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From the Editor

Our Summer issue opens with a Special Commentary, "The Military as Social Experiment: Challenging a Trope," by Jacqueline Whitt and Elizabeth Perazzo. They argue the use of terms such as social experiment does little more than obscure the issue of who gets to serve in the US military and why.

Our first forum, *Teaching Strategy*, features two articles. The first contribution, "Stuff Happens: Understanding Causation in Policy and Strategy," by Andrew Hill and Stephen Gerras, describes why it is so difficult to trace cause-and-effect relationships, an essential part of learning about and practicing strategy. As a remedy, the authors offer a multiple-causation framework to increase the effectiveness of strategy development and execution. The second article, "Comparative Strategy in Professional Military Education," by Jean-Loup Samaan, explains the value of using comparative case studies in the teaching of strategy. It also offers an analytical approach to help identify case-selection bias.

Two articles constitute our second forum, *Nontraditional War*. Christopher Spearin's "Russia's Military and Security Privatization" discusses how Moscow has outsourced some of its combat power and combat-support functions. It also offers a strategy to aid diplomats in regulating the application of violence by private military and security companies. Erik Grossman's "Russia's Frozen Conflicts and the Donbas" analyzes how Vladimir Putin has made use of armed conflicts in which the fighting might have ceased but a treaty resolution might not have occurred. The strategic purpose of such "frozen conflicts," the author contends, is to counter the spread of Western alliances in the region.

Our third forum, *Traditional War*, consists of two contributions. Ben Wermeling's "Fighting Russia? Modeling the Baltic Scenarios" reveals insights gleaned from wargaming low-probability, high-consequence Russian assaults against the Baltic states. He recommends NATO continue analyzing its force capabilities to ensure it can blunt a Russian attack, thereby making a low-probability event even less likely. Patrick Savage's "The Conventionality of Russia's Unconventional Warfare" underscores the evolving use of Moscow's style of unconventional warfare. He offers several takeaways for policymakers and strategists regarding the orthodoxy of the Kremlin's unorthodox methods. ~AJE

Special Commentary

The Military as Social Experiment: Challenging a Trope

Jacqueline E. Whitt and Elizabeth A. Perazzo

The phrase "The military is a fighting force, not a social experiment!" has become something of a rallying cry in contemporary conservative discourse about the American military. It is usually deployed in response to policies related to religion, gender, and sexuality. This phrase, though, misrepresents the real social and political history of the United States military, and it presents a false choice between experimentation and effectiveness. In reality, the choice is more complex.

Labels such as "social experiment," "social laboratory," "social engineering," and "social agenda," signal opposition to certain kinds of military personnel policies, and they carry intentionally provocative, and often partisan, political connotations. Experiments hinge on uncertainty. They often fail. And although failed experiments may be a path to deeper understanding, the failures can produce unforeseen effects or raise undesirable questions. Social experiment connotes both experimentation on people and manipulation. Social experiment may echo other unmentioned government-directed experiments or initiatives, such as those carried out in the Tuskegee syphilis study or in eugenics and sterilization programs. Engineering suggests manipulation, changes to the natural order of things. A social agenda signifies a program of action designed to subvert or to advance a particular political position, usually at the expense of "traditional" values.

The claim the military should not be a social experiment, the locus for advancing a social agenda, or a product of social engineering—which we collectively term the *social experiment critique*—has been used primarily by political conservatives to criticize diversifying the American military.

This essay exposes the social experiment critique using two arguments. First, the social experiment critique fundamentally distorts the social and political history of the American military and sets up a false binary: the military can be either an effective fighting force or a social experiment. This critique further assumes the choice is obvious: national values must be sacrificed for militarization and military effectiveness. Yet, the American military has always been a social experiment, especially when determining who can and cannot serve and why. Thus, today's social experiment critique misleads the audience.

Second, the social experiment critique is deployed selectively, namely against populations other than heterosexual, white, Christian, native-born cisgender men in the military. Thus, the social experiment critique operates as a political trope, gaining traction specifically in conservative political circles. We demonstrate this rhetorical device by highlighting the sources of the critique, including mainstream politicians, political pundits, the media, and the public at large. The participation of veterans

(especially retired general officers) and currently serving military members reveals additional complexities about this construct.

Importantly, this commentary is not about whether increased diversity is good or bad for the military, whether women should be integrated into combat roles, whether transgender people should be allowed to serve, or whether unit cohesion is an argument worth engaging in the twenty-first century. Countless other works explore these issues in great depth, and the issues remain contested. Instead, we trace a specific discourse and criticize its contemporary usage to encourage military professionals to engage in meaningful conversations about the relationship between military effectiveness and inclusivity.

Historicizing the Military Social Experiment

Discussions about the function and composition of the armed forces must take into account the relationship between the military and the society it serves. Each society must answer the question of who fights, and under what terms. In the United States, the ideal has been the citizen-soldier, motivated by patriotism and American spirit. Historian Richard H. Kohn has written, "Americans have long believed that how they have behaved in service and in battle reflected their character as a people and their virtue as a nation."[1] Yet this vision glossed the systematic and purposeful exclusion of many Americans from military service. Even under conscription regimes, the American military has never truly been a cross section of American society; rather it has always been a social experiment—changing over time, cobbling together a fighting force designed to fight and win the nation's wars, and signaling what it meant to be fully American.

The American military has never been homogenous. It has always limited service based on demographic characteristics such as race, class, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, gender, and sexuality—often at the expense of "objective" considerations about military effectiveness. For most of its history, these categories were used to preserve the prevailing social and political order based on hierarchies of race, class, ethnicity, and gender. The American military, defining and redefining itself in relation to who serves in uniform, cannot truly be understood, except as a social experiment.

During the American Revolution, the social experiment impulse meant enshrining in law exemptions based upon racial, economic, and religious distinctions that valued certain classes of people. The ranks of the Continental Army were disproportionately filled with men from the lower third of the socioeconomic ladder and other disadvantaged groups. In a foundational piece of legislation constituting military force for the new nation, considerations of race, gender, citizenship, religion, and class are clearly evident: the Militia Act (1792) called on every "free able-bodied white male citizen" to enroll in a local militia. But some state statutes included exemptions—for example, Pennsylvania made

1 Richard H. Kohn, "The Social History of the American Soldier: A Review and Prospectus for Research," *American Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (June 1981): 555. For US military demographics in the twentieth century, see Jennifer Mittelstadt, "Military Demographics," in *At War: The Military and American Culture in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, ed. David Kieran and Edwin A. Martini (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 87–107.

exceptions for congressmen and judges as well as conscientious objectors and those who had volunteered for military service for seven years.[2]

During the American Civil War, the military social experiment was not just about who was included but also about who was excluded. The Enrollment Act (1863) meant Union men could pay substitutes to fulfill their enlistment obligations, which reflected the value of wealth and social class to the obligation of military service. There, draft riots threatened social and political stability as young men objected to being sent to war.[3] The Confederate States of America wrestled with how to constitute its army given its smaller pool of available manpower, but service exemptions, such as the Twenty-Slave Law (1862), and restrictions on slaves' military service conveyed the Confederacy's value of social order over military effectiveness until the very end of the war.[4] In the Confederacy, the social experiment related to conscription led to the widespread belief that the Civil War was a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight."[5] The military social experiment in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrated the United States and its Confederate enemy could make decisions about who would fight based on social status rather than military fitness or political interest.

The United States confronted massive military manpower requirements during the First World War. Questions about the relationship between service, citizenship, and equality came to the forefront of political and military discussions. Conscription required many, but not all, to serve. In addition to what seemed like obvious exclusions—women, the disabled, the aged, or the infirm—the legislation allowed for other exemptions. Exemptions for college students, clergy, and others in professions deemed vital to the war effort signaled their political value and caused more lower- and working- class men to be conscripted. The military also wrestled with questions about citizenship and military service. Some immigrants were permitted to join the ranks while others, such as German immigrants, were initially excluded. But this exclusion, which many in society found unacceptable, shifted the burden and dangers of service onto native-born whites.[6]

In the Second World War, maintaining segregated units reified prevailing social structures. Arguments were couched in grounds of effectiveness, but little supporting evidence was offered. In a speech to black newspaper editors, a representative of the Army's adjutant general said: "The Army is not a sociological laboratory; to be effective it must be organized and trained according to the principles which will insure

2 *Militia Exemption Books, 1801–13* (PA: Office of the Comptroller General), 6 vols., RG/004/35, box 1, microfilm roll 5151, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg.

3 Michael T. Meier, "Civil War Draft Records: Exemptions and Enrollments," *Prologue* 26, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 282–86; and Barnet Schecter, *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America* (New York: Walker, 2009).

4 Paul D. Escott, *Military Necessity: Civil-Military Relations in the Confederacy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006); William L. Shaw, "The Confederate Conscription and Exemption Acts," *American Journal of Legal History* 6, no. 4 (October 1962): 368–405; and Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971).

5 For a straightforward expression of this idea, see Charles H. Wesley, *The Collapse of the Confederacy*. with a new introduction by John David Smith (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001). For a contending interpretation, see Joseph T. Glatthaar "Everyman's War: A Rich and Poor Man's Fight in Lee's Army," *Civil War History* 54, no. 3 (September 2008): 229–46.

6 Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in WWI* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001).

success. Experiments to meet the wishes and demands of the champions of every race and creed for the solution of their problems are a danger to efficiency, discipline and morale and would result in ultimate defeat."[7]

In the postwar period, the newly formed Department of Defense explored options for conducting explicit "experiments" to desegregate some units.[8] But the services objected. In 1948, Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, which ordered the desegregation of the armed forces. But opponents of racial integration, often from within the military, continued to employ the rhetoric of social experimentation to argue against the policy. In 1949, for example, Marine Corps Commandant General Clifton B. Cates argued segregation was a national, rather than military, problem because the military "could not be an agency for experimentation in civil liberty without detriment to its ability to maintain the efficiency and the high state of readiness so essential to national defense."[9]

During the Vietnam War, local draft boards, wielding complicated rules about exemptions, held extraordinary power to manipulate which men served and under what conditions. These boards often exempted or offered choices to the sons of the wealthy while providing few alternatives to working class Americans.[10] The military social experiment went apace when it served the interests of the economically and racially privileged. At the same time, the Department of Defense instituted another experiment—Project 100,000 that ostensibly aimed to uplift the "subterranean poor" by lowering conscription standards and allowing "rejectees" to serve.[11] Project 100,000 is almost universally considered a failed experiment that weakened readiness and effectiveness without producing positive long-term effects for the populations it sought to bring into the military.

After the Vietnam War, with the implementation of the all-volunteer force, the military services made conscious efforts to recruit women and racial minorities to meet manpower requirements. In practice, this move meant recruiting, training, retaining, and promoting more women and more racial and ethnic minorities than previous iterations of the American force demanded. This expansiveness is most readily evident in the US Army, which had the highest personnel requirements. The all-volunteer force required recruiting a willing and qualified force, which was, in theory and reality, a diverse one.[12] The all-volunteer force is best understood as a social experiment that offered a new vision of how the military would relate to society.

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7 Col Eugene R. Householder (speech before Conference of Negro Editors and Publishers, December 8, 1941), quoted in Morris J. MacGregor Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2001), 23.

8 MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 328–30.

9 Gen Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, memorandum, "Proposed Directive for the Armed Forces for the Period 1 July 1949 to 1 July 1950," March 17, 1949, AO-1, US Marine Corps files, quoted in MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 336.

10 Christian G. Appy, *Working Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

11 Lisa Hsiao, "Project 100,000: The Great Society's Answer to Military Manpower Needs in Vietnam," *Vietnam Generation* 1, no. 2 (1989): 14.

12 Beth L. Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

As in the 1940s, critics of expanding access to military service in the era of the all-volunteer force used pervasive language of social experimentation to target women in the armed forces who sought expanded roles as well as servicemembers who were gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. During the period from 1970 to 1980, women went from less than one percent of the force to nine percent. In 1979, James Webb, then a professor at the Naval Academy, lambasted the integration of women into the armed services and the academies, accusing politicians of endangering effectiveness in return for political favor. He wrote the armed forces cannot be "a test tube for social experimentation. Nowhere is this more of a problem than in the area of women's political issues."[13] Webb joined a loud chorus that used this particular rhetorical formulation, often embedded with other critiques about standards, sexuality, and human nature.

The social experiment critique gained momentum throughout the 1990s. Charles Moskos, a prominent military sociologist, suggested the "postmodern military" wrought unwelcome developments in the civil-military arena. At the height of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" debate and the Clinton administration's policy toward open homosexual service in the military, Moskos wrote, "Once thought of as the institution through which citizens—at least male citizens—discharged their basic civic obligation, the military is now coming to be seen as a large and potent laboratory for social experimentation." After briefly examining the history of racial integration within the military, he rejected comparisons between racial integration and integration of women and gay, lesbian, and bisexual servicemembers: "We live at a time when the combat mission of the armed forces appears to be of secondary importance. . . . We can only hope that our postmodern military never has to face the uncivil reality of war."[14] Moskos's article exemplifies the way the social experiment critique makes a binary distinction between social experimentation and military effectiveness.

The social experiment critique resonated in popular culture, too. In the 1997 film *G. I. Jane*, a female Navy lieutenant is selected to undergo elite SEAL training—and the men are none too happy about it. In a confrontation with the commanding officer, the Navy lieutenant says she believes the commanding officer resents her. The captain, though, disagrees—at least on the details—and tells her, "What I resent, lieutenant, is some politician using my base as a test tube for her grand social experiment." The captain goes on to elaborate on all of the things he resents, which he sees as both a violation of his command and the sanctity of the masculine space of the elite unit.[15] In this critique, the problem was not with the lieutenant as an individual, but with the perceived encroachment of the outside world on a closed culture and the deleterious effects of broader representation on the group.

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13 James Webb, "Women Can't Fight," *Washingtonian*, November 1, 1979. Webb later became a senator from Virginia and walked back these comments. Dan Lamothe, "Under Pressure, Jim Webb Declines To Be Recognized as a Distinguished Naval Academy Graduate," *Washington Post*, March 28, 2017.

14 Charles Moskos, "From Citizens' Army to Social Laboratory," *Wilson Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 83, 94.

15 C. O. Salem to Lt. Jordan O'Neil in *G. I. Jane*, directed by Ridley Scott (Caravan Pictures et al., 1997).

Contemporizing the Social Experiment Critique

The binary construct pitting experimentation against effectiveness reveals the politicization of questions about representativeness and inclusivity in the military. The social experiment critique is used in conservative media and political circles critical of what they deem to be politically correct efforts to diversify the force.

At the national level, the Republican Party clearly expressed its opposition to the advancement of social concerns at the alleged expense of military readiness and effectiveness. The 2016 Republican Party distinctly stated its intent to repeal inclusivity policies initiated during President Barack Obama's term. The platform called for "an objective review of the impact on readiness of the current administration's ideology-based personnel policies," promised to "correct problems," and "reject[ed] the use of the military as a platform for social experimentation," which it saw as an attempt to "undermine military priorities and mission readiness."[16] The social experimentation is characterized as a direct threat to military priorities and readiness, but the nonspecific nature of the critique protects its utility and flexibility as a trope.

Politicians employing the social experiment critique run the risk of sending mixed messages. The 2016 Republican platform further states, "We reiterate our support for both the advancement of women in the military and their exemption from direct ground combat units and infantry battalions." Republicans know that the all-volunteer force cannot function without women, but it also desires to designate combat as masculine space. But the messaging is inconsistent. In 2016, Congressman Mac Thornberry (R-TX) stated, "I do not believe that the military should be an experimental laboratory for social issues." But he continued, "I also believe that you focus on capability and getting the job done, protecting the country, and don't worry so much about a person's color or gender."[17] Nonetheless, policies that perpetuate systematic exclusion of certain groups eliminate their chance to demonstrate their ability to do the job.

The social experiment critique is often voiced by conservative senior retired military officers attempting to resist civilian-initiated policy changes that appear to challenge military culture and tradition. These veterans are powerful messengers, and many are held in high regard by the public. Before the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was repealed, more than 1,160 retired generals and admirals signed a letter stating that repealing this law would have a detrimental effect on the military.[18] These critics objected to involving the military in a social agenda and insinuated the change would break the all-volunteer force. Another firestorm of critique using the social experiment language ignited in late 2015 when Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter opened all occupational specialties to women. As he reasoned, "the military

16 Republican National Committee (RNC), *Republican Platform 2016* (Cleveland, OH: RNC, 2016), 44.

17 Joel Gehrke, "Lawmaker: Obama Using Military for Social Experiments," *Washington Examiner*, February 1, 2016.

18 Aaron Belkin et al., "Readiness and DADT Repeal: Has the New Policy of Open Service Undermined the Military?," *Armed Forces & Society* 39, no 4 (December 2012): 587–601; and "Concerns Regarding Recruiting, Retention, and Readiness," Flag and General Officers for the Military, accessed September 11, 2018.

services will be better able to harness the skills and perspectives that talented women have to offer."[19] This statement, however, was often read as yet another example of a social agenda being forced on the military.

The social experiment critique emanates from conservative media and activist organizations as well. A search for "experiment" on the Center for Military Readiness, a conservative political advocacy group, yields 156 hits.[20] On the *Federalist*, a conservative online journal that offers political and cultural commentary, many articles that address gender, sexuality, or diversity in the military employ the language of the social experiment critique.[21] On social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, searches for "military social experiment," "military political correctness," and "military social engineering" yield thousands of hits, almost all of them decrying inclusivity policies and suggesting military readiness and effectiveness has been dangerously degraded. Many participants in these online forums claim to be veterans or currently serving military members, although such affiliations and identities are difficult to verify. These phrases and ideas circulate within a relatively closed ecosystem and generally do not engage with detailed analysis or evidence. Altogether, the discourse of the contemporary social experiment critique exists largely separate from the detailed social and political history of the American military.

Ultimately, the social experiment critique defines military service as a privilege for those deemed fit to serve rather than a broad obligation of citizenship. This definition has potentially significant consequences should the United States find itself in a major war. The perceived value of military service in the United States changes. Sometimes being in the military is an honor. The soldier represents the best ideals of the United States and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Military service ennobles and valorizes individuals and the state's purpose, and it confers respectability and legitimacy on those who serve. At other times, military service seems a punishment. The military represents the overreach of the state that magnifies divisions among social classes, and distinctions of race, class, and gender can be used to marginalize servicemembers when public support for war ebbs. The social experiment critique finds more purchase in the first instance, when the "experiment" serves to broaden representation and inclusion, expanding the boundaries of citizenship and the legitimacy of American identities. When the experiment serves to exclude populations in order to preserve perceived social statuses, the critique is less robust, if it exists at all.

19 Cheryl Pellerin, "Carter Opens All Military Occupations, Positions to Women," Department of Defense, December 3, 2105.

20 "Search Results: Experiment," Center for Military Readiness, accessed July 9, 2018.

21 For examples, see Sumantra Maitra, "Dear Trans Lobby: The Military Is Not a Social Experiment," Federalist, August 28, 2017; and Walt Heyer, "Thanks to the Trump Administration, the U. S. Military Will Not Become a Sex-Change Clinic," Federalist, March 27, 2018.

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Stuff Happens: Understanding Causation in Policy and Strategy

Andrew A. Hill and Stephen J. Gerras

Abstract: This article provides strategy makers with a multiple causation framework for analyses in complex environments with low tolerances for negative outcomes. With this framework, leaders can develop solutions with outcomes surpassing the effectiveness of single causation approaches.

Cause-and-effect relationships lie at the heart of all strategic decision-making. The raison d'etre of strategy is the idea that our choices matter. We make deliberate, strategic choices because we believe what we choose shapes what is to come. All definitions of strategy link present decisions to some desired future condition. Therefore, good strategy depends on the effective identification and manipulation of causal relationships. Whether we want to maintain the status quo or alter a system, we must have a sense of the cause-and-effect relationships that support those conditions.

Causation is the basis for explanation (Why did this thing happen?) and prediction (What is going to happen?). Both are crucial to strategy. Let us therefore make a simple assertion: the better we understand the causal relationships in a system, the better our strategy for manipulating that system will be.

How do we raise our causal IQ? To begin, we must acknowledge we use the word "cause" in regular speech to signify many different things. The phrase "x causes y" is, on its own, pretty uninformative. Take the following examples: Smoking causes cancer. The bacterium *Vibrio cholera* causes cholera. Irresponsible lending practices caused the 2008 financial crisis. And, the missed free throw caused the basketball team to lose the game.

Apart from the shared use of "cause," not much links these statements conceptually—cause means something different in each case.[1] Even the statements describing the causes of disease make very different arguments. One is probabilistic: smoking dramatically increases the risk of developing lung cancer and, in some cases, is sufficient to cause lung cancer. The other argues for a necessary condition: without *Vibrio cholera*, there is no cholera.

Causation, it turns out, is complicated. As the relationship between causes and effects is foundational to strategy-making, we must get better at determining it, yet we rarely teach or study a systematic and persistent approach to learning it. To understand and to exploit causal relationships more effectively, strategic decision makers must take a

1 Judea Pearl, "The Art and Science of Causes and Effect" (lecture, University of California, Los Angeles, October 29, 1996), http://singapore.cs.ucla.edu/LECTURE/lecture_sec3.htm.

pluralistic approach to comprehending causes. Toward this purpose, we present a multiple causation framework (MCF) based on four modes of causal explanation: regularity and probability, counterfactuals, physical processes, and disposition.

This framework will help national security leaders think more holistically and comprehensively about military strategy than the historically narrow view of how and why things happen, the physical view of causation, which will be discussed more later. Yet good strategy is not just the domain of the military. Thus, this framework also has value to leaders developing and implementing strategy than they have historically.

Reasons

Human beings are suckers for good stories, and good stories tend to offer relatively simple narratives. We seek out the narrative that most appeals to us, and we build a simple solution around it. Some of the most contentious arguments about the causes of events are in fact appeals to the primacy of different modes of causal reasoning. When we talk past each other, we are often simply arguing about which causal perspective is most important. Consider the problem of gun crime. The gun control narrative says "no guns, no gun violence," an argument for the necessity of guns in explaining gun violence. The right-to-bear-arms narrative says, "Guns don't kill people, people kill people," an argument for the insufficiency of guns in explaining gun violence and for broader dispositional factors. Logic is on the side of both perspectives. But the insistence that one or the other has a monopoly on truth blinds us to exploring a wider set of alternatives. The plural-cause approach provides an escape from this stalemate.

Employing multiple causal perspectives focuses decision makers on different kinds of questions, levels of analysis, distances in space, and periods of time. Although the framework presented here does not explain the relative power of these causal perspectives, a leader who is open to asking questions based on different causal perspectives has already made significant progress in developing a comprehensive and coherent strategy for manipulating a complex problem. The complexity of the environment will inevitably lead to miscalculations; a multiple causal perspective should significantly reduce these. The multiple causation framework also discourages us from ending the strategy conversation when we discover silver-bullet solutions. Before we describe the framework, however, we must briefly review causal conditions in complex, dynamic (as opposed to static) systems to understand better why a multicausal approach is useful.

Causes

Time is a stream. The effects of yesterday's causes are the causes of tomorrow's effects. Thus, for example, we can explain why the Islamic State came to power, and we can predict what that power is going to do to the region, with and without external intervention. Three categories of causal analysis make such determinations possible. Explanation examines present, by which we mean observable, conditions as the effects of past causes and describes why these outcomes occurred. Prediction documents present conditions as causes and predicts the future

conditions they will produce in an independent system. Intervention analyzes potential changes to the system to predict new, hypothetical conditions useful to attaining strategic aims.

These three activities increase in complexity and difficulty. By no means is explanation in complex systems easy; however, it is easier than prediction and intervention. Moreover, errors in explanation are compounded in prediction and intervention. If we wrongly assess how we got here or even where we are, we will probably be even more wrong about where we are going.

Three additional factors complicate our analysis of causal relationships. Overdetermination prevents us from explaining a specific set of causes that uniquely explain our present condition because there are more than enough past causes for a present effect. Underdetermination limits us from predicting the unique effects that might arise from present causes because we cannot sufficiently restrict future, potential effects. Even when we succeed in explanation and prediction, adaptation acknowledges all causal relationships that involve human choice are provisional: agents in a system have a frustrating tendency to change the rules in the middle of the game.

Identifying the cause of the surrender of Japan in August 1945 is a powerful example of overdetermination. The defeat of the Japanese in Burma, the Soviet declaration of war on Japan and its invasion of Japanese-occupied Manchuria, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the changing power dynamics in the Japanese ruling circle, and the continued blockade of Japan were each a sufficient cause for Japan's surrender. But which were necessary for the outcome?[2] To assign definitive credit for the surrender requires knowledge we cannot obtain.

By contrast, underdetermination precludes precise prediction. With overdetermination we cannot determine what is necessary to obtain our present condition; with underdetermination we cannot know what is sufficient to obtain a future condition. Was the Treaty of Versailles enough to require, a second major European war? No. While the treaty increased long-term instability, it did not necessitate another war. Other factors also mattered.

With the benefit of hindsight, we could easily adopt a world-on-rails view of history in which each event is uniquely determined by the events that precede it and one thing necessarily and unavoidably follows the other. Yet we are skeptical that we can predict the future with precision if we just have enough data and computing power.[3] The future always divides before us. Every decision forecloses some potential futures, but also opens new possibilities. In military planning, this reality is reflected in the branches and sequels of plans. From our present causes, we can construct numerous possible future states. Improbability and impossibility should not be confused.

The essential concepts of necessity and sufficiency are also at work. If X is necessary for Y, Y cannot occur without X but X alone is not enough to cause Y. Oxygen is necessary for fire but not sufficient to

2 For a balanced discussion of this question, see Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: the End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999).

3 Pierre Simon Laplace, *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*, trans. Frederick W. Truscott, Frederick L. Emory, and E. T. Bell (New York: Dover, 1951).

start a fire—fuel and heat are also necessary. If X is sufficient for Y, it means X alone could produce Y. However, when we exclusively argue for the sufficiency of a single cause, we leave open the possibility that other causes could yield the same effect. A massive electrical shock is sufficient to cause death but not necessary for death to occur. If X is necessary and sufficient to cause Y—there is no other way to produce Y—then Y is uniquely caused by X alone. These distinctions may seem clear enough, but confusion about the difference between necessity and sufficiency contributes to bad policy and poor strategy.

Modes

Given the challenges of overdetermination and underdetermination, and the distinction between necessity and sufficiency in causes, we can improve strategy development and execution through a wide view of causation. A plural-cause perspective embraces the many ways for understanding why things happen.[4] Strategic leaders can identify current and potential causal connections while developing strategies by using a framework based upon four modes of causal explanation—regularity and probability, counterfactuals, physicalism, and disposition—that outlines tools for discovering and for exploiting these connections.

Regularity and Probability: Patterns, Patterns Everywhere

The regularity-and-probability view (RPV) of causation identifies causes in consistent patterns observed through experience—for example, low air pressure always (or usually) precedes rain; therefore, low air pressure is the cause of rain. In its purest form, this account of causation simply identifies an association between two facts. Pattern recognition, especially of highly consistent relationships, is the foundation for much of our learning—fire produces heat, heat causes pain; therefore, do not touch fire. Thus, we use the regularity-and-probability view all the time.

Not all regular relationships are deterministic: some causes usually, but not always, precede certain effects. Yet these probabilistic statistical relationships are the basis of many important causal insights, and statistical modeling has become the primary method for using probability to identify and corroborate causal relationships in medicine, epidemiology, and many of the social sciences.[5] In this probabilistic form, RPV tends to identify potentially sufficient but not necessary causes. For instance, observing a connection between a breakdown in basic government services and an increased tendency toward insurgency in Baghdad, we can claim the breakdown was sufficient but not necessary for insurgent activity.[6]

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4 This framework draws on the plural-cause perspective advanced by the philosopher Peter Godfrey-Smith. Peter Godfrey-Smith, "Causal Pluralism," in *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, eds. Helen Beebee, Christopher Hitchcock, and Peter Menzies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 326–37; and Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, *Causation: a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

5 Judea Pearl, "Causal Inference in Statistics: An Overview," *Statistics Surveys* 3 (2009): 96–146, doi:10.1214/09-SS057; and Christopher Winship and Michael Sobel, "Causal Inference in Sociological Studies," in *Handbook of Data Analysis*, ed. Melissa A. Hardy and Alan Bryman (London: Sage, 2004), 481–503.

6 Major General Peter W. Chiarelli and Major Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (2005): 9–11.

Valuable in causal analysis, RPV is useful for developing indicators and predictors, for conducting preliminary program evaluation, and for developing hypotheses about underlying causal mechanisms.[7] With observational data and computing power getting cheaper all the time, RPV is also economical and fast. If we have representative data that is free of sampling errors, we can run models at relatively low cost.[8]

Another strength, which is also one of the drawbacks, of RPV is the ability to develop useful predictors and indicators despite their insufficiency for interpreting the probabilistic associations that we observe.[9] Many associations between variables are in fact spurious, which means we observe a strong correlation that is due to chance, such as a sports fan noting the connection between wearing a certain T-shirt and his favorite team's performance. On its own, RPV does not give us the conceptual tools to distinguish between authentic, lurking, and spurious connections and is therefore insufficient to develop policy and strategy interventions. Nor can RPV be used to prove necessary connections between causes and effects; it can only suggest sufficient causal connections. The evidence provided by such models remains circumstantial.[10]

A second problem with RPV is its reliance on experience: it has no element of foresight and is the slowest of all the causal perspectives to adapt to new facts. In philosophical terms, this issue is the problem of induction formulated by David Hume in his *Treatise of Human Nature*.[11] Experience is usually a good predictor of future observation, but when it is not, it can be profoundly and catastrophically misleading. This Black Swan problem is especially relevant to strategic systems in which participants adapt. Such adaptations may disrupt relationships that up to that point had the qualities of laws of nature.[12] Traditional statistical models are slow to adjust to such changes in behavior as demonstrated during the 2007–8 financial crisis when Americans began defaulting on their mortgages in record numbers.[13] Nevertheless, RPV is a great starting point for causal analysis.

Counterfactuals: "If not for . . ."

The counterfactual lens sees causes as difference-making events. If we removed some contributing cause from the system, would the system of transmission collapse? Whereas RPV identifies causes through their constant (or probabilistic) conjunction with effects, counterfactual causal reasoning is completely focused on necessary (or dependent) connections between causes and their effects. We identify counterfactual causes in three ways: physical experimentation, statistical analysis, and

7 Jim Manzi, *Uncontrolled: The Surprising Payoff of Trial-and-Error for Business, Politics, and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 155–56.

8 Charles J. Wheelan, *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data* (New York: Norton, 2013), 111–26.

9 Stathis Psillos, "Regularity Theories," in *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 131.

10 Wheelan, *Naked Statistics*, 224; Williamson, "Probabilistic Theories," in *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 203; Clark Glymour, "Causation and Statistical Inference," in *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 510; and Manzi, *Uncontrolled*.

11 David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (London: Henry Frowde, 1888), 89.

12 Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2nd ed. (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

13 Harold Kincaid, "Causation in the Social Sciences," in *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 738.

thought experiments.[14] The first two are empirically based. The third is purely deductive.

Intelligently applied, experimental approaches provide leaders with timely information about causal assumptions and give leaders a mechanism for examining new ideas without committing the whole organization to them. Leaders should embrace experimentation as a core element of strategy development and change.[15] Experiments in which subjects are randomly assigned to an experiment group and a controlled group are the gold standard for assessing causality.[16] When experimentation is not possible, sophisticated statistical tools can be used to interpret nonexperimental, observational data in a way that explains what might have happened in the sample if an experiment had been conducted.[17]

Thought experiments are perhaps the most familiar mode of counterfactual causal reasoning. They allow us to examine causal relationships in light of hypothetical absences—what would have happened had this thing not happened. Many important causal arguments are completely outside of the realm of formal experimentation or statistical analysis. Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August* is a riveting account of the outbreak of World War I that relies on a series of counterfactual questions to explore the causes of the war and its devolution into a catastrophic stalemate. If Archduke Franz Ferdinand had not been assassinated in Sarajevo . . . if the German offensive had not been delayed by the Belgian fortifications . . . if the French had not held at the Marne . . . [18] Thought experiments suggest the necessary causes of events, though they can never be conclusive.

Counterfactual causal reasoning, however, does have limitations. First, counterfactuals are great for identifying necessary causes, but those are not always the ones that matter. Necessity alone is not enough to identify key leverage points in strategy formulation. "If there were no people in country X there would be no rebellion," is certainly a true statement, but it is not useful unless we are willing to consider depopulation as a strategy—which we are not. "There are people" is a necessary condition for rebellion, but it is not sufficient.

Second, the list of counterfactuals can be very long. We can assert that without the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. . . or if Osama bin Laden had not been born. . . or if George W. Bush had not been elected. . . or if the British had not arbitrarily divided the Middle East following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. . . there would have been no Iraq War. And so, discussions regarding necessary conditions should be leavened with good judgment about which causes should correspond to actual policy decisions.

Finally, counterfactuals raise the problem of preemption. In order to identify X as a necessary cause of Y, we must assume another necessary

14 L. A. Paul, "Counterfactual Theories," *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 159. See also Winship and Sobel, "Causal Inference in Sociological Studies," 481–503.

15 Manzi, *Uncontrolled*, 70–82, 86.

16 Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, *Everybody Lies: Big Data, New Data, and What the Internet Can Tell Us about Who We Really Are* (New York: Harper Collins, 2017), 209.

