Operational wargames are often used to walk military planners through plans, to test operational plans, ... explore the limitations of them [or] identify gaps. We use operational wargaming to challenge planning assumptions or explore where planning assumptions may be miscalculated between different elements of the plan.

Outside of planning, operational wargaming is also a partly undervalued training tool for military members and anyone that does anything at the operational level. You can do, probably, some operational-type corporate gaming if you wanted to, but it is an educational tool for the military (... that's what I'm used to, so that's the example I'm going to use) to walk through how they may encounter various scenarios and allow them to practice the decision-making cycle. ... Every single time you face a challenge, you need to think adaptively and adjust your plan, and then adjust back, and wargames are a great way to do that in a way that is very ... low-cost comparative to an exercise. And it allows them to fail

and learn from their failure. Operational wargames are not games that you should be winning by any stretch. They are a tool for education and sometimes analysis.

Rhett: ... That's excellent, and I like the notion that failure is a good thing in these because that's where you really learn your biggest lessons, I think. Great.

... I can definitely see how this would be valuable to planners and your comments also make it clear how it's helpful in anticipating needs, challenges for those on the ground. As you're doing this sort of operational wargaming, what are some of the challenges you see and what are some of the opportunities?

Rachel: Operational wargames are really good at a lot of things. They tend to be really hard to balance. If I start talking about tactics, anyone in uniform is ... [going to] understand what a tactic is [and] what a procedure is at that very, very low level. If you start talking about strategy and policy, they know that, "Okay, that's probably gonna go into the Pentagon, it's gonna go into the DOW, [U.S. Department of] State side of things, very high-level strategic." But the area in between the operational level and like operational art is much harder to define. And so, when you're working with an operational problem set, finding that balance between tactics and ... [strategy] is one of ... the primary design challenges. It's also hard to then get players to buy into that, because if I hand a player a unit and say, "Okay this is your entire corps. I need you to tell me what operations or missions they're notionally doing." And then that player is gonna look at me and say, "Okay, but ... what is this infantry brigade doing?" Whereas in operational gaming, you have to assume that the lieutenants [and] the captains that are below the corps level are all performing their job to sufficiency. ... That's one of like the abstractions that we typically have to make in operational gaming; ... [we] pull players up from the tactical level and assume that the command structure below the decisions we're playing in work and function, and there's competence in the military for the most part. That tends to be one of the hardest things about getting people to play and then balance through an operational game.

Rhett: I can totally see that.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Rosemary: Well, people love to live down at the tactical level. It doesn't matter what kind of game you're gonna be doing, people will be trying to control the actions of a single guy in uniform doing something.

Rachel: Yes.

Rhett: What is it, tactics are what the amateurs practice and...?

Rachel: We designed a game earlier this year where one of the means by which we tried to abstract ... [involved] actually removing all of the platforms and units from the board. And we ... generated ... [a] fake order of battle that was inspired by a real one, but we said, "Your planes can do these types of missions. We're not telling you what types of

planes are in there, because if we do, you're gonna get down to the, 'Okay, so an F-35 can refill at this airfield,' and that is ... a logistics game, not the operational game we're trying to play, and it's going to detract from the analytic objective that we have." But it was a really interesting way to ... abstract and balance where we could and prevent players from knowing what types of tanks and planes they could try to ... [handle].

Rhett: Oh, that makes sense. Rachel, you mentioned a minimum level of competence.

Rachel: When I speak about assuming competence, it is that to play at the operational level, my players in front of the board are making operational-level decisions. The way we adjudicate those decisions assumes that any lower rank amongst the ... [Command and Control (C2)] is working at a level of competence where the mission they're given will notionally work. And if testing that competence is a mechanic that the sponsor is interested in, you just add a level of randomization so that if they don't want every operation to work all the time you can roll a die for how effective your ... [commanding officer] is at doing an operation.

Rhett: It's neat that these games offer that level of flexibility where you can adjust things on the fly, so to speak. Do you find yourself doing that often?

Rachel: Oh, 100%. I don't know if anyone at this table can say that every game they've executed has executed directly to the rulebook that they have written going into game day every single time.

Rosemary: I can say with confidence that it has never happened.

Rachel: I've gotten lucky ... once.

Rhett: So, I noticed a couple of terms in there: C2, which I think stands for command and control, and you also use COMREL. What is that?

