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VOL. 45 NO. 3 AUTUMN 2015

THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
**QUARTERLY**  
PARAMETERS

Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

**Special Commentary:  
Soldiers Fighting Alone**

*Patrick Porter*

**Strategic Leadership**

*William E. Rapp  
Jason W. Warren*

**Countering Gray-Zone Wars**

*Jakub Grygiel  
William G. Pierce, Douglas G. Douds,  
& Michael A. Marra*

**Thinking Strategically**

*Yakov Ben-Haim  
David Patrick Houghton*

**Regional Challenges**

*Ted Middleton  
Daniel Morgan*



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**QUARTERLY**  
PARAMETERS

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**QUARTERLY**  
PARAMETERS

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## From the Editor

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Patrick Porter opens our Autumn issue with a special commentary entitled, “Soldiers Fighting Alone: The Wars of the Market-Security State.” Porter might well have used a different title, “Fighting in the Gray Zone.” Many of the features he ascribes to the ways market-security states make war also apply to the kinds of conflicts Western powers tend to confront today, namely, those falling short of war but which are clearly not peace.

Our first forum, *Strategic Leadership*, addresses the practice of strategic leadership both as a practical challenge and as a cultural challenge. Major General William Rapp’s “Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making,” describes shortcomings in the civil-military relations model advanced by Samuel Huntington, and suggests how military leaders can move beyond it to provide the best possible military advice to our political leaders. Jason Warren’s “The Centurion Mindset and the Army’s Strategic Leader Paradigm,” critiques the US Army’s cultural preference for developing officers’ tactical or operational expertise at the expense of the skills needed to develop sound strategy.

The second forum, *Countering Gray-Zone Wars*, discusses two strategic approaches capable of working within the space short of war. Jakub Grygiel’s “Arming Our Allies: The Case for Offensive Capabilities,” argues some US allies should be allowed to arm themselves, if they desire. Doing so would strengthen the capability of those allies to deter the “under-the-threshold” aggression that characterizes gray-zone wars, and thus augment US extended deterrence. In “Understanding Coercive Gradualism,” authors William Pierce, Douglas Douds, and Michael Marra offer their collective insights regarding the strategies Beijing, Moscow, and others appear to be pursuing short of open conflict. The authors also reveal some of the weaknesses of these strategies.

Our third forum, *Thinking Strategically*, considers ways to enhance how military leaders might think through strategic problems. In “Dealing with Uncertainty in Strategic Decision-making,” Yakov Ben-Haim proposes a method, which he dubs “robust satisfying,” by which strategists might be able to reduce the influence of uncertainty on their decisions. David Patrick Houghton revisits the controversial theory of groupthink in “Understanding Groupthink: The Case of Operation Market Garden,” and offers ways to avoid its pitfalls.

The last forum, *Regional Challenges*, considers developments in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Ted Middleton’s “Order and Counter-Order: The European System and Russia,” suggests the clash between Russia and the West is that of a modern system of political order confronting a post-modern one. One way forward might be through better economic cooperation. In “Expanding the Rebalance: Confronting China in Latin America,” Daniel Morgan argues the US “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific region is in danger of being outflanked in Latin America and the Caribbean. To avoid that, policymakers must respond to Beijing’s growing influence in that region. ~AJE



## Soldiers Fighting Alone: The Wars of the Market-Security State

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Patrick Porter

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**ABSTRACT:** The rise of the Anglo-American “market-security state” in the past few decades has created contradictions in how Britain and the United States conceive and conduct their armed conflicts abroad. For those who bear the brunt of the fighting, killing and dying, the accentuated political distance between the frontline and the civilian world produces a particular kind of alienation. Creative measures are needed to help those who must navigate the transition between the war and the mall.

There is a problem with how the United States and its allies exercise power, a problem rooted in forces deeper than the imperfections of any one president or government. This problem was pithily summarized by a widely circulated photograph of a written statement on a whiteboard in a forward operating base in Iraq: “America is not at War. The Marines are at War. America is at the Mall.”<sup>1</sup> As it happens, this statement in some ways is an inadequate summary of the ripples the war in Iraq generated. It ultimately stretched beyond the frontline and affected home society deeply, from the war’s contribution to the debt-deficit crisis that has swept the Euro-Atlantic world to the unexpectedly large number of maimed and wounded personnel, the extent of whose care our societies are unprepared. But the statement does summarize how a dysfunctional set of social relations shapes the way the state exerts force in the world and begets a confusion about what it means to be “at war.” To borrow a phrase Leon Trotsky, albeit used in a different context, “no war, no peace.”

The rise of the Anglo-American “market-security state” in the past few decades has created particular problems in how countries both conceive and conduct their armed conflicts abroad. Due to confluent forces and choices, countries like Britain and the United States wage war (and augment state power to do so) by invoking the moral language of great national wars, while in other ways resisting the status of being “at war” as a political condition, that is, not declaring war, not making material demands of the people directly, and going to great lengths to insulate their populations from the conflict.

For the nation as a whole, this contradictory condition helps bring about a situation in which the state applies military power continuously in the name of an existential struggle, but trying to do so “on the cheap” while encouraging “the people” to look on as passive consumers – or to look away. For those who bear the brunt of the fighting, killing and

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1 For the photograph of the quote, see “The Quotepedia,” <http://www.thequotepedia.com/america-is-not-at-war-the-marine-corps-is-at-war-america-is-at-the-mall-america-quote>.



dying, the accentuated political distance between the frontline and the civilian world produces a particular kind of alienation. This distance does not warrant nostalgia for the twentieth-century's "total wars" that mobilized an engaged, nationalist, and even conscripted population. But it does warrant concern for "the consequences of lessened levels of mobilisation for war on the quality of democratic citizenship."<sup>2</sup> It suggests greater attention is needed to bridge the gap, and greater support is needed for creative measures to help those who must navigate the transition between the war and the mall. More ambitiously, it means greater demands should be made of the people on whose behalf such wars are fought, and in return, a more robust civil society is needed to exert greater civilian supervision of government.

### War Time and Peace Time

In her ground-breaking study of conceptions of "war time" and "peace time," Mary Dudziak observes as the Global War on Terror dragged on, it left society in a strange state of limbo. "It is not a time without war, but instead a time in which war does not bother everyday Americans."<sup>3</sup> In her account, the root problem is how the collective memory of the twentieth century creates an outmoded way of thinking, where people suspend vital political questions—of state power, its limits, and authority—because they wrongly await the end of the war to get back to a post-war normality. Yet, as she notes, the issues at stake are too important to leave waiting for a mythical discrete peacetime. Rosa Brooks agrees.<sup>4</sup> The very conception of a separate peacetime is an illusion, and the lines are blurred because of real developments, in particular that of the ongoing struggle against a geographically diffuse terrorist network that also gets a vote. The desire by political elites to remain in a state of permissive wartime status—to retain the enabling aspects of such a status—is not likely to end soon. We cannot and should not try to draw sharp boundaries for the state of wartime, therefore. Somewhere in the space between total peace and war, she argues, is where we should develop institutions and rights that are not premised on a temporary suspension of normality.

I want to offer an alternative account of how we got here, one that adds to these interpretations rather than conflicting with them. Neither the United Kingdom nor the United States as a whole is straightforwardly at war. They are at war and peace all at once. The confusion over war and peace is not just due to an outmoded twentieth-century time horizon, or to the evolution of threats and military technologies. It is also due to how the Atlantic liberal states have chosen to organize themselves. Britons and Americans find themselves in an ambiguous state of "no war, no peace" because they are market-security states, which apply force regularly and globally while treating the citizen as a passive consumer of security, choosing both the extraordinary powers of formal wartime while desiring the undisturbed – and unmobilized – civilian life of peacetime.

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2 Allan Silver, "Not Peace, Not War: America Since 1945," The Liberal Way of War Conference, University of Reading, July 6, 2012.

3 Mary Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 134.

4 Rosa Brooks, "There's No Such Thing as Peacetime," *Foreign Policy*, March 13, 2015.

## The Market-Security State

By market security state, I do not mean the same thing as Philip Bobbitt's concept of the market state, a form of polity that seeks to harness private capital to maximise the opportunities of its citizens.<sup>5</sup> Rather, I mean the marriage of two things often thought of as antithetical. These two things are an ever more intrusive statism, with ever more monopolistic market capitalism, intended to ensure capital's profitability. Since Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher spearheaded an Atlantic liberal revolution from the 1980's, an unintended net effect of this emerging market-security state is to erode and hollow out civil society, or what Edmund Burke called the little platoons of voluntary association, family, local, and collective local life. Paradoxically, though the architects of this revolution advocate limited government, the act of unleashing a pure marketplace requires order and good liberal subjects, and this demands ever stronger enforcement of the rules of property, the rule of law and free trade, thus creating a state with strengthened security apparatus and powers of coercion and surveillance.<sup>6</sup> That the size of the state actually grew under Thatcher and Reagan was no accident, but a defining feature of neo-liberalism.

The unleashing of capital and the acceleration of market exchange, with the support of the state, offers cheaper products, assists the fight against crime, and helps drive innovation. But it has its costs. It leaves people increasingly lonely and disconnected from real relationships of quality, despite the vaunted interconnectedness wrought by globalizing technologies. It uproots people in search of work, it loosens neighborhood bonds, and sees families increasingly broken up.<sup>7</sup> It drives a decline in collective association, with falling membership of trade unions, political parties, churches or community groups. There are efforts at forging an intermediate, civil society; but such efforts struggle against a trend towards the domination of big business and the big state. The growing dominance of an oligopolistic market, or one dominated by a few mighty companies like Walmart, coupled with the ever-greater dependence on the welfare state by more and more people, drains civic life of meaning. Citizens transform into clients, indebted in the market and reliant on the state as protector, with less and less shielding from anything in between.

We are left with shopping and consumption as the remaining communal rituals, though neither seems to make people very happy. The present condition is not simply one of consumerism. It is also an age of anxiety about security. In the new order, however, security is predominantly something not collectively created by a nation in arms, but as a consumer product, as a commodity the state must offer or deliver. The liberal revolution of the late-twentieth century depleted social solidarity and therefore inevitably reshaped the relationship between citizens and the state in the course of the ultimate political act, that of waging war.

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5 Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History* (New York: Random House, 2003), 211; and Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent: The Wars for the Twenty First Century* (New York: Anchor Books, 2008), 88.

6 David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 64-65.

7 For more on the effects of the new liberalism, see Phillip Blonde, *Red Tory: How Left and Right have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010); on the loneliness' problem, see John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick, *Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009).

The measure of this change has been taken by Robert Putnam, who characterizes the unravelling of community as “bowling alone.”<sup>8</sup> Is it possible that the small fraction of professional armed services bear the main burden of operations abroad are, in an existential if not literal way, fighting alone?

### Shopping for Victory

Consider how the United States and, on a lesser scale, the United Kingdom has designed and conducted their wars over the past few decades. Most of them have been intended to be a swift, hi-tech and, for their own side, relatively low-casualty affairs, though conditions and opponents have got in the way of these clinical ambitions. In any event, the state’s preference has been to eliminate opponents from a distance, minimize their own losses, and make the conflict both minimally disruptive and yet a basis for increased state power. The private market increasingly plays a role, as military-logistic functions are outsourced to it. Despite dramatic rhetorical gestures invoking the memory of collective struggle in national wars, such as the British Secretary of Defence’s recent claim that the campaign against the Islamic State is the “new battle of Britain,” the state strives to push wars into margins of national life, turning the civilian—in whose name the wars are waged—mainly into a spectator and beneficiary, observing the continuous projection of power.<sup>9</sup>

In the wake of the atrocities on 9/11, some American commentators hoped the crisis which had erupted this time on home soil would have a silver lining, that it would rouse the citizenry to a revived sense of common purpose. The neoconservative variant of this hope was the crisis would summon people out of commercial torpor through a politics of heroic greatness.<sup>10</sup> Yet the response of government was not to urge citizens to mobilize into an extraordinary state of supreme emergency, but almost the opposite, to maintain their routine way of life, at most keeping a wary eye on anything suspicious. Contrary to one legend, President George W. Bush did not urge his compatriots just to “go shopping.” But he did urge them to carry on as normal. Speaking at O’Hare International Airport in Chicago only weeks after Al Qaeda’s attack, he announced one of America’s goals in its new war was to restore confidence in the airline industry:

It is to tell the traveling public: Get on board. Do your business around the country. Fly and enjoy America’s great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed.<sup>11</sup>

The summons was not to self-sacrifice, as the state urged citizens to practice during World War II, but to self-gratification, or at least collective

8 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, 2000).

9 Ben Farmer, “New ‘Battle of Britain’ against ISIL,” *The Telegraph*, July 16, 2015.

10 David Brooks, “Facing Up to Our Fears,” *Newsweek*, October 22, 2001; George Packer, “Recapturing the Flag,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 30, 2001; see also Michael C. Williams, “Morgenthau Now: Neoconservatism, National Greatness, and Realism,” in *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 216-241.

11 “Bush on Airline Safety Measures,” *The Washington Post*, September 27, 2001.

gratification. This new struggle was not to be the property of the nation as a whole.

The heavy demands of industrialized major wars of the twentieth century prompted campaigns, from above and from below, to get local and often voluntarist society to pull its weight actively, to dig for victory, buy war bonds, melt down church bells, and knit socks, to make material sacrifices. The effort to maximise the state's extraction of resources also had a coercive side, with the draft, mass internment camps and intervention into the economy. But it was linked symbiotically to the awakening of new political consciousness, the movement for enfranchisement. Mass mobilization also energized the demand for independence from empire for better deals and new settlements with their governments.

The ending of a war, at least in some countries, was the occasion for internal struggle over the relationship between the citizen and the state. War's socially mobilizing power, in fact, has traditionally been a point of hope for the political left. One result of the attempt to neutralize and divorce the people from the conduct of wars is to remove an important stake the population could have in the fight, making the war over there, for those not directly linked to family or friends, feel to most like an abstract curiosity.

This characteristic marks a contrast with the wars of our time in the first fifteen years of this century. To finance the ambitious and unbounded war against terrorism, the United States turned not to war bonds or taxes, but to private capital markets, contracting many services out to private specialists. The belief states could run up extra debts rather than extract resources from their citizens was the product of a market fundamentalism, where in the age where "deficits don't matter" or "the end of boom and bust," the state could borrow with little regard to its carrying capacity. The financing of what turned out to be, in both direct and indirect costs, a three trillion dollar war in Iraq (according to the former chief economist of the World Bank) was shaped to quarantine, as much as possible, the economy and the general population from the strains of conflict.<sup>12</sup> Of course, deficits in the long run do matter, and the state has effectively placed the burden back on its people to reduce them. The interaction of war and debt is one force that has stirred up the wave of leftist and rightist insurgents in politics across Europe and North America. As it turned out, the attempt to insulate the people from the fiscal strain of modern wars could only be temporary. And there are the other human dimensions for those coming home.

### **Points of Transition: Coming Home**

There have long been tensions between those who fought and those who stayed away. But in the national wars of the past century, wider civil society was intensively engaged either in support, civilians at times were rotated to the front by force, rationing and taxes brought the war home in a tangible way. Equally, in more divisive conflicts there was that other, opposite manifestation of an energized citizenry, an active, vocal mass anti-war movement. War in Iraq did initially generate opposition, and one mass protest in Britain, as well as political rancor, but did not

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

create a sustained, energized counter-cultural movement comparable to Vietnam. Whereas now, the general population looks on mostly with sympathy but with far less connection or dissent. Conversely, surveys of veterans in the United States report a common theme of disconnection from civilian life, and a sizeable minority is wary of overt expressions of support at airports, bars and sporting events. The story is not a simple one of disillusionment. Many also express professional pride and regard military life itself as a nobler existence. But every indication is that the civilian-military divide is real and growing.<sup>13</sup>

The situation in Britain is not an exact parallel; public military uniforms and overt displays of gratitude are less frequent, but there are similar patterns. There is popular demand for better treatment of those in arms, and respect and curiosity for memory of great national struggles like World War I, and also considerable voluntarist donations to charities like Help for Heroes. Yet even this charity explicitly separates the appeal to supporting the troops from the cause of supporting the war itself: the very concept of “hero” is de-politicized, and the organization frames the hero as a worthy person in need. Again, in contrast to the national wars of the past, civil society offers war without politics and we are encouraged not to engage the political purpose of the conflict with what Clausewitz called “passion.”

In addition, downward pressure on defense budgets reflects a broad reluctance to pay any more for operations, equipment or personnel, and most surveys suggest a wider unfamiliarity born of political disengagement. The military covenant – between armed forces, government and civil society- is under strain though not “broken.”<sup>14</sup> Only 18 percent of the British public have any friends or relations serving in the armed forces.<sup>15</sup> This anxiety was put in concrete terms by General Richard Dannatt: “When a young soldier has been fighting in Basra or Helmand, he wants to know that people in his local pub know and understand what he has been doing and why.”<sup>16</sup> Yet this presupposes a kind of social solidarity that does not exist. Despite wide use of term hero and broad support for armed forces as an institution, there is little sustained political engagement to their causes and little belief their sacrifices have achieved positive, meaningful political results.

These problems are accentuated in the case of reservists, lacking a secure recognition either at the front or at home. Studies find that even family and social networks are less receptive to returning reservists than to regulars. Jake Wood, a lance sergeant turned investment banker, recalled the disorientation of moving between worlds:

There is almost a fascination [with you] when you first come back but it doesn't last long. First you get questions – some intelligent, some stupid and some just ghoulish – then by the afternoon it's like, OK, here's a business document. It was as if I'd never left and that was incredibly disorienting.

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13 See the poll conducted by *The Washington Post* and the *Kaiser Family Foundation*, “After the Wars - Post-Kaiser Survey of Afghanistan and Iraq War Veterans,” *The Washington Post*, October 20, 2105, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2014/03/30/National-Politics/Polling/release\\_305.xml](http://www.washingtonpost.com/page/2010-2019/WashingtonPost/2014/03/30/National-Politics/Polling/release_305.xml).

14 Helen McCartney, “The Military Covenant and the Civil-Military Contract in Britain,” *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): 411-428.

15 YouGov Poll on Defence and Britain's Place in the World, March 26-28, 2007, (sample size 2,042), <http://www.yougov.com/archives/archives-Political.asp>,

16 “General Sir Richard Dannatt's speech,” *BBC News*, September 21, 2007.

That feeling of isolation, alienation and dislocation was heightened by what I found out later was PTSD.<sup>17</sup>

Some of the most effective efforts to reach out to returning service personnel come from civil society where veterans can articulate a more complex set of responses than being forced into banal categories of victim or hero. The “Theatre of War” project in United States is a case in point. This project began with an independent production company, Theater of War, visiting military sites to give stage readings of Sophocles’ two plays about tormented veterans, *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*, and now attracts Pentagon funding. While we do not yet have any systematic survey of the effects of such processes, the impression of audience response suggests a communal space for the articulation of pain and anger resonates with those who are trying to come home:

During the post-performance discussion with the audience, led by a panel of therapists and military personnel, veterans from the Vietnam War, Iraq and Afghanistan spoke about their own sleepless nights, drug addictions and isolation from family members. A Vietnam veteran described being homeless for 10 years, suffering breakdowns but at last “getting my dignity back” in part from mental health care.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

Clausewitz as a historicist argued how states fight reflects who they are in time. If so, the current state of “no war, no peace” tells us something about our societies’ contradictions. The penetration of security by a neoliberal market ideology has given birth to the idea and, in many ways, the reality of the passive consumer citizen, unmobilized, insulated from war’s revolutionary and subversive power, yet also not granted a condition of peace.

This contradiction has caused problems, not only at the strategic and policy level, but for those who do the fighting and must live with endings. It poses problems in comprehending the distinctive difficulties of warmaking; it poses problems in the financing of war; and it makes life stranger, and harder, for those who must endure the endings of war most directly, the people who do the fighting and come home. It places the burden of the fighting on a small fraction of the population, asking most citizens to get on with their lives as consumers and being distinctly uncomfortable with spontaneous acts of grass roots mobilization. By demanding little of citizens, it encourages the corollary, and encourages political inattention from the ruled and an alarming lack of civic supervision. At the very least, this means we need the likes of Theatre of War more broadly. At the most, it calls for a new politics of civil society.

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17 Simon Usborn, “Broken by War,” *The Independent*, January 15, 2014.

18 Patrick Healy, “The Anguish of War for Today’s Soldiers, Explored by Sophocles,” *New York Times*, November 11, 2009.



# Civil-Military Relations: The Role of Military Leaders in Strategy Making

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William E. Rapp

**ABSTRACT:** This article addresses the current inadequacies of the civil-military relations model advanced by Samuel Huntington and embraced by the US military, the tensions and realities of security policy development, and the professional responsibilities military leaders have for providing the best military advice possible to political leaders.

National security strategy making is difficult business. Some contend the entire enterprise, at its very best, is just focused improvisation.<sup>1</sup> Post-9/11 decisions to use military force, as part of national security policy implementation, and the execution of those policies, have been plagued in the past by a host of factors that have reduced public confidence in both government decision making and the efficacy of military force in the 21st century. With some clear exceptions, the senior leadership of the military, and those who advise it, have contributed to the confusion because of their largely self-imposed mindset of civil-military relations stemming from our almost 50-year acceptance of the orderly and appealing concepts of Samuel Huntington.<sup>2</sup>

Huntington's 1957 *The Soldier and the State*, has defined civil-military relations for generations of military professionals. Soldiers have been raised on Huntingtonian logic and the separation of spheres of influence since their time as junior lieutenants. His construct assigns to both military and civilian leaders clear jurisdictions over the employment of military force. This clarity appeals to military minds and forms the philosophical basis for military doctrine and planning systems. The logic of Huntington's "objective control" of the military focuses on the role of civilian leaders to determine objectives and broad policy guidance up front. The military offers options to achieve these goals and provides its assessment of risk for each of these options. The president makes the key decisions and then the military executes this guidance with minimal political oversight or "meddling" and is held accountable for the results.

However appealing to the military, Huntington's conceptualization of proper civil-military relations does not reflect the reality of security strategy making and implementation today. Such an orderly, logical world simply does not exist at the top of the national-security hierarchy.

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1 Eliot Cohen, Robert E. Osgood Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, conversation with author, October 20, 2015. See also Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 243.

2 Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1957).



The result is that many senior military leaders find themselves, when thrust into this stratosphere, ill-served by the tradition the military's embrace of Huntington has taught them. They worry that diving into the murky waters of national security decision-making causes them to become "political," which is seen as antithetical to military culture and ethics.

Since America puts so much faith in its military leaders and these national security decisions put American lives at risk, military officers are morally obligated to help craft the best possible policies and strategies.<sup>3</sup> As opinion polls show and commentators assert, the American public holds the US military in extremely high regard and gives significant deference to military leaders on matters of security. This deference creates a responsibility, even an obligation, for generals to participate fully in the dialogue that leads to civilian decisions on the use of force.<sup>4</sup> Our senior general officers, pressed into this dialogue by the demands of their current positions, know this obligation well. Although their war-fighting skills are unquestioned, most military leaders do not naturally wade, by inclination or assignment, into these political waters on their way up in rank. To be effective and to assist the president in crafting and implementing national-security policy involving military force, senior military leaders must embrace a more involved role in the back-and-forth dialogue necessary to build effective policies and workable strategies. Thus, educating and developing strategic-mindedness in our rising senior military officers is an imperative that trumps nearly all other aspects of their professional competence.

Building and implementing successful national security policy and strategy is hard. It is even harder when senior military leaders communicate ineffectively. It is not as simple as Huntingtonian tradition suggests. Effective support to civilian decision-makers requires that military officers not only provide informed arguments about military strategies and capabilities, but also that they engage in a messy give-and-take on the full range of issues to craft living, whole-of-government strategies.

### **Difficulties in Making and Implementing National Security Strategy**

Even in the simplest of cases, crafting and implementing a workable strategy to achieve national-security policy goals is a very difficult undertaking.<sup>5</sup> Four main reasons account for this difficulty. First, the demanding workload, limits of experience, and tyranny of the present denies top decision makers and their staffs the luxury of having sufficient time to think through all the problems they face. Enumerating goals is relatively easy to do, but all too often strategic discourse ends there. Having the capacity, time, energy, and knowledge to craft a sufficiently detailed set of workable strategies to achieve policy goals is a much more elusive and difficult endeavor. These need to be strategies

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3 James M. Dubik, "Civilian, Military Both Morally Obligated to Make War Work," *Army Magazine* 65, no. 11 (November 2015): 17-18. LTG (Ret) Dubik's upcoming book is focused on this moral obligation to get war-making decisions right.

4 Rachel Maddow makes this point effectively in Rachel Maddow, *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power* (New York: Random House, 2012).

5 Richard Betts provides a thorough dialectic on the difficulty of strategy making and implementation in Richard Betts, *American Force* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 232-271.

that not only contain initial ends, ways, and means, but also things like development of supporting objectives and thorough risk analyses. All of that takes time and each day brings unforeseen challenges that strip away the time and energy leaders and their staffs have, especially in Washington.

This limitation leads to the second challenge—the need to craft the fundamental underpinnings underlying any successful strategy. Assumptions, necessary for any planning to proceed, must be valid. Understanding the other actors is especially problematic; assumptions about how our adversaries and potential partners will act or react to our actions are often wrong. The ends sought must be attainable by the means available and given the ways with which those resources, including time, will be employed. Finally, and most importantly, the causal logic must be right. While causal relations—the “theory of victory” that logically ties actions to successful attainment of goals—are somewhat predictable in the short run, the omnipresence of chance and the existence of thinking adversaries confounds predictions of causality over the longer term.<sup>6</sup>

If the theory of victory tends to dissolve over time due to the nonlinear nature of warfare, then the ability and willingness to change strategies becomes the third challenge to achieving effective security policy outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Thus, one must view policy and strategy formulation as iterative. Policymakers and senior military leaders must adapt their strategies throughout implementation.<sup>8</sup> They must change resources allotted, the methods of resource employment, or modify the ends themselves. But costs get sunk, administrations become tied to certain courses of action, and the “can-do” attitude ingrained in military leaders often leads to requests for more time and more resources rather than a thoughtful re-evaluation or modification of ongoing policy and strategy. Similarly, accurate assessments of changing situations are much harder to build than outside observers might expect.

National level analysts often claim those on the ground are not able to see the forest for the trees. Those on the ground decry the rosinness or direness of external assessments as being out of touch with reality and missing the “fingertip sense” of actual conditions. Thus, due to the difficulty in both assessing the need for change and the very human reluctance to change our minds, policies and their implementing strategies often outlive their usefulness.

Even if leaders have the capacity to develop a workable strategy, get the logic right, and possess the courage and wisdom to shift direction as required by changing situations, implementation of those strategies may confound even the most wise and diligent of senior leaders. Fog and friction abound in the field, making the execution of even the simplest strategic effort difficult, per Clausewitz’s famous dictum.<sup>9</sup> In the 21st

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6 For a fuller discussion, see J. Boone Bartholomees, “Theory of Victory,” *Parameters* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 25-36.

7 For a superb discussion of the nonlinearity of warfare, see Alan Beyerchen, “Clausewitz, Nonlinearity and the Unpredictability of War,” *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992): 59-90.

8 Strachan, *The Direction of War*, 55, notes: “War has its own nature, and can have consequences very different from the policies that are meant to be guiding it.”

9 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), Book I, Chapter 7.

century, it is more important than ever for coordination to take place with US government interagency and international partners about the direction and energy for any strategy. Most significantly, domestic political will must back the effort, not only at the beginning, but especially when setbacks and missteps occur. This coordinated implementation in the face of an adaptive adversary is simply a difficult and unsure business—made harder still by the realities of representative democracy.

In his speech to the Corps of Cadets at West Point on April 21, 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted the difficulty of successfully using military force to achieve national goals when he referenced the relatively unknown but hugely influential mentor of George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower, Fox Conner, and his three axioms for waging war by a democracy: never fight unless it has to, never fight alone, and never fight for long.<sup>10</sup> Examples like troop presence on the Korean Peninsula for more than 60 years show America can support long-term military commitments and uses of military force as integral parts of coercive foreign policies. Still, strategy is hard business, made even harder by the domestic political considerations inherent in a participatory democracy. In effect, civilian and military leaders must always work together and overcome significant challenges to have a legitimate hope of getting any strategy right.

### Getting Past Huntington

Much academic and practitioner work has described the many tensions inherent in American civil-military relations.<sup>11</sup> Among these are the Constitutional construct of Articles I and II that create a dual-principal, single-agent construct for military leaders. Culturally, military preference for robust, decisive wins, even in the absence of existential and immediate threats, runs afoul of the democratic tendency to compromise and leap only halfway across the proverbial Clausewitzian ditch.<sup>12</sup> As a society, Americans are intrigued by the lure of precise, discriminate military weaponry and dismayed when such expensive tools fail to achieve lasting results. Many more such bureaucratic, perceptual, political, and organizational tensions exist and, coupled with the lack of military experience of most policymakers, have created a situation in which political and military leaders are often not on the same page. National security policymaking and strategizing requires both military personnel and civilians to learn how to be more effective, both separately and with each other - an imperative likely to be uncomfortable for all involved. But the onus is on military leaders to cross the divide to meet civilian policymakers on their turf, rather than expecting civilian leaders to provide the military clear autonomy in the development and execution of strategy. Clausewitz noted:

War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means...To bring a war,

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10 Robert Gates, speech to Corps of Cadets, West Point, NY, April 21, 2008, <http://www.stripes.com/news/text-of-secretary-of-defense-robert-gates-speech-at-west-point-1.77986>.

11 Janine Davidson, "Civil-Military Friction and Presidential Decision Making: Explaining the Broken Dialogue," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (March 2013): 129-145; and Matthew Moten, "A Broken Dialogue: Rumsfeld, Shinseki, and Civil-Military Tension," in Suzanne Nielsen and Don Snider, eds., *American Civil-Military Relations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 42-71

12 "A short jump is certainly easier than a long one, but no one wanting to get across a wide ditch would begin by jumping half-way." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 598.

or one of its campaigns, to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce: the [general]-in-chief is simultaneously a statesman.<sup>13</sup>

Nearly 170 years later, historian Hew Strachan stated:

The effort to remain apolitical may lead military members to avoid the necessary political education and awareness they require to operate in today's complex environments. The unintended consequence of this ignorance is incompetence when the mission requires awareness of political sensitivities and the political repercussions of military actions.<sup>14</sup>

While Strachan's comment is clearly hyperbole, both he and Clausewitz correctly note that senior military leaders must understand the strategic political space into which they will offer their military advice.

The challenge for senior military leaders and those who advise them is to recognize that the comfortable notion of separate spheres of professional responsibility does not always correspond to reality. Effective military support to the nation's senior civilian leaders requires senior military leaders who are politically astute without engaging in domestic politics, and who have learned the non-military complexities of policy implementation. The wars of the past decade show that military force is insufficient in and of itself to achieve all policy goals. Military leaders must help broaden the dialogue to all means of national power. Effective military support also requires that military leaders learn how to participate effectively in the dialogue necessary to better align ways and means with desired ends. They must be prepared to offer alternative ends if the ways and means are limited. They must take the time to build relationships and trust in a chaotic and transitory decision-making process, learn how to socialize ideas, and most importantly, must reconsider how to provide "best military advice" as part of a holistic strategy to achieve national objectives.

For their part, civilian leaders should endeavor to gain a better understanding of the capabilities, limitations, and bluntness of military force and to be open to the recommendations of military leaders. They must have the fortitude to withstand the lure of fast, cheap, light, and easy solutions to complex problems. They do not exist. Civilian leaders must grasp that clean, discriminate, and error or risk-free warfare is a dangerous myth. They must understand there is rarely a one-agency solution to achieving policy objectives, and must work through the difficulty of coordinating multi-agency actions. This is a challenge for policymakers who cut their teeth on domestic politics and military leaders should not assume this understanding is mutual. Finally, civilian leaders at all levels must be willing to listen and modify their positions when presented with compelling arguments. Senior military leaders can help by gently and respectfully educating civilian decision makers on the various aspects of military force and warfighting as part of a whole of government strategic approach.

Civilian policymakers must also strive to do the right thing. While Lieutenant General James M. Dubik (US Army, Ret.) makes the ethical

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13 Clausewitz, *On War*, 112-113.

14 Hew Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," *Survival* 52, no. 5 (September 29, 2010): 164-165.

argument that civilian leaders do not have the right to be wrong when so many lives are on the line, our Constitution clearly does give them the authority to make what they believe is the best possible policy decision.<sup>15</sup> Finally, as policymakers, civilian leaders must help ensure American foreign policy remains solvent: that national commitments are roughly aligned with interests, available resources, and political will.<sup>16</sup>

There are two broad schools of thought on American civil-military relations when it comes to the creation of effective policies: one that was originally set forth by the academic godfather of the topic, Samuel Huntington, and another that critiques his conception of objective control. Huntington's conceptualization provides the roots for much of the United States military. The military raises its officers throughout their careers to believe that, by assumption, guidance from above starts with a mission or goals to be achieved. In line with our planning systems, senior leaders and their staffs expect to take that clear mission and create courses of action from which the president ultimately decides. Military officers then expect relative freedom in executing the chosen option and then to be held accountable for the results. The clarity of objective control, however, does not reflect reality.

There are many critiques of Huntington's model that better reflect the realities of security strategy making today. In general, they note the effectiveness championed by Huntingtonian logic either does not work in the real world of national-security policymaking or is best achieved through direct intervention in military affairs by civilian leaders.<sup>17</sup> Given the complexities of 21st century warfare, control by issuing top-level objectives and then allowing the military to build and execute operational plans is simply not practicable; nor is this system used in American security policy-making today. Having said this, the famous admonition "war is too important to be left to the generals" must also be modified for the 21st century.<sup>18</sup> What is largely missing in this debate is a middle ground between arguing effective policy is best achieved by relatively autonomous military leaders on the one hand, or by directive civilian leaders on the other.

Importantly, this is not just an academic argument. Building competence in this middle ground by both military and civilian leaders will lead to better national-security policy outcomes. Richard Betts offers a useful model for today's complex world as one of equal dialogue with unequal authority.<sup>19</sup> Civilian leaders rarely articulate clear objectives for an endstate up front in this dialogue and thus confound standard military planning processes. Moreover, goals frequently change over the course of a conflict. While civilian leaders must strive to be right in their decisions to use force, the ability to achieve that wisdom depends heavily

15 Dubik, "Civilian, Military Both Morally Obligated to Make War Work," 18.

16 Walter Lippman, *US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1943).

17 Scholars criticizing the "objective control" model favored by Huntington are many. Since Huntington focused on effectiveness as his dependent variable, the best comparison is Elliott Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002). However, also useful for the debate are Suzanne Nielsen and Don Snider, eds., *American Civil-Military Relations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); and Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2003).

18 George Clemenceau, "La guerre! C'est une chose trop grave pour la confier a des militaires," quoted in Georges Suarez, *Soixante Annees d'Histoire Francaise, Clemenceau, Vol 1: Dans la melee*, 1932.

19 Betts, *American Force*, 225-231.

on a bruising back-and-forth dialogue with military leaders. In practice, the spheres of responsibility and execution significantly overlap—by design.

Equal dialogue means both military and civilian leaders have the responsibility to listen to each other and probe the answers they hear. This dialogue is required to achieve rough consensus on the definition of the problem faced, and it must precede policy and option articulation. The logic of the strategy must be right. Department and agency leads must generate real strategic options to give the president actual choices; however, the ends to which each option can aspire and the inherent risks involved in them are often dissimilar and the nation's senior civilian leadership needs to understand those dynamics as well. Ultimately, civilians will ask senior military leaders to give their "best military advice," and military leaders must do so in a holistic and contextual manner that frames the use of military force in a larger national and international framework of action.

### **Six Realities in National-Security Policymaking**

Those who develop and provide this "best military advice" must be cognizant of the impact of six realities of national-security policymaking in the United States today. First, clear policy guidance rarely appears at the beginning of the strategic dialogue. Since military leaders have been conditioned to expect to receive a mission complete with goals or "end-states," the lack of clear guidance raises the angst of leaders and their planners.<sup>20</sup> They must accept this condition when necessary, and not be paralyzed by this lack of clarity. Second, the policy formulation process is iterative and often "out of order" with the military's more linear models for planning. Policymakers often request options before policy goals are decided to reduce the political risk of laying down markers that will come back to haunt them in the future. External shocks may change the framing of the problem well into the discussions of policy and options. When necessary, military leaders must get used to a lack of linearity and finality in the national security policy decision-making process.

Third, military leaders must also face the reality that political decisions on policy and uses of military force are rarely as timely as necessary for prudent planning and minimization of risk. The retention of political and strategic flexibility is a prime consideration for the senior civilian leadership and thus military planners should expect delays in decisions, which often come in the guise of requests for more options or operational details. In the end, military leaders and planners must be prepared for the frustrations of constant planning and modification of guidance.

Fourth, mutual trust between military leaders and senior civilians is not automatically conferred. Rather, such trust is built over time through iterative interaction, and is largely based on personal relationships. Rank does not confer trust in either direction. However, this trust is absolutely necessary for the constructive dialogue so essential for the development of sound policy and strategy. It is for this reason

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<sup>20</sup> However ubiquitous in national security parlance, the term "endstate" in reality has little meaning, since changing circumstances and policy often modify the policy ends sought. Even if policy implementation was perfect, an "endstate" simply becomes an intermediate objective upon which statesmen build new policy goals.

that military leaders must not shun service in Washington, but rather take the time and energy to build relationships and trust that can help shape good national-security decisions in the future.

As Peter Feaver notes, the fifth reality is that civilian and military leaders need each other to develop sound policy options.<sup>21</sup> Neither always has the right answer and each is laden with a set of experiences that served them well to that point, but may be insufficient going forward. Use of military power has complexities and limitations of which most civilians are unaware or downplay. On the other hand, strategic aims have political dimensions that military leaders might underappreciate. Strategy and policy options require long-term political and popular support and thus must be feasible, nuanced, and ultimately provide hope of success.

Finally, as Richard Betts notes, the reality is strategy is often neglected in the current civil-military divide.<sup>22</sup> Civilians frequently talk policy goals and assume military actions will naturally bring about their attainment, while military leaders often assume battlefield successes alone will somehow achieve the overall political goals. It is strategy that ties policy to military and whole-of-government operations and the cognitive space that must be addressed. In sum, the reality of national-security policymaking is very different from the military's conception of how that process should run. Civilian and military leaders must change their behavior in order to construct strategies that can realistically achieve policy goals, or to modify desired political goals to those that can be achieved with the resources available.

However frustrating these realities may be, senior military officers and their staffs must learn to act in this environment and to commit fully to the often frustrating and iterative dialogue necessary to craft effective policies and strategies; they must provide civilian leadership with decision options worthy of the expenditure of the nation's blood and treasure.

### Providing Best Military Advice

Colloquially, the final recommendations provided by the most senior military leaders to their civilian overseers are known as "best military advice."<sup>23</sup> Senior military leaders give this considered military advice, a set of recommendations based on experience and planning, every day at many levels regarding issues of policy, force structure, and the like. The discussion below concerns the provision of best military advice on the critical subset of interactions focusing on use-of-force decisions and implementing strategies, but the interactive dynamics apply to the range of policy decisions. Those recommendations are essentially a strategic narrative of various options and associated risks that have the

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21 Peter Feaver, in Feaver and Richard Kohn, eds., *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 418.

22 Betts, *American Force*, 234.

23 The term "best military advice" has a decidedly political connotation in Washington. Committee Chairmen ask for such final recommendations when trying to make a point for or against administration policy. Senior leaders may use that specific term when attempting to draw attention to a critical redline over which they will not acquiesce or modify. In this paper, I use the term in a more neutral manner, akin to what James Golby describes as "considered military advice." Author's conversation with Major James Golby, Assistant Professor, United States Military Academy, October 27, 2015.

potential to help achieve specific security policy objectives. It is critically important to note military objectives rarely if ever achieve overall policy objectives.<sup>24</sup> If properly aligned and executed, they set conditions for the achievement of policy objectives. Military leaders, thus, must always be cognizant of the larger strategic goals to which military actions are subordinated.