17 Winship and Sobel, "Causal Inference in Sociological Studies," 493–95.

18 Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

cause would not have occurred if X were removed. This assumption may not be justified. If I am late for work because I was stopped for speeding, the stop is a difference maker. But suppose that because I was stopped, I avoided getting in an accident due to my speeding, which also would have made me late—one necessary cause of being late preempted another. Suppose the 9/11 operation had been prevented by law enforcement. Would the United States never have invaded Afghanistan to confront al-Qaeda?

In this context, we can see counterfactual causes are more effective based upon their proximity in time and space to the effects they seek to explain. Counterfactual causation involves thinking about causal processes, but it is similar to RPV in that it suffers from an absence of tools for identifying causal mechanisms.

Physicalism: Inside the Black Box of Causation

Physicalism focuses on causes as direct links to effects in a process and seeks to understand the mechanism that links them. When determining the causes of IED attacks, physicalism would draw attention to the process of fabricating, placing, and triggering the explosive device. This perspective helps identify points that would allow us to disrupt the process. Equipping vehicles with the technology to jam a cellular signal transmitted by a triggerman to an emplaced IED is an example of an intervention prompted by a physical perspective.

Of all of the causal perspectives, physicalism is perhaps the most military in its outlook. This view orients strategists to elements of a system that are either obstacles to or enablers of success. To stop the drug trade, intercept the shipments. To end an insurgency, kill the insurgents. The notion of centers of gravity is best captured by the physical causal lens. Thus, the military finds this strategic philosophy quite familiar.

In this lens, the underlying causal mechanisms are found through reductive analysis. When we break a system down into some subset of actors or subsystems and the connections between them, we are applying the physical perspective of causation. Through the physical lens, we see causes as literally connected to their effects. Such causes are relatively easy to understand and interventions to address them are often obvious.

Yet physicalism, too, has significant limitations. First, the causal relationships suggested by the physical perspective are highly susceptible to the law of unintended consequences. Physicalism suggests interventions that are very close to the causal interface in space and time, and it encourages a narrowing of focus that may exclude the analysis of interventions' probable side effects elsewhere in the system. Indeed, physicalism is not very useful for exploring those potential effects because it usually lacks a Gestalt perspective on the system as a whole. The reduction of the system to a subset of causal interfaces can obscure the higher-level characteristics of the system. Thus, we miss the forest for the trees or kill the sniper by bombing the mosque.

Second, physicalism emphasizes powerful, silver-bullet interventions that draw attention and resources away from existing, complementary approaches.[19] One of the problems with powerful interventions,

19 Malcolm Gladwell, "The Mosquito Killer," *New Yorker*, July 2, 2001.

and the notion of a center of gravity in a strategic system, is that they give rise to the expectation that strategies can be transformative if only we find the right approach.[20] On its own, physicalism can deceive us into believing in a form of technological solutionism of the type that has plagued American foreign policy for decades.

Third, the physical perspective cannot account for the causal significance of absences. Some things happen because of what is not present. An eighteenth-century naval physician treating a sailor suffering from scurvy might have attributed the man's suffering to food poisoning or an exotic insect bite, when in fact the potentially fatal disease was caused by the absence of vitamin C. No process diagram would reveal this.

Finally, physicalism is poorly suited to recognizing causation due to emergent phenomena in a system. Macrolevel system behaviors such as financial panics or mass protests defy effective analysis through reduction. Such occurrences are more than the sum of their parts and are incomprehensible unless they are observed at the system level.[21]

But as part of a set of causal lenses, physicalism is vital. This perspective reduces complex, adaptive systems into a set of constituent parts and the connections between them, and then invites us to disrupt, change, or enable system behavior by manipulating the system's composition and structure. This lens is a powerful way to comprehend the close, causal interface and intervene in the causal dynamics of a system.

Disposition: Hidden Causes

Disposition, on the other hand, looks at causation from a distance, examining how causes can be drawn into effects. This perspective views causes in traits, characteristics, capacities, or vulnerabilities of an entity that are triggered by context. The cause of the massive forest fire, for example, was the dryness of the forest. Or in the case of the Ebola outbreak of 2014–15, the cause of the epidemic was the lack of effective public healthcare in western Africa.

Disposition describes the relationships between causes and their effects, referring to the power of entities to produce effects. "With powers waiting to be released or stimulated into action," philosopher Stephen Mumford writes, "each event that occurs can be regarded as an effect of a power manifesting itself in a causal process."[22] As a rule of thumb, as we move further away from effects in space in time, our arguments for causation are more likely to be dispositional.

Suppose we question the cause of a civil war in country X. If our explanation cites the nation's ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, or the unequal allocation of wealth and power, then we are employing a dispositional causal argument. Most dispositional causes are discovered through a process of inference that is based on both experience (empirical

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20 Headquarters, US Department of the Army (HQDA), *The Operations Process*, Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2012); and Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Clausewitz's Center of Gravity: It's *Not* What We Thought," *Naval War College Review* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 108.

21 Jeffrey Goldstein, "Emergence as a Construct: History and Issues," *Emergence* 1, no. 1 (1999): 50, doi: 10.1207/s15327000em0101_4. According to Goldstein, "Emergents have features that are not previously observed in the complex system under observation. . . [They] are neither predictable nor deducible from lower or micro-level components."

22 Stephen Mumford, "Causal Powers and Capacities," *Oxford Handbook of Causation*, 272–3.

observation) and abstract reasoning. Dispositional arguments usually have to employ a theory to justify the explanation. Dispositional insight therefore requires a combination of observation and creativity.

Because dispositions, such as personality and culture, in social systems are often not observable, causal arguments that employ them involve inference, as well. No other causal lens allows us to think about the causes of things before they have happened. If we want to understand what causes a nuclear war, we probably do not want to build an argument based on experience or experimentation. We will reason based on abstracts and analogies. Similarly, the dispositional view helps us think about the causes of nonevents. When we want to understand why something did not happen, the dispositional lens leads us to examine how the absence or presence of something may have prevented an effect.

As with other causal perspectives, the strength of dispositional causal explanation is also its weakness. First, because disposition lets many causal explanations in, we can spend too much time arguing about the causes of things that have never happened. Second, the emphasis on unobservable causes introduces problems with specification—for example, personality may be the cause of many behaviors, but experts spend a lot of time arguing about its definition.

Disposition is nevertheless an essential causal perspective and a powerful tool for understanding why things happen. With unique strengths, this lens is ideally applied in combination with other modes that will counteract the tendency of dispositional arguments to become too inclusive or too diffused.

Application

The right questions are more valuable than the wrong explanations. More than anything, this framework suggests a set of questions that leaders can use to identify the various causal relationships in complex systems and to develop a portfolio of interventions toward a desired condition.

- Regularity and probability. What elements are regularly observed close to an outcome in space or time?
- Counterfactuals. Which elements could be removed from the system to preclude an outcome or enable alternate outcomes?
- Physicalism. Which key set of elements can be most closely connected to where, when, and how major events happen?
- Disposition. What are the active and latent, individual and collective tendencies that enable or inhibit the outcome that we wish to produce or avoid?
- Intervention. To what extent are any of the identified causal relationships subject to manipulation?
- Intervention. What is the probability and consequence of miscalculation?

The final two questions consider the importance of limiting errors when developing strategies in complex environments where miscalculation is not a possibility but a certainty. The Nobel Laureate Herbert A. Simon coined "bounded rationality" to describe how the complexity of most organizational environments limited the ability of

managers to make economically optimal decisions. Simon also listed three constraints on optimization in decision-making: We cannot know the precise consequences of our decisions, which is essentially an argument for the underdetermination of effects. We cannot know the true value of the things we seek—for example, we imperfectly anticipate how we will feel about an effect. And we cannot exhaustively specify causes, that is, there are always causes that we do not know or imagine.[23]

Illustration

In 2014, the worst Ebola outbreak on record afflicted the West African nations of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. In response to the unprecedented levels of infection, the United Nations established the first emergency health mission, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). Anthony Banbury, then-head of UNMEER, determined the first task was to develop a unifying strategy for the various UN agencies and international partners that were providing assistance. At a conference in October, UNMEER and its partners decided upon a strategy based on four core activities.

The first—case management—focused on treating the sick and isolating patients during recovery. The second—case finding and lab and contact tracing—concentrated on finding those who might be ill and cutting chains of infection as quickly as possible. The third—safe and dignified burials—centered on preventing Ebola transmission from the fluids of corpses. The fourth and final activity—community and social mobilization—educated on community identification, isolation, and treatment of the sick to prevent further transmission of the disease.[24]

The unifying objective of the strategy was to stop Ebola from causing people to die. Interrupting this causal relationship was the change that UNMEER wished to bring about in the affected nations, and all four pillars of the strategy supported that change. But each activity dealt with the causal connection between Ebola and death in a different way, and to some extent, each represented a different perspective on the statement, "Ebola causes death." Yet each line of effort in the international response exemplified at least one of the four causal lenses.

Case management/RPV and physicalism. Case management sought to reduce the probability of death after contracting the disease. This strategy involved recognizing patterns of the illness and understanding the physical damage the virus caused. Doctors reviewed patient records to determine which treatments significantly decreased the mortality rate. From this basic understanding of the mechanism of the disease, death from rapid dehydration, physicians suggested using certain interventions over others and prioritized interventions during specific stages of infection. Thus, the strategy of increasing Ebola patients' fluid intake early in the treatment counteracted the struggle to maintain hydration during the advanced stages of the disease and yielded positive results.

Case finding and lab and contact tracing/RPV and counterfactuals. Case finding focused on locating the sick by using public health

23 Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Process in Administrative Organization*, 4th ed. (New York, Free Press, 1997), 93–94.

24 "UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response," UN Ebola Response, accessed August 2, 2015, http://ebolaresponse.un.org/un-mission-ebola-emergency-response-unmeer.

data, surveilling affected communities, and identifying patterns that would increase the probability of locating infected people who were not yet known to the health system. Lab and contact tracing was built around the idea that infectious diseases spread to uninfected people from an infected person. "If someone does not have contact with the infected, that person will not die of the disease," is a simple and persuasive example of counterfactual causal thinking.

Safe and dignified burials/Physicalism. Safe and dignified burials focused on allowing cultural customs and practices to be performed while mitigating the risk of infection by physical causes—the biological mechanism of virus transmission and the funeral and burial practices. In many cultures of the affected nations, religious customs require the dead be washed and prepared for burial, and the bereaved grieve in close contact with the corpse. When the dead person is a victim of Ebola, those who come in contact with the body are at significant risk of infection. But simply ignoring these customs would deprive family members of their opportunity to grieve, which might lead people to avoid notifying health authorities of a dying person and spread the disease. Safe and dignified burials controlled the postmortem release of bodily fluids, incorporated personal protective equipment during the rites, and practiced sanitation guidelines to prevent infected fluids from being released into the environment.

Community and social mobilization/Disposition. Community and social mobilization focused on reducing communities' vulnerability to acquiring and spreading the disease regardless of its presence in the population. A major contributor to the rapid spread of Ebola was the absence of trust in public institutions in the affected countries. In many cases, instead of contacting public health officials when a member of the community showed symptoms of disease, community members would conceal the sick from containment teams or move ill people out of the area, which lengthened the trail of infection. The cultural burial practices also disposed communities to spreading the virus. Thus, social and cultural characteristics acted like dry fuel in a forest, providing material through which a fire could spread. Community and social mobilization sought to change this by educating the public regarding the proper procedures for isolating and treating the sick and safely handling the body if a patient died.

The Ebola example demonstrates that an essential part of developing an effective, multicausal strategy is being open to identifying a wide variety and combination of potential causal relationships. This objectivity can be hard to practice. Politically or culturally sensitive perspectives may be held in abeyance in fear of offending key stakeholders. It makes no sense to examine causal relationships explicitly, only to skip a central relationship because it makes people uncomfortable.

The discussion on improving American student performance provides an example of this imprudence. Policymakers examine socioeconomic and operational factors such as neglect, classroom size, teacher quality, unions, parental involvement, and the number of books in the home. Decades of education policies have spent billions of dollars on various interventions, with little or no improvement in student outcomes. Why have we not made progress? Perhaps because we are ignoring the best predictors of student academic achievement, intelligence (as

measured in IQ), which is best predicted not by environmental factors but by parental IQ. The heritability of IQ is a major dispositional cause of educational performance.[25] Due to a legacy of association with repugnant theories of racial superiority, however, this characteristic is rarely considered when setting the performance goals that must inform wise education policy.

These same kinds of omissions occur when discussing dispositional factors in places like Afghanistan. How does culture affect politics? What is the tendency of this society, given these circumstances? In order to develop and implement effective strategies and policies, we must speak truth to power across the range of the four lenses described in this paper. Leaders are responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that enables an open exploration of options.

Conclusion

A plural view of causation opens our minds to the wider possibilities of behavior. When we consider multiple types of causation, we see causes in the system from multiple levels and from multiple distances in space and time. A pluralistic view of causation helps us to see how multiple interventions may be necessary to maintain or to change system conditions. Such a view also helps us recognize the unintended consequences of interventions—for example, viewed from a physical perspective, violent action against an insurgency may be extremely appealing. Insurgents are agents of violence, and if we destroy these agents, we interrupt the production of violence in the system.

But what does this intervention look like from a dispositional standpoint? How does an insurgent-killing strategy affect the tendency of the system to produce more insurgents? When we kill insurgents, we may gain the favor of the part of society that is sympathetic to US interests or to the government that we support. But we may also radicalize the opposition or empower those who favor greater violence instead of a political settlement. Indeed, just this sort of polarization has been a common characteristic of many counterinsurgency campaigns, and was vividly depicted in the film *The Battle of Algiers*.[26]

We are not naive about the effects of violence. Sometimes it works. But forewarned is forearmed, and a leader who is informed about the possible side effects of an intervention is better able to weigh the costs and benefits of that action and to develop mitigating actions.

There is a Yiddish proverb, "Mann traoch, Gott lauch," Man plans, God laughs. We have to analyze and plan because we reject the idea that we are powerless to change our environment. But we also must remain open to the possibility that we may be (sometimes catastrophically) wrong. Understanding and effectively manipulating causation in policy and strategy requires that we tread a narrow path between hubris and fatalism. Perhaps that is the most important causal insight of all.

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25 Richard J. Haier, *The Neuroscience of Intelligence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 195–96; and Kathryn Asbury and Robert Plomin, *G is for Genes: The Impact of Genetics on Education and Achievement* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), 142.

26 Franco Solinas, *The Battle of Algiers*, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (Igor Film and Casbah Film, 1966), 121 min.

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Comparative Strategy in Professional Military Education

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ABSTRACT: This article addresses the lack of rigor associated with the application of comparative strategy in professional military education. It also offers an analytical approach to help students identify case-selection bias and thereby strengthen the value of case comparisons in the curriculum.

Instructors frequently use case studies to teach students to compare the strategies that different countries have used to respond to similar threats and challenges. Despite the popularity of using this approach to *comparative strategy* in professional military education (PME), there is no systematic effort to discuss its contours or establish guidelines for its use. This article discusses how best to use comparative strategy coherently, given its increasing use in PME.

The first and second sections of this article discuss the concept of comparative strategy with an emphasis on its potential value and the trends regarding its expanding use in an increasingly internationalized PME context. The third section identifies challenges in applying comparative strategy; while the fourth section offers suggestions for mitigating those challenges.

Concept

To establish a definition of comparative strategy, we can look at the way academic studies define comparisons. In political science the comparative method is understood "in terms of the rules and standards and procedures for identifying and explaining differences and similarities between cases often (but not always, defined in terms of countries), using concepts that are applicable in more than one case or country."[1] Also lacking a universal definition, strategy sometimes refers to a set of objectives or the management of resources to achieve a goal. The US Department of Defense, for instance, articulates strategy as a "prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives."[2]

For purposes of this article, strategy is the coordination of all domestic and international activities—including the use of force—that civilian and military organizations execute to achieve national security goals. By extension, comparative strategy appreciates the differences and similarities of such orchestrations. The comparison should, at the very

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1 Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 202.

2 US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: JCS, June 2018), 219.

least, consider the geographical, historical, cultural, and institutional elements of the action to identify possible causes necessitating the activity. The primary purpose of the analysis is not to dismiss a general theory but to test it and refine it in distinct, national contexts. Comparing the implementation of new technologies in distinct national military organizations, for instance, could illuminate the mechanisms of innovation within the armed forces, the importance of doctrine, and the role national cultures played in shaping such processes.[3]

While this approach may provide generalized knowledge about a state's strategy, it may also downplay or ignore specific differences. Thus caution should be exercised before applying general theories. That said, a rigorous approach to comparative strategy should, by definition, yield scientifically useful results. Indeed, one political scientist recognized "it makes no sense to speak of a comparative politics in political science, since if it is a science, it goes without saying that it is comparative in its approach."[4]

Ideally, using comparative strategy should allow scholars to identify the limitations of a given strategic theory or to amend its conceptual framework. Comparative strategy is also vital as a trial-and-error method that might enable students to refine analytical tools or to develop new theories and hypotheses. The current lack of a rigorous methodological approach to comparative strategy, however, often allows students at PME institutions to compare case studies, or an "instance of a class of events," without appreciating the peculiarities of each case.[5]

Trends

The evolution of the use of comparative strategy can be understood as a consequence of the institutional, professional, and intellectual expansion of PME. During recent decades, national war colleges have gradually opened their enrollments to foreign participants from allied and partner nations. Annually, the US Army War College hosts approximately 80 foreign officers each year, the Royal College of Defence Studies invites students from 50 partner countries per year, and a third of the 200 students enrolled in the French War College hail from one of 60 partner nations.[6] Such institutions have internationalized not only their attendance but also their programs. The US Department of Defense now supervises five regional centers that provide partner

3 For examples, see Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequences for International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Ariel E. Levite, Bruce W. Jentleson, and Larry Berman, eds., *Foreign Military Intervention: The Dynamics of Protracted Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988); Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Jack L. Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

4 Gabriel A. Almond, "Political Theory and Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 60, no. 4 (December 1966): 878.

5 As used here, *class of events* is consistent with "a phenomenon of scientific interest, such as revolutions, types of governmental regimes, kinds of economic systems, or personality types that the investigator chooses to study with the aim of developing theory (or 'generic knowledge') regarding the causes of similarities or differences among instances (cases) of that class of events." Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 17–18.

6 "International Fellows Home," US Army War College, accessed January 22, 2018; "College Members," Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, accessed January 22, 2018; and "L'École," Ecole de Guerre, accessed January 22, 2018.

nations tailored instruction on such topics as security sector reform, civil-military relations, counterterrorism, and counterproliferation.[7] Other institutions specifically designed for an international military audience—such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Defense College, the Baltic Defense College, the Inter-American Defense College, and the European Security and Defence College—have also changed the landscape of military education by putting comparative strategy at the center of the learning process.[8]

Hitherto, doctoral students in military history or international relations defended their dissertations within their home countries. With doctoral programs integrating students from around the world, faculties in both civilian and military institutions now come from many nations. Even the method of teaching strategy in today's war colleges reflects the internal "globalization" debate about rebalancing the discipline from a traditionally Western scope.[9] These trends create an environment that favors the international exchange and comparison of strategic ideas. This reciprocity, in turn, calls for the intellectual development of comparative strategy itself. In short, a comparative strategy approach matters because it not only expands students' cultural awareness but also allows them to challenge their basic assumptions about national security priorities and military policy and planning processes.

Challenges

Because war college students typically enroll after operational assignments, they are not often well-versed in the academic study of strategic context. International assignments may enhance cultural awareness, but they rarely supply an analytical framework for rigorously researching geographical, historical, cultural, and institutional variables. As a result, students often select case studies based on personal interest or proximity rather than clear relevance to a research question.

Thus, one of the primary challenges for using comparative strategy in PME is case selection. Absent rigor, two competing issues can undermine comparative strategy: studying only the peculiarities of cases and presenting the findings as universal rules. These factors preclude the discovery of useful generalizations and create a challenge between false uniqueness and false universalism.[10]

False uniqueness, a traditional bias, sees the country under study as so exceptional in its history, its culture, and its political system that

7 The George Marshall European Center for Security Studies, the Williams J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. Larry Hanauer et al., *Evaluating the Impact of the Department of Defense Regional Centers for Security Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014).

8 For more on other NATO efforts such as the European Security and Defence College, the 5+5 Defence College, or the ongoing project of the Gulf Cooperation Council Defence College, see Jean-Loup Samaan and Roman de Stefanis, *The Ties that Bind? A History of NATO's Academic Adventure with the Middle East*, Eisenhower Paper no. 1 (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2014).

9 Isabelle Duyvesteyn and James E. Worrall, "Global Strategic Studies: A Manifesto," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 3 (2017): 347–57; Patrick Porter, *Military Orientalism: Eastern War through Western Eyes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); and Pascal Vennesson, "Is Strategic Studies Narrow? Critical Security and the Misunderstood Scope of Strategy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 3 (2017): 358–91.

10 Richard Rose and W. J. M. Mackenzie, "Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis," *Political Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 1991): 446–62.

any attempt to apply findings from studying it to other situations—or conversely to apply findings from other cases to it—are doomed to failure. This bias can be explained by the traditional skepticism of regional experts regarding the import of models and theories developed without in-depth understanding of their empirical fields. In military institutions, such bias can be derived from a national instinct—the inner belief in "the exceptional nature of *my* country's experience"—which is nurtured within servicemembers to build a cohesive identity and loyalty.

False universalism, which relates to the intellectual foundations of strategy in rational choice theory, may be a harder issue for national security practitioners to tackle. Furthermore, such universalism is very often Western universalism. The language of strategy matters here since the discipline of strategic studies may be global in terms of instructor and student backgrounds, but teaching and research are primarily in English. Therefore, students may arrive at universal generalizations derived from Western-centric material or biased comparisons, which too often serve to confirm preconceived notions.[11] The linguistic monopoly deriving from US primacy, in particular, carries preconceptions that cannot be ignored when comparing various national experiences.

The war college curricula of Persian Gulf countries that are allied with the United States, for example, tend to be influenced by the American PME model. But a well-established concept in the American strategic context, "national security," is translated into Arabic literally as *al-Amn al-Watani*. This translation does not consider US notions of nation and Arabic notions of *watan* differ greatly as both refer to very distinct experiences of political identity building and of state formation.[12] Likewise, American debates on the relevance of terms such as "homeland security" simply do not resonate in Arab or European contexts, which conflate the expression with "national security" or "domestic security." These linguistic subtleties are too often underestimated, if not ignored. But their misuse in other national contexts carries the same risk of false universalism.

With regard to nuclear weapons, strategists have also looked mostly, if not exclusively, at Western experiences. For a long time, scholarship on the topic was based on the nuclear postures between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and it assumed the findings from these cases were generalizable.[13] As a result, concepts and theories of nuclear deterrence were developed in a specific context of two global powers involved in various regional conflicts. These principles were then applied incorrectly to very different contexts such as the regional powers of China, India, Pakistan, and, Israel whose security predicaments shared few commonalities with those of the United States or the USSR.[14] As researchers attempted to explain the causes for

11 Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979).

12 For more on the modern development of the Arab state, see Ghassan Salamé, ed., *The Foundations of the Arab State,* Nation, State, and Integration in the Arab World, vol. 1 (London: Croom Helm, 1987).

13 See among others, Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy,* 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1989); Charles L. Glaser, *Analyzing Strategic Nuclear Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Raymond Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1962).

14 S. Paul Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not like Cold War Europe," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 127–52.

successive nuclear weapons programs, they paid scant attention to the specificities of the nuclear strategies; if they did, they frequently assumed views similar to Western ones.[15]

A proper comparative analysis can prevent us from inappropriately applying Western theories of nuclear deterrence to Asian countries and can offer alternative answers. Considering the limitations of past studies, recent assessments have used different models to reach a broader understanding of nuclear doctrine. Notably, these approaches factor in the availability of a reliable third-party security patron; the existence of a conventional, superior, and proximate threat; civil-military relations within the nuclear power; and resource constraints.[16] This framework still relies on general variables, but also aims to understand local dynamics. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine, for instance, favors asymmetric escalation. This characteristic exists not only because of the absence of a third-party ally but also because of the military's conventional inferiority and its primacy over civilian authorities for controlling its nuclear weapons.

Again, the selection of cases for comparison affects the reliability of results. Scholars and students generally have three options for conducting comparative strategy: analyzing many different countries (large-n study), comparing a small number of countries (small-n study), and examining a single country (case study or monograph). Larger comparisons tend to follow a quantitative approach that includes aggregating data on the national militaries under observation and comparing statistics. Smaller studies can include quantitative analysis but usually lean towards a more qualitative approach. Case studies and monographs typically examine a particular national experience deeply.

In PME, research trends toward qualitative comparisons of three to four different countries. A potential pitfall, students frequently act upon *case selection bias* by choosing cases for investigation intuitively before thinking rigorously.[17] Students in European war colleges, for example, often select cases from NATO members with the expectation that linguistic, geographical, cultural, or political similarities confer relevancy. These students likely find it difficult to conceive non-Allied cases may be more relevant for testing their initial hypotheses.

This pitfall may seem paradoxical, as students simultaneously assert the fundamental importance of these variables to understanding their own national experiences. Consequently, students may draw lessons from European militaries without considering important variables—for example, an assessment of German military strategy may not consider how the Second World War legacy and its implications on German civil-military relations constrain the international missions of the armed forces today. Similarly, some students may underestimate the significance of a variable such as financial constraint on European defense cases

15 Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of the Bomb," *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996/97): 54–86; and Jacques E. C. Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotions, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace."

16 Vipin Narang, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 32.

17 David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (October 1996): 56–91

simply because their own military does not operate under the same budgetary pressures.

Other issues, such as the *benchmarking bias* or *leadership variable bias*, prevent students from fully exploiting comparative strategy because of deeply ingrained beliefs that cannot be easily dismissed in any adult learning environment. Students often compare cases using benchmark analyses rather than academic assessments. In other words, they select cases on whatever is considered—or what they believe is considered—to be a best practice. The students then assume their analysis will yield obvious lessons or recommendations for their own countries.

This logic yields inaccurate results. Even though their relevance is questionable, comparisons with the United States are commonplace in both European and Middle Eastern institutions. At the practical level, these studies are convenient because of the massive amount of scholarship produced on the US strategic experience and also, at times, because instructors are American. For the militaries of small states, comparing themselves with a major power can be a means of self-flattery, a statement of purpose in itself. But because this type of comparison is driven by expected outcomes—the best practices—it frequently excludes the national experience that led to the observed end state. Such comparisons may be shallow, especially if they ignore or downplay important variables that could caution against applying the results too broadly.

Beyond best practices, case studies elucidate the best or worst examples of leadership, a variable excessively emphasized within PME. According to this bias, strategy fails because of bad or shortsighted leadership, while successes result primarily from brilliant and innovative leadership. Sometimes, students attribute successes merely to one strategy or solely to the quality leadership of a commander. Not only do such articulations introduce problematic, monocausal explanations, but they also rely on retrospective illusion. Based on an outcome—the success or the failure—a leader or commander is deemed either brilliant or misguided from the start. But in some cases, leaders started poorly and adapted effectively. Conversely, leaders may have had a great plan that was not executed precisely at the operational level.

Thus as an explanatory variable, leadership remains problematic. The concept is not well-defined, and it is too often used by students as "magic card" to explain in hindsight the success or failure of one experience. Because the ultimate goal of PME is to educate and prepare future leaders in the field of national security, it is no surprise that students would see an individual as the central variable of national history. But too often leadership is an explanatory factor that blurs, rather than illuminates, the case study.

An additional factor, *omitted variable bias*, occurs when students fail to consider one or several explanatory factors in their comparisons.[18] When any comparison between armed forces is loosely designed, the study generates several flawed conclusions. Failing to distinguish between causation and correlation can lead to misidentifying the key variables of explanation and eventually to false results.

18 Jonathan Hopkin, "The Comparative Method," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 299.

Aside from these challenges, the epistemological problems provide another counterargument for incorporating comparisons. Rational choice theory, which posits actors and systems will behave in universal patterns, so heavily influences the discipline that comparisons emphasizing local differences have been eliminated.[19] By focusing solely on a cost-benefit analysis, rational choice theory empties cases of human specificities and discards culture and tradition as a means of explaining the behaviors and decisions of policymakers. The limitations of this approach are well-documented in scholarship, however, its salience in PME institutions persists.

Suggestions

Comparisons in the field of strategy largely use qualitative, small-n studies. Thus the following guidelines are for that context. These guidelines provide tools to select more relevant cases and measure those cases' similarities and differences. These suggestions cannot address all the challenges for comparative strategy, but they can help achieve analytical inequality.

The first device involves clearly identifying the question driving the research project before comparing any feature or variable in a case. Once the question has been established, the comparatist can focus on the important purpose of comparative strategy: distinguishing between the particular properties of two or more cases and identifying the structural causes responsible for those differences. Ideally, these causes can then be applied in other contexts. The added value of comparing is not simply in the juxtaposition of two or more national military experiences, however. Comparative research can also explore key questions of strategy and provide new knowledge to the discipline, but only through careful case selection and effective differentiation of cases similarities and differences. Formulating a well-circumscribed inquiry before cases are chosen allows the researcher to probe a hypothesis and the comparative process to produce and to test new theories.

After clearly defining the objectives, students need to evaluate the relevance of potential case studies to the hypotheses. The main requirement for case selection should be analytical equivalence. One prerequisite that could be important to a case analysis is a geographical comparison, which would examine the effects of geography on the political and military structures of the compared states. Such a comparison should consider the implications of physical parameters on military resources, training, and basing. Obviously, a landlocked country such as Ethiopia would not allocate military resources in the same way that an island state such as Singapore would. Therefore a case study testing a hypothesis involving the contrasting characteristics would not produce relevant findings.

Geographical parameters also pertain to political and social considerations. Obviously, conflicts between neighboring countries—such as South and North Korea, India and Pakistan, or France and Germany (before 1945)—could be useful for a comparison of other

19 Lawrence Freedman, "The Limits of Rational Choice," in *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 575–89; and Stephen Walt, "Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 5–48.

countries with similar tensions. The proximity of a regional hegemon also influences national strategies, such as balancing or bandwagoning. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar, for example, built two very different foreign and defense policies vis-à-vis neighboring Saudi Arabia. Similarly, many members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) derive their strategies vis-à-vis China.

Comparative analysis must also consider historical legacies created by past experiences that shape a country's contemporary strategic orientation and play a significant role in its strategy. Too often, students explore contemporary issues without considering how historical events shape the way policymakers and military commanders assess current events and make decisions.[20] As Robert Jervis wrote, "Previous international events provide the statesman with a range of imaginable situations and allow him to detect patterns and causal links that can help him understand his world."[21] Leaders may be cognizant of a legacy or it can be a subconscious bias. France's skepticism of a NATO missile defense strategy vis-à-vis nuclear deterrence, for example, resonated with negative views held by France's political and military establishment regarding defensive strategies. Arguably, these views are shaped by the legacy of the Maginot Line that French armed forces implemented in the 1930s, which partly caused their defeat against Germany in 1940.[22] Similarly, Germany's military policy remains heavily-shaped by the memory of the Second World War. Today, the memory of Nazi war crimes hangs over German military policy, which imposes tight civilian control over the Bundeswehr and very strict mission scopes as observed in German operations with NATO in Afghanistan.[23]

Strategic culture also informs state trajectories. In Jack Snyder's seminal study of Soviet strategic behavior, the notion of *strategic culture* is defined as "the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other."[24] This definition emphasizes the importance of cognitive processes in the ways actors come to perceive and frame phenomena in the international arena. Even when this cultural factor relates to geographical and historical legacies, it goes beyond them. It also refers to the way the social fabric of a country, its statecraft, and its national identity translate at the level of its military forces.[25] Discerning

20 Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

21 Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 217.

22 Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*; and Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and French Military Doctrine before World War II," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 186–215.

23 Stephen M. Saideman and David P. Auerswald, "Comparing Caveats: Understanding the Sources of National Restrictions upon NATO's Mission in Afghanistan," *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (March 2012): 67–84.

24 Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1977), 8.

25 Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); and Katzenstein, *Culture of National Security.*

strategic cultures may be challenging, but it enables us to better grasp the relationships between national narratives and military strategies.[26]

Strategic culture examines military organizations as a reflection of a nation being understood as an "imagined community."[27] Furthermore, this variable acknowledges external observers may perceive geographical, historical, or other factors of a given country very differently than its decision makers do. Israel's reliance on offensive doctrines and its occasional use of preemptive force, for example, can be understood by looking at the origins of the modern Israeli state and how the elements of its political identity—the combination of Zionism and a deep sense of permanent insecurity—have shaped its military culture.[28] Studying the experience of war in a country such as Israel can help future decision makers in US institutions to grasp the politics of security in Israel, the specific strategic culture it developed, and the choices it has made with regards to military doctrines. Likewise, officers can better apprehend the contemporary European military debate by comparing the legacy of the Second World War on countries such as Germany and France and then reflecting on their major differences.[29]

Lastly, comparative strategy should integrate the role of institutions in shaping national security policies. Students too often dismiss bureaucracies because of their mundane natures. But institutional arrangements matter, as they reveal the interaction between civilians and armed forces. These relationships inform us of not only the nature of the political system but also the operational implications of using armed force.[30] In this regard, recent comparative studies on nuclear strategies are valuable. Contemporary scholarship on cases regarding China, India, and Pakistan shows how assertive or delegative civilian control of forces affects nuclear posture.[31] The different nuclear strategies of India and Pakistan are the result of competition between civilian and military authorities in each country. Indian civilians are wary of political intervention by armed forces, therefore their government closely supervises nuclear policy. In Pakistan, however, the military enjoys direct control over the country's nuclear arsenal and largely

26 Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 32–64; Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 1999): 49–69; and Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (December 2002): 87–113.