Rachel: Command relationships.

Rhett: Okay, gotcha. And we'll probably be using more jargon throughout, but we'll try and define ... as we go. Sounds like you covered a lot of the challenges. What opportunities do you see?

Rachel: Personally, from my experience, one of the greatest opportunities for operational wargaming is operational wargaming with allies and partners. I mentioned earlier that it's one good way to put pressure on the assumptions we're making. A lot of the times those are planning assumptions. Sometimes they're planning assumptions about what other countries will or will not support or contribute to a conflict. And so, I've been in a lot of operational games where we have allies and partners and it's the first time we're having these types of conversations in a meaningful way with ... an actual problem set in front of us. I think that translates really well to some of the other types of wargaming here as well.

... It's questioning those assumptions and starting a conversation for ... the planning and operations that we're gonna be doing with allies and partners.

Rhett: Great. There's another uncommon type of wargame that offers a chance to expose players to new insights that are, I think, especially critical to our rapidly changing world, and that's logistics wargaming. I think we've mentioned that already in this discussion. As we become ever more attuned to the importance of global supply chains [and] critical minerals, this sort of game stands to help planners understand the complexities involved in sustaining intact supply lines. Akar, can you tell us more about this?

Akar: Yes. ... IDA runs several logistics wargames, usually focused on ally and partner issues. So, a lot of times countries tend to think of their own logistics networks in a vacuum or in connection with other countries neighboring them in peacetime. A lot of the wargames we run about logistics ... [lead us to consider] how... we think about conflict with our allies and partners in a way that we work together to solve the logistics problem. So, a lot of our games take expert logisticians from various countries and have them work together to solve a problem, which produces a lot of experiential learning in a way that just receiving a brief or having a conversation might not. If you actually see a map in pieces and you actually move them around, that sort of tactile interaction, that ... ability just to stare at a map for a while and talk about these problem sets really creates a level of learning that you might not have in any other medium. Gaming is the art of agency, and by ... changing your agency a little bit so you're not just a national-level logistician, now you're an alliance-level logistician. That offers a lot of benefits in the minds of the players.

Rhett: One of the benefits that I'm coming to appreciate about wargames is that it does expose you to new ways of thinking about things, new insights. What ... are some ways that ... could be helpful for planners?

Akar: So, you can kind of think through ... the major constraints and limitations that you might have in a conflict scenario. So, we typically build our logistics infrastructure for peacetime, right? So, ... all the roads can run on time, all the oceans are clear, everything's working as it should. There's a lot of vulnerabilities inherent in that. So, thinking through the problem set with a map, with our assumptions ... open on the table about what might happen in this scenario, and having everyone sit around the table and be able to visualize that is very helpful. Additionally, not every country views these topics the same way, and ... understanding how the ... political, organizational culture of other countries work, their priorities ... on a ... more direct level rather than just reading about it ... [is] very valuable. And that can help you challenge some of the assumptions of how countries might work together in a conflict.

Rhett: Yeah. Logistics is such a huge topic, and like I said at the preamble to all this, it's one that is increasing in importance as we go. Can you give us some examples of how you might approach a logistics wargame?

Akar: ... Typically, we try to think about logistics in its simplest way, [in] which ... you have demand, you have supply, and you have some sort of transportation medium that gets from the supply to the demand. And so, whereas a lot of the operational wargames that Rachel talked about might be more focused on ... units on the map, ... how they maneuver, how they fight each other, for this, it's more focused on what are the resources that there is demand for, and what sort of supply do we have, and what sort of transportation constraints do we have. So, I designed a system that largely uses just wooden game pieces to model all of that. We have demand pieces, we have supply pieces, we have transportation pieces, and you have limited amounts of all of that. And how do you do what you need to do with what you have? And if you do it once, after that, now we lose some of it. Now, what do you do? And basically, we create a set of challenges that players can work through, just using boardgame pieces and ... a very detailed map that shows infrastructure and so forth. And by playing through that environment on a very simple board, I think players get a lot of insights that they might not through a game that's far more complex or far more simple.

Rachel: ... People that do not live and breathe wargaming often think of logistics as more of a modeling problem and not a gameable problem, but I think there are a lot of opportunities (sorry to steal your question) of ... why we game logistics as opposed to solely ... [modeling them].