But first, some clarifications and conventions on terms are in order. An *option* is a set of actions including resource commitments designed to lead to a specific political objective or goal or a fundamentally different combination of ways and means to achieve the same political objective or goal. *Courses of action* are minor variations on a single option and provide differing levels of resources and ways to achieve the same policy objectives or goals. Thus, if the president asks the military for multiple options, there is an inherent requirement to provide clarity on the political objectives that each option is designed to help achieve. Said differently, there is a clear imperative to offer alternative ends when presenting multiple options. Finally, *risk* is the discrepancy between ends sought and means available or, otherwise stated, as the probability of failure in achieving strategic goals at politically acceptable costs.<sup>25</sup>

Four important steps outline military responsibilities in the provision of best military advice for the strategy making process. First, civilian leadership provides initial guidance and military leaders use their best judgment to come up with narrative options for consideration. Second, the iterative dialogue at multiple levels leading up to the president then takes center stage and helps both military and civilians sharpen their thinking and understanding of objectives sought and strategies to be employed. Third, senior military leaders offer their best military advice and recommendations and the president makes an initial decision. Fourth, both military and civilian leadership periodically reassess the policy and strategy and offer adjustments as required.

Bridging the middle ground between policy and operations begins with strategic options. Senior civilian leaders do not like to be painted into a box by the limiting of options, but since each option may achieve different objectives or goals, proper civil-military relations calls for a more expansive view of the military's responsibility in providing best military advice.<sup>26</sup> In this conception, discussion by military leaders of policy objectives is part of the needed dialogue. Importantly, this dialogue starts with gaining rough, collective agreement on the nature of the problem faced. Military action, however tactically brilliant, is insufficient to achieve policy goals if the actual problem defies coercive force. Every option must have a separate, logical, strategic narrative that addresses the problem, states the specific policy ends that can be achieved, discusses the resources (means) and how those resources will

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24 Trey Braun, Professor, US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2015, conversation with author.

25 James F. Holcomb, "Managing Strategic Risk," in J.B. Batholomees, ed., *US Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 119.

26 Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of our nation's most astute politicians, viewed service contingency planning as "an institutional gambit to box him in. He refused to issue the kind of clear policy guidance that military planners craved . . . if his subordinates were in conflict with one another, they would always have to appeal to him for decisions, bringing a range of alternatives from which he would be free to choose, or not." See Matthew Moten, *Presidents and their Generals* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2014), 192-193.



be applied (ways), key assumptions that underpin the logic, and the resulting risk. Thus, the provision of multiple options requires a comprehensive dialogue between the military and civilian leaders addressing the policy objectives that the option's ways and means can reasonably attain. In this part of the discussion, the civilian leadership must provide as much detail as possible in response to the key questions asked by the military leadership. The answers to these questions will form the conditions that the military must work with to derive strategy options. In turn, the military leadership must be able to respond with the number and variety of strategy options desired by their civilian counterparts.

Taking the conditions for the strategy making process into account, to include the factor of time available for option analysis, every strategy option that the military presents for consideration must be assessed in detail. Risk cannot be simply high, medium, or low, but rather clearly and specifically outlined in terms of the alignment of military objectives to the political objectives sought, potential 2nd and 3rd order effects, the time requirements, the potential for casualties and collateral damage, the risk of escalation, and, importantly, the risk of inaction.<sup>27</sup> Because these options and associated risks involve human lives, there is a strong ethical component to this dialogue. The back-and-forth nature of the discussion allows military leaders to articulate clearly the limits of what military force can achieve and how the uncertainties and vagaries of combat can foul even the best laid plans. This dialogue and accommodation to different ideas and contextual understanding works in both directions. The military should not think it is civilians alone who must modify their thoughts and positions after receiving military advice.<sup>28</sup> The dialogue sharpens and refines the beliefs and recommendations of all participants in this effort.<sup>29</sup>

Military leaders sometimes offer advice and recommendations in a way that limits the choices of civilian leaders. Broadly, military professionals should avoid three situations in the provision of their considered military advice. The first is for the military to present to the civilian leadership a single option that focuses on one set of policy objectives. Doing so resembles a briefing rather than a dialogue and will rarely result in acceptance of that option. Alternatively, a military leader may offer an artificially limited set of strategic options, with all but one option presented as clear throw-aways. Using present day Syria as an example, this list of faux options might be capitulation to ISIS (throw-away), create a Kurdish enclave, and invade Syria with a Desert Storm-sized joint force (throw-away). Another variation on the single option error is when a single option is disguised as two more courses of action. Again, the president is limited in his choices because he or she is given only one real option. Using Syria again, an example would be the creation of a Kurdish enclave with a) 20,000 troops, b) 25,000 troops, or c) 30,000

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27 This typology of risk comes from course materials used by the Basic Strategic Arts Program at the US Army War College.

28 The dialog between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the invasion of North Africa is instructive in this regard. Had the president simply accepted the chiefs' "best military advice" in the summer of 1942, he would have forgone the invasion of North Africa in favor of sending more resources to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. This shift in strategy might have had harmful effects on the course of the war.

29 Golby, conversation with author, September 2015.

troops.<sup>30</sup> In each of these examples, the military provides only one real option, which then gives the decision-maker little flexibility or potential for an informed choice.

Every issue has a decision space that defines, at that time and for that issue, the range of possible strategic options from which the senior civilian leadership can choose. The real “art” of military interaction in the political sphere is the understanding that space. Its size and boundaries are ambiguous and changeable. The space expands or contracts for a variety of reasons, including world events, domestic and international public opinion, and the availability and terms for evaluation of options. Expanding that decision space increases the likelihood of good policy decision, and it is with that goal in mind that military leaders should offer their analysis and advice. This is where a senior military leader must be politically aware, without being perceived as openly partisan or actively political. This is not easy, but without such political astuteness, a leader’s “best military advice” can be of limited value to senior civilian leaders.

At the beginning of a national security dialogue, such as the debate over what to do about Syria in 2013, presidential decision space is undefined and dialogue becomes necessary to gain common understanding of the problem and to start identifying policy goals and desired strategy ends. Civilian leaders ask military leaders for options despite the fact that policy objectives have yet to be clearly stated. A parody of such a conversation between a NSC staff member and Pentagon planner might go something like this:

“What are some military options to deal with this situation?”

“Well, what do you want to achieve?”

“I don’t know, what can be achieved?”

“Well, we can’t give you options until you tell us what you are trying to achieve.”

While this example may be cartoonishly problematic, this cart-before-the-horse discussion is both common and unproductive. At this point, both the civilian and is military staffs need each other to create the context and real strategic options demanded by their senior leaders. The military cannot afford to step out of this dialogue and then object when civilian leaders decide on an action that military leaders believe to be decidedly sub-optimal.

Provision of multiple genuine options, expressed in a strategic context that explains how and why the resources requested can act upon the extant problems and help achieved specified ends at defined levels of risk, is the best way to honor the traditions of American civil-military relations and craft the best possible policy and strategy. This dialogue is iterative and the back-and-forth conversation, animated but respectful, helps expand the senior civilian leader’s decision space and brings the civilians and military closer to optimal policy choices matched with an appropriate strategy.

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<sup>30</sup> Some administration officials complained that the military recommendations for a surge of forces to Afghanistan in 2009 fell into this category.

Military professionals honor the traditions of American civil-military relations when they provide multiple, genuine options, expressed in a strategic context that explains how and why the resources requested will solve or mitigate given problems and help achieve policy goals at acceptable levels of risk. They do this as part of an iterative dialogue, sometimes animated but always respectful. They help expand the senior civilian leader's decision space and brings the civilians and military closer to optimal policy choices that are matched with an appropriate strategy. The policy dialogue may prompt military planners to modify their options or change their preferences in light of a whole of government approach or by the inclusion of allies and partners. The dialogue may expose faulty assumptions and question causal mechanisms. It can also sharpen strategic understanding and leads to better tasking to intelligence agencies for supporting information. At its best, the policy dialogue, however bruising, creates achievable policies, lowers risk, and leads to more ethical decisions regarding when and where to put soldiers' lives on the line. Throughout this iterative process, senior military leaders offer the senior civilian leader highly valued military advice.

When a senior military leader offers his or her military advice and a decision is made, the process of policy-making on this issue is most certainly not over. As described above, the vagaries of use of military force against an adaptable and intelligent enemy demand periodic reassessment of assumptions, policy, and strategy. Military leaders play a vital role in this constant assessment process. They often control the assets with high fidelity on operational and strategic effectiveness. Given the credibility enjoyed by the military, these assessments and recommendations for change, as required, demand brutal honesty and may run counter to the "can-do" ethos of the American military.<sup>31</sup> As Barry Posen points out, proper civil-military relations require senior military leaders not be the enablers of bad policy.<sup>32</sup>

Senior military leaders engaging in this strategic dialogue should be aware of three conditions that increase the risk of bad policy decisions by the senior civilian leadership. The first occurs when the military leaders offer multiple options but their preference, their "best military advice," falls squarely in the middle of the senior civilian leader's decision space. In such a situation, groupthink can occur and the president might make a bad policy decision in the absence of the dialogue that would otherwise probe the beliefs of those agencies involved.<sup>33</sup> If a consensus comes too quickly, wise military leaders will step back and "red team" the issue.<sup>34</sup> The second condition is the slow march of accommodation to the political space in which the gradual but persistent demands for more

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31 As General David Petraeus and his staff were flying across the Atlantic en route to Iraq at the beginning of the surge in 2007, his executive officer, Colonel Peter Mansoor, cautioned him that the hardest thing for him to do, should it come to it, would be to tell the President and the American people the surge had failed. Peter Mansoor, conversation with author, October 2015.

32 Barry R. Posen, Ford International Professor of Political Science at MIT, and Director of the MIT Security Studies Program, conversation with author, October 2015.

33 The term groupthink was first coined by Irving Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Wadsworth, 1972); see also David Patrick Houghton, "Understanding Groupthink: The Case of Operation Market Garden," *Parameters* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2015).

34 General Motors CEO Alfred Sloan once famously ended a meeting where there was unanimous support for a decision with the statement "I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about." See Alexander George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980).

and more acceptance of risk slowly results in a final policy choice that looks quite different from the original military recommendation.<sup>35</sup> C.S. Lewis wrote, “the safest road to hell is the gradual one.”<sup>36</sup> At some point, military redlines are likely crossed, beyond which the military leaders cannot go quietly. The third condition is that of the political general - a military leader who shapes his advice to accommodate the perceived decision space of the senior civilian leader.<sup>37</sup> When any of these three conditions hold, military leaders fail to fulfill their professional responsibilities to the civilian leadership and the nation.

## Conclusion

Huntington understood military culture in the context of its unique planning systems. However, the 21st century world of national-security policymaking and the resulting strategies of implementation demands significantly more dialogue and political savvy from senior military leaders and their staffs. In October 1950, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Hoyt Vandenberg, told President Truman if the Chinese attacked in Korea, the United States would have to resort to atomic weapons, as that was the current strategic doctrine. Truman, not wanting to be boxed-in by an option clearly outside his decision space, retorted that Vandenberg needed to “go back and get yourself some more strategic doctrine!”<sup>38</sup> Senior military leaders who offer their recommendations in such an absolutist manner abdicate their vital role in the shaping of policy and strategy on use of force. Likewise do those who fail to keep military operations tied to the political objectives toward which force was used in the first place.

Developing military leaders who are competent in the political environment of national-security strategy decisionmaking is vitally important. It requires a broad revision of talent management among the armed services. Developing strategic mindedness goes beyond operational warfighting assignments and simply “broadening” the officers by sending them to fellowships or for civilian graduate degrees, though both are valuable. Assignments that increase the leaders’ understanding of the interagency decision-making process and of alliance and coalition relations are critical. This means sending the very best to the Joint Staff, OSD staff, and combatant commands. These developmental roles widen thought-apertures and worldviews. Military leaders must also build their interpersonal and communications skills to engender the trust of other stakeholders, and to be effective and valuable contributors to the policy dialogue. This requires analytical understanding, mental flexibility, skill in rhetoric, comfort with media relations, and presentation techniques that do not rely on innumerable powerpoint briefing charts. Finally, senior military leaders have all had jobs that are

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35 The iterative steps that led to the creation of Cobra II, the plan to invade Iraq in 2003 with insufficient force to control the country in the aftermath of major combat operations, falls into this category.

36 C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Harpers, 2014), 61.

37 The advice provided by General Maxwell Taylor to President Lyndon Johnson, which led to the introduction of ground combat forces to war in Vietnam without a clear path to victory, falls in this category. See H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998).

38 Quoted in Robert H. Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman: A Life* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 344.

physically and emotionally draining. They must relearn to how take care of their aging selves so they are sharp and ready when civilian leaders need their strategic counsel.

A sign that the military is addressing a shortfall in strategic thinking is the recent surge in introspection among all military services. For example, in 2013 General Raymond Odierno ordered complete reviews of the history of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Other top leaders are directing similar reviews of the past fourteen years of conflict and undertaking changes to professional military education and personnel policies to make competency in national security strategy formulation a core part of leader development over the length of a career.

The experiences of the past two decades show improved dialogue between military and civilian leaders may lead to better policy and the strategies to achieve them. Military leaders play an exceedingly important role in this dialogue, but it is a role and an arena of dialogue foreign to military leaders for most of their careers. The senior leaders of the armed services of the United States must overcome this largely self-imposed handicap in the quest to provide their best military advice in the creation of effective policy and strategy. Civilian leaders must better understand the nature of war and the vagaries of warfare. Military and civilian leaders together must ensure that when Americans put their lives on the line, they do so with a path to victory that relies on more than hope.

## The Centurion Mindset and the Army's Strategic Leader Paradigm

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**ABSTRACT:** Army culture does not currently value or incentivize education and broadening for senior leaders, as it did prior to 1950. Various structural factors, such as the creation of a mega-bureaucracy, co-equal service branches, and a fixation with tactics, have contributed to the decline in numbers of educated and broadened leaders in the molds of Generals Pershing, MacArthur, and Eisenhower. The Army's strategic performance since the Korean War is symptomatic of this cultural decline.

On October 12, 1972, General Creighton Abrams became Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), a promotion that symbolized the further devaluation of broadly educated leaders in favor of tactically minded “centurions.” Centurions in the Roman legions, combining the command authority of a contemporary company commander with the experience of a sergeant major who directed tactics. Superior legates or generals orchestrated campaigns to achieve Rome's strategic objectives.<sup>1</sup> Abrams epitomized the tactically centered centurion paradigm, and it is no small irony the US main battle tank bears his name. In his mold, well-meaning but misguided Army leaders of the post-World War II era, have championed tactical career progression that stunted officer strategic broadening, and ensured the rise of centurions often incapable of performing as true “generalists.” The institution's transition from valuing an officer career path that produced sufficiently developed leaders helped birth the so-called training revolution, which Abrams and like-minded leaders enshrined. These men sought to ensure “no more Task Force Smiths” would occur, referring to an untrained and under-equipped Army task force that North Korean tanks rolled over in 1950.

This simplistic “lesson” still resonates within the Department of the Army, which recently opted to preserve brigade readiness at the expense of middle-management at headquarters, ignoring the likelihood Task Force Smith was symptomatic of overall institutional decline.<sup>2</sup> General William DuPuy's view of the quintessential Army leader was molded as a junior officer who experienced an earlier version of Task Force Smith

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1 Adrian Keith Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War, 100 BC—AD 200* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Publishers, 1996), 31-36. While the article's content and errors remain mine, I want to thank Dr. John A. Bonin for suggesting the centurion analogy, as well as Dr. Larry Tritle, Dr. Edward Gutierrez, Dr. Leonard Wong, LTC Mike Shekleton, MAJ Rob Grenier, and LTC Donald Travis for their assistance with this article.

2 This included Corps HQs, which then CSA General Joe Lawton Collins rapidly increased from one to eight by summer 1951. James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Directives the First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1992), 30, 64, 72, for some of the corps. Unit histories contains Corps activation dates.

in the days following the Normandy invasion.<sup>3</sup> DuPuy later became the architect of Abrams' tactical colossus.

Fixation on tactics instead of strategy reflected the searing of dangerous World War II combat experiences into DuPuy, Abrams, General William Westmoreland, and others of their generation. Dispassionate analysis, however, informed but not overcome by experience, often occurs only at a safe distance from the subject matter at hand, and these leaders seemed incapable of distinguishing institutional maintenance from individual combat. Experiences such as those of Dupuy do have some merit, revealing how insufficient tactical preparedness led to unnecessary casualties in America's first battles and beyond.<sup>4</sup> The choice of developing strategic thinkers is not a zero-sum game with tactical wherewithal, however, as Army formations must also maintain tactical effectiveness. The shift to a centurion paradigm has come at a cost.

### The Army's Tactical Paradigm

In some ways, the battlefield-dominant US Army created by these men has become a more ethical version of the Wehrmacht, which the institution intentionally sought to emulate in the years after WWII. The Army has developed a force capable of winning nearly every firefight, while simultaneously blunting its development of strategic leaders. The outcomes of wars clearly rest on more than military strategy. Factors such as poor policy, enemy efficiency and will, resources, and luck also affect outcomes. However, the Army's painfully obvious inability to achieve national objectives since the Korean War against the likes of the Islamic State of the Levant (ISIL), the Taliban, Iraqi and Somali insurgents, and the North Vietnamese Army, reveals an institution in need of reform.<sup>5</sup> The debate over these failures has centered on martial frameworks such as counterinsurgency versus conventional operations and AirLand Battle doctrines.<sup>6</sup> Elevating the discourse above the operational and tactical levels of war, Army leaders must demote the centurion mentality in favor of a model better reflective of the institution's diverse past, while retaining the best of the tactical revolution. A comparison of the pedigrees of the Chiefs of Staff of the Army (CSAs) before and after 1950 demonstrates the transformation to a centurion-led Army that has ultimately undermined the institution's ability to contribute to the achievement of national objectives.

The lack of military success during a time of American technological and training advantages indicates the shortcomings of US Army culture.<sup>7</sup> While Brian Linn, Tom Ricks, and others have commented on the Army's strategic inability, none has tied it to the decline of officer

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3 Thomas E. Ricks, *The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 244.

4 Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft, eds., *America's Fist Battles, 1776-1965* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), x-xi.

5 For example see, H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), which indicts senior civilian and military officials for the Vietnam crisis.

6 This debate is well-documented and includes writings by Peter Mansoor, Andrew Birtle, John Nagl, David Kilcullen, Gian Gentile, and others. For a useful summary see, Matthew Morton, "Learning from the Past, Looking To the Future," *Parameters* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 53-67.

7 Culture is defined here as the officer corps' beliefs, perceptions, experiences, and capabilities.

broadening and structural factors.<sup>8</sup> The post-Vietnam era also witnessed the rise of management science in American society. This societal transformation contributed to an Army institutional shift from valuing broadly educated and experienced strategic thinkers, to parochial, tactical, and technical centurions.<sup>9</sup> The creation of the Department of Defense in the aftermath of WWII weakened the Army's ability to formulate strategy by rendering the institution a co-equal service branch, while interposing unnecessary bureaucracy between top generals and the US president.

Bureaucrats have ascended within this structure, while the Army has become anti-intellectual.<sup>10</sup> Ricks' assertion the Army must relieve more generals for ineffectiveness would fail to address this underlying centurion problem, as replacements spawn from the same culture.<sup>11</sup> The Army's anti-intellectual bent also suggests advanced degrees are irrelevant to warfare; no current four-star generals have doctorate degrees, only one maintains a masters from a top-tier civilian university, and only one serving lieutenant general holds a PhD.<sup>12</sup> These numbers would disappoint reform-minded leaders such as Major General (ret. and former commandant of the US Army War College) Robert Scales, who has encouraged the intellectual development of Army leaders.<sup>13</sup>

While simply promoting leaders with advanced degrees to the highest levels will not guarantee success, officers broadly educated can better inform strategic discourse, having had their intellectual abilities expanded to think deeply and widely about complex issues. It is fashionable for government agencies to lament a seemingly complex operating environment (an ahistorical assertion)—should Army leaders not have the education to grapple with such complexity? A centurion's tactical acumen might mold a foundation for higher leadership, but it is not a prerequisite for strategic ability.

Since Vietnam, the Chiefs of Staff of the Army have generally been less broadened, and more tactically minded, than at any other time since the emergence of the United States as a world power during the Spanish-American War (1898). Tactical expertise now represents the current promotion paradigm, while the career of Dwight Eisenhower, a distinguished Chief of Staff of the Army and President, exemplifies a less flashy archetype. Without WWI combat experience, "Ike" today would remain non-promoted to lieutenant colonel. So would CSA Omar

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8 Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 7-8; and Ricks, *The Generals*, 458.

9 Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Reconsidering the American Way of War* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014), 135,140, highlights Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's attempted use of management science; and Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 7, describes a "hero" class of officers as tending towards "warrior" status and anti-intellectualism.

10 Charles D. Allen and George J. Woods, "Developing Army Enterprise Leaders," *Military Review* 95, no. 4 (July-August 2015): 42-49.

11 Ricks, *The Generals*, 451-453.

12 US Department of the Army, "General Officer Management Course," <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/OfficerResume>. A Department of the Army preliminary study indicated that only 1/7 BGs (2011 class, courtesy Robert Grenier) received graduate education at civilian institutions, and only two attended top-tier universities. US Department of the Army, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, DA Pam 600-3 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, 2014) defines broadening as any billet not considered necessary for future command.

13 Robert H. Scales, "Too Busy to Learn," *United States Naval Institute. Proceedings* 136, no. 2 (February 2010): 30-35.



Bradley, who wintered WWI in Minnesota. Ike and Bradley performed well in WWII without combat experience. Not all WWI “slick sleeves” followed suit, however, as General Lloyd Fredendall, a highly regarded pre-war trainer and II Corps Commander at Kasserine Pass (1942) badly mangled the battle. Ike ultimately relieved him of duty.<sup>14</sup> The cases of Ike, Bradley, and Fredendall indicate that combat experience and pre-war training may be desirable, but are unnecessary for adequate performance. In 1943, the majority of the Army’s “elite” senior leadership lacked combat experience prior to that conflict.<sup>15</sup>

Tactical expertise, when confronted with an irregular enemy and conditions not resembling the sands of the National Training Center (NTC), has proven insufficient much like the case of training expert Fredendall. Training centers, such as the National Training Center, not only molded these leaders’ Army credentials, but their view of war as a limited conventional engagement, necessarily bounded in time and space by the astrategic parameters of the training area, and “won” by maneuver and overwhelming firepower.<sup>16</sup> Army officer evaluations once noted how many rotations officers performed “in the box,” and books on “winning” National Training Center were widely read in Army circles, as opposed to studying actual American battles.<sup>17</sup> Rigorous tactical training has better prepared soldiers for first battles to prevent Task Force Smiths. However, this training renaissance has not been complemented by strategic rebirth.

Historian Peter Mansoor, a former brigade commander and General David Petraeus’ executive officer during the “surge,” demonstrates how in the early years of the second Iraq War, Generals John Abizaid (Central Command or CENTCOM) and George Casey (Multi-National Force Iraq) simply did not grasp the situation. Both made decisions counter to the ways in which the “surge” later pacified the country long enough to return it to Iraqi security forces, though as ISIL is proving, not long enough.<sup>18</sup> Ricks maintains Generals Tommy Franks (CENTCOM) and Rick Sanchez (Commander, Combined Joint Task Force-7) previously had understood the situation in Iraq even less.<sup>19</sup>

The post-Vietnam training revolution prepared leaders for tactical conditions against Soviet-style forces, but as a byproduct, raised battle success to the level of strategy. It also downplayed education at the expense of training. As Ricks notes “...training tends to prepare one for known problems, while education better prepares one for the unknown, the unpredictable, and the unexpected.”<sup>20</sup> The Army desperately sought *raison d’être* after defeat in Vietnam, as well as a firm budgetary basis

14 Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943* (New York: Henry and Hold Company, 2002), 272, 399-400.

15 Walter Millis, *These are the Generals* in Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1971), 160.

16 Ricks, *The Generals*, 349-350, and Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 216, make similar points.

17 Conversation with Dr. John A. Bonin, Professor of Concepts and Doctrine, US Army War College, June 2015, detailing his officer evaluation reports. There is a cottage industry of non-academic books about “winning” at the NTC, such as: Adela Frame and James W. Lussier, *66 Stories of Battle Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2001); and James R. McDonough, *The Defense of Hill 781* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988).

18 Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 32, 45-46, 179, 183, 262.

19 Ricks, *The Generals*, 418-419.

20 *Ibid.*, 419-420.

to achieve relevance. The training revolution provided both. Abrams and DePuy, despite warnings about the dumbing-down of officership, focused the Army on the tactical level of war.<sup>21</sup> Leaders with broadening limitations such as Franks, Sanchez, and Casey, have risen within this culture. The performance of a well-educated Abizaid demonstrated broadening is not a silver bullet, however, and training should not be ignored while officers simply attend Harvard. As with Abizaid, leaders sometimes operate on false assumptions (or the enemy gets it right). Yet tactical obsession, with the advent of training center rotations as the pinnacle of Army command has weakened the proclivity for strategic thought. This paradigm emerged, in part, as a misnomer about G.I. battlefield performance in WWII.

S.L.A Marshall's (and others) inaccurate assessments of US Army battlefield performance, as well as German generals' ingratiating accounts of their own successes against the Soviets, created the erroneous idea that the German army outfought the Americans.<sup>22</sup> A telling WWII German intelligence report around the time of the struggle for Aachen, however, rated US divisions highly.<sup>23</sup> The Wehrmacht did fight well at the tactical level throughout the war, but poor strategy and an inclination toward committing atrocities doomed its efforts—in some ways a parallel with Army failures since 1965.<sup>24</sup> The misnomer of US forces fighting less well seeped into late-1940s Army doctrine as the institution prepared to fight the emerging Soviet threat, and vestiges of this focus on Wehrmacht success in battles survives today.<sup>25</sup> It also assisted in generating the training revolution.

Army victory in Panama, the Gulf War, and the opening stages of Afghanistan and Iraq seemingly proved Abrams' training revolution successful. The seeds of tactical success sprouted strategic disaster, however, as the Army found itself unable to grapple with strategy. Hence the debate over counterinsurgency operations has dominated military discourse from before the "Surge." This situation also reflected the larger American cultural prominence of technocrats. A recent article

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21 Ibid., 346-347, Ricks at once criticizes the downplaying of education, while crediting DePuy with creating a better Army; and Suzanne C. Nielson, *An Army Transformed: The US Army's Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations*, Letort Paper (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, September 2010), 42-44, also indicates DePuy's tactical focus as necessary for the post-Vietnam Army.

22 S.L.A Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947); Peter R. Mansoor, *The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 1-15, discusses the historiography (including Marshall) of the pro-Wehrmacht and the pro-American arguments, while his book adds heft to the latter category. For inflated German accounts see B.H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk: Startling Revelations from Hitler's High Command* (New York: William Morrow and Company Inc., 1975 reprint of 1948).

23 Mansoor, *GI Offensive*, 197.

24 For Wehrmacht fighting cohesion see Kevin Farrell, "Culture of Confidence: The Tactical Excellence of the German Army of the Second World War," in *Leadership: The Warrior's Art*, ed. Christopher Kolenda (Carlisle, PA: The Army War College Foundation Press, 2001), 177-203. Unlike members of the Wehrmacht who perpetrated war crimes with the sanction of official policy, US Army personnel sometimes committed atrocities of their own volition in instances such as My Lai in Vietnam War and post-911 in the handling of prisoners such as at Abu Ghraib prison. Columbia Professor Adam Tooze's lecture to West Point history faculty connected US Army atrocities with the institution's focus on the Wehrmacht, US Military Academy, West Point, NY, Spring 2012.

25 Robert W. Hutchinson, "The Weight of History: Wehrmacht Officers, the US Army Historical Division, and US Military Doctrine, 1945-1956," *Journal of Military History*, 78, no. 4 (October 2014): 1321-1348. A recent Pentagon study also examined Wehrmacht replacement practices, email with US Department of the Army staff February-March 2014.

in *Military Review* highlights this emphasis in the Army by conflating managers with leaders, a tradition emerging with the “Whiz Kids” of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s reign.<sup>26</sup> An emphasis on techno-bureaucracy obscures the larger issue of strategic failure, which efficient management will not ameliorate.

The rise of civilian managers in the Department of Defense, like McNamara and Donald Rumsfeld, and an emphasis on equality between the services, resulted in the structural demotion of senior Army leaders. General George Marshall, for instance, served as chief military advisor with unfettered access to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in WWII.<sup>27</sup> Reorganizations such as the *National Security Acts* of 1947 and 1949, and *Goldwater-Nichols* of 1986 created unnecessary bureaucracy between senior generals and the president, as well as demoted the Army’s influence to an equal footing with the other services. This relegation to equal status occurred even as the Army served as the nation’s strategic force, shouldering the majority burden of war efforts in personnel, logistics (including support to the other services), and casualties.<sup>28</sup> Although the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), serves as the President’s chief military advisor, the position rotates between services and is a staff billet without authority in the way that WWII (and prior) Army Chiefs of Staff and generals of the army exercised prerogatives. These structural changes diminished the Army’s strategic influence on US policy, and failures in many ground wars since 1945 indicates the nation is not better for it. Other Army structural changes set in motion months before the Korean War accelerated the shift in institutional culture from strategy to tactics.

The Cold War reversed the United States’ traditional military cycle of rapidly expanding Army ranks with draftees and then precipitously demobilizing them following victory.<sup>29</sup> Government officials perceived a worldwide Communist threat that required a standing military, particularly a large conventional Army. These attitudes, encapsulated in George Kennan’s “Long Telegram” and Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech, coalesced in *National Security Memorandum 68* (NSC-68), which President Harry Truman only endorsed after the North’s invasion of South Korea.<sup>30</sup> This invasion confirmed perceptions of global communism and resulted in a permanently large Army. It also contributed to the eventual subjugation of strategy to tactics.

Army promotion soon became linked to the command of standing units, the vast majority of which operated below the strategic level. This linkage contributes to the development of an astrategic officer corps, in which some officers may disbelieve military leaders have a role

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26 Allen and Woods, “Developing Army Enterprise Leaders;” and Dale R. Herspring, *The Pentagon and the Presidency: Civil Military Relations from FDR to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 121.

27 *Ibid.*, 26-27, for no barrier between the Chief and the President.

28 *Ibid.*, 62, on equalizing the services, *Ibid.*, 64-65, on elevating civilian secretaries; *Ibid.*, 303, for Goldwater-Nichols increasing the role of Chairman at the expense of the service Chiefs; see Army Support of Other Services, US Department of the Army, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*, FM 3-94 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, 2014), for current Army support.

29 Jason W. Warren, ed., *Drawdown: The American Way of Postwar* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2016).

30 For these Cold War issues see, John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

in formulating military strategy. Antulio Echevarria's *Reconsidering the American Way of War* rightly posits US strategy, in fact, connects political goals with national strategies, and thus the "American Way of War" is not astrategic at the national level.<sup>31</sup> A strategic fissure has emerged, however, between the national level and Army entities responsible for fashioning strategy. Army culture prior to *National Security Memorandum 68* received a boost in strategic emphasis, in the interwar years for instance, where officership revolved around education and broadening, even including discussions of strategy in officers' messes. The officer corps more readily resisted a tactical mindset with few troops available to command during these lean personnel years.<sup>32</sup>

The tactical dominion eventually became king of the realm for post-Korean War promotion, which the training revolution elevated to the throne. Summer 2004 in Iraq found Casey upon a tide of sinking strategy and he believed the war was lost before Petraeus temporarily righted the ship.<sup>33</sup> Petraeus' surge of forces was but a current of success upon an ocean of failure. Petraeus' preference for well-educated subordinates and officer broadening soon receded with his departure to the CIA, in an Army culture hostile to non-tactical endeavors. In addition to Petraeus other generals bucked the centurion trend including, Alexander Haig (SACEUR and Secretary of State), Frederick Woerner (US Southern Command), and more recently, Daniel Bolger (NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan), but in insufficient numbers. Casey, himself son of a general who was killed in Vietnam, had limited broadening. He became Chief of Staff of the Army after his tour in Iraq. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld summoned Casey's predecessor General Peter Schoomacher off the retirement bench as a swipe at senior Army generals to replace the marginalized General Eric Shinseki. Schoomacher's career was mainly focused on special operations. Shinseki himself completed a masters degree and then taught at West Point before returning to a predominantly tactically focused career. General Raymond Odierno, replacing Casey in 2011, had commanded effectively at the operational level of war in Iraq, but maintained a background similar to his predecessors. His term as CSA eventually originated a number of programs, however, that may bear strategic fruit, if continued.

The post-911 Chiefs of Staff of the Army generally share a lack of graduate education and broadening with their Vietnam War counterparts. Neither Westmoreland nor Abrams achieved advanced degrees and both served in mainly tactical billets.<sup>34</sup> Although America's Abrams tank was aptly named for the general, headquarters staffs he worked to reduce would be less well named. He began the short-sighted headquarters reductions that have become a characteristic of the post-Vietnam Army. This reduction came at the moment sociologist Morris Janowitz noted that the backgrounds of successful WWII generals were different from those of the post-1950 era, the latter of which elevated tactical assignments as the "ideal" career progression. According to Janowitz's

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31 Echevarria, *Reconsidering the American Way of War*, 165-167.

32 Michael Matheny, "When the Smoke Clears: The Interwar Years as an Unlikely Success Story," in Warren, ed., *Drawdown*.

33 Mansoor, *Surge*.

34 Westmoreland attended Harvard Business School for only a year and completely lacked professional military school attendance after West Point.

analysis, “ranking military leaders displayed an early and persistent propensity for staff work.”<sup>35</sup> Abrams’ training revolution did bear fruit in early battles in the 1980s and beyond, and the Army should maintain its best practices, but must also emphasize strategic leader development.

Abrams was the embodiment of the shift to the centurion motif, serving in successive tactical positions, with a telling break only to teach tactics at the Armor School at Ft. Knox, and later returning as Chief of Staff, Armor Center. Recent scholarship indicates Abrams’ vaunted role in Vietnam was less successful than previously accepted, as he simply advanced programs enacted by Westmoreland.<sup>36</sup> Abrams’ distaste for headquarters personnel with the simultaneous deification of command billets institutionalized an attitude that smaller staffs can accomplish the mission while maintaining the contradiction that officers manning them are less capable than those on track to command soldiers. Some senior generals confuse poor intra-headquarters leadership and non-broadened and inexperienced staff with headquarters bloat, eliminating the very force structure history has repeatedly demonstrated is necessary for sustained land combat.<sup>37</sup> Robust headquarters, besides acting as a unit’s intellectual center, provide broadening and serve as opportunities for officers between line billets and educational and professional development assignments. Army leaders have ineptly continued Abrams’ programs, and ironically so, as much as the US Army has sought to ape the Germans.

The great general staff, the elite organization in the Prussian-German armed forces, undergirded German tactical prowess. It was instrumental in the unification of Germany under a Prussian ruler, and assisted the Second Reich in dominating the European continent from 1866-1918 and again under the Third Reich from 1938 to 1944.<sup>38</sup> Adolf Hitler increasingly usurped the staff’s power and eventually neutered it, as many American generals have done to Army headquarters since Vietnam. The US Army fetishized the wrong aspect of the German army.<sup>39</sup>

The Army institution has largely failed to achieve strategic results under the direction of the CSAs after the Korean War. There is no denying the dedication of these officers, and like Shinseki, some bled for their country. It would also represent a shallow argument to lay the failure of national strategy at the feet of the CSAs or any commander. Failure has reflected structural paradigm shifts, as well as the influence of domestic politics. The profiles of the CSAs in a hierarchical organization like the Army, however, offer a swampy view into the larger institutional strategic morass. A comparison of the backgrounds of CSAs before WWII reveals an earlier crop of strategically broadened officers.

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35 Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 166.

36 Gregory Daddis, *Westmoreland’s War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

37 Conrad Crane and John A. Bonin, “The Next Task Force Smith: The Danger of Arbitrary Headquarters Reductions,” *War on the Rocks*, October 27, 2015.

38 For the rise and effectiveness of the German General Staff see, Geoffrey Wawro, *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 73-123.

39 The Command and General Staff College in its military history block on the German Wars of unification does not mention the German staff, Academic Year 2012-2013, Phase II, accessed September 2015.

## An Earlier Tradition of Broadening

John Schofield, who commanded a division at Gettysburg and became general of the army (the office prior to CSA) for the lengthy period of 1888-1895, influenced the Army as the United States emerged as a world power. Schofield was Superintendent of West Point for five years. He previously taught “natural and experimental philosophy” (physics) at the Academy (also for five years) and later physics at Washington University. Besides his division, corps, and Department of North Carolina (reconstruction) commands, Schofield served “as a confidential diplomatic emissary to France,” and deployed on “special mission” to Hawaii.<sup>40</sup> Schofield’s educational and broadening assignments were not unique for leading Army officers of this period. Educated in part by a French officer in Massachusetts before the Civil War, and wounded four times in it, General Nelson Miles also commanded the reconstruction of North Carolina, and later defeated Indian resistance to white expansion. He observed the Greek-Turkish War, and Russian, German, and French maneuvers, and then commanded US efforts in Puerto Rico. Miles published three books, two while General of the Army. This highlights the cultural shift to anti-intellectualism at the highest ranks, as a former Army commander of the war in Afghanistan counseled that leaders risked promotion by publishing.<sup>41</sup>

The first CSA, General Samuel Young, established professional education at Ft. Leavenworth and served as first president of the Army War College. The fourth CSA, General James Bell studied law and was admitted to the bar, while teaching at Southern Illinois University. Bell’s successor General Leonard Wood was a Medical Doctor, studying at Harvard Medical School and Boston City Hospital. His replacement General William Wotherspoon who served three years in the Navy, taught at Rhode Island College and the General Staff College, and was also president of the US Army War College, transforming it into an independent educational institution.

General Tasker Bliss’s career was a mixture of education, broadening, and, like his predecessors, line assignments. These included French and artillery instructor at West Point; adjutant of the Artillery School at Ft. Monroe; recorder on the Board on Interior Waterways; instructor Naval War College; military attaché to Spain; collector of customs in Havana and president of the commission to revise the Cuban tariff; Governor of Moro Province, Philippines; twice President of the US Army War College; and after his tour as CSA, a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference. Given his broadening experiences, one might imagine Bliss succeeding in “Phase 4” operations in Iraq. Again highlighting a centurion mindset, the Army has transformed service as Superintendent of West Point or the Commandant of the US Army War College as a retirement billet instead of an opportunity for broadening (General Malin Craig in 1935 went from Commandant of the US Army War College directly to Chief of Staff of the Army). General John J. “Black Jack” Pershing, best known as commander of the Mexican Punitive Expedition and

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40 William G. Bell, *Commanding Generals and Chiefs of Staff: Portraits & Biographical Sketches* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2010), 90, for further biographical information herein on Generals of the Army and Chiefs of Staff see pages 90-168.

41 Basic Strategic Arts Program, US Army War College lecture, Winter 2014 (non-attribution).

American Expeditionary Forces in France, also performed in a number of educational and broadening posts. These comprised obtaining a law degree while professor of military science and tactics at the University of Nebraska; the Bureau of Insular Affairs when serving in the Office of Assistant Secretary of War, an headquarters billet which he created, unlike modern CSAs who rashly reduce headquarters; military attaché to Japan; observer of the Russo-Japanese War, and like Bliss, Governor of Moro Province.

In addition to his legendary career in both World Wars and Korea, General Douglas MacArthur served as aide to President Theodore Roosevelt from 1906-1908, service school instructor at Ft. Leavenworth, and Superintendent of West Point before becoming CSA. Although some detest MacArthur for “flamboyant” tendencies, he was one of the best military minds of his generation, conducting one of the “twin drives” in the Pacific theater of WWII with limited resources and joint forces across large geographic areas, as he later did at Inchon in Korea.<sup>42</sup> Eisenhower served on MacArthur’s staff in the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Philippines. Ike was extensively educated in Army schools, including Leavenworth, the US Army War College, and the Army Industrial College, while also serving as an instructor at Leavenworth before his illustrious career in WWII and beyond. The careers of Bradley, Marshall, and others reflect the broadening paradigm of a past Army generation that achieved strategic results. In an era before the proliferation of graduate degrees, the education of these leaders was exceptional.

### A Way Ahead

Instead of maintaining its post-1950 centurion trend, the Army must develop and promote broadened leaders in the vein of those like Schofield and Eisenhower to CSA or Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the latter position of which an Army officer must occupy during major ground wars. The caprices of victory are not subject to the politically correct whims of service equality. These officers would foster a professional intellectual climate by emphasizing education and broadening. Odierno began this initiative with programs such as the Strategic Broadening Program and Army Strategic Planning and Policy Program, but these have been implemented in haphazard fashion and should be expanded and elevated intellectually as a post-Leavenworth offering for promising mid-grade officers. The Army should proliferate officer education programs such as the US Army War College’s Basic and Advanced Strategic Arts Programs that educate strategists and colonels, adding two levels of these courses for junior and senior general officers. The Army must make a clear distinction between education and training, which its bureaucracy and attendant budget practices often conflate.<sup>43</sup>

These initiatives are inexpensive. For the production and maintenance cost of one F-35 fighter, the Army could educate most Active and Reserve Components officers. Every mid-grade officer should receive at

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42 Ricks, *The Generals*, 197; also Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) are critical of MacArthur.

