**Literature Review Expansion: Hidden Tensions and Authorial Silences**

A striking feature of the RMA and mission command debates is not only the polarity between techno-optimists and sceptics, but also the silences and evasions within texts. Many of the sources cited in the proposal are not merely offering analysis; they are speaking within doctrinal, political, or institutional contexts that shape what can be said explicitly. A more critical reading reveals tension between official optimism and tacit caution, between the promise of technology and the persistence of organisational culture, and between declaratory support for decentralisation and implicit acceptance of micromanagement.

**Mission Command under Surveillance: What Authors Do Not Admit**

Cohen (1996) frames mission command against the danger of technological intrusion. His metaphor of the commander perched “cybernetically” beside subordinates illustrates the temptation of intervention. Yet Cohen does not fully admit the degree to which U.S. culture and career incentives encourage such intervention. Betts (1996) makes this explicit by noting that militaries consistently misuse technology because incentives reward short-term control. The silence here is institutional: Cohen acknowledges the problem but couches it in anecdote, whereas Betts links it to a structural pathology. Owens (2002), in turn, extols the potential of “systems of systems” but concedes—almost in passing—that bandwidth and cultural divergence undermine this vision. What he is “really saying” is that technology promises decentralisation only if leaders resist their instinct to centralise.

This tension reappears in the cases of Guderian and Winters. Guderian’s celebrated advocacy of Auftragstaktik is contradicted by his practice of personal intervention (Guderian 1952). Winters, by contrast, exemplifies restraint. The juxtaposition reveals that even proponents of decentralisation often cannot live by its demands. Authors citing Guderian tend to underplay this inconsistency, preferring the myth of Auftragstaktik to the messier historical reality. The literature therefore hints at but rarely foregrounds the uncomfortable truth: that mission command is less a doctrine than a fragile climate, constantly threatened by cultural habits and political pressure.

**Organisational Adaptation: Evolutionary Rhetoric and Revolutionary Silences**

Krepinevich (1992; 1994) bridges optimist and sceptic camps by insisting that organisational adaptation is the true measure of revolution. Yet his own analyses of the Gulf War (1996) reveal a reluctance to label it a genuine RMA, even while acknowledging its technological novelty. The silence lies in institutional loyalty: as a Pentagon insider, Krepinevich could hardly dismiss the campaign’s significance outright. Instead, he hedges—offering the vocabulary of revolution while conceding the evidence for evolution. Similarly, Metz (2000) stresses incremental change, but does so in a way that avoids alienating U.S. reform constituencies. Both are “really saying” that militaries must appear open to revolution, while privately recognising the inertia that makes evolution the safer description.

The Stimson Center (2015) underscores this bureaucratic absorption. Its working group report openly states that UAS adoption was shaped more by routine integration than by transformation. Yet even here, the rhetoric of “seven recommendations” betrays a reluctance to admit that institutional self-preservation may be the strongest driver. What is omitted is the obvious: that bureaucracies often co-opt innovation precisely to prevent it from disrupting core hierarchies.

**Character of Warfare: Revolution Talk, Evolution Practice**

The RMA literature itself is marked by “rhetorical excess” (Alach 2008, p. 50). Authors frequently speak in revolutionary terms while their evidence describes evolutionary cycles. Desert Storm is emblematic: heralded by optimists as a proof of RMA, yet treated by sceptics as an anomaly unlikely to recur. Betts (1996) predicted as much, arguing that U.S. success was contingent on context rather than transferable to insurgencies. Gray (2005) and Rassler (2015) reinforce this by pointing to cultural continuity and incremental adaptation. Yet few optimists ever admit they oversold Desert Storm. Their silence is strategic: to sustain funding and reform momentum, they had to maintain the language of revolution even when evidence pointed otherwise.

Husain (2021) pushes the debate forward by arguing that AI swarms may replicate the combat power of larger forces. Yet here too the silences are telling. Husain emphasises technological potential but downplays vulnerabilities—electronic warfare, bandwidth limits, attrition—that already appear in Ukraine. His “real” position is conditional: AI swarms may appear revolutionary, but only against unprepared opponents. Once adversaries adapt, the revolution attenuates.

**Tensions within Ethics and Governance**

The ethical literature also contains implicit tensions. Singer (2010) and Sparrow (2016) present autonomy as a moral hazard, but their tone suggests advocacy as much as analysis. They rarely admit that militaries will pursue autonomous systems regardless of ethical cautions. Sauer (2020) and Altmann (2017) stress governance through Article 36 reviews, yet they leave unsaid the weakness of enforcement mechanisms. The silence is thus institutional: these authors imply that law can restrain autonomy but tacitly acknowledge that power politics will drive its use. What they are “really saying” is that law may frame debate, but deterrence and competition decide outcomes.

**Synthesis: The Rhetoric–Reality Gap**

Taken together, these readings reveal a common pattern. Optimists such as Cohen, Owens, and Husain use the language of revolution, but their detailed observations admit fragility, dependency, and attenuation. Sceptics such as Betts, Gray, and Alach dismiss revolution, but they too avoid spelling out the full implication—that military innovation may be structurally incapable of producing true discontinuity. Institutional reports such as Stimson split the difference: recognising evolutionary absorption but masking it with managerial vocabulary.

For the Irish Defence Forces, this tension is instructive. The lesson is not to take authors at face value but to interrogate what they avoid saying. Mission command advocates may secretly concede the inevitability of micromanagement; techno-optimists may know their revolutions will fade; ethicists may understand that governance lags competition. The task for small states is therefore to design doctrine and training not around what authors say, but around what their silences reveal: that autonomy is context-dependent, micromanagement is culturally entrenched, and revolutions are mostly rhetorical.