

# The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

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Volume 28  
Number 4 *Parameters Winter 1998*

Article 13

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11-6-1998

## Book Reviews

Parameters Editors

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### Recommended Citation

Editors, Parameters. "Book Reviews." *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 28, 4 (1998).  
<https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol28/iss4/13>

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# Book Reviews

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From *Parameters*, Winter 1998, pp. 171-79.

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● **Ethics and Counter-revolution: American Involvement in Internal Wars.** By Kermit D. Johnson. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1997. 330 pages. \$49.00. **Reviewed by Chaplain (Colonel) John Brinsfield,** Director of Ethical Program Development, US Army War College.

Since the end of the Vietnam conflict almost a quarter century ago, there has been a spectacular display of interest in the ethics of warfare, and later in the ethics of intervention, by both the American academic and professional military communities. By 1982, only seven years after the fall of Saigon, some 682 books and articles had been produced in America on the history, theory, and practice of military ethics. Since 1982, the number has more than doubled.

Chaplain (Major General) Kermit D. Johnson, Army Chief of Chaplains from 1979 to 1982, was one of the first to advocate and sponsor advanced seminars in this field for strategic leaders. In his most recent book, *Ethics and Counter-revolution*, Chaplain Johnson focuses the reader's attention on an ethical analysis and critique of US policy and involvement in counterrevolutionary war with particular emphasis on Latin America.

Johnson rejects the assertion that the end of the Cold War means the end of revolution, since revolutions are frequently grounded in root causes such as poverty, exploitation, and injustice. He outlines the defining characteristics of revolutionary war based on a survey of theories from Mao Tse-tung to modern counterinsurgency proponents to recent US national security directives and military publications. Underlying reasons for US interventions are traced from the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary to President Kennedy's Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Nixon Doctrine. When combined with previous US warfighting experience and declared policy, the evolution of national policy and strategy for counterinsurgency becomes apparent.


Johnson notes that whatever their stated intent, most of these historic policies have been formulae for winning wars, not revolutions. Therefore he advocates a fresh look at demilitarization and civilianization of US intervention strategies in order to better address the root causes of revolution and to build more constructive relationships with the nations of Latin America. "Instead of supporting a countervailing foreign policy based on the legitimization of local militaries," Chaplain Johnson argues, "the US military and all branches of government should conform to a single policy toward Latin American nations, that of civilian control over military forces and the strengthening of civilian rule." This goal might be enhanced, he observes, by taking six steps, chief of which would be the elimination of all forms of military aid to Third World military forces. The funds saved would be reallocated to economic aid in the civilian sector, civilian leadership and technical training in democratic institutions, and peace accord implementation. US support for long-term development programs, debt relief, technical assistance, training and credit provisions for small farmers and businesses, and other programs that reduce economic and social inequity would strengthen the role and rule of local civilian governments, help obviate the need for future military intervention, and avoid inadvertent support for repression in the Third World.

"The only way abuses of human rights and political power can be curtailed is through genuine democracy, where the military is subject to civilian control," Johnson concludes. In short, he believes that the United States should be in the business of educating and enhancing civilian, not military, leaders. Counterrevolution or low-intensity conflict is inimical to democracy because it strengthens rather than challenges the very military and political forces whose power usually lies at the root of a conflict. Thus demilitarization and civilianization are not only the antidote to revolution and conflict; they also form the soil in which democracy can grow.

Chaplain Johnson has raised issues which have already begun to engage strategic leaders in evaluating the history, interests, ethical foundation, consistency, and efficacy of 20th-century US policies in Latin America. The reason Johnson's book should be read is not necessarily for his conclusions, however. Some will find those to be far too idealistic, although even they might agree that his idealism has a much better chance now than, for example, in the

mid-1960s. Rather, this book should be read because it raises issues candidly and supports them by historical example. His approach could open a necessary and one hopes fruitful debate on how to avoid supporting murderous military operations in Latin America while at the same time fostering better democratic governments and better relationships with the people who are not only our neighbors but also increasingly our citizens. In this regard, Chaplain Johnson's idealism is not a weakness but a wake-up call for change.