43 For example, the US Army War College recently reported to Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and Army educational programs are funded with training in the same budgetary category.

least a masters degree at a well-regarded civilian institution. This serves not only the personal development of the officer and the intellectual foundation of the institution, but to influence civilian peers and relate the Army story.<sup>44</sup> An emphasis on education during drawdowns and after major conflicts would not constitute an original program, as the Army concentrated its meager resources on education between World Wars.<sup>45</sup>

To not only right the ship but keep it afloat, the Army must undertake a comprehensive strategic study of not only the past 14 years, but also the post-draft era.<sup>46</sup> Recommendations should include structural changes to prioritize Army prerogatives as the lead service for major land conflicts, and reduce the barriers that allowed business-minded strategic amateurs such as McNamara and Rumsfeld to interdict military recommendations of the institution's senior leaders to the President.

The tradition that preceded *National Security Memorandum 68* is one of a cadre Army, while also maintaining a varying quantity of a professional force. Facing current manning constraints, the Army should return to a cadre force that would also provide adequate opportunities for broadening assignments of the kind the CSAs before Vietnam experienced, without these assignments prejudicing career progression. In a large-scale crisis, the cadre from the training base would serve as leadership for new battalions with the Reserve Component assuming training duties. The emphasis on training should be maintained for remaining units, which the extra number of non-commissioned officers and officers from cadre units would rotate to fill after broadening assignments. Training emphasis should be expanded for echelons above corps.<sup>47</sup>

The Army must rebuild its headquarters where broadened officers would help guide strategic decision-making. In the tradition that Abrams accelerated, the institution reduced the wrong headquarters, forcing division and corps headquarters to cover the shortfall. Division and corps staffs are poor substitutes for the theater level because of experience and rank disparities. The obvious solution was to maintain theater army headquarters at strength and appropriate grade level. Combining US Forces Command (FORSCOM) with US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), as well as reducing Medical Command would have allowed the 25 percent reduction to remain in place without compromising warfighting headquarters, as well as those performing critical "Phase 0" activities like security cooperation and "setting the theater."

FORSCOM and TRADOC were created in the early 1970s to replace US Continental Army Command (CONARC), and this arrangement has outlived its usefulness and furthered the centurion paradigm. A return to the CONARC model would help balance the Army's training priorities, and serve as a conduit for better Active and Reserve Components relations, as well as ease the raising of forces with an updated cadre system. McArthur formed the precursor of Continental Army Command when he "activated his 4-army structure in 1932," understanding solid

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44 Tim Kane, "Why Our Best Officers Are Leaving," *The Atlantic* 307, no. 1 (January/February 2011): 80-85.

45 Matheny, "When the Smoke Clears."

46 Ricks, *The Generals*, 455.

47 Cadre and other personnel issues are beyond the scope of this article, but worth noting in the context of broadening.



command and control required an extra layer of headquarters between corps commanders and the CSA.<sup>48</sup> He based this decision on the never enacted three field armies concept created by the 1920 *National Defense Act*.<sup>49</sup> Instead of the current bifurcated training system, where TRADOC is the proponent for individual training and FORSCOM oversees collective training at the training centers, a CONARC model would re-apply a regional approach to training management with three sub-command regional army commanders responsible for all training of both active and reserve territorial formations. TRADOC's and FORSCOM's staffs would merge, while TRADOC's three-star sub-commands would remain. Central Command would receive assignment of III Corps (FORSCOM must assign forces per Title 10 US Code para. 162), while CONARC would maintain XVIII Corps as the Global Response Force (GRF).<sup>50</sup>

### Conclusion

The Army must alter the gears of its personnel machine to produce the next generation of generals in the mold of Black Jack, Marshall, Ike, or the American Caesar, to improve the nation's chances of achieving its strategic objectives. Poor national policy or an implacable adversary may still overcome the best leaders' plans, but there is less chance of success without a deep bench of strategically capable generals. Demoting the centurion-focused Abrams' archetype to its proper place in the legion, the Army must merge its successful model for training with a renewed broadening program from yesteryear to develop strategic leaders and ultimately repair strategic capability. This will include advocating for the reduction of governmental structural barriers formed since WWII and the righting of poor institutional history, both of which have contributed to the Army's overly tactical focus. Cadre formations and reversed headquarters reductions with a return to CONARC will assist in the growth of a strategic culture. The Army must move beyond a simple debate over operational frameworks and take common sense and time-honored measures within current budget limitations to reform its internal culture and recreate an institution capable of conceiving of victory. Without leaders capable of developing an intellectual framework for winning, the Army will continue to produce disappointing results.

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48 Jean R. Moenk, *A History of Command and Control of Army Forces in the Continental United States, 1919-1972* (Fort Monroe, VA: Headquarters, United States Continental Army Command, 1972), 56.

49 Ibid.

50 A number of speakers at the USAWC have denigrated the CONARC template without distinguishing between a necessary, but poorly administered organization, and the model itself. Non-attributed guest speakers at the Basic Strategy Program Course, US Army War College, 2014-2015.

## Arming Our Allies: The Case for Offensive Capabilities

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Jakub Grygiel

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**ABSTRACT:** The desire of some US allies to rearm presents an opportunity to shore up a system of deterrence challenged by ambitious and disruptive powers. Given the nature of the threat (a limited war scenario) and the security environment of the region (A2/AD capabilities of the revisionists), frontline US allies should be armed with offensive arsenals capable of targeting our common rivals. Such a capability would strengthen not only the immediate deterrent of the individual states but also the effectiveness of American extended deterrence.

Some of the most vulnerable US allies, located near regional revisionists in Europe and Asia, are beginning to rethink their security strategies. A combination of obstreperous revisionist powers in their vicinity and a distracted and solipsistic United States far away is in fact awakening security fears dormant for decades. Poland and Japan, among others, are embarking on defense modernization plans and are adjusting their postures to reflect new regional realities. Most interestingly, some US allies are acquiring, or planning to acquire, weapons capable of striking inside their rival's territories.

The United States should encourage such rearming. Well-armed frontline states, capable of hitting a common rival on its own territory, are a source of stability in a US-led alliance. They develop a missing and necessary component of the deterrence that undergirds regional stability, strengthening local defense and enhancing US extended deterrence.

In particular, offensive capabilities in the hands of the most vulnerable allies address two sets of problems. First, they reinforce indigenous deterrent capabilities that are especially needed to deal with the threat of small, localized attacks by the nearby revisionist power. They also give the targeted small or medium-sized state the option to force the enemy either to escalate to an uncomfortable level or to continue a limited war under more difficult conditions. Second, offensive capabilities in the hands of frontline allies reinforce the credibility of American extended deterrence by breaking the hostile A2/AD bubble, thereby lowering the costs of projecting power to the battlefield.

The nature of the threat presented by regional revisionist powers – China and Russia – makes such offensive capabilities more necessary than in past decades. The Western alliance system in Europe and in Asia cannot rely on a defense in depth, trading space for the time required to activate the allies and to project their forces to the frontline. The rapacious regional powers may in fact pursue a limited war, striking quickly for narrowly defined geographic objectives: their goal is not the

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territorial conquest of whole states but a gradual revision of the regional order, and they have demonstrated an aversion to direct and large confrontations with the United States and its alliances. To respond to this threat, it is crucial to have some frontline states armed with offensive capabilities. Through such capabilities, the targeted states can steel their own deterrent, increasing their ability to deny the enemy's limited objectives. At the same time, they can make allied participation less costly and thus more credible, elevating the risk of the larger war the rival fears.

### **Defensive Mindsets, Offensive Capabilities**

Before examining the strategic benefits of offensive capabilities, it is important to note frontline states such as Poland or Japan are interested in defending their independence, not in expanding their influence or control. They are status-quo powers, benefiting from the decades-old order underwritten by the United States and maintained by its system of alliances. Their mindset is defensive. The question they face concerns the most effective way of shoring up their defenses.

There are two basic ways in which exposed frontline states can defend themselves against an aggressive neighbor: they can develop a posture of territorial defense, blunting and slowing those forces that might penetrate their state – or they can also target the enemy's rear lines and bases and even strategic assets deep inside the rival's homeland. They can acquire exclusively defensive capabilities or they can field offensive weapons.

Defensive capabilities aim to hinder the aggressor's advance into, and retention of, the targeted state's territory through a mix of position defense, guerilla warfare, and rear-guard actions. Such capabilities strike the tip of the enemy's spear, trying to blunt and hamper the attack or, should the initial defenses fail, to destabilize and harass the lands that the enemy has already taken. A spectrum of weapons can be included in this category: landmines, anti-tank missiles, short-range anti-air missiles, small arms, fixed defensive lines, and local militias. Such capabilities can attempt to hold a front in the hope of maintaining a fixed defensive line but, because of the conventional disparity, the attacking great power is likely to punch through the protected front. Hence, the defending state will have to accept some form of defense-in-depth, trading space for time to allow the allies to mobilize and join the fight – combined with the continued harassment of the hostile forces already in control of newly conquered territory or seas.

While these defensive assets aim to hold the line on the defender's homeland, offensive capabilities project destruction into the rival's territory. They include a range of weapons that can strike the enemy's staging areas, airports, radar installations, sea and river ports, logistical nodes, used by the aggressor for offensive operations. In some cases, the defending state can also acquire and plan to use medium- and long-range weapons—for instance, cruise and ballistic missiles—to threaten targets deep inside the enemy's homeland, such as cities or military installations that are not directly involved in the conduct of military operations. There are of course important differences between tactical and strategic capabilities, ranging from financial and technical to political considerations. But given the geographic propinquity of the rival and

the contained area of the military clash, the effects of the two categories of offensive weapons – short-range to disrupt the enemy’s operations and longer-range to menace targets of economic and political value – will overlap: strategic targets (e.g., cities, railroad stations, or ports) are in fact within reach of short- and medium-range weapons.

These two sets of capabilities and associated doctrines are not mutually exclusive. The choice for the US ally is not either-or, and most US allies who may be strengthening their defenses (especially those with greater economic heft and more confident foreign policies) are likely to seek a mix of both capabilities. But there is a risk these states may be tempted, or pressured by domestic and international opinion, to contemplate the defensive-only approach. The United States as well as other, less exposed allies may fear, for example, a frontline ally acquiring offensive weapons capable of striking inside the enemy’s territory will destabilize regional dynamics. It may lead to the much dreaded “cult of the offensive,” creating a dangerous belief that whoever attacks first will win and exacerbating the local security dilemma.<sup>1</sup> As a result of these fears, there may be international pressures on the US ally to limit its military procurement and doctrine strictly to a passive and fixed territorial defense, and to avoid the acquisition of weapons capable of hitting beyond the narrow confines of the battlefield.

The rearming state, too, may be tempted to favor exclusively defensive capabilities because they are cheaper and thus can be acquired in greater numbers. Landmines and anti-tank rounds are easier to buy in large quantities than cruise missiles and stealth bombers. They also do not require the complex communications and intelligence systems associated with power-projection capabilities that impose additional costs and demand extensive training. A decision to specialize in territorial defense would also continue the *de facto* division of labor in the alliance: the frontline ally would conduct small-scale, low-intensity defensive actions while the alliance (or rather, the United States) would join in with its overwhelming forces and fight the high-intensity, long-range war.

This fear of offensive capabilities, however, is misplaced. As the nineteenth-century naval theorist Alfred T. Mahan noted in the context of maritime competition, an exclusively defensive posture such as coastal fortifications is not sufficient to deter the enemy or, if necessary, to win wars. “In war”, he wrote, “the defensive exists mainly that the offensive may act more freely.”<sup>2</sup> “Fortresses ... defend only in virtue of the offensive power contained behind their walls. A coast fortress defends the nation to which it belongs chiefly by the fleet it shelters.”<sup>3</sup> This argument holds true for land warfare, too. Fortifications, or any other means to block the enemy’s assault, are effective only in so far as they protect the means to threaten the lines of communication and the logistics of the attacking force. The protection of a piece of real estate

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1 Stephen Van Evera, “The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War,” *International Security* 9, no. 1 (Summer 1984): 58-107; and Robert Jervis, “Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1978): 167-214.

2 Alfred T. Mahan, *Naval Strategy Compared and Contrasted with the Principles and Practice of Military Operations on Land* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1911), 150.

3 *Ibid.*, 433.

must therefore be accompanied by the ability to strike the rear of the advancing forces and to threaten not just the tip of the enemy's spear.

Most importantly, given today's security environment, the "temptation of the defensive" is not only misplaced but also dangerous. It allows revisionist powers to achieve their limited objectives without activating the larger alliances opposed to them. Russia or China may not be interested in a lengthy war of conquest but in quick and localized strikes against nearby states, conducted in ways to minimize the risk of having the target state's security patron (the United States) organize a response.<sup>4</sup> The vulnerable frontline ally needs to possess the means both to inflict costs on the predatory neighbor in order to deter it and to create a relatively permissive environment for the distant ally (or allies) to send necessary reinforcements. In other words, the goal of frontline allies is to increase the enemy's costs and to decrease the costs of allied backing. To do so, they need to acquire some offensive weapons, capable of striking the enemy well beyond the frontline.

A US ally who can strike the aggressive neighboring power not only at the front of its attacking forces but in its rear, including the enemy's homeland, may contribute to a more stable region: such capacity increases the ally's indigenous deterrent as well as the credibility of the extended deterrent provided by the United States. The fact the exposed ally may have an incentive to use its offensive capabilities in case of a conflict is a strategic asset for the alliance, not a risk that must be avoided at all costs.

There two sets of benefits of offensive capabilities in the hands of frontline states: first, they steel those states against an attack, and second, they strengthen the extended deterrence supplied by a distant security patron.

### **Benefits for the Vulnerable Ally**

For vulnerable US allies, such as Poland or Japan, the benefits of offensive capabilities are twofold: they mitigate the fear of being attacked by a hostile neighbor as well as the fear of being abandoned by security patrons who are distant and focused on multiple theaters.

First, relatively small states naturally fear the proximate rival power (e.g., Russia and China) may attack them, thereby creating the pressing need to shore up their indigenous deterrent capability. An ability to strike the enemy's logistical lines or the staging areas hinders the aggressor's advance, enhancing the defender's ability to deny, or at least to increase the costs of achieving the objective sought by the aggressor (deterrence by denial). Such a capacity can also threaten the enemy's more valuable targets not directly involved in the offensive operations, creating an incipient but credible capacity to punish him in case of an attack. In brief, a defender that can strike outside of his borders improves his capacity to deter by denial and begins to deter by punishment.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Jakub Grygiel and A. Wess Mitchell, "Limited War Is Back," *The National Interest*, no. 133 (September/October 2014).

5 The classic distinction between deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment is in Glenn Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

Because of the small or medium size of frontline states, such capabilities will remain limited, far from reaching parity with the regional proto-imperial powers. China or Russia will maintain escalation dominance in one-on-one confrontations with their weaker neighbors. Given the small number of offensive weapons the defending states can field, it is natural to wonder whether both small US allies and revisionist states may have an incentive to strike first: the latter will want to deprive its target state of its minor capacity to hurt, while the former may fall into “use it or lose it” logic.

This is one of the fears that cautions against the acquisition of offensive weapons. But the fear is overblown. Smaller states with offensive capabilities would commit political suicide were they to start wars simply out of fear of losing their limited stock of weapons. Estonia or Poland will not assault Russia, and Japan will not invade China because they have no intention of attacking and will not acquire the necessary conventional (not to mention nuclear) superiority to do so. Moreover, the wider alliance systems of which they are members is explicitly defensive in purpose, and the United States and its allies would not back a war of aggression initiated by one of their own. Both the unbalance of military power and the nature of the Western alliance system create, therefore, strong incentives for frontline states not to start wars against their predatory neighbors.

Regional imperial aspirants will also exercise caution because a surprise attack to deprive smaller opponents of their strike capabilities may not be fully successful and, as argued later, is likely to ignite larger conflagrations by unequivocally activating the security guarantees of the protector (the United States). The offensively armed small state, after all, is anchored in a larger defensive bilateral or multilateral alliance regional revisionists are eager to sidestep. It is unlikely, therefore, that offensive capabilities in the hands of frontline states will result by themselves in a dramatic destabilization of the region.

The second fear of US allies, and in general of all allies who are the weaker and more dependent party, is that of abandonment. There is always a level of doubt about the commitment a security guarantor extends to an ally. Distance, lack of capabilities, and above all the possibility the alliance may fail to activate once a conflict begins, weaken the credibility of the commitment. Unwilling to risk its own narrowly defined security, the more powerful but distant ally may deem it too costly to come to the aid of its weaker partner.<sup>6</sup>

There are various time-tested ways in which the stronger ally can mitigate such anxieties by increasing its own credibility in the eyes of the weaker partner (as well as in those of the geopolitical rival). Public commitments to mutual defense, for instance, increase the reputational costs of abandoning an ally. Placing troops in permanent bases on the ally's territory, thereby making them vulnerable to an attack, is perhaps the most effective way of shoring up the credibility of the security guarantees extended to an ally.

But the smaller ally is not a passive recipient of alliance credibility. It too can alleviate its own fears of being abandoned by anchoring

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6 On deterrence and the “art of commitment,” see Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 35-91.

itself more firmly in the alliance. One way to do so is, paradoxically, by developing the ability to escalate the conflict. This is alliance credibility through escalation.

The small ally has an incentive to entangle – or to use a term with more negative connotations because it assumes an exaggerated unwillingness on the part of the distant ally, to entrap – its security patron.<sup>7</sup> The ability to draw in a distant and more powerful protector can mitigate the small ally's fear of being abandoned. Such fears, and the corresponding desire to entangle, become particularly acute when the hostile power is likely to engage in a low-intensity attack, limited in geographic scope, violence, and time. Such a limited assault may tempt the defending alliance not to mobilize, *de facto* abandoning the attacked state.<sup>8</sup> The distant security provider, the United States, may choose to accept a small territorial and political revision (at the immediate expense of its ally) in order to avoid a military escalation and war (at a future cost to itself).<sup>9</sup> As Roman historian Tacitus presented it, the choice is between an “uncertain war and a dishonorable peace:” the appeal of the latter can trump the necessity of the former.<sup>10</sup>

Russia's conflict in Ukraine is an exemplar of such a limited war approach, aiming to deprive the targeted state of outside support. But Russia is applying analogous and (for now) less violent tactics elsewhere, in particular toward the Baltic states and Poland. Moscow is carefully pursuing a gradual, small, low-intensity revision of the status quo with actions under the threshold of violence that would elicit a more assertive response of the powers overtly or tacitly behind the attacked state. In Ukraine, Russia pursues a limited war that avoids the activation of a wider alliance and thus attempts to achieve low-cost changes to the geopolitical status quo. A similar attack may take place in the future against a NATO ally (e.g., the Baltic states), testing the credibility of Article 5 of the North Atlantic alliance. And even if the distant security patron, the United States, places small numbers of weapons and soldiers to serve as “tripwires,” a limited war will likely avoid targeting them and therefore will not trigger an automatic response from the wider alliance. The end

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7 On entrapment and abandonment in alliances, see Michael Mandelbaum, *The Nuclear Revolution: International Politics Before and After Hiroshima* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 6; and Glenn Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (July 1984): 461-495.

8 This is an inherent problem of conventional deterrence because every aggressor seeks a quick victory. On conventional deterrence, see John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

9 The temptation to abandon an ally may be particularly acute for a maritime power, such as the United States. The safety offered by the oceans (or any body of water, such as the Channel for Great Britain) creates perverse incentives to treat allies as disposable. The working assumption is in fact that land borders are more threatening than maritime ones, and thus as long as the sea separates one from a rival, allies are a strategic luxury and not a necessity. Nicholas Spykman, for instance, observed “All the invasions into Egypt have come through the hundred miles of desert on the Sinai Peninsula, and all the land invasions into India have come over the Hindu Kush, one of the highest and most difficult mountain chains in the world.” Nicholas Spykman, “Frontiers, Security, and International Organization,” *Geographical Review* 32, no. 3 (July 1942): 438. Harold Sprout made a similar point, writing, “it is still axiomatic that sea frontiers can be, and are, defended more securely, with less outlay and effort, than land frontiers. A country thus removed from other centers of military power and ambition enjoys a measure of security and a freedom of action and choice denied to less favored countries with powerful and dangerous neighbors and vulnerable land frontiers.” Harold Sprout, “Frontiers of Defense,” *Military Affairs* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1941): 218.

10 “Bellum anceps an pax inhonesta.” Tacitus, *Annals* (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1937), LCL 322, Book 15, #25, p. 254.

result is that frontline allies fear abandonment and call for renewed and greater reassurances.

While the faraway power may prefer a great power compromise to a war (or at a minimum, it can be perceived by its allies and rivals to favor compromise, decreasing in any case its credibility), the calculation is likely to be very different for the attacked state. For it, the uncertainty of a wider and larger war may be preferable to the certainty of territorial dismemberment or of loss of political independence. Consequently, the exposed frontline state has a strong interest in escalating the limited war waged against it because by doing so it can elevate the conflict to a level that unequivocally demands the intervention of its allies. The clear incentive of the vulnerable US ally to escalate – and trade short-term risks (a destructive escalation of war) for long-term advantages (activation of the alliance and the intervention of the security patron) – makes the threat of such an escalation more credible. And the result is that deterrence is stronger.

To be able to escalate, the attacked state cannot rely exclusively on defensive capabilities that can “hold the line.” It needs to bring the war to the aggressor by targeting the enemy’s territory. Such a course of action carries serious risks because the defending state is the weaker side and does not possess escalation dominance. Any escalatory step it undertakes is more than likely to be matched by the enemy. But the purpose of the defender’s potential escalation is to increase the likelihood his allies will intervene on his side, and not to engage alone in an escalatory duel he is destined to lose. The small offensive force of the frontline state, in other words, can serve as a trigger for the alliance, akin to one of the roles played by British nuclear forces during the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> It introduces an additional risk in the strategic interaction with the revisionist rival, a risk he may be unwilling to accept.<sup>12</sup>

By projecting power unto the enemy’s territory, the defender puts the aggressor in front of an uncomfortable choice: either it responds by escalating and risking a larger war than initially desired, or it ignores the strikes and continues to fight its limited war but under much more arduous operational conditions. In either case, the defender increases the chances the war will expand in scope, size and time, allowing the allies to mobilize and come to his aid. The goal is to threaten, in Schelling’s words, “a discontinuous jump from limited war to general war, and we hope to confront them [the rival] with that choice.”<sup>13</sup>

Given the inherent dangers of such an escalation, a defending state will have to think carefully about what to target in order to limit the enemy’s response. For instance, it should avoid targets (e.g., early warning radars, nuclear reactors) the destruction of which may trigger a nuclear or otherwise disproportionate response. The frontline state seeking to balance the short-term costs of war with the long-term benefits of an

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11 Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 362.

12 As Robert Jervis put it, the threat of using a limited level of force, such as an offensive strike by the attacked state, may be deemed too risky and an “adversary can find this prospect sufficiently daunting that it will retreat or refrain from a challenge even if it has sufficient military force to be able to prevail at reasonable costs if the war is kept limited.” Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 94.

13 Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 190.



allied response must be vigilant to avoid the risk of incurring immediate retaliatory devastation of its own territory.

An additional danger frontline states need to take into consideration is that of being perceived as overly aggressive, engaging in actions that may be considered unduly provocative by their own allies. The United States might deem offensive actions of the frontline state as unwarranted given the regional revisionist's limited attack. Should Poland or Japan experience a below-the-threshold attack, each must tailor its response carefully. Hence, for example, "little green men" or a Russian "motor-cycle gang" in a border town, or Chinese "fishing trawlers" occupying a small island, may not call for an escalatory response from the targeted state – one targeting enemy ports or airports, or other high-value places. There is, however, no clear threshold of violence the crossing of which, by the revisionist power, would be widely accepted as justifying a reaction in the form of an in-depth attack. It simply depends on a variety of factors, such as the risk aversion of the distant allies (the United States in particular), the immediate threat to the forward deployed forces of those allies, or the specifics of the offensive reaction of the frontline state. But the uncertainty surrounding the diplomatic and military effects of an offensive volley from the targeted state is again a source of additional risk; it creates doubt in the mind of the revisionist power, that might suffice to deter him.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind frontline states are likely to be very careful in how they respond to limited or hybrid wars waged against them. Even were Japan or Poland to become more nationalistic and aggressive, neither would seek to provoke its stronger regional rival and or employ their offensive assets in preventive or even preemptive strikes. By doing so, they would undermine their security, grounded in the support of their allies. The greater danger is such states may become desperate if they perceive the alliance and the security guarantees of the United States as untrustworthy. Such desperation, born out of an intense fear of abandonment, may then lead to risky and destabilizing behaviors. A well armed but desperate ally may decide to use its relatively small arsenal to lash out against the regional revanchist power in a last-hope attempt to defend its independence (but it also may simply fold, switching its strategic allegiance and putting an end to an alliance, in order to limit the risks and costs that it is likely to incur). To avoid these risks, vulnerable and fearful allies must be firmly and credibly anchored in the alliance. Trusting in the security provided by the alliance, they will maintain a defensive mindset even when wielding offensive capabilities. Another way to put this is the main source of destabilization is not the possession of offensive capabilities by US allies, but the credibility of the American commitment to the region.<sup>14</sup>

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14 This is also why a US strategy relying on a long-term cost imposition on the aggressor, through for instance a blockade or sanctions, is dangerous. Not only might it not succeed and in fact generate further aggressiveness on the part of the targeted rival, it is also likely to exacerbate fears of abandonment among US allies. For a discussion of the challenges of such indirect approaches, see Aaron L. Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2014), Chapter 4, 105-132; and Elbridge Colby, "The War over the War with China," *The National Interest*, August 14, 2013.

## Strengthening Extended Deterrence

The second set of benefits of a frontline ally with offensive capability is related to the credibility of external security guarantees. In brief, a vulnerable ally with offensive capabilities strengthens the credibility of the alliance by decreasing the costs of intervention of a distant security patron.

The US challenge of extending deterrence to an ally located near the rival and potential aggressor is partly related to the distance at which it has to project power: the farther the theater of operations, the more power the United States needs.<sup>15</sup> This historic problem of a “power gradient” is compounded by the growing capacity of the rival states, whether China or Russia, to deny access to American forces in the theater. The A2/AD (anti-access/area denial) threat means the United States cannot operate freely near, or even on, the territory of its frontline ally. The frontline ally’s air, sea, and land are no longer permissive environments.<sup>16</sup> The assumption that the United States can maintain a credible extended deterrent by promising to project forces to the conflict zone once hostilities have started is simply no longer valid.

Russia’s integrated air defense system, for example, covers every Baltic state and one third of Poland, all NATO members.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Russian land-based missiles and naval assets may make Western maritime operations in the Baltic and Black seas very difficult.<sup>18</sup> Without first weakening Russia’s access denial capabilities, any projection of US power by air to those countries would likely result in high costs in terms of lost US airplanes and manpower. An analogous problem exists in Asia, where US ships would not be able to come near the ally in need of defense (South Korea, Japan, or Taiwan) without meeting a growing array of Chinese A2/AD capabilities. By increasing the costs of extended deterrence, US geopolitical competitors are aiming to decouple nearby states from their ally, Washington. The greater the costs of extending deterrence, the smaller its credibility.

Some argue, correctly, the United States should develop and plan for capabilities that would allow it to enter the area of conflict by first degrading the opponent’s A2/AD systems. This would require striking into the rival’s territory in order to blind him and to diminish the effectiveness and the quantity of his anti-ship and anti-air weapons.<sup>19</sup> The problem is such offensive operations are less credible if only a single power, the United States, is capable of engaging in them. Any attempt to counter the enemy’s A2/AD capabilities would lead to a serious escalation of the

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15 Kenneth Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York: Harper, 1962). For a slightly contrarian perspective, see Albert Wohlstetter, “Illusions of Distance,” *Foreign Affairs* 46, no. 2 (January 1968): 248-249.

16 Andrew Krepinevich, Barry Watts, and Robert Work, *Meeting the Anti-Access and Area-Denial Challenge* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2003); and Andrew Krepinevich, “The Pentagon’s Wasting Assets,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 4 (July/August 2009): 18-33.

17 Frank Gorenc, “USAFE-AFAFRICA Update,” AFA-Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition, September 15, 2014, <http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/aP%20events/Speeches/15SEP2014-GenFrankGorenc-USAFE-AFAFRICA%20Update%20at%20AFA.pdf>.

18 Julian Barnes, “Top US Admiral Says NATO Should Rework Maritime Strategy,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 22, 2015, <http://blogs.wsj.com/brussels/2015/10/22/top-u-s-admiral-says-nato-should-rework-maritime-strategy>.

19 Friedberg, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle*.

conflict, an outcome not necessarily in the interest of the distant United States for the reasons suggested earlier.

Threatened US frontline allies, on the other hand, have clear incentives and thus the credibility to engage in such anti-A2/AD actions. They have very strong enticements to keep the theater of operations open to the expeditionary support of their security guarantor, without which they cannot survive the onslaught of the stronger aggressor. An offensive volley could scrub the opponent's territory of radar sensors, command and control centers, and a few weapon platforms, opening a small and brief window in which allies could position their forces closer to the battlefields. The frontline US ally is willing to incur the associated risks of escalation not only because its offensive actions may transform a "hybrid" or limited war into a larger and clear conventional conflict (as described earlier) but also because it will decrease the threat coming from hostile A2/AD assets – increasing the likelihood of allied military support.

Due to the costs associated with rearming and the military balance favoring the neighboring rival, US frontline allies are highly unlikely to be able to develop an arsenal of medium-range missiles or bombers large enough to conduct a prolonged offensive. They are also unable to establish and maintain dominance over air and sea by themselves. But they could wield sufficient power to create a moment in which the theater of operations becomes adequately permissive for the allies to send reinforcements and restore the military equilibrium. They can burst the enemy's A2/AD bubble long enough for their own allies to join the fight.

The regional revanchist power is likely to respond to offensively armed US allies by increasing its own capabilities so as to maintain the balance in his favor. But there are strategic benefits in such an arms race, and it is important to direct it toward a more defensive posture of the revisionist state. Any move by US frontline allies to rearm, even the most defensive in nature, will generate some response from their domineering neighbors. And the most desirable response is a forced reorientation of the rival toward defense, something that can be achieved most effectively by having US allies capable of conducting strikes inside enemy territory. China or Russia, in fact, will have to allocate resources to protect their own bases and other assets from the menace of newly acquired capabilities of smaller states. Every yuan or ruble devoted to their own defense reduces the aspiring imperial powers' budgets for conducting more aggressive and expansionistic policies.

Moreover, the alternative to an arms race is not a stable status quo. Regional balances have been changing for a while, and the resilience of the existing geopolitical order in Europe and Asia is being tested with increasing frequency. Russia is aggressively modernizing its military forces while China has been pursuing an ambitious defense buildup. And they have been revising the territorial status quo of the region (Russia in Ukraine, China in the South China Sea) gradually but assertively. Even if frontline states aligned with the United States do nothing, the challenge presented by revisionist powers will not abate and will continue to destabilize the respective regions.

A restoration of stability is possible only with a steadfast investment of US resources and attention, and ultimately with the active participation of allies in deterring aggressive challengers of regional orders.<sup>20</sup> Those allies willing to pick up some overdue security provision should be encouraged and helped to acquire the most effective tools to deter rivals or defend against their attacks. Some offensive capabilities in the hands of these allies will not only strengthen extended deterrence but will redirect the ongoing arming of revisionists toward more defensive efforts. We should fear less the potential rearming of our allies and the strategic repercussions of it than the current military aggrandizement and territorial expansion of our rivals.

The nascent desire of some US allies to rearm presents thus a great opportunity to shore up a system of deterrence challenged by ambitious and disruptive powers. Given the nature of the threat (a limited war scenario) and the security environment of the region (A2/AD capabilities of the revisionists), frontline US allies should be armed with offensive arsenals capable of targeting the common rival's strategic and military assets. Such a capability will strengthen not only the immediate deterrent of the individual states but also the effectiveness of American extended deterrence. By ringing the Western alliance with offensively-armed, and yet still vulnerable states, we can restore increasingly more fragile regional military balances and geopolitical orders.

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20 Jim Thomas, "From Protectorates to Partnerships," *The American Interest* 6, no. 5 (May 2011).



## Understanding Coercive Gradualism

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**ABSTRACT:** Over the past few years, Russia and China have expanded their influence using a step-by-step strategy of coercive gradualism. This article explores the characteristics of coercive gradualism, the factors that affect its execution, and potential counters. It also examines current US policy with respect to other states' employment of coercive gradualism.

Over the past few years, Russia and China have expanded their influence, if not control, over others' sovereign territories or international waters. Affected states and the international community's efforts to counter such aggression have largely failed, or are in doubt. It appears both Russia and China will continue their expansionist aims using a step-by-step strategy - one of coercive gradualism.

Gradual approaches to executing policy or strategy have always existed. Policy changes and decision-making are often evolutionary and progress by "baby steps" or by "muddling through." President Franklin Roosevelt put it in practical terms when he said, "It is common sense to take a method and try it: If it fails, admit it frankly and try another."<sup>1</sup> The corollary to this proposition is when one finds a strategy that works, to build upon it successively and cumulatively.

Gradualism is by definition the "principle or policy of achieving some goal by gradual steps rather than by drastic change."<sup>2</sup> Likewise, we may gain some insight by looking at "incrementalism" which is "a policy of making changes, especially social changes, by degrees."<sup>3</sup> We can combine these with the Department of Defense's definition of strategy and arrive at one for coercive gradualism "a state employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve national or multinational objectives by incremental steps."<sup>4</sup> These steps can be cooperative or coercive.

Cooperative gradualism is found in almost every nation's approach to achieving its national interests. It tends to be non-confrontational. It is predicated on finding common ground between nations – shared values, economic benefit, improving governance, or mutual security. However, this article is about coercive gradualism.

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1 Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address at Oglethorpe University," public speech, May 22, 1932, <http://newdeal.feri.org/speeches/1931d.htm>.

2 *The Dictionary.com Home Page*, <http://www.dictionary.com>.

3 *Ibid.*

4 US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 8, 2010, as amended through June 15, 2015).

Coercive gradualism is simply a step-by-step pursuit of one nation's interests against other nations' interests. It is a form of aggression. Moreover, as all strategies are, it is a choice made within a context. In particular, it is a choice usually made by relatively powerful states. A state may have the capability and capacity – the ways and means – to achieve its ends, yet it might choose to do so in incremental moves as opposed to a single *coup de main*.

### Characteristics of Coercive Gradualism

Coercive gradualism is recognizable when three large aspects are in play. First, a state (an “aggressor”) advances its interests at the expense of those of another. This aggression may be accompanied by threats and intimidation which, as Thomas Schelling wrote, are “avoidable by accommodation.”<sup>5</sup> This intimidation defines the strategy's coercive nature. Next, using a step-by-step process makes it gradualist in character. This process is chosen within a specific context. An aggressor state may own the ways and means to achieve its ends in a single move, but after assessing the environment determines the risk of doing so are too great. The risk assessment thus suggests a choice. In this case, the aggressor chooses a gradualist approach because it determines the real or perceived reaction to incremental moves will not entail unacceptable costs. Thus, choice is the third characteristic of coercive gradualism. These three characteristics warrant further examination.

#### *Motivation*

Interests provide the motivation for employing any strategy, and in particular, one of coercive gradualism. The pursuit of national interests implies a rational calculation.

David McClelland's human motivation theory also provides insight into the motivations of national leaders. McClelland argues everyone has a need for achievement, affiliation, and power.<sup>6</sup> An extension of this theory could apply to people, states, or cultures that share common identities. Such groups may have a need for collective achievement, affiliation, and power.

Coercive gradualism is not normally a tool for weak states. A weak state may lack the ways and means to achieve its ends in a single move. Its gradualist approach to achieving its interests are dictated to it by forces beyond its control: it has no choice. Strength is always relative and that principle holds true when considering coercive gradualism. Likewise, the relative strength of a targeted state's allies may also be part of the calculation. Although an aggressor state may be stronger than the targeted state, it could be the anticipated reaction of the targeted state's allies that lead the aggressor state to choose coercive gradualism.

An aggressor state may assume the first step of its gradualist approach has a high likelihood of success. Perhaps the object of the aggressor state's action (the targeted state) is unwilling to contest the initial aggression. The targeted state may decide the risks of contesting the aggressor's step will outweigh its costs, or have a low likelihood of

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5 Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 4.

6 “McClelland's Human Motivation Theory,” <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/human-motivation-theory.htm>.

success. Likewise, targeted states that depend on critical resources from an aggressor may be hesitant to counter aggression. As examples, Western Europe's dependence on Russian natural gas, and Japan's electronics industry's dependence on China's rare earth elements impact European and Japanese support of, and participation in, sanctions against Russia and China respectively. Perhaps, the targeted state is unable to contest the initial aggression due to insufficient ways, means, or other resources such as time to support a defense. In a military sense, a study of conventional deterrence concluded the importance of an aggressor achieving a "quick military victory and political fait accompli."<sup>7</sup>

### *Environmental Factors*

Environmental factors might also motivate a state to engage in coercive gradualism. One such factor is precedence. A lack of effective response by the international community to other state-on-state aggression, resulting in a belief that a state can "get away with aggression," may encourage it to consider coercive gradualism. Correlating lack of past inaction to future inaction is problematic. Nonetheless, inaction may indicate a lack of capability or will, especially if the target state or its allies have interests similar to those affected by previous aggression.

Also, believing an aggressor state could withstand or mitigate anticipated reactions by the international community could encourage a state to assume the risks of coercive gradualism. This ability supports the notion that coercive gradualism is an option of the relatively strong. Regardless of an aggressor or target state's ability to execute or to counter coercive gradualism, there will always be justifications for their respective actions and reactions.

Justification is not unique to coercive gradualism, but it may provide insight into an aggressor's will and ultimate intentions. Several such justifications exist. The first is an historical claim to land or sea areas (e.g., Iraq and Kuwait in August 1990). A second is an aggressor's claims of the oppression of citizens with similar ethnic backgrounds in contested areas. Russia utilized this justification in Crimea and Ukraine. Ambiguous or nonexistent international laws also enable states to engage in aggression without clearly violating international norms (e.g., China and South China Sea).

Aggressor actions themselves may provide evidence of coercive gradualism. A state may initially move into contested territories under the guise of humanitarian assistance or as an organization supporting disaster relief. This could be legitimate support of organizations or paramilitary forces (police, border guards, coast guards, indigenous forces or organizations sympathetic to the aggressor) to set conditions or provide opportunities for military aggression. Another initial move may be under the guise of economic development (e.g., off-shore oil platforms) requiring targeted states to decide between using force on "civilians" to roll back the move, or to accept it and use other instruments of power to affect change. These initial steps to establish a foothold may be misconstrued based on the lack of engagement by aggressor military forces. Another technique an aggressor could employ is to hide the identity (state of origin) of elements deployed to set conditions for subsequent

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7 Edward Rhodes, "Conventional Deterrence," *Comparative Strategy* 19, no. 3 (2000): 222.



military operations (e.g. military forces and criminal organizations). In this case attributing aggression to a specific state may be difficult to prove.

National policy documents referring to unfulfilled aspirational interests beyond current sovereign claims may signal potential future moves. When resources, acquisition programs, and people are focused on achieving those claims, evidence of coercive gradualism is usually present. We see this problem today with China's naval investment presumably focused on fulfilling its claims in the South and East China seas.

Finally, the availability of time and space to maneuver instruments of power could encourage an aggressor to adopt a strategy of coercive gradualism. Largely, this is a matter of strategic patience: is the aggressor willing to play "the long game?" Making this calculation is another choice. The aggressor's government must identify the interest and assess the environment to include international and domestic wills. Does the international environment provide an opportunity to allow multiple steps to achieve an objective? Simultaneously, is the aggressor's domestic will patient and unified enough to allow a more gradual approach in the face of a contested national interest? Time is agnostic. It favors neither the aggressor nor the targeted state. Time between aggressor moves is available to consolidate gains, react to counters, and prepare for subsequent moves. Concomitantly, time is also available for the targeted state and its allies to develop a strategy to counter or roll back initial moves.