27 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

28 For more on Israel's strategic culture, see Michael Handel, "The Evolution of Israeli Strategy: The Psychology of Insecurity and the Quest for Absolute Security," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, eds. Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 534–78; and Yoav Ben-Horin and Barry Posen, *Israel's Strategic Doctrine* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1981).

29 Allison Abbe and Stanley M. Halpin, "The Cultural Imperative for Professional Military Education and Leader Development," *Parameters* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2009–10): 20–31.

30 For case studies on civil-military relations, see Zoltan Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); and Florence Gaub, *Military Integration after Civil Wars: Multiethnic Armies, Identity, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (London: Routledge, 2011).

31 Narang, *Nuclear Strategy*, 36; and Peter D. Feaver, "Command and Control in Emerging Nuclear States," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992–93): 160–87.

defines its doctrine.[32] In other words, institutional arrangements also play a significant role in shaping national strategies.

Systematic considerations of, and building upon, the foregoing parameters should prevent comparatists from succumbing to flawed results caused by omitted variable bias. Such an approach will enable researchers to not only emphasize the similarities and the differences between cases but also highlight underlying research questions—for example, why X uses its armed forces differently from Y in a similar situation despite similar past experiences.

As a practical example, consider a military strategy adopted by a small state in pursuit of its national security. Identify an underlying research question or hypothesis. A starting assumption might be that a small state has no choice but to either bandwagon with the local hegemon or balance power with an external ally. In this manner, case studies can help isolate variables influencing the state's preferred strategy. To test the hypothesis, "small state" must be defined, in particular geographic and political indicators should be established.[33] Obviously limited in scope, the following analysis applies the foregoing recommendations to a concrete case.

The UAE, Singapore, and Estonia share geographical similarities such as proximity to regional hegemons (Saudi Arabia and Iran, Malaysia and China, and Russia, respectively) and an overwhelming inferiority in terms of size, population, and resources. Historical and cultural considerations emphasize such peculiarities as the symbolic significance of Iranian control of UAE islands as well as the cultural ties between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, past Chinese and British presences in Singapore, and the Soviet occupation of Estonia.

In all three cases, research may suggest small states tend to mix bandwagoning and balancing rather than relying on one strategy. Balancing might be defined as relying both on security patronage from a major power, such as the US, and on developing indigenous defense forces. At the institutional level, this balancing may translate into very different situations. The defense of Estonia relies on NATO. Singapore and UAE defenses involve loose regional security architectures from the ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council, respectively. The latter therefore favor more bilateral defense cooperation.

More profoundly, all three of these sample cases underline an element of the initial concept of strategy: how much the strategies of small states rely on external security from bilateral partnerships and multilateral alliances. Their inherent vulnerabilities deny them solely domestic sources of security. In this context, applying the framework of comparative analysis, which relies on selected cases that directly test the initial hypothesis, allows for better identification of the general lessons for small-state security. In any case, appropriate analytical guidelines should prevent researchers from oversimplifying the specificities of each case.

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32 Huma Rehman, "Nuclear Command and Control Systems: Pakistan and India," *CISS Insight* (June–July 2013): 27–36.

33 For more on small states security, see Giorgi Gvalia et al., "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States," *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 98–131; and Efraim Inbar and Gabriel Sheffer, eds., *The National Security of Small States in a Changing World* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

Conclusion

Scholars and practitioners need a broader discussion of how to apply comparative strategy in the classroom. This article has raised some of the most significant challenges in PME institutions. It has tried to close a surprising gap in the existing literature on strategy, with regard to the uses—and misuses—of comparisons. Because of the quasi absence of past exchanges on the topic, much must yet be done. This article does not pretend to present a definitive account of what should be termed comparative strategy but rather to offer some recommendations on potential ways to mitigate or prevent unreliable results from its practice. Given the internationalization of professional military education, comparative strategy is likely to become one of its major research methods. Moreover, the globalization of PME institutions should not merely rely on Western-centric curricula and research materials. If we are to avoid such a phenomenon, more attention should be dedicated to building a comparative approach that finds a proper balance between in-depth analysis of similarities and differences in various armed forces and the search for more general knowledge for strategic studies.

Russia's Military and Security Privatization

Christopher R. Spearin
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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the conflicting use of nonstate actors in state-sponsored actions. It also introduces a diplomatic strategy for regulating the application of violence by private military and security companies.

On the night of February 7–8, 2018, for the first time since the Vietnam War, American and Russian forces clashed directly.[1] A Russian-Syrian force of approximately 500 fighters crossed the Euphrates River near the eastern Syrian city of Deir ez-Zzor and launched an attack. The target, on the other side of the river, was a base for the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces and its US military advisors. During the three-hour battle that followed, the US military deployed artillery, jets, helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles. In the subsequent press conference, Lieutenant General Jeffrey L. Harrigian, the commander of US Air Forces Central Command, reported these US forces "release[d] multiple precision fire munitions and conduct[ed] strafing runs against the advancing aggressor force, stopping their advance and destroying multiple artillery pieces and tanks."[2] While US forces incurred no casualties, some reports suggest as many as 100–200 Russians were killed in the engagement.[3]

Adding to the significance and complexity of this event, the Russian forces were not soldiers in state uniforms. Instead, they were personnel of Wagner, a Russian private military and security company (PMSC). In recent years, 2,500 Wagner personnel have operated in Syria as Russia's unofficial "boots on the ground."[4] Reports of the company using a military base in southern Russia and relying upon state-sponsored military logistics and medical services tie the company to Russian state actors.[5] Nevertheless, officials responding to the February battle could simply distance themselves: "Russian service members did not take part in any capacity and Russian military equipment was not used."[6] Elements in the nation's media drew a further distinction: "It was a

1 Joshua Yaffa, "Putin's Shadow Army Suffers a Setback in Syria," *New Yorker*, February 16, 2018.

2 "News Transcript: Department of Defense Press Briefing by Lieutenant General Harrigian via Teleconference from Al Udeid Airbase, Qatar," US Department of Defense (DoD), February 13, 2018.

3 Yaffa, "Putin's Shadow Army"; and David Isenberg, "Putin's Pocket Army? The Rise of Russian Mercenaries in Syria," *American Conservative*, February 15, 2018.

4 John Sparks, "Revealed: Russia's 'Secret Syria Mercenaries,'" Sky News, August 10, 2016.

5 William Watkinson, "Russian Mercenaries Reportedly Hired To Fight Isis in Syria despite Kremlin's Denials," *International Business Times*, August 10, 2016; Maria Tsvetkova and Anton Zverev, "Ghost Soldiers: The Russians Secretly Dying for the Kremlin in Syria," Reuters, November 3, 2016; and Henry Meyer and Stepan Kravchenko, "Mercenaries Hurt in U.S. Syria Strikes Are Treated at Russian Defense Hospitals," Bloomberg, February 14, 2018.

6 Ellen Nakashima, Karen DeYoung, and Liz Sly, "Putin Ally Said To Be in Touch with Kremlin, Assad before His Mercenaries Attacked U.S. Troops," *Washington Post*, February 22, 2018.

Dr. Christopher R. Spearin, a professor in the Department of Defence Studies, Royal Military College of Canada/Canadian Forces College, wrote *Private Military and Security Companies and States: Force Divided* (Palgrave Macmillan).

purely commercial issue. It had nothing to do with war."[7] These Russian denials came easily even though this was the single largest loss of PMSC personnel lives since the rise of the phenomenon in the 1990s.[8]

Despite the significance of this confrontation, the official US reaction was muted too. When reporters pressed for the composition of the group US forces had confronted, Defense Secretary James Mattis pleaded ignorance: "I think the Russians would've told us. If they—as long as they knew, you know, then they probably would've told us. Right now I don't want to say what they were or were not, because I don't have that kind of information."[9] Harrigian's response to a similar query was both comparable and diversionary: "I'm going to be clear that I will not speculate on the composition of this force or whose control they were under . . . we are focused on a singular enemy: ISIS."[10] Additionally, a telephone conversation between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin on February 12, 2018, did not cover the clash. Notwithstanding this obfuscation, PMSCs, which were a fixture in the US-led interventions earlier in this century, have now entered the realm of great-power confrontation.

In light of this significance, this article answers the following questions: What role do PMSCs play in Russian military endeavors? What informs this role? And what policy might inform a US response in the longer term? In answering these questions, the article identifies the presence of PMSCs in Russian military thinking. In turn, it highlights the recent Russian utilization of PMSCs as a gray-zone challenge, defined as "*competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality* [that] are characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks."[11]

Given this challenge, the article contends the United States might robustly highlight its stance towards the PMSC industry: namely, America should place PMSCs in a normatively defensive context in which utilization is transparent.[12] The United States might promote greater international acceptance of the *Montreux Document*, which US officials have endorsed, that sets the defensive nature of PMSCs. Since the document establishes that PMSCs focus on "*armed guarding and protection of persons and objects, such as convoys, buildings and other places*; maintenance and operation of weapons systems; prisoner detention; and advice to or training of local forces and security personnel," successfully promoting it might help the United States influence the removal of such nonstate actors from Russia's gray-zone arsenal.[13]

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7 Yaffa, "Putin's Shadow Army."

8 Isenberg, "Putin's Pocket Army."

9 "News Transcript: Media Availability with Secretary Mattis," DoD, February 8, 2018.

10 "Briefing by Lieutenant General Harrigian," DoD, February 13, 2018.

11 Philip Kapusta, "The Gray Zone," *Special Warfare* 28, no. 4 (October–December 2015): 20 (emphasis in original).

12 For this article, a norm is "a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity." Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, 4 (Autumn 1998): 891.

13 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Montreux Document: On Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States Related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict* (Geneva: ICRC, 2009), 9 (emphasis added).

Russian Thinking and Usage

Using contractors, and PMSCs as a subset of those actors, is a key element of the American way of war.[14] This application was made plain during the US-led interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq—for instance, US Central Command reported 176,000 contractors were deployed alongside the 209,000 uniformed personnel under its responsibility in 2010.[15] The PMSC employees accounted for about 15 percent of the private presence, an amount considerably larger than many military contingents offered by America's allies.[16]

For the United States, this development is, in part, a function of decades of decisions underscored by both the strategic requirement for resources and neoliberal thinking.[17] The integration concerns how, why, and by whom tasks are done, with an eye towards reaping the benefits of fostering a division between service managers and service providers with the latter facing potential competitors. The desired result is to reduce costs, gain efficiencies, and create economies of scale.

Looking back to the 1950s, the Eisenhower administration initiated public-private competitions. A decade later, the Johnson administration reinforced this approach through the *Performance of Commercial Activities* circular. The Reagan, Clinton, and W. Bush administrations bolstered the process and its dual fundamentals of preventing government competition with civilian enterprise and maintaining competitive responses and economic efficiency.[18] Analysis of the resulting changes reveals a movement from *government* towards *governance*.[19]

Given the fact that the United States is both the world's dominant military power and largest consumer of PMSC services, other states have taken note for the sake of assessment and adaptation if not emulation. For-profit actors, for instance, are now nestled into contemporary Russian considerations of the nature of war. Russian military doctrine released in 2014 specifically categorizes such nonstate actors as *private*

14 Deborah D. Avant and Renée de Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," *Daedalus* 140, 3 (Summer 2011): 88–99; and Sean McFate, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries," *Atlantic*, August 12, 2016.

15 Moshe Schwartz and Joyprada Swain, *Department of Defense Contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq: Background and Analysis* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service [CRS], 2011), 5.

16 McFate, "America's Addiction."

17 Mark Erbel, "The Underlying Causes of Military Outsourcing in the USA and UK: Bridging the Persistent Gap between Ends, Ways and Means since the Beginning of the Cold War," *Defence Studies* 17, no. 2 (June 2017): 135–55. The prevalence of private actors in recent interventions reflects overly conservative calculations about force requirements. Scott L. Efflandt, "Military Professionalism & Private Military Contractors," *Parameters* 44, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 54.

18 *Performance of Commercial Activities*, Circular A-76 (Washington, DC: Office of Management and Budget, 1999); Ann R. Markusen, "The Case Against Privatizing National Security," *Governance* 16, no. 4 (October 2003): 480; and Jennifer K. Elsea, Moshe Schwartz, and Kennon H. Nakamura, *Private Security Contractors in Iraq: Background, Legal Status, and Other Issues*, RL32419 (Washington, DC: CRS, August 25, 2008).

19 On the challenges of transitioning from government to governance, see Elke Krahmann, "Security Governance and the Private Military Industry in Europe and North America," *Conflict, Security & Development* 5, no. 2 (August 2005): 247–68.

military companies.[20] Likewise, General Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, has reflected on the changes in the conduct of warfare. While widely recognized as the Gerasimov doctrine, "doctrine" likely goes too far in terms of offering a sense of programmatic unity.[21] Nevertheless, for the purposes of this article, private military companies are presented therein as a new actor in the modern milieu.[22]

While Gerasimov and his colleagues may have merely acknowledged the American way of war or, relatedly, identified the means and challenges Russia will likely confront in the future, one can rightly argue that they do, in fact, describe Russian approaches and practices, especially regarding for-profit violent actors.[23] In the collective Russian approach towards these actors, the word "military" is quite flexible. From one angle, private military companies are deemed *nonmilitary* armed forces. This reflects the variance of manpower levels, weaponry types, and professionalism—or capability and firepower—compared to a state's army, navy, and air force.[24] From another angle, these actors are not solely for maintaining the status quo or for offering protective services. Instead, "private military companies . . . prepare an operational setup" for the eventual activities of state armed forces.[25] These actors can also conduct independent offensive operations. Moreover, the relationship between state authorities and private military companies is quite intimate, to the point that companies form " 'hybrid businesses,' technically private, but essentially acting as an arm of the Russian state."[26]

The characteristics and nature of this approach are informed by two factors. First, private military companies fit into "new generation warfare," which despite some differences is known in Western assessments as hybrid warfare.[27] In this approach, armed forces remain valuable; however, the state utilization and orchestration of nonmilitary measures of strategic influence are increasingly important.[28] On one hand, "new"

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20 Fredrik Westerlund and Johan Norberg, "Military Means for Non-Military Measures: The Russian Approach to the Use of Armed Force as Seen in Ukraine," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29, no. 4 (2016): 581. "Private military company" is consistent with the Russian representation. "Private military and security company" covers various terms used to refer to private military contractors, private security companies, private security contractors, military service providers, and military provider firms. "All studies and accounts of PMSCs begin with the problem of simple definition: they are ambiguous or polymorphous entities." Kateri Carmola, *Private Security Contractors and New Wars: Risk, Law, and Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 9.

21 Keir Giles, *Russia's "New" Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power* (London: Chatham House, 2016), 10; Samuel Charap, "The Ghost of Hybrid War," *Survival* 57, no. 6 (December 2015–January 2016): 53; Andrew Monaghan, "The 'War' in Russia's 'Hybrid Warfare,'" *Parameters* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2015–16): 65–74; and Mark Galeotti, "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine,'" *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018.

22 Westerlund and Norberg, "Military Means," 580.

23 Charap, "Ghost of Hybrid War," 53; and Timothy Thomas, "The Evolution of Russian Military Thought: Integrating Hybrid, New-Generation, and New-Type Thinking," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29, no. 4 (2016): 555.

24 Westerlund and Norberg, "Military Means," 588. Special Forces, though in uniformed state service, are nevertheless also categorized as nonmilitary armed forces in the Russian approach.

25 Dimitry (Dima) Adamsky, *Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy*, Proliferation Papers 54 (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2015), 24; and Janis Berzins, *Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy*, Policy Paper 2 (Riga: National Defence Academy of Latvia, 2014), 13.

26 Mark Galeotti, "Moscow's Mercenaries in Syria," *War on the Rocks*, April 5, 2016.

27 Adamsky, *Cross-Domain Coercion*, 9, 21; Thomas, "Evolution of Russian Military Thought," 554; and Berzins, *Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine.*

28 Adamsky, *Cross-Domain Coercion*, 9.

may be somewhat of a misnomer. The Soviet experience reveals a long history of relying upon nonstate actors, whether partisans or guerrillas, in various countries, to achieve directed military and policy objectives.[29] In this sense, contemporary Russia has not turned to military and security privatization to reduce costs, gain efficiency, and create economies of scale as is evident in the US case. Instead, with nonstate actors working in conjunction with the Russian state, Moscow is revisiting the use of nonstate uniformed means. On the other hand, Gerasimov asserts the "role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, *they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness*."[30] In this "new" environment, actors like PMSCs are perceived to have a leg up, at least in some domains, vis-à-vis much larger state-based organizations.

The second factor is that the uncertain legal status of these nonstate actors in the Russian context heightens the obfuscation.[31] To explain, there are currently no rules in the Russian Criminal Code that define the use of Russian firms abroad. Companies so operating have had to present themselves as advisors or "training centers" or have sought incorporation outside of Russian territory.[32] This solution applied, for instance, to Russian firms conducting tasks such as defending maritime shipping from pirates, escorting logistics convoys in conflict zones, and protecting energy sector infrastructure. This approach is required to take a wide berth around Article 359 of the Russian Criminal Code that prohibits Russian mercenaries. In this context, a mercenary is "a person who acts for the purpose of getting a material reward, and who is not a citizen of the state in whose armed conflict or hostilities he participates, who does not reside on a permanent basis on its territory and who is not a person fulfilling official duties."[33]

The RSB-Group, for example, is registered domestically to work within Russia and registered in the British Virgin Islands for international operations.[34] In 2016–17, the RSB-Group employees worked in eastern Libya ostensibly to remove landmines. Owner Oleg Krinitsyn indicated, however, the firm had other tasks and operated under liberal conditions regarding the application of violence: "If we're under assault we enter

29 Notably, degrees of effort also varied during the Cold War with "the Soviet Union maintain[ing] more military advisors in Latin America and Africa than the US had globally." Graham H. Turbiville Jr., *Logistic Support and Insurgency: Guerrilla Sustainment and Applied Lessons of Soviet Insurgent Warfare: Why It Should Still Be Studied*, JSOU Report 05-4 (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2005), 12.

30 Robert Coalson, "Top Russian General Lays Bare Putin's Plan for Ukraine," *Huffington Post*, September 2, 2014 (italics added).

31 Unlike Russia, the United States recognizes PMSCs as entities subject to US legal measures. The Defense Department, the State Department, and the US Agency for International Development established the framework for referring possible violations of the Military Extraterritorial Judicial Act by PMSC personnel to the Justice Department. See National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, Pub. L. No. 122 Stat. 3 (2008).

32 "Iraq, Private Russian Security Guards Instead of the Foreign Armies," *Asia News*, October 28, 2009; and Olivia Allison, "Informal but Diverse: The Market for Exported Force from Russia and Ukraine," in *The Markets for Force: Privatization of Security across World Regions*, ed. Molly Dunigan and Ulrich Petersohn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 95.

33 Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Fed. L. 64-FZ (1996), pt. 2, sec. 7, ch. 34, art. 359, para. 3; and Signe Zaharova, "Russian Federation: Regulatory Tools regarding Private Entities Performing Military and Security Services," in *Multilevel Regulation of Military and Security Contractors: The Interplay between International, European and Domestic Norms*, ed. Christine Bakker and Mirko Sossai (Oxford: Hart, 2012), 475.

34 Pavel Felgenhauer, "Private Military Companies Forming Vanguard of Russian Foreign Operations," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 14, no. 36 (March 16, 2017).

the battle, of course, to protect our lives and the lives of our clients. . . . According to military science, a counterattack must follow an attack. That means we would have to destroy the enemy."[35] Moreover, the group operated in a region controlled by General Khalifa Haftar, a warlord enjoying both Egyptian and Russian support. Though the firm's actual employer is unknown, Krinitsyn did indicate the RSB-Group was "'consulting' with the Russian foreign ministry."[36] In short, the RSB-Group provided Russia the ability to maintain its influence without a uniformed state presence.

The malleability of the Russian approach is also evident in the case of the Moran Security Group and the Slavonic Corps. In 2013, supposedly Syrian paymasters hired the Moran Security Group to protect energy infrastructure. Moran gave this task to the Slavonic Corps (registered in Hong Kong), which provided 267 personnel for the proposed five-month mission.[37] The mission subsequently changed to offensive operations with activities directed against Syrian rebels. Poorly resourced, the service ended after only one month. Detaining the security personnel who returned to Russia in the fall of 2013, the Federal Security Services (FSB) also conducted the first arrests under Article 359—Vadim Gusev and Evgeny Sidorov, two Slavonic Corps commanders. This response occurred despite the fact that the head of Moran Security Group was a FSB reservist and the mission likely had FSB clearance.[38]

Finally, Russian firms can be absorbed into broader state initiatives designed to create hesitation and confusion consistent with gray-zone challenges. For instance, Russian orchestration of the conflict in Crimea and eastern Ukraine featured a variety of armed actors known as "green men" that brought about Russia's creeping success. Russian firms such as Wagner were part of this collage, and media reports suggest Wagner had access to a Russian military base near eastern Ukraine.[39] Reports also suggest the company's efforts were highly valued by other actors on the ground.[40] Indeed, the US government recognized Wagner's impact in the region after the fact: the company "recruited and sent soldiers to fight alongside separatists in eastern Ukraine. PMC Wagner is being designated for being responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, stability, sovereignty, or territorial integrity of Ukraine."[41]

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35 Maria Tsvetkova, "Exclusive: Russian Private Security Firm Says It Had Armed Men in East Libya," Reuters, March 10, 2017.

36 Tsvetkova, "Russian Private Security."

37 James Miller, "The Insane Story of Russian Mercenaries Fighting for the Syrian Regime," *Huffington Post*, November 21, 2013; James Miller, "Putin's Attack Helicopters and Mercenaries Are Winning the War for Assad," *Foreign Policy*, March 30, 2016; and Michael Weiss, "The Case of the Keystone Cossacks," *Foreign Policy*, November 21, 2013.

38 Weiss, "Keystone Cossacks"; Miller, "Russian Mercenaries"; and Gregory Wilson, "PROXY Capabilities: The History and Future of Russian Private Military Companies," Isenberg Institute of Strategic Satire, April 5, 2016.

39 Laurence Peter, "Syria War: Who Are Russia's Shadowy Wagner Mercenaries?," BBC News, February 23, 2018.

40 "The Ride of the Mercenaries: How 'Wagner' Came to Syria," *Economist*, November 2, 2017.

41 "Treasury Designates Individuals and Entities Involved in the Ongoing Conflict in Ukraine," US Department of the Treasury, June 20, 2017.

Toward a Diplomatic Strategy

The United States has had many reasons to set limits on the PMSC industry. Certainly, America wished to avoid accusations of hiring mercenaries, who are inherently shadowy actors in the modern context. The pejorative term, *mercenary*, would have tainted US initiatives in already complex undertakings such as the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The United States Federal Acquisition Regulation plainly establishes PMSC personnel are "not mercenaries and are not authorized to engage in offensive operations."[42] Though the international legal definition of a mercenary does not make an offensive or defensive differentiation, nor does Article 359 of the Russian Criminal Code, the United States, through its purchasing power and regulatory activities, has instilled this distinction.[43]

Moreover, making this distinction permitted the US military to focus actively upon offensive undertakings that upset the status quo, showed initiative in theatre, seized territory (rather than only holding it), and demanded specialized skillsets and sophisticated equipment denied to other actors.[44] In the official US determination then, PMSCs are defensively boxed: "The use of force by [PMSCs] is limited to self-defense, the defense of others and the protection of U.S. Government property. . . . [PMSCs] may not engage in combat, which is defined as deliberate destructive action against hostile armed forces or other armed actors."[45]

Making this distinction was also valuable because other states, as indicated above, followed the US lead vis-à-vis military and security privatization. Since the PMSC activities of others could negatively impact US operations in theatre, framing the PMSC industry through common practices, expectations, and regulation became important.[46] Thus the United States was a key negotiating party and one of the original state signatories to the *Montreux Document*, which at the time of writing, had been endorsed by 54 states, 24 of which are NATO members and many of whom are close US allies; Russia is not a signatory.

Linked to this evolution, the American National Standards Institute and ASIS International developed the PSC.1 Standard in 2012, at the request of the US Department of Defense.[47] This standard operationalizes the *International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers*, the industry's supporting initiative for the *Montreux Document*.[48]

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42 *Hearing on Department of Defense Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 110th Cong 13 (April 2, 2008) (statement of Mr. P. Jackson Bell, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness), 13.

43 ICRC, *Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949* (Geneva: ICRC, 2010), article 47.

44 Christopher Spearin, *Private Military and Security Companies and States: Force Divided* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 23–50, 89–116.

45 "Private Security Companies," Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics & Materiel Readiness, accessed May 2, 2018.

46 Deborah D. Avant, "Pragmatic Networks and Transnational Governance of Private Military and Security Services," *International Studies Quarterly* 60, 2 (June 2016): 338.

47 ASIS International (ASIS), *Management System for Quality of Private Security Company Operations—Requirements with Guidance*, ANSI/ASIS PSC.1-2012 (Alexandria, VA: ASIS International, 2012).

48 ICRC, *International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers* (Geneva: ICRC, 2010); and Whitney Grespin, *The Evolving Contingency Contracting Market: Private Sector Self-Regulation and United States Government Monitoring of Procurement of Stability Operations Services* (Carlisle, PA: Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2016), 24.

As stressed by Ian Ralby, PSC.1 "provides auditable procedures for the development, certification, and monitoring of ongoing compliance" of PMSCs at home and abroad.[49] The US Departments of Defense and State now require PSC.1 compliance for the firms they hire, and other state and private clients of PMSCs have embraced the standard.[50]

Given the particular nature of Russia's reliance upon military and security privatization, the United States faces a challenge with two characteristics. First, Russia's offensive use of these nonstate actors conflicts with the longstanding US practice and political efforts toward limiting PMSCs to defensive endeavors. Second, Russia utilizes, rather than employs, these actors. This challenge is exacerbated further by the relationship between the two nations: Russia is not an ally with whom the United States might engage closely or diplomatically nor are the countries likely to develop a common practice in theatre.

Nevertheless, the United States might make progress by drawing attention to how Russia relies upon military and security privatization. As Deborah Avant notes, one cannot ignore the impact of the United States, which "has chosen to play a large consumer role in this market and its choices have therefore had a large impact on the market's ecology."[51] This role has helped to limit what the international industry *should sell* and to indicate, in a normative sense, what other interested parties *should buy*. This "defensive" norm does not collapse simply because Russia does not fully follow it in the first or early instances. However, given that norms are influenced strongly through practice, especially the practice of powerful actors, they could loosen. This weakening standard would have negative implications for maintaining international peace and security and managing violence worldwide. In short, a strong US influence can preserve the country's normative power to maintain global stability.

In this vein, the US government recently upheld its defensive credentials by turning down the possibility of employing PMSCs more robustly and offensively. On several occasions in 2017, Erik Prince, the founder of the PMSC Blackwater, advocated for the United States to take a new approach towards its operations in Afghanistan. His plan, directed more towards counterterrorism than counterinsurgency, called for reducing the US military presence. Prince proposed 5,000 contractors and 90 privately supplied aircraft to replace departing US military elements.[52] Rather than rotating in and out as state military forces do, this private presence would be a long-term engagement at a substantially lower annual cost of $10 billion rather than the $45 billion spent currently. Under this plan, these private personnel would both mentor and become enmeshed within the Afghan security sector. Personnel would become more and more engaged in the full spectrum of operations, moving beyond the limitations set for the international PMSC industry. Nevertheless, despite President Trump's avowed tendency toward unorthodox solutions, the proposal was not acted upon.

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49 Grespin, *Evolving Contingency Contracting Market*, 24.

50 Avant, "Pragmatic Networks," 339.

51 Deborah D. Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 220.

52 Erik D. Prince, "The MacArthur Model for Afghanistan," *Wall Street Journal*, May 31 2017; Erik Prince, "Erik Prince: Contractors, Not Troops, Will Save Afghanistan," *New York Times*, August 30 2017; and William Gallo, Ayub Khawreen, and Hasib Danish Alikozai, "Plan to Privatize US War in Afghanistan Gets Icy Reception," Voice of America, August 12, 2017.

The second reason to preserve this normative power relates to the strategic implications for the United States. As Russia has made clear, companies can be used in gray-zone conflict activities that feature "rising revisionist intent, a form of strategic gradualism, and unconventional tools."[53] Gray-zone practitioners look to upend the international system favoring the United States slowly through efforts that fall short of major armed conflict or that occur in bewildering ways. For Russia, its use of firms deviates from US expectations, promotes deniability, and increases confusion in regions of US interest.

Given the difficulty in deterring Russia from utilizing a particular tool in its gray-zone arsenal, either through the threat of force or sanction, US promotion of the *Montreux Document* might help steer privatization efforts away from the aforementioned ambiguity, opacity, and uncertainty inherent in wider gray-zone endeavors. Formal, state-sanctioned efforts will bring the utility of unconventional gray-zone strategies into doubt.[54] To avoid the castigation caused by having its efforts labeled mercenary and obscure, Russia might eventually sign the document or at least adopt a similar approach.

Several factors underscore this contention. To start with, the *Montreux Document* has a catholic approach to "private business entities that provide military and/or security services, irrespective of how they describe themselves."[55] The document can, therefore, apply to a variety of activities. In turn, by identifying and relying upon existing international law, the document spells out the pertinent legal obligations for states. Fulfilling these requirements makes it less likely that states can deny a PMSC presence and argues against the notion that the organizations exist in legal limbo. To ensure further transparency, the document outlines good practices for states to follow. Thus, promoting the internationally recognized *Montreux Document* rather than advancing the US standard PSC.1, which might be problematic for universal acceptance, would make diplomatic sense.

Furthermore, the management and control of violence concerns all states. One can view this from two angles. First, as Jack Straw asserted when he was the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, "The control of violence is one of the fundamental issues—perhaps the fundamental issue—in politics."[56] Managing and framing the limitations on nonstate actors capable of applying violence has been a long-term effort, arguably ongoing since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It is a task engaged by states for the sake of preserving the state as an institution and for creating joint

53 Michael J. Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2015), 4.

54 On June 20, 2017, the US Treasury Department implemented sanctions against a handful of Russian actors and entities, including Dmitry Utkin, Wagner's founder. This action coincided with President Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in the White House. Note, however, that these sanctions did not halt Russia's usage of Wagner in Syria. Stepan Kravchenko and Jake Rudnitsky, "U.S. Expands Russia Sanctions as Trump Meets Ukrainian Head," Bloomberg, June 10, 2017; and Shaun Walker and Julian Border, "US Broadens Russia Sanctions as Ukraine President Visits Trump," *Guardian* (Manchester), June 20, 2017.

55 ICRC, *Montreux Document*, 9.

56 United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Private Military Companies: Options for Regulation 2001–02*, HC 577 (London: The Stationery Office, 2002), 4.

expectations within the international society of states.[57] Second, in a more immediate way, while the Russian use of these nonstate actors is cast in the context of upending the international system favoring the United States, gray-zone conflict dynamics and revisionist intents might appeal to other states who wish to shift at least a local dyadic or regional status quo. Consequently, these objectives arguably behoove many states to prevent erstwhile adversaries from asymmetrically levelling the playing field through military and security privatization. Taken together, the United States need not focus solely on Russia given the wider international utility.

Additionally, there are specific Russian matters to consider. Although it did not sign the *Montreux Document*, a Russian delegation was involved early in the negotiations. Most likely, Western criticism of Russia's August 2008 conflict with Georgia subdued Moscow's interest in the initiative.[58] In this vein, though they have not come to fruition, there have been several domestic legislative attempts to authorize and legalize the foreign work of Russian firms.[59] Finally, there have been concerns within the Russian security sector that substantial military and security privatization efforts will affect morale and give rise to unhealthy competition.[60] Taken together, these factors speak to a larger constituency for having Russia become part of the international normative fold.

Concluding Remarks

Russia's use of firms as offensive tools in gray-zone conflict is not in keeping with the defensive use of PMSCs established by global practices underscored by the United States. Indeed, the United States sets such standards in large part by its own usage of PMSCs, by serving as an example for others, and by its diplomatic engagement, often with close allies. Russia's application of these nonstate actors is also contrary to the associated effort to make the industry more transparent and less deniable. As such, a renewed emphasis on spreading the merits of the *Montreux Document* would be an appropriate US policy response. Such an effort is important because, as is plain with the Russian experience, the PMSC phenomenon should no longer be interpreted as a creature of policymaking within the United States and between it and its allies. Many PMSCs are now a part of the confrontational, if not adversarial, relationships between great powers.

Given these stakes, this article recommends two avenues for further examination. The first is for the United States to engage the PMSC industry to sustain and to elevate the *Montreux Document*. Earlier actions

57 Janice E. Thomson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State-Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7–20.

58 James Cockayne, "Regulating Private Military and Security Companies: The Content, Negotiation, Weaknesses and Promise of the Montreux Document," *Journal of Conflict & Security Law* 13, 3 (2009): 425.