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 **Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776.** By Walter A. McDougall. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. \$26.00. **Reviewed by Brigadier General Harold Nelson (USA Ret.),** former US Army Chief of Military History.

My purchase of this book was pure impulse. Recognizing Walter McDougall as the author of a great work synthesizing the history of the North Pacific (*Let the Sea Make a Noise: Four Hundred Years of Cataclysm, Conquest, War and Folly in the North Pacific*, Harper Collins, 1993), I let the cover art capture my attention: red, white, and blue bands; "Promised Land" at the top, above a picture of George Washington crossing the Delaware; "Crusader State" in the middle, above a picture of Bradley fighting vehicles lined up in the desert. This looked like a book that could teach me something.


It did, and I recommend it to anyone who is trying to think seriously about the national security options that face our nation in this new age. Goodness knows there are plenty of voices trying to speak to us on the subject, but this is one that has a clear message, synthesizes a mass of material, and projects insights from the past into the new millennium.

McDougall's clear message is that we can think about the ways the United States has approached its national security challenges in terms of a few traditions, and we can organize these traditions under "Old Testament" and "New Testament" headings. This is not meant to imply that there is a religious dimension to US policy or to the way we might think about it. Rather, in our first century of national self-discovery, policymakers tended to act as if they spoke for a "chosen people" in the midst of claiming a very special "promised land." In our second period--which has not yet ended--policymakers have been "spreading the word," seeking converts to American-style democracy. But just as the New Testament builds upon the Old, the multiple traditions coexist, interacting and influencing policy in complex ways as our nation matures.

McDougall's synthesis consists of a careful look at the history behind familiar labels--what was "isolationism" or "the Monroe Doctrine"? When did ideas originate? What aspect of the international dilemma were they designed to influence? How did they evolve? What were the forces shaping the evolution? Who were the champions of new ideas, and how did existing ideas, persistent problems, and new challenges shape those ideas? This is the bulk of the book, and like all good synthesis, it defies further condensation. Suffice it to say that McDougall has mastered his sources and writes with clarity and eloquence, giving the reader ample opportunity to think and learn.

McDougall projects his insights into the new millennium by explicitly evaluating each of his eight traditions in terms of the international situation facing us today. US foreign policy has been somewhat adrift following the Cold War, and his observations are as current today as when they were written. He provides thoughtful views on internationalism, problems of the developing world, and the relationship between the security environment and economic activity. Obviously, readers of *Parameters* should read this book.

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 **The Wrong War: Why We Lost in Vietnam.** By Jeffrey Record. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998. 256 pp. **Reviewed by Colonel Adolf Carlson,** Chairman of the Department of Distance Education, US Army War College.

During a recent Memorial Day ceremony, a World War II veteran asked me: "What's the matter with the Vietnam vets?" His question had a specific point--membership in the American Legion--but the question has a larger relevance. For him, World War II was an experience that bonded a generation of Americans together. In contrast, the Vietnam experience tore a generation of Americans, my generation, apart. Why? Because for Americans the Vietnam War lacks a gestalt; there is no body of shared beliefs. The war was either a misguided effort to stop communist

aggression, or it was a venal charade waged by a Democratic administration to deflect Republican assaults on profligate social programs. The military leadership was either hamstrung by civilians, or too dim-witted to adapt to limited war. Air power was either the decisive instrument that drove the enemy to the bargaining table, or was an indiscriminate waste that proved irrelevant to the war's outcome. The communist effort was either conventional aggression abetted by subversion, or popular-based insurgency waged against an unpopular tyranny. And so forth.

These divergent lines of thought tend to segment the Vietnam generation into many small camps, alienated from one another by a need to justify their own interpretations rather than to comprehend the whole. It would seem that, for the foreseeable future at least, we can expect commentary by Vietnam veterans to represent narrow points of view written by people with an ax to grind.