### **Examples of Coercive Gradualism**

Perhaps the best known example of a strategy of coercive gradualism was Nazi Germany's efforts to expand its territory prior to WWII through a combination of the instruments of national power. In the late 1930's, Germany annexed Austria (March, 1938) and shortly thereafter, Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland (October, 1938) with ineffectual reactions from English, French, and Czech leaders. Germany took control of the remainder of Czechoslovakia five months later despite the diplomatic redline Chamberlain established in the Munich Agreement. The September 1939 invasion of Poland ended Britain's, France's, New Zealand's, and Australia's acceptance of Germany's incremental land grab. On the same day, these states declared war on Germany. One can understand the acceptance of German coercive gradualism. The risk and potential cost to counter the initial German moves were perceived to be too high. The ghosts of World War I with its millions of casualties were only two decades old.

Outside acceptance of Russian coercive gradualism has been mixed. To date, Moscow's assessment of that acceptance has led to its retention of all the territory and influence it has seized. Russia has done this in spite of a UN General Assembly vote that passed by a wide margin calling on states, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any change in the status of Crimea or Sevastopol, and to refrain from actions or dealings that might be interpreted as such. However, General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, and Russia can veto any Security Council Resolutions.

In response to Russian aggression, Western nations have placed economic sanctions on Russia. In a recent article on the effects of those sanctions, Anders Aslund, a former economic advisor to the Russian and Ukrainian governments stated, “The Russian economy is now in a serious financial crisis, which is, to a considerable extent, caused by the financial sanctions.”<sup>8</sup> Russia’s choice to implement coercive gradualism as strategy manifested itself in multiple domains. From 2008 to 2015, Russia has expanded its influence into Georgia, Ukraine, the Arctic, western European airspace, western European maritime areas, and in regional/global cyberspace with a well-orchestrated series of operations coordinating multiple elements of strategic power.<sup>9</sup> Time will tell if sanctions and international pressure will convince Russia’s President Putin to reassess his coercive gradualism, to refrain from future steps, or to return to the status quo ante bellum.

China’s claims and presence in the South and East China seas is growing and seemingly permanent, much to China’s neighbors’ chagrin. On the sea, the Chinese have occupied Scarborough Shoals in the face of Philippine resistance. In the Spratly Islands, early actions at sea such as their denial of access to Vietnamese engineers in 1988 have led to exploits on land with China constructing six artificial islands.<sup>10</sup> In the air, the 2013 issuance of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in airspace claimed by South Korea and Japan reveals not only the extent of Chinese claims of sovereignty, but Beijing’s versatility in employing incremental steps to achieve them.<sup>11</sup> This is not lost on China’s neighbors. Narushige Michishita, an associate professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo, offered a summary of China’s actions: “China has been creating a gradual fait accompli, step by step, . . . We make a big deal of this now, but we’ll forget about it [ADIZ] after a while.”<sup>12</sup> The Chinese have a name for this approach—cabbage strategy: “an area is slowly surrounded by individual ‘leaves’—a fishing boat here, a coast-guard vessel there—until it’s wrapped in layers, like a cabbage.”<sup>13</sup>

Chinese claims, naval defense investment, and recent release of a map showing nearly the entire South China Sea as Chinese territory

8 Priyanka Boghani, “What’s Been the Effect of Western Sanctions on Russia?,” January 13, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/foreign-affairs-defense/putins-way/whats-been-the-effect-of-western-sanctions-on-russia>.

9 This statement consolidates views from a number of sources. Douglas Mastriano and Derek O’Malley, *Project 1704: A US Army War College Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an Appropriate US Response, and the Implications of US Landpower* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March, 2015). Uri Friedman, “The Arctic: Where the US and Russia Could Square Off Next: A Closer Look at Moscow’s Claims in the Northern Seas,” *The Atlantic*, March 28, 2014. Elizabeth Kreft, “Multiple Incidents of Russian Aggression in the Air and on Sea Prompt NATO Warnings,” *The Blaze*, December 2014. Richard Balmforth and Pavel Polityuk, “Ukraine’s President Tells Military To Prepare For ‘Full-Scale’ Russian Invasion,” *The World Post*, July 6, 2015. Vladimir Socor, “Minsk Two Armistice Rewards Russia’s Aggression, Mortgages Ukraine’s Future,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, February 20 2015. Clayton Browne, “Russian Military Aircraft Continue To Encroach On European Airspace,” *Value Walk*, March 9, 2015, <http://www.valuewalk.com/2015/03/russian-military-aircraft-on-european-airspace>.

10 Seasresearch, “China’s Artificial Island Building: Fiery Cross Reef,” November 10, 2014 <https://seasresearch.wordpress.com/2014/11/10/chinas-land-reclamation-fiery-cross-reef>.

11 The Week Staff, “China’s Audacious Territory Grab,” June 21, 2015, <http://theweek.com/articles/561324/chinas-audacious-territory-grab>.

12 Chico Harlan, “China’s Gradual Expansion in East China Sea Poses Challenge for Japan,” *Washington Post*, November 30, 2013.

13 Howard French, “China’s Dangerous Game,” *The Atlantic*, October 13, 2014.

inflamed its neighbors, and confirmed their fears of Beijing's aggressive intentions.<sup>14</sup>

## Risks

While there are opportunities to employ coercive gradualism, there are also potential risks. By setting a series of sequential intermediate objectives short of the ultimate strategic objective, targeted states may acquire a clearer picture of the intentions and the value the aggressor places on the ultimate objective. In this case, perhaps time favors the targeted state. The step-by-step process provides time to develop effective counters to the initial thrust potentially driving the costs of continued aggression to unacceptable levels.

A significant risk in employing coercive gradualism is conflict escalation. Neither the aggressor nor the targeted state or its allies have control over what the other side is willing to do to achieve or counter the initial step, or even the last step. Efforts to halt, or roll back aggression by force could result in an escalation of armed conflict well beyond what either side believed possible.

Another risk is the aggressor might miscalculate its ability to control populations and effectively govern in newly acquired territory. Populations in occupied areas may be unwilling to succumb to foreign control. This could fuel an insurgency against the aggressor resulting in a long and costly occupation that precludes the possibility of subsequent moves.

Finally, states with multi-lateral or bi-lateral agreements with the aggressor may void those agreements after the first hostile move.

## Transparency

Transparency is a reality of 21st century information environment: one's actions will be observed. As a general rule, transparency hinders aggressors. The more time the international community has to prepare (based in observed behaviors and actions) for what it perceives as impending aggression, the more time it will have to mobilize. The international community may mobilize to deter, or if necessary, defeat the aggression. Moreover, contested aggression may generate civilian casualties with the proximate cause of the collateral damage tied directly to the aggressor and transparent to all.

Transparency works for and against the targeted state (and its allies). On the plus side, transparency in the policy realm enables state and international organization leaders to convey the consequences of aggression and the benefits of restraint to any potential aggressor. In the military realm, transparency provides clarity on the capabilities available to counter the aggression – a crucial aspect of conventional deterrence.

Targeted states can also suffer from transparency. When the world hears of a policy to deter or defeat an aggressor, any failure to implement that policy can establish a precedent encouraging other states to consider aggression. Additionally, transparency is a necessary component of conventional deterrence – sharing capability and capacity in an effort

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<sup>14</sup> Edward Wong, "China Unveils New Map of South China Sea," June 25, 2015, <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/06/25/china-unveils-new-map-of-south-china-sea>.

to signal cost imposition to an aggressor. However, revealing capability and capacity enables an aggressor to develop counters and workarounds to them.

### Mitigating and Countering Measures

States can take any number of activities to prevent or counter the first move by a state contemplating coercive gradualism. One way to counter potential aggression is to satisfy the needs of the aggressor's decision-maker through alternative means. As an example, if Mr. Putin's actions in Ukraine are driven by need for achievement and power, are there diplomatic solutions that would have satisfied these needs as an alternative to territorial expansion? There is a cost to this approach. The international community's diplomatic efforts to meet an aggressor's needs could be viewed as appeasement. Ultimately, there is no guarantee such diplomatic efforts would prevent coercive gradualism. Nonetheless, it is an avenue worth considering when the alternative may be armed conflict.

State borders on the world map are not necessarily permanent. Over the past two decades a number of state borders have changed. Examples include the creation of South Sudan, the transfer of Bakassi Peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon, the dissolution of Serbia and Montenegro into two states, East Timor's independence, and the transfer of the Panama Canal Zone to Panama. Diplomatic efforts to change state borders do not always work, but a peaceful transfer of territory is not a rare occurrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A key to countering coercive gradualism is recognizing measures that could set conditions for a state considering aggression. These measures include economic development in contested waters, non-military aid to disaffected populations in a target country (without target country concurrence) or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. As stated, they also include more recognizable measures like the reiteration of historic claims, justifications, and investment in equipment and people that might support a future move. For any nation attempting to counter coercive gradualism, understanding the environment, defining the problem set, and developing multiple approaches is a vital starting point.<sup>15</sup>

In the face of an aggressor state employing coercive gradualism, other states will weigh their interests. If deemed appropriate, deterrence may be an acceptable approach to counter potential aggression. Military conventional deterrence may prevent states from taking the first aggressive act. Unfortunately, there are limits to conventional deterrence. Deterrence theory takes into account the costs and benefits of proposed actions by an adversary as weighed against the costs and benefits of restraint. Expert Edward Rhodes concludes some adversaries are, "at times, undeterrable."<sup>16</sup> Robert Pape explains convincing the aggressor that the benefits of inaction have greater value than the benefits of aggression is the difficulty. The aggressor determines the value of the strategic

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15 US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), III-1.

16 Rhodes, "Conventional Deterrence," 221.

objective, which leaves the targeted state and international community only two choices: impose costs or emphasize the benefits of restraint.<sup>17</sup>

States can take a number of specific actions prior to or during the first aggressive move. All are well known and individually, may not achieve the deterrent effect. However, in combination, these efforts could deter a state that is considering coercive gradualism:

- Increase the volume and legitimacy of open-source information to make an aggressor's action transparent.
- Build a reservoir of domestic will to counter current and potential aggressor moves.
- Establish mutual or bilateral security agreements with allied nations potentially affected by aggression.
- Increase intelligence activities to include entering into intelligence-sharing agreements; such activities could provide indications and useful warnings.
- Seek cooperative security efforts with allied states; a demonstration of support could have a significant deterrent effect.
- Seek international arbitration to settle disputes in the case of ambiguous or unclear international laws.
- Threaten aggressors with targeted and allied state economic sanctions.
- Counter the aggressor's anticipated first move with the threat of force (coercive diplomacy).<sup>18</sup>

One of the challenges of the above actions is that most of them take time to execute – potentially more time than it would take an aggressor to mobilize and execute the first move of its coercive gradualism strategy.

If deterrence fails and an aggressor achieves a successful first move, many of the actions above are still appropriate. The target nation and international community have additional actions available to reverse or halt an aggressor's moves. International condemnation through UN resolutions may help build coalitions in support of the target state. Likewise, UN resolutions may legitimize the use of force to counter aggression. Unfortunately, given the veto power of the permanent Security Council members, especially if the offender is a permanent member, states may find significant difficulty in building effective coalitions against specific acts of aggression.

Another obvious countermove to coercive gradualism is sanctions. Economic sanctions are by now a customary response on the part of the international community to aggression. Based on Peter Steen's recent Special Report on Sanctions, the "endowment effect"

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17 Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), Kindle Edition location 395.

18 Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 36. For further readings on coercive diplomacy, see Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003), vii; Bruce Jentleson, "Coercive Diplomacy: Scope and Limits in the Contemporary World," December 2006, <http://stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/pab-06CoerDip.pdf>; and Sam Brannen, "The Return of Coercive Diplomacy," September 12, 2013, <http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2013/09/return-coercive-diplomacy/70284/>.

and the “availability heuristic” may reduce the effectiveness of sanctions.<sup>19</sup> Accepting the imposition of sanctions to punish aggression is predictable; thus, the aggressor may take steps to mitigate or reduce the effectiveness of those sanctions. For example, aggressors may move financial resources, establish alternative essential materials sources or services, or offer inducements to states to prevent their participation in any sanctions regime.

Other target state actions could also prevent additional aggression. Target states and their allies could provide covert support to indigenous forces in occupied areas to contest the aggression. Finally, the least desirable, but arguably the most definitive way to halt and (or reverse) the situation would be to compel the aggressor to return to the status quo antebellum.<sup>20</sup> An example is Desert Storm. The US-led coalition halted Iraqi aggression into Saudi Arabia and reversed the initial incursion into Kuwait. Kevin Woods, principal author of the *Iraqi Perspectives Project* stated that pre-Desert Storm, Iraq had plans to invade Saudi Arabia in three stages with the final stage ending at Saudi Aramco’s Ras Tanura major oil port. While not part of the initial Iraqi plan during its invasion of Kuwait, Woods offered:

Of course if the coalition or Saudi Arabia had reacted as Saddam hoped (stood down, withdrew in the face of Iraqi intimidation)... in my estimate Saddam’s personality was such that I have no doubt within time – he would have been tempted to threaten, if not execute, the next phases as a way to achieve his original purposes and even his grand historic vision of breaking the Gulf Arabs as a part of the plan to restore Arab (Iraqi led) greatness.<sup>21</sup>

In this case, the international community contested the initial aggressive move and ultimately, through compellence, restored Kuwaiti sovereignty.

Countering a strategy of coercive gradualism once initiated requires continuous pressure using the instruments of power in a synchronized manner, and strategic patience. Regrettably, state leaders may not have the ability or desire to apply this pressure for prolonged periods of time. The strategic environment is constantly changing and other crises can emerge which might deflect leader attention. Consistent with Mr. Michishita’s comment above, absent sustained will and attention, unchecked aggression over time leads to acceptance of a “new normal.”

President Barack Obama recognized this reality and addressed strategic patience in his 2015 State of the Union address when he stated, “We’re upholding the principle that bigger nations can’t bully the small, by opposing Russian aggression, supporting Ukraine’s democracy, and

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19 Peter Steen, e-mail message to author, January 7, 2015. Mr. Steen is an economist and Special Advisor to the Principal Deputy Director, Joint Staff, J5. Every week he does a Special Report on economics and national security and his distribution list includes numerous senior leaders and flag officers in the Pentagon. “The ‘endowment effect’ leads people and decision makers to inflate the cost of giving up a ‘held’ program (or peninsula). The ‘availability heuristic’ shows that decision makers both amongst the sanctioning and sanctioned may miss information or very likely misconstrue the new information due to habits of the mind.”

20 For a detailed look at deterrence and compellence, see Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 74. For further readings on compellence, see Edward Ifft, “Deterrence, Blackmail, Friendly Persuasion,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 23, no. 3 (September 2007), and Mary Kaldor, “American Power: From ‘Compellence’ to Cosmopolitanism?” *International Affairs* 79, no. 1 (January 2003).

21 Kevin Woods, e-mail message to author, January 15, 2015. Dr. Woods is the author of the *Iraqi Perspectives Project*.

reassuring our NATO allies.” He then added, “That’s how America leads — not with bluster, but with *persistent, steady resolve* [authors’ emphasis].”<sup>22</sup>

### Coercive Gradualism and US Foreign Policy

The current National Security Strategy (NSS) states US policy regarding aggression, and the section “Build Capacity to Prevent Conflict,” includes language applicable to countering coercive gradualism.

American diplomacy and leadership, backed by a strong military, remain essential to deterring future acts of inter-state aggression and provocation by reaffirming our security commitments to allies and partners, investing in their capabilities to withstand coercion, imposing costs on those who threaten their neighbors or violate fundamental international norms, and embedding our actions within wider regional strategies.<sup>23</sup>

The United States has a role in shaping the global security environment proactively and in enforcing it should coercive gradualism be observed. Under a section titled “International Order” the NSS states, “We have an opportunity - and obligation - to lead the way in reinforcing, shaping, and where appropriate, creating the rules, norms, and institutions that are the foundation for peace, security, prosperity, and the protection of human rights in the 21st century.”<sup>24</sup>

The National Military Strategy (NMS) also contains language on countering aggression. “Should deterrence fail to prevent aggression, the US military stands ready to project power to deny an adversary’s objectives and decisively defeat any actor that threatens the US homeland, our national interests, or our allies and partners.”<sup>25</sup> This section reinforces the expectation that force can, and will, be used to counter acts of coercive gradualism when American national interests are at stake.

US strategic documents clearly state the United States will work to counter states that violate international norms through aggression. However, theory and practice do not always align. In an article evaluating Philip Bobbitt’s book *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace, and the Course of History*, Dennis Patterson states, “We do not choose our values: we make choices and in doing so, exhibit our values.”<sup>26</sup> Here is the dilemma for the United States. Will its words match its deeds? In *Joint Force Quarterly* article in 2009 Admiral Mullen addressed this issue:

We hurt ourselves more when our words don’t align with our actions. Our enemies regularly monitor the news to discern coalition and American intent as weighed against the efforts of our forces. When they find a “say-do” gap—such as Abu Ghraib—they drive a truck right through it. So should we, quite frankly. We must be vigilant about holding ourselves accountable to higher standards of conduct and closing any gaps, real or perceived, between what we say about ourselves and what we do to back it up.<sup>27</sup>

22 Barack H. Obama, “State of the Union,” public speech, United States Capitol, January 20, 2015.

23 Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 10.

24 *Ibid.*, 23.

25 Martin E. Dempsey, *The National Military Strategy of United States of America 2015* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, June 2015), 7.

26 Dennis Patterson, “The New Leviathan,” *Michigan Law Review* 101 (May 2003): 1731.

27 Michael G. Mullen, “Strategic Communications: Getting Back to Basics,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 55 (4th Quarter 2009): 4.

## Conclusion

Coercive gradualism offers both opportunities and consequences to states seeking to expand their influence, if not control, over others' sovereign territory. Once an aggressor makes the first move, rolling it back may prove very difficult. There are no simple solutions.

Key to countering a strategy of coercive gradualism is preventing the initial aggressive move using all instruments of power. Ultimately, Clausewitz's dictum regarding the relationship between the value of the political object and the price (sacrifice) the state is willing to pay for that object will define how much a state is willing to invest in pursuing or countering coercive gradualism.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 92.





## Dealing with Uncertainty in Strategic Decision-making

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Yakov Ben-Haim

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**ABSTRACT:** Strategic uncertainty is the disparity between what one knows, and what one needs to know in order to make a responsible decision; it permeates defense decision-making. Because of strategic uncertainty, planners must maximize the robustness against surprise in striving to achieve critical goals. This article describes the decision methodology known as “robust-satisfying” and the integration of this method with other military decision-making processes.

Flipping a fair coin has equal chance of getting heads or tails. Rolling a balanced dice has equal probabilities for each of six known outcomes. But if we take this into the realm of strategic decision-making and consider the 2002 assessment of Iraqi capability with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), how many outcomes should we ponder: what are they and what are their likelihoods? One might say the answer is binary: “Either they do or they do not have WMD.” Or, perhaps we should consider multiple possibilities: “They have small (or large) quantities, they are (or are not) developing more, and they intend to use it (or not).” It is as though we are rolling dice without knowing how many faces each die has, and whether or not each is balanced for equal probabilities of all outcomes. This is essentially the problem every strategist faces, and the one this article proposes to address.

We often are justified in thinking probabilistically and in saying something is very likely. For example, Stalin’s military advisers in 1941 claimed a German invasion of the Soviet Union was very likely. The advisers had reconnaissance evidence, captured documents, and more.<sup>1</sup> Most analysts (though not Stalin) readily acknowledged the complementary assertion – Germany is not about to invade Russia – was very unlikely.

In binary logic, an assertion is either true or false. If we know an assertion is true, then we know the negation of that assertion is false. There is an “excluded middle” in binary logic. The excluded middle rules out the possibility an assertion is both true and false. Probabilistic thinking is an extension – to the domain of uncertainty – of the binary thinking of pure logic: If we know an assertion is highly probable, then we know the negation of that assertion is highly unlikely. An assertion and its negation cannot both be highly likely when using probabilistic reasoning.

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1 Richard Overly, *Why the Allies Won*, 2nd ed. (London: Pimlico, 2006), 80.

In strategic affairs, we often do not know enough about the situation to exclude the middle as we routinely do in binary logic and in probabilistic thinking. The British during World War II could have viewed the assertion that Germany was trying to build an atomic bomb as “quite likely” (indeed they were). Otto Hahn, who was a war-time professor in Berlin, had visited Enrico Fermi during the latter’s experiments with uranium in the 1930s, and Hahn won the 1944 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (awarded in 1945) for his discovery of fission of heavy nuclei.<sup>2</sup> But one could argue the Nazis abjured “Jewish physics,” such as relativity and quantum theory, and therefore it is “quite unlikely” Germany would try to exploit this physics in order to build an atom bomb. Indeed, the Nazis never pursued nuclear weapons as enthusiastically as the Allies.

If one needs to say an assertion is both quite likely and quite unlikely, one must abandon the binary structure of probability. This need arises quite often in strategic affairs. One reason is conflicting intelligence reports are common, as the Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz emphasized.<sup>3</sup> Another reason is we often are unaware of, or do not understand, new doctrinal or technological possibilities. For instance, the possibility and implications of massive infantry use of hand-held Sagger anti-tank ordnance surprised the Israelis in the Yom Kippur War, despite their experiences with similar missiles both as users and as targets.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, prediction is always difficult, especially in war. For example, P.M.H. Bell discusses the unpredictability of Stalingrad as a turning point in the war, whose outcome was uncertain even in 1944.<sup>5</sup>

The uncertainty confronting the strategic planner is often less structured and less well characterized than probabilistic uncertainty. We will define strategic uncertainty as *the disparity between what we do know and what we need to know in order to make a responsible decision*. Strategic uncertainty is a functionally important information-gap, and it has two elements. First, the domain of possibilities is unbounded and poorly characterized. This is different from probabilistic uncertainty where we know the domain of possible outcomes (even though this domain may be huge and complex). The second element of strategic uncertainty is that it is functionally important because it impacts the outcome of a decision. We are explicitly concerned with outcomes, and with uncertainties that may jeopardize critical goals or may be exploited to achieve desired outcomes.

### Doing Our Best: Optimization is Not What it Seems

Managing strategic uncertainty is difficult. The successful response to strategic uncertainty is to acknowledge it and to struggle with it, but to recognize that strategic uncertainty is ineradicable.

The pervasiveness of uncertainty has profound implications for what it means to do one’s best in many areas, including military

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2 Nobelprize.org, “The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1944: Otto Hahn,” [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1944](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/chemistry/laureates/1944).

3 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Book One, trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 117.

4 Meir Finkel, *On Flexibility: Recovery from Technological and Doctrinal Surprise on the Battlefield*, trans. by Moshe Tlamim (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 29, 155, 156, 179.

5 P.M.H. Bell, *Twelve Turning Points of the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 95, 231.

strategy. The decision methodology, which could be called outcome-optimization, begins by identifying the best available information, understanding, and insight, including perhaps assessments of uncertainty. We will call this information our knowledge. This knowledge entails information and understanding about friendly and adversarial capabilities, geopolitical constraints and opportunities, terrain, logistics, etc. Outcome-optimization chooses the option whose knowledge-based predicted outcome is best.

Outcome-optimization is usually unsatisfactory for decision-making when facing strategic uncertainty because our knowledge is likely wrong in important respects. Instead, we will advocate the decision methodology of “robustly satisfying” outcome requirements.<sup>6</sup> The basic idea is to identify outcomes that are essential – goals that *must* be achieved – and then to choose the decision that will achieve those critical outcomes over the greatest range of future surprises.

We use our knowledge in two ways. First, to assess the putative desirability of the alternative decisions, and second, to evaluate the vulnerability of those alternatives to surprising future developments. The robust-satisfying strategy is the one with maximal power against strategic uncertainty while satisfying critical requirements. In other words, the outcome will be satisfactory, though not necessarily optimal, over the greatest range of future deviations from our current understanding. Of course, what constitutes a satisfactory outcome can be as modest or as ambitious as one wants.

A simple preliminary example is the robust satisfying response to a surprise attack. The immediate critical goals are to protect and stabilize the attacked force and to assess the strength and deployment of the attacking force. Actions are taken that depend minimally on the limited and uncertain knowledge about the attacker. Uncertainty about the attacker will usually preclude an immediate attempt to achieve an optimal outcome such as annihilating the attacker. Subsequently, the critical goals change and the response evolves accordingly.

Colin Gray expressed something very close to the idea of robust satisfying when he wrote:

You cannot know today what choices in defense planning you should make that will be judged correct in ten or 20 years' time. Why? Because one cannot know what is unknowable. Rather than accept a challenge that is impossible to meet, however, pick one that can be met well enough. Specifically, develop policy-makers, defense planners, and military executives so that they are intellectually equipped to find good enough solutions to the problems that emerge or even erupt unpredictably years from now. ... The gold standard for good enough defense planning is to get the biggest decisions correct enough so that one's successors will lament 'if only ...' solely with regard to past errors that are distinctly survivable.<sup>7</sup>

The goal of the methodology we are calling “robust-satisfying” is to achieve *specified critical objectives reliably*. This is different from attempting

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6 Further discussion of ideas in this section are found in Yakov Ben-Haim, “Strategy Selection: An Info-Gap Methodology,” *Defense & Security Analysis* 30, no. 2 (2014): 106-119. Robust-satisfying is central in info-gap decision theory. See Yakov Ben-Haim, *Info-Gap Decision Theory: Decisions Under Severe Uncertainty*, 2nd ed. (London: Academic Press, 2006).

7 Colin S. Gray, “War - Continuity in Change, and Change in Continuity,” *Parameters* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 6, 9.

to achieve the best possible outcome. Charles Freilich described a closely related idea in analyzing Israeli formulation of military strategy in Lebanon:

We have thus adopted a different criterion of success as the measure of a DMP [decision-making process]: not the quality of the outcome, but the degree to which decision makers achieved their objectives. The central argument is not that Israel would have achieved better outcomes had the process been better, but that the prospects of it actually achieving its objectives would have increased significantly.<sup>8</sup>

Robustness against strategic uncertainty, or simply robustness, is the core of the methodology we are describing. A strategy is robust to uncertainty if the specified outcome requirements are achieved even if the future evolves very differently from our anticipations. A strategy is highly robust if critical goals are achieved despite great surprise or large error in our understanding. Low robustness means the goals are jeopardized if the future deviates even slightly from the predictions based on our knowledge.

Three components make up an information-gap robust-satisfying decision. The first component is our information, understanding, and insight about relevant situations, what we are calling our knowledge. Second, we specify the goals that must be achieved, without which the outcome is not acceptable or good enough or not distinctly survivable. Third, we identify those aspects of the first two elements – the knowledge and the goals – that are uncertain, about which we might be wrong or ignorant.

These three components – knowledge, goals, and uncertainties – are combined in assessing the robustness of any proposed strategy. The robustness of a specified strategy is the greatest uncertainty that can be tolerated without falling short of the goals. Robustness is the greatest degree of error, in knowledge and goals, which does not prevent achievement of the goals.

### First Example: Epaminondas's Feint

We will use the Theban-Spartan Wars of the 4th century BCE as a brief illustration of the method. Keegan describes the situation as follows:

Thebes won two remarkable victories, at Leuctra in 371 and Mantinea in 362, where its outstanding general, Epaminondas, demonstrated that the phalanx system could be adapted to achieve decisive tactical manoeuvre in the face of the enemy. At Leuctra, outnumbered 11,000 to 6000, he quadrupled the strength of his left wing and, masking his weakness on the right, led his massed column in a charge. Expecting the battle to develop in normal phalanx style, when both sides met in equal strength along the whole front of engagement, the Spartans failed to reinforce the threatened section in time and were broken, for considerable loss to themselves and almost none to the Thebans. Despite this warning, they allowed themselves to be surprised in exactly the same fashion at Mantinea nine years later and were again defeated.<sup>9</sup>

8 Charles D. Freilich, "Israel In Lebanon—Getting It Wrong: The 1982 Invasion, 2000 Withdrawal, and 2006 War," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 3 (2012): 69.

9 John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 258. See also John David Lewis, *Nothing Less than Victory: Decisive Wars and the Lessons of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 52.

A Spartan robust-satisfying analysis would begin by identifying the Spartan goal. Given the balance of force favoring the Spartans nearly 2-to-1, the goal could reasonably have been routing the Thebans.

One then outlines the relevant knowledge. This knowledge would include intelligence about enemy strength, plans of battle, weapons and tactics, weather, terrain, and so on.

One then identifies the domains of uncertainty, which can be numerous. How confident are we in the intelligence about enemy strength? Might enemy allies be lurking in the region? Is the intended field of battle truly flat and unimpeded?

These three components – the goal, the knowledge, and the uncertainties – are then combined in assessing the robustness to error or surprise of any proposed Spartan plan of battle. This is not a simple task (hindsight is a tremendous aid).

The analysis of a proposed decision centers on the “robustness question” which is: how large an error or surprise can the proposed plan tolerate without falling short of the goal? The question being asked is not “how wrong are we?” but rather “how large an error can we tolerate?” These are very different questions, and only the second question is answerable with our current knowledge. Furthermore, the question is not “what is the best possible outcome?” but rather “what is the most robust plan for achieving our goals?” These questions also differ fundamentally, and the latter is far more relevant when facing strategic uncertainty.

We will not perform the robustness analysis on all the dimensions of uncertainty. We will focus on the Spartan uncertainty about Theban tactics. The standard tactical model, as Keegan explains, was uniform frontal assault of phalanxes leading to close fighting with swords and spears. The robustness question for the Spartans is: how large a Theban deviation from this combat model would deny Spartan victory? If the Spartans were confident that a 2-to-1 force ratio was sufficient for victory, then a local 2-to-1 Theban force concentration entails significant Spartan vulnerability. Given the overall Spartan force advantage, a robust tactic for the Spartans would be to hold significant reserve to either bolster Spartan forces against Theban concentration or to exploit points of Theban weakness.

The point of this example is not to claim that holding force in reserve is a good tactic. The point is the type of reasoning: identify goals, knowledge and uncertainties, and then maximize one’s robustness against surprise. Do not ask for the best outcome; ask for the best robustness in achieving specified outcomes (that may be very ambitious). One is optimizing something (the robustness) but not what is often the aim of optimization (the substantive outcome).

Strategic uncertainty motivates the robust-satisfying methodology: optimize one’s immunity against surprise, rather than trying to optimize the quality of the outcome. Routing the Thebans on the day of battle is less than a Spartan general might desire: totally destroying their force, their will to fight, their allies’ support, the economic base of their future resistance, etc. Routing the Thebans, we suppose in this example, would constitute success or victory or at least be good enough, and the aim of

the robust-satisfying analysis is to achieve this outcome as reliably as possible. What one optimizes is the reliability of a good enough outcome (which can be chosen as ambitiously or as modestly as one wants).

The analysis would continue by examining the vulnerability to additional uncertainties and the robustness obtained from alternative plans of battle. The analysis is neither simple, nor fast, nor free of the need for deliberation and judgment. However, the process identifies a plan that will achieve the specified goals over the widest range of surprise by the adversary and error in our knowledge.

### **Trade-off in Force Development: An Israeli Example**

Military planners often face a trade-off, given limited budgets, between the ability to apply force, and the ability to identify threats and targets for that force. Neither alone would be effective. More generically, the trade-off is between different but complementary military capabilities. For example, John Gordon and Jerry Sollinger write that “the Army’s essential problem is the changing relationship between air and ground forces at the high-end of the conflict spectrum, especially the appeal stand-off (usually air-delivered) precision munitions have to risk-averse decisionmakers.”<sup>10</sup>

The attractiveness of airpower over landpower was illustrated in the Israeli “Defensive Pillar” operation in Gaza (November 14 to 21, 2012). Massive landpower was deployed at the border, but operations were terminated after eight days of precise aerial munition and naval artillery attack without land action. As Lukas Milevski explains in a different context, “Landpower exclusively may take and exercise control,” but “landpower, of all tools of power, faces the greatest impediments, risks, and dangers in its use.”<sup>11</sup> Critics of Israel’s cease-fire pointed out Hamas retained considerable assets – rockets and launchers hidden in civilian areas – that could be destroyed only by invasion. The response to these critics was that invasion would entail significant civilian and military casualties and international condemnation.

Choosing between two options, motivated by the Israeli experience, will illustrate the robust-satisfying methodology in response to strategic uncertainty.<sup>12</sup>

1. Massive investment in aerial delivery systems and instrumented intelligence sources, as well as sensor capabilities for threat detection and munitions control, would enable effective focused use of aerial and artillery power. Landpower is needed only in a supporting role. We will call this option “aerial intel and delivery.” This would leverage the strong Israeli hi-tech capabilities.
2. Extensive landpower with supporting airpower are essential for defense and control of territory because Israel has almost no strategic depth separating major civilian populations from international borders, and is thus extremely vulnerable to invasion. We will call this

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<sup>10</sup> John Gordon IV and Jerry Sollinger, “The Army’s Dilemma,” *Parameters* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 43.

<sup>11</sup> Lukas Milevski, “Fortissimus Inter Pares: The Utility of Landpower in Grand Strategy,” *Parameters* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 14.

<sup>12</sup> More extensive discussion of this example is found in Ben-Haim, “Strategy Selection: An Info-Gap Methodology.”

the landpower option.

An Israeli strategist might reason as follows in selecting between these options, drawing on experience in Lebanon and Gaza over the past decade.<sup>13</sup> We will not present a comprehensive analysis of these operations. We consider a simplified planning problem in order to illustrate the robust-satisfying method for strategic planning. Different judgments might be made in a real-life situation.

The major security challenges in coming years arise from missile bombardment of Israeli cities and towns by non-state actors. The threat of land invasion by a national army is small though not negligible. Consequently, the preferred response by risk-averse elected officials, and due to international constraints, focuses on neutralizing incoming missiles, extensive intelligence on the adversaries' capabilities, and pin-point aerial capability for eliminating enemy assets. In short, the best current estimates indicate a clear preference for the aerial intel and delivery platform over the use of landpower.

However, the best current estimates of future security challenges are highly uncertain. The fluid nature of geo-politics in the region can cause rapid change in the dominant security challenges. Degradation of conventional landpower would be disastrous in the case of major theater war against several regional states. Under-development of landpower could even induce traditional war as deterrence erodes, even though current understanding makes such a scenario unlikely. Unanticipated threats (e.g., attack tunnels or massive rocket capabilities) could necessitate response by ground forces. In short, the most reasonable option – aerial intel and delivery – is also the riskiest given the strategic uncertainty about future political and military developments in the immediate region and beyond.

We now outline the three elements of the robust-satisfying analysis: the knowledge, the goal, and the uncertainties. We then specify two alternative options available to the planner and draw conclusions about robustness and the prioritization of the options.

Our understanding of the situation – the knowledge – is that adversaries have two alternative modes of attack. The much more plausible mode is to support informal non-state actors engaging in frequent but fluctuating missile bombardment of civilian populations. Large arsenals can be provided to these non-state actors, who have high motivation and ability to cause injury and damage and to seriously disrupt civilian life. The much less plausible mode of attack is conventional war with land forces and supporting air power. Major injury and damage would result from unrestrained conventional war.

The goal is to maintain, in the civilian population, a sense of personal security and normality in daily life or, equivalently, to prevent what Shamir and Hecht called psychological exhaustion of the populace.<sup>14</sup> This is operationalized by requiring a low level of loss of life, injury or damage to property. (We ignore other goals in this analysis.)

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<sup>13</sup> 2nd Lebanon War, 12 July to 14 August 2006; Operation Cast Lead, 27 December 2008 to 17 January 2009. Operation Pillar of Defense, 14 to 21 November 2012. Operation Protective Edge, 8 July to 26 August 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Eitan Shamir and Eado Hecht, "A War Examined, Gaza 2014: Israel's Attrition vs Hamas' Exhaustion," *Parameters* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2014-15): 85.



Four issues are subject to strategic uncertainty. First, the likelihood of conventional war seems small but non-negligible and it is imprecisely known. Neighboring countries maintain substantial standing armies with offensive capabilities. Future geo-political developments could quickly change the likelihood of war. What seems implausible might actually be quite likely due to unknown future developments. Second, future missile range, payload, accuracy and quantity employed by non-state actors will improve at unknown rates. Third, instrumented intelligence can greatly enhance weapon effectiveness. However, the extent to which instrumented intelligence provides thorough understanding of the adversary is highly uncertain. The adversary's goals, morale or organization may change in unknown ways. These first three uncertainties relate to the knowledge. The fourth uncertainty is that the civilian population may, in the future, become less tolerant to loss of life, injury or damage. Thus the goal is uncertain.

Having outlined the knowledge, the goal, and the uncertainties, we now specify two alternative options, and subsequently assess their robustness.

The first option, aerial intel and delivery, is designed to reduce drastically the disruption of civilian life from non-state missile bombardment by continuous interdiction of missile attack and by targeted elimination of enemy assets. Supported by solid land capability, the knowledge predicts that this option plausibly provides acceptably low loss of life, injury or damage in response to either mode of enemy attack. Ignoring uncertainty for the moment, the knowledge indicates that this option would be acceptable.

The second option, landpower, is primarily designed to repulse a conventional invasion and to bring the conflict into enemy territory quickly. This option is less effective than aerial intel and delivery against low-level non-state missile attack. Major landpower can be employed to eliminate such activity by invasion and control of territory, but the threshold for action is necessarily rather high. Consequently our knowledge predicts that more loss of life, injury or damage is the plausible outcome of landpower. Again ignoring uncertainty for now, our knowledge indicates that landpower is less acceptable than aerial intel and delivery. If we knew the knowledge to be correct, we would prefer aerial intel and delivery over landpower. Aerial intel and delivery would be the preferred option based on the outcome optimization methodology discussed earlier.

### **Assessment**

We are now in a position to assess the robustness (to uncertainty) of each option, for achieving the goal despite strategic uncertainty in both the knowledge and the goal. The discussion will briefly focus on four general and inter-related conclusions.

First, predicted outcomes are not a reliable basis for selecting an option. Our knowledge is quite likely wrong, so knowledge-based predictions may err greatly and thus are not a reliable basis for prioritizing the available options. Like the Spartans' error in their war against Thebes, it would be an error to suppose that the future can be reliably predicted from the past or from what now looks most plausible.

Selecting aerial intel and delivery because it is predicted, by our knowledge, to yield a better outcome than landpower, is unreliable because the knowledge is uncertain and likely wrong in significant ways. In contrast, the robust-satisfying approach is to select the option that would achieve the specified goals with the greatest robustness against uncertainty in the knowledge.

Second, goals that are more numerous or quantitatively more demanding, are also more vulnerable (less robust) to strategic uncertainty. For example, if the goal is to prevent both civilian casualties and property damage, then more contingencies can prevent achievement of the goal, than if the goal is only to prevent casualties. Similarly, the goal of preventing all civilian casualties can fail in more ways, and is thus less robust, than the goal of keeping casualties below a threshold, say 5 per year. We can summarize this by saying that more demanding and ambitious goals are more vulnerable to surprise. We are not saying that more audacious actions are necessarily less robust. We are saying that striving to achieve more ambitious outcomes can fail in more ways than striving to achieve less. A standard approach – optimizing the substantive outcome – would favor achieving more rather than less. In contrast, the robust-satisfying approach tries to achieve specified goals despite inevitable surprises along the way.

Third, the option that is preferable, based on its predicted outcome, may in fact be less robust than other alternatives for achieving the goal. This was true in the Theban wars, where uniform deployment of the Spartan phalanxes was disastrous for Sparta. The choice between aerial intel and delivery, and landpower, is more complicated. Aerial intel and delivery looks better than landpower because the knowledge predicts better outcomes with aerial intel and delivery. If the goal is very demanding (e.g., no casualties), then aerial intel and delivery may be the only feasible option and it will be more robust than landpower which would not reach the goal even if the knowledge is correct. This has two implications. First, the robustness of aerial intel and delivery for achieving a very demanding goal will be small, so perhaps the goal should be re-examined. The robustness analysis reveals situations in which existing capabilities can't reliably deliver the goals; consequently, the goals may need to be modified. Second, as a goal is relaxed (e.g. accepting greater loss of life or property), landpower becomes more robust against surprise. In short, the robust prioritization of options may differ from the prioritization based on outcome optimization. That is, landpower may be more robust than aerial intel and delivery for achieving specified goals, even though aerial intel and delivery is predicted (by our knowledge) to have a better outcome. Furthermore, the actual choice depends on the goals. Very demanding goals (very low civilian injury and damage) will indicate aerial intel and delivery, while less demanding goals will indicate landpower.