59 "RBC Publishes Report Sourced in FSB and Military on Wagner Private Military Contractor with 2,500 Fighters in Syria," *Interpreter*, August 26, 2016; Wilson, "PROXY Capabilities"; Pierre Vaux, "Fontanka Investigates Russian Mercenaries Dying for Putin in Syria and Ukraine," *Interpreter*, March 29, 2016; "Bill To Allow Private Military Contractors Submitted to Russian Parliament," RT, October 22, 2014; and Alexey Eremenko, "Blackwater.ru: The Future of Russian Private Military Companies," *Moscow Times*, November 12, 2014.

60 As an example, officials raised these concerns in the context of the Russian government decision allowing firms like Gazprom to develop their own security forces. See also "Ride of the Mercenaries," *Economist*.

and statements of individual companies and industry associations suggest they too wish to avoid the normatively pejorative label of mercenary.[61] To capture this statistically, over 700 companies have signed the aforementioned International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers. Consideration might be given, therefore, to catalyzing and supporting industry activism that might ensure PMSCs do not become tarnished by the "offensiveness" of Russian activities.

The second avenue concerns engaging close US allies—in particular, relying upon NATO as a platform through which to advance the *Montreux Document*. On one hand, United States-NATO relations are rocky at the time of writing. On the other hand, European NATO members are now paying more attention towards continental defense, not because of US badgering but because they recognize the challenge posed on their eastern flank.[62] Forming part of this challenge is Russia's usage of companies, which is part of Moscow's gray-zone arsenal. Given that NATO has worked to counter other elements in this arsenal through efforts such as its Centres of Excellence for Strategic Communications, for Cooperative Cyber Defence, and for Countering Hybrid Threats, promoting the *Montreux Document* would fit well into this repertoire. Moreover, NATO has already highlighted its acceptance of the document in the context of human security furtherance through the binding and regulation of the PMSC industry.[63] Thus, one more step would be to put the PMSC issue into the frame of European defense. This would permit European NATO members to address matters better in their own neighborhood and to highlight to states in other regions the challenges presented by similar offensive and difficult to counter activities.

61 Spearin, *Private Military*, 101.

62 Lucie Beraud-Sudreau and Bastian Giegerich, "NATO Defence Spending and European Threat Perceptions," *Survival* 60, 4 (August–September 2018): 53–54.

63 "NATO Partners–Building on Two Decades of Success," NATO, May 28, 2014.

Russia's Frozen Conflicts and the Donbas

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ABSTRACT: This article describes the evolution of Russia's use of unconventional warfare within regions that have large populations of ethnic Russians. The purpose of Russian unconventional warfare is usually to counter the growth of Western alliances in the region within the boundaries of international law.

The Kremlin has long used frozen conflicts to extend their reach beyond Russian borders. In Moldova, Russia has backed the pro-Russian regime in the breakaway region of Transdniestria since 1992. In 2008, Georgia faced a conventional Russian invasion in support of the separatist governments in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In 2014, Russia seized Crimea from Ukraine and began supporting an insurgency of pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas. Analysis of these conflicts reveals the Kremlin's growing understanding of frozen conflicts and the opportunities they present to achieve global and regional objectives. Despite this knowledge, however, Russia's attempts to foment and to exploit a frozen conflict in the Donbas have been a failure.

This article analyzes Russia's legacy of frozen conflicts and Vladimir Putin's use of them, including the Transdniestria conflict in Moldova, the Russian-Georgian war of August 2008, and the Donbas insurgency. After examining the Donbas insurgency. The article concludes with policy recommendations for the Ukrainian and Western governments.

Legacy of Frozen Conflicts

Armed conflicts that have ended via a cease-fire, whether de facto or de jure, but not a peace treaty, are considered frozen. Taken as a region, the post-Soviet space seems perfectly ripe for the creation of frozen conflicts as they boast "ethnic minorities that are large enough to hope for their own statehood," separatist sentiment, and societal divisions an external actor can exploit.[1] Post-Soviet successor states were left in control of large minorities who had been shuffled around over decades of Soviet-induced migration, and the evaporation of central authority renewed many long-suppressed religious, ethnic, and territorial divisions. This gives Russia, a revisionist power, the local knowledge, influence, and circumstances to foment separatism and exploit frozen conflicts on its periphery.

It is understandable that Russia would seek to freeze these conflicts. The feeling in Vladimir Putin's Moscow is that Russia lost its rightful empire with the fall of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, statists such as

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1 Nadezhda Arbatova, "Frozen Conflicts and European Security," *Security Index* 16, no. 3 (September 10, 2010): 51.

Putin have been forced to watch these newly independent nations turn away from Russia and towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Thus, frozen conflicts are a solution to the problem of creeping Western influence in the post-Soviet space. Russia might not be able to bring these states back under Moscow's control wholesale, but it can effectively siphon off pieces to the Kremlin's benefit.

First, freezing a conflict retains at least some of the buffer zone that is central to Russian identity and strategy. Russia is a country steeped in tradition that includes a 700-year legacy of foreign powers marching across the flatlands of the European plains and central Asian steppes, burning and pillaging as they advance on Moscow. With no geographical barriers or impediments to an enemy, aside from "General Winter," Russia has consistently sought to expand and to maintain a barrier around its heartland. As Robert D. Kaplan writes, "Land powers are perennially insecure. . . . Without seas to protect them, they are forever dissatisfied and have to keep expanding or be conquered in turn themselves. This is especially true of the Russians, whose flat expanse is almost bereft of natural borders and affords little protection."[2]

Second, suspending the fight immediately halts Western integration in the affected state since NATO and the European Union are unwilling to challenge a Russian military response.[3] This aversion was most evident following the Georgian conflict.

Third, the pause provides Russia an opportunity for further infiltrating local governments and economies by acting "as engines for corruption and criminality, and as Trojan horses to block progress."[4] This corruption is often used as an avenue for money laundering by Russian elites and Putin's allies, most notably in Moldova. In another act of economic corruption, frozen conflicts allow Russia to support its key energy exports by gaining control over "major energy pipeline routes, often at key junctures in pipeline networks" and exert political pressure over the affected countries who are forced to purchase Russian gas.[5] Many of these pipelines are the product of Soviet investment, and therefore viewed by the Kremlin as Russia's rightful property.

Fourth, frozen conflicts allow Russia to establish a forward presence of armed forces, such as the roughly 9,000 troops currently maintained across South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transdniestria as well as additional GRU and Spetsnaz forces deployed in the Donbas.[6] These forward troops provide the same sort of deterrence as the trip wire of NATO forces in Europe and extend the immediate reach of the Moscow's intelligence services. Furthermore, the presence of Russian troops in

2 Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us about Coming Conflicts and the Battle against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2013), 155.

3 Andrei P. Tsygankov, "The Russia-NATO Mistrust: Ethnophobia and the Double Expansion to Contain 'the Russian Bear,'" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46, no. 1 (March 2013): 186.

4 Robert Ottung and Christopher Walker, "Putin's Frozen Conflicts," *Foreign Policy*, February 13, 2015.

5 John R. Haines, "The Geopolitics of Russia's Networked Energy Infrastructure," *Orbis* 59, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 558.

6 Joshua Kucera, "At Press Conference, Putin Forgets about Military Bases in Armenia, Moldova, Abkhazia . . . ," Eurasianet, December 18, 2014; and Tor Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces in Crimea and Donbas," *Parameters* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 18.

nominally independent nations tacitly reinforces the narrative of Russia's regional dominance.

Finally, abeyance provides a platform for Putin to present himself as a conflict mediator, a key player in international affairs, while managing geopolitical alignment and democratization. By freezing conflicts, Russia blunts democratic revolutions that might spill over its borders. The Rose Revolution (2003) and Euromaidan demonstrations (2013–14), for example, preceded Russian involvement in Georgia and Ukraine, respectively.

Transdniestria, Moldova

Transdniestria, sandwiched between Moldova and Ukraine, is de jure a Moldovan enclave but is de facto an independent state. During the waning days of the Soviet Union, Transdniestria declared independence from Moldova, which was seeking closer cultural and political ties with Romania. Romania had deposed its own communist government through violent revolution in 1989 and was firmly aligning itself with the West. Standing in contrast was Transdniestria, which was "Russophone, industrialized, and the home of the 14th Soviet Army."[7] Of particular concern was a newly passed language law that declared Romanian as the official state language and moved to extend its use in legal, cultural, and educational spheres. This move frightened the Russified population of Transdniestria who "viewed this shift away from Soviet (Russophone) norms as 'Romanianization,' a phenomenon that threatened non-Romanian speakers with persecution, disenfranchisement, and death."[8] This suppression of Russian culture therefore represents one of the earliest cases of Russophobia, which the Kremlin views as an attack on Russia as a civilization, and in turn demands a state response to protect ethnic Russians. This is a concept Putin later employed to justify interventions in Georgia and Ukraine.

When the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic became independent in 1991, it claimed sovereignty over the breakaway region. At the same time, pro-Russian leaders in Transdniestria declared independence from Moldova, which was confirmed in a plebiscite quickly followed by presidential elections.[9] Transdniestria had hoped to remain a federalized part of the Soviet Union, but only weeks after its elections the Soviet Union was dissolved. After several border skirmishes between Moldovan police and Transdniestrian paramilitary forces, Moldova invaded and captured the secessionist city of Bendery. The rebels were near collapse when the 14th Army intervened and drove the Moldovan forces into retreat. The following month, leaders negotiated a cease-fire with the line serving as the de facto border between Transdniestria and Moldova.

Today, Russian, Transdniestrian, and Moldovan peacekeepers enforce the arrangement. Russian political influence and financial support allows the Transdniestrian government to function as a quasi-independent state. Russia has also employed the favored tactic of passportization: at least one-fifth of Transdniestrians hold Russian passports as do "the

7 Michael S. Bobick, "Separatism Redux: Crimea, Transnistria, and Eurasia's *De Facto* States," *Anthropology Today* 30, no. 3 (June 2014): 4.

8 Bobick, "Separatism Redux," 6.

9 Helge Blakkisrud and Pal Kolsto, "From Secessionist Conflict toward a Functioning State: Processes of State- and Nation-Building in Transnistria," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2011): 183.

vast majority of Transnistrian state officials."[10] Yet despite these close ties, it seems Russia prefers to keep Transdniestria frozen rather than to allow it to become formally independent. Russia may not be able to force Moldova back into the fold, but freezing the Transdniestrian conflict has weakened Moldovan sovereignty and frozen its western integration for the past 25 years. This uncertainty has served to trap Moldova in a geopolitical gray zone between East and West and forced it to act as a vehicle for Russian corruption and money laundering.[11]

South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia, Part I

Like Moldova, Georgia's two frozen conflicts came about during the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1989, South Ossetia demanded to be acknowledged as an autonomous republic, and antigovernment protests in Abkhazia began after Georgia attempted to open a branch of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in the capital. Georgia also introduced a language law that required "a Georgian language test for entry into higher education," instituted national holidays, created military units comprised exclusively of native citizens, and promoted "the resettlement of Georgians in areas dominated by minorities."[12] Skirmishes between state forces and separatist militias began in late 1989. The conflict escalated in 1991 when Georgia declared independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum in which neither South Ossetia nor Abkhazia participated. At this point, Russia takes a turn in its foreign policy direction.

Initially, Soviet and Georgian troops cooperated to try to contain and disarm militias in South Ossetia, but after the newly elected Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia refused to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and refused to condemn the attempted Soviet coup in 1991, he became persona non grata in the eyes of the Kremlin.[13] In June 1992, Russia started launching attacks on Georgian military units and villages. After this intervention, Abkhazia declared independence from Georgia and by the end of 1992, Gamsakhurdia's successor, Eduard Shevardnadze, was negotiating a cease-fire with Moscow. Later that year, a peacekeeping mission froze South Ossetia—with Georgians, Russians, and South Ossetians acting as enforcers along the cease-fire line.

The Georgian-Abkhazian conflict continued for two years. In that time, three separate Russian-mediated cease-fires fell apart.[14] Offensive Abkhazian action, with Russian support, seizing territory and cities from the Georgians, broke the third cease-fire. At the same time, Georgia was beset by a "revival of the Zviadist rebellion [supporting Gamsakhurdia] . . . threatening the complete collapse of the Georgian state. At this stage (in October 1993), Shevardnadze flew to Moscow and agreed that Georgia would join the Commonwealth of Independent

10 Bobick, "Separatism Redux," 6.

11 Agnia Grigas, "Moldova: Stepping Out of Europe's Grey Zone," *American Interest*, March 9, 2018.

12 Dennis Sammut and Nikola Cvetkovski, *The Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict*, Confidence Building Matters 6 (London: Verification Technology Information Centre, 1996), 10.

13 Sammut and Cvetkovski, *Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict*, 28.

14 S. Neil MacFarlane, "On the Front Lines in the Near Abroad: The CIS and the OSCE in Georgia's Civil Wars," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (September 1997): 513.

States."[15] Following Georgia's ascension, Russia intervened to crush Gamsakhurdia's supporters and deploy troops along the line of contact. By 1994, the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict was frozen with Russians, Georgians, Abkhazians, and United Nations (UN) personnel acting as peace enforcers.

The Georgian scenario has many similarities to the Moldovan scenario. The implementation of language laws drastically increased tensions. South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transdniestria had all hoped to remain a part of the Soviet Union or Russia, and turned to violence when the country from which they separated declared the referendums invalid. Like Transdniestria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia were on the losing side of a battle with state forces until Russia's intervention, the nature of which was also in part "a reflection of decisions made by independent-minded generals."[16] These regions are also embroiled in peace talks that have not presented Russia with any preferable alternative to maintaining the status quo.

There are, however, key distinctions between these scenarios. Unlike supporting the government of Moldova, Russia supported the Georgian opposition leader to help launch a coup to oust the uncooperative Gamsakhurdia. The increased involvement was due to three factors: Georgia is more historically important to Russia than Moldova; Georgia buffers Russian borders—as does South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which also borders the Black Sea; and Gamsakhurdia's active spurning of Russia's overtures for Georgia to become part of the federation. Many in the Kremlin likely viewed this as a personal affront—former vassals should not refuse the policy of a superpower.

South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia, Part II

The Russian-Georgian war has been referred to as the product of a security dilemma rather than overt Georgian or Russian ambitions. For Georgia, the frozen conflicts of South Ossetia and Abkhazia represented an untenable source of insecurity and illegitimacy that drove Georgia to become more secure by trying to resolve the issue.[17] For Russia, Georgia represented a peripheral strategic interest that was taking power away from Moscow. Russia's paranoia seemed justified after Georgia's Rose Revolution ended with the ousting of the Russian-compliant Shevardnadze and the institution of democratic reforms. The new government stated its goals as returning South Ossetia and Abkhazia to Georgia and integrating more closely with the European Union. As both sides implemented measures to secure their interests, neither could accurately determine aggressive or defensive maneuvers by the other.[18]

The war started with either a Georgian offensive into South Ossetia, South Ossetian terrorist attacks on Georgian forces, or Russian military exercises that were merely screens for an invasion. The security dilemma made a confrontation so likely that, for the purposes of this article, the antagonist is inconsequential.[19] Georgian forces captured the

15 MacFarlane, "On the Front Lines," 514.

16 Sammut and Cvetkovski, *Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict*, 13.

17 Cory Welt, "The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War," *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 1 (January 2010): 64–65.

18 Welt, "Thawing of a Frozen Conflict," 65.

19 Welt, "Thawing of a Frozen Conflict," 92–93.

South Ossetian capital, and Russia responded with a combined arms counteroffensive. As Russia pushed into Georgia, Abkhazian forces opened a second front and attacked the Kodori valley. By the end of the five-day campaign, Russia occupied numerous Georgian cities and South Ossetians began cleansing Georgians from local villages. The conflict ended with a cease-fire on August 12, 2008. Russia withdrew its troops back into South Ossetia and Abkhazia in September, and formally recognized these states as independent. In response to the war, the West levied condemnations that were "firm in rhetoric but compromising in reality."[20]

Russia's objectives were as much regional as they were global. Russia had invested a considerable amount of political and military resources in the region such as staffing the local government with ethnic Russians and the passportization of the populace, which made them official Russian citizens.[21] Globally, Russia was facing a crisis. Between 2004 and 2008, 11 former Soviet or Soviet-satellite states joined the European Union, 7 joined NATO, and Georgia and Ukraine were promised NATO membership.[22] From a national security perspective, the war in 2008 may have been inevitable, but it was also an opportunity for the determined Russia to stop oppositional expansion: the territorial integrity of the frozen space and the safety of Russian citizens could serve as a pretext for action.[23] Russia has strayed from flagrant violations of international law that might see it on the receiving end of a UN-sanctioned regime change. Thus, Russia operates within the Kremlin's interpretation of international norms, such as the responsibility to protect, which it applied to the Russian citizens of South Ossetia.[24] By freezing South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and enshrining itself as their protector, Russia was granted a free hand to intervene in an area it considers part of its strategic interests.

The 2008 conflict started as the result of a security dilemma. But its outcome was due to a Russian strategy of manipulating frozen conflicts to achieve foreign policy objectives. Like Moldova, Georgia possessed the necessary preconditions for creating a frozen conflict. Unlike Moldova, Russia recognized these preconditions and then set out to exploit them. In this, it was undoubtedly successful beyond the Kremlin's expectations. In just five days of campaigning, Russia secured its protectorate states and ended NATO expansion. More importantly, the victory heralded a new era of Russian revisionism and Western hegemonic decay. These factors would eventually lead Russia to target the other country that was promised NATO membership at the Bucharest summit: Ukraine. In this new theater, the Kremlin would actively foment the necessary preconditions for creating a frozen conflict. What started as an accident in Moldova and evolved into an opportunity in Georgia would culminate as dedicated strategy in Ukraine.

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20 Nona Mikhelidze, "After the 2008 Russia-Georgia War: Implications for the Wider Caucasus and Prospects for Western Involvement in Conflict Resolution" (background paper, The Caucasus and Black Sea Region: European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Beyond conference, Rome, February 6–7, 2009), 2.

21 Roy Allison, "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace,'" *International Affairs* 84, no. 6 (November 2008): 1147.

22 Allison, "Russia Resurgent," 1165.

23 Allison, "Russia Resurgent," 1146.

24 Allison, "Russia Resurgent," 1151–52.

Donbas, Ukraine

Compared to the examples above, the Crimea is not frozen. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution requesting the international community "not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea."[25] Although Russia was viewed as a peacekeeper in Moldova and Georgia, it has been overtly described as an occupier in Crimea. Of greater interest in the context of this article is the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Donbas, which represent Russia's understanding of frozen conflicts as part of strategy. In 2007, the European Union offered Ukraine an association agreement. This agreement "remained on the table throughout 2013, even as Kyiv failed to meet key, public EU demands for political reform."[26] Indeed, the European Union also recognized Ukraine's strategic importance. With EU and NATO prospects looming, the Euromaidan demonstrations necessitated greater Russian involvement in the region to address its security concerns.

Ukraine boasted the key ingredients needed for a frozen conflict: an ethnic minority "large enough to hope for their own statehood," separatist sentiment, societal divisions, and Russia as the external actor.[27] These circumstances had thus far been muted through democratic processes, a tradition of peaceful power sharing and turnover, and the election of the pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovych.[28] Through a mixture of Russian pressure and promises, Yanukovych abruptly cancelled the implementation of the EU-Ukraine association agreement. This action led to the 2013 student protests, which the Yanukovych government responded to with force, thereby sparking Euromaidan. The revolution violently ousted Yanukovych in favor of a pro-EU government. Although governments are sometimes excused, at least marginally, for their use of force against protestors under the notion of "keeping the peace," the violent ousting of an elected government official in Ukraine was something new. Just as Sulla's march on Rome shattered the *mos maiorum* of Roman politics, so too had the "flagrant use of force by protesters with the tacit support of opposition parties removed the major constraint that had previously kept the political struggle in Ukraine peaceful."[29] Militias in the Donbas were formed to protect locals from a perceived ultranationalist threat, a concept bellowed loudly by Russian television that described Euromaidan as a fascist takeover. These militias were quickly buttressed by Cossacks, Russian "volunteers," and Russian sympathizers within the Ukrainian armed forces.

To crush the insurgency in its infancy, Ukraine targeted a militia group, led by former Federal Security Service (FSB) officer Igor Strelkov, that had taken over the key city of Slavyansk.[30] Generously described as incompetent, the Ukrainian recapture of Slavyansk took over two months. In that time, Donetsk and Luhansk declared their independence

25 UN General Assembly, Resolution 68/262, Territorial Integrity of Ukraine, A/RES/68/262 (March 27, 2014), 2.

26 Paul Kubicek, "Dancing with the Devil: Explaining the European Union's Engagement with Ukraine under Viktor Yanukovych," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 25, no. 2 (2017): 144–45.

27 Arbatova, "Frozen Conflicts," 51.

28 Serhiy Kudelia, "The Donbas Rift," *Russian Social Science Review* 58, no. 2–3 (2017): 212–34.

29 Kudelia, "Donbas Rift," 216.

30 Kudelia, "Donbas Rift," 221.

and fortified their positions. The insurgency also had the time it needed to achieve military parity: "By the middle of July, the militia moved from guerrilla raids and infantry battles to tank battles and remote duels using rocket artillery" with Russian assistance.[31] Despite this setback, by the end of the summer campaign, Ukraine was on the offensive. As in Moldova and Georgia, Russian troops directly intervened to stop the separatist governments from being overrun. Thus in the battle for Ilovaisk, Ukrainian state forces were soundly defeated.[32]

Early in the Donbas unrest, Russia initiated talks toward a resolution that would allow Donetsk and Luhansk "to choose their own government, legislative authorities and governors" as well as manage their economic affairs.[33] This solution, a semiautonomous Donbas acting as a buffer zone, was the best Russia could imagine. If the region could not achieve semiautonomy, Russia was prepared to freeze the conflict with a cease-fire agreement. In these negotiations, the United States, United Kingdom, and France consistently rejected proposals of limited sovereignty in the Donbas.[34] Russia thus turned to the frozen state and successfully achieved a cease-fire agreement in 2014. Russia could have exploited this frozen conflict for decades, but Russian-backed separatists crossed the cease-fire line and launched the Debaltseve offensive. Pursuing objectives such as cities, industrial centers, and airports "showed the extent to which Moscow was willing to support the opposition in gaining its strategic objectives, even justifying these military operations at the UN as self-defense."[35] By applying the lessons learned by the Abkhazian breaking of the cease-fire in Georgia, Moscow attempted to shift the cease-fire line and establish a more strategic position before letting the freeze set in.

Given the dearth of territorial exchanges after the Debaltseve offensive, some have described the Donbas as frozen, but the characteristics are far more violent than those associated with Transdniestria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia.[36] Numerous cease-fires—such as the Easter cease-fire on March 30, 2018, which failed on its first day—have been implemented and violated by both parties, suggesting two key developments. First, Ukraine and the West are more aggressive and determined to blunt Russian aspirations. Second, Russia has either not achieved the strategic positioning it desires or it has lost control over the actions of its separatists. Thus, a more accurate analysis would categorize the Donbas and Ukraine as being in a low intensity civil war.

In Moldova and Georgia, Russia acted openly and without Western interference, thus allowing it to use all military measures available to achieve a quick victory and to dictate the terms of any cease-fire agreements. In the Donbas, Russia is facing Western military and political support for the Ukrainian government. Because of this, Ukraine does not need to negotiate with Russia on its own nor negotiate

31 Kudelia, "Donbas Rift," 226.

32 Jamie Dettmer, "Should the U.S. Arm Ukraine's Militias?," *Daily Beast*, November 24, 2014.

33 Sergey Lavrov (Russian Foreign Minister), interview with *Voskresnoye vremya*, Moscow, March 30, 2014.

34 Lance Davies, "Russia's 'Governance' Approach: Intervention and the Conflict in the Donbas," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 735.

35 Davies, "Russia's 'Governance' Approach," 742.

36 Maria Tsvetkova, "Ceasefire Brings Limited Respite for East Ukrainians," Reuters, July 21, 2015.

from a disadvantageous position. The increased Western involvement has invited more Western scrutiny, condemnation, and reprisals in the form of economic sanctions. Furthermore, if Moscow is perceived to invade Ukraine openly, the West may have justification for not only intervening to remove Russian forces but also to extend the intervention to Moscow itself. These conditions force Putin to operate on a level of official deniability, however dubious, to deny the West a casus belli. This "doctrine of deniability" was at first advantageous to allowing Moscow to support separatist movements covertly. Since Russia has been forced to remain at this level, however, they have been unable to exercise the authority necessary to keep the movements both effective for and subservient to the Kremlin's aspirations.

Given these considerations, one can say Putin's attempt to strategize a frozen conflict in Ukraine has been a success, but the outcome of that strategy has been a failure. Regardless, Russia has clearly learned from its experiences in Georgia and Moldova to lay the groundwork for intervention and to create the conditions for a frozen conflict early. Russian television focused on the violent far right elements of Euromaidan, decried supposed human rights violations against ethnic Russians, provided operational support to catalyze and to sustain resistance movements, and recognized the breakaway regions as cultural identities separate from Kiev. The scenario demonstrates the separatist movements are not under the purview of Russian authorities.

Strelkov, the former FSB officer who took over Slavyansk, likely went beyond any mandate he might have received from Moscow. He had expected Russian forces to drive into the Donbas, as they had in Crimea once the independence referendum was carried out, but Moscow refused to even recognize the vote as legitimate.[37] In negotiations to end the conflict or to implement cease-fires, Russia has proved unable to control the separatism it fomented. Recognizing this shortcoming, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, "We shouldn't pretend that those people (opposition) will readily obey. They live on their land, and they are fighting for it."[38] Russia used separatism to create chaos in a space that could then be exploited. But this paradoxically left the separatists prone to acting outside Russian interests.

The Donbas scenario proves that while Moscow's understanding of frozen conflicts has evolved, so too has the West's, which has been employed to curb Russian ambitions. Russia is therefore presented with four options moving forward. First, it can aim for a frozen status akin to Transdniestria-Moldova. Second, it can withdraw from the Donbas and allow Ukrainian state forces to resume control either totally or as part of a power-sharing agreement. Third, it can recognize or annex the Donbas and gamble that the West will not respond. Finally, it can choose to sustain the low intensity civil war and find uses for it such as staging false-flag attacks to increase domestic support or by using the conflict space as a testing ground for military technology.

Putin will likely pursue the first direction. Freezing the Donbas would benefit Russia's economic and geopolitical circumstances far more than the other options. But Russia seems willing to maintain the

37 Kudelia, "Donbas Rift," 221.

38 Sergey Lavrov (speech, 51st Munich Security Conference, Munich, February 7, 2015).

low intensity civil war until that goal is accomplished. A low intensity civil war provides opportunity for political exploitation and military development; critically, it allows for Russia to remain prepared should an opportunity to freeze the conflict present itself, thus finally achieving the desired end state.

Policy Recommendations

The West has made great strides in combating Russian exploitation of frozen conflicts by refusing to negotiate peace agreements that recognize the autonomy of the Donbas regions and by refusing cease-fires where Russia acts as the primary peacekeeper. Western sanctions need to be upheld and strengthened, including the implementation of America's secondary sanctions on companies that do business with Russian firms. Any new peace agreement should include measures acknowledging Ukraine as the sole government and authority within its state borders, and any cease-fire agreements should preclude Russian peace enforcers.

For Ukraine, the tradition of peaceful political struggle destroyed in 2014 needs to be reestablished, along with the monopoly on violence that Ukraine once enjoyed over its society. Ukraine should undergo a renewed campaign to remove the governments in Donetsk and Luhansk by seizing or destroying the separatists' buildings and infrastructure. The airs of legitimacy for the "republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk, which give it leverage over peace negotiations, must be eliminated. Further, the fact that Russia does not retain control over the militias opens an opportunity for their corruption. Ukraine should focus on pliable militia leaders who may be bribed with payments and government posts as well as former militia members who can be incorporated into state forces.

To help address the lack of economic opportunity in the Donbas, Ukraine should make and fulfill pledges for greater economic investment in the region with Western assistance if needed. Ukraine should repeal the language law implemented in 2017, which banned teaching minority languages in schools; increase the representation of ethnic Russians throughout the government; marginalize far-right movements; and acknowledge the violence of the Euromaidan demonstrations to include taking steps towards reparations for destroyed property and loss of life.

If the West determines that supporting Ukraine—and its reclamation of the Donbas—against Russia are security priorities, then the key recommendation is to take a more aggressive stance. The West should increase its involvement in the Donbas, including the engagement of private military contractors in a train, advise, and assist capacity that reduces exposure. Weapon deliveries to Ukraine should increase so state forces have a qualitative edge over the opposition. Russia's response to this support would likely result in increased support for the separatist forces, but operating on a level of deniability limits the types and quantity of assets—such as drones, conventional air strikes, and standoff weapons—that can be engaged.

By intervening at the behest of the sovereign Ukrainian government, the West has the advantage of bringing those forces to bear. Should such an action occur, Russia will be forced either to remain at a lower level of engagement than the West or to confront Western assets directly. Russia would likely be unwilling to risk a direct confrontation with NATO and

opt to remain at a lower level of engagement to maintain deniability. As long as the West remains more engaged than Russia, Ukraine should emerge with an advantageous position in settlement negotiations.

Russia's history with frozen conflicts reveals preventative measures post-Soviet states may take to reduce or to degrade Russia's ability to foment separatism and conflict. Russia strives to widen the identity rift between native and Russian populations by funding cultural centers, summer camps, and language academies. Vulnerable states such as Estonia and Latvia attempted to counter these efforts by implementing language laws akin to those found in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine. Understanding how these laws encourage separatism, vulnerable states should repeal these mandates. Collaborations with regional partners should invest in native cultural programs that encourage Russian populations to assume a shared identity. The United States similarly promotes shared identities among its ethnic populations by celebrating holidays such as Cinco de Mayo and the Chinese New Year despite neither being official government holidays.

According to political anthropologists, Baltic states can successfully assimilate Russian populations not by forcing them to become Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian but by acknowledging Russian ethnicity as a legitimate subdivision of the native culture.[39] In Estonia and Latvia, ethnic Russians make up approximately 26 and 30 percent of the total population, respectively. Marginalizing Russia as a primary language, removing Soviet monuments, maligning Russian media (which may be the only understandable outlet), and diminishing ethnic holidays only gives just cause to claims of Russophobia. Denying the Russians minority of legitimacy as stakeholders in the native society creates a schism that is more susceptible to overtures of Russian ultranationalism. Thus by investing in a stronger national identity and state character among the population of ethnic Russians, the Baltic will be less vulnerable to Russian influence.

Media plays an important role in deterring Russian aggression against post-Soviet states. The relative ignorance of the international community made previous Russian efforts more effective. Russia had frozen Moldova, humbled Georgia, and annexed Crimea before NATO states even knew there was a conflict. Increased media and international attention has helped stifle Russia's efforts in the Donbas by keeping the conflict relevant to Western voters and their representatives. Thus, post-Soviet states should keep diplomatic, political, and military confrontations with Russia as public as possible. This is not to say an alarm should sound every time Russia violates Lithuania's airspace, but it does mean a narrative of Russian aggression should be propagated to deprive Russia control over the narrative if a separatist conflict breaks out. Such a deterrent would reduce Russia's political capital and make its direct support of separatism less likely.

The Baltic states should be commended for integrating with NATO and the European Union. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania successfully petitioned for an increased NATO troop presence, and Estonia expanded NATO infrastructure that included the Cooperative Cyber Defence

39 Durukan Kuzu, "Comparative Analysis of Political Systems and Ethnic Mobilization: Assimilation versus Exclusion," *Comparative European Politics* 15, no. 4 (June 2017): 567–68.

Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. More can be done to strengthen the effectiveness of this deterrent force, however. Baltic states should advocate for a legal framework within NATO regarding allied troops responding to separatist forces supported by adversarial nations without triggering Article 5 since Russia is far less likely to employ "little green men" and GRU operatives directly against NATO forces, which would degrade the sustainability of a separatist force.

Not all separatist movements are the result of nefarious directives emanating from the Kremlin, however. Vulnerable states should therefore adopt a doctrine of maximum response to any armed movement. Such a strategy raises the commitment necessary for supplying and sustaining separatist militias. If the Kremlin does not believe it will achieve a quick, legitimate, or effective political victory at a reasonable cost, it will be far less likely to support such movements. Although the tactic failed in Ukraine, the strategy to crush the assumed center of resistance in Slavyansk was correct. Where Ukraine erred was in the execution, which provided time for Donetsk and Luhansk to fortify their positions. Post-Soviet states should create contingency plans for seizing vulnerable towns, government buildings, and infrastructure that might lend a separatist movement legitimacy. These plans should involve the greatest qualitative and quantitative assets available. Should an armed separatist movement break out, Russia should be faced with a quagmire rather than an opportunity.