Jeffrey Record's book, *The Wrong War: Why We Lost in Vietnam*, is an ambitious attempt to explain the Vietnam War in its entirety, but in the end it articulates another singular point of view. Mr. Record has little praise for the American side at any level of the war. The political leadership he describes was cynical, deceitful, and ignorant. The high commands were incompetent, self-serving, and devoid of moral courage. The troops were poorly trained, unmotivated, and pampered. The South Vietnamese ally (for whose sake, after all, we ostensibly waged war) was corrupt, cowardly, and unworthy of our sacrifice. Record presents us with a war that was both unwinnable and not worth the effort. As he puts it: "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the United States lacked any strategically decisive and morally acceptable war-winning military options in the Vietnam War." Such a harshly critical view may be fully justified, but it is hardly new.

Record comments on virtually every aspect of the war, which may be a bit too much in a book of only 184 pages. In Chapter 3, "The War in the South," he reveals what I believe to be his thesis: that "pacification" or "population control" would have been a superior strategy in South Vietnam to military "attrition." This view is clearly derived from his experiences in the Civil Operations for Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. He argues convincingly that US military operations aimed at conventional-style attrition of the enemy were misguided and self-defeating. He also is quick to point out that alternatives to attrition offered no guarantees of victory, but posits that they would at least have been less costly and more humane.

Record's views are worthy of our respect and consideration. They are based on hard field experience and are presented with persuasive sincerity. The question which hangs unanswered, however, is the degree to which they represent what the author set out to present us: a holistic analysis of the War. Record asserts that offensive military operations against main force units were wasteful and self-defeating. Colonel Harry Summers (USA Ret.) argues that the main force North Vietnamese army was the "center of gravity," and until it was defeated pacification could not have safely proceeded. Record describes the South Vietnamese army as corrupt, incompetent, and cowardly. General Norman Schwarzkopf (USA Ret.) describes a different South Vietnamese army, one that was honorable, competent, and brave. From their perspectives, each of these views has validity, but we have no way to know which represents truth.

In the end, Record is to be commended for his effort to put the Vietnam War he knew into a larger analytical perspective. That a complete view of the war remains beyond reach makes the effort no less worthy. Those of us who were there will have to accept the fact that there is no Bruce Catton to describe the war, either for our benefit or for the understanding of the American people. So we will have to be content with our own memories, our own rationalizations, and occasional glimpses into the recollections of others. For the Vietnam War, more than most, the words of Shakespeare apply: "Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own."

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**?** **Lemnitzer: A Soldier for His Time.** By James L. Binder. Washington: Brassey's, 1997. 353 pp. **Reviewed by Colonel Robert B. Killebrew (USA Ret.),** who served in Special Forces, mechanized, air assault, and airborne infantry units, and held a variety of planning and operational assignments, during his 30-year Army career.

James L. Binder's biography of General Lyman Lemnitzer is an overdue look at an Army officer who played a pivotal role in the history of the United States and its Army during this century. While the book has some minor technical glitches--the Davy Crockett was not a shoulder-fired weapon, thank goodness--it is well researched and worthwhile. Some readers will be frustrated that it does not treat in more depth the events in which Lemnitzer played a key role,

but that would have expanded the project to multiple volumes. Binder's book does excellent, scholarly service to honor this remarkable officer.

Lyman Lemnitzer wore the uniform of his country for 51 years. He was a general officer for 27 years and a four-star general from 1955 to 1969. He played a central role in most of the momentous issues of the 20th century, and knew well the majority of the great men who shaped the post-World War II world. And yet, the memory of this truly great soldier remains overshadowed by the names of more picturesque military heroes. He would be content. As Binder's biography makes clear, Lemnitzer was the ultimate team player, as comfortable marching in the band as leading the parade.

Yet he was usually at the head of the band, in part because he was a moderate, highly intelligent, and widely experienced soldier who was known and respected by the great leaders of the postwar West. By the end of World War II, Lemnitzer was at least acquainted with most of the key leaders of the Allies, some of whom became presidents and prime ministers. As a major general in postwar Washington he played a significant role in the development of NATO (often against the inclinations of his boss, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson). Although he relished duty in the field, going through jump school in his 50s to command an airborne division (and later another infantry division during the Korean conflict), his talent and reputation for strategic affairs kept drawing him back to Washington. After distinguishing himself in a variety of intermediate duties, he held five four-star assignments, surely a record (and one that would be highly unlikely with today's personnel policies).