Finally, the analysis identifies and clarifies the implications of central judgments that must be made. The info-gap robust-satisfying analysis is a conceptual framework for deliberation, judgment, and selection of an option.

## Conclusion

The future will often be surprising because current knowledge and understanding are incomplete or deficient in functionally important ways. Strategic uncertainty is the disparity between what one knows, and what one needs to know in order to make a responsible decision. Strategic uncertainty permeates defense policymaking and strategic planning.

Planners and decision-makers for strategic issues must do their best, but this does not mean achieving the best conceivable outcome. Political rhetoric aside, strategic planners must identify critical goals – outcomes that must be achieved, without which the result would be unacceptable – and then choose a decision that will achieve those goals over the widest range of surprise. Referring to the aerial intel and delivery/landpower example discussed earlier, we can contrast conventional outcome-optimization, with the proposed robust-satisfying approach. Conventionally one says: Use your best knowledge to predict outcomes, and then adopt the plan whose outcome is predicted to be best. Aerial intel and delivery was predicted to have lower cost than landpower, and thus to be preferred by the outcome-optimizer. However, the prevalence of strategic uncertainty means that our knowledge is wrong is important and unknown ways. This undermines the reliability and usefulness of such predictions. The robust-satisfying approach in choosing between aerial intel and delivery and landpower begins by imagining how our knowledge could err. One then chooses the option that would cause no more than acceptable loss over the widest range of deviation between our expectations and what the future could bring. Because of strategic uncertainty, planners should maximize the robustness against surprise in striving to achieve critical goals. It is unrealistic, and may be irresponsible, to try to maximize the substantive value of the outcome itself.

We described the decision methodology of robust-satisfying and its three components (knowledge, goals, and uncertainties), and illustrated the prioritization of decision options with two examples. The methodology is relevant to many challenges facing the United States.

Consider US coordination with a friendly state, in competition with a neighboring state that can project both land and marine power. A “competitive strategies” model argues that landpower development by the friendly state could threaten the competitor’s border and draw the competitor away from maritime competition with the United States. In contrast, a “strategic partnership” model argues that friendly maritime development could assist US efforts to protect the maritime commons against the competitor.

Difficulty in establishing a US policy preference derives in part from uncertainty in the relative validity of these two models. Friendly landpower buildup could, unlike the competitive strategies prediction, drive the competitor to maritime buildup as a path of least resistance for power projection. Or, friendly maritime growth could, unlike the strategic partnership anticipation, lead to re-doubled maritime competition in response to augmented maritime challenges. Strategic uncertainty dominates this policy selection, and weighs against choosing the strategy with the best predicted outcome. The robust-satisfying approach chooses the

strategy that can tolerate the greatest error without jeopardizing specified outcome requirements.

A robust-satisfying analysis is readily integrated with other tools for military decision-making. For example, in identifying “prudent risks to exploit opportunities” the commander must “analyze and minimize as many hazards as possible.”<sup>15</sup> This hazard analysis can be operationalized by assessing the robustness against uncertain threats. Likewise, assessing the risk of a threat can be based on the estimated “probability of occurrence and the severity of consequences once the occurrence happens.”<sup>16</sup> These estimates are uncertain and their robustness to error can be evaluated. Similarly, Courses of Action (COAs) can be compared by using a decision matrix of weights and ratings of each COA for each relevant criterion.<sup>17</sup> The COA assessment can be evaluated for its robustness to uncertainty in these numerical weights and ratings.

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, recognizes that a COA should “provide the most flexibility to meet unexpected threats and opportunities.”<sup>18</sup> Flexibility can be assessed systematically in terms of robustness to uncertainty in these threats and opportunities. For instance, the assessment of “advantages and disadvantages” of each COA should include evaluation of their robustness to surprise.<sup>19</sup> Finally, our skepticism about outcome-optimization suggests caution in interpreting the task of defeating “the enemy COA that is of the most concern to the commander.”<sup>20</sup> It is usually unrealistic to think that one has identified the most dangerous threat; doing so probably rests on the untenable assumption that the future will mimic the past. Furthermore, countering the most dangerous enemy COA does not guarantee effectiveness against the full range of enemy capabilities because answering the most dangerous threat may not answer other threats at all. A robust-satisfying analysis provides a more systematic approach to the management of strategic uncertainty.

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15 US Department of the Army, *The Operations Process*, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 5-0 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, May 17, 2012), 14. See also US Department of the Army, *The Operations Process*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, May 17, 2012), 4-2.

16 US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 11, 2011), IV-11.

17 *Ibid.*, G-1.

18 *Ibid.*, IV-39.

19 *Ibid.*, IV-37.

20 *Ibid.*, IV-36.



## Understanding Groupthink: The Case of Operation Market Garden

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David Patrick Houghton

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**ABSTRACT:** This article applies the groupthink model of decision-making to the planning for Operation Market Garden in late 1944. It shows especially strong parallels between decision-making in the Market Garden case, and those of the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam, and the Challenger shuttle disaster.

In 1982, social psychologist Irving Janis—heir to a long line of others who had shown how social pressures and the power of the situation can combine to make us do things we never dreamed we would—published the second edition of his book *Groupthink*.<sup>1</sup> Originally published a decade earlier, the book articulated the “groupthink” hypothesis, arguing certain tight-knit groups were especially prone to making policy errors. Some groups induce conformity or groupthink, a process through which a group reaches a hasty or premature consensus and then becomes effectively closed to outside ideas.

In Janis’s groupthink model, the rationality of decisions is distorted by dysfunctional group and social forces because members come to prize unanimity and agreement over considering all courses of action rationally.<sup>2</sup> Janis referred to this tendency as a “concurrence-seeking.”<sup>3</sup> Once the group has reached its decision, that decision cannot be revisited or reconsidered. Dissenters are progressively excluded or shunted aside altogether. “Self-censorship” occurs as those who disagree with the chosen course of action remain silent, often because they think changing the minds of others is hopeless. Furthermore, “mindguards” are apt to appear, individuals who take it upon themselves to police the decision taken and to dissuade dissenters from rocking the boat. This action can sometimes lead to the removal of a determined dissenter from the group altogether, or else to the effective silencing of the individual.

Janis discussed a number of the symptoms of groupthink as well as the antecedent conditions that could produce it.<sup>4</sup> These conditions encourage the symptoms but do not necessarily produce them. Of these, an especially important factor is group cohesiveness, where a “clubbish” atmosphere develops between the members. Often this atmosphere occurs when the decision-makers have spent a great deal of time with

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1 Irving Janis, *Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

2 *Ibid.*, passim.

3 *Ibid.*, vii.

4 *Ibid.*, 174–197, where Janis lays out the theory at length.

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one another or begin to socialize together. During the Kennedy/Johnson era, for example, many members of the administration stayed in the same posts for several years and came to know one another very well. While cohesiveness is critical to many teams - including military ones - this trait is a double-edged sword; a group in which members become overly familiar with one another can come to think alike and can fail to question each other's assumptions. Decisions regarding Vietnam, for instance, were made by a collection of like-minded individuals who agreed on aspects of foreign policy, and cultivated an atmosphere of consensus.

Other pre-conditions include a history of failure, stress induced by time pressure, and overly directive leadership of the type that allows no disagreement. Margaret Thatcher, for instance, was known for arriving at meetings already having decided what she wanted, stating her position upfront and then effectively challenging others to disagree with her. There is also what Janis calls "suave leadership," where a leader induces docility and a false sense of complacency.<sup>5</sup> The presence of a charismatic president in 1961 during the disastrous Bay of Pigs episode appeared to reinforce the idea that the plan was in fact a good one. But he allowed the CIA to monopolize the discussion, failing to encourage his advisers to ask tough questions that might have exposed the plan's flaws before it went into effect.

The symptoms of groupthink, similarly, take on disturbingly common forms. They include the following:

- *Illusions of invulnerability.* The group comes to believe it cannot lose. As Janis sees it, the new Kennedy officials who came to office in 1961 were laboring under an illusion of invulnerability, believing they were winners.<sup>6</sup> Unaccustomed to losing, JFK had emerged victorious from a very close presidential election in late 1960, and persuaded similarly youthful "can do" figures to join him in office.
- *Rationalizing away problems.* Risks and dangers are waved away and treated as insignificant. Many of the supporters of the decision for intervening in Vietnam compared it to the Korean War, and Johnson's views drew explicitly on this analogy. Johnson dismissed the differences as insignificant.<sup>7</sup> A war of insurgency was hence treated as if it were a conventional conflict like Korea.
- *Belief in the group's inherent morality.* This condition exists when decision-makers see themselves as morally correct. The Kennedy officials in 1961 viewed themselves as the "good guys," moral men who were on the right-side of history. Surely this was enough to do the job? The same was true of Johnson's group, which came to see itself as the purveyor of morality, despite the fact that Vietnamese civilians were continually being caught in bombings by American B-52s.
- *Stereotyping the opposition* – the group comes to see the adversary as weak or stupid. In 1961, Kennedy's advisors overestimated US capabilities and stereotyped the enemy—Fidel Castro—as both weak and

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5 Ibid., 42.

6 Ibid., "A Perfect Failure: The Bay of Pigs," and "Escalation of the Vietnam War: How Could It Happen," and 35-37.

7 See, for instance, Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 110-111.

unpopular (both assumptions were wrong). The staying power of Ho Chi Minh was similarly underrated, and US policymakers thought he would cave to graduated bombing.

- *Illusions of unanimity* – the group comes to see itself as wholly united. Some – notably Arthur Schlesinger – privately harbored doubts about the Bay of Pigs plan, as did a few other Kennedy advisers. Schlesinger did send Kennedy memoranda in which he questioned various assumptions behind the plan. But when he was given the opportunity to speak up in official meetings before the plan was implemented, he remained strangely silent. In Janis’s words, Schlesinger engaged in “self-censorship.” As the Vietnam group became more and more cohesive, it closed in upon itself. Members became increasingly unwilling to revisit old decisions or reassess their collective wisdom.
- *The emergence of dissenters* – the supposed unanimity is exposed as an illusion, since “transgressors” emerge. As we have noted, Schlesinger and others did eventually express their doubts. In the Vietnam case not everyone within the administration agreed with Johnson’s eventual decision to escalate the war in 1965. Dissenters like Clark Clifford and Undersecretary of State George Ball quickly stepped forward, arguing the United States could not win without paying unacceptable costs to do so. While Johnson initially gave Ball a sympathetic hearing, the Undersecretary of State became less trusted over time. Others on the inside dealt with any dissent by implying the decision-maker was somehow “burned out” or even ill. The phrase “I’m afraid he is losing his effectiveness” became a standard refrain, as more and more members of the Johnson administration left government for good, despairing of ever changing the president’s mind.
- *The emergence of “mindguards.”* This condition occurs when various means are employed to get dissenters to “toe the line,” which may involve marginalization or complete exclusion from the group. When they finally spoke out against the consensus to go ahead with the Bay of Pigs plan, both Schlesinger and Chester Bowles (Undersecretary of State) were effectively mindguarded. Just as bodyguards protect against physical threats, mindguards are said to act as guardians of the group’s collective conscience. Bowles sent his boss, Dean Rusk, a strongly-worded memorandum which challenged the plan’s assumptions; but Rusk apparently shoved this in his desk and did not pass it on to the president.<sup>8</sup> In Vietnam, meanwhile, mindguards like National Security Advisor Walt Rostow would tell the president what he wanted to hear and keep dissenters away from the oval office. Eventually, even one of the original architects of the war, Robert McNamara, began to have doubts about its wisdom. When he started to express these doubts outside the inner circle, Johnson compared him to a son who had let slip to prospective buyers of a house that there are cracks in the basement.<sup>9</sup>

### Three Caveats

At this point, three caveats should be noted. First, although Janis was vague on the issue of how many symptoms of groupthink have to

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8 Ibid., 40-42.

9 Ibid., 118.



be present before one can reliably diagnose it, he was clear that most of them have to be present. For instance, it is not sufficient to note some dissenters were present, since this is almost always the case. For practically any decision, there are people who can honestly say afterwards they disagreed. After the raid to get Osama Bin Laden in 2011, for instance, it became clear Robert Gates (then Secretary of Defense) had been opposed to a military infiltration of Bin Laden's base in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Equally, there were those who wanted to go ahead. But to diagnose groupthink, most or all of Janis's symptoms must be present (an illusion of invulnerability or unanimity was arguably missing from the Bin Laden case, for instance). But as we shall see in the Market Garden case, a whole range of symptoms manifested themselves.

Secondly, there are plenty of policy failures where we can show groupthink was not at work; errors can be individually-based rather than resulting from the group, or may derive from bureaucratic politics or inter-service rivalry. As Janis noted,

...obviously, one cannot assume that groupthink is the cause of practically all policy miscalculations and fiascos. Anyone who relies on that naïve assumption in reading a case study would be carrying out a worthless exercise in unadulterated hindsight.<sup>10</sup>

Some policymaking fiascos emerge from the application of dubious analogies by leaders who have first-hand experience of the events.

Lastly, groupthink does not always lead to disaster. Policy successes that involved an element of groupthink may somehow work anyway. Like Clausewitz, Janis conceded there are moments when chance intervenes; decision-making processes are only one determinant of success or failure. A group can also reach the right conclusion via the wrong route. The relationship between groupthink and policy outcomes, Janis notes, is imperfect.

## Operation Market Garden

There has been relatively little interplay between theories of foreign policy decision-making like groupthink and the study of strategy. Even Norman Dixon's *On The Psychology of Military Incompetence*, which deals briefly with Market Garden, does not conceptualize the failures which occurred in groupthink terms (even though the theory is covered in his book).<sup>11</sup> In fact, none of the standard accounts of the Arnhem affair attempt to apply an overarching theory such as groupthink.<sup>12</sup> Instead, they focus on detailing what went on during the operation, apportioning

<sup>10</sup> Janis, *Groupthink*, 193.

<sup>11</sup> Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Pimlico Books, 1994), 399-400.

<sup>12</sup> Of these, by far the most famous is Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2007). But there are many others, a number of them by participants in the events themselves. See for instance Christopher Hibbert, *The Battle of Arnhem* (London: Batsford, 1962); Roy Urquhart, *Arnhem* (London: White Lion, 1973); Lewis Golden, *Echoes from Arnhem* (London: William Kimber, 1984); Geoffrey Powell, *The Devil's Birthday: The Bridges to Arnhem 1944* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1992); Peter Harclerode, *Arnhem: A Tragedy of Errors* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1994); Martin Middlebrook, *Arnhem 1944: The Airborne Battle* (London: Penguin Books, 1995); A.D. Harvey, *Arnhem* (London: Cassell, 2001); John Frost, *A Drop Too Many* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2001); David Bennett, *A Magnificent Disaster: The Failure of Market Garden, the Arnhem Operation September 1944* (Drexel Hill, PA: Casemate, 2008); and Sebastian Ritchie, *Arnhem: Myth and Reality* (London: Robert Hale, 2011).

blame and ultimately debating whether the operation was a wise military move or ill-considered (and therefore doomed) from the very start.

Accordingly, this brief piece tries to demonstrate the ultimate value of applying a groupthink explanation to the planning behind Market Garden. As we shall see, an intriguing number of symptoms as well as some of its most potent antecedent conditions were visibly present. Avoiding groupthink requires an ability to rethink and reassess in the light of new information, or evidence which has been seen in a new light; but this was made impossible by the time constraints imposed.

Market Garden was a truly bold and inventive plan. Some have even seen it as strategically brilliant in conception, though most authors consider it a heroic failure. While the definition of success and failure is partly in the eye of the beholder, John Buckley captures the consensus view of Arnhem when he argues “it was a poorly conceived, ill considered and deeply flawed plan which stood little chance of success before it had even begun.”<sup>13</sup> Other accounts have already done a good job of outlining its key features, so these will be dealt with only briefly here and only as particular aspects of the plan pertain to the theory of groupthink. However, its essential elements were the air component (Market) and the land one (Garden). In September 1944, the strategic problem was that eight bridges lay between the Allies in France or Belgium and the industrial Ruhr in Germany, including key Dutch bridges at Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem. It was assumed that capturing the Ruhr valley, on which the German war making machine depended, would quickly cut Berlin’s capacity to fight. Using three sets of airborne troops – two American and one British – the basic idea was to drop soldiers quickly behind enemy lines. The Allies would thereby leapfrog over the German defensive wall and attempt to capture all key bridges simultaneously. Speed and surprise were absolutely critical, since catching the Germans off guard was the only way to make this bold military plan work.

Needless to say, it did not work as intended. For the Allies, the numbers killed, wounded, or missing exceeded an astonishing 17,000; as many as 10,000 Dutch civilians may have died as well. As Dixon puts it, “defeat was absolute and terrible.”<sup>14</sup> And the military objectives, of course, were not achieved, since the Germans successfully repelled the attack and took many Allied soldiers prisoner.

Was the decision to go ahead taken in a group setting, or was it taken unilaterally? As the name suggests, groupthink is obviously a group-based process, and decisions which are not taken in a group context therefore do not fit within the remit of the theory. Available evidence is admittedly thinner on this question than on other aspects of the decision-making, partly because Montgomery was rather secretive about his own decision-making processes. It is, of course, possible he was a “lone wolf” who made decisions entirely on his own. Yet, the available evidence suggests he was not. First of all, it would have been impossible for a figure like Bernard Montgomery – who had lost overall control of the Allied war effort to Eisenhower – to violate the chain of command or fail to consult with others. We know he obtained Eisenhower’s permission to

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13 John Buckley, *Monty's Men: The British Army and the Liberation of Europe, 1944-45* (London: Yale University Press, 2013), 208.

14 Dixon, *On The Psychology of Military Incompetence*, 148.

go ahead with the plan, though the relationship between the two men was difficult at best.<sup>15</sup> More tellingly, we know meetings were held at various stages before the green light was given.

The key planning meeting at which it was decided to go ahead with Operation Market Garden was held on September 10, 1944. Anxious to go, most members of the group strongly believed in what Montgomery was planning.<sup>16</sup> There was an especially pervasive feeling that a “single thrust” was all that Allied resources could do. There was also a strong sense of unanimity within the group that aligned with Montgomery’s absolute conviction he was right. The group also believed intelligence emanating from the Dutch underground was not to be trusted, based on past experience.

The objections of those who felt Montgomery was not correct seem to have been wholly ignored or swept aside. Forrest Pogue notes, “some individuals at 12th Army Group and First Allied Airborne Army, and even some members of the 21st Army Group staff, expressed opposition to the plan.”<sup>17</sup> Among those who disagreed, Monty’s own Chief of Staff, General Francis de Guingand, did not feel the plan could work. Brigadier Ronald Belchem, his Chief of Operations, disliked the “narrowness” of the thrust.<sup>18</sup> We also know General Sir Miles Dempsey, Commander of the British 2nd Army, advocated an airborne drop at Wesel; dropping at the Arnhem bridge, he argued, made little strategic sense.<sup>19</sup> All were overruled by Montgomery; he desperately wanted it to go ahead.

### *Antecedent Conditions*

*Time Pressure and a History of Failure/Cancellation.* Janis always emphasized that various things can aid in (or make more likely) the appearance of groupthink. One is simple time pressure, along with the frustration that inevitably accompanies repeated cancellations or failures to launch. This is not to say time pressure necessarily leads to disaster; but the decisions which led to the ill-fated *Challenger* mission in January 1986 provide a classic example.<sup>20</sup> On five or six occasions the shuttle launch was scrapped or delayed, mainly due to bad weather and other technical issues. These delays led to immense pressure to go ahead, increasingly embarrassing officials at NASA. However, it was an unusually cold winter day in Florida, and employees like Roger Boisjoly tried to warn their bosses the O-Rings which connected sections of the solid rocket booster used to put the shuttle into space were simply not tested at such low temperatures; hence, they might shatter with absolutely catastrophic effect. Sadly, this advice was ignored, and the O-Rings did indeed fail, causing the shuttle to explode.

In the case of Market Garden, a large variety of plans – no less than sixteen, by one count - had already been scrapped prior to the decision to

15 Thomas Ricks, *The Generals: American Military Command from World War II to Today* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 81-95.

16 Alistair Horne and David Montgomery, *Monty: The Lonely Leader, 1955-1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 283.

17 Forrest Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 281.

18 David Irving, *The War Between The Generals* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981), 72.

19 Chester Wilmut, *The Struggle for Europe* (New York: Harper, 1952), 488.

20 See the film *Groupthink* (CRM Films, 1991), which recreates the shuttle launch decision-making with actors, using Janis’s theory.

go ahead. Operation Comet, for instance, had just been scrapped prior to Market Garden, much to the frustration of men who were anxious to get into battle. The sense of hurry was also encouraged by the feeling the Germans were on the run, and Montgomery believed their presumed disarray could be exploited.

*Suave Leadership.* A further background factor that may encourage groupthink is what Janis calls “docility fostered by suave leadership.”<sup>21</sup> The tactless Montgomery seemed anything but charismatic, although it should be noted charisma is very subjective. More than Montgomery, though, one figure who was almost universally agreed to have ‘oozed’ such qualities was Brian Horrocks of XXX Corps. Horrocks was an immensely charismatic figure who, in the eyes of one observer at the time, would have made “a very good salesman.”<sup>22</sup> While Horrocks was not a key decision-maker, his salesmanship of the plan may well have contributed to the general sense of camaraderie and to the feeling that Allied forces could not lose.

*Aggressive Leadership.* Overly assertive or aggressive leadership is another one of the classic antecedent conditions which can encourage groupthink, as when a leader comes into the meeting room having already decided what she/he wants. Montgomery’s aggressive leadership was always likely to give rise to a dysfunctional decision-making process, and there is some evidence he “knocked down” anyone who disagreed with him. Brigadier Bill Williams and General Walter Beddell Smith would both complain afterwards they simply could not get Montgomery to change his mind. What is also known is Montgomery was more generally an aggressive leader who rarely if ever brooked objections to his ideas. Indeed, even after the failure of the operation, he would insist (rather absurdly) that it had been “90% successful.” As Max Hastings argues, “this was nonsense, for it was a *cul-de-sac* which took the Allies nowhere until February 1945 ... the Arnhem assault was a flawed concept for which the chances of success were negligible.”<sup>23</sup>

Montgomery’s arrogance was legendary. Brighton talks of his “obstreperous behavior towards his seniors,” Sosabowski thought him “recklessly overconfident,” Irving calls him “spiky” and self-obsessed,” while Ricks speaks simply of Montgomery’s “egotism.”<sup>24</sup> The Field Marshal’s own official biographer, Nigel Hamilton, goes even further, arguing that by 1942 “Monty’s egoism, his doctrine of quasi-papal infallibility, began to mushroom, and the final vestiges of modesty were cast overboard.”<sup>25</sup> He “refused to listen to the exhortations of his main Headquarters staff,” and would frequently exasperate his colleagues.<sup>26</sup>

21 Janis, *Groupthink*, 42-44.

22 Sydney Jarey, quoted in the BBC series *Battlefields*, “Arnhem.”

23 Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World At War, 1939-1945* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2011), 561.

24 Terry Brighton, *Patton, Montgomery, Rommel: Masters of War* (New York: Crown Books, 2008), 219; Irving, *The War Between the Generals*, 42; and Ricks, *The Generals*, 85.

25 Nigel Hamilton, *Master of the Battlefield: Monty’s War Years, 1942-44* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1983), 142.

26 Nigel Hamilton, *Monty: Final Years of the Field Marshal, 1944-1976* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1986), 73.

## Symptoms

### *The Illusion of Invulnerability*

In 1944, there was a sense among many British servicemen after the routing of the Germans in France that “we cannot lose.” Montgomery had also been through a victorious campaign in North Africa and been integral to the conquest of Sicily. He had enjoyed one military success after another, which made him immensely popular in Britain. As Harclerode notes, “the relative ease with which the Allies had advanced through northern France into Belgium had resulted in a dangerous and misplaced sense of euphoria which permeated their forces at all levels.”<sup>27</sup> Others argue there was a kind of “victory virus” infecting Monty and his group within 21st Army.<sup>28</sup> By the time the plan went ahead, the Germans had reorganized and regrouped sufficiently to put up a highly effective defense, and fanatical SS troops had also been held in reserve as reinforcements.

### *Collective Rationalizations*

Here the group ignores or rationalizes away evidence that challenges its shaky assumptions. In a perfectly rational world, of course, new information would be taken on board and strategies altered. But as Janis maintains this is all too often not how things work in practice. Market Garden depended above all on two closely related factors: the element of total surprise, and the airlift capability necessary to put an airborne force close to the eight bridges in Holland at a moment’s notice. Sadly, because the Allied planners lacked the second capability – and the planners would not or could not put the men and material in with the speed required – they could not provide the first.

The transporter of choice for the men – which would convey both men and gliders – was the American Dakota C-47 Skytrain. But there were simply not enough of them to put both men and equipment into the battle in one go; it would take three days to do so because Browning’s superior, General Lewis Brereton, feared exhausting his crews by forcing them to do two runs in a single day. Two drops might have been performed in a single day: one by the RAF at night, and one by USAAF forces during the day. But this would have meant waiting several days for moonlight, and the planners were not interested in further delays.

All of this meant the element of surprise upon which Market Garden would depend would be gone. Montgomery clearly realized this was a problem. The fact they had insufficient airlift and would lose the element of surprise altogether might scupper the whole thing. But he simply insisted the plan could not be changed. He also wholly discounted Walter Bedell Smith’s warning about the presence of panzer divisions in the Arnhem area. Similarly, when presented with photographic evidence that two German panzer divisions were there, General (Boy) Browning simply rationalized the information away. “I wouldn’t trouble myself about these if I were you. They’re probably not serviceable at any rate,” he told his astonished subordinate Major Brian Urquhart.<sup>29</sup>

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27 Harclerode, *Arnhem*, 38.

28 Horne and Montgomery, *Monty*, 273. The Montgomery referred to here was Bernard’s son.

29 Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 142.

### *A Belief in the Group's Inherent Morality*

It hardly needs to be noted that the planners of Market Garden saw themselves as morally superior to the opposition. While it is hard to deny the proposition that Hitler himself was morally evil, as well as at least some of his deputies. The war gave rise to a number of morally “gray” areas though, such as the Allies indiscriminate bombing of civilians, in the hope of dramatically shortening the war.<sup>30</sup>

### *Stereotyping the Enemy as Evil, Weak or Stupid*

It was certainly true German intelligence was woefully unprepared for the timing of what occurred. However, the Allied planners seem to have greatly overplayed their hand, especially by claiming that the enemy was weak. The clearest manifestation of this came in the belief – apparently widespread amongst the planners – the invading force of British and Americans would be met only by “old men and boys.”<sup>31</sup> This was perhaps the most mystifying belief of all, but it can be traced to intelligence reports which suggested the enemy was in complete disarray after its collapse in France. The Allies saw the enemy as ineffective and completely demoralized.<sup>32</sup>

This, of course, ignored other intelligence which suggested Arnhem was well-defended by SS troops, evidence which genuinely troubled Urquhart and others. In fact, the Germans were fully aware Arnhem was a key access route to the Ruhr and industrial Germany. In that sense, it is amazing how British planners underestimated the Germans. In reality, Arnhem and the other bridges between France and Germany were the obvious next target.

### *The Illusion of Unanimity*

The planning group seemed to be unanimous in its approval of Market Garden, but this masked what were in fact real divisions within it. Generals Stanislaw Sosabowski and James Gavin had major doubts about the plan, but neither voiced these forcefully. Indeed, Sosabowski went so far as to ask Browning for a written order during the previously cancelled but similar Operation Comet, convinced his men were about to be massacred. But having voiced his dissent already to little or no effect, Sosabowski saw little point in doing so again during the planning for Market Garden. As Cornelius Ryan relates:

Despite Sosabowski's anxieties, at the September 12th briefing, he remained silent. 'I remember [Roy] Urquhart asking for questions and nobody raised any,' he recalled. 'Everyone sat nonchalantly, legs crossed, looking bored. I wanted to say something about this impossible plan, but I just couldn't. It was unpopular as it was, and anyway, who would have listened?'<sup>33</sup>

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30 See for instance Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe, 1939-1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2013).

31 See Chris Brown, *Battle Story Arnhem 1944* (London: The History Press, 2011), 57; and John Nicol and Tony Rennell, *Arnhem: The Battle for Survival* (London: Penguin Books, 2011).

32 Horne and Montgomery, *Monty*, 273.

33 Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, 126.

*Emergence of Dissenters*

The best-known dissenter within Browning's own staff was Brian Urquhart. Urquhart was greatly worried by intelligence gleaned from the Dutch and from British overflights which suggested the presence of two SS panzer divisions, since the lightly armed paratroopers could be easily wiped out by the heavily armed panzers. Intelligence is sometimes ambiguous, especially during the fog of war, but the mission had also already reached an advanced stage. Urquhart's dissent parallels that of Arthur Schlesinger in the Bay of Pigs case, George Ball in the Vietnam example, and Roger Boisjoly in the *Challenger* one. In all of those cases, the concerns of the dissenter were downplayed or ignored, but were ultimately proven correct.

Urquhart's dissent may be the most famous and best documented, but it was perhaps the least consequential due to his relatively junior status. Both the Intelligence Chief to the British 21st Army and General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff are known to have held similar positions to Urquhart's, and both had access to more sensitive intelligence which showed the young officer was absolutely correct.<sup>34</sup> The Chief of Intelligence for the British 21st Army, Brigadier Bill Williams, had access to secret ULTRA intelligence, for instance. Williams went directly to Montgomery on two separate occasions warning of the presence of the Panzer divisions, but was ignored. Days later, Montgomery received a similar visit from Walter Beddell Smith, Eisenhower's American Chief of Staff, who had seen the same evidence. But when Beddell Smith visited Montgomery in person, his concerns were summarily dismissed.<sup>35</sup> Intelligence from at least three separate sources had pointed to the existence of panzer divisions.

*Emergence of Mindguards*

As we have seen, dissenters are dealt with in part via the emergence of mindguards. These are individuals who take it upon themselves to suggest the dissenter's advice is of little or no value. Stating the dissenter is "sick" or "losing his mind" are common ways of doing this, as when Johnson suggested the dissenter Robert McNamara was literally "cracking up" over Vietnam.

Browning dealt with Urquhart's dissent by suggesting "his nerve had broken."<sup>36</sup> While Urquhart was certainly under great pressure—all of the planners were—he was apparently dealing rather well with this, and subsequently rose to become Secretary-General of the United Nations. Urquhart said later Browning treated him:

...as a nervous child suffering from a nightmare... I was a pain in the neck... Colonel Eggar, our chief doctor, came to visit me. He informed me that I was suffering from acute nervous strain and exhaustion and ordered me to go on sick leave. When I asked him what would happen if I refused, he said, in his kindly way, that I would be arrested and court-martialed for disobeying orders.<sup>37</sup>

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34 Harclerode, *Arnhem: A Tragedy of Errors*, 38-45.

35 Ibid, 39.

36 Christopher Hibbert, quoted in the BBC series *Battlefields*, "Arnhem."

37 Urquhart, *A Life In Peace and War*, 73.

## Conclusion

The presence of wishful thinking is very much in evidence in the Market Garden case. Those who conceived and planned the operation, as well as those who implemented it, desperately wanted it to succeed. As has often been noted, victory at Arnhem would have shortened the war by four months, and thousands might have been saved thereby. In retrospect, it might also have changed the shape of the Cold War, since the Allies would probably have reached Berlin before the Russians.

The theory of groupthink has been widely criticized as well as praised since it first appeared in the early 1970s. For one thing, critics have often been suspicious of the “fit” between Janis’s case studies and the various causes of groupthink, and have criticized the blurring of preconditions, symptoms, and effects. But the presence of his symptoms in the Market Garden instance – a case he never studied – is intriguing, and worthy of further study.<sup>38</sup> Montgomery was told there were major flaws in his plan. Yet, the prize itself proved too tempting to resist.

Avoiding groupthink requires an ability to reassess goals in the light of new information or evidence. But this was made impossible by artificial time constraints. As Sunstein and Hastie note, when we are in possession of information which cuts against the grain, “people have a strong tendency to self-censor.”<sup>39</sup>

The groupthink phenomenon is not inevitable, however, and the US military can take measures to safeguard against it. For instance, a member of the group can be appointed as a “critical evaluator,” ensuring all viewpoints are heard; leaders can absent themselves from meetings in order to avoid advisers becoming “yes men.” They can also break the group into option-based units, each given the task of explaining the merits and demerits of a course of action. Or outsiders can be brought in to provide fresh views and counteract any “clubbiness” within the group. A “devil’s advocate” can be created, whose job is to argue against whatever position emerges as the consensus view.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Alexander George has shown how the use of devil’s advocates, the rigorous exploration of alternatives and what he calls “multiple advocacy” – ensuring a given administration is filled with a diversity of voices – can counteract an overly-hasty rush to judgement.<sup>41</sup>

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38 See for instance John Levine, “Reaction to Opinion Deviance in Small Groups,” in Paul Paulus, ed., *Psychology of Group Influence*, 2nd ed. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1989); and Paul ‘t Hart, *Groupthink in Government: A Study of Small Groups and Policy Failure* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

39 Cass Sunstein and Reid Hastie, *Wiser: Getting Beyond Groupthink To Make Groups Smarter* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2015).

40 Janis, *Groupthink*, 260-311.

41 Alexander George, *Presidential Decision Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 169-208.





# Order and Counter-Order: The European System and Russia

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Ted Middleton

**ABSTRACT:** This article explores how today's post-modern, interdependent European system of order interacts with a competing system led by a modern, realist Russian Federation. Russia's great power identity is based on a long-standing statist tradition of foreign policy thinking combined with a legacy of conviction in the uniqueness of Eurasian civilization. Key to meeting the Russian challenge is systemic adaptation to engender cooperation in the common economic space, thereby permitting the two systems not only to co-exist, but co-evolve as stable, interdependent entities.

In 2008, Charles King wrote the five-day Russian-Georgian war “will mark a time when Russia came to disregard existing international institutions and begin, however haltingly, to fashion its own.”<sup>1</sup> The war was a manifestation of Russia's claim to a key zone of “privileged interests,” and shocked the post-Cold War geopolitical order by challenging the expansion of NATO into post-Soviet Eurasia.<sup>2</sup> The true significance of the crisis, however, was twofold. The unilateral intervention signaled Moscow's general distrust of multilateral institutions as organs of global governance, thus affirming a Russian conviction that hard power was the true currency of international relations.<sup>3</sup> Further, the intervention was proof a recalcitrant Russia would no longer accept western indifference to its Great Power aspirations or to its strategic interests in the newly independent neighboring republics.

With US-Russia relations at their lowest point since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Obama administration extended an olive branch by proposing a “policy reset.” By acknowledging Russia's leading role in the post-Soviet space, ending (temporarily) NATO expansion, reconfiguring the US concept for missile defense in Europe, supporting Russia's membership in the World Trade Organization, and deepening bilateral economic relations, the reset brought the relationship from the brink of collapse towards effective rapprochement.<sup>4</sup> Although the reset policy did not return the breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to full Georgian control, it was largely successful. In 2009, President

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1 Charles King, “The Five-Day War: Managing Moscow after the Georgia Crisis,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008): 2-11.

2 Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, Canada: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 263-264.

3 In 2008 there was a lingering feeling among Russian leaders that multilateral institutions like the United Nations Security Council and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe existed only to promote the interests of the United States and its allies. See King, “The Five-Day War.”

4 Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 89-93, 263.

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Medvedev steered Russian foreign policy back towards a more pragmatic course of international cooperation and economic modernization.

In 2010, President Obama's National Security Strategy mentioned Russia specifically only 14 times in the document's 52 pages. Each of these references was in a positive light, emphasizing partnership, inclusion and cooperation in recognition of the fact that power in an interconnected world was no longer a zero-sum game.<sup>5</sup> Acknowledging the deepening integration of the European Union alongside the rise of global engagements by China and India, the strategy described Russia as an emergent twenty-first century center of influence, a nation that shared with the United States mutual interests and respect.<sup>6</sup> Russia was not included in the strategy's list of states endangering global security by flouting international norms. Quite to the contrary, the strategy touted cooperation and partnership as key elements to a stable, substantive, and multidimensional relationship with a strong, peaceful, and prosperous Russia. The strategy identified common ground in terms of advancing nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, confronting violent extremism, forging new trade and investment opportunities, as well as promoting the rule of law, accountable government and universal values. In short, the 2010 strategy clearly signaled the United States' intention to seek Russia's cooperation as a responsible partner in Europe and Asia.<sup>7</sup>

By comparison, President Obama's 2015 National Security Strategy specifically mentions Russia 15 times and while the frequency is almost identical to that of 2010, there is a marked difference in the context. Replacing the 2010 emphasis on partnership, inclusion, and cooperation is an unequivocal condemnation of Russian aggression, coercion, deception and belligerence.<sup>8</sup> The strategy speaks of America's indispensable leadership in a global effort to deter Russian aggression and to dissuade Russia from using its vast energy resources as political leverage to manipulate an energy-dependent Europe. In stark contrast to the 2010 strategy, Russia is now specifically named as a state endangering international norms regarding inter-state conflict, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.<sup>9</sup> Flagged as the hallmark of Russian belligerence in the near abroad, the crisis in Ukraine polarizes American-Russian relations and draws US attention and presence into Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>10</sup> While the door may be closing on the prospects of Russia becoming a responsible partner in Europe and Asia, it has not yet slammed shut. Despite the pledges to deter Russian aggression through sanctions and other means, to remain alert to Russia's strategic capabilities, and to help American allies to resist Russian coercion, the strategy leaves "the door

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5 Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 3.

6 *Ibid.*, 8, 11.

7 *Ibid.*, 44.

8 "Aggression" is paired with "Russia" eight of the fifteen times the country is named in the 2015 *National Security Strategy*. The remaining references to Russia include contextual descriptions of deception, coercion, belligerence, and energy security concerns. See Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), i, 2, 4, 5, 10, 16, 19, 25.

9 Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 10.

10 The Near Abroad is commonly considered the region encompassed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War. It includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The term "Near Abroad" emerged as a term of Russian diplomatic parlance to describe not just Russia's immediate neighbors, but the special relationship Russia maintained with these former republics in the post-Soviet space.

open to greater collaboration” in areas of mutual interests, should Russia choose “a path of peaceful cooperation that respects the sovereignty and democratic development of neighboring states.”<sup>11</sup>

This article explains the context of this fluctuating ally-adversary relationship by exploring the concept of world order since the end of the Cold War, Russia’s challenge to the evolution of that order, and the potential disorder that may ensue given Vladimir Putin’s current foreign policy vector. The central question is: how does today’s post-modern, interdependent European system of order interact with a competing one led by a modern, realist Russian Federation? The analysis reveals Russia’s great power identity is based on a long-standing statist tradition of foreign-policy thinking combined with a legacy conviction in the uniqueness of Eurasian civilization. This identity, which is not unique to Putin’s presidency but is consciously perpetuated by his foreign policy, challenges the European paradigm of post-modern order, the predominance of which is underwritten by the power of the United States. Key to meeting this challenge will be systemic adaptation that limits confrontation in the contested space and encourages cooperation in the common space so the two systems can not only co-exist, but co-evolve as stable, interdependent entities.

## Order

“Our age is insistently, at times almost desperately, in pursuit of a concept of world order.”<sup>12</sup> In any discussion of order, it is important to acknowledge from the onset two things: first, the world is a complex and adaptive system, and as such it should come as no surprise if the existing system of order is not performing its function, a new system will emerge; second, the lexicon used to describe the system matters. This article borrows Kissinger’s distinction between world order, international order and regional order to establish a baseline understanding of these interrelated systems.

World order describes the concept held by a region or civilization about the nature of just arrangements and the distribution of power thought to be applicable to the entire world. An international order is the practical application of these concepts to a substantial part of the globe – large enough to affect the global balance of power. Regional orders involve the same principles applied to a defined geographic area.<sup>13</sup>

Arguably, no world order has ever existed in the truly global sense; but that fact does not dissuade a region or civilization from perceiving its sense of order is globally accepted. What conceptually differentiates these systems is a matter of scale. What undergirds them is a commonly accepted set of rules regulating state behavior. A balance of power construct “enforces restraint when the rules break down, preventing one political unit from subjugating all others.”<sup>14</sup>

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11 Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 25.

12 Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2014), 2.

13 *Ibid.*, 9.