Conclusion

South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transdniestria, Crimea, and Donbas represent an evolution of Moscow's understanding of frozen conflicts. What started as an accidental development eventually matured into an opportunity to be exploited and culminated into strategy. Frozen conflicts have thus far allowed Russia to achieve its revisionist goals while staying free of Western military response. Russia dominated the frozen space for so long because it was the only superpower willing to operate within it. Post-Crimea, however, the West has started to challenge Russia on this front. Still, the West can do more to degrade Russia's advantage in the frozen conflict space further and to formulate preemptive measures. Such efforts will become increasingly important as Russia takes aim at other vulnerable states who have the necessary preconditions for separatism present in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Fighting Russia? Modeling the Baltic Scenarios

Ben S. Wermeling
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ABSTRACT: This article presents five scenarios that might result from a Russian coup de main in the Baltic region. The author argues the North Atlantic Treaty Organization should analyze force capabilities further to ensure Alliance nations can adequately respond if Russia attacks across its border with Estonia and Latvia.

Russia's annexation of Crimea, involvement in Donbas, and support of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria have strained the country's relations with the West. Throughout this period of increased tension, defense analysts from countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have explored ways to deter or defeat additional acts of aggression committed by Russia. Current literature covers a variety of topics such as conventional war scenarios, deterrence strategies, cyber defense, countering political subversion, and the status of Russia's military.[1] Through quantitative modeling, this article contributes to this discussion by examining how variances in force employment and size affect Russia's chances of employing conventional warfare to expand into the Baltic region.[2]

Although an open conflict between Russia and the West is unlikely due to the escalation risks between states with nuclear weapons, should a war erupt, it would most likely be fought along Russia's border with Estonia and Latvia.[3] Within these nations reside many ethnic Russian minorities who form enclaves similar to those Moscow "intervened" on behalf of in the Ukraine. That intervention led NATO to enhance its military presence in the region for deterrence purposes.[4]

One scenario suggests Russia may attempt to conquer the Baltic countries with a hasty attack along its border. Such an operation would

1 Wesley Clark et al., *Closing NATO's Baltic Gap* (Tallinn, Estonia: International Centre for Defence and Security, 2016); Andrew Radin, *Hybrid Warfare in the Baltics: Threats and Potential Responses* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017); Phillip Karber and Joshua Thibeault, "Russia's New-Generation Warfare," Association of the United States Army, May 20, 2016; Timothy L. Thomas, *Russia Military Strategy: Impacting 21st Century Reform and Geopolitics* (Fort Leavenworth; KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2015); and Michael Connell and Sarah Vogler, *Russia's Approach to Cyber Warfare* (Arlington, VA: CNA, 2017).

2 Douglas Macgregor to the National Commission on the Future of the Army, "Competitive Performance Analysis of US Army Brigade-Based Force and Alternative Force Design, Reconnaissance Strike Group (RSG) in Baltic Warfighting Scenario," September 7, 2015, National Commission of the Future of the Army; Leszek Elak and Zdzisław Śliwa, "The Suwałki Gap: NATO's Fragile Hot Spot," *Zeszyty Naukowe AON* 103, no. 2 (2016): 24–40; and David A. Schlapak and Michael W. Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank: Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016).

3 R. Reed Anderson et al., *Strategic Landpower and a Resurgent Russia: An Operational Approach to Deterrence* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2016), 11–15; and "The Geopolitics of Russia: Permanent Struggle," Stratfor, April 15, 2012.

4 NATO, *NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence* (Brussels: Public Diplomacy Division, 2017).

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likely be more tempting to Moscow than war after a deliberate buildup.[5] Although the latter strategy would allow the superior strength of NATO allies to be mobilized to defend its small members, a RAND study argued the Alliance would suffer a quick defeat if Russia attempted the former.[6] Optimal force employment is one important factor to consider in such analysis due to its impact on combat outcomes and its role in determining regional military requirements.[7] Better estimates of these requirements can also reduce the probability of overcommitting scarce security resources.

Based on the modeling, a forward-oriented defense would be untenable. But NATO could prevent a coup de main from succeeding with a different set of employment choices. These efforts would need to include a defense arrayed in depth with positions minimally exposed to observation and a large force kept in reserve. Stopping Russia's offensive may require ceding parts of Estonia's and Latvia's eastern territories as well as maintaining soldiers at a high state of readiness to implement complex force-employment choices. Additionally, if Russia increases its available strength by keeping more units near its western border or acquiring more personnel, NATO defenders could still be overrun. Because Russia appears to be taking such actions while also modernizing its military, additional NATO forces and improved weaponry will likely be needed in the near future.

Modeling Choice and Explanation

Civilian researchers often lack access to sophisticated computer programs and to wargaming models used by military and defense contractors since the 1980s.[8] Of the options publicly available, many treat questions of force employment implicitly or offer few variables.[9] Although less detailed and precise than sophisticated computer models used by the Pentagon, Michael E. O'Hanlon explains comparatively simpler models can make up for this shortcoming by "requiring a user to think pragmatically, historically, and intuitively about the modeling enterprise—rather than running the risk of getting lost in the math."[10] Thus, this article draws from Stephen Biddle's *Military Power*, which explains how increasingly lethal weaponry made mass movement in the open impossible, or at best very costly, by the early twentieth century.

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5 John W. Nicholson, "NATO's Land Forces: Speed and Strength Matter," *Prism* 6, no. 2 (2016): 31.

6 Schlapak and Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence*. For a counterargument and rebuttal, see Michael Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat By Russia," War on the Rocks, May 12, 2016; and Karl Mueller et al., "In Defense of a Wargame: Bolstering Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank," War on the Rocks, June 14, 2016.

7 Force employment refers to the operational concepts, doctrine, and tactics used by militaries.

8 John A. Battilega and Judith K. Grange, eds., *The Military Applications of Modeling* (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH: Air Force Institute of Technology Press, 1984).

9 The combat model of COL Trevor N. Dupuy, US Army retired, does not have force employment explicitly counted despite a broad array of variables. Joshua Epstein's work at the Brookings Institution only has the attacker's rate of advance and the defender's rate of withdrawal as force employment variables. Trevor N. Dupuy, *Numbers, Predictions, and War: Using History to Evaluate Combat Factors and Predict the Outcome of Armed Conflict* (Fairfax, VA: Hero Books, 1985); and Joshua M. Epstein, *The Calculus of Conventional War: Dynamic Analysis without Lanchester Theory* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985), 21–22.

10 Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The Science of War: Defense Budgeting, Military Technology, Logistics, and Combat Outcomes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 72.

As a consequence, combatants adopted a series of force employment techniques that created a strategy of a "tightly interrelated complex of cover, concealment, dispersion, suppression, small-unit independent maneuver, and combined arms at the tactical level, and depth, reserves, and differential concentration at the operational level of war."[11] While this system, or major elements of it, can lead to better combat outcomes, it is not synonymous with good practice. Instead, surviving modern firepower requires trade-offs. Additionally, the complexity of this system makes it difficult for unskilled soldiers to implement.

Biddle's aggregate and deterministic representation, which explains how force employment affects the outcome of continental warfare, measures technological sophistication with a weighted average of the years tanks and combat aircraft were introduced for the two combatants. This article adds factors for anti-tank weapons and armored vehicles to provide a more accurate metric for the equipment likely to be deployed in contemporary Baltic scenarios.

Although this method does not provide a level of detail equal to computer simulations, it is a viable option for allowing a single person to make computations while accounting for numerous, quantifiable variances in force employment. Moreover, this model can help predict the likelihood of a defender containing an offensive before it manages to break through the depth of the defensive positions. If the offensive is likely to be contained, the amount of ground gained by the attacker can be calculated. The approach also provides outputs for casualties, territorial gains, and campaign duration based on changes in variables.

The model assumes breakthroughs, which provide an attacker with the chance to gain ground at low cost, lead to high defender casualties and territorial loss, but without specific quantities. Such feats can give the attacker control of the entire theater of operations as, once past the main defenses, the force moves quickly in the open to envelope or isolate forward deployed defenders. Additionally, the attacker can sever the defender from supporting units needed for sustainment. In this situation, defenders fight with greatly reduced effectiveness, devolve into panic and disorder, or even surrender.[12]

Force-Employment Variables

The model allows attackers to change the force employment variables of assault frontage and the velocity of his forces' assault with differing effects based on chapter 3 and the appendix of *Military Power.* Assault frontage is the width of the theater in which the attacker conducts an offensive operation. Narrower frontages allow the attacker to achieve a greater ratio of forces at the point of attack, which allows an offensive to penetrate deeper with all else equal. Drawbacks of narrower assault frontages include greater vulnerability to counteroffensives that threaten the attacker's lines of communication, resupply, and reinforcements due to fewer avenues for rapid movement. These frontages may also

11 Stephen D. Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3.

12 Biddle, *Military Power*, 42–44; and Christopher Bellamy, *The Evolution of Modern Land Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 17–21.

require an attacker to echelon units for the dispersion characteristic of modern tactics.

Velocity of assault refers to the attacker's net attempted rate of advance during an offensive. A lower assault velocity provides attackers with greater opportunity to implement modern system tactics. Furtive and dispersed movement, reconnaissance, and coordinating suppressive fire, are time-consuming actions. Ceteris paribus, lower assault velocities provide an attacker the ability to take a given amount of ground with fewer casualties or to expend a given number of casualties for more ground. Slower assault velocities have the cost of giving the defender more time to counterconcentrate against an offensive.

In terms of force employment, defenders can modify the fraction of their forward deployed forces exposed, the depth of their defensive positions, the velocity at which their forces in reserve move, and the fraction of their forces kept in reserve. The fraction of forward garrison exposed represents the vulnerability of the defenders not held in reserve. Given the lethality of modern weaponry, it is important to disperse defending soldiers in concealed, covered fighting positions. There is no incentive to increase exposure. But preparing defenses is a challenging task attempted with varying degrees of success.

Greater defensive depth extends the time an attacker needs to implement modern forces and it provides more time to concentrate against an offensive. Likewise, holding more forces in reserve results in more defenders for counterconcentration. At higher values, these two variables affect the attacker's ability to achieve a breakthrough and to make territorial gains.

Scenario Overview

The scenarios identified here involve a Russian offensive that begins after a period of hasty mobilization. Russia launches the offensive from its shared borders with Estonia and Latvia combined with minor attacks and demonstrations. The primary metrics are Russia's projected territorial gains regardless of the ability to break through NATO's defenses. If Russian troops achieve a breakthrough, it is assumed they take most of the Baltic territory. This article focuses on a coup de main scenario over one week and does not necessarily deny Russia the ability to make further advances during a prolonged campaign.

Several assumptions simplify the scenarios. First, the Russian ground units in the Kaliningrad oblast are not explored since 4 brigades from Polish and NATO reaction forces are assumed to defend the line of communications and the Suwalki Gap as well as reduce or contain offensive forces within the enclave. Because Russia has 3 maneuver brigades in that region when fully mobilized, the larger Allied forces are presumed at least able to contain any ground offensives originating in the enclave.[13]

Second, in the short period of one week and with air forces of comparable size, neither side is expected to achieve air superiority, to engage in a one-sided preliminary bombardment of the other, or to

13 Gudrun Persson, ed., *Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective—2016* (Stockholm: FOI, 2016), 81.

achieve full deployment of all planned formations in the region. Because the opposing air forces will attempt to defeat their counterparts, neither combatant is likely to provide disproportionate air support to its ground forces within ten days postmobilization.[14]

The defined structures for Russia's and NATO's three progressively larger forces are based on recent and projected trends for expanding the strength of each combatant in the Baltic region. The depth of the defenses and the fraction of the defender's forward garrison exposed comprise the defender's variables of force employment. The attacker's variables include the width and velocity of assault, which will vary based on the defender's choices and the attacker's campaign objectives. To attempt a breakthrough, the attacker chooses a narrow width of assault and the slowest velocity of assault that allows a breakthrough within six days. This maneuver assumes the Russian exploitation on the seventh day begins the collapse of NATO's theater defense. In scenarios with limited aims, the attacker utilizes an increased width of assault to account for consolidating the defense of territorial gains and an assault velocity that will maximize territorial gain within seven days.

The width of the theater, a variable used for the model, is the total length of Estonia's and Latvia's borders with Russia. Including one-third of the length of the large lake border between Russia and Estonia accounts for an observation force and reduces the bias created with no NATO coverage in this area. Some of these troops could also be diverted to guard against disruptions from Russian infiltrators behind the front.

14 For similar reasoning by the RAND Corporation, see Schlapak and Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence*, 6.

Scenario 1. NATO's Defense versus Russia's Invasion (2016)

The first scenario considers the force sizes and the equipment of the two combatants in 2016, which provides an analysis of how NATO might have performed shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine. If NATO's defense at these force levels is successful, the Alliance could likely reduce its manpower in the Baltic, if Russia did so as well. Regarding the orders of battle, 11 active duty combat battalions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are mobilized. The United States deploys 3 light battalions and a reinforced Stryker battalion, while the United Kingdom musters an airborne battalion. From its Western Military District, Russia mobilizes 5 motorized infantry, 5 mechanized infantry, 8 airborne infantry, and 4 tank battalions.

Regardless of exposure, a defensive depth of 10 kilometers is inadequate for preventing a breakthrough. Additionally, the attacker can break through defenses prepared 30 kilometers deep except when there is low defensive exposure. Even then, advances extend into the last 3 kilometers, which given the deterministic nature of the model, suggests a breakthrough would still be plausible. Albeit narrowly at higher levels of exposure, 50 kilometers of defenses result in a contained offensive. In the case of limited aims offensives, the attacker can also break through against shallow defenses. Against deeper defenses, the attacker can be contained after an advance of 17–29 kilometers.

These results suggest that in 2016, the Baltic states would have been in danger even with the technology acquired since NATO began reacting to Russian aggression in Europe. Russia would have struggled to defeat a modern system defense with high depth and low exposure but could have achieved a breakthrough in most other cases. Alliance units would have to have been well-trained in implementing complex modern system techniques and have had their preparations completed on short notice, though. Furthermore, this outcome suggests that unless Moscow makes notable reductions in its western units and their readiness, NATO cannot reduce its own strength without risk. Russia has few feasible objectives for a limited offensive. There are few large towns in the eastern Baltics, with the exception of Narva, in Ida-Virumaa County, on the northeastern isthmus of Estonia.[15]

Scenario 2. NATO's Defense versus Russia's Expanded Capabilities (2017)

The second scenario examines NATO's ability to defend against a coup de main given the status of Russia's military buildup before 2017 without an expanded force on short notice nor further efforts of modernization. Changes to the Russian order of battle reflect raising 3 new divisions, partly from currently existing brigades, in the Western Military District.[16] Expected to have 4 maneuver regiments each, two divisions of the reformed Guards Tank Army are near full strength and 2–3 divisions are in early development. This article considers the third, an armored division, will also be raised and fully manned or

15 Ene Narusk and Liis Haugas, eds., *Regional Development in Estonia 2014* (Tallinn, Estonia: Statistics Estonia, 2014); and "Estonia: Administrative Division," City Population, accessed November 12, 2017.

16 Michael Kofman, "Russia's New Divisions in the West," *Russia Military Analysis* (blog), May 7, 2016; Michael Peck, "Next Stop Berlin? Moscow's Nazi-Killing Tank Unit Is Back," *National Interest* 142 (April 1, 2016); and "Chapter 5: Russia and Eurasia," *Military Balance* 117, no. 1 (2017): 218–21.

that high-readiness armored forces from neighboring districts will be available. These additions will allow Russia to mobilize the following additional battalions in time for the scenario: 3 tank, 2 motorized infantry, 1 mechanized infantry, and 1 airborne. infantry. Russian forces also have more modern equipment, such as larger numbers of AT-13 anti-tank missiles rather than AT-7s.

With this model, combinations of defensive depths and force exposure levels fail to contain a breakthrough attempt—except at depths of 50 kilometers and lower exposure. Even then, the attacker comes close to a breakthrough, suggesting a contained offensive would not be guaranteed. The capability of a limited aims offensive improves modestly, allowing Russia to advance a few more kilometers. Viable objectives, however, remain outside easy reach. Shallow defenses allow these limited offensives to achieve breakthrough, much as in the first scenario.

These results indicate NATO needed to expand the Baltic capability that was in place by the end of 2016 to provide an adequate defense of Estonia and Latvia. Even with well-trained and prepared soldiers, a Russian invasion on short notice before that expansion could have overrun large swathes of the Baltic countries.

Scenario 3. NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence versus Russia's Expanded Capabilities (2018)

This scenario examines the defense of NATO's current force, with an enhanced forward presence and units being raised by the Baltic countries, against a Russian coup de main.[17] Russia's order of battle is the same as in the previous scenario. The NATO force is augmented by a US Army armored brigade as well as formations from NATO's enhanced Forward Presence battlegroups for each Baltic country.[18] These units serve as a deterrent to Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, promising full Alliance participation in the event of a conflict.

The scenario portrayed in table 1 indicates breakthrough would only occur when the defensive depths are at 10 kilometers. The invasion is halted before penetrating into the deeper defensive positions. This scenario suggests NATO's current strength in the Baltics could defeat a Russian coup de main, and that no radical increases are needed for the near future. Furthermore, the defense could be successful with lower levels of readiness and training than the other scenarios, allowing more room for error. With limited aims, a Russian offensive could be halted with a forward-oriented posture and low levels of exposure. Such force employment by the defenders would be risky, though, as a breakthrough attempt could still penetrate shallow defenses. Otherwise, the ground gain of the invader is less than in previous scenarios, and few objectives are within reach in those cases.

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17 Srivari Aishwarya, Estonia To Invest in Ammunition and Armaments for Its 2nd Infantry Brigade, Army Technology, March 13, 2017; and "A New Brigade Named Žemaitija Is Established within the Lithuanian Armed Forces in Western Lithuania," Lithuanian Armed Forces, December 31, 2015.

18 NATO, *NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence*; John Vandiver, "New Tank Brigade Arrives in Europe for Mission in the East," *Stars and Stripes*, September 13, 2017; and "Boosting NATO's Presence in the East and Southeast," NATO, accessed August 11, 2017.

Table 1. Outcomes of NATO Enhanced Forward Presence versus Russia's Expanded Force (2018)

Breakthrough Attempt

Fraction of Forward Garrison Exposed	Depth of Forward Defenses	Width of Assault	Velocity of Assault	Ground Gained by Attacker	Breakthrough
	Depth, width, velocity, and ground in kilometers per day (km/day)				
0.10	10	5	1.67	14.23	Yes
0.10	30	5	5.00	18.82	No
0.10	50	5	8.33	20.12	No
0.25	10	5	1.67	16.95	Yes
0.25	30	5	5.00	22.35	No
0.25	50	5	8.33	23.87	No
0.40	10	5	1.67	20.93	Yes
0.40	30	5	5.00	27.50	No
0.40	50	5	8.33	29.34	No

Limited Aims Offensive

Fraction of Forward Garrison Exposed	Depth of Forward Defenses	Width of Assault	Velocity of Assault	Ground Gained by Attacker	
0.10	10	15	1.2	7.55	
0.10	30	15	2.0	13.45	
0.10	50	15	2.6	17.26	
0.25	10	15	1.3	8.70	
0.25	30	15	2.2	15.35	
0.25	50	15	2.9	19.53	
0.40	10	15	1.5	10.02	
0.40	30	15	2.6	17.38	
0.40	50	15	3.3	22.49	

*For each case, 50 percent of defenders are in reserve, moving at a velocity of 20 km/day.

	Combat Maneuver Personnel	**Year Major Weapon Systems Introduced (Weighted Mean)**
Aggressor	11,600	1985.4
Defender	11,870	1985.2

Scenario 4. NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence versus Russia's Planned Capabilities (2020)

The fourth scenario involves NATO's enhanced Forward Presence and a liberal estimate of the Russian army's strength in 2020. Russia's force structure notably includes all of the planned divisions in the Western Military District and the largest plausible unit rosters. The two divisions in the 1st Guards Tank Army and the airborne forces are assumed to be at a high state of readiness, able to mobilize more units for the invasion. These factors add an airborne battalion, 3 tank battalions, 2 mechanized infantry battalions, and 2 motorized infantry battalions. Although the newest ground combat vehicles, the T-14 Armata main battle tank and T-15 Bagulnik infantry fighting vehicle, are also capable of participating in the offensive, the costs combined with Russia's recent economic troubles suggest that only select units will receive them.[19]

At this strength, the invaders can break through shallow defenses regardless of the defender's exposure. At depths of 30 kilometers, the Russian attack leads to breakthrough in all but the lowest defender exposure levels. Even then, the offensive is contained less than one kilometer away from a breakthrough. A defensive depth of 50 kilometers leads to a contained offensive in all cases. The territorial gain from limited aims offensives are similar to those in the previous scenarios. Few major objectives are in easy reach, and any NATO attempt to limit the advance with a forward-oriented defense risks a breakthrough.

These outcomes suggest that even if Russia achieves its military buildup goals, an aggressive use of modern system force employment by the defenders could halt the attack. Consequently, an urgent need for NATO to strengthen its Baltic defenses further is absent even though modernizing weaponry, increasing force structures, improving readiness levels, and expanding training for soldiers would be wise.

Scenario 5. NATO's Expanded Forward Presence versus Russia's Planned Capabilities (2020)

In the fifth scenario, NATO expands its force structure to counter a Russian coup de main attempted in 2020 after Moscow's planned buildup. To the Alliance effort, the Baltic countries add 3 new maneuver battalions, and the United States contributes an additional armored brigade, which would bring the strength of America's ground forces in Europe to pre-2013 levels.[20] Other NATO members with a large population and defense budget—such as France, Germany, or the United Kingdom—could also provide the additional brigade. Russia's order of battle remains the same as in the fourth scenario. The NATO effort also benefits from improved weapon systems such as additional Javelin anti-tank missiles, CV90 infantry fighting vehicles, and Spike anti-tank missiles.[21] The results shown in table 2 indicate NATO can contain this Russian offensive when its defenses are 50 kilometers deep even with relatively exposed defenders.

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19 "Armata Main Battle Tank," Military-Today, accessed July 26, 2018.

20 John Vandiver, "Pentagon Lays Out Significant Cuts to U.S. Forces in Europe," *Stars and Stripes*, February 16, 2012.

21 "First IFVs Arrive in Estonia," *Postimees*, October 7, 2016; Thomas Newdick, "Fearing Russia, One of Europe's Smallest Armies Just Bought a Bunch of Armored Vehicles," War Is Boring, September 19, 2014.

Table 2. Outcomes of NATO Expanded Force versus Russia's Planned Force (2020)

Breakthrough Attempt

Fraction of Forward Garrison Exposed	Depth of Forward Defenses	Width of Assault	Velocity of Assault	Ground Gained by Attacker	Breakthrough
	Depth, width, velocity, and ground in kilometers per day (km/day)				
0.10	10	5	1.67	15.87	Yes
0.10	30	5	5.00	20.93	No
0.10	50	5	8.33	22.36	No
0.25	10	5	1.67	18.90	Yes
0.25	30	5	5.00	24.87	No
0.25	50	5	8.33	26.55	No
0.40	10	5	1.67	23.36	Yes
0.40	30	5	5.00	30.63	Yes
0.40	50	5	8.33	32.66	No

Limited Aims Offensive

Fraction of Forward Garrison Exposed	Depth of Forward Defenses	Width of Assault	Velocity of Assault	Ground Gained by Attacker	
0.10	10	15	1.20	8.40	
0.10	30	15	2.10	14.65	
0.10	50	15	2.80	18.58	
0.25	10	15	1.40	9.30	
0.25	30	15	2.40	16.33	
0.25	50	15	3.10	20.99	
0.40	10	15	1.60	10.70	
0.40	30	15	2.70	18.89	
0.40	50	15	3.50	24.17	

*For each case, 50 percent of defenders are in reserve, moving at a velocity of 20 km/day.

	Combat Maneuver Personnel	**Year Major Weapon Systems Introduced (Weighted Mean)**
Aggressor	15,120	1991.3
Defender	14,220	1988.3

The invasion could also be halted earlier by using defenses 30 kilometers deep with low levels of exposure. As previously identified, the shallow defenses failed to prevent a breakthrough. In the event of a limited aims offensive, a defensive depth of 10 kilometers leads to breakthrough only with exposed defensive positions. Most other combinations lead to advances of 14–25 kilometers. A moderate defensive depth of 30 kilometers leads to the attacker gaining less than 20 kilometers of ground. That depth combined with low exposure levels could prevent a breakthrough while limiting the territorial gain of a limited offensive. Thus, with a moderate expansion, NATO can be prepared to defend against even an optimistic Russian offensive.

Modeling Results

In nearly every case examined during this modeling, Russia penetrated a forward-oriented NATO posture. Considering the size of the theater and the small defensive force, this outcome is unsurprising. The advantage of such a posture is the chance to reduce territorial gain if the offensive can be contained. Also in most cases, a defense deployed in depth, with limited exposure, and with a large force in reserve, managed to contain the offensive. In scenarios involving the stated force employment options and higher disparities in numbers or equipment, containment succeeds by narrower margins. Limited offensives were less promising for Russia. Regardless of force structure, they could not advance more than 35 kilometers in a week. Neither Estonia nor Latvia has many cities near their border with Russia. Because of this, there are few lucrative targets worth attempting a limited aims offensive, except possibly the northeastern region of Estonia.

The results lead to several suggestions regarding NATO force employment and structure in the Baltics. First, NATO should consider adopting a defensive concept of operations that includes a combination of well-concealed defensive positions arrayed in depth and a large fraction of forces in reserve. Specifically, the operational concept would attempt to force a Russian invasion either to proceed at a pace too slow to defeat NATO before reinforcements can arrive or to make an exposed rush that becomes too costly to sustain. This approach would sacrifice more ground if Russia attempted a limited offensive, but it offers a strong possibility of containing a breakthrough offensive that could collapse NATO's defense theater wide. Even in the event of a limited offensive, most of the Baltic territory could be held. Lacking the ability to overrun Estonia and Latvia quickly, while also having few feasible objectives for a limited offensive, Russian aggression could be defeated or deterred.

Regarding force structure, modeling suggests NATO's strength in the Baltic region, the availability of immediate reinforcements, and the expansion of regional armies are currently adequate. As Russia expands its military strength in the region, though, this status could change. As long as Russia adds and modernizes units in its western region, more NATO troops with increasingly better equipment will be required to contain an offensive at safe margins. If Russia follows through with its military expansion plans through the 2020s, however, major NATO powers will need to contribute more forces.

Examining Other Factors

Other variables that could influence combat outcomes in the Baltic region should also be considered. Equipment differences, for example, could result in NATO's predominately light forces, which lack the tactical mobility, firepower, and protection that Russia's mechanized units have, being pinned down and outmaneuvered while struggling to damage the attacker's armored vehicles.[22] Additionally, NATO's limited quantities of land-based fires and air defense assets, in comparison to Russian formations, could be an issue in a scenario where the Alliance has not gained air superiority. Finally, concerns may arise that the low force-to-space ratio of NATO troops could not halt an attacker due to the low concentration of soldiers and porous defenses.[23]

While these are reasonable concerns, these factors are unlikely to cause radically different combat outcomes. The Baltic countries are buying new advanced anti-tank missiles, armored transport vehicles, artillery, and air defense systems that contribute to NATO's military effort to modernize equipment. More land-based fires, counterbattery capabilities, and air defense units, however, would still be helpful. Additionally, the rough, wooded terrain of the eastern Baltics could partially negate some of the advantages of mechanized units.[24]

Although the force-to-space ratio for NATO would be low by historic standards, it would still be plausible.[25] In 2006, for instance, a brigade-sized light infantry force of Hezbollah fighters defended southern Lebanon with 5.5 soldiers per square kilometer.[26] Hezbollah provided fierce resistance against a larger Israeli force with armored units. After surviving weeks of aerial bombardment, Hezbollah still prevented the Israel Defense Force from advancing more than 20–25 kilometers in 72 hours.[27] In the early phases of Operation Desert Shield, the American military planned to defend against a larger Iraqi army over an area of more than 36,000 square kilometers and 200 kilometers depth with 4 divisions, three of which were not heavily mechanized.[28] The suggested force employment in the Baltics would involve a density of roughly two soldiers per square kilometer.[29] This distribution would be thinner than the examples above, but not drastically so. Additionally, the rough terrain in the western Baltics would require an attacker to be more reliant on roads for fast movement, providing defenders with a chance to

22 Schlapak and Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence*, 5–6.

23 Felix K. Chang, "NATO's Baltic Defense Challenge," Foreign Policy Research Institute, June 7, 2017.

24 Over 60 percent of Estonian and Latvian territory is marshland or forest. "Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey 2012." European Commission (Eurostat), *Land Use/Cover Area Frame Survey 2012: Buildings, Roads, and Other Artificial Areas Cover 5% of the EU*, 154/2013 (Luxembourg: Eurostat, October 25, 2013).

25 In the war in Donbas, battalions occasionally held frontages of 40 kilometers. Karber and Thibeault, "Russia's New Generation Warfare."

26 Stephen Biddle and Jeffrey A. Friedman, *The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 56–57.

27 Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Combined Arms Center, 2008), 50–56.

28 Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 2006), 90–99.

29 This is for an estimate of an area 24,500 square kilometers and a conservative NATO ground force of 47,500 personnel.

concentrate on those avenues of approach. Thus, there is little reason to believe a low force-to-space ratio would significantly alter the outcome.

Recommendations

Preparing NATO forces to conduct a defensive operation with a complex force employment scheme similar to the one described above would demand a high level of readiness and extensive training. The forward defenders need to provide an early warning for the main defenses and delay the attackers. They would have to select and create concealed fighting positions with covered routes of retreat.[30] The force would execute challenging military tasks such as delaying actions and withdrawals as well.[31] These decisions demand judgment about when to retreat to avoid being overrun, how to slow down the attacking force, and how to coordinate fires to cover the withdrawal. The forces in reserve must move significant distances while minimizing casualties from deep strikes and then conduct a counterattack.[32] The skills needed for these tasks can be learned only with extensive practice. All Alliance countries need to invest the necessary resources to ensure their contingents maintain or acquire the required level of proficiency.

If NATO forces decide to plan a defense of the Baltics based on the conclusions above, there are several avenues for further research. Defense strategists should use additional modeling and simulation, perhaps at finer levels of detail, to test, specify, and modify the concept of operations. Strategists must study the rates at which NATO and Russia could send reinforcements to the region. Even if a coup de main is prevented, the Baltics could still be overrun if the Alliance cannot quickly mobilize relief forces. The Alliance should examine the conditions for expanding its regional deterrent to maintain credibility. Finally, the allied militaries must ensure they have the skills and readiness needed to conduct a complex campaign on short notice. Most notably, force employment warrants additional study in analyzing a potential Baltic conflict. Material factors may be easier to quantify, but the nonmaterial can have as much, or even more, influence on the outcomes of battle.

30 Biddle, *Military Power*, 44–46.

31 HQDA, *Offense and Defense*, vol. 1, FM 3-90-1 (Washington DC: HQDA, 2013). Chapter 9 of the field manual goes into detail on the associated difficulties.

32 Biddle, *Military Power*, 46–48.

The Conventionality of Russia's Unconventional Warfare

Patrick J. Savage
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ABSTRACT: This article outlines the progression of Russia's use of unconventional warfare. This perspective provides strategists and policymakers with insights into the actions leading up to and extending from Russia's annexation and occupation of Ukrainian territory since 2014.

Russia has engaged in unconventional warfare by supporting insurgencies into the twenty-first century. When discussing the concept of unconventional warfare, this paper refers to a specific subset of irregular warfare, which American doctrine defines "as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations."[1] Under US law, unconventional warfare includes "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, or guerrilla force in a denied area."[2] The US response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, when America supported opposition fighters in Afghanistan, provides an example of unconventional warfare. In Afghanistan, US Special Forces worked with the Northern Alliance, a guerilla group, to overthrow the Taliban, a radical Islamic regime that had collaborated with and harbored Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist organization.[3]

Chinese Communist leader Mao Zedong wrote the eponymous book on guerilla warfare during 1937, in the midst of war with the Japanese empire. When speaking of guerilla warfare and insurgency, Mao separated such warfare into three phases. The first focused on training, organization, and consolidating forces in a hard-to-reach safe haven. From there, "direct action" increases, weakening the enemy forces through sabotage and terrorism as well as ambushing them when they are vulnerable—all while gathering weapons and supplies as well as working politically to indoctrinate and to educate the populace. Only in the third, decisive phase does the guerilla force finally transition into a traditional, conventional military force, attacking and destroying the enemy in a final campaign.[4] As will be demonstrated, however, Russia appears to spurn Mao's oft-referenced guidance on guerilla warfare.

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1 US Department of Defense (DoD), *Irregular Warfare (IW) Joint Operating Concept (JOC),* version 1.0 (Washington, DC: DoD, 2007), 1.

2 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, Pub. L. No. 114-92, 129 Stat. 1021 (2015).

3 Steve Balestrieri, "Battle of Mazar e Sharif, Special Forces Troops Mount Horseback Assault," Special Operations, November 8, 2017.

4 Samuel B. Griffith, trans., *Mao Tse-tung on Guerrilla Warfare*, Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 12-18 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1989), 20–22.

Unconventional warfare stands in direct contrast to conventional, or traditional, warfare. According to the Department of Defense, "Traditional warfare is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states . . .[and] typically involves force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional forces and special operations forces (SOF) against each other in all physical domains."[5] When picturing modern conventional warfare, major twentieth-century conflicts from World War II through Operation Desert Storm come to mind, with large professional armies engaging in a war of maneuver. In unconventional warfare, Russia shows a tendency for skipping Mao's first two phases in favor of building guerillas into a conventional force. The Russian military lexicon even appears to lack terminology directly comparable to the American terms of irregular or unconventional warfare. Historically and currently, the Russian military thinks about unconventional warfare in a decidedly conventional way.