Lemnitzer's professional life spanned World War II, the creation of NATO, and the Vietnam era, and almost reached the end of the Cold War. Loyalty and service were his hallmarks. As Vice Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff of the Army, he loyally supported Eisenhower's New Look. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Bay of Pigs fiasco, he ordered the Joint Chiefs to silence and, justly or not, shouldered much of the blame himself for the Joint Chiefs' sins of omission. When he planned retirement in 1962, NATO's civilian and military leaders asked that Lemnitzer be appointed Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), his final post, and one he held for six and a half years. Even after France expelled NATO forces from its territory in 1966, he and De Gaulle continued on good personal terms.

It was as SACEUR that Lemnitzer's collaborative style of leadership was most tested. As an architect of the military agreements that were holding the Alliance together, Lemnitzer was personally, as well as professionally, committed to maintaining the Western alliance against an aggressive Soviet Union. Within the constraints of writing a personal biography, Binder does what he can to mention the tremendous stresses on the NATO Alliance during the Lemnitzer years, both among the Allies themselves and from the United States. All of Lemnitzer's tact and leadership were needed to obtain Allied agreement on Flexible Response, repositioning US forces for forward defense, fighting the Mansfield resolution to cut US troop strength in Europe and other moves toward troop reductions, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (which at least ended calls for US troop reductions), and, most of all, Vietnam and rebasing NATO forces after the French expulsion. Binder correctly focuses on his subject and leaves to others the more detailed story of NATO in those years, but others should take up the tale.

Lemnitzer correctly saw that the US role as a world leader requires tangible commitment to be effective, and he dedicated his later life to maintaining the transatlantic links that ensure US-European ties for security and peace. After retirement, he turned down lucrative job offers to write and speak in support of NATO and America's global leadership. The end came gracefully in 1988, close enough to the collapse of the Soviet Union that victory must have been in sight for this champion of the West.

What are we to make of this solid, unassuming, brilliant man? He was called, disparagingly, a good staff officer, yet he impressed the strongest-willed world leaders with his quiet forcefulness. He was not charismatic, but his legacies survive the works of more glamorous contemporaries. In his last public fight, he opposed increasing the authority of the JCS, fearing the creation of an all-powerful Chief of Staff at the expense of the service chiefs. As Binder's biography has portrayed him, Lyman Lemnitzer was one of the last of the old-style generals, whose outlook was formed by the professional values of the pre-World War II Army--apolitical, tightly focused on the military's role in a democratic society, quietly authoritative. He was old oak, not shiny brass.

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**2** **US Special Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare.** By Thomas K. Adams. Portland, Ore: Frank Cass, 1998. **Reviewed by Colonel Steven C. Hightower (USA Ret.),** formerly in the Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations at the US Army War College.

Early in his book, Thomas Adams states that his research focuses on "Army Special Operations Forces, principally US Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, since these constitute the original, largest, most active group of special operators and are arguably the 'center of gravity' for all special operations." What follows is an excellent historical treatment of the organizational and doctrinal development of Army Special Operations Forces (SOF), illustrated with operational vignettes of those forces in action. However, this is far from the usual collection of assorted stories about "there I was, knee deep in grenade pins." Instead of attempting to tell tales that have been poorly told far too many times, Adams sets out to examine the more important issue of whether today's Army Special Operations Forces are really "special," or whether they merely perform unusual or unconventional missions at a much higher level of proficiency than others in the Army. Perhaps retitling the book "The Internecine Wars," or even "Army SOF, The Niche Warriors," might have been more descriptive of its contents.

The American military, and perhaps the American public as well, seem to have a love-hate relationship with organizations perceived as elitist. Adams cites the well-known examples of the rise and fall and subsequent rise of the Army's better known elite units, including the Rangers and others of World War II fame as well as the Special Forces. His analysis of these organizations, formed to carry out missions outside the expertise of the conventional Army, is historically accurate. He notes that "units organized to conduct unconventional warfare and/or special operations tend to devolve toward the preferred conventional model" once the special circumstances for which these units were created no longer exist. One only has to recall the horrific misuses of the Ranger battalions in the World War II Italian campaign to verify this contention. To bolster his point, Adams describes the formation and evolution of the Army's Special Forces as well as the Rangers, civil affairs units, and psychological operations forces.