14 *Ibid.*

*A Brief History of Order in Europe*

The “rules-based” system that best represented the twentieth-century paradigm of world order traces its lineage back to the Peace of Westphalia, the accords of 1648 that marked the end of the Thirty Years’ War and the emergence of the European state system. Prior to 1648, conflict was all but endemic, permeating all levels of society, and the battle to reestablish peace and order in Christendom dominated the relationships between powers. After the Peace of Westphalia, the concept of a regional system based on a balance of power construct emerged where “the state, not the empire, dynasty, or religious confession, was affirmed as the building block of European order.”<sup>15</sup> For the better part of the next three centuries the European system evolved and expanded, becoming the accepted system of international order. Throughout this evolution, the international system’s anarchical state of nature remained, more or less, in equilibrium, absorbing and adapting to the shocks of revolutions, the fall of empires and even the re-ordering of spheres of influence.<sup>16</sup>

By 1914, the European system of order became synonymous with world order as the Westphalian concept took root on every continent. The system continued to evolve and adapt over the course of what some historians have identified as a second Thirty Years’ War, noting the period from 1914 to 1945 brought about a level of destruction the European continent had not witnessed since 1648.<sup>17</sup> In the 40 years following WWII, the system evolved as a bipolar order with crisis stability preventing the system from exploding into chaos.<sup>18</sup> The doctrine of mutually assured destruction that characterized the Cold War promised a potential devastation so vast the actual devastation of the two world wars combined paled in comparison.

The Cold War was the culmination of the continual evolution of international order since 1648, an evolution characterized by a series of adaptations in response to shocks that threatened the equilibrium of the system. In other words, the system evolved in response to foreign policies that threatened to upset the balance of power between European states. In the wake of WWII, the foreign policies of the United States and Russia drove the transition of world order from Europe’s multi-lateral balance of power system to one of global bipolarity. The end of the Cold War, however, ushered in an entirely new system of order; one that did not rely on balance of power, emphasize sovereignty, or isolate domestic from foreign affairs.<sup>19</sup> Instead, a new European order emerged that rejected the use of force as an instrument for settling conflicts in favor of increased mutual dependence among states. At the heart of

15 Ibid., 26.

16 For more on Hobbesian anarchy and the Hobbesian state of nature, see Joseph S. Nye and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 9th ed. (New York, NY: Pearson Education, 2013), 4-10.

17 Ian Kershaw, “Europe’s Second Thirty Years War,” *History Today* 55, no. 9 (September 2005): 10-17.

18 Crisis stability describes the phenomenon where an acute international crisis is avoided at all costs due to the severity of the consequences for all actors. See Nye and Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*, 50.

19 Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, “The New European Disorder,” *European Council on Foreign Relations* 117 (November 2014): 2, [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR117\\_TheNewEuropeanDisorder\\_Essay.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR117_TheNewEuropeanDisorder_Essay.pdf).

the new system was a mutual consent to supranational activity in the domestic affairs of states and the idea that security can best be achieved through cooperation rather than competition. In a system that stresses openness and transparency, a system that appeals to the jurisdiction of international institutions, European states today are less absolute in their sovereignty and independence than ever before.<sup>20</sup> The year 1989, therefore, marked not only the end of the Cold War, but most significantly it marked the end of the balance of power system in Europe.<sup>21</sup>

### *Pre-modern, Modern, and Post-modern Order*

The British diplomat and special advisor to the European Commission Sir Robert Cooper described the post-Cold War international order in terms of divisions between pre-modern, modern, and post-modern constituents of the world.<sup>22</sup> In the pre-modern parts of the world, states are not fully functioning; in the modern part of the world, states are concerned with issues of territorial sovereignty and the pursuit of national interests; and in the post-modern world, foreign and domestic policies are inextricably intertwined, tools of governance are shared and security is no longer based on control over territory or balance of power.<sup>23</sup>

The pre-modern world is characterized by the pre-state, post-imperial chaos congruent with places like Somalia, Liberia, and Yemen, where the state cannot claim the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force within its territory.<sup>24</sup> The state is fragile and dysfunctional. By and large, the pre-modern regions of the world are considered chaotic, where non-state actors thrive and occasionally threaten regional order or the interests of the powerful. The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is a prime example of pre-modernity. The concept of security in such a scenario is well beyond the scope of this article as it implies bringing order to a chaotic system. The Russian Federation is not a pre-modern state, though some of the former Soviet republics might qualify as such.

In the modern world the traditional state system remains intact, sovereignty is paramount, and order is maintained primarily through a Westphalian balance of power. Military force is not only the principal guarantor of security, but also a viable instrument of power to change international borders. In the modern world, the strategic calculus of interests from a Hobbesian worldview defines state interaction. Russia represents the traditional paradigm of a modern world state, a legitimate and internationally accepted paradigm shared by other significant powers such as China and India.

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20 Robert Cooper, *The Postmodern State and the World Order* (London: Demos, January 2000), 7, <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/thepostmodernstate.pdf>; and Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 2.

21 Cooper, *The Postmodern State and the World Order*, 7.

22 Ibid., 17. The term "modern" is used as a reference point not because it represents something new; quite to the contrary, "modern" in this context refers to the Westphalian concept of the nation state, which was considered "the great engine of modernization."

23 Ibid., 15-23.

24 For more on the monopoly over the legitimate use of force as a criterion for statehood, see Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Garth and C. Wright Mills (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1946).

The post-modern world is a reflection of the new European order described earlier; a system based on interdependence, openness and transparency. What is particularly interesting about the post-modern world is, while its traditional state system is conceptually collapsing, it is not descending into some pre-modern state of chaotic disorder. Quite to the contrary, its collapse is bringing greater order to the European system.<sup>25</sup> Take for example the state's traditional monopoly over the use of force; in the post-modern European system, the state's use of force is subject to international, albeit self-imposed, constraints. War is therefore to be avoided. Another example is the state's traditionally exclusive purview over domestic affairs. In post-modern Europe, international institutions such as the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are now deeply involved in the standards of state domestic behavior. By representing "security through transparency, and transparency through interdependence," the EU and OSCE provide frameworks for dispute resolution and transnational cooperation.<sup>26</sup>

The post-modern state has become more pluralist, more complex, and less centralized than the modern state from which it evolved. While EU countries are clearly post-modern states, the relationship EU countries have with other states may not necessarily be post-modern in nature. There is dissonance between the modern and post-modern systems concerning perspectives of interests and security. In the post-modern context, foreign policy has become the continuation of domestic concerns beyond national boundaries, and individual consumption trumps collective glory as the dominant theme of national life.<sup>27</sup> The opposite is true of the modern state system, which continues to view the world through a Hobbesian prism. Therein lies the rub; for a post-modern system to succeed, it requires all of the most powerful constituents of the system to behave as post-modern states. So long as Russia remains fixated on *raison d'état* and power politics, it will remain a modern state, an incompatible and uncomfortable neighbor to post-modern Europe.<sup>28</sup>

### Counter-Order

Viewed through a Western prism, Russia is a country that has only fitfully and recently emerged from an isolation imposed by its geography, culture and political system.<sup>29</sup> Situated at the junction of civilizations and trade routes, the "land of the Rus" is a uniquely Eurasian power "sprawling across two continents but never entirely at home in either."<sup>30</sup>

It has been nearly twenty years since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a breakup that marked the symbolic loss of Russia's historical empire and the transition from communism to a political system resembling liberal democracy. The West had great hopes Moscow would integrate into the Euro-Atlantic international order as an emergent

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25 Cooper, *The Postmodern State and the World Order*, 19.

26 *Ibid.*, 26.

27 *Ibid.*, 31-32.

28 *Ibid.*, 41.

29 Celeste A. Wallander, "Global Challenges and Russian Foreign Policy," in *Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century and the Shadow of the Past*, ed. Robert Legvold (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 443.

30 Kissinger, *World Order*, 51.

center of influence with a strong voice in the international arena.<sup>31</sup> Those hopes were unfortunately based largely upon three flawed assumptions: the first, Russia was committed to becoming a full member of the democratic and capitalist West; second, Russia would consent to join a common security community led by the United States; and third, the struggle for influence around Russia's borders ended with the close of the Cold War.<sup>32</sup>

### *Misplaced Hopes*

The first assumption – the integration of Russia as a full member of the democratic and capitalist West – faced two insurmountable challenges. The collapse of the Soviet Union was synonymous with an economic collapse, the magnitude of which plunged Russia into the depths of political and civil chaos characterized by corruption, crime, and widespread destitution. Russia's gross domestic product fell between 50 and 83 percent, capital investment by 80 percent, and three quarters of the Russian population found itself below, or just marginally above, the subsistence level.<sup>33</sup> Sadly, the Russian people conflated economic prosperity with liberal democracy and, as a result, the economic collapse brought with it widespread disenchantment. Liberal democracy, as the Russians were growing to understand it under Yeltsin's leadership, lost all popular resonance and by 1993 the promise of democracy became the scourge of the nation.<sup>34</sup> The second challenge was the appearance that the West lacked the will to embrace Russia fully as one its own. For integration to succeed the West needed to draw Russia into the post-modern European system, not just by exporting the ideas of democracy and free markets, but by welcoming Russia into the Euro-Atlantic system of multilateral diplomacy.<sup>35</sup> That welcome was unfortunately less than genuine and fell well short of a full embrace.

The second and third assumptions – Russia's consent to join a US-led common security community and the belief in the cessation of competition for influence in the post-Soviet space – conflicted with Russia's great power ambitions and the sense of Russia's evolving national identity. In the uncertainty of the immediate post-Cold War years the major international trends of economic globalization, the emergence of a "single Europe" through NATO and EU enlargement, the United States' consolidation of global dominance, and the rise of China as a regional power all eclipsed Russia's desire to be taken seriously as pillar of international order.<sup>36</sup> Struggling to accept the idea of membership and station in a system of order that operated according to rules devised by and for the Western powers, Russia devolved, retreating from the possibility of post-modernity and retrenching as a modern state on Europe's periphery. Whether overcome by some euphoric sense of Cold War victory, or overcautious due to decades of distrust, the West's assessment

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31 This hope was reaffirmed by President Obama in 2010. See Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 8.

32 Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 130.

33 Stephen Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 169.

34 Daniel Beer, "Russia's Managed Democracy," *History Today* 59, no. 5 (May 2009): 37-39.

35 Cooper, *The Postmodern State and the World Order*, 35.

36 Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), 113; and Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 132, 267.



of the situation failed to understand the Russian perspective, squandering the opportunity for rapprochement. Thomas Graham, Condoleezza Rice's principal advisor on Russia, affirmed the misplaced hope in an essay published in 2002:

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Russia remains far short of having fulfilled the grand hopes for its future widely entertained in both Russia and the West at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union. If there has been a transition at all, it has not been the hoped-for one to a free market democracy, but rather a reincarnation of a traditionally Russian form of rule that in many respects is premodern. Russia has not been integrated into the West in any significant way, contrary to the goals set forth by the Russian and Western governments a decade ago.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Russian Lens*

Russia's leadership viewed the dissolution of the Soviet Union – Russia's exit from empire – more as a pragmatic decision than a surrender to national liberation movements. The collapse was not some chaotic implosion of the political system. Facing rapidly mounting domestic economic and social pressures, Russian nationalists recognized the opportunities of separate states far outweighed the burden of empire and therefore did not stand in the way of the sovereign aspirations of the Soviet republics in east Europe.<sup>38</sup> From President Yeltsin's perspective, it was the Russian people, not the United States and its Cold War allies, who toppled the regime, bringing an end to communism and the great power rivalry that had characterized the Cold War.<sup>39</sup> Russia in 1991 was actively seeking inclusion and integration with the West in the hope of developing a cooperative partnership capable of joint global leadership.<sup>40</sup> "From their new partners in the West, they expected proper recognition for their unique feat of embracing democracy, ending the Cold War, and recognizing former Soviet satellites in East Europe as fully independent states."<sup>41</sup>

What Moscow got for its concessions was much less than "peace with honor," or in more practical terms, "partnership with prosperity." Russia was not to be integrated into the core West, but managed by it.<sup>42</sup> Moscow watched NATO extend a warm welcome to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, while its own informal bid for NATO

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37 James Goldgeiger and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: US Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), 321.

38 Given the fact that USSR was collapsing and the Russian Federation was forming, there was public disagreement between Gorbachev's view and Yeltsin's view on the sovereign aspirations of these republics.

39 The counter-view to this is that Russia's concessions in the post-Soviet space were more the result of Russian weakness than any sort of fundamental redefinition of national interests. See Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 265.

40 Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (October 2009): 7.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 7-8.

membership stalled.<sup>43</sup> In lieu of some grand Marshall Plan to alleviate the economic aftermath of the collapse, Russia's massive debt accrued in International Monetary Fund trenches while Western borders tightened in anticipation of waves of desperate economic migrants from the East.<sup>44</sup> Moscow's attitude towards the West was bound to shift with mounting resentment and a growing perception the United States and its allies preferred insulation from post-Soviet Russia to inclusion of the Russian Federation.

Consequently, when Vladimir Putin came to power, he abandoned Yeltsin's aim of integration, and instead pursued a more pragmatic course of integration with the West, intending to reestablish Russia's global prestige as a "great power" on the world stage.<sup>45</sup> He transformed the failing Russian political system into what it is today: a managed democracy, a form of political authoritarianism characterized by "the centralization of political and economic power, the emasculation of parliamentary politics, the muzzling of the media, a return to the rhetoric of Great Russian nationalism, and a bullying interference in the affairs of neighboring states."<sup>46</sup> With this transformation well under way, Putin set about redefining his foreign policy objectives. In short order, Putin's Russia sought soft dominance in its immediate neighborhood and rightful membership in a global multipolar order as an equal to the United States and the European Union.<sup>47</sup> Part of this modern state concept of soft dominance is Russia's right of regard to order its traditional space as suits Russian interests; a right shared by other regional powers such as China and India.

Putin's decision to lead Russia away from integration marked not only a tectonic shift in relations with the United States, but also his intent to establish a regional order based on a Russian sphere of interest rivaling the order of post-modern Europe. It is important to recognize Putin was not trying to recreate the Soviet empire. In fact, Putin once quoted a Ukrainian diplomat who had quipped those who do not regret the passing of the Soviet Union have no heart; but those who want to bring it back have no brains.<sup>48</sup> Instead, Putin looked to solidify spheres of "privileged interests" that included but were not limited to

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43 Yeltsin and Kozyrev viewed reconciliation with NATO as critical and therefore sought promise from the major Western powers that NATO would not seek to expand to fill the power vacuum in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin opposed any expansion of NATO into the post-Soviet space that did not include a path for membership for Russia itself. Russia became a member of NATO's Partnership for Peace – a halfway house on the road to full membership – in 1994. Prospects for reconciliation, and Russia's membership, deteriorated in 1997 with NATO's decision to expand. Arguably, Russia would likely have been reticent to join NATO without securing for itself a veto in the decision-making structure. See Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 152-156.

44 Russia secured an expedient \$10 billion loan from the IMF in 1996. See Cohen, *Failed Crusade*, 140-141; and Trenin, "Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence," 8.

45 Jim Nichol, *Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and US Interests* (Washington, DC: US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, March 31, 2014), 38.

46 Beer, "Russia's Managed Democracy," 37-39.

47 Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Reborn: Reimagining Moscow's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 6 (November 2009): 64-78.

48 Trenin, "Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence," 9.

the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>49</sup> Through integration, alliance-building, and the expansion of Russian presence in the near abroad, Putin aimed to bring about a less Western-centric system of order, with Russia holding the place of first-among-equals in its own neighborhood.<sup>50</sup>

### *Disorder*

While one can argue there is no new world order in the post-Cold War era that satisfies Kissinger's definition, there is no denying the emergence of a new European order. What challenges this emergence is the confrontation with Putin's alternative view, which sees Russia as the pole of a competing regional order. By rejecting the universal nature of Europe's post-modern system, Putin has effectively put a halt to the notion of its global expansion as a potential world order. Reflecting upon the observation of Charles King cited earlier, the invasion of Georgia marked the beginning of this rejection and Russia's intent to push-back. The annexation of Crimea and engagement in Ukraine highlight the fragility of the post-modern system's equilibrium when one of its powerful constituents behaves as a modern state. This situation illustrates the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the post-modern system and the post-modern state: one requires the other in order to thrive. As globalism increases and draws more modern states into contact with the post-modern system, equilibrium can quickly become agitation.<sup>51</sup> Agitation can quickly lead to disorder.

What contributes to the agitation of the system is the relative isolation of its continual evolution. Europe's post-modernity, while innovative, isolates Europe from states that do not share the same perspective of the universal applicability of security through interdependence. This difference becomes a point of considerable geopolitical friction for states on the system's periphery if they do not identify with the new Europe. In the case of Russia, an isolated Europe completely overlooked Moscow's resentment of the Western-led emergence of the post-modern international system; Europe simply "could not understand that what they saw as the best possible order seemed to many Russians to be both hypocritical and unstable."<sup>52</sup>

From the Russian lens, the perception of hypocrisy is understandable as the evolution of Europe's post-modern system was arguably enabled by the security guarantees of a less than post-modern United States. As the most powerful state in the world, the United States presents a peculiar dilemma for the European system, espousing post-modern values and principles yet often demonstrating classic modern geopolitical behavior. There are numerous examples of America's practical disregard

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49 Russia regarded the former Soviet republics as a key zone of strategic interest and believed it only natural for those republics to regard Russia in much the same way. Unlike the historical reference to the Soviet Union's spheres of influence, Russia's spheres of interest do not feature territorial control, they are more specific and identifiable. Rather than whole countries they include various politico-military, economic and financial, and cultural areas within them. See Trenin, "Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence," 4, 6, and 13.

50 *Ibid.*, 5, 11.

51 Globalism is defined as "a condition of international relations in which networks of interdependence connecting states and societies transmit effects in one part of the globe to other parts of the globe that are not in direct proximity." See Wallander, "Global Challenges and Russian Foreign Policy," 443-444.

52 Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 2.

for multilateral norms and institutions that undermine any claim to full membership in the club of post-modern states.<sup>53</sup> The most obvious was perhaps the unilateral decision to ignore international consensus and the will of the United Nations Security Council by invading Iraq in 2003, an example not lost on Putin. In his 2007 speech at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, Putin accused the United States of overstepping its national borders, perpetuating an almost uncontained use of military force in international relations.<sup>54</sup>

Labeling the OSCE as “a vulgar instrument” of American foreign policy interests, Putin described the existing system of order as unacceptably unipolar: “One single center of power. One single center of force. One single center of decision making . . . a world of one master, one sovereign.”<sup>55</sup> The rhetoric aside, the US government has not shown a convincing acceptance of “either the necessity and desirability of interdependence, or its corollaries of openness, mutual surveillance, and mutual interference to the same extent as most EU governments.”<sup>56</sup> These observations lend credit to the idea the evolution of Europe’s post-modern system of order is nurtured by America’s post-modern principles, yet back-stopped by its modern state interests. This unique relationship with the United States unmoors the EU from the rest of the continent by making the EU a hostage of geopolitical confrontations that are not of its choice, weakening the EU’s role in the global decision-making process.<sup>57</sup>

At the heart of the dissonance between post-modern Europe and Russia’s modern statist alternative is the concept of sovereignty. Russia continues to subscribe to sovereignty as the capacity to act, a concept at odds with Europe’s post-modern interpretation of sovereignty as merely a legal construct.<sup>58</sup> In the words of Putin’s ideologue-in-chief, Vladislav Surkov, “sovereignty is the political synonym of competitiveness,” which implies economic independence, military power, and cultural identity.<sup>59</sup> The power Europe (and the United States) sees therefore as benevolent, symbolized by NATO expansion and American anti-missile defence systems in Europe, Russia sees as a threat.

This difference in perspective is potentially dangerous, and the West ignores such differences at its own peril. In the words of Admiral Gortney, Commander US Northern Command, “what we believe is interesting, but what the Russians believe is what really matters.”<sup>60</sup> The

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53 The United States remains cautious about post-modern concepts, particularly as they apply to concessions of sovereignty and the notion of security interdependence. Furthermore, the United States has yet to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is somewhat reluctant to accept challenge inspections under the Chemical Weapons Convention and refrains from participating in the International Criminal Court.

54 “Putin’s Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy,” *The Washington Post*, Transcript, February 12, 2007.

55 Ibid.

56 Cooper, *The Postmodern State and the World Order*, 29.

57 Alexey Klebnikov, “What Globalization and Sovereignty Mean for Russia Today,” *Russia Direct*, March 25, 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/what-globalization-and-sovereignty-mean-russia-today>.

58 Krastev and Leonard, “The New European Disorder,” 3.

59 Ibid.

60 Admiral William Gortney, “WEST 2015 Keynote Address,” public speech, Western Conference and Exposition, San Diego, California, February 10, 2015, YouTube, video file, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1EHwzbsIKI>.

fact Russia remains convinced all the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space, including the protests in Russia, were designed, sponsored and guided by Washington, cannot be brushed aside as preposterous.<sup>61</sup> Putin sees this unrest as a crisis of legitimacy for Russian interests and by extension a threat to his regime.<sup>62</sup> As long as Putin holds this perception, Russia will remain wary of ceding any sovereignty to a post-modern European system. Furthermore, Putin's confidence in the global economic system was shaken by the financial crisis of 2009, convincing him that Russia's great power status is contingent upon having an economic region of its own – i.e. a sphere of strategic interest.<sup>63</sup> Globalism and the EU presence in the post-Soviet space have combined to present what Russia perceives as an encroaching threat to its political identity. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Russia is less inclined to depend on its uncompetitive, one-dimensional economy and instead focus on its military strength to exert its place in the international order.

If the paradigm of world order is accepted as “an inexorably expanding cooperative order of states observing common rules and norms, embracing liberal economic systems, forswearing territorial conquest, respecting national sovereignty, and adopting participatory and democratic systems of governance,” then Vladimir Putin is challenging this paradigm; he is creating conditions “where borders can be changed by force, where international institutions are powerless, where economic interdependency is a source of weakness, and where predictability is a liability rather than an asset.”<sup>64</sup>

### Conclusions & Recommendations: Where to From Here?

The shift in the strategic relationship between Russia and the West can be attributed to Russia's view of the world since making the conscious decision to abandon the notion of integration first into the West, and later with it. That view rejects the universality of the post-modern principles and instead sees order, at least regionally if not internationally, to be sustained by a system that allows for both power competition and collaboration.<sup>65</sup>

Western efforts to transform Russia into the image of a post-modern state have been unsuccessful and show no real promise in the near future, despite President Obama's warning in the 2010 National Security Strategy:

To adversarial governments, we offer a clear choice: abide by international norms, and achieve the political and economic benefits that come from greater integration with the international community; or refuse to accept this pathway, and bear the consequences of that decision, including greater isolation.<sup>66</sup>

This warning has not fallen on deaf ears; Putin seems prepared to bear the consequences and embrace the isolation. That isolation,

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61 Trenin, “Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence,” 11, 12; and Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 176.

62 Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 266.

63 Krastev and Leonard, “The New European Disorder,” 3.

64 Kissinger, *World Order*, 1.; and Krastev and Leonard, “The New European Disorder,” 1.

65 Trenin, “Russia's Spheres of Interest, not Influence,” 4.

66 Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 8, 11.

however, is not proving to be as complete as forewarned. In an effort to overcome the ongoing economic sanctions, Russia is befriending former Balkan allies, Greece and Eastern Europe while forging stronger relationships with China and India.<sup>67</sup> By providing attractive solutions to the energy needs of countries like Hungary and Bulgaria as well as potential economic relief to Greece, Putin is pressuring the unity of the EU and frustrating the United States.<sup>68</sup> The hope, therefore, of sanctioning Russia into adopting a more Westernist foreign policy is misplaced so long as Putin remains in power, and that is unlikely to change with whomever succeeds him. To borrow from the wisdom of Clausewitz, the first and most far-reaching act the statesman must make is to establish what kind of state Russia really is; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.<sup>69</sup> Putin's is a modern, statist regime with civilizationist undertones.

Key to establishing a sustainable international order with this state will be acknowledging Russia as a major power and developing a system that can co-exist with Russia, as well as co-evolve with it. "Russia is too big, too important, and too embedded in international institutions to hope that we can isolate it on our terms."<sup>70</sup> If integration is not possible, and isolation is not practical, then cooperation becomes vital to systemic evolution. For meaningful cooperation to occur, there needs to be a common space between the Euro-Atlantic system and Eurasian system; that space is likely economic and the best entry point is the convergence between the European Union and Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

The EEU – an economic and political bloc formed in 2014 uniting Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia – may be considered a flawed project by post-modern Europe, but it may also be the best opportunity Europe has to divert Russia away from the politics of military pressure and nationalist rhetoric.<sup>71</sup> Russia has been the driving force behind the Eurasian integration project with the goal of creating a single economic space for the full and free movement of goods, capital, services and people.<sup>72</sup> The population base of the Eurasian Economic Union is approximately 171 million people and the expectation is that its gross domestic product could reach 3 trillion dollars next year.<sup>73</sup> Paradoxically, the Eurasian Economic Union could be "a powerful manifestation of the EU's soft power – an attempt by Moscow to gain status and recognition by mimicking the institutions and structure of the EU."<sup>74</sup>

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67 China's National Bank has opened a credit line for three of the major Russian banks sanctioned by the West. While foreign direct investment (FDI) flows from Europe to Russia shrank by 63% in the last three quarters leading up to 2014, FDI from Asia to Russia, primarily from China, increased by 560% in the first quarter of 2014. See Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 5.

68 Eugene Bal, "Russia's New 'Trojan Horse' Strategy for Breaking European Unity," *Russia Direct*, February 19, 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/russias-new-trojan-horse-strategy-breaking-european-unity>.

69 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 88.

70 Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 7.

71 "Eurasian Economic Union is Open for New Partners," *RT Online*, December 24, 2014, <http://www.rt.com/politics/217359-putin-russia-allies-eurasia>.

72 Christopher Hartwell, "Will Ukraine become a Roadblock to Eurasian Integration?" *Russia Direct*, March 20, 2014, <http://www.russia-direct.org/analysis/will-ukraine-become-roadblock-eurasian-integration>.

73 "Eurasian Economic Union is Open for New Partners," *RT Online*.

74 Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 7.

Conceived as an inclusive organization, the Eurasian Economic Union offers engagement through trade and economic links rather than military competition. As Putin's alternative to the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Union is founded on the principle of economic interdependence, meaning that each of its constituent members can, in theory, veto any joint policy.<sup>75</sup> It is, therefore, the closest approximation to a post-modern institution that has emerged from the CIS to date. Engaging the Eurasian Economic Union as a legitimate regional institution could temper Russia's nationalistic rhetoric and present opportunity for cooperation and healthy competition between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian systems of order. For co-existence and co-evolution of these systems to occur, post-modern Europe must recognize Russia's right to advance the Eurasian integration project rather than attempting to subsume it as a subordinate constituent of European order. This implies various forms of overlap and collaboration between the systems, to include potential dual membership of states.<sup>76</sup>

The Eurasian Economic Union may just be the vehicle through which this is possible. Austrian diplomat and former Secretary General of the Council of Europe Walter Schwimmer endorses the notion of exploring the common ground for cooperation between the European Union and Eurasian Economic Union. Despite the geopolitical tension, the European Union remains Russia's main trade partner and Russia remains a strategic partner for the European Union in terms of energy security.<sup>77</sup> Schwimmer sees the Eurasian Economic Union as a reflection of the European Union and posits that a common market could be built between them. A productive relationship, therefore, between the European Union and Eurasian Economic Union built around a common market may serve to bridge the gap between the divergent European and Russian approaches to security and sovereignty.

As highlighted in the opening pages, these are complex and adaptive systems; as they interact it must be understood "the act of playing the game has a way of changing the rules."<sup>78</sup> For the US Department of Defense, and more specifically for US European Command, it is therefore imperative that military posture and security policy focus on managing peace and prosperity rather than containing risk. Focusing on the former does not imply that risk is not real, but it holds greater promise for co-evolution and co-existence in the common economic space. Focusing on the latter may lead to confrontation in the contested security space. The US Department of Defense must appreciate the Russian view of sovereignty and how Russia perceives US security policy. European Command must factor that appreciation into every action on the continent so as not to provoke an irreversible reaction – counteraction spiral. Key to European Command managing the peace will be: (1) avoiding miscalculation; (2) developing and maintaining a thorough understanding of the environment; (3) sharing information amongst not

75 Ibid., 8.

76 Krastev and Leonard, "The New European Disorder," 8.

77 Alexey Klebnikov, "There is no Europe without Russia and no Russia without Europe," *Russia Direct*, March 19, 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/qa/there-no-europe-without-russia-and-no-russia-without-europe>.

78 James Gleick, *Chaos – Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 24.

only European allies but with Russia as well; and (4), developing an appreciation of unintended consequences.

As the Department of Defense considers a range of military options to bolster security in Europe, it must resist the warfighter mentality that only through credible threat will bullies blink. Russia is not threatening to cross swords with European Command so much as it is challenging US policy, US values, and the US political machine. To meet these challenges, the United States must synchronize its levers of national power and not rely solely on the military to contain Russian antagonism. European Command should continue to build NATO's military capacity in Europe, particularly in the Baltic States, but it should also be wary of the unintended consequences of building up a large US Army presence in the region. Developing the capability of the Baltic armed forces through individual and collective training should be complemented by diplomatic efforts to incentivize increased European defense spending and to encourage European forces to demonstrate consistent, measured presence in the region. That presence could be reinforced by a US over-the-horizon force capability that provides strategic depth to NATO Response Forces while avoiding some of the overt military-political tensions that result from establishing a permanent US forward force as a deterrent.

Ultimately, Russia has rejected the role allotted to it by the Euro-Atlantic system of order, an order that did not include Russia in its design or evolution. In hindsight, it was likely erroneous to believe that Russia's desire for economic prosperity at the end of the Cold War signaled a commitment to post-modern evolution and an enduring dominance of the liberal, Westernist foreign policy tradition. Russia is deliberately challenging the European paradigm of post-modern order by emerging as a modern, statist pole in the post-Soviet neighborhood.

Key to meeting this challenge is systemic adaptation that engenders a degree of cooperation in the common space that outweighs confrontation in the contested space. As an incremental step towards systemic adaptation, the common economic space between the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union shows the greatest promise of promoting the co-existence and co-evolution of the competing systems. While the Eurasian Economic Union is not a comprehensive solution to the legacy battles over the military balance in Europe, it may be a start towards negotiating a new European order, where geopolitical differences are narrowed on the heels of narrowing economic differences. The alternative is for both systems to remain focused on the sovereignty interests and security issues that polarize the contested space, which for post-modern Europe is the drum that beats the retreat to modern state nationalism.





## Expanding the Rebalance: Confronting China in Latin America

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Daniel Morgan

**ABSTRACT:** China's expansion into Latin America might well outflank the US rebalance in Asia. The United States needs a broader strategic option, one capable of ensuring access to markets and of reducing future strategic risk to US interests in Latin America.

The rise of Chinese power in the Asia-Pacific region and in Latin America is a growing concern for US strategy. Recent US focus on the Middle East has facilitated Beijing's political, economic, and military expansion from the Pacific into South America. A new global economy has opened opportunities for growth and development with China and others in the Asia-Pacific. Some countries have responded with commitment to China in terms of economic trade and investment. In addition, governments such as Peru, Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica have pledged international political support for Chinese interests, arms sales, and military training and education cooperation. These developments challenge US strategy, as Chinese presence in both regions is arguably part of an intensifying competition between Beijing and the United States. This developing trans-Pacific interdependency between the two regions creates one integrated problem rather than two separate regional ones.

The growing cooperation between the governments in both regions and China presents political, economic, and military challenges that call for the incorporation of the Western Hemisphere into a Asia-Pacific strategy. Evan Ellis notes, "the principal strategic imperative for the United States historically has been, and continues to be, the region's geographic and economic connectedness to this country."<sup>1</sup> First, the different political interests of the United States and China can create tension and instability, or deny US access in both regions. Second, extensive trade and investment agreements across both regions are creating economic interdependencies and undermining US influence, and generating further political, social, and economic tensions. Third, the People's Republic of China's (PRC) military posture and forward presence in the South China Sea aims to improve its anti-access and area-denial (A2AD) capacity. The PRC's military expansion through arms sales and other means provide security alternatives for Latin American governments and support Chinese military power in the Asia-Pacific region.

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1 R. Evan Ellis, "Strategic Insights: The Strategic Relevance of Latin America for the United States," December 8, 2014, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/The-Strategic-Relevance-of-Latin-America/2014/12/08>.

For these reasons, the rebalancing to Asia does not adequately address the growing interdependencies between the two regions and Beijing's pursuit of its interests.

Accordingly, the United States must adapt its regional approach to Asia. Cross-regional cooperation in policy areas outside trade and investment is emerging independently, such as military training and arms sales, which demands a more holistic and synchronized approach. Without a broader Pacific strategy, non-economic cooperation can hinder the United States and the security and prosperity of its allies and partners. The United States should expand the rebalance to Asia into a trans-Pacific strategy that incorporates Latin America. Without a trans-Pacific strategy, a US regional approach will only create strategic risk, and enable China to draw on its influence in the Western Hemisphere to support its interests elsewhere.

This article examines the political, economic, and military challenges posed by China's increasing influence in both regions, and discusses why a new trans-Pacific strategy can best address them.

### **Political Challenges**

Beijing's political actions in Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region are creating an integrated cross-regional problem for US interests rather than two separate regional ones. In response to Chinese actions in the latter, the United States has strengthened its regional relations and defense cooperation with Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Meanwhile, China's actions have resulted in more political influence (in the Western Hemisphere) with traditional and non-traditional US partners, potentially undermining US values and relationships. At the same time, governments in the Asia-Pacific have developed relationships based on common political values and economic interests. Japan, Australia, and South Korea have deepened ties with some of the region's governments, particularly the Pacific Alliance of Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Chile. Some Asia-Pacific governments have also become permanent observers to the Organization of American States (OAS) due to common political interests. South American and Caribbean governments have recognized the strategic value of areas along the Pacific rim, and Chinese trade and investment alternatives in order to promote future growth and development.

### *Diplomacy and Soft Power*

Chinese soft power is aimed at gaining access to governments in order to maintain national security, ensure the inviolability of Chinese sovereignty and territory, and to enhance economic growth.<sup>2</sup> In the pursuit of these interests, Beijing employs a partnership diplomacy to "foster a multi-polar balance of power situation in order to safeguard its position and interests in an international system dominated by American pre-eminence."<sup>3</sup> As a result, US access to markets and other policy areas is challenged due to Chinese alternatives in trade, investment, arms,

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2 Stephen Harner, "Clarity in Core Interests, a Must for A New Type of Great Power Relations," April 8, 2014, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/clarity-in-core-interests-a-must-for-a-new-type-of-great-power-relations>.

3 David Scott, "China and the EU: A Strategic Axis for the Twenty-First Century?" *International Relations* 21, no. 1 (March 2007): 23-45.

and technology. Beijing has established forty-seven partnerships, in which eight are with Latin American nations (Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Chile).<sup>4</sup> In addition, in 2008, Beijing released a white paper specifying new relations with Latin American governments.<sup>5</sup> These regional partnerships may pose an integrated trans-Pacific challenge to the United States.

Chinese soft power in Latin America continues to gain increased support for Beijing's foreign policy goals. China's expanding influence in the Western Hemisphere challenges US political interests, especially when relations with the Asia-Pacific are increasingly more connected. In 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao stated China wanted to strengthen strategic ties and enhance mutual political trust, pursue creative and practical cooperation, and deepen cultural understanding with the region's nations.<sup>6</sup> Despite such statements, Beijing's political actions undermine US interests concerning democracy, human rights, rule of law, and other international norms. In addition, China continues to demand the political unification of Taiwan, and claims sovereignty over the South China Sea.

## Political Solutions

### *Trans-Pacific Multilateralism*

Regional organizations provide the means for a trans-Pacific strategy to build intergovernmental and interorganizational unity of effort, organizations to protect US interests, and to reestablish US leadership. Prominent regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank provide the United States with the ability to influence emerging trans-Pacific challenges. Cooperation between the:

two regions is growing, as evidenced by increased bilateral and multilateral diplomatic agreements....such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), India, Brazil, and South Africa Forum (IBSA), and Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS).<sup>7</sup>

These specific and exclusive organizations are increasingly relevant in developing cross-regional ties. Regional organizations, however, provide the forum to settle disputes and reinforce cooperative, transparent partnerships. Consensus building and conflict resolution must occur primarily through regional organizations to ensure legitimacy, not solely in narrow ones like FEALAC or BRICS. Without regional organizations understanding trans-Pacific impacts, Chinese alternatives

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4 Feng Zhongping and Huang Jing, *China's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy: Engaging with a Changing World* (Madrid, Spain: European Strategic Partnerships Observatory, June 2014), 18-19.

5 Russell Hsiao, "China's Strategic Engagement with Latin America," November 24, 2008, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34164#.VNURXkI2\\_FI](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34164#.VNURXkI2_FI).

6 President Hu Jintao, "Joining Hands to Enhance Friendly Relations between China and Latin America," public speech, Brazilian Parliament, November 12, 2004.

7 *Shaping the Future of the Asia-Latin America and the Caribbean Relationship* (Metro Manila: Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and Asian Development Bank Institute, 2012), <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29748/shaping-future-asia-lac.pdf>.

will continue to undermine US interests and support Beijing's goals in the Asia-Pacific.

Transparency, inclusion, and multilateralism provide the principles for establishing sustainable mutual interdependence and stability.<sup>8</sup> These principles can also encourage China to be a part of the solution, rather than create a perception of containing or isolating it. Divergent approaches between the United States and China require sophisticated diplomacy to manage crises or perceptions. A second critical challenge exists with various multilateral agreements, like China's Free Trade of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) contrasted with the US Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement. These opposing approaches threaten transparency, inclusion, and multilateralism in both regions. A trans-Pacific strategy should build cross-regional multilateral organizations that prevail over exclusive alternatives and institutions such as the Free Trade of the Asia-Pacific, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Mercosur, and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA). Another example for consideration is an expanded ASEAN Regional Forum, which already has 27 trans-Pacific members. A trans-Pacific strategy that promotes transparency, inclusion, and multilateralism will best facilitate cooperation, consensus, and enforcement with China, rather than confronting China separately in two regions.

### **Economic Challenges**

Latin American and Caribbean governments recognize they must "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific in order to ensure economic growth and development. Trade flows with the Asia-Pacific are well established and still growing. Regional multilateral and bilateral trade agreements have resulted in integrated supply chains. These supply chains have linked many of the interests of the United States and those of its allies and partners in both regions. However, Chinese alternatives and support to anti-US economic organizations undermine US interests and can disrupt important supply chains. These tensions can best be resolved by a trans-Pacific regime that protects the interests of all players, to include China.

#### *Trade Imbalance*

Deepening trade relationships between China, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific governments increase competition over access to resources. As the report, *Shaping the Future of the Asia-Latin America and the Caribbean Relationship*, written jointly by researchers from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, revealed:

...trade between Asia and LAC [Latin America and Caribbean] nations has expanded at an annual rate of 20.5 percent over the last 12 years. The report also stated that Asia accounts for 21 percent of its international trade, rapidly narrowing the gap with the United States, which has a 34 percent share.<sup>9</sup>

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8 R. Evan Ellis, *The Strategic Dimension of Chinese Engagement with Latin America* (Washington, DC: William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, 2013), 158.

9 Inter-American Development Bank, "IDB and ADB Look at Future of Asia-Latin America Relations," May 5, 2012, <http://www.iadb.org/en/topics/trade/idb-and-adb-look-at-future-of-asia-latin-america-relations,6688.html>.

China's trade with the region's governments increased from 29 billion dollars in 2003 to 270 billion dollars in 2012.<sup>10</sup> This surge has provided Chinese alternatives to United States model of promoting free market values, human rights, democracy, and security cooperation.

This surge has also created trade imbalances that could lead to an undesirable reduction of US trade, and other tensions. First, Beijing's expansion along with increased Asia-Pacific trade is leading to globally integrated supply chains challenged by cultural barriers, increased costs, and market development outlays, which all lead to declining profits for commodity-based Latin America economies.<sup>11</sup> Second, South American exports to China total over 70 percent and are principally limited to commodities, which stifles their trade diversification. Third, China and other Asia-Pacific nations export a wide range of cheap manufactured goods, including cars, electronics, equipment, and other parts and components. These imports, unfortunately, impede domestic manufacturing and further economic growth beyond commodities. Last, slowing Chinese growth and its low value added imports threaten the vitality of South American and Caribbean economic growth and development. These factors have contributed to International Monetary Fund and World Bank expectations that the region's growth rate will remain under 3 percent for 2015-2018, which is almost a 50 percent decrease over the last decade.<sup>12</sup>

China's declining growth and reduced commodity prices demand increased US focus with its southern allies and partners. The United States must enable economic diversification with broader and deeper market integration, or the Latin American region could expect instability similar to which plagued their governments in the past. Commodity prices have dropped by a quarter since 2011. After growing by an average of 4.3 percent from 2004 to 2011, the region's economies managed just 2.6 percent last year.<sup>13</sup> But, an increasing and more concerning fear is Beijing has slowed its target growth rate to 7 percent, which can further impact South American and Mexican trade and revenue.<sup>14</sup> The United States can help offset the region's lower commodity exports to China by coordinating with other Asia-Pacific governments to increase purchases from the South American and Caribbean economies.

### *Investment Challenges*

Chinese investment in Latin America impedes US access by providing governments with financing alternatives. The region has been a destination for Chinese investment, attracting approximately 40

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10 R. Evan Ellis, "The Rise of China in the Americas," *Security and Defense Studies Review* 16 (2014): 90.

11 Sean Ryu, Michelle Kam, Zhan Ying, Jiang Yi Wei, and Yang Chao, *Globally Integrated Supply Chain: China Perspective* (Somers, NY: IBM Global Services, 2008), 3.

12 Santiago Levy, "When Will Fast Growth Return to Latin America," May 9, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/05/09-growth-return-latin-america-levy>.

13 "Life After the Commodity Boom," *The Economist*, May 29, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21599782-instead-crises-past-mediocre-growth-big-riskunless-productivity-rises-life>.

14 "Why China's Economy is Slowing," *The Economist*, March 11, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/03/economist-explains-8>.

billion dollars since 2010.<sup>15</sup> In 2010, China's loan commitments to the region's governments totaled 37 billion dollars, exceeding that of the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, and the US Import-Export Bank combined.<sup>16</sup> Beijing's willingness to provide foreign direct investment not only helps offset lower commodity prices, but increases Chinese access and influence across the region. Investment with Beijing comes with a "no strings attached" policy that does not require adherence to western requirements for environmental compliance, fiscal responsibility, or transparency in transactions and contracting.<sup>17</sup> These benefits provide governments with incentives to invest with China, but usually at the expense of social and environmental risk. This investment approach only strengthens Beijing's relations with anti-US governments like Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and increasingly with Argentina.

Beijing's principle of noninterventionism and lack of adherence to high standards create negative social and environmental consequences and contradict western values and international norms. Chinese noninterventionism allows investment in governments regardless of human rights' practices, values, or rule of law. China's limited corporate social responsibility, particularly the neglect of workers' rights and energy and environmental standards, also facilitates corruption and social unrest. Recent international attention to inadequate corporate social responsibility and its noninterventionism policy, however, is leading to positive change. If China improves its international labor and environmental practices, anti-corruption efforts, and local community support, Chinese investment alternatives could take investments and market share from the United States.

### *Polarization of Economic Organizations*

Chinese trade and investment and aggressive posture in the South China Sea are dividing Western Hemisphere and Asia-Pacific governments into opposing political and economic camps of the United States and China. In the Asia-Pacific, Beijing may reenergize the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a proposed free trade bloc that would include the ASEAN member states plus Australia, India, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand, but not the United States.<sup>18</sup> In South America and the Caribbean, Chinese trade and investment has shifted anti-US governments away from western institutions that promote transparency, rule of law, and other international norms. The Chinese alternative has also prolonged the negative effect of less responsible economic organizations like the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America and Mercosur. Other countries like Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela have also formed anti-western alternatives that deny US access and facilitate China's expansion.

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15 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America and the Caribbean: China-Latin America Cross-Council Task Force Working Document," November 2013, <http://www.cepal.org/en/publications/35927-chinese-foreign-direct-investment-latin-america-and-caribbean-china-latin-america>.

16 Kevin P. Gallagher, Amos Irwin, Katherine Koleski, *The New Banks in Town: Chinese Finance in Latin America* (Washington, DC: Inter-American Dialogue, March 2012), 1, [http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/NewBanks\\_FULLTEXT.pdf](http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/NewBanks_FULLTEXT.pdf)

17 *Ibid.*, 19.

18 Shannon Tiezzi, "US Pressures China to Kill Asia-Pacific Free Trade Agreement Talks," November 4, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/11/us-pressures-china-to-kill-asia-pacific-free-trade-agreement-talks>.

## Economic Solutions

Significant opportunities exist to liberalize trade agreements and investments in order to strengthen Western Hemisphere economies that support common Asia-Pacific and US interests. One such opportunity is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which currently includes the United States, Canada, Peru, Chile, Australia, Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Vietnam, and likely Colombia and Costa Rica. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is an ongoing trade negotiation that opens market access across the Western Hemisphere and Asia-Pacific and manages 21st century issues in a global economy.<sup>19</sup> Current Trans-Pacific Partnership participants comprise 11.2 percent of the world's population and almost 40 percent of the Global Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>20</sup> Critical to the Trans-Pacific Partnership is that it links Western Hemisphere nations to the emerging Asia-Pacific supply and value added chains and facilitates US and Asia-Pacific investment.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership can provide the economic anchor to a trans-Pacific strategy because it would provide a living, inclusive, and rules-based regime for cross-regional trade and investment. In addition, the Trans-Pacific Partnership can drive other non-economic relationships concerning security cooperation and assistance and other policy areas like climate and energy. This multilateral agreement has the potential to build a long-term economic strategy and statecraft model that can promote sustainable cooperation over hazardous competition. The Trans-Pacific Partnership addresses fair competition, consumer protection, labor rights, liberalized access to investment under rules of law, intellectual property rights, and small and medium business opportunities.<sup>21</sup> The Trans-Pacific Partnership also creates jobs, increases wages, and reinforces democratic institutions. This trade agreement can address one aspect of the integrated problem by incorporating Latin America political and economic development.

## Military Challenges

PRC arms sales in Latin America generate revenue and support Chinese military modernization in the Asia-Pacific. Chinese military partnerships in the Southern Hemisphere give them increased access and influence in their decision-making based on Beijing's interests and actions in the Asia-Pacific. For example, an Asia-Pacific conflict that arises from miscalculation, or a deliberate decision, gives China the ability to secure political support from South American and Caribbean governments for their actions in the Asia-Pacific. Any US assumption that Chinese actions in Western Hemisphere and the Asia-Pacific are two separate problems overlooks Beijing's long-term strategic perspective of gaining multi-regional influence. PRC military presence south of the United States combined with growing political and economic linkages creates an integrated problem for US security engagement and influence. A US trans-Pacific military strategy must forge new cross-regional

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19 Office of the US Trade Representative, "Trans-Pacific Partnership: Summary of US Objectives," <http://www.ustr.gov/tpp/Summary-of-US-objectives>.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.



security cooperation relationships between South American-Caribbean and Asia-Pacific militaries.

### *Chinese Military in the Pacific*

China's aggressive stance and military forward presence and posture, particularly in the South China Sea, intend to replace the United States as the regional hegemon in the Asia-Pacific. The region is a vital driver of the global economy and includes the world's busiest international sea lanes and nine of the ten largest ports. Thousands of maritime vessels transverse the South China Sea, ranging from fishing boats to coastal naval ships to trade ships. Beijing claims sovereignty and territorial rights for much of the region's waterways in direct confrontation or threat to Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Brunei. The Asia-Pacific is also home to seven of the world's ten largest standing militaries and five of the world's declared nuclear nations.<sup>22</sup>

China's demands for territorial integrity and sovereignty in the Asia-Pacific region challenge freedom of navigation and access to resources for the United States and other extra-regional actors. The PRC's military modernization and expansion into the South China Sea increases Chinese anti-access and area-denial capacity and capabilities. Heightened tensions and miscalculations by US allies or partners, or other actors, could draw the United States into an escalating conflict or other military commitments. Impacts of such miscalculations can also affect trade flows and investment and impose significant costs on Latin American, Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific economies. Such high risks demand a new strategic approach, one that views the challenge as a trans-Pacific problem, rather than a regional one.

### *Chinese Military in Latin America*

Political partnerships and economic trade blocs in the Western Hemisphere facilitate Chinese military activities and challenge US access and its building of security capacity in the region. Latin American governments, to include US partners, have increased ties to the PRC military through a growing number of official visits, military officer education exchanges, training exercises, and arms sales.<sup>23</sup> China sent 130 riot police to Haiti from 2004 to 2012 as part of the UN's peacekeeping force, becoming the first Chinese uniformed formation to serve in the Western Hemisphere. In the past decade, China sold 58 million dollars worth of K-8 Karakorum jets to Bolivia, upward of 150 million dollars in air surveillance systems to Venezuela, donated military materiel to multiple countries, and sold Peru a mobile field hospital and other equipment worth 300 million dollars.<sup>24</sup> They are reportedly about to sell 1 billion dollars in arms to Argentina, including armored personnel carriers and Chinese-designed fighter jets, with the likely candidates

22 Admiral Samuel J. Locklear, III, "PACOM Senate Armed Services Committee Posture Statement," March 25, 2014, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/SpeechesTestimony/tabid/6706/Article/565155/pacom-senate-armed-services-committee-testimony.aspx>.

23 General John F. Kelly, US Southern Command, "Posture Statement of General John F. Kelly, United States Marine Corps Commander," February 6, 2014, [http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Documents/2014\\_SOUTHCOM\\_Posture\\_Statement\\_HASC\\_FINAL\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Documents/2014_SOUTHCOM_Posture_Statement_HASC_FINAL_PDF.pdf).

24 Gabriel Marcella, "China's Military Activity in Latin America," *Americas Quarterly*, Winter 2012, <http://americasquarterly.org/Marcella>.

being the FC-1 Xiaolong, JF-17 Thunder, or the J-10.<sup>25</sup> Last, China is taking aggressive efforts in technology transfer programs with Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela in areas of space technology for military and civilian purposes. Chinese military relations in the region do not pose an imminent military threat to the United States or its allies and partners, but they are an indicator of how seriously Beijing considers Latin America as a military market.

Beijing's arms sales to Latin American governments generate revenue that advances its anti-access and area-denial capabilities in the Asia-Pacific, which directly threatens the United States and its allies. In addition, PRC military presence and influence in the region provides China with strategic options that can overtly or covertly support Chinese activities in the Asia-Pacific. The United States cannot underestimate the threat posed by Beijing's military presence in the Western Hemisphere. The United States should not approach this issue as a separate regional concern. Increased Chinese activities and influence in the Western Hemisphere provide Beijing with a range of ways and means that can negatively impact US interests in the Asia-Pacific. The United States must integrate South American and Caribbean governments into a trans-Pacific military solution in order to ensure US interests are protected in the Asia-Pacific.

## Military Solutions

### *Security Cooperation*

Standing mutual defense treaties, agreements, and theater engagement plans provide the foundation for cross-regional military security cooperation that can address the trans-Pacific challenge of China. The Pacific Alliance, for example, has facilitated multilateral agreement between Colombia, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Chile and Mexico participated with Japan in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, which was adopted as an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the United Nations in April 2013.<sup>26</sup> Other countries that supported this initiative were Costa Rica and Argentina. These cooperative partnerships provide a foundation for addressing China's actions in both regions as one integrated problem. The US military must examine current theater campaign plans and synchronize them with developing trade and investment relationships in order to achieve the best holistic solution to the challenge posed by China.

China's military presence and posture and expanding relations between Latin American and Asia-Pacific governments necessitate unique cross combatant command coordination between US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and US Pacific Command (PACOM). The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff should begin identifying options and enabling geographic combatant commanders with specific authorities to build better cross combatant coordination in support of a trans-Pacific strategy. Southern Command and Pacific

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25 Jose Higuera and Usman Ansari, "Argentina's Jet Fighter Replacement Options Narrow," *Defense News*, November 30, 2014.

26 Akira Yamada, "Japanese Diplomacy in the Latin America and the Caribbean," *Americas Quarterly*, August 22, 2013, <http://www.americasquarterly.org/content/japanese-diplomacy-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

Command should bolster partner militaries based on cross-regional political ties, emerging trade and investment linkages, like those within the TPP, and current mutual defense treaties. Under new multinational security agreements, geographic combatant commanders should then expand current cooperative security locations (CSLs) and build new locations based on existing and growing trade and investment relationships.<sup>27</sup> A coalition approach to cooperative security location expansion and integration would facilitate trans-Pacific military partner capacity building among both regions' militaries. This approach would provide opportunities for multinational training and education exchanges with United States, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific militaries operating together in any region, not just one.

Cross-combatant command coordination that integrates both regions' militaries into a comprehensive security cooperation will demonstrate US resolve, reduce cultural barriers, and increase burden-sharing among partnered nations. Geographic combatant commanders should develop cross-combatant command multinational wargames and exercises focused on disaster relief and other humanitarian situations. Pacific Command and Southern Command should also integrate South American and Mexican military leadership into crisis management or contingency operations as much as possible. This integration focused on common objectives will also reinforce the need for interoperability among US allies and partners. A trans-Pacific option with multinational military capacity and capability will reinforce shared political, economic, and military interests, rather than a predominant US regional presence. Critical to the trans-Pacific military approach, however, is transparent military-to-military interaction between United States and Chinese maritime, air, and land forces in order to gain understanding on mutual shared interests.

The US Army Pacific (USARPAC) Pacific Pathways provides an innovative example of a potential trans-Pacific option that would include Latin American governments. The Pacific Pathways initiative is an Army land power approach to the rebalancing in Asia strategic priority by providing sustained US land forces in the region. The Pacific Pathways develops joint interdependence, increases US military partner building capacity, and sets theater conditions that prevent and shape potential conflict. The United States should look to expand the Pacific Pathways initiative in coordination with the US Army National Guard (USANG) partnership program into a multinational trans-Pacific Pathways. The inclusion of the Army National Guard reinforces the multi-component Total Army concept and gives the United States increased land power capacity and capability. The enlargement of Pacific Pathways can evolve into a trans-Pacific cross combatant command campaign that maintains US resolve with its allies and partners, while sharing the security burden through partner building capacity. For example, Southern Command could extend their annual PANAMAX air, sea, and land military exercise to include Asia-Pacific militaries, to include China possibly. The Pacific Pathways initiative along with other Southern Command and

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<sup>27</sup> A cooperative security location is a host-nation facility with little or no permanent US personnel presence, which may contain pre-positioned equipment and/or logistical arrangements and serve both for security cooperation activities and contingency access. Examples are in Aruba-Curacao and Comalapa, El Salvador in SOUTHCOM and Thailand and others in PACOM.

Pacific Command exercises must remain inclusive to Chinese cooperation and participation in order to reinforce transparency, inclusion, and multilateralism principles.

### *Multilateral Arms Control*

China's military capacity and capability in the Pacific and arms sales and technology transfers in Latin America demand new approaches in US security assistance programs. China's official defense budget rose from 669.1 billion yuan in 2012 to 740.6 billion yuan (equivalent to 119 billion dollars) in 2013, a rise of 10.7 percent.<sup>28</sup> China now has the second largest defense budget in the world.<sup>29</sup> Latin American defense spending is forecasted to grow from 63 billion dollars in 2011 to 65 billion dollars by 2014, with 20 percent being available for procurement from China or other external actors.<sup>30</sup> Chinese anti-access and area-denial capacity and capability and increasing arms sales in the Western Hemisphere necessitate regional arms control organizations in order to ensure stability and a balance of power in both regions. Two recent agreements on military confidence building measures in the Asia-Pacific can help China and the US reach better levels of trans-Pacific cooperation: the notification of major military activities and a code of conduct for safe conduct of naval and air military encounters.<sup>31</sup> The United States must build on these agreements to include trans-Pacific concerns and pursue open dialogue with China to move away from bi-lateral conflict resolution towards multilateral cooperation, transparency, and conflict resolution.

A trans-Pacific strategy should consider a multilateral arms control regime similar to the 1990 Conventional Arms Forces in Europe Treaty. Although this treaty was designed for a late post Cold War period, the treaty sought to control the proliferation of technologies that might contribute to conventional or unconventional weapons programs.<sup>32</sup> These multilateral frameworks could place regional ceilings on specific capabilities in order to promote stability and reduce the possibility of miscalculations that could lead to armed conflict. In addition, such a program would also stipulate reports and compliance inspections on specific equipment, force structure, and training maneuvers for specific at risk countries. Last, this regime would also detail specific requirements and constraints concerning cyber and space domains to protect US interests and enforce rule of law across both regions. A trans-Pacific cooperative threat reduction and monitoring mechanism that addresses emerging threats can mitigate unnecessary militarization in both regions and reinforce further confidence-building measures.

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28 Dean Cheng and Walter Lohman, "Solutions 2014: China," The Heritage Foundation, <http://solutions.heritage.org/china>.

29 Ibid.

30 Marcella, "China's Military Activity in Latin America."

31 Bonnie Glaser, "A Step Forward in US-China Military Ties: Two CBM Agreements," Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 11, 2014, <http://amti.csis.org/us-china-cbms-stability-maritime-asia>.

32 Amy Wolf, Paul Kerr, and Mary Beth Nikitin, *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements* (Washington, DC: US Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, July 21, 2014), 38.

## Conclusion

Beijing's political, economic, and military ties in Latin America and its aggressive posture in the Asia-Pacific region can threaten US capacity in issues ranging from free trade and investment to security cooperation and assistance. China's diplomatic approach through economic statecraft and strategy, which leads to increased political and military influence, is increasingly competing with US interests in Latin America and elsewhere. Chinese alternatives continue to reinforce the legitimacy of authoritarian, or semi-authoritarian, governments in both regions, which threaten US interests and its allies and partners. US allies and partners are also less prone to act in accordance with US interests than in past decades due to increasing opportunities globally. The United States must adjust traditional regional statecraft and strategy towards more contemporary diplomacy to identify cross-regional linkages between governments, tie them into common objectives, and develop an integrated approach. If not, China's pursuit of multi-regional leadership will threaten US interests and potentially lead to increased tension and unpredictable outcomes.

Relationships between Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the United States are inextricably linked across common interests and objectives. No region exists in isolation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The tough balance is the United States must remain economically engaged with China and encourage free-market cooperation. At the same time, the United States must develop and maintain comprehensive and strong responses to negative Chinese behaviors, such as support to authoritarian organizations and cyber espionage activities. The US government needs to readjust its current re-balancing in Asia, and develop a wide-ranging and cross-regional approach to reinforce Latin America and Asia-Pacific linkages in support of US interests. This approach will help the United States better rationalize its power in an era of declining or static defense budgets.

## Book Reviews

### CONTEMPORARY WAR

#### **It Takes More than a Network: The Iraqi Insurgency and Organizational Adaptation**

By Chad C. Serena

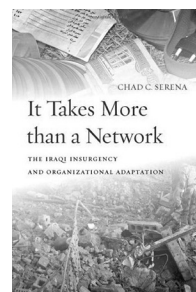
Reviewed by Ross Harrison, School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Middle Eastern Politics at University of Pittsburgh

Chad Serena's book makes a major contribution to our understanding of the nuts and bolts of the Iraqi insurgency, at a time when the United States is actually encountering remnants of that insurgency in the form of ISIS. He pulls back the veil on the insurgency movement with the most systematic and methodologically clear treatment to date. He uses his skill as a political scientist and experience at Rand to dissect the insurgency, exposing its strengths but also its weaknesses, which he claims are manifold. Serena drives home the point about the weaknesses of the Iraqi insurgency network by contrasting it with the more effective Afghan network.

His basic thesis, enshrined in the title of his impressive volume is the insurgency in Iraq is not unified, but involves a network with multiple strengths, but also many vulnerabilities. By very effectively analyzing network dynamics, he debunks the notion this kind organizational model is necessarily more adaptive or leads to greater effectiveness. This insight makes a major contribution, since some conventional wisdom shows networks, particularly for non-state actors like al-Qaeda, generally confer strength. Serena essentially argues networks neither confer strengths nor weaknesses. Rather, whether a network is a robust model depends on its nature, such as size, diversity, and information transfer.

Like networks themselves, the book has strengths but also several weaknesses. Because Serena relies so heavily on his framework, the book has more the feel of a political science primer on networks than a book about the political dynamics of the insurgency of Iraq. Rather than using the framework suggestively to tease out insights, he applies it more rigidly, using the Iraqi insurgency almost as a case study to amplify his insights about networks. This has an impact on the reader, as we are left feeling we are observing the Iraqi insurgency at 30,000 feet rather than at ground level. Because of this, the book seems almost apolitical. There is always the danger when dissecting something of losing sight of its essence. The Iraqi insurgency was messy, dynamic and ever changing. The book treats it too antiseptically.

The most puzzling omission was the failure to mention how during the Sunni Awakening, General David Petraeus used some of the vulnerabilities Serena identified to drive a wedge between Al-Qaeda in Iraq (which later became ISIS) and the Sunni tribal leaders, something that would have added to the texture of the book and made it more relevant for today. Many of the issues the United States and its coalition partners are facing today in Iraq concern both the strengths and vulnerabilities of a Sunni network. Serena could have made this less of a textbook and more of a policy book by pulling the argument forward a bit. While ISIS

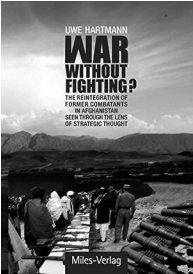


Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014

240 pages  
\$24.95

did not gain international notoriety until 2014, the signs of its strengthening were evident at the time of the publication of the book.

That said, Serena makes a valuable scholarly contribution by giving us a systematic treatment of the Iraqi insurgency. In a world where much of the work on Iraq is descriptive and off-the-cuff, Serena's methodologically sound treatment adds tremendous value.



Berlin, Germany: Miles-Verlag, 2014

146 pages

\$17.00 (paper)

## War Without Fighting? The Reintegration of Former Combatants in Afghanistan Seen Through the Lens of Strategic Thought

By Uwe Hartmann

Reviewed by Daniel J. Glickstein, Corporal, US Army National Guard, Research Analyst, and National Security Education Program (Boren) Scholarship recipient

*War Without Fighting* by German officer Uwe Hartmann emphasizes the primacy of reintegration in resolving protracted conflicts. Reintegration here is defined as “the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income.”<sup>(9)</sup> Hartmann’s work nestles within the existing disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration field, but adds a key twist by insisting policy-makers pursue reintegration during a conflict, instead of waiting until hostilities have ceased. His additional expertise on Carl von Clausewitz and a chapter devoted to civil-military relations are welcome bonuses in his book.

### *Counterinsurgency, Reintegration, Kinetic Operations?*

Hartmann asserts the failure to connect counterinsurgency (COIN) with a broader, overarching political strategy has been a critical shortcoming in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. “Reintegration should not be a means to COIN, but instead COIN should be a means to support reintegration. Reintegration, in order to be successful, must be seen as the overall political concept that directs COIN.”<sup>(70)</sup> This line of thinking echoes similar COIN-phrases such as the importance of connecting military and political aims, and the idea that you “can’t kill yourself out of an insurgency.” But Hartmann’s work shines when fleshing out subtler concepts within the reintegration process.

Moving beyond catchphrases and mantras, Hartmann devotes careful attention to the social science underpinning support or mistrust in insurgencies. Beginning at the basic level, he discusses how government legitimacy and capability (or lack thereof) can make or break popular support. He then moves further into detailing the side-effects of negative capability and legitimacy. These detract from popular perception and create skepticism and lead to hedging.

Perception is my preferred term for the much-maligned “hearts and minds” phrase. Put simply, how populations perceive the ruling governments will directly impact their actions. This phrasing is also useful in clarifying the chain of action here; positive or negative government actions dictate the population’s perception. It is an input-output relationship, and trying to bolster community relations without changing the actual government will do nothing to solve underlying problems.

Hedging is tackled later: when a new government is faltering and its stability is unclear, “the buy-in of local leaders may remain limited, so long as they perceive a need to hedge their communities against insurgents.” (23) This is a logical thought, and one seen especially often in Afghanistan (the example cited in the book is of an Afghan family who has one son in the Taliban and one in the Afghan National Army), yet it has garnered hushed discussion at best.

This hedging behavior explains the tug-of-war between insurgents and government forces, and is a topic well-worth further study. But there is no “critical mass” within a specific area for insurgents to win or lose. Every case is subjective, and there is no mathematic formula to predict when popular support will shift. For example, rural Afghan villagers in a region with a limited Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) presence are at high-risk of being intimidated and harmed at night by insurgents. Hearts and minds are irrelevant here; when civilians are facing mortal danger on a regular basis they are unlikely to unfurl an Afghan flag and proclaim full support for the government.

*Filling in the Blanks*

Given the situational nature of low-intensity conflicts and reintegration processes, developing universal laws and guidance can be stumbling blocks. As seen with American counter-insurgency doctrine, theorists can develop broad statements, but no one can write standard operating procedures for one thousand different situations with guarantees of appropriateness and success.

Thus, Hartmann’s work leaves us with a sturdy platform to conduct further thinking, research, and writing. His overall thesis is the primacy of reintegration is useful and correct. Yet the devil is in the details, and future practitioners will have to forge ahead themselves and discover unique approaches; for example, how to pursue transitional justice regarding human rights violations while reintegrating enemy forces into a new government.

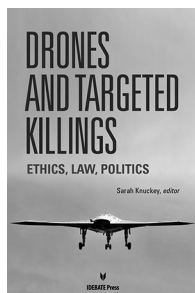


## MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

**Drones and Targeted Killings: Ethics, Law, Politics**

Edited by Sarah Knuckey

Reviewed by Ben Lerner, Vice President for Government Relations, Center for Security Policy



New York, NY: IDEBATE  
Press, 2014  
392 pages  
\$25.99 (paper)

As global jihadist organizations continue to ramp up targeting of the West and its allies – [both as a result of collaboration with one another, and as a means of vying for primacy within their collective movement] – the United States will continue to look to deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) as a valuable counterterrorism tool, enabling the use of precise lethal force with comparatively little risk to non-combatants on the ground, and zero risk of American casualties. While drones have undoubtedly provided the American warfighter with significant tactical advantage over an asymmetric enemy that operates without legal or moral constraint, their prominence in the targeted killing component of U.S. counterterrorism efforts has ignited substantial debate over the legality and advisability of using such weapons for this purpose, particularly away from the so-called “hot” battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq.

In *Drones and Targeted Killings: Ethics, Law, Politics*, Prof. Sarah Knuckey of Columbia Law School endeavors to introduce readers to the various contours of this debate. Drawing from numerous sources from within and outside government, Knuckey compiles several speeches and articles (or excerpts thereof) covering drone strikes, and divides them into four categories: 1) Are drone strikes effective? 2) Are drone strikes ethical? 3) Are drones strikes legal? and 4) Transparency and Accountability—Efforts and Obstacles.

Knuckey frames her objective as follows: “*Drones and Targeted Killings* was designed to stimulate debate among those who are new to the issues. It brings to the fore human rights, civil liberties, and civilian protection issues, while introducing readers to a range of diverse views from a variety of sources.” She succeeds in achieving these goals in some respects, but falls short in others.

The effectiveness section strikes a reasonable balance between those who argue drone strikes are effective in countering terrorist operatives and organizations, and those who argue they are ineffective or even counterproductive. Thoughtful arguments asserting effectiveness – including from CIA Director John Brennan, American University law professor Kenneth Anderson, and Daniel Byman of Georgetown University – are paired with likewise thoughtful counter-arguments from the Stimson Center and Micah Zenko of the Council on Foreign Relations, exploring at times concepts such as the extent and importance of “blowback” vis-à-vis drone strikes; the reliability of data on civilian casualties resulting from drone strikes; and the extent to which US drone strike practice could affect how other nations use their own drones in the future.

The ethics section is similarly balanced, exploring varying points of view on whether US drone strike practice is moral or immoral. Some themes emerging in this section include 1) the impact of the drone's precision on the ethics question. For instance, Kenneth Anderson and *New York Times* journalist Scott Shane argues the precision of drones, particularly relative to other weapons, could be used on counterterrorism missions but would result in higher numbers of civilian deaths; and Professors John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, and Conor Friedersdorf of *The Atlantic*, argue the precision capabilities of drones could paradoxically encourage more frequent and less judicious use of force and 2) the extent to which the remoteness of drone operators from the battlefield risks creating a videogame mentality towards lethal force – an especially important contribution in this regard comes from the late journalist Matthew Power, whose profile of drone sensor operator Brandon Bryant's struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder provides a snapshot of how drone operators can be deeply affected by their missions, even if operating from thousands of miles away.

Perhaps the most contentious area of debate on the subject of US drone strikes, however, has been their legality under domestic and international law, which makes Knuckey's construction of the legal section problematic. The balance the reader finds present in the effectiveness and ethics sections is regrettably lacking with respect to the legal discussion. While Knuckey does offer up a lengthy excerpt from then-Attorney General Eric Holder's address at Northwestern University defending the legality of the drone strike program, the rest of the selections in this section are weighted heavily towards arguing the illegality of the program, an arrangement which casts the Obama administration as alone in arguing against what is portrayed as the preponderance of non-governmental analysis on this question. It would have been helpful for Knuckey to include a couple of writings from a range of scholars who have written in defense of the program's legality, including Steven Groves, James Carafano, Prof. Michael Lewis, Prof. Jordan Paust, Prof. Charles Dunlap (USAF, Ret.), and David French, to name just a few. The transparency section similarly lacks representation from non-government analysis arguing in favor of less transparency regarding the US drone strike program, although that is perhaps a more understandable omission given what would appear to be a relative lack of such sources.

*Drones and Targeted Killings: Ethics, Law, Politics* is a good read, up to a point, for those seeking a variety of views on select aspects of the drone strike debate. Knuckey, however, is more faithful to her objective of "introducing readers to a diverse range of views" in the first half than in the latter.

## Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation

By Gabriel Weimann

Reviewed by Jeffrey L. Caton, Colonel (USAF, Retired), President, Kepler Strategies LLC

Gabriel Weimann opens *Terrorism in Cyberspace: The Next Generation* by asking "Can we declare the war on terrorism to be over?" Clearly we cannot, or so the author contends as he builds the case "that terrorists'



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296 pages.

\$30.00

presence and the use of cyberspace is today more sophisticated, richer, and broader than a decade ago.” While Weimann offers credible articles, reports, and case studies to illustrate his assertions, he does so through the lens of the same 9/11 goggles with which he opened his 2006 work, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges*. As is the case with many sequels, his new book repeats a significant amount of the content from its predecessor. Ironically, it fails to capture the wealth of data concerning changes in terrorist groups, cyberspace capabilities, and societal habits that have emerged in the intervening nine years.

*Terrorism in Cyberspace* narrows the scope of the diverse world of terrorism and ignores many of the operations addressed in the first book, such as those by groups like the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The result is an interesting recitation of vignettes of Islamic extremists’ use of the Internet that, unfortunately, is lacking in broader critical analysis of all current forms of terrorism in cyberspace, let alone future ones. In short, this book is a disappointment; it does not deliver the material implicitly promised by the title, and it does not deliver on its own explicit criteria.

Weimann states that the book is written to address three research questions: What are the new faces of online terrorism? What can be expected in the near future? How can we counter these trends? These questions receive uneven treatment covered in 11 chapters separated into three parts that surprisingly do not parallel these questions.

Part I, “Terrorism Enters Cyberspace,” is largely a repeat of the first four chapters of *Terror on the Internet* updated with new examples. It is here that Weimann fails to provide the fundamental context necessary for readers to comprehend the topic’s scope. Specifically, some of the most basic definitions and metrics on terrorist incidents—such as the actual growth (or decline); the criteria that links them to cyberspace; and the criteria that links them to terrorists—are not addressed. The only historical data presented are two graphs showing the number of academic publications and the number of articles (*Washington Post* and *New York Times*) written on Internet terrorism from 1996 to 2013. Sadly, the reader is left wondering if cyberspace-related terrorist acts number in the tens, hundreds, or thousands. If the reader happens to be a senior leader entrusted with decision making for resources and priorities, these are vital statistics.

Part II, “Emerging Trends,” provides interesting insights with regard to cyberspace-related means and methods—such as “narrowcasting,” social media, and “online fatwas”—used by terrorist groups to identify and groom recruits. Among these are the “lone wolf terrorists” that Weimann claims to be “the fastest growing form of terrorism.” But again, the reader must accept this assertion on faith; no evidence in terms of number of lone wolf attacks and their severity is included. Also, the discourse makes simplistic cause-and-effect connections between such attacks and any alleged cyberspace means. In this, Weimann fails to distinguish the ills attributed to changes in terrorist tools and activities on the web from similar extreme behavior that society writ large wrestles with on the Internet, such as addictions to online pornography or gambling.

Included in Part III, “Future Threats and Challenges,” is the discussion of countermeasures and counter narratives. While Weimann does introduce the concepts of the “noise” and MUD (monitoring, using, disrupting) models as well as potential roles of public-private partners, the material is broadly descriptive with few practical details. *Terrorism in Cyberspace* ends abruptly with a single paragraph in the last chapter. There the author wraps up the journey of both books with “we live in a dangerous world threatened by terrorism, and intelligence agencies should do their utmost to protect us against terrorist plots.” While it’s hard to argue with this conclusion, readers probably expect more at the end of almost 600 collective pages.

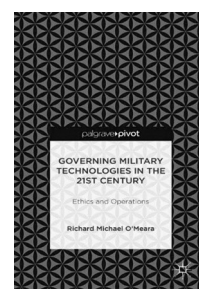
Perhaps this book could serve well as a primer or narrative annotated bibliography for an undergraduate class interested in the narrow topic of Islamic-related extremist groups’ use of various instruments in cyberspace. Weimann conducted his research with the backing of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, an organization that aims to inform national leadership in a nonpartisan forum. No doubt his 14-year long research efforts have considerable merit toward this goal. However, with its paucity of context and rigor, *Terrorism in Cyberspace* is not adequate to inform actionable ideas on threats for the full diversity of terrorism in the dynamic environment of cyberspace.

## Governing Military Technologies in the 21st Century

By Richard Michael O’Meara

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong State University, Savannah, Georgia

Conflicts in the twenty-first century will not take place in the jungles of Southeast Asia or some other exotic location around the world. Most conflicts in the twenty-first century will take place in major metropolitan areas. Also, conflicts in the twenty-first century will be heavily dependent on new forms of technologies previously non-existent and those new technologies will have a tremendous impact in the conduct of war in new technological environments. Given the new emerging technologies and how they will impact the conduct of war in the future, we need to rethink national security and how the new technologies will impact the conduct of war. Retired US Army Brigadier General Richard M. O’Meara examines the big five emerging technologies that are shaping and are being shaped by the environments in which they have been employed. O’Meara examines emerging military technologies including nanotech, robotics, cyberwar, human enhancement, and non-lethal weapons. O’Meara also describes the technological uncertainty of the environment in which they are created, and engages the reader in the discussion regarding past attempts to govern technologies and the potential for future governance. As O’Meara points out, governance of military technologies must reflect the legal and ethical concerns of the people the military is sworn to protect; yet it must also recognize the existential need for soldiers to accomplish a myriad of violent and dangerous tasks while at the same time looking out for the welfare of soldiers. (80)



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125 pages.

\$67.50

O'Meara's focus in this timely book is not on the particular technology itself, but rather "the ability of the group to envision and organize its application, conceive of its relationship and use with other technologies, and otherwise maximize its benefits as it competes with other groups." (4) The advancement of new technologies in the war making environment is no longer just limited to the superpowers of the world. With the democratization of technology even rogue nations will have the ability to acquire those newly developed technologies as part of its arsenal of war making. O'Meara argues, "technology is available democratically, it is innovation in a space of technological uncertainty and its power to change the way humans operate on all levels is staggering." (99) Another characteristic of democratization of technology is the fact that it "will continue to be pervasive, and their use has considerable impact on the ways humankind operates." (6)

Given the fact that the theoretical "genie has come out of the bottle" in regards to technology in the twenty-first century, the question becomes who gets to decide what to design, when to design it, and how to use particular technology in future conflicts? The debate regarding the development, implementation, and regulation of new technologies has been polarizing between two competing schools of thought. The libertarian school argues that, "society should not and cannot put constraints on the development of new technology." (81) The other school of thought is composed of a "heterogeneous group with moral concerns about biotechnology, consisting of those who have religious convictions, environmentalists with a belief in the sanctity of nature, opponents of new technology, and people on the Left who are worried about the possibility of eugenics." (83) While the debates goes on, O'Meara suggests several mechanisms that "may be useful should one wish to seek international regulation of the various specific issues with each technology brings to the table." (84) For example, international treaties; prohibitions and limitations on the acquisition of certain weapons; prohibitions and limitations on research and development; prohibitions and limitations on testing; prohibitions and limitations on deployment; prohibitions and limitations on transfer/proliferation; and finally, prohibitions and limitations on use.

The military of the twenty-first century will not be the military of the twentieth century. These radical changes are the results of recent developments in technology that will forever have a tremendous impact on the conduct of conflicts in the twenty-first century. Students at the US Army War College will do themselves a favor by reading US Army Brigadier General O'Meara timely book on the governing military technologies in the twentieth century. As General O'Meara concludes, "this book argues that failure to act will not stop the use of these technologies. Rather, military technologies will continue to emerge with or without restraint, their unanticipated consequences are a matter of record. The genie is out of the bottle and [its] supervision is possible but not inevitable." (102-103)

## CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

**Congress and Civil-Military Relations**

Edited by Colton C. Campbell and David R. Auerswald

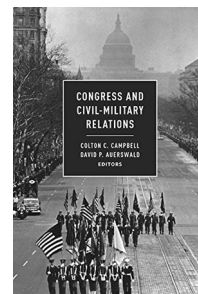
Reviewed by Charles D. Allen, Colonel (USA, Ret), Professor of Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

Trust is a recurring theme within the United States military's recent study of the profession of arms. Within the profession, it is the trust among its members: officers and enlisted as well as the senior and junior members of the armed services. More important is the trust between the profession and the society it serves. Such trust is enabled through the civil-military relations of elected officials and uniformed members of the US Armed Services. In our nation, two civilian bodies are constitutionally obligated to control the military—the Office of the President and the US Congress. While civilian supremacy is most demonstrated by the direction and orders of the Commander in Chief, equally vital roles of regulation and oversight are provided by the Congress. Hence the necessity to explore and understand this aspect of civil-military relations. National War College professors Colton Campbell and David Auerswald have compiled such a primer for national security professionals.

Campbell and Auerswald, editors of *Congress and Civil-Military Relations*, have gathered a diverse group of scholars, political scientists, and practitioners from academia, professional military education, and those who have served in US government. Within their areas of expertise and experience, each author addresses a unique element of the many facets of civil-military relations by offering a short history, establishing context with current concerns, and then providing implications for the future of defense policy making. Their contributions result in an edited work that is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but gives readers an appreciation of the enduring nature of civil military relations as well as its shifting character through the use of well-chosen cases.

In their Chapter 1 introduction, the editors assert the congressional role is underappreciated and show how Congress shapes the culture and behavior of the US military by using four main tools. The tools are: “selection of military officers, determining how much authority is delegated to the military, oversight of the military, and establishing incentives (positive and negative) for appropriate military behavior.” (2) Accordingly, the first part of the book consists of chapters that illustrate the evolution and application of each tool. Chapter 2 reviews processes for the appointment, selection, and promotion of officers; this is especially interesting given by October 2016 each of seven four-star members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff nominated by President Obama will require confirmation by the Congress before assuming the most senior positions within the US military.

Chapter 3, “A Safety Valve” is informative and very effective in recounting the leadership of then Senator Harry Truman and the actions of the Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program in the prelude to and onset of World War II. Concerns about the lack

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Georgetown University  
Press, 2015

240 pages

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of military preparedness as well as “revelations of graft, greed, and corruption among defense contractors” provide an historical analogy to consider as the US seeks to discern its lessons learned during the War on Terror in this twenty-first century. (38) For World War II, as with most wars, the call for expediency in the name of military necessity quickly became suspect with accounts of poor planning and mismanagement leading to ineffectiveness and inefficiency in providing military capability and sustained capacity for national security. Decades later the Truman committee became the exemplar for a series of post-Vietnam War ad hoc congressional defense commissions detailed in Chapter 4. The chapter author contends in addition to the goal to conduct oversight of the Department of Defense, congressional commissions are created to advance an agenda or policy reform, to avoid blame, or to delay action—“kicking the can down the road”—on particularly controversial matters. (53) Such is the case in Chapters 5 and 6 as congressional members respectively embrace the reserve component for its state support versus federal role or the TRICARE-FOR-LIFE entitlements for veterans among their constituents.

While the six chapters of Part I provides historical context of the use of tools by Congress, Part II offers a more interesting examination of the debates within the two Houses of the legislative branch and, in turn, with the executive branch on the use of military force to support US foreign policy. Readers will be familiar with the discourse in Chapter 7 on lack of the consensus within the US government or its political parties on the national policy agenda. This discord has been attributed to increased polarization rather than parochialism. From Chapter 8, debates beginning with defense roles and missions affect force structure in the active component-reserve component mix of the US military. Subsequently, Congress becomes part of the political mechanism to exploit technologies that may generate new capabilities and mitigate emergent threats in the twenty-first century (see Chapter 9 cases on Cyber and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/Drones). Chapters 10 and 11 examine the role of Congress facing the challenges of consistency in the demonstration of US national values as provided in the cases of closure of Guantanamo detention facility and the support of human rights in Latin America.

Some observers may naively bash Congress for its deference to the executive branch out of tradition or necessity, its ambivalence to issues not directly affecting local constituency or party agenda, or its abdication in areas deemed too messy or politically untenable. Former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill often said, “All politics is local” referring to congressional members acting in short and long-term interests of their voters, which may be seemingly contrary to ambiguous national interests.

The challenge for an edited volume such as *Congress and Civil-Military Relations* is to determine how much material to include and what to leave out. A deeper discussion of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the potential impact of its associated sequestration measures deserved more consideration since it stills looms over defense policy with implications for military readiness and force structure. Acknowledgement of the view of Congress by those in uniform as a practical and important aspect of civil-military relations is also missing from the text.

Accordingly, Campbell and Auerswald author the concluding chapter, which derives three policy issues from the contributors: ongoing congressional debate on future of the defense budget following the major operations of the War on Terror; congressional intent and ability to shape social and international agendas through US defense policy, and the growing civil-military divide between an increasing polarized Congress and a confident, professionalized military. The editors have produced a useful book for those seeking to understand the often overlooked, but critical aspect of US civil-military relations. As a primer, their work can start the conversation and spark deeper inquiry and discourse among national security professionals.

## The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation: Canada in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan

By Christopher Ankersen

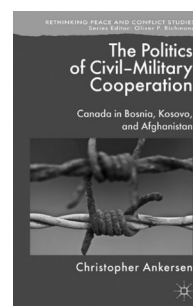
Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz. Visiting Research Professor at the US Army War College and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong State University, Savannah, Georgia

Civil-military cooperation is a hallmark of contemporary military operations in the twenty-first century. Yet, as Christopher Ankersen articulates in his book *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation*, little has been written about this important concept/idea from a theoretical perspective. Ankersen's book concentrates on civil-military cooperation from the military's point of view. According to the author, this focus is warranted for several reasons. First, while civil-military cooperation is the product of a Trinitarian relationship within a given society, it is largely carried out by only one of those actors—the military. Second, there are some indications that this may be beginning to change, but in the time period under examination (1999-2007), “civil military cooperation” is a military practice. Ankersen's operational definition of civil-military cooperation is a long one but worth quoting verbatim:

All measures undertaken between commanders and national authorities, civil, military, and para-military, which concern the relationship between (military forces), the national governments and civil populations in an area where...military forces are deployed or plan to be deployed, supported, or employed. Such measures would also include cooperation and co-ordination of activities between commanders and non-governmental or international agencies, organizations and authorities.

While Ankersen's operational definition of civil-military cooperation is useful, there are problems with it. First, the term is a value-laden one, in that it assumes a degree of cooperation or partnership that is by no means universally present. (3) Second, the term connotes collaboration or coordination of, not necessarily direct involvement in, a range of activities.

Ankersen's *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation* most important contribution to the civil-military cooperation debate is his Clausewitzian framework. By examining Canada's civil-military cooperation efforts in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan through the lens of Clausewitz's



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Macmillan, 2014

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\$100.00



“Remarkable Trinity,” Ankensen shows that military action is the product of influences from the government, the Armed Forces, and the people at home. As Clausewitz pointed out in his seminal work *On War*; “a theory that ignores any of them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.” Ankensen also argues that, “Clausewitz tells us that war (and by extension, all military operations) is not purely a military activity. Rather, it is the result of inputs from all aspects of a state. The people contribute passion; the government provided direction; and the military applies its skill within the realm of chance to affect a result.” (69)

In chapter 5 (The People); chapter 6 (The Government); and chapter 7 (the Military), Ankensen examines each of the three elements of the Clausewitzian holy trinity. While the Clausewitzian holy trinity concept has been widely used as a fundamental tool for the study of war, Ankensen utilizes it to study civil-military cooperation within the context of the Canadian military involvements in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. In chapter 5 (The People), Ankensen argues that the Canadian people, while perhaps not projecting “hatred and enmity,” certainly provides the government and the military with a degree of passion to be harnessed. (71) In chapter 6 (The Government), the second prong of the Clausewitzian holy trinity, Ankensen shows that in the context of the Canadian government, Canadian policy guidance can be seen, above all, to maintain political legitimacy in the particular Canadian setting. (86) That is, the government’s role in the Clausewitzian framework is a crucial element. As Ankensen argues, “they [the Government] have harnessed the emotion of the people, turning it from raw, inchoate desire, into a refined and structured direction that the military can then execute.” (99-100) Ankensen, in chapter 7 (the Military), argues that “the thinking about civil-military cooperation in Canada was not very sophisticated.” (115) This lack of sophistication is partially due to the “institutional military in Canada ha[ving] a love-hate relationship with civil-military cooperation.” (103) Yet, as part of the Clausewitzian holy trinity, the military “exists first and foremost: to protect vital national interests; to contribute to international peace and security; and to promote national unity and well-being.” (111)

Ankensen’s *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation* is a single country study rather than a comparative study. While the focus on a single country (Canada) may seem like a weakness of Ankensen’s study, the author makes a compelling case that by concentrating on a single country, “the dynamics behind civil-military cooperation can be understood as richly as possible.” (11) Ankensen has chosen a single country for two main reasons. First, Canada is a country of particular relevance in terms of military participation in international security operations. Second, Canada is a representative of other middle and small powers, in a way that major and Great Powers, are not. Ankensen draws on a variety of interviews with politicians and members of the Canadian military to provide an in-depth examination that civil-military cooperation is not just about soldiers following orders but also about negotiations, vested interests, and contested group identities.

As the military is called upon to different parts of the world not only to fight but also to act as “social workers,” Ankensen’s *The Politics of Civil-Military Cooperation* should be read by all US Army College students.

## THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

**Occupying Syria Under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation**

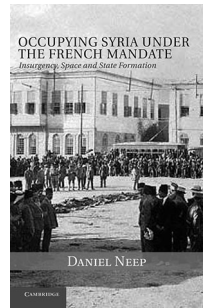
By Daniel Neep

Reviewed by W. Andrew Terrill, PhD, Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Daniel Neep's study of the French occupation of Syria during the post-World War I mandate era is an interesting consideration of the ideology, justification, and vocabulary of colonialism as well as an analysis of colonial warfare. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, the French sought to dominate the Levant through the League of Nations mandate system to safeguard their perceived economic, strategic, and even religious interests (involving the protection of Christian communities) in the region. The French government also viewed their efforts in Syria as a "civilizing mission," which was not to be disrupted by anything as trivial as the wishes of the indigenous population. In this spirit, the 23-year French mandate involved more than simply the military imposition of nominal French rule. Rather, it entailed efforts to transform completely the social, political, and economic systems of Syrian society in ways designed to Westernize the population and guarantee the future of French influence. In keeping with this outlook, Syrian armed opposition to French rule was viewed as either irrational reactionary resistance to modernization or mere banditry masquerading as a national movement.

French authorities viewed the Levant as a "mosaic society" with largely closed ethno-sectarian communities characterized by mutual mistrust and internecine warfare. This "mosaic" was composed of such groups as the Circassians, Druze, Alawites, Kurds, Shi'ite Arabs, Christians, and Sunni Arabs made up the Syrian population. The French based their strategies for Syria on the mosaic framework and were not interested in alternative policies possibly uniting the Syrian population into a single national identity, which they saw as threatening to their interests. Colonial ethnological visions of Syria's mosaic society were consequently translated into institutional reality with separate policies developed for different groups. Additionally, the French also undertook detailed sociological studies to understand the nature of the indigenous societies and cleavages within them. In describing this process, Neep calls the science of ethnography a modern weapon of colonial warfare within a divide and rule policy.

In considering the French attitude toward force, Neep draws a distinction between "discipline," which seeks complete military control over an administered territory, and "security," a cheaper and more preferred method which involves measures ensuring the effective management of the territory without direct control or military oversight. By the time of the mandate, France had a great deal of experience as an imperial state and French theories about colonial administration were well developed. Despite this experience, French military efforts had to undergo considerable adaptation to address recurring difficulties which



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230 pages

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often forced them to use “discipline” rather than “security” to control territory. Heavy French columns were continuously outmaneuvered by light insurgent units, which often employed hit-and-run tactics. In response, the French transitioned from their heavy supply-laden columns to more agile formations, which also had less firepower. They also used their own irregular troops drawn from friendly elements of the Syrian and Lebanese populations. Roadbuilding (with conscripted local labor) became central to French ability to enable their units to respond quickly to unrest. Additionally, in the unforgiving calculus of colonialism, village populations fell into one of three sweeping categories: friendly (often Christian), suspect, or enemy. Villages in the last two categories were in particular danger of being razed in times of confrontation between rebels and colonial authorities. During Syria’s Great Revolt of 1925, Neep describes the French burning of such villages as routine.

Syrian accounts of the French occupation unsurprisingly did not accept the concept of a civilizing mission. Rather, they identified the mandatory power as an alien presence serving as a continuation of Ottoman despotism, which had to be fought. In resisting French authority, the rebels faced a number of difficulties beyond the disparity in military capabilities. These types of difficulties included problems in coordinating military actions in a way that could place maximum pressure on the occupation force. Rebel recruits often joined guerrilla bands from their local area in units often coming from the same social and sectarian background. It is extremely difficult to wage a meaningful anti-colonial struggle if different bands are fighting different wars without any substantial coordination. Some rebel groups also fit the French stereotype for them and were primarily interested in seeking plunder. The rebel movement suffered from the lack of an effective plan to suppress such activities.

The Syrian rebels had some advantages as well. A large number of prominent fighters and rebel leaders had been trained as officers by the Ottomans, and gained exposure to European military innovations at Ottoman academies. Some former Ottoman officers who were Syrian also served in the army of King Faysal during World War I and thereby gained valuable combat and leadership experience fighting against the Turks. German and Turkish rifles and other weapons left from World War I were also available to many Syrian fighters. The Bedouin alone had about 18,000 fighters armed with such weapons. Moreover, some common purposes developed between different groups even while serious military coordination remained elusive. These Syria fighters never defeated the French, although Paris had considerable difficulty re-establishing authority following World War II. After more than 400 people were killed in a 1945 French bombing of Damascus, the international and domestic outcry against these actions was so severe that continuing French dominance over Syria became untenable. French troops were replaced by British soldiers on the streets in Damascus as a transitional measure, and Syria became independent in August 1946.

Neep’s work is interesting and valuable, but some caution is also appropriate. The work appears to draw heavily from his doctoral dissertation. As such, it is meticulously researched, but also makes extensive use of the ponderous and tiresome jargon of historical sociology. The work also mentions how French policies for Syria contributed to

contemporary problems, although considering these links was not the main focus of the book and were not fully developed. It is hardly the author's fault for choosing his own topic when the topic is an important one, but many contemporary readers may at least be moderately concerned about current Syrian problems. Subsequently, for an especially comprehensive understanding of the link between French mandate policies and the contemporary Syrian civil war, Neep's book can be amiably supplemented with Nikolaos Van Dam's often reprinted classic *The Struggle for Power in Syria*.

## Gulf Security and the US Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing

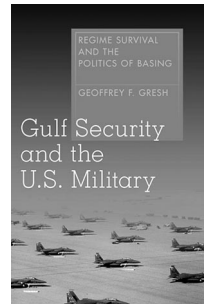
By Geoffrey F. Gresh

Reviewed by Russ Burgos, Associate Professor, Joint Special Operations Master of Arts program, National Defense University, Fort Bragg, North Carolina

In *Gulf Security and the US Military*, Geoffrey F. Gresh makes an important contribution to studies of American overseas military basing policy and US security assistance; he also adds to an increasingly rich literature on the strategic significance of the Persian Gulf to America's global security. Based on extensive archival research and an excellent command of the secondary literature, Gresh argues, convincingly, that when analyzing American basing policy in the Gulf region, one must bear in mind basing decisions are *bilateral* – host nations' decisions to extend or withdraw basing rights are largely a function of politics, domestic and foreign. It is not the case (as one so often hears in popular discourses and mass media) that the USA simply “puts” its military bases here and there, as if host nations were blank canvasses against which American strategists fling olive drab paint. Just as importantly, Gresh does not overstate the importance of oil in US strategic calculations; inasmuch as all great powers have had an interest in secure (or deniable) sources of Mideast oil, oil is a constant, rather than a variable, and therefore does little to explain how the United States and its partners reach basing decisions.

This book calls our attention to the strategic interaction inherent in all overseas military basing decisions and shows how the internal politics of Gulf states – which, as rentier states, often confront quite delicate tradeoffs in their dealings with civil society – play vital roles in determining the circumstances under which American military forces will be hosted. The book starts by situating the question of overseas basing policy within the framework of power politics, pointing out “military presence has been essential for...power projection,” especially given changes in military technology. (5)

Using case-study methods pioneered by the late scholar Alexander L. George, Gresh analyzes the history of US basing policy in three Gulf nations – Bahrain, Oman, and Saudi Arabia – and concludes with a re-assessment of US-Saudi basing politics post-1991. Of the three, the Saudi case study is the best developed, no doubt because the US-Saudi relationship historically has been of greater significance to American strategic calculations than those with Bahrain and Oman. Because each of the three partner nations is a rentier state, the decision over hosting



Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2015

268 pages.

\$27.95

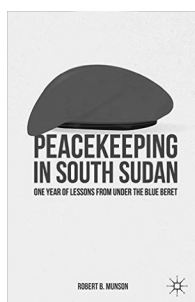
American military forces is both political (i.e., domestic politics) and strategic, where ruling elites are confronted with often orthogonal political needs: to maintain the legitimacy of their rule and satisfy key domestic constituencies on the one hand and to balance external threats to their nation-states (in the case of the three case study partners, most often Iran and Iraq) on the other. Further complicating the task of sustaining internal regime legitimacy and balancing external regime threats is the unpredictable impact of local and regional reactions to US policy initiatives elsewhere. An American military installation can both ensure and jeopardize the survival of a regime.

Gresh concludes with a valuable “lessons-learned” overview, emphasizing a very important point that should animate future US basing decisions – the growing threat of basing “blowback.” As delicate as partner-nation politics can be, they are increasingly problematic for US national security policy. The presence of US forces in Saudi Arabia, he reminds us, was directly implicated in Osama bin Laden’s decision to issue fatwas declaring global jihad against the United States and was, therefore, a proximate cause of the 9/11 terror attacks and, consequently, of the now many years of warfare that have followed. Where once a coaling station or airbase was the solution to some strategic problem, the politics of overseas basing are creating their own set of strategic challenges. Geoffrey Gresh’s fine book is an excellent start to what is certain to be an important and long-running national security debate.

## **Peacekeeping in South Sudan: One Year of Lessons from Under the Blue Beret**

By Robert B. Munson

Reviewed by Dr. Kersti Larsdotter, Assistant Professor at the Swedish Defence University



New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

188 pages

\$90.00

The UN has been deployed since 2005 in what today is South Sudan. After a six-year peace process, South Sudan became independent in July 2011, and the previous UN mission was converted into the UN Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS. The author, Robert B. Munson, was deployed as the Chief of Planning (J5) to the mission for one year in 2011 and 2012. He also has a solid academic background.

*Peacekeeping in South Sudan* is, however, not primarily about the UN mission in South Sudan. Instead, it provides a personal account of daily life as an American military staff officer on a UN mission. Particularly, it sheds light on two different, but interlinked, issues. First, it contributes to our understanding of how differences in culture, language and identity influence work in a multinational and multidimensional mission. This issue has been extensively dealt with elsewhere, and the book offers few new insights. It does, however, provide a personal, well written, and entertaining account of it. Second, and more novel, the book sheds much needed light on how previous experiences and academic education influence an individual’s understanding of the task at hand, and what impact it has on the effectiveness of one’s work.

After introducing the reader to the American understanding of UN peacekeeping missions and giving a short background of the conflict

and the UN presence in Sudan and South Sudan, the book primarily focuses on how the different cultures, identities and languages of the UNMISS staff play out in day-to-day life. Among other things, Munson gives several examples of how maddeningly slow the bureaucracy of a UN mission is, and offers the diverse background of the staff and the complexity of the organization as an explanation.

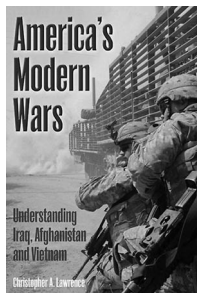
In a nuanced and reflective way, Munson describes how, among other things, the culture of officers occupying key positions influence the general working environment, how language barriers impede a common understanding, and how it all contributes to the lack of long term planning, a common understanding of the mission – in this case the protection of civilians, and even difficulties in solving day-to-day problems. He also delicately addresses the question of how different motives of the individual to join the mission as well as the inherent double loyalties of working for UN – partly to the aim of the UN mission, partly to the home country – contribute to incompatible mind sets and ambitions. He concludes that patience is of utmost importance, that different backgrounds and cultures also contribute to a more nuanced way of understanding the task at hand, and that many and long meetings should actually not be discarded since it contributes to a common understanding between people.

In addition, Munson provides the reader with an amusing narrative of what it is like to live on a camp, in very close quarters, together with people from highly different cultures and with different habits, and how it is to be a UN officer on the streets of Juba, the city in South Sudan in which the camp is located. Here, the style is less analytical but more entertaining. Before the conclusions, Munson offers a detailed and personal account of how his own religious background helps him to relate to the religious life of the South Sudanese people.

The book leaves the reader with surprisingly little knowledge about the UN mission in South Sudan, and only a few insights in the particularities of the mission. Instead, it offers an intriguing and well written account of Munson's personal experiences of working in a multinational operation, as well as an unique and reflective account of how experiences, education and identities plays out in this context. He concludes that his previous education, for example, his knowledge about Africa, acquired during fieldwork in Tanzania during his PhD education, has contributed to a better understanding of current events in South Sudan, that his knowledge about "tribes" have helped him to navigate among the different "tribes" of UNMISS, and that his language skills have facilitated communication between colleagues from different countries.

He also emphasises how his "academic exposure to differing ideas, opinions, and ways of working," in a more general way helped him to be "intellectually flexible and better tackle the tasks and take advantage of the opportunities," thereby making him more effective at work. (142) Munson's ability of critical thinking is clearly shown in his skillfully balanced narrative of his time in UNMISS. The only thing missing is a more explicit analysis throughout the book of how this ability of his played out during his time in the mission.

## MILITARY-HISTORICAL STUDIES



Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2015  
376 pages.  
\$32.95

## America's Modern Wars: Understanding Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam

By Christopher A. Lawrence

Reviewed by David Fitzgerald, School of History, University College Cork, Ireland

America's counterinsurgency wars have attracted no little scholarly attention in recent years. In *America's Modern Wars: Understanding Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam*, Christopher A. Lawrence of the Dupuy Institute aims to provide some insight into the nature of these conflicts by putting them in the context of eighty other post-World War II insurgencies. Using a database of 83 such insurgencies (including a number of peacekeeping operations), Lawrence uses a quantitative approach to search for answers to some of the major questions and assumptions given rise to by the literature on counterinsurgency.

The book's title is thus something of a misnomer – the work is much more focused on providing some general insights on insurgencies broadly defined, and offers specific analyses of America's wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Vietnam only in three brief chapters towards the end – but it does offer some thought-provoking lessons for those interested in studying the phenomenon of insurgency.

The book's origin as a series of reports commissioned by various US government agencies (primarily, it seems, the US Army Center for Army Analysis) is clear, as the chapters are often quite brief and limited in their analytical depth. Lawrence's quantitative approach may not appeal to all readers but his findings do reward close attention. In 25 short chapters, he offers a number of sometimes counterintuitive conclusions about the importance of force ratios, rules of engagement, insurgent sanctuaries and host of other factors. Rather than providing an overarching narrative, or a general theory of insurgency, the book instead provides a wealth of specific insights. If we adopt Isaiah Berlin's taxonomy of ideas, this book is a fox that knows many things rather than a hedgehog that knows one important thing.

Lawrence has two major findings: (1) force ratios – the ratio between counterinsurgent and insurgent forces rather than counterinsurgent to population – and (2) insurgent causes matter quite a bit in terms of predicting the outcome of the conflict. The higher the counterinsurgent to insurgent ratio, the more likely the counterinsurgency campaign is to succeed. The other crucially important factor in this analysis is insurgent motivation. Insurgencies based on broadly appealing rationales, such as nationalism, tend to succeed, whereas those based on more limited, factional interests do not. According to Lawrence, other factors, such as the presence of sanctuaries, third party support and the ratio of insurgents to the general population do not matter nearly as much.

These findings are interesting, but should be considered as a starting point for further research rather than conclusions in their own right. Lawrence's approach is sometimes haphazard, perhaps an artifact of the

book's origin as a series of reports for government agencies. In a host of chapters, he offers a very brief analysis based on his database, and then some conclusions without ever really unpacking his assumptions in any great depth, or working through the inevitable problems of correlation and causation.

For instance, Lawrence's finding that insurgent motivation is substantially important in determining the outcome of a conflict is worthy of further study. But the author never provides an explanation for his choice of three political concepts to categorize insurgencies (limited [regional or factional], central idea [like nationalism] or overarching idea [like communism]) or indeed his method for grouping conflicts into the various categories. The French War in Indochina is classed as a nationalist war whereas the Vietnam War (itself broken into two phases – 1961-64 and 1965-73) is described as an insurgency defined by communism. Given the continuities between the Viet Minh and the National Liberation Front and the strong undercurrent of nationalism present in both conflicts, such a choice is confusing and surely worthy of further comment.

Similarly, the author's inclusion of a variety of peacekeeping missions in the database (although certainly not all post-1945 UN peacekeeping operations) muddies the waters quite a bit as classifying the results of such operations as an "insurgent" or "counterinsurgent" win is surely oversimplifying things, especially when these conflicts often involve more than two parties.

Lastly, it would have been useful to see the author update his literature review on insurgency and counterinsurgency. Lawrence provides us with an overview of some of the classical scholarship on insurgencies, but there is little to be seen of the vast post-2004 outpouring of work on these conflicts. David Kilcullen is mentioned only in passing, and we hear nothing of John Mackinlay, Stathis Kalyvas, Paul Staniland and all the other scholars who have done much to advance our understanding of the nature of insurgency in recent years.

The most problematic omission is the lack of any deep engagement with some of the more interesting quantitative work that has been carried out on insurgencies in recent years. For instance, there is some brief commentary on the Iraq troop surge, but there is no reference to or engagement with the work of Biddle, Friedman and Shapiro, who used quantitative approaches to test the reasons for the decline in violence. Nor does the book address Berman, Shapiro and Felner's work on the economics of counterinsurgency in Iraq. While these studies operate at a less general level than Lawrence, they still could have enriched his model. Similarly, Lyall and Wilson's work on explaining counterinsurgency wars, which relies on a large database of 286 insurgencies would have been worth engaging, as it offers some conclusions at odds with this book.

Even so, *America's Modern Wars* will still be of interest to those who wish to understand more about what governs success in insurgency and counterinsurgency. Lawrence has posed a number of interesting questions for scholars of counterinsurgency and engagement with his conclusions could provide valuable new insights for the field.



## Ways of War

American Military History from the  
Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century



Matthew S. Muehlbauer  
and David J. Ulbrich

New York, NY: Routledge,  
2014

537 pages.

\$67.95

## R **Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century**

By Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David J. Ulbrich

Reviewed by Jill Sargent Russell, Teaching Fellow, Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham, UK

Billed as a comprehensive survey of American military history for undergraduates, this work achieves much. Matthew Muehlbauer and David Ulbrich do the heavy lifting to produce a text which, given the breadth of the subject, is both comprehensive and compelling. Furthermore, against the standard of a university textbook, it is readable, quick-paced, and offers just enough thought-provoking commentary to encourage young scholars further in military history. I have no qualms recommending this book for its intended function, it being entirely fit for purpose as an introductory text. Notwithstanding this broad success, the comparatively insignificant place accorded to the naval component in American military history is an important flaw which must be acknowledged.

Given its length, it is impossible to spend this review considering details and what was done well. However, a few points should be made. Turning first to what this book is and is not, we must be clear that it is a text for beginner use. Although certain generalizations and omissions in the narrative must be accepted, this survey still succeeds in taking good account of the strengths and trends in recent scholarship. There is as well a clear desire to address peripheral issues often left out by similar texts, such as logistics or social themes. These are interesting and useful, although at times it feels they are mentioned without sufficient further consideration. Taking logistics, the chapter on the Interwar period covers aircraft and vehicles, but the narrative limits itself to their application and development as weapons of war. And yet, mighty though tanks, bombers, and fighters were, it was the truck and the promise of air mobility which transformed American warfare. For the consideration of *Parameters* readers the work would serve well the needs of an ROTC course.

What is troubling is the relative absence of the navy and the maritime component of history. Although a significant shortcoming in the coverage of this book, it is a larger problem reflecting much about the field of military history generally. Bluntly put, the field does not always deal well with the naval component: nor give due credit to what constitutes seapower in peacetime. Too often constrained by Mahanian expectations, the tough sinews of transportation and seamanship are given short shrift. But it is upon these factors that wartime success often depends. For instance, the authors write that following the Revolution, “Beyond fighting pirates, the US Navy saw little combat in the 20 years after the Algerian War.” Granted, the title is “Ways of War,” but the subtitle is more broadly conceived as American military history, and as such it is rather meant to include more than merely the conflicts. The US Navy in the early 19th century may not have been fighting many battles, but it was upon the seas and growing as an institution. In Chapter 6 on the Civil War, the military capabilities of the Union and Confederacy

contemplates only those of the armies, even as the former's dominance of the seas would hamstring the Confederate cause as much as it had the Patriot cause nearly a century before. This general preference for a land-centric focus continues throughout the book.

If this book were about "ways of war" then it would seem to argue that the United States has relied predominantly upon landpower. But the strength and security of the nation, its military and strategic experience, has been of a maritime nature and has always depended as much upon the navy as the army. Going forward, in contemplation of future editions and revisions, it would be good to see the naval story more developed and better incorporated into the larger narrative. Until then, however, Muehlbauer and Ulbrich's work more than suffices to welcome new students to the subject.

## Power, Law and the End of Privateering

By Jan Martin Lemnitzer

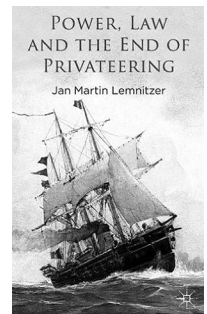
Reviewed by Martin Murphy, PhD, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax and Visiting Fellow at the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies at King's College, London.

Jan Martin Lemnitzer has written a book that is important, timely, and astonishing.

It is important in several ways. First, because many of the norms, notions of sovereignty and international legal constructs that shape our world have arisen first in the maritime domain. Of these none is arguably more important than the center-piece of this book, the Declaration of Paris, signed in 1856. Secondly, because the purpose of the Declaration was, by outlawing privateering, securing the rights of neutrals and placing limits on blockade to make the seas safe for the transport of goods in times of conflict, it is a reminder of the central importance of the relationship between economics and naval power. This is something that was downgraded – at least by the US Navy – for much of the Cold War and in the years of strategic uncertainty that have followed. It is timely because, as China grows in importance as an international trading power, the US Navy may now need to pay as much attention to its own economic role as it does to Beijing's rising challenge to maritime order in the East and South China Seas. It is astonishing because, as Lemnitzer admits, his book explores the borderland between law and war, a region many students of both subjects find "infuriatingly complex and mildly dull." (4) Nonetheless, Lemnitzer has produced a book that is at once an eye-opener and (for the most part) a page-turner.

Prior to the congress in Paris that brought the Crimean War to a close in 1856, a mechanism to enable agreement on international norms was almost non-existent. Yes, the concept of state sovereignty and recognition of basic religious freedoms had been established at Westphalia in 1648, and the international slave trade had been outlawed at Vienna in 1815; but these amounted to almost isolated events.

For a similar period, British naval power had rested on its asserted right to blockade enemy ports and search neutral shipping for contraband; that is to say for goods, as defined by Britain, of use to an enemy



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Macmillan, 2014  
272 pages.  
\$95.00

in wartime. It had backed its words by building a navy capable of carrying out these missions of search and blockade globally, including the creation of a battle fleet large enough to resist any power attempting to interfere.

Neutral states had opposed this bitterly and on two occasions in the early years of the epic struggle with France between 1793 and 1815 had combined together in sufficient strength to cause Britain problems. Nelson's mission at Copenhagen in 1801 had been to smash one such neutral alliance. However, in the early days and weeks of the Crimean War, Britain—to cement its alliance with France and to prevent neutral states from banding together and frustrating their joint war aims—announced it would soften its traditional hardline position regarding the transport of contraband by neutral shipping for the duration of hostilities.

Not surprisingly, once the fighting ceased, France, which had suffered the effects of Britain's policy during the Napoleonic Wars particularly, was keen to see Britain's softer position continue by enshrining it in an international declaration. The surprise was that Britain accepted without protest.

Lemnitzer's purpose is to establish why it did so, and why—even though Britain gained huge advantages from its restraint—the Declaration came under sustained attack in Britain as much as it did elsewhere prior to World War I, before disintegrating during the war itself. He also asks why the terms of the Declaration, which laid the foundation for what has been referred to subsequently as the world's first period of globalization, have never been revived.

Britain agreed because it was being squeezed from two directions. First, its own trade had expanded exponentially since 1815; its import dependency had become vulnerable to any state that sanctioned privateers: the states which presented the greatest threat were the United States (which regarded privateering as its main strategic weapon against Britain) and Russia (which more than once schemed to issue letters of marque to willing US captains). Secondly, returning to the old right of search would likely antagonize too many neutrals in a British-dominated world of globalized trade. If Britain was forced to fight an alliance of neutral states, or if the United States was joined by Russia or France in a privateering war, either could impose an intolerable strain on even Britain's considerable naval resources.

Lemnitzer argues previous historians have paid too little attention to this dilemma, assuming the Palmerston government in Britain signed the Declaration either in a swoon of liberal ideology or in a typically British act of calculated perfidiousness. His explanation is much simpler: the threat of privateering was too great to allow it to continue and the price of neutral support in its elimination too small not to pay it.

In effect Britain turned the naval order of the oceans on its head. Neutral states, instead of combining to limit British naval power, a hugely risky undertaking, now had Britain on their side. Any belligerent violating the rights of neutral shipping “could not avoid hurting the interests of British merchants and ship-owners” triggered a reaction from the British government and, ultimately, the Royal Navy. (179) The freedom of neutrals to trade was elevated almost overnight from a desired objective

to a norm that over the next twenty years spread around the globe. It was, moreover, enforced by British sea power working in cooperation with all commercial nations interested in the uninterrupted movement of goods. “International law,” writes Lemnitzer, “was by far the most effective means of securing this freedom everywhere on the high seas.” But underlying this fact was the implied threat of overwhelming British (and neutral) force “against anyone who tried to defy or subvert the rules.” (179) To achieve this end Britain signed-up to a revolution in international law making.

The detail with which Lemnitzer invests his account is essential reading, even if it might slow the page-turning pace in the middle chapters. In these, he recounts the history of the significant and contentious Marcy and Cass Amendments. Britain would have balked at the former, but would have stood alone in doing so. It could thank Bismarck for sparing it from diplomatic defeat. The great statesman misunderstood the role of the Declaration in the increasingly interwoven late-nineteenth century world; he rejected the treaty as unreliable, which set Germany on a course that eventually led it to adopt unrestricted submarine warfare with a clear conscience (and disastrous strategic results).

This attitudinal shift by a major power against the predominantly liberal thrust of the Declaration did not sink the agreement immediately. It did, however, chime with the rise of Social Darwinism, a new “spirit of the age” that encouraged an unrestrained pursuit of national advantage which ran counter to the Declaration’s principals. At sea, this spirit was channeled into the use of mines, the newly invented torpedo, specialized motor torpedo boats, cruisers and naval concepts such the French *Jeune Ecole* that aimed to attack British trade without regard for the niceties of international law.

The 1909 Declaration of London which aimed to revive the Declaration of Paris achieved some success but in the end defeated itself. It complicated the Paris Declaration by adding new rules that unintentionally allowed competing interpretations of what was meant by blockade and contraband to emerge. Here Lemnitzer overlaps with Nicholas Lambert who describes in *Planning Armageddon* (2012) how the British Admiralty, by now thoroughly disillusioned at the direction neutral rights were taking, planned, in the years prior to World War I, to ignore them completely and bring Germany to its knees with a lightning campaign of financial warfare that would be over before any neutral power could respond. Why this failed is left best to Lambert, but Lemnitzer’s work adds additional legal and political context to Lambert’s economic and political thesis.

Finally, and to reinforce the relevance of Lemnitzer’s work for contemporary concerns, it is important to remember the Declaration of Paris still remains in force. Its rules on neutral trade populate the pages of naval commanders’ handbooks the world over; yet, the enforcement mechanism that for so long made it effective – that is say the de facto alliance between the world’s greatest naval power and the world’s maritime trading nations – has been, at best, downgraded. As Lemnitzer writes, navies, “unlike in the 19th century...offer no guarantee or even reassurance that belligerents will respect the rights of those not involved in their conflict to use the oceans as they wish.” (190)

With this in mind it is disappointing to observe the US Navy, which in the original 2007 version of its current strategy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st-Century Seapower*, grasped the importance of economics and its role as the naval guardian of the global maritime order, is now retreating from this position in the 2015 revision, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st-Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready*. This document reasserts the Navy's Mahanian-derived emphasis on "warfighting," and power projection in a new framework which it terms "all-domain access." These are legitimate and necessary naval objectives. However, to re-emphasize them in a world where China, America's nearest peer competitor, is consciously aiming to become a global maritime trading and naval power, and is seeking to realize oceanic preeminence in ways that are at odds with the global maritime order of the past two hundred years, appears to be perverse unless they are anchored in an over arching economic mission.

China was one of the first signatories of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the UN treaty which has been described as a "constitution for the oceans." Yet, like Bismark's Germany, it is clearly working to undermine provisions in the treaty that safeguard neutral rights. It is doing so, moreover, as it builds a mass of air, naval, and paramilitary power sufficient to take on the US Navy, the naval force that neutrals look to for leadership and protection against any power that seeks to defy or subvert the rules that permit free use of the sea.

Jan Lemnitzer has written an important and timely book; it is both an erudite history and a work of contemporary relevance. It is also, most astonishingly, a page-turner. It deserves the widest possible audience.

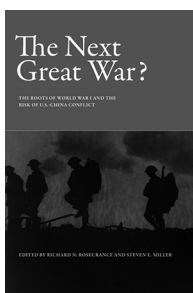
## The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of US-China Conflict

Edited by Richard N. Rosecrance and Steven E. Miller

Reviewed by Michael S. Neiberg, PhD, US Army War College

When I wrote my own book on 1914, I got into the habit of noticing news items that a scholar a century from now might use to make the argument that a war between China and the United States was inevitable. Indeed, such a case might not be too hard to make in retrospect. One might point to the accidental American bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the EP3 plane incident in 2001, and Sino-American tension over the dispute about the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands as steps along the way to war. Or, one could take the structural approach and look at the rapid rise of Chinese power to argue that war resulted from a tectonic shift in the global order. My point in this small exercise was less to argue that war between the United States and China is or is not inevitable than to show how much easier large processes in history look in retrospect than they do to contemporaries.

Still, the China analogy will not go away. Those who use it argue that our world looks increasingly like the world of 1914, with a rising China taking the place of a rising Germany and the United States playing the role of Great Britain, the established global power that is struggling to maintain its place in the face of a new challenger. As with most historical



Cambridge, MA: MIT Press,  
2015  
320 pages  
\$27.00

analogies, this one can often obfuscate as much as it clarifies, but it remains in the public and scholarly discourse.

*The Next Great War?* provides the fullest exploration of the analogy yet. The authors are a veritable all-star cast of political scientists supplemented by a few historians and the former Australian prime Minister Kevin Rudd. As might be expected, the authors do not agree on all points and the quality of the essays is inconsistent, especially in their use of the latest historical scholarship. Still, the book is thought-provoking and insightful, especially when the subject is in the hands of thinkers like Graham Allison and Joseph Nye.

The authors do tend to agree on a few salient points. They see much value in the analogy of World War I to the current situation in the western Pacific, but they appropriately acknowledge that similarity does not imply inevitability. Any decisions for war will be made by real people, responding to real events rather than sterile actors trapped in geopolitical structures predetermined by a century-old conflict. The value of studying the analogy, then, is not in seeking formulaic answers (other than the obvious one of avoiding the 1914 nightmare at all costs short of national survival) than in what it might help us think through as the two superpowers negotiate their shared future.

They also agree that three factors in our world that were absent in 1914 are likely to help limit the chances of a war. First, because each side has nuclear weapons, the cost of going to war may become prohibitive, forcing the two sides to come to diplomatic agreement instead. Second, because they share (and dominate) an interconnected global economy, war is likely to cost far more than it could possibly achieve. Third, international institutions are far stronger than they were in 1914, thus providing more opportunities for resolution of conflict short of war.

The book also has a number of essays that refer to the so-called Thucydides trap. The phrase normally refers to the way the perception of growth of one state's power (Athens or China) can stoke fear in another (Sparta or the United States), making the latter more likely to go to war. Thus, to return to 1914, a power on the decline like Austria-Hungary can be more destabilizing to the international order than a rising one. The Thucydides trap can also refer to the ways great powers can get drawn into wars on behalf of an ally like Corcyra, Corinth, North Korea, or Japan. This latter problem seems most likely to create trouble, especially given America's many bilateral treaty obligations.

The strength of the book comes in the variety of approaches and methods the authors use. Its greatest weakness is the tendency of some authors to lean on the most popular historians rather than the best-respected. As a result, a few old saws appear here, like the myth of enthusiasm for war in 1914 and the dominance of military planners in the decisions for war. Still, the book gives us much to contemplate and is well worth the time spent wrestling with its core ideas.



# Contributor's Guidelines

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## Article Submissions

The editor welcomes unsolicited works that adhere to the following criteria:

### Content Requirements

- Scope:** The manuscript addresses strategic issues regarding the theory and practice of land warfare. Visit our website ([www.strategic-studiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/](http://www.strategic-studiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/)) to gain a better understanding of our current editorial scope.
- Audience:** US Army War College graduates and other senior military officers as well as members of government and academia concerned with national security affairs.
- Clearance:** If you are a member of the US military or a civilian employee of the Department of Defense or one of its service departments, your manuscript may require official clearance (see AR 360-1, ch. 6). Contact your local Public Affairs Office for assistance.
- Concurrent Submissions:** The manuscript is not under consideration with other publishers and has not been published elsewhere, including on the Internet.

### Formatting Requirements

- Length:** 4,000 words or less.
- File Type & Layout:** MS Word Document (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) file; Times New Roman, 12-point font; double-spaced; 1-inch margins.
- Visual Aids:** Only include charts, graphs, and photographs when they are essential to clarify or amplify the text. Images must be grayscale, a minimum of 640 x 480 pixels, and submitted in their original file format (.tiff or .jpg). It is not sufficient to submit images embedded in a .doc or .rtf file.
- Citations:** Document sources as footnotes. Indicate all quoted material by quotation marks or indentation. Reduce the number of footnotes to the minimum consistent with honest acknowledgment of indebtedness, consolidating notes where possible. Lengthy explanatory footnotes are discouraged and will be edited. The Quarterly generally uses the conventions prescribed in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

### Submission Requirements

- Submit to:** [usarmy.carlisle.awc.mbx.parameters@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.carlisle.awc.mbx.parameters@mail.mil)
- Include:**
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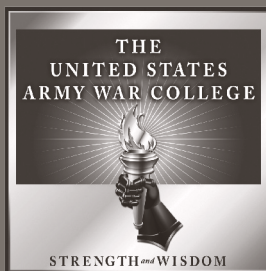
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