Akar: That's a good question. I think modeling and gaming have two very different purposes. Modeling can show me kind of the ideal path, the ideal supply chain to get from point A to point B. We don't live in an ideal world, and a lot of times human decision making gets in the way of that, and ... it's very difficult to model human decision making with any level of fidelity. On the other hand, ... if you get people to work through a problem, you can see it more literally. ... [For instance,] "Okay, for me to move this stuff across this border, I need to call this person, I need to get this permission, [and] that's gonna take this long." And that's a consideration that ... most models can't give you very easily.

Rhett: I can imagine that this would get complex very quickly, trying to come up with an abstraction that allows planners to work with logistics problems. What are some challenges that you find this medium faces?

Akar: Probably the big challenge is making sure that the game ... handles the data at a level that's simple. I think logisticians often tend to think at a very tactical level. And then on the other side, ... with globalization, you have international supply chains that are immensely complex. And so, ... the challenge is ... finding out what level of detail is optimal and how do you trim out the details that are not helpful to address your problem set. And so that's a big problem, basically. We work with very large data sets, and how do we convert those data sets into something that is more playable for the player?

Rhett: We've gone from operations to logistics, and now we're gonna get even more difficult to conceptualize and bring into a game format, and we're gonna talk about

intelligence games. So, Rosemary, can you share with us some insights about games that deal with intelligence?

Rosemary: Yeah, and so intelligence is very hard to game for a lot of reasons, and one of the big ones, like you said, is it's hard to conceptualize, where when you're talking about an operational game, a missile striking a target is a very easy-to-imagine situation. You can model it fairly easily. Things like ... [probability of kill] are known numbers that you can deal with and randomize. [The] same thing [is true] with logistics. The idea of moving some physical object from point A to point B to meet a concrete demand is a very tangible idea. Intelligence, on the other hand, is ... the problem of dealing with unknown-unknowns, and so it's extremely conceptual to understand what intelligence do I need to gather to meet some kind of question when the question might be wrong and the intelligence may or may not exist, and I, as the intelligence analyst, have to balance all of these things. And so, it is a very conceptual game.

And a lot of times, the way we deal with that is that we don't game any of the intelligence tradecraft, so we are not using games to teach analysts how to analyze intelligence better. They have lots of other things that are much better suited to teach analysts tradecraft. Instead, we are looking ... usually at the processes for intelligence. So, how do you go through ... the [tasking, collection, processing, exploitation and dissemination] (TCPED cycle) ... of intelligence, and ... how do we run through that cycle to then meet intelligence needs for the warfighters or the planners or whoever is asking for these requests for information?

Rhett: Yeah, it seems like it'd be an interesting balance to strike: to give enough information without getting into those [and] telling them how to do their job.

Rosemary: And you run into a lot of gameisms too, because obviously I can't design unknown information into my game.

Rhett: Right.

Rosemary: ... Adding a negative into the game isn't something you can do, and then you end up with a bit of a gameism where any intelligence I give you in the game is findable, whereas doing actual real-world intelligence has a lot of unfindable variables. And so, ... there's a bit of strangeness with that, where I can't give you anything concrete to look at, and if I do give you something concrete to look at, I am adding a lot of artificiality into the actual process of intelligence.

Rhett: I understand where you're coming from with what you told us, Rosemary. You've expressed some of the challenges. What opportunities do you see with this style of game?

Rosemary: There's a lot of opportunity, but mostly because the intelligence community doesn't get a lot of opportunities to do wargaming. Usually, intelligence is white carded into games. So, I will give [intelligence to] the operators in Rachel's game and say, "You

have detected this missile launch,” and that's just given to the players. And so, because the intelligence community traditionally hasn't done a lot of wargaming, they haven't really used this medium to look at their problems [and] to look at their decision space. And so, that's something that we've been working on — trying to get a wider audience and get more traction within the intelligence community to do more of this wargaming and to use it as an analytic and educational tool. Because even though they have different mediums to train analysts on tradecraft, helping analysts learn how to think about intelligence processes and problems is something that wargaming is very well suited to. And helping them think through how can we improve our processes, how we communicate with each other, how all of the intelligence agencies relate to one another, how different phenomenologies relate to one another...all of those are things that are very gameable. And so, it's very useful for the intelligence community to start looking at these kinds of things.

Rhett: Well, it sounds like a wonderful chance ... to grow the community in different ways ... and to give them new ways of thinking about the very important work that they're doing.

Rachel: I also think, to jump in, ... that Akar and I do a very different type of game in terms of ... the design methodology that we use. ... Our systems look like board games, but yours tend to look very differently. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Rosemary: ... Akar had mentioned earlier that we will sometimes use mechanics from commercial board games. I tend to use a lot of mechanics that come from commercial tabletop roleplaying games. Sometimes they look like ... [Dungeons and Dragons]. However, I am usually operating in the weird, indie realm of tabletop games. So, I will steal a lot of mechanics from different systems. [There's the] Powered by the Apocalypse systems [and] there's the Forge in the Dark systems. I've also used games like Fate to pull mechanics from. A lot of them use interesting dice tricks that I can use to balance probability, because unlike an operational game where the probabilities are very known, I'm ... rolling probabilities based on vibes. And so figuring out the dice curves that are not necessarily the most realistic outcomes of what the intelligence would look like and how this process would work, but more of the probability curves that are going to be useful to gameplay, is what I'm doing. And ... some of that revolves around looking at [how] this tabletop game has this kind of probability curve, [be]cause it's looking for this kind of gameplay. Which one of those is going to apply to what I'm trying to do? And so, for example, when I mentioned Powered by the Apocalypse, that's a 2D6 [two six-sided dice] system. So, you always roll 2D6 and then add some number. It happens at the probability curve for 2D6. If you set success at 7, people will tend to succeed, and that's usually a very useful format for intelligence games where intelligence failures are a real problem. They need to be looked at in a lot of formats, but when I'm trying to game a process, generally I want you to succeed so that the process continues.

Rhett: Yeah. And by 2D6, you mean roll two six-sided dice.

Rosemary: Yeah, ... roll two six-sided dice. I've also used things like fake dice. They have two pluses, two minuses and two blank sides, and that will get you a similar probability curve depending on how many of them you roll and where you set the success and failure mechanics. But the same thing [would be true] if I did that, because I could very tightly control my players tending to succeed if they thought they should be able to succeed.

Akar: So, I often think about tabletop roleplaying. The main purpose of that is to ... create an interesting, engaging story that we might be characters in. How do you view that purpose as coinciding with the kind of games that you designed?

Rosemary: I think a lot of times people are playing their office and their agency. So, there are a lot of players in the intel space, [and] there are a lot of different offices that have very bespoke, niche missions that they get after. And so, when they're playing their office, they're bringing the strengths of their office, and I think that's why some of that roleplaying analogy works very well. ... They're bringing a lot of subjective qualities that are hard to measure, and so using that kind of system works pretty well for it.

Rhett: I appreciate a lot of the concepts that you've shared today. It's just interesting to see how much you can take from one area and take from another and put it together and come up with something that's not just a fun and engaging way of doing something, but it helps people to really latch onto those lessons that they've learned. And I think there's a lot of benefit here. Thank you for the work that you've done to help our sponsors with their pressing problems. Akar, Rachel, Rosemary, thank you for joining us and taking the time to discuss this timely topic with us, for sharing your expertise. It's been most illuminating.

As always, if you want more information on IDA and its ongoing work, please check us out at IDA.org. We also have a presence on X at IDA_ORG and we have a channel on YouTube. If you've enjoyed what you've heard, please take a moment to rate and review us. We would look forward to seeing that. IDA Ideas is hosted by the Institute for Defense Analyses, a nonprofit organization based in the Washington, D.C. area. Once more, you can find out more about us and the work we do at IDA.org. Thank you for tuning in, and we hope you'll join us again next time as we discuss another big idea here at IDA Ideas.

Show Notes

Learn more about the topics discussed in this episode via the links below.

Dodson, Walter R., and Taylor Bradley. "Cyber Maneuver, Operations, and Combat: A Knowledge Wargame (CMOCKW)." IDA Document D-33213. October 2022.
<https://www.ida.org/research-and-publications/publications/all/c/cy/cyber-maneuver-operations-and-combat-a-knowledge-wargame-cmockw>.

Wong, Yuna H., et al. "Meta-Synthesis Framework to Understand Results Across Defense Experiments, Studies, and Wargames." IDA Paper P-33123. June 2022.
<https://www.ida.org/research-and-publications/publications/all/m/me/meta-synthesis-framework-to-understand-results-across-defense-experiments>.