Adams traces the Special Forces from their "true origins," the Jedburg Teams of World War II OSS renown, to their modern counterparts. In so doing he carefully points out that the original purpose for forming these special organizations was to conduct unconventional warfare in the classical, and purest, interpretation of the term, which he defines as:

Those military activities conducted within a conflict environment that are not directed toward or directly supporting conventional warfare. [They include] humanitarian operations, complex emergencies, insurgency and counterinsurgency, support to civil authority, nation-building and some forms of subversion, sabotage and similar activities. Intelligence gathering is an incidental function in most forms of UW [unconventional warfare]. It is distinguished from conventional warfare chiefly by the fact that UW does not seek to defeat or destroy enemy forces in combat.

Although Adams' definition of unconventional warfare is not in keeping with and is substantially broader than that found in today's doctrine, it is nonetheless a useful definition. It allows him to get to the heart of an issue which surfaces periodically within the Army's SOF community: "What is the appropriate role for Army SOF?" Adams argues, correctly in my opinion, that in order to survive in a resource-driven environment, the Army's practitioners and true believers of unconventional warfare have had to make a number of organizational and doctrinal compromises. In doing so, he suggests, Army Special Operations Forces may have sold their unconventional souls to keep from being absorbed into the conventional Army. Adams pulls no punches in pointing out the facts: the Army, when given the opportunity, has consistently attempted to do away with the Special Forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations units. (Rangers, although characterized as a special operations organization, are considered "special" only because they perform largely conventional tasks to an extremely high degree of proficiency. They are both highly regarded and protected by the conventional Army.) He concludes that when forced to provide resources for these organizations, most recently by congressional mandate (such as the 1987 Nunn-Cohen Amendment, which created the US Special Operations Command and put special operations on an equal footing within the services), the Army adroitly practices the arts of "foot dragging and quibbling" until Congress threatens to withhold resources for conventional programs.

In his examination of and proposals for appropriate roles and missions for Army SOF, Adams states that Special Forces, civil affairs, and psychological operations leaders must return their emphasis to those missions for which their

organizations were originally created and which they, and they alone, can do well. Perhaps repeating a disavowed comment might bear some thought: "If the 82d (Airborne Division), or the Marines can do it . . . it ain't special!" Indeed, if the Special Forces--and their civil affairs and psychological operators--are to maintain their relevancy, they must regain their unique niche. That niche is the ability to operate effectively within the vagaries of asymmetrical warfare in the 21st century.

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 **Elements of Military Strategy: An Historical Approach.** By Archer Jones. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996. 264 pages. \$24.95. **Reviewed by Dr. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Colonel, USA Ret.),** Professor of Military History, US Army War College.

*Elements of Military Strategy* is vintage Archer Jones. Readers familiar with his earlier work, especially *The Art of War in the Western World*, will recognize the strategic theory he uses to analyze military history. This book, however, limits the examination to US military history, expands the analytical framework, and stays at the strategic level. Lest the remarks that follow be taken as disapproval, let me state up front that this is an important book for the military strategist. Jones is an excellent historian with a broad range--his examples in this book cover the entire scope of American military history from the earliest Indian wars to Desert Storm. His analysis is original, intriguing, insightful, and well supported by research and fact. It is possible to quibble with facts and interpretation, but the analysis holds up and offers a new approach to the study of strategy. Let me now quibble.

Archer Jones has developed a system that analyzes military strategy in terms of the duration and intent of operations. Long duration activities are persisting, while those of short duration are raids. Militaries undertake operations either to seek battle or to damage the opponent's logistics. Thus, Jones characterizes all military strategy as combat persisting, combat raiding, logistics persisting, or logistics raiding. He recognizes overlap and complexity within that simple system, although there is a tendency to fit strategies into one of the primary categories. Supporting the basic paradigm are a number of other theoretical constructs. Thankfully, the paper-stone-scissors description of tactics prominent in *The Art of War in the Western World*, where one type of unit beats another in a hierarchical order, shrinks in significance in this book. The addition of Aristotle's four causes adds little insight, but also plays a minor role in Jones's analysis. The use of Newton's third law of physics (for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction) to explain strategic events is both an incorrect and dangerous analogy. Strategy does not operate under fixed laws, as Jones recognizes, even as he insists that it inevitably obeys them. A strategic act may provoke a response, but it is never automatic. One characteristic that makes warfare at the highest level an art rather than a science is that both sides have free will and may choose whether, where, when, and how to respond. Current fascination with asymmetric strategic responses is an example. Jones's application of the economic principle of the elasticity of demand to strategy is unnecessary if one accepts basic Clausewitzian thought.