Russian Unconventional Warfare

Russia's modern approach to unconventional warfare has its roots in Soviet partisan fighting against Nazi Germany during World War II. Indeed, that experience had a strong influence on Soviet thinking through the end of the Cold War. Writing on the relevance of the Soviet partisan movement to contemporary guerilla movements in the 1980s, Soviet Major General Viktor N. Andrianov characterized the development of partisan bands as a natural evolution into larger, more conventionally equipped and organized military units that could even have the capability to become offensive formations moving into other occupied countries and aiding other partisan bands. In drawing parallels between the Soviet partisan movement and the contemporary Russian movements, Andrianov's main observation was that a key component of Soviet-supported national liberation wars was the guerilla force growing and taking on a conventional army organization as people's liberation armies.[6] From the beginning, the Soviet desire for waging insurgencies made the unconventional, conventional, as soon as possible.

Prime examples of this conventional attitude toward unconventional warfare can be found throughout Soviet support of unconventional conflicts in Africa during the 1970s and 1980s. During the internal conflict against the white-minority government of Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe, the Soviet Union backed the left-wing Zimbabwe African People's Union, and its military arm, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). In the final years of the Rhodesian Bush War, from 1977 to 1979, ZIPRA received logistical guidance and training from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Cuba, operating out of neighboring Zambia. This support had a role in ZIPRA shifting its overall strategy towards a conventional war in Rhodesia during that period. This effort contrasted with the Zimbabwe African National Union, and its military arm, the Zimbabwe African National

5 US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, DC: JCS, 2013), ix–x.

6 Graham Hall Turbiville Jr., *Logistic Support and Insurgency: Guerrilla Sustainment and Applied Lessons of Soviet Insurgent Warfare: Why It Should Still Be Studied*, Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Report 05-4 (Hurlburt Field, FL: JSOU Press, 2005), 13–15.

Liberation Army, which was backed by China through Mozambique and adhered to Maoist inspired strategies of insurgency, mobilization, and revolutionary guerilla warfare.[7]

Additional examples of this Soviet tendency occurred due west of Zimbabwe—in Angola, Zaire, and Namibia—during the same period. One of these examples is the Shaba conflicts (1977–78) in Zaire—now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Angolan and Cuban forces, which were backed and supplied by the Soviet Union, provided training and support in Angola to the Congolese National Liberation Front (FLNC), a rebel group, as it launched an invasion into the southern Shaba province of Zaire. Despite being an unconventional conflict in theory, the organization, tactics, and equipment of the FLNC's invasion was largely conventional—as was Zaire's response that included foreign support from 1,200 Moroccan troops with artillery.[8] Namibia provides another case of a Soviet-backed revolution. In this instance, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) fought for independence from apartheid South Africa. Operating out of southern Angola, with support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Angola, the thousands of liberation troops were joined by an elite, conventionally trained and organized brigade of 1,500 to 2,000 men that consisted of motorized infantry battalions and a detachment of Soviet BRDM armored cars.[9]

Aside from a desire to forge allied unconventional forces into conventional ones, there was also an occasional tendency for the Soviets to intervene directly, forcibly transforming an unconventional conflict into a conventional one. Initially, the Soviet Union's support of national proliberation movements and recently liberated Third World states was largely limited to supplying some weapons, training, and political support. This approach began to change after the mid-1960s, as the United States began to disengage, and eventually withdrew, from the Vietnam War. Taking advantage of post-Vietnam US disengagement, the Soviet Union became more directly involved militarily in multiple Third World conflicts. One clear example is the Soviet intervention leading up to Angola's independence from Portugal. From 1974 to 1975, the Soviets not only supplied weaponry to its preferred faction, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, but also provided direct logistical support and transportation. The Soviet Union also supported thousands of conventional troops sent by Communist Cuba to strengthen the faction, which led to the Angolan civil war.[10]

Although Moscow was able to provide significant support to the guerillas in the Angola case, it also serves as an example of how direct Soviet intervention in unconventional conflicts far away from the USSR's periphery was still fairly limited during the Cold War. Even at the height of its military power, and after having made significant improvements to its ability to undertake force projection via air and

7 Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart van Wyk, eds., *Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2013), 165.

8 Malutama di Malu, *The Shaba Invasions* (thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1981), 22–32, 46; and Thomas P. Odom, *Shaba II: The French and Belgian Intervention in Zaire in 1978* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1993), 16–20.

9 Office of African and Latin American Analysis, *Namibia: SWAPO's Army—Organization, Tactics, and Prospects* (Washington, DC: US Central Intelligence Agency, 1984), 1–7.

10 Roger E. Kanet, "The Superpower Quest for Empire: The Cold War and Soviet Support for 'Wars of National Liberation,'" *Cold War History* 6, no. 3 (2006): 335–38.

sea at long distances, the Soviet Union had "only a limited capability to project military power into distant areas in the face of substantial local or rival power armed opposition."[11] Whenever possible, the Soviets encouraged proxy forces and allies to undertake military interventions as a more economical and practical method of sowing discord. This strategy was seen on the Arabian Peninsula during 1973 when Soviet ships were used to transport troops from Communist-aligned South Yemen to fight in an insurgency against the Sultan of Oman who was supported by the Iranian shah.[12] And as already shown with the Angola case, Moscow also relied heavily on Cuban forces throughout Africa, not only to assist with training guerillas but also to engage in direct, conventional-style military interventions in which the unconventional force would clash with the conventional military and allies of apartheid South Africa.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia's ability and willingness to become directly involved in unconventional warfare appears to have increased. This interest may be due in large part to the internal conflicts largely arising on Russia's periphery in the newly independent states. One clear example occurred in Moldova, where largely ethnic Russian separatist forces attempting to gain autonomy in the border region of Transdniestria clashed with Moldovan forces. One of the key factors behind Russian-backed Transdniestria's eventual victory over Moldova was the presence of conventional elements of Russia's 14th Army, which offered significant support and even direct firepower to the separatist's cause, ensuring the enclave's ongoing pseudo-independence.[13]

A similar situation occurred in the separatist region of Abkhazia, which attempted to break away from Georgia in 1992 following the Soviet Union's dissolution. Initially, Moscow's involvement in the conflict was confused: some elements of Russia's government and military supported Georgia while others supported the separatists. But Moscow's unofficial policy eventually shifted in support of Abkhazia. Regional Russian commanders eventually supplied Abkhazian fighters with large quantities of Russian weapons, intelligence, and operational planning. The Kremlin's direct involvement went further with aircraft bombing the region's capital of Sokhumi as Abkhazian separatist forces attempted to retake it from Georgian forces in 1993.[14] Russia's geographical proximity to Abkhazia and military presence, with bases and troops in the region, made direct involvement more feasible and achievable. This element played a key role in Russia's decision and ability to take similar action in Ukraine years later.

Case Study: Donbas since 2014

The origins of the current military conflict in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region are found in the overthrow of pro-Russian President

11 Edward L. Warner III, *The Defense Policy of the Soviet Union* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1989), 94–95.

12 Alex P. Schmid, *Soviet Military Interventions since 1945: With a Summary in Russian*, with case studies by Ellen Berends (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), 98.

13 US Army, Special Operations Command (SOC), *"Little Green Men": A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare, Ukraine 2013–2014* (Fort Bragg, NC: SOC, 2016), 10.

14 Alexandros Petersen, "The 1992–93 Georgia-Abkhazia War: A Forgotten Conflict," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 4 (2008): 194–98.

Viktor Yanukovych by an opposition protest movement in early 2014. The controversy resulted from Yanukovych's suspension of talks on closer ties with the European Union. In the aftermath of Yanukovych's flight from the Ukrainian capital of Kiev in February, Russia took military action by seizing control of the strategic Crimean Peninsula, utilizing forces stationed at the Sevastopol naval base, which is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet. Russia then annexed the region after holding a disputed referendum the following month. This vote further deteriorated relations with the West and with Ukraine's new, pro-Western government. Around this time, antigovernment, pro-Russian protests intensified in the eastern half of Ukraine where Yanukovych's political base was located. Eventually, pro-Russian groups stormed key government buildings throughout the provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk in the Donbas region. These provinces were declared independent republics in April. The Ukrainian government then ordered an "antiterrorist operation" to restore order in the region, leading to the first military confrontations with separatist militia forces.[15]

Evidence suggests Russia was encouraging separatist sentiments and supporting separatist and pro-Russian groups in the Donbas region through its intelligence services and third-party provocateurs before hostilities broke out.[16] Moscow's support continued and intensified during the initial fighting, though Soviet involvement was ad hoc and indirect, with little or no use of official military forces. Instead, Russia used an informal network of mercenaries and volunteer fighters who had served in other conflicts across the former Soviet Union and who possessed a pro-Russian or Russian-nationalist outlook. A significant amount of this indirect support namely, arms and funding, also came through third-party Russian or pro-Russian elites rather than the Kremlin itself, most likely to maintain plausible deniability regarding the Russian government's involvement.[17]

In these early stages of Russia's support of unconventional warfare in Donbas, efforts by the Russian-backed separatists to organize themselves along conventional lines, rather than strictly as insurgents, were already visible. In addition to the foreign fighters from throughout the former Soviet Union, several thousand Ukrainian soldiers joined the separatist forces—3,000 of them by August 2015—along with 5,000 local police from the rebelling oblasts. Units of fighters were often raised as conventionally-styled units, such as battalions. These forces used armored vehicles captured from the Ukrainian military with additional armored vehicles later provided by Russia. These forces, supported by local civilian groups, foiled the Ukrainian military's initial attempts to reestablish control over separatist areas. But these early separatist victories against Ukraine may have largely been due to the poor state of its military at the start of the conflict. Among other issues, only 6,000 combat ready troops were available, and they were led by a Russophone leadership reluctant to harm other Russians.[18]

15 "The Ukraine Crisis Timeline: The Battle in the Donbass Begins: Ukraine Invites UN Peacekeepers, Tacitly Supports Nationwide Referendum," Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 14, 2014.

16 Michael Kofman et al., *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 33–35.

17 Kofman et al., *Lessons*, 55–60.

18 Kofman et al., *Lessons*, 40–42.

The separatist militias also initially suffered from key institutional weaknesses that hindered their effectiveness as conventional forces. The separatist units did, however, include some experienced and battle-hardened troops, mainly the defectors or some of the volunteers from Russia or the former USSR. A prominent example is the Vostok Battalion—a unit of predominately veteran pro-Russian fighters from Chechnya, the pseudoindependent states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and elsewhere in the Caucasus.[19] The homegrown Ukrainian separatist forces in the Donbas, however, were less effective and less disciplined, allegedly engaging in looting and other illicit activities that hurt their support among the locals. This lack of local support contributed another factor as, despite poor popular opinions of the post-revolution government in Kiev, most locals declined to become involved in the conflict, contributing to a shortage in separatist troops.[20] Overall, coordination and cooperation among the separatists was either poor or lacking completely.[21] This was true not only among high-ranking leaders at the theater and strategic levels but also among unit leaders at the tactical level. During the battle for Donetsk airport in May 2014, for example, Russian volunteers fighting for the separatists came under friendly fire from the Vostok Battalion after apparently being confused for a Ukrainian unit.[22]

As the conflict continued, the Ukrainian military enacted large-scale mobilization, calling up thousands of reserves and reinstating conscription as well as beginning extensive restructuring, reform, and modernization efforts.[23] In the face of renewed Ukrainian military vigor and superior firepower and airpower, the weaknesses among the separatist forces became more apparent. This vulnerability culminated in the Ukrainian military capturing the strategic Donetsk airport on May 26, 2014, inflicting mass casualties on separatist forces in the process.[24]

Russia tried to remedy this defeat from June to August by providing separatist forces with increasing amounts of heavy conventional weapons, including armored vehicles and tanks, surface-to-air missiles, and other advanced systems and munitions. Despite this build up, the Ukrainian military gained ground against the separatists in what had become a siege campaign that capitalized on the significant advantage in troops and firepower to encircle and push separatist forces from populated areas. By August, the Donetsk and Luhansk regions were in danger of being isolated from one another and overrun by Ukrainian forces pushing towards the Russian border.[25] Russia and the separatists had successfully turned an unconventional conflict into a conventional one, but they were losing that conflict in the face of overwhelming force as the mass support that had been expected from the populace for an independent eastern Ukraine failed to materialize.

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19 Kofman et al., *Lessons*, 58–60.

20 "Russians Take Charge of Ukrainian Separatists," Stratfor, August 7, 2014.

21 Lawrence Freedman, "Ukraine and the Art of Limited War," *Survival* 56, no. 6 (2014), 16.

22 Kofman et al., *Lessons*, 43.

23 Valeriy Akimenko, "Ukraine's Toughest Fight: The Challenge of Military Reform," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 22, 2018.

24 Freedman, "Ukraine," 15–17.

25 Kofman et al., *Lessons*, 44–45.

In August 2014, to prevent the possible defeat of the separatist forces in Donbas, Russia's conventional forces crossed the border into Ukraine, through separatist held territory, to help launch a large-scale counterattack against Ukrainian government forces.[26] Evidence of these incursions in NATO satellite imagery shows heavy Russian units moving through Ukraine. Additional intelligence reported enemy forces using advanced Russian weapons and vehicles that were not present in the Ukrainian military arsenal. These weapons included the hallmarks of large-scale conventional warfare, such as tanks and armored vehicles, long-range surface-to-air missiles, rocket artillery, and other weapons systems.[27] This counterattack managed to recapture multiple locations that had been seized by Ukraine in its offensive, recovering the separatists' initiative as the Ukrainian military suffered heavy personnel and equipment losses.[28] This escalation led to a series of peace talks and cease-fires negotiated in the Belarusian capital of Minsk in 2014 and 2015.

Although the frontline has remained stable since then, fighting in early 2018 continued in violation of the two 2015 Minsk agreements. Russo-Ukrainian tensions remain high, and Ukraine's parliament officially declared Russia an "aggressor" and the Donbas territories "under temporary occupation."[29]

Russia's escalation of the conflict involved not only committing its own troops to the war but also embarking on new efforts to improve the fighting capabilities of the proxy separatist forces that remained within the oblast. After saving the separatists from destruction in August 2014, Russia reportedly began paying the salaries, benefits, and pensions of separatist political and military leaders in Donbas during 2015.[30] With the direct Russian involvement, the separatist forces have also taken on an increasingly conventional structure and organization.[31] Russia's military provides supplies, training, and personnel—through both active duty soldiers and volunteers—as well as reconnaissance, special operations, and other military capabilities.

Moscow's forces deployed behind separatist lines in Ukraine and directly across the border in Russia also provide reserve forces to protect the separatists from large-scale Ukrainian counterattacks like that of Summer 2014. This reinforcement allows separatist forces to focus more energy and resources on frontline units and engaging in offensive operations. This arrangement is similar to the FLNC or SWAPO in Angola during the 1970s operating with a safety net of support from the Soviet Union and its proxies.

Despite the rescue and the increased support from the Kremlin, the separatist forces still have many fundamental weaknesses. Franklin Holcomb notes the "artificially capable force" is almost entirely dependent

26 Marek Menkiszak, Rafal Sadowski, and Piotr Żochowski, "The Russian Military Intervention in Eastern Ukraine," Centre for Eastern Studies, September 3, 2014.

27 Victoria Butenko, Laura Smith-Spark, and Diana Magnay, "U.S. Official Says 1,000 Russian Troops Have Entered Ukraine," CNN, August 29, 2014.

28 Menkiszak, Sadowski, and Żochowski, "Russian Military Intervention."

29 "Ukraine Declares Russian 'Occupation' in Eastern Region," Al Jazeera, January 18, 2018.

30 "Russia and the Separatists in Eastern Ukraine, Briefing 79," International Crisis Group, February 5, 2016.

31 Franklin Holcomb, *The Kremlin's Irregular Army: Ukrainian Separatist Order of Battle*, Russia and Ukraine Security Report 3 (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2017), 17–27.

on Russia for its survival and effectiveness. The military capabilities have either remained static or even degraded over four years of conflict, while the Ukrainian military has continued to upgrade its capabilities and armaments over time. Many separatist units are still disorganized and fail to communicate and to work with one another efficiently in combat. Leadership at the top levels of the separatist republics remains an issue. Russia resorts to purges by force in order to keep its proxy separatist entities in line. To that end, separatist forces have effectively been reduced to a buffer and a screening force for regular Russian forces in the Donbas, keeping Russian troops separated from the Ukrainians and acting as scouts and skirmishers for conventional Russian units.[32]

An analysis of the Ukrainian conflict shows how Russia's use of unconventional warfare has followed its behavior during and after the Cold War. From the beginning of the conflict, Russian support was indirect. Efforts to create a conventional separatist military force in the Donbas region, however, were already evident. Separatist forces were organized along largely conventional lines, stealing and deploying heavy weapons and vehicles, and endeavoring to take and to hold territory for their nascent pseudostates rather than launching guerilla style hit-and-run attacks or blending in with the populace. When these forces began to struggle against the Ukrainian military, who countered them with conventional tactics of siege and overwhelming size and firepower, Russia's first instinct was to increase its conventional strength through more heavy weapons and armor. In Ukraine, as with past cases, Russia proceeded directly to phase three of Mao's phases of insurgency and tried to create a conventional force to do battle with the government.

Second, when conventional separatist proxy forces suffered military setbacks against the government's troops despite increased support, Russia resorted to sending its own military into combat. This involvement saved the separatists and continued to put pressure on the Ukrainian government. This strategy superseded Russia's first choice of supporting the separatists indirectly through intelligence services and third-party benefactors. But when the widespread local support for *Novorossiya* ("New Russia") in eastern Ukraine failed to materialize as Moscow hoped it would, this situation changed. The separatists faced defeat, and Moscow possessed the ability to intervene quickly in force. Russia took that opportunity to preserve the separatist forces as a means of exerting influence on and undermining Kiev. This logic followed that used in Angola in the 1970s but with Russia able to apply much more force.

Third, the ability and extent to which Russia could project power by directly intervening to save its insurgent allies was facilitated by its proximity to the combat zone. During the Cold War, this contingency limited Soviet intervention, as well as the quality of any support provided to unconventional forces, in proxy conflicts far from Eurasia. In Angola, supporting the opposition force turned out to be easier, politically and militarily, for the Cubans with Soviet assistance than it was for the Soviets to become directly involved. But eastern Ukraine's shared border with Russia's heartland substantially elevated Russia's ability to support the separatists, like in Abkhazia. This position provides Russia the ability to

32 Holcomb, *Kremlin's Irregular Army*, 9–11.

augment the separatists with thousands of troops equipped with heavy weaponry and vehicles. Ukraine may be the greatest extent of Russian intervention on the behalf of an unconventional ally since the birth of unconventional warfare in World War II.

In supporting such efforts in Ukraine, Russia appears to have followed an established pattern of behavior: intervene after a potential ally is threatened and prepare the pro-Russian force for conventional conflict. That said, Russia's continued adherence to this model has not produced substantial results thus far. While fruitful in the smaller separatist conflicts prior to Ukraine, success has not been replicated there, in a far larger conflict involving a much more valuable territory to Russia.

The Ukrainian government, for all its flaws, remains in power, and continues to gain it relative to separatist forces. As the political and military situation in Ukraine stands now, Russia's current strategy lacks a clear, obvious path to victory, absent escalation into a full-scale war with Ukraine. This prospect carries the risk of greater confrontation with the West, which reinforces the necessity of understanding Russia's concept of and uses for unconventional warfare as well as its understanding of that concept in comparison to the United States and its Western allies.

Conclusions and Implications

The ongoing pattern of behavior established here explains how Russia and its military became involved in unconventional warfare and how Moscow chose to support irregular forces in such conflicts. This pattern revolves heavily around the use of conventional warfare, regardless of other, current narratives. The concept of "hybrid warfare" used by Western analysts and experts discussing the Ukraine conflict generally touts the mix of military and nonmilitary means as key to Russia's approach. But the political influence, information warfare, and propaganda associated with this term were not able to conceive most of the people in eastern Ukraine to support the independent *Novorossiya* that Moscow wanted. Russia's conventional warfare saved the separatist forces in 2014. As a result, conventional escalation, by proxies or direct intervention, remains central to Russia's unconventional warfare.

Future research should examine Russia's interest in and ambition for the behaviors associated with unconventional warfare: Is it a conscious choice based on what policymakers and military leaders know are Russia's strong and weak points in a conflict? Is it a more subconscious choice based on experiences taken for granted? Does Russia simply lack awareness of Western notions of unconventional warfare? In the meantime, the pattern presented in this article can help allied strategists and policymakers anticipate Russia's actions in burgeoning and future unconventional warfare environments and identify strategies to counter or contain these activities—if and when, they present a threat.

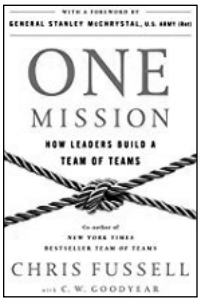
Book Reviews

Strategic Leadership

One Mission: How Leaders Build a Team of Teams

By Chris Fussell with C. W. Goodyear

Reviewed by James P. Farwell, national security expert; associate fellow, Department of War Studies, Kings College, London.



New York: Portfolio, 2017
298 pages
$27.00

Journalist Mark Urban credited a task force led by General Stanley McChrystal and his team, which included Chris Fussell, in Iraq for neutralizing more than 11,000 members of al-Qaeda. They employed an approach called "team of teams." These unprecedented lines of communication broke down the silos of rigid command structures into a cooperative organization comprised of small, specialized teams. The approach created flexible, creative, adaptable groups that responded in real time to implement the notion of find, fix, finish, exploit and analyze. On retiring from the military, McChrystal and Fussell established a cutting-edge firm that has translated the lessons learned from their experience to the business world.

With his coauthor C. W. Goodyear, Fussell builds upon an earlier book that described the team-of-teams to increase business efficiency, creativity, and productivity. The goal is to cut through red tape and stove-piped bureaucracy to connect individuals and teams across traditional hierarchical lines of authority.

Their approach stresses the need to create networks through which individuals who might otherwise compete or pursue contradictory courses of action communicate, liaise, and align their actions with the organization's prevailing mission. It offers a notion of "decision spaces" that define how decision-making can be devolved to the lowest tactical level, and yet create a shared consciousness that forges different teams into a cohesive team-of-teams.

Fussell and Goodyear adroitly draw upon the fascinating challenges that McChrystal's team confronted in Iraq match a disciplined, cunning, fierce enemy that employed distributed networks and decision-making to threaten the Iraqi government and coalition forces. The authors relate the imaginative solutions devised so that a large organization could respond with the speed and agility of a small team.

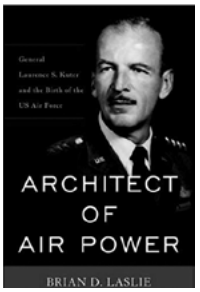
At the core of their notion of "one mission" lies the maxim credibility = proven competence + integrity = relationships, which they persuasively argue applies equally to public and private sectors. In their view, complex missions succeed "when great teams interconnect with a powerful, one mission focus" (245). They reject as obsolete, and unable to keep up with rapid change, older models rooted in vertical bureaucracy in which people at the top ordain strategy, middle managers facilitate its implementation, and lower-rung tactical operators do what they are told.

Fussell and Goodyear avoid detailed case studies for companies such as Intuit Inc. and Under Armor, as well as government agencies such as emergency medical service responder MedStar Health and

the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services. They describe how regularly-scheduled, well-tailored video teleconference forums—a commercial variation of the Iraq task force's Operations and Intelligence forum—enable leadership to communicate.

Their approach entails creating horizontal alignment within an organization, opening dialogue among players, and properly contextualizing information and strategic guidance to its teams. Critical is identifying key influencers and colocating the right people to create productive synergies and an operating rhythm that works individually for each organization. Such action is vital to understanding how an organization's external environment is changing, and what can be done to make a culture distinctive and efficient in processing, digesting, and projecting information to leverage emerging opportunities.

Fussell and Goodyear have made an excellent contribution to the literature on how strong, savvy leadership can apply concrete approaches rooted in strong values to increase efficiency, growth, and impact. The book is highly recommended



Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017
254 pages
$39.99

Architect of Air Power: General Laurence S. Kuter and the Birth of the US Air Force

By Brian D. Laslie

Reviewed by Dr. Ryan Wadle, professor of comparative military studies at the Air Command and Staff College's eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education

In the annals of American airpower, Laurence S. Kuter (pronounced kyoo-ter) never became a household name like many of his contemporaries of the 1940s and 1950s because he only briefly saw combat and spent much of his career standing up new organizations. This lack of a notable public profile means that Kuter had heretofore been ignored in the historiography in favor of flashier subjects and flamboyant personalities. With his new book *Architect of Air Power*, Brian D. Laslie, the deputy command historian at both the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command, rectifies this gap with this efficient, engaging, and persuasive portrait of General Kuter as an unsung hero in the development of American airpower.

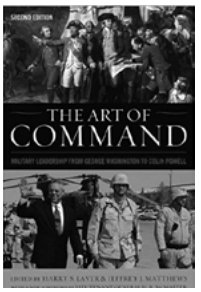
Born in Rockford, Illinois, in 1905, Kuter graduated from West Point in 1927 and joined the field artillery. Although he had been exposed to aviation during his time as a cadet, he moved into aviation initially to enhance the effectiveness of his native branch. Soon, however, he became a convert to airpower, and during his time at the Air Corps Tactical School as a student and a faculty member, he became part of the so-called "bomber mafia" and eventually served as a coauthor to the doctrine that laid the foundation for employing American airpower in World War II. The wartime expansion of the officer corps and Kuter's innate talents led him to reach the rank of brigadier general by the age of 36; at that time, he was the youngest general in the US military since the Civil War. During the war, Kuter played critical roles

in building up American airpower in England, North Africa, and the Pacific, making him the rare officer to serve in every major theater of combat. In these postings, he often served as a deputy or helped to establish new organizations, which as Laslie argues, meant that Kuter's public profile remained low even as his service won him praise from his superiors and peers alike. This record of exemplary serviced continued after the war as Kuter, who had shifted into transport aviation in 1945, played a vital role in international civil aviation after the war before leading the new Military Air Transport Service. He later served as the head of Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, and then as the first commander of Pacific Air Forces in 1957. He led NORAD until his retirement in 1962.

This impressive array of assignments makes Kuter an excellent subject of study, but Laslie's clean narrative makes it easy for readers to follow Kuter through the many assignments he had in the course of his career. Furthermore, Laslie wisely establishes the context surrounding the many noteworthy people, places, and events in Kuter's life so the learning curve for readers is very gentle. The wealth of personal papers left behind by Kuter and his wife, Ethel, at the United States Air Force Academy form the core of this biography and humanize Kuter by providing a complete picture of his home life, his personal interests, and the varied personal and professional relationships he maintained with others throughout his life. Thankfully, Kuter himself understood the value of history and set about preserving documents and even started work on his own memoirs in the last years of his life, but he died in 1979 before he and his wife could complete his ambitious project.

Architect of Air Power is a valuable addition to the literature for reasons that go beyond filling a gap in the historiography because it presents a pair of important lessons for military professionals. First, given the prevalence of bureaucracy and staffs in the modern-day Department of Defense, there is much to learn from studying Kuter's experience, skillset, and temperament to understand what made him successful in building up new organizations. Furthermore, even though Kuter identified with and adopted the positions of the dogmatic theory of strategic bombing, he demonstrated much intellectual flexibility throughout his career and modified his views to account for the importance of tactical airpower and air mobility. The ability to see beyond the needs of one's own organizational needs and culture was a valuable trait then, and remains so today.

This volume brings into focus a man who often stood in the historical shadow of men like General Henry "Hap" Arnold and General Curtis E. Lemay, yet played a vital role in creating the modern US Air Force. Laslie has done well to show why the air force and military historians should better appreciate Laurence Kuter's place in history, and this biography should help introduce military professionals to an officer whose career offers many useful lessons for the modern-day world.



Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2017
364 pages
$80.00

The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell

Edited by Harry S. Laver and Jeffrey J. Matthews

Reviewed by Lionel Beehner, assistant professor at the Department of Defense and Security Studies at the United States Military Academy at West Point

There is no one-size-fits-all definition of effective leadership. That goes in spades for military leadership as *The Art of Command* articulates convincingly. The book, edited by Harry S. Laver and Jeffrey J. Matthews and reissued ten years after its initial release, details what made a handful of military commanders great leaders, despite their diverse upbringings, temperaments, and styles.

Although written mostly by military historians, the book's lessons will apply to nonmilitary readers as well. What I appreciated was the narrative thread that binds together the lives of a disparate set of men—perhaps for the book's centennial rerelease, they will not all be men—who served our country yet all had very different backgrounds and upbringings. They were Indiana plowboys and Virginia-landed gentry, Pennsylvanian aristocracy, and descendants of Jamaican immigrants. Some, given either their lack of academic promise or lack of connections, had to cut deals to get admitted into the United States Military Academy. Each of the book's eleven chapters showcases an attribute of effective leadership—adaptive, innovative, etc.—told through a biographic vignette. George Washington led through integrity, Ulysses S. Grant through sheer will and determination.

There are leaders whose main strength was their charisma. Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller was famous—perhaps infamous—for his slavish devotion to those under his command, often giving any gifts of whiskey to them first, "Pass it around, just leave a sip for me." Others led large institutions and were "organization men." General George C. Marshall, for example, summoned his inner George Orwell in an attempt to make Army field manuals more legible, instructing his soldiers on the art of simple writing and to avoid military jargon or elaborate maps. Anyone who has sat through a Powerpoint presentation at the Pentagon will appreciate his advice, "Get down to the essentials." Others were visionary. The phrase "American airpower" did not strike fear in our enemies until Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, through sheer will and determination, modernized our aviation capabilities and developed strategic air doctrine.

That leadership takes courage, grit, and the respect of one's peers and followers will not surprise most readers of this book. Leadership books tend to be chock-full of corner-office bromides or wistful war stories of derring-do. Thankfully, *Art of Command* is neither. The book lays out a set of generalizable attributes that made all the men profiled great leaders but more important, showcased their ability to tackle the challenges given them under pressing circumstances. We know General Dwight D. "Ike" Eisenhower defeated the Nazis in World War II. But readers may be less familiar with his uncanny ability to forge alliances with difficult foreign allies (think Charles de Gaulle), a lesson he first

learned in the Philippines in the 1930s. We know that "Unconditional Surrender" Grant defeated Lee in the American Civil War, but readers may be shocked to learn that he nearly called it quits after his hard-fought victory at the Battle of Shiloh.

Nobody is born a leader. It takes hard work, some luck, good fortune, and a deep reservoir of character. What each of these men shared were two key attributes: First, they all benefited from a mentor who guided their rise to the top. Second, they all sought out self-improvement.

All great leaders benefit from mentorship. Ike had Major General Fox Conner. Grant had Major General Charles F. Smith. A mentor provides a roadmap of how to foster untapped talent, how to behave under pressure, how to lead from the front. Self-improvement is not just learning from one's mistakes. It's going beyond what's asked of them. General Matthew B. Ridgway, while teaching languages at West Point, taught himself French on the side.

There are many parallels between leading teams in battle and leading teams in business. Military leaders, not unlike corporate executive officers, should not only be able to inspire those beneath them, but they must also be adaptive and innovative. They should be thinkers, not just warriors. A good leader should be unafraid to remove underperforming subordinates. They are active learners as well as doers. Part of command is the art of improvisation. There are field manuals one can devour of course. But the best military commanders read their predecessors' memoirs. "Warrior monk" has become a term of endearment in today's military circles.

Military leadership does not only apply to those fighting along dangerous frontlines. It also extends into the labyrinthine maze of American political bureaucracy. The book's strongest chapters reveal riveting accounts of leaders who dutifully mastered the interagency turf wars and civil-military relations. Without the sharp-wittedness of General Marshall, the US Air Force may never have emerged. Without the shrewd advice of General Colin Powell, Americans may have stumbled into more wars than they were prepared to fight. (I wish the chapter on Powell had been expanded into its own separate book on followership.)

There is a tendency to think that great leaders were able to succeed at every task given them—that everything they touched turned to gold. This is inaccurate. Nor should we assume that leaders are paragons of virtue or perfection. Almost all were flawed human beings. Washington had a quick temper. Chesty Puller could never fully shake some of his racist views. Leaders are complex bundles of many attributes both positive and negative. But these shortcomings do not diminish their leadership styles nor the imprints they left on the military.

The book has its flaws. Terminologies are not always clearly defined. The use of the term cross-cultural leadership to describe Ike did not always fully reflect historical reality and felt at times forced, given that the culturally similar British often gave him a harder time than our more culturally disparate allies. A better discussion of culture might have examined how these men left their mark on the institutional culture of the military. Another limitation of the book is its puffy celebration of American military leaders at the expense of showcasing military leaders from other countries. A complete book on military leadership would

showcase how commanders like Soviet Marshal Georgy Zhukov led, or to take a more modern example, what Brazil's Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz learned from pacifying the slums in Haiti.

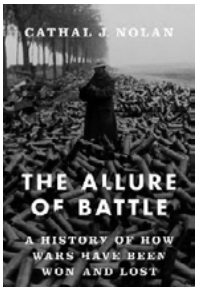
A final flaw with the book is its unblinking emphasis on "leading from the front," which in today's parlance contrasts the oft-scorned (yet misunderstood) phrase "leading from behind," referring to America's role in in recent military campaigns. But what does "leading from the front" even mean? The authors never really define it, except to note that it should not be construed with seeking fanfare or glory. Good leaders shun the limelight. They let others share in their successes. Leading from the front means eating last.

The image of a leader is not Washington standing ramrod crossing the mighty Delaware in the dead of winter. It is of Ulysses S. Grant, slouching under a tree drenched in rain. "Well, Grant, we've had a devil's own day, haven't we?" his subordinate asked. "Yes," Grant responded. "Lick 'em tomorrow, though." Told like a true leader.

Military History

The Allure of Battle: A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost

By Cathal J. Nolan



New York: Oxford University Press, 2017
728 pages
$34.95

Reviewed by Major Nathan K. Finney, visiting fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute

Annihilation through battles is ephemeral; exhaustion is what wins wars. Therefore, war is a struggle based on matériel, not command of soldiers. Additionally, successful command is the thoughtful application of force to destroy enemy capability and morale, not based on an inherent genius of great captains. Or in more pithy words, war is "running a deliberate strategic and military marathon to its conclusion, not seeking to always fight marathons" (23).

These are the main elements of the argument put forth in Cathal J. Nolan's *The Allure of Battle,* and they are compelling. This is true not only because the arguments resonate in our times, when strategic finality through tactical application of military forces is seen as the easiest and most effective approach to foreign policy challenges. Rather, the deliberate assessment of three thousand years of war that drives Nolan's narrative systematically assesses conflicts that are historically taught as wars of annihilation and battle. Through his analysis, which focuses on the actual drivers of success and failure, he comes to the conclusion that despite the battlefield action that typically draws attention in history and military thought, it is the slow, long, devastating exhaustion of an entire nation at war that results in a war's conclusion.

Allure of Battle is a fusion of history and military thought across time. Its clear prose and thoughtful organization make this book an easy, though not a quick, read. Its length is driven by a thorough drive across the military history of the wars of Western civilization—from the wars among the Greek states to World War II. In each of these national and global conflicts, Nolan traces the waxing and waning of battle's place in war, how such military thought affected war, and how it was affected by war.

Allure of Battle shines in three areas. First, as a comprehensive narrative that describes Western wars and their impacts, it could easily be used in any undergraduate military history course or early professional military education opportunity to familiarize students with the arc of war in Western civilization. Second, this book thoughtfully and comprehensively challenges long-held assertions of military thought on the application of military power. It would be of significant value for military officers and thinkers on military affairs to balance their intellectual diet of Carl von Clausewitz and Napoleon I, particularly as midgrade leaders, by paring the former with *The Allure of Battle*. Finally, this book is a phenomenal example of the synthesis of many topics, across a large swath of time, addressing an extremely important topic. Academics and military historians would be well served to review the

ways Nolan weaves historical knowledge and strategic analysis into an easily digested narrative.

With those positive aspects in mind, *Allure of Battle* is by no means perfect. As alluded to above, Nolan only addresses popularly understood conventional wars viewed as critical to Western civilization. While one should not assess a book on what one may wish it had covered, his thesis would likely be bolstered further if it included non-Western conflicts and those less prone to focusing on battle as its central tenet. Also, while not a critique but rather simply an acknowledgement for those in the academic field, this book is based on secondary sources, with a noticeable lack of primary source research. This is understandable, given it is a work covering thousands of years of conflict across vast distances, cultures, and languages. The quantity and quality of source material Nolan uses, however, is an impressive feat in itself, indicating the knowledge the author possesses in the history of war.

I highly recommend *Allure of Battle* to all those interested in war, from undergraduate students to those wrestling with defense policy at the most senior levels. Nolan's book forces the reader to think deeply about strategy, the role of leadership, and the use of military force for political ends. His ideas on the strategic defensive as better suited to the enduring nature of war and on the requirement for national endurance to drive positive war termination should make all those classically trained in the Western way of war question themselves.

If such an approach is more successful than wars focused on annihilation, then there are many implications, none more so than those that affect civilian-military relations. If successful wars are dependent on national endurance, it clashes with the contemporary politics and processes of war making—short, cheap wars are easier to sell to a nation and its coalition partners. Who enters wars knowing they will drag on for years? That said, if Nolan is correct and a nation is prepared and supported for a long war, it may be possible to prevent national collapse based on a flawed focus on battle at the expense of strategy.

Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017

352 pages

$79.95

From Disarmament to Rearmament:The Reversal of US Policy toward West Germany, 1946–1955

By Sheldon A. Goldberg

Reviewed by Dr. Raymond A. Millen, professor of security sector, Peacekeeping and Stability Institute, US Army War College

As the title signifies, Sheldon Goldberg's *From Disarmament to Rearmament* examines the history of allied policies regarding the demilitarization of the Third Reich and the eventual rehabilitation of Germany, leading to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. In the first chapter of the book, Goldberg addresses allied plans for the occupation of Germany and formal surrender. As the defeat and occupation of Germany was punitive in nature, the Allies implemented the complete demilitarization and denazification of Germany. The remaining chapters focus on US and British efforts to

incorporate Germany into the defense of western Europe during the first ten years of the Cold War.

As a caveat, this book might be confusing to the casual historian. The reader should have a solid understanding of allied occupation policy and planning for Germany during and after World War II. Specifically, Goldberg does not provide a comprehensive picture of allied preparations and planning for the occupation of Germany before he delves into the details of disarmament. His coverage of Operation Rankin is puzzling since Rankin was a series of contingency plans, which addressed a possible German military collapse, political collapse, or a deliberate withdrawal from occupied countries. Hence, Rankin (and its successor, Talisman) had virtually no impact on occupation policy and implementation. A greater discussion on Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive 1067 (which operationalized the Morgenthau Plan) and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's decision in 1944 to dissolve the German Country Unit (responsible for formulating occupation policy) would have provided a greater appreciation of the excessively punitive nature of allied occupation policy, which had a substantial impact on Germany's postwar recovery and rehabilitation.

Further, the author only touches lightly on the plan for military government, which included the training, preparation, and geographical assignment of military government detachments and headquarters in the allied zones of occupation. A greater discussion on the impact of nonfraternization and denazification policies would have set the stage for the problems associated with the rehabilitation and rearmament of Germany.

The chapters dedicated to rearmament efforts leading to Germany's admission into NATO in 1955 are more instructive. Still, the reader should have a firm foundation on early Cold War history beforehand. The series of conferences, meetings, private discussions, staff studies, and policy papers, stretching out over years, is particularly illuminating. Here, the author reveals the early attention by US and British defense planners regarding the defense of western Europe in the face of the growing Soviet threat. As such, while senior military leaders were cognizant of the political constraints and limitations regarding the rearmament of Germany, they helped shape policy and strategy behind the scenes.

As Goldberg points out, the fear of resurgent German militarism proved the greatest obstacle for rearmament. US and European fears (including the Soviet Union) were justified. After all, Germany was a formidable adversary in both world wars, and Germany is justifiably blameworthy for the devastation of Europe. Germany's large population, advanced industry, wealth, and geostrategic position alone were a cause of grave anxiety. The vexing question for the Western powers was how to incorporate West Germany into the defense of western Europe without raising the specter of militarism?

Goldberg provides exhaustive details of the policy process, supplementing contemporary knowledge on the formation of the Brussels Treaty defense alliance, NATO, the European Coal and Steel Community, and the Western European Union. What is most illuminating in the book is the reasoning behind the European Defense

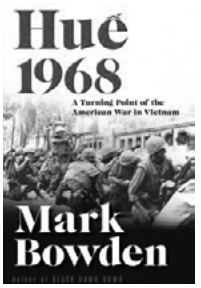
Community, its ultimate failure, and France's intractable resistance to German rearmament. Goldberg walks the reader through the plethora of discussions and documents leading to the incorporation of the West German military into NATO in May 1955—ironically, almost ten years to the day after Germany's surrender in World War II.

Goldberg's book relies on primary sources from government meetings, communications, staff papers, planning documents, conferences, and committee meetings from both sides of the Atlantic. For NATO scholars, Goldberg demonstrates the evolution of thinking regarding the necessity for and implementation of a German military contribution to the defense of Europe. Senior policymakers and military leaders were sensitive to France's morbid fear of a rearmed Germany and hence devised initiatives which acknowledged these sensibilities. But as Goldberg reveals, there was a limit to US and British patience, particularly when the French National Assembly rejected the European Defense Community. Nevertheless, the US and British governments ensured the German military remained subordinate to NATO, vetted its servicemembers, and trained the initial contingents.

From Disarmament to Rearmament is relevant to the US defense community, primarily because it describes the practice of strategic thinking for a complex problem. Further, the book demonstrates that complex problems like the German dilemma can take years to solve. For Cold War scholars and strategic thinkers, Goldberg's book deserves attention.

Hue 1968: A Turning Point of the American War in Vietnam

By Mark Bowden



New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017
594 pages
$30.00

Reviewed by Dr. Russell W. Glenn, Director, Plans and Policy, G2, US Army Training and Doctrine Command

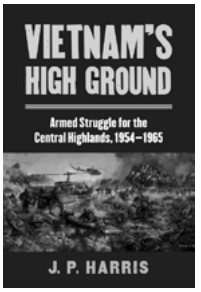
Mark Bowden's review of Tet Offensive fighting in Hue provides readers with another view of what has become a brutal hallmark of the Vietnam War. Personal memoirs, official histories, and others' earlier efforts to cover events on the same contested terrain include a few well done and acknowledged by Bowden: Nick Warr's *Phase Line Green*, Jack Shulimson and colleagues' official United States Marine Corps history *US Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968*, and Eric Hammel's *Fire in the Streets*. Bowden seeks to distinguish his new work by encompassing insights from all significant participant parties to an extent others have not. The task was not without challenges. The author notes the none-too-subtle self-injection of Vietnam government representatives into his interview process, as these individuals sought to ensure he was shielded from what Hanoi considered less pleasant truths, similarly experienced by this reviewer when he was teaching at the Australian Command and Staff College. So too, some of the participating parties featured are too little represented, notably those fighting with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in defending the city's citadel. Bowden might be forgiven in this regard. One imagines that the tumultuous events in the years following the end of the Vietnam War would make finding these veterans a difficult task. Regardless, it is in the weaving of these

participants' activities throughout the book that Bowden's popular history is at its strongest.

A complement to previous volumes regarding the Tet Offensive and an effective introduction to the battle for Hue for first-time readers on the subject, Bowden's pages additionally offer lessons of value as today's soldiers confront the ever-increasingly likelihood of combat in densely populated areas. That one commander ordered his men to leave their packs behind as "room on the choppers was tight" will surely cause some to recall equally unfortunate decisions to leave behind vital equipment—for example Mogadishu (October 3–4, 1993) night vision goggles and bulletproof plates for protective vests were sorely missed as the urban fighting exceeded its expected duration. The critical role played by tanks; 106mm guns that were the main armament of a virtually unarmored, six-gun, tracked vehicle; and liberal use of tear gas in turning the tide in favor of US Marines fighting in Hue reminds us that combat in cities is very likely to be costly in terms of soldiers' lives, and even more so of noncombatants' lives, particularly when such large caliber weapons and nonlethal agents might well be proscribed by rules of engagement. The fighting described in Hue 1968 took place only 23 years after the end of World War II, a time when expectations regarding noncombatant casualties were considerably different than is the case today. One might nonetheless question whether those restraints on firepower and other capabilities could survive during a similar battle in the future. It is an issue meriting consideration as our citizens' expectations regarding both soldier and noncombatant casualties are unlikely to change barring political leaders' addressing the public in that regard.

Hue 1968 is not without occasional shortfalls. The effective use of interviews makes the lack of an index more egregious. Readers hoping to refresh their memories regarding an individual's or a unit's appearance several pages or chapters before are burdened with having to wade through previously read material, a nontrivial task in a book of nearly six hundred pages. That red tracers signified US or ARVN rifle fire is recognized correctly on some pages while elsewhere they are confused with rounds from enemy weapons, their tracers being green. On occasion an interview response that begs to be questioned, if not discarded, appears undisputed: surely any US fighting man would challenge, if not refuse, an order "to shoot anything or anyone—even any Americans" who might appear to his front (459). Stating that there has been a "conspiracy of denial around Hue [that explains] why this terrible battle has remained . . . little known" for 50 years ignores the several excellent sources the author himself cites as does the statement that "for what we have known of it, we are indebted to the handful of journalists who braved those streets." Such gratuitous passages are unnecessary in good historical work.

As with *Black Hawk Down*, Bowden makes it only too clear that urban combat is often horrific. Training must prepare our military men and women to deal with the ambiguity when facing a woman cradling a child in one arm while grasping a rifle in the other or the potential of tens, hundreds, or thousands of refugees fleeing into friendly lines in search of safety. War is increasingly an urban phenomenon; Bowden's and similar histories can help our soldiers ready for its challenges.



Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016
552 pages
$42.75

Vietnam's High Ground: Armed Struggle for the Central Highlands, 1954–1965

By J. P. Harris

Reviewed by Dr. Douglas V. Johnson II, research professor emeritus, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

This book is an historical account of the battle for control of the Vietnamese central highlands. It is unusual for the breadth and depth of the portrayal of the ethnographic details of its varied inhabitants and their responses to the forces that engulfed them. The Communists sought to enlist these populations in the fight for control of this area; the Vietnamese—not unlike land hungry American settlers—wanted the highlanders/savages out of the way.

Two years in Vietnam taught me almost nothing about the material contained in this very detailed book although I had been taught the outline of the story even as a cadet. The first 107 pages of this remarkable work are a roller-coaster of hope and hopelessness alternating with insight and stupidity. Throughout, at least to this reader, there is an undercurrent of inevitability.

One remarkable feature of this work is the sources the author has been able to use even though none, including those of the US military, are complete—and the source material is evidently the best available, even with the postwar, self-justifying writings of all sides. The author notes massive amounts of French-developed and compiled information of highlander life patterns were lost through American bureaucratic arrogance, leaving substantial gaps in understanding the highland peoples. The Communist materials are treated with care and reasonable analysis and are routinely evaluated against Vietnamese and American reports, which must also be treated with care. In short, the resources leave much to be desired, but provide enough to make the work credible and fascinating.

Stylistically, the constant shifting back and forth between dates and events is distracting. In several pages one gets an overall view of the actions of a year with qualifying adjectives, but a few pages later the adjectives shift from negative to positive and a few pages later back to negative again. As a consequence, the reader must pause, sort through what has been presented and search for a solid stepping stone into the next chapter or phase. Typical of this shifting is the marked tonal difference between chapter 4, which touts the remarkable success of the Buon Enao experiment in the Darlac Province, and then in chapter 5, the apparently total difference of a "flood of refugees" driven in extremis of Communist supply demands.

Organizational issues notwithstanding, it is refreshing to see the inclusion of as many elements as seem relevant to each situation—the personal, political, demographic, social, and military—and of each contending party—Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), local Communist cadre, North Vietnam Communist hierarchy, tribal leaders, Ngo Dinh Diem's government, or other regimes, and Americans of

various attitudes and organizations. It was so much simpler to be out in the boonies where who shot first mattered most.

By page 159, it is clear that the initial sense of inevitability has come to fruition and the destruction of the very successful Buon Enao project, perhaps the only really solid attempt to hold the highlands through the efforts of its peoples, had begun. Faith had been betrayed, survival alone was the remaining motivational force.

The tragic stupidity of the Diem regime set the stage for the well-known Buddhist revolt which, in combination with the several senior military officers' plots, threw the ARVN off balance, thus forfeiting the successes of the first part of 1963. It must be noted, however, that those successes were evidently much less than had been reported, as the Communists were able immediately to resume antigovernment operations with significant levels of success. American military operations at that point underwent major changes as reorganizations, changes of personnel, and then President John F. Kennedy's assassination impacted an already chaotic scene.

It may not be too much to say that the author holds up the highlander's conduct as the principal measure of merit as opposed to the success or failure of operations in the field. Strongly opposed to any external government at first, many highlanders accepted participation in variants of the Strategic Hamlet Program as an acceptable middle-of-the-road path. At least it tended to keep the Republic of Vietnam Air Force from bombing them. With the abandonment of any real security for them by the South Vietnamese government, and apparent abandonment by the Americans, neutrality was a hope, albeit only a fond one with little substance. And as the author notes, "the Communists were quick to take advantage."

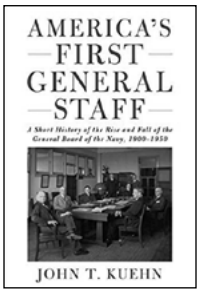
Yet-to-be-learned lessons are found on every couple of pages. Each is worthy of another book, and the author is not shy about highlighting many of them. One of the most salient is that old Sun Tzu quip, "Know your enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril." Despite massive intelligence efforts, the Communist forces seem to have been able to strike when and where they wished.

Insofar as this work is of use to US Army War College students, the first message is "hubris kills." The criticality of solid intelligence at all levels must be recognized, and with deference to Carl von Clausewitz, do not seek to make of a war something, which, by its very nature, it cannot be.

Vignettes of "important" combat actions are used to illustrate the success or failure of various programs or phases of the war, but most record the loss of fewer than twenty or so lives, and government successes in particular rest on the detailed counts of the capture of several small arms, a couple of ammunition clips, and a grenade, forcing the question again and again, what is success in this struggle supposed to look like?

Ending with a critique of the Battle of the Ia Drang, the author deftly describes the cost, in terms of full blown operational effectiveness, of the airmobile concept as experienced by the 1st Cavalry Division. Here are crucial lessons in logistics management.

I recommend this book to all professional leaders at every grade.



Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017
310 pages
$35.00

America's First General Staff: A Short History of the Rise and Fall of the General Board of the Navy 1900–1950

By John T. Kuehn

Reviewed by Captain Albert F. Lord Jr., USN Retired, Director of the Joint Warfighting Advanced Studies Program, US Army War College

The creation of the General Board of the United States Navy was one of many military reforms enacted by the US government after the Spanish-American War. From the origin of the Department of the Navy in 1798, the secretary of the navy was responsible for every facet of strategy and operations as well as shore facilities and ship design, construction, and maintenance. The advent of the American steam navy in the 1880's demanded more technical expertise and new tactical and operational concepts for fleet employment. Alfred Thayer Mahan's seminal work, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History*, created a "navalistic" faction of civilian and military leaders that understood the future of the country to be determined by seapower, which was defined as a combination of a powerful fleet, overseas bases to support worldwide fleet operations, and a merchant marine for trade.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, convened a group of consultants (including Mahan and Long's assistant secretary, Theodore Roosevelt) to assist with his responsibilities. After the war, the navy's uniformed leadership convinced Long that a standing body of senior advisors would be useful to direct the navy in its newfound global responsibilities. This advice led to Long establishing the General Board of the Navy. The board's purpose, as stated in General Order 544, was to "insure efficient preparation of the fleet in case of war and for the naval defense of the coast."

Presided over by the esteemed Admiral George Dewey (until his death in 1917), the board of nine officers included leaders from the US Naval War College and the Office of Naval Intelligence. Over time the board proved its worth by developing war plans, conducting extensive studies on a myriad of topics, and holding hearings on the important issues confronting an emerging navy with global responsibilities. The board's work greatly influenced warship design and fleet composition.

In 1915, Congress created the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OpNav) in order to provide a recognized uniformed head of the navy and to carry out day-to-day operational control of fleet movements and management of the burgeoning navy establishment. The General Board retained influence as a policy development body for the navy secretary. The creation of the OpNav staff initiated tensions between the uniformed advisors to the civilian secretary and the highest ranking naval officer. These tensions would wax and wane for the next thirty-five years until the General Board was disestablished in the wake of the creation of the Department of Defense. Much of the effectiveness of the board depended upon the personal relationships of the senior leadership within the department and the leadership style of the navy secretary.

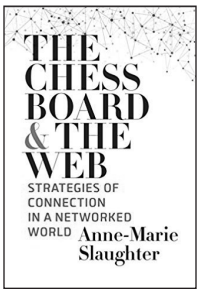
After World War I, and with the Washington Naval Conference of 1922, the board issued guidance for the annual shipbuilding programs

and thereby exercised considerable influence upon ship characteristics and ship design. The board also provided some "quality assurance" in war plan review and critique. One can say with confidence that the fleet that fought and won World War II was conceived by the interwar General Board. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, the board's influence would recede as attention was given to OpNav's direction of active combat operations. The towering personality of Admiral Ernest Joseph King, as chief of naval operations and commander in chief of the US Fleet, would simply not allow another power center in the naval establishment.

The board made somewhat of a comeback after the war's end. Under the leadership of Admiral John Towers, and with significant talented membership seasoned by wartime service, the board was again very influential in fleet design, especially with respect to naval aviation. In 1949 the Revolt of the Admirals, which was precipitated by postwar cost cutting and the rise to prominence by the newly independent US Air Force, with its monopoly on the nuclear mission, caused the new secretary of the navy to disestablish the General Board. The author's intent was to write a short history of an influential group of problem solvers that filled a need for professional advice to civilian leadership as the US Navy grew from a coastal defense force to one that could fight and win a simultaneous two-ocean war against formidable foes. To that end, the author has successfully filled a void in the popular history concerning the US Navy's administration in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the term "general staff" has a negative connotation in naval circles that implies an overly centralized control of operations that would inhibit a local commander's freedom of action, the General Board served the country exceedingly well.

There are lessons embedded in the story of the General Board that should not be lost on today's national security leadership. Complex geopolitical problems are not unique to each generation. Serious study by a diverse group of educated and engaged professionals from different disciplines can be counted upon to provide a reasonable options and courses of action to leadership. There are times when leaders must understand when changing circumstances require new perspectives. President Abraham Lincoln said it best in his annual message to Congress when he said, "As our case is new, we must think anew, and act anew." The General Board's deliberation allowed the military establishment to change and adapt successfully to set the stage for victory in the crucible of World War II.

STRATEGY AND POLICY



New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017
269 pages
$26.00

The Chessboard & the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World

By Anne-Marie Slaughter

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, professor of comparative politics and international studies at Georgia Southern University and adjunct research professor at the US Army War College.

The world of the twenty-first century is more complex, more interconnected, and more complicated when dealing with foreign governments. This complexity in international affairs has been more profound with the democratization of technology and globalization. Thus, leaders worldwide are realizing governing has also become more complicated. For example, Anne-Marie Slaughter argues in *The Chessboard & the Web* that statesmen and foreign policy experts have long been trained to think of the world as a chessboard, analyzing the decisions of powerful states and anticipating rival states' reactions in the endless game of strategic advantage. That is the old way of thinking about international affairs.

Political science and international affairs has been dominated by the realist perspective. From this perspective, in which the state is the primary unit of analysis, state power is derived from its individual attributes, self-interests, and autonomous behaviors regarding other states in the international system. The emerging international system of the twenty-first century is characterized by what Slaughter calls the Web view or networked view. According to this view of the world, the primary unit of analysis is not the state but rather people, and state power is derived from relationships and connections.

In this networked world, digital technology is playing a major role in global governance. Disasters, political crisis, terrorist acts, coups, and other issues used to take months to be broadcast to the world. States, in essence, were able to get away with certain malfeasances due to the lack of transparency and accountability. But as Slaughter succinctly points out, "digital technology [is] shrinking the world in ways that allow[s] anyone to communicate information to and from anywhere instantaneously, bypassing traditional hierarchies and channels of authority" (8). The nation-state is more permeable.

As Richard Haass explains "the world is not to be confused with Las Vegas: what happens somewhere rarely remains there" (*A World in Disarray*, 2017, 226). In the network world, "different parts of government [are] peeling away from the chessboard model of foreign policy directed by the head of the state and the foreign ministry, and instead creating networks of both private and civic actors" (37). Given that the world is being transformed from one of a chessboard game to a networked game, one fundamental question of Slaughter's asks how actors are connected, how patterns of connections form, and how network ties determine power, influence, and the fragility of nodes.

Slaughter's core argument is that we can identify resilience networks, task networks, and scale networks, that can be created, shaped, and supported to address resilience problems, execution problems, and scale problems. Resilience networks are particularly relevant to foreign policy in three distinct areas: defense networks, response networks, and stabilization networks. Resilience is operationalized as "a system's resistance to change in the face of disturbance and its ability to recover" (97). Resilience networks "strengthen, deepen, react, and respond, bounce back, stability, and assist." And task networks "perform more precise and time-bound tasks" (111).

According to this notion, the power of task networks is in "aggregating knowledge and linking multiple problem solvers with different areas of expertise" (132). Scale networks derive power from their ability to connect and distribute information simultaneously. The power of a scale network is in seeking out a broad range of ideas and forming connections with people when making a decision. Regardless of the network (resilience, task, or scale) all require connecting the right people or institutions in the right ways: neither too many connections nor too few.

Given this radical transformation of the world from a chessboard approach to a network world of interconnectedness and globalization, how will power, leadership, and grand strategy be developed and implemented? Slaughter defines power as "the ability to achieve your goals either on your own or by getting someone or something to do what you want them to do that they would not otherwise do" (162). As the world becomes more networked there are several fundamental ideas that must be understood by foreign policymakers.

First, the nature of power is changing. In the networked world, power with "is the power of many to do together what no one can do alone" (173). From this prospective, power with "enables individuals . . . in connection with others" and power over "is closed, inaccessible, and leader-driven" (173, 178). In the interconnected world, any understanding of . . . as well as the deeper distinction between power over and power with, must be meshed with these older concepts of power" (181).

Leaders and their definitions of leadership will also be called into question in the networked world. They "determine or clarify goals for a group of individuals and bring together the energies of members of that group to accomplish those goals" (183). To be a catalyst in the networked world, leaders must understand that a chief attribute necessary to be persuasive is evidence and sincere willingness to be persuaded yourself. No one will buy into and follow an idea that the leader cannot first buy into and promote. Again, Slaughter argues, "an idea, no matter how good, will not spread if those in the network have high critical thresholds for change" (196).

The last issue Slaughter discusses is how a country defines grand strategy in the brave new networked world. She maintains that in the networked world, a grand strategy must be at least partly a strategy of connections between an open society, an open government, and an open international system. The first pillar, open society, means that any grand strategy's primary goal is the protection of its citizens and its allies. While an open society may invite a measure of insecurity, Slaughter insists

that insecurity is the "price of liberty and democracy" (208). An open government's grand strategy is grounded on the notion of transparency, civic participation, and accountability.

In conclusion, Slaughter's book is a must read for students at the US Army War College and practitioners of international relations. While some of the elements of the chessboard view of the world may still be relevant in the twenty-first century, the advance of the networked world will make it obsolete. In the networked world, connection, relationships, participation, sociability, and most important, adaptation will become ever more essential.

Counterinsurgency Wars and the Anglo-American Alliance: The Special Relationship on the Rocks

By Andrew Mumford

Reviewed by Conrad Crane, Chief of Historical Services for the US Army Heritage and Education Center, US Army War College

Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017

248 pages

$104.95

There have been a number of writers who have questioned the existence of a unique diplomatic relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States, but few attack the notion as vigorously as Andrew Mumford, an associate professor at the University of Nottingham. Not only does he argue that there has been very little that was special about the ties between London and Washington since the end of the Second World War but that the shared experience with counterinsurgency (COIN) during that period has instead highlighted the primary roles of self-interest and mutual irritation. While the relationship has traditionally been defined based on sharing intelligence, nuclear cooperation, and the "mythologized unity of large-scale warfighting," Mumford argues there has been a wide range of tensions on security issues, and especially in the management of counterinsurgency wars (10).

For Mumford, the effects of these COIN tensions on both countries have been extremely pernicious. The American military has been overreliant on overhyped Malaya for misinterpreted lessons. Cooperation with the British undermined anticolonial sentiment in the United States and turned that nation into anticommunist imperialists, most notably in Vietnam. On the other hand, America worked to undermine Britain's policy on Palestine. The aftermath of the Suez Crisis and lack of American support in the Middle East led to British defeat in South Arabia and withdrawal from the region. The lobbying power of Irish Americans and their direct support for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had significant impact on the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

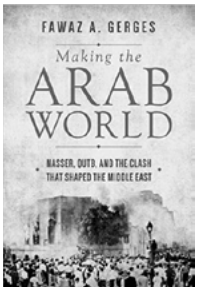
The recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan receive particular attention. The influence of the perception of a special relationship was evident in the decision-making concerning Iraq of both Tony Blair and George W. Bush in 2003, though the prime minister received much criticism later for appearing to be Bush's lackey, but their subordinates did not work together as well. As the war deteriorated so did relations between America and Britain in the theater. But Mumford admits, "more often than not, the greatest obstacle to British action in Iraq was other Brits"

(167). Lack of resources from home and restrictive political direction contributed to a deteriorating security situation in the British sector around Basra. And in 2007, their forces withdrew to a controversial overwatch position at the airport. Just as the Americans were instituting a much more active counterinsurgency campaign with the surge, under the leadership of General David Petraeus, the British were going in the opposite direction. The Iraqi–American Charge of the Knights operation to regain control of the area in 2008 basically ignored the British altogether. Mumford does concede the importance of British involvement leading Sunni reconciliation efforts, but sees that initiative as contrary to other trends in the relationship.

The experience in Afghanistan further reinforced American frustration with British capabilities and highlighted how far ahead in learning and adapting US forces were. This time the British failed in the major poppy producing province of Helmand. Particularly galling was the fractious relationship that developed between troops on the ground, especially with US Marines. Mumford notes ironically that when the British finally ended combat operations in Afghanistan and handed over their last military base, the only speaker at the flag lowering ceremony was an American general. While the author acknowledges that the American military has now far eclipsed the British in COIN expertise, he also recounts the conservative backlash within the US Army that now threatens to expunge that knowledge, a return to historic patterns of "unlearning" about irregular warfare exhibited most recently after the unpleasant experience in Vietnam.

Although Mumford makes a strong case about the actually contentious course of American–British counterinsurgency cooperation, in the end whether a special relationship exists really depends upon whether decision makers and the public they serve believe it does. Much of the American disappointment with the British performance in Iraq was because better was expected. The United Kingdom remains one of only six NATO members (with Estonia, Greece, Poland, Romania, and the United States) who are spending two percent of their gross domestic product on defense. The fact that accounts like this one continue to be written demonstrates the persistence of the belief, justified or not. But decision makers on both sides would benefit from reading this book and understanding that, no matter how close allies are, in democracies like ours differing domestic politics and national interests will always interfere with close international relations.

REGIONAL STUDIES



Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018
528 pages
$29.99

Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East

By Fawaz A. Gerges

Reviewed by Alma Keshavarz, associate, *Small War Journals-El Centro*

Fawaz A. Gerges takes a historical and sociological approach to assess the opposing forces of Arab nationalism and Islamists. In *Making the Arab World*, Gerges offers a biography of both Gamal Abdel Nasser and Sayyid Qutb to facilitate the discussion on how they shaped the divisions in the Middle East. Particular emphasis is on the Muslim Brotherhood, or the *Ikhwan*, throughout the book. Gerges does not seek to provide a mere history lesson; rather, he offers decades worth of interviews and archival research to present an alternative perspective on Egyptian history and how Nasser and Qutb were driving forces in the Arab world.

Gerges begins the book with a history of Egyptian sovereignty and its break from British colonialism. Throughout the twentieth century, Egypt experienced the rise of political movements that created divisions, which were the earliest signs of revolution in the country. The author fast-forwards to the World War II era and explains Egyptians' dissatisfaction with the country's politics. As the author explains, "The emergence of authoritarian social movements and parties reflected an increasing shift towards radical religious discourse in the politics of the 1930s and 1940s" (63). The war brought economic hardships not only to Egypt's middle class but to all North Africa and the Middle East. This population believed Europe had wronged the Arab world. Radical groups nurtured the plight of this community, and the Muslim Brotherhood rose to the occasion, establishing itself as a political and social movement in Egypt.

Gerges centralizes the importance of the 1952 coup d'état in Egypt by Nasser's Free Officers. Following the coup, deeper divisions in the country developed. The Free Officers found themselves in continual tension with the Muslim Brotherhood. Nasser wanted to demonstrate he was the authority and thus began to purge the country of Islamists—namely the Muslim Brotherhood—and communists. To understand this conflict, Gerges examines Qutb's prison years (1954–64). Despite the following Qutb developed while incarcerated, Gerges argues Qutb should not be perceived as a direct link to jihad ideology. Although leaders, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri, invoke Qutb's work as a means to justify their own ideology, it does not mean that Qutb is the single influencing factor.

After a backdrop of Egypt's early history, the author begins a biography of Nasser, including indirect associations with the Muslim Brotherhood in hopes of finding revolutionaries who would break Egypt from British imperial control. He argues that many Nasserists prefer not to discuss Nasser's involvement with the organization possibly because they do not want to hurt Nasser's image. Gerges references a

number of political organizations that Nasser was indirectly involved with throughout his life. Ultimately, Nasser developed an identity through associations with a number of political experiences living throughout Egypt. According to the author, Nasser was pragmatic, not ideological. Gerges then follows with a biography on Qutb to complete the juxtaposition. Interviews with his contemporaries and a deep study of his writings between the 1920s and 1940s reveal that Qutb was "deeply suspicious of mixing religion and politics" (181). In other words, Qutb's early years were not of what is known of him today. His spiritual awakening occurred in 1953 when he formally joined the Muslim Brotherhood and altered his way of thought. The author argues that Qutb's followers refer to his early years as the "lost years" because he was so different from what he is presently remembered (184).

Nonetheless, Gerges sees similarities between these two men who have profoundly different ways of thought. Nasser was deeply rooted in Egyptian patriotism blended with Arab nationalism. The author believes that Nasser has in large part been misunderstood. Nasser sought to "cleanse Egypt of the old corrupt ruling elite and imperial control" (211). From the 1950s onward, Qutb delved deeply into religious thought and Islamist thinking. Qutb's involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood, however, was not without conflict.

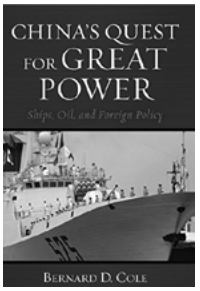
There was a split in the organization between the ideals of the Muslim Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna, and that of Qutb. Nasser ultimately sentenced Qutb to death; he was hung in 1966. Nasser's life took a shift as well. Following the defeat in 1967 during the Six-Day War, Nasser's role in Egypt declined. The country's revolutionary zeal dwindled. Nasser died of a heart attack in 1970. His death revived political Islam as well as the Muslim Brotherhood.

The author smoothly transitions into discussing a resurgence aided by Anwar Sadat. Sadat purged the country of all things Nasser, including loyalists within the government, and steered the country towards Islamist rule. Egypt quickly transitioned from Arab nationalism to Islamism. Both government and society would abide by political Islam, however, the Muslim Brotherhood remained divided between the ultraconservative linked to Qutb and those who viewed things differently. This division prevented the group from having an active role in society and politics.

To conclude, Gerges believes that the Muslim Brotherhood is at a breaking point with the regime of current Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who has been dismantling the organization since the fall of Mohammed Morsi in 2013. According to the author, al-Sisi finds himself in a conflict similar to that of Nasser; he is trying to position himself as a leader who seeks to crush a powerful Islamist organization and express Egyptian nationalism.

Gerges seeks to understand the problem without restating what has been previously written on the subject. Decades worth of interviews with Nasser and Qutb contemporaries and others who were close with both men, as well as archival material helped formulate this book, however, the book lacks fundamental discussion on the Arab Spring. While the author discusses the fall of Hosni Mubarak and Morsi, more contemporary evidence to support the overarching theme of the book could have been added. Overall, this book is a must read for anyone who

seeks to understand Egyptian history and key players who helped shape the divisiveness of the Middle East. In an era where history is being glossed over, this book serves its purpose by telling the story of a nation with a rich past and figures who set the stage for what was to come in the Arab world.



Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2016
304 pages
$34.95

China's Quest for Great Power: Ships, Oil, and Foreign Policy

By Bernard D. Cole

Reviewed by June Teufel Dreyer, professor, Department of Political Science, University of Miami

As indicated by its title, this book examines three major intertwined elements of China's national security policy: naval power, energy security, and foreign policy, with an emphasis on the first. The author is superbly qualified to undertake the topic, capping off a distinguished naval career by becoming a professor at the National War College. This is his eighth book.

Cole first considers the geographic realities of China's situation, referencing British author Halford Mackinder's early nineteenth-century analysis that the country that rules the World-Island—the interconnected continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, beginning with the Heartland of the Eurasian landmass—commands the world. Mackinder's formulation might, observes Cole, be reformulated for the twenty-first century as using sea power to control land power. He considers 2015 a watershed, with a military strategy released in that year by China stating that "the traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned, and great importance has to be attached to managing the seas and oceans and protecting maritime rights and interests." Nevertheless, the author notes, no seagoing force, whether naval or commercial, can operate without support from an extensive shore-based infrastructure. One might add that, by including a significant land component to its ambitious One Belt, One Road scheme—the belt stretching from eastern to western China and across central Asia to Europe—Beijing seems to be striving to dominate both the heartland and the sea at the same time.

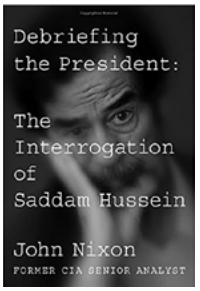
While giving due credit to the impressive achievements in Chinese naval power, Cole notes that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) must find a way to secure a sufficient share of the country's budget to continue modernizing and expanding. Among other obstacles to this is overcoming the power of the country's army, which has historically been the largest and best funded of its services. There are also complicated organizational issues arising from President Xi Jinping's sweeping 2015 reorganization of the armed forces into five operational theaters while the navy retains control of its three fleets. An additional challenge is that recruiting qualified personnel into the increasingly technologically sophisticated navy entails competing with the country's burgeoning civilian hi-tech industries. The traditional Chinese belief that just as "one does not use good iron to make nails, one does not use good men for soldiers" adds another layer of difficulty, as does the recently abandoned, but decades-long, one-child policy—parents are reluctant to surrender their only child to a potentially dangerous profession.

With regard to energy, Cole predicts that, barring some major petroleum discovery, China's dependence on imported oil and natural gas will continue increasing annually, which will also increase the importance of the sea lines over which the petroleum products pass. Coal is plentiful but is low-grade and hence worsens the country's already appalling environmental pollution. China is estimated to have the world's second-largest shale oil reserves and its third-largest shale natural gas reserves, but access is a different matter: they are inconveniently located and the large amounts of water required for extraction would worsen the already severe water shortages facing the country.

Due to the continued need for energy imports, foreign policy takes on an added dimension of importance. China has gone as far afield as Africa, Latin America, and the Arctic to secure oil and natural gas, as well as asserting its claims over large swaths of the South China and East China Seas. The author first addresses the numerous players in China's foreign policy apparatus, describing it as a scrum rather than precision marching (174). This is a curious statement, given the commanding role Xi Jinping has assumed in foreign as well as domestic policy. Not everyone is as confident as Cole that the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea will be effective, since immediately after it was signed China's chief negotiator stated that the country would not necessarily observe it, depending on circumstances (211). A significant omission is mention of the PLA's Three Warfares (psychological, public opinion, and legal, aka "lawfare") and the part they play in strategy. It is misleading to say that Beijing is determined to "reunite Taiwan with the PRC" since Taiwan was never a part of the PRC but rather of Manchu dynasty China (167–68). And Tokyo did not cede Taiwan back to China in 1945: in a purposefully artful evasion, the Japanese government simply renounced its claim to the island (185). These quibbles, almost inevitable in a work of so broad a scope, should not be allowed to detract from the value of the volume.

Cole concludes that, if PLAN is to achieve its goal of having a world-class navy, and perhaps the world's most powerful navy, by the hundredth anniversary of China's founding in 2049, it must address serious shortfalls. Although the past eight years of deployments to the Gulf of Aden and beyond have taught the navy much about conducting distant deployments, PLAN continues to lack operational experience. Its employment of airpower at sea, and particularly that of ship-based helicopters, is still nascent. PLAN will also need to place more officers in the top command structure of the PLA as a whole. Like other branches, it must deal with widespread corruption. The dual political-operational structure inherited from Maoist days continues to blur lines of command, there is an overabundance of noncombatant headquarters, and the noncommissioned officer corps is still under development. Defense publications frequently reference shortfalls in training as well as issues involving the integration of naval forces with air and land power. Moreover, other countries' navies are also increasing their reaches, both singly and in concert with others, in order to ensure that they are able to counter challenges from the Chinese navy. All these must be dealt with before the PLAN can make the transition from a navy with regional capability to one with global capabilities.

Defense Studies



New York: Blue Rider, 2016
256 pages
$14.76

Debriefing the President: The Interrogation of Saddam Hussein

By John Nixon

Reviewed by Dr. Christopher Bolan, professor of Middle East security studies, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

John Nixon unexpectedly found himself at the forefront of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) interrogation efforts immediately after United States forces pulled deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from a cramped and dirty spider hole where he had been hiding near his hometown of Tikrit in December 2003. In a matter-of-fact tone, Nixon relays the personal story of his 13 years as a CIA senior leadership analyst who served multiple stints in Iraq.

As a whole, Nixon provides an insightful firsthand account of the search for, and subsequent debriefing of, this notorious and brutal Iraqi leader. The book was vetted and cleared by the CIA with some phrases and occasionally entire paragraphs having been redacted as a result. However, these minor deletions do not detract from the book's overall readability or diminish the strength of Nixon's narrative.

The book is best at providing insights into Saddam's perspectives of regional developments surrounding the US military intervention during 2003. According to Saddam's account, he was totally perplexed by shifting US policies toward his leadership in Baghdad—celebrated as an effective Sunni bulwark against the expansion of revolutionary Shiite Iran after the Iranian Revolution of 1978–79, vilified after his invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and then ultimately ousted by American military forces in 2003.

Moreover, in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Saddam was absolutely mystified that leaders in Washington did not see him as a useful, secular Arab ally in the fight against Islamic extremism. In this regard, Nixon observes that Saddam sounded especially prescient warnings about the scale of the threat posed by this radical Islamic ideology: "Wahhabism is going to spread in the Arab nation and probably faster than anyone expects. And the reason why is that people will view Wahhabism as an idea and a struggle . . . Iraq will be a battlefield for anyone who wants to carry arms against America. And now there is an actual battlefield for a face-to-face confrontation" (4).

Nixon also usefully fills in important details in Saddam's personal background—in particular, his self-aggrandizing perception of himself as a historical, valiant, and noble defender of the Iraqi people, and Arab nations more broadly; his superb ability to manipulate internal Iraqi politics for his own benefit; and his perennial and intense distrust of Iran and Israel.

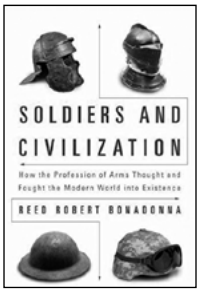
Unfortunately, readers will find that these debriefings of Saddam contribute little to understanding other important issues such as the extent of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs. On this issue,

Saddam refused to admit any substantive knowledge and repeatedly advanced unbelievable claims that he had delegated the authority to employ chemical weapons in attacks that killed tens of thousands of Iranians and Iraqi Kurds during the war with Iran from 1980–88 to local Iraqi commanders. Nixon admits Saddam's silence on this score was likely intended to avoid indicting himself for war crimes. For some reason, however, Nixon appears wholly persuaded by Saddam's rather unconvincing claims that he was increasingly disengaged from Iraq's foreign policy decision-making, even as the crisis with international inspectors and the United States was peaking prior to the US invasion.

Nixon also gives a surprisingly substantive description of his White House briefings to President George W. Bush that many readers might well find entertaining and informative. Nixon recalls the weeks of research and preparations, paper drafting, and murder boards leading up to the Oval Office meeting itself as well as the production of an associated Presidential Daily Briefing that would be used as a read ahead for the president. This process will sound familiar to those who have been involved in senior-level briefings. Nixon also ably describes the personal pressures and strains he experienced when the president either confronted his assessment directly or when discussions veered from the narrow confines of the scheduled topic.

One of the least informative aspects of this book includes Nixon's obvious distain for the senior leadership of the CIA, as well as those of other government agencies. Perhaps inherent to an account written from the narrow perch of an individual working at a relatively low level of government, Nixon is quick to dismiss the perspectives of higher ups—for instance, the manager of the CIA Iraq team is characterized as a "schmoozer" because he "provided simplified material that was easy for policymakers to understand . . . with the sycophantic touch of an experienced bureaucratic player" (37). But is providing digestible intelligence to US policymakers not the central purpose of the CIA analysis? Similarly, Nixon complains loudly about the cultural divide between the operational and the analytic arms of the CIA. Unfortunately, the accounts come across more as the sour grapes of a disgruntled employee rather than a thoughtful reflection on the need for internal CIA reforms to bridge this divide.

Ultimately, the book never convincingly fulfills its expressed purpose of examining "what the war accomplished and what it all meant" (9–10). Those calculations will need to be made by scholars, military historians, and foreign policy practitioners with deeper expertise and broader regional and international perspectives than Nixon can bring to bear. But this goal was never a realistic one. No number of interviews with a lone, deposed, and isolated Arab dictator was ever going to answer these wide-ranging questions from an American perspective. Nonetheless, Nixon makes a genuine contribution to the literature on the Iraq War (2003–11) by shedding light on the thinking and the attitudes of the ruthless leader who remained at the pinnacle of power in Baghdad and who managed to attract both the support and ire of the United States over the course of several decades.



Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2017
341 pages
$27.95

Soldiers and Civilization: How the Profession of Arms Thought and Fought the Modern World into Existence

By Reed Robert Bonadonna

Reviewed by James D. Scudieri, PhD, chief, Military History Institute, US Army Heritage and Education Center

This work is vastly ambitious. It encompasses the accomplishments of armies as a profession from Classical Greece to today, including ethics, doctrine, organization, training, and societal contexts. The introduction explains military professionalism in seven elements: knowledge, cognition, beliefs, compensation, communication, leadership, and both trust and character. Eight numbered chapters examine soldiers and civilizations from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century. The conclusion brings the story to the present. These are no superficial surveys.

Classical Greeks were amateurish, but fused soldier-citizens. The focus on the Persian Wars is a bit confusing and at the cost of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides receives bare mention. The Macedonians appear as other Greeks. Alexander the Great garners very high marks in leadership and skills, but without any discussion of ethical and other professional shortfalls. The Macedonians were the exceptional professionals as were the Spartans.

Similarly, the Romans attained a very high degree of professionalism with unprecedented organization across three periods. Roman engineering skill was a strategic resource. Interestingly, the author sees an ethics of restraint related to the period of imperial defense. A timeless challenge is maintaining a balance between citizenship and high military skill. Rome's breakdown traced to leaders and their policies. Julius Caesar is "an exemplary military professional" without consideration of his dismantling of what was left of the late Roman Republic. Perhaps the chapter's greatest point is the centrality of the very idea of Rome.

"Late Antiquity" covers the traditional Dark Ages to 1000 CE, contrasting Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. Charlemagne's reign facilitated the rehabilitation of the soldier from warrior to symbol of service and loyalty. The Middle Ages proceed from circa 1000 CE with professional Western knights, some with education, in the context of larger, more capable political units. Chivalry balanced reality and idealism. The text would benefit from a deeper analysis of castles.

The "Early Modern" chapter has an extended chronology. Aggressive international politics included societal changes in the form of revolutions in knowledge and belief. Other revolutions concern the changes which gunpowder wrought. The text integrates how the Reformation's lack of restraint degraded a soldier's status. They had to (re)discover restraint and show a new knowledge of the latest technology and characteristics of warfare. Central was the development of Westphalian states in Europe, allowing chivalric revival with an ethos of national service. The 1st duke of Marlborough here is a "model of a Restoration general" without reference to core professional, civil-military relations. Marlborough led the army to abandon its monarch, James II, in 1688. What were and are the ethical dimensions for the profession?

The eighteenth century was the heyday of the general notion of limited war during the Enlightenment. The text generally surveys it well, concluding with the legacy of a military profession close to modern form. Examples are a noncommissioned officer corps and the attributes of a "good officer." Naturally, Frederick the Great looms large, without questioning his aggressive Silesian Wars. Unique is the inclusion of Empress Maria Theresa, highlighting her successes amid great challenges to streamline military reforms uniformly. But did she abandon limited war to wage the Seven Years' War in 1756–63? Did Frederick face an unabashed existential threat to Prussia's future? Finally, much of George Washington's professional ethos is not discussed.

A single chapter on the nineteenth century is hard-pressed to range from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars to the brink of the First World War. Napoleon's focus on decisive battle within a single campaign enthralls; yet there is no discussion of its few successes beyond the battlefield. The text captures the attempts of military professionals to learn from Napoleon, to adapt to change, especially technical, and to institutionalize excellence. Unfortunately, it repeats old myths. The notion that popular frenzy forced politicians to wage an unnecessary Crimean War and that an atrophied British army under incompetent aristocrats bungled its way does not stand in the face of the evidence. The myths of the American Civil War as a first for technologies continue: "The use of trains . . . was pioneered in the Civil War" goes without reference to the thousands of French and Austrian troops moved by rail in 1859. Prussian coverage emphasizes the 1870 triumph over France, but not across the entire formative period. The chapter cites the attainment of full professionalism within the context of the times.

The twentieth century is covered in 55 pages. The First World War appears only on the "Western Front." Unmentioned are the tensions between civilian political leaders who would not negotiate and the military professionals who sought victory over bloody stalemate. The discussion does not tap into the plethora of historical inquiries into the bona fide attempts to find technological, tactical, and operational solutions. There is also some confusion on relationships between WW I, the interwar period, and early World War II. The Axis and Germany are synonyms. A perpetual, inaccurate stereotype is that the French fought the Campaign of 1940 obsessed with the Maginot Line.

More importantly, why did the vaunted German blitzkrieg have so few successes—fewer than Napoleon's decisive battles? This omission is significant in the context of an examination of military professionalism, despite the indictment for supporting Nazism. The American military scores high marks: rapid expansion with numerous leadership challenges, and unprecedented integration of scholar, scientist, and soldier. There is a look at the "new breed of special operations units," strategic air warfare, and the United States Marine Corps amphibious warfare.

The post-WW II portion of the chapter covers the Cold War, changes in conventional warfare, and the need for counterinsurgency to combat wars of national liberation. The emphasis is the professionals' ability to avoid nuclear war. There is no examination of American military professionalism by the end of the Persian Gulf War.

The conclusion on the twenty-first century leaves the reader with questions, such as a "race between learning and forgetting" and specific requirements to reform American officer education. Strains in civil-military relations spike during humanitarian assistance, but especially nation building. While the Marine Corps features often, the Army does not, despite larger successes. There is a narrow, shallow selection of sources regarding the profession's excessive toleration of misbehavior and mediocrity. The mistaken notion that there was no planning for governance and stability in the Iraq War continues.

There is a lost opportunity to tie together the text as a whole and to pose a challenge. Professional militaries have trumpeted decisive battle, blitzkrieg, and AirLand Battle as war-winning strategies, but most have failed. Is the American military profession postured to face the challenges beyond 2020 with the Army's espousal of unified land operations?

This review has proven quite frustrating. The author lacked sufficient space. Hence the book missed opportunities to focus more effectively on the theme of professionalism. The research is impressive, a concerted effort to feed a freewheeling inquiry. Unfortunately, several areas missed key sources, resulting in the perpetuation of certain, major stereotypes and misperceptions.

Its shortcomings notwithstanding, this work is important. Few would attempt such a sweeping analysis over two millennia with military professionalism as the central question. Fewer still will do so in the future. Try this one. Think on it—and add your thoughts to the discussion.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017
318 pages
$27.95

Enemies Known and Unknown: Targeted Killings in America's Transnational Wars

By Jack McDonald

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Jack McDonald, the author of *Enemies Known and Unknown*, is a research associate and teaching fellow at the Centre for Science and Security Studies, in the Department of War Studies, King's College London. He also holds a PhD in War Studies from the same institution and has a research focus primarily on "the philosophical questions underlying the regulation of warfare both in the present and the past." This work is his second academic book and is directly related thematically to his very recent *Ethics, Law and Justifying Targeted Killings: The Obama Administration at War* (Routledge, 2016). The research and writing of the book was supported by a grant provided to the author by the Economic and Social Research Council—a United Kingdom nondepartmental public body (ix).

The work addresses the post-September 11, 2001 world in which transnational war—specifically against elements of the al-Qaeda network—is being waged by the United States via targeted killings that are facilitated by the use of armed drones in an extrajudicial manner (7). The work contains a preface, an introduction—providing an initial vignette discussing Predator drone use in the Balkans—nine chapters of research and analysis, an afterword, an extremely well referenced

end notes section, and an index. The first half of the work concerns perspectives on transnational war and the second half looks at targeted killings and their effects (9). Chapters focus on (1) war, warfare, and law; (2) the political concept of war vis-à-vis the law of armed conflict; (3) law/legal argument impacts on politics/policy decisions relating to war/armed conflict; (4) the role of law and normative values related to attrition and targeted killings of al-Qaeda personnel; (5) America's pluralist views on liberal values and human rights obligations which are in variance with the opinions of many of its close allies; (6) the rule of law as a constitutive element related to the use of targeted killings by the United States; (7) the targeting of known and unknown individuals by means of "personality strikes" and "signature strikes" respectively; (8) civilian agency within areas of drone-strike operations and their attempts at protecting themselves from harm; and (9) an analysis of the preceding chapters as they relate to the war against the Islamic State.

Throughout the book chapters, which are both descriptive and analytical in nature, the author ties in his thematic arguments. These relate to the constructivist approach followed in the work related to the "the construction of categories of permissible violence, the role of knowledge and truth in these categories, and how they can inform our study of US strategy and warfare" (viii). The main argument derived from this approach is that the status quo use of violence embraced by the Obama administration—derived from an adherence to the rule of law—is in some ways more disturbing than that of the policies of the earlier Bush administration.

Critiques of the work are relatively benign and perhaps oblique. The first is that, even today, constructivism—with its European roots—represents an analytical approach that is in variance with more traditional American international relations perspectives formed around neorealism and neoliberalism. While each has a place, this focus of the work may not sit well with older military officers and scholars who still find realist—or perhaps a better term is rationalist—approaches in this area to have more resonance. Thus, it may be a hard sell to this audience.

A second comment relates to the author's two very similar books, based on his Obama administration research, published within the same time frame. McDonald is no doubt facing the "publish or perish" dilemma all career academics must contend with but it begs the question whether the nuanced emphases of his two books—the cohesive or hypocritical administration arguments related to the uses of armed drones and the paradoxes inherent in an administration promoting the rule of law and democracy vis-à-vis the undertaking of extrajudicial killings—require both to be read to gain a broader knowledge in this subject matter. Personally, I find this Oxford University Press work the stronger of the two and it may suffice unless one has a specialized interest in the topical areas.

In summation, *Enemies Known and Unknown* is a thoroughly researched, balanced, and well-written constructivist work that has utility for the student of war. It has immediate relevance for military officers and defense community scholars who must grapple with new forms of war and our enemies who utilize them as well as our conduct of military operations and emerging interpretations of international law related to armed conflict. Further, it leaves us reflecting upon the contradictions

and concerns of our ever-increasing reliance on stand-off drone strikes against shadowy transnational enemies:

> We need the government to work in a legitimate fashion because the contemporary world has no shortage of people and states that are hostile to both democracy and its values. Defending a democratic way of life requires some organisations to work in secret, it requires political leaders to make life-and-death decisions on the basis of fragmentary evidence and it also sometimes requires violence. Where to set the standards for accommodating this within the rule of law is up to us (251).

In a world of rising nonstate radicalism and state authoritarianism, this passage underlines a key consideration of our age: how do we effectively defend our nation and its constitutional liberties without in the process becoming like the monsters, some real and some presumably constructed, striking us from the darkness.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017
282 pages
$34.95

Soft War: The Ethics of Unarmed Conflict

Edited by Michael L. Gross and Tamar Meisels

Reviewed by C. Anthony Pfaff, research professor for the military profession and ethics, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

In *Soft War*, Michael Gross and Tamar Meisels have assembled an important volume addressing aspects of military ethics that are underserved by standard just war accounts as well as international humanitarian law (IHL), which primarily address the use of lethal force by state and nonstate actors.

One way to think about the problem the authors pose is this: nonlethal means—whether cyber, economic, media, or others—have the ability to significantly disrupt civil life. While much of that activity is experienced as a nuisance, as Jessica Wolfendale observes in her chapter "Defining War," once that disruption reaches a level that threatens civilians' ability to meet basic needs, it has reached the level of war.

Certainly cybermeans raise such concerns, as George Lucas discusses in his chapter on state sponsored "hacktivism." But the authors in the volume address a much wider range of "soft war measures" including economic sanctions, restrictions on trade, propaganda, media warfare, lawfare, extortion as well as restrictions on liberty, including kidnapping and hostage taking. While such means can cause loss of life and damage to infrastructure as second and third order effects, such as coalition sanctions on Iraq in the 1990s, they do not have to in order to have the same coercive effect as lethal means normally associated with warfighting. In this way, soft war measures do not fall short of war as much as they are a part of, or in lieu of, "hard" war.

Moreover, as Lucas notes, while one single nonlethal attack would not likely rise to the level of war, effects of such attacks can accumulate until one has suffered "death by a thousand cuts." Thus more concerning than an unlikely cyber "Pearl Harbor," are the cumulative effects that things like theft of state and proprietary secrets, interference with trade,

commerce and finance, exploitation of domestic and international laws to constrain an adversary's response—all of which can be accompanied by an effective information campaign—can have on the outcome of a conflict, without a shot being fired. Such means raise a number of questions regarding their permissible use.

The fact such means are nonlethal raises questions whether the conventional rules of war apply. Gross and Valerie Morkevicius argue that even with "soft" means one should still discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate targets, limit collateral harm, and consider proportionality. However, both argue that what counts as legitimate, collateral, and proportional is different. For Gross, the employment of nonlethal means suggests civilians can be liable to nonlethal measures based on the contribution they make to the enemy's war effort. Morkevičius argues that intentional, nonlethal, targeting of civilians is morally preferable when the alternative is the use of lethal tactics that may still result in their deaths, however unintentional that may be.

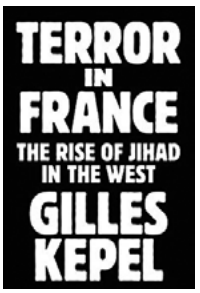
The chapters on economic measures are also informative. In general, the authors who took up economic sanctions, especially Joy Gordon, felt that indiscriminate sanctions that disrupted civil life were always wrong. However, sanctions on nonessential goods as well as "smart sanctions" that targeted organizations and individuals closely associated with causing or prosecuting the conflict were permissible, though she acknowledged their efficacy has historically been limited. Cécil Fabre's chapter on "conditional sales" offered an alternative to sanctions, where states may withhold or sell at a premium some kind of commodity an adversary state may need in order to compel it to address one's legitimate concerns.

Also of particular interest were Laurie Blank's and Sebastian Kaempf's articles on media in soft war. Blank notes the complementary effect media operations can have on how various audiences perceive the use of force. While not lethal itself, media operations can shape the narrative associated with the use of lethal force to enhance the legitimacy of one's own operations or the illegitimacy of the enemy's. Doing so, however, raises some concerns. To the extent a party to a conflict portrays otherwise compliant uses of force as noncompliant, they paradoxically risk eroding adherence to IHL or encouraging abuse of the law, such as the use of human shields, which exploits prohibitions on targeting noncombatants. Janina Dill, in her chapter on lawfare, poses a similar concern regarding the abuse of IHL, and notes such exploitation risks undermining adherence to those laws.

Kaempf's concern seems to be the mirror image of Blank's. Rather than the discouraging effect the media coverage can have on compliance, he is concerned about the sanitizing effect on the killing itself, which obscures the costs of war and sometimes covers up war crimes. Moreover, he observes, that while instantaneous nature of media coverage has had the effect of encouraging compliance with IHL by the United States and others, it also encourages downplaying the actual harm done. He further notes media has had the opposite effect on the Islamic State, which uses it to publicize its atrocities as a means to terrorize. Given the critical role media plays as a "soft weapon," then it may be time to develop better rules for regulating its use.

The book also addresses the role nonviolence can play in shaping and resolving a conflict. As James Pattison, Christopher Finlay, and Cheyney Ryan argue, the employment of nonviolence, whether in protest of some injustice or as unarmed peacekeepers, conveys a legitimacy that may make these measures preferable to violence, and perhaps more effective. To the extent that efficacy can be demonstrated, then such means can become morally preferable, if not obligatory. Such an obligation would have a profound impact on how states organize for war.

Taken together, this volume addresses an aspect of national security that is underrepresented not just in military ethics and law, but in practical discussions regarding how to fight wars well. Thus, the concerns these authors raise expand the kinds of ethical considerations academics and practitioners ought to take into account when employing the means associated with soft war, whether integrated into a "hard war" strategy or used in lieu of lethal force.



Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017
217 pages
$29.95

Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West

By Gilles Kepel

Reviewed by Dr. W. Andrew Terrill, professor emeritus, US Army War College

Gilles Kepel is one of Europe's leading scholars of radical Islamist groups, and interested readers can virtually always assume that his work is going to be compelling and valuable. In this notable volume, he addresses problems the French government has faced in fighting terrorism as well as governmental shortcomings in fostering the assimilation of Muslim immigrants and citizens. Muslims emerged as an important segment of the French population following the conclusion of the 1954–62 Algerian war, when many of these people fled Algeria, often becoming residents of impoverished French banlieues (suburbs) where their opportunities for employment or education were limited. New French-born generations of Muslims, unlike many of their parents, are French citizens and have often been especially angry over discrimination and the lack of opportunity within their society. Kepel also notes that various nationalist politicians, and most especially members of Marine Le Pen's National Front, have been highly confrontational towards Muslim citizens. According to Kepel, this problem has been further compounded by some mainstream politicians such as former president Nicolas Sarkozy, whom he describes as willing to move his rhetoric and agenda closer to the extreme French right in the hope of siphoning National Front votes.

Kepel maintains that a milestone event in the rise of Islamic radicalism and terrorism in France was the December 2004 internet publication of the 1,600-page volume, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* by jihadist theorist Abu Musab al-Suri. This work put forward a new strategy that viewed Europe's "poorly integrated" younger generation of Muslims as the preferred instrument for waging war against the West (10). Although al-Suri had worked with Osama bin Laden, he had little use for his tactics of seeking spectacular attacks, which he saw as those of a leader "intoxicated by his own image in the media" (23). Rather than follow bin Laden's lead, the Syrian ideologue sought to incite

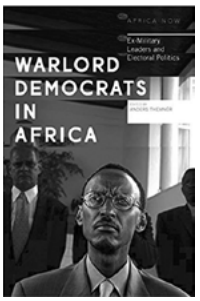
civil war in Europe by radicalizing and inspiring poor, marginalized, and rebellious Muslim youth who could be trained in basic terrorism skills, often over the internet. Many of the young Muslims successfully recruited by al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) knew very little about Islam, but they had developed a sense of victimhood over problems that they attributed to discrimination. Some of them had serious criminal records or lives of delinquency, gang culture, and petty crime. Such young and confused people can sometimes be influenced by the highly professional internet propaganda developed by ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their supporters. Kepel also states that many young, nominally Muslim criminals later became radicalized in French prison.

Kepel asserts, "France holds the absolute record for exporting jihadists from the European Union" to a variety of countries but most notably to Syria (189). Syria is sometimes especially alluring to jihadists because of its paramount place in radical Muslim eschatological literature, and it is currently a near perfect environment for nurturing violent extremism. Many contemporary jihadists view Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as representing al-Dajjal, who is sometimes described as Islam's version of the anti-Christ, and thus one of humanity's greatest enemies. In a possible preview of a forthcoming genocide (should ISIS win the war in Syria), Kepel quotes a popular jihadist internet propagandist as describing Assad's 'Alawite sect as "apostates more infidel than Christians and the Jews" who must be addressed by a "final solution" (129). It is difficult to be any clearer than that. Unfortunately for French Muslims who are inspired to travel to Syria by this rhetoric, ISIS often views them as too inexperienced to have much military value and sometimes assigns them to suicide missions, which they may perform with the aid of Captagon, an amphetamine in wide use by that organization. Nevertheless, those recruits who remain alive and manage to gain military skills sometimes return to France, where they are substantially more dangerous than when they left.

Kepel is caustically critical of the French government and security establishment for their failures to address or even understand the problems associated with radical Islam. He suggests that French leaders have often used a strategy that relies on their own prejudices and the advice of "pseudoexperts" and laments the decline of French universities from their once prominent position in the field of Islamic studies (189). He also maintains that Western intelligence was slow to recognize new modes of radicalization, which involved increasing reliance on well-produced action videos on the internet. French security forces instead focused on "traditional surveillance" and also "failed to see what was going on behind bars" (32). Kepel states that while the French security forces did well when jihadists were organized in a top-dominated "pyramidal" system, they are much less able to cope with a "net-based system" where planning is more defuse and lines of authority are often unclear (157).

In sum, this book is so rich with useful information and valuable analysis, it would be a shame to overlook it. Importantly, Kepel notes that Islamic radicalism is likely to remain a problem in France so long as the government and society fail to improve the educational and employment conditions for young Muslims while avoiding overexcited French identity politics. He seems to view radical Islam as a vehicle

for opposition by confused youth, prison indoctrinated criminals, and various others at the angry margins of society. He even notes that the infamous terrorist known as Carlos the Jackal converted to radical Islam while serving a life sentence in a French prison, possibly because he viewed it as a stronger challenge to Western society than the Marxism of his youth. Still Kepel is focused on more than reform and demands that French security forces start to address the jihadist threat as it currently exists and not how it was structured and organized twenty years ago. Additionally, it is worth noting that Kepel's work provides many interesting insights important to non-French readers concerned with the problems of their own countries as well as the global terrorist threat.



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254 pages
$25.00

Warlord Democrats in Africa: Ex-Military Leaders and Electoral Politics

Edited by Anders Themnér

Reviewed by Whitney Grespin, peace operations analyst at the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) at the US Army War College

The collection of essays contained within *Warlord Democrats* examines ten transitions led by former combatants, or "warlord democrats," of nonstate groups who struggled to establish themselves as viable political actors in postconflict and complex environments. Given public demand for regular, multiparty elections across the continent in the postcolonial era and the prevailing notion