Conversely, in *Elements of Military Strategy* he adds insight with increased emphasis on the character of the logistical base areas of the opposing forces (the major organizational tool for the book), and with consistent analysis of concentration in space or time. Concentration in space and time is obvious. The base construct postulates that forces act differently and are thus both capable of and vulnerable to different strategies depending on whether they operate within, at a distance from, or both within and distant from their logistic base.

Aspects of the book will prove difficult for conventionally trained strategists. Jones uses his own language and paradigm that occasionally conflict with standard usage. His analytical system operates outside an overarching framework like Clausewitz's vision of war as a continuation of politics. Thus, in his view, military activities undertaken for other than pure combat or logistic reasons become political or political-military strategy. The distinction makes an unnatural separation between war and politics that modern American strategists will find either amusing or disturbing. Additionally, some major strategic concepts like deterrence, both conventional and nuclear, do not fit an apolitical paradigm. Further, Jones defines the purpose of military action as depleting the enemy force rather than the more conventional Clausewitzian idea of compelling the enemy to do one's will. Thus, since the fundamental aim of military action is attrition, attrition cannot be a distinct strategy.

As another example, Jones insists on using aircraft as a modern analogue of cavalry rather than a force with unique characteristics and capabilities operating in a separate medium. Neither does he use a concept of command of the air

as a necessary prerequisite to the use of that medium for other purposes. Jones thus discusses both aerial interdiction and strategic bombing as cavalry raids on logistic targets, and attacks on airfields, command and control facilities, or air defense assets to gain air superiority are essentially distractions from the primary logistics raiding strategy. Certain paradoxes arise as well from the analysis of intent rather than result. Thus, American daylight bombing in World War II was a logistic raiding strategy because pilots theoretically aimed at military targets even though the vast majority of bombs missed and hit German cities. Conversely, when the British accepted the fact that they could not hit specific targets and switched to night area bombing to conserve their force, they adopted a political terror strategy. The result in both cases was the same; Jones draws the distinction based on stated or implied intent.

On other fronts, Jones uses terms flexibly, and because he is doing historical analysis can adjust theory to suit what worked. Thus, both Iraq and the Desert Storm coalition operated from remote bases. While the coalition analysis is obvious, Iraq's reliance on a distant base seems to refer to the fact that their lines of communication were vulnerable to interdiction. That is a fine distinction but an enormous qualitative difference in distance from the base. Likewise, the 1944 Cobra breakout worked because Allied air concentrated in time and space to attack a narrow front; however, the Desert Storm preparation was effective because it was dispersed in time and space to conceal the attack point and achieved effect through better technology.

Finally, although Jones describes how strategy worked, intent is not always clear. The Jamestown settlers adopted a persisting logistic strategy (gradual expansion of occupied territory protected by fortified dwellings) supplemented by a logistic raiding strategy (raids on Indian villages and crops). The raiding was a conscious strategy, but the expansion was a result of a growing population seeking resources, not an effort to deprive Indians of resources. Of course, accidental strategy is both legitimate and common, but not something on which a strategist can rely.

In the hands of someone less skilled than Jones, this analysis will almost inevitably become simplistic. His system is descriptive and analytical; it would thus be a difficult tool to use in planning. Nevertheless, *Elements of Military Strategy* is a significant contribution to strategic thought. And although it should not be the only book on a strategist's shelf, it should have a prominent place.

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Reviewed 6 November 1998. Please send comments or corrections to [carl\\_Parameters@conus.army.mil](mailto:carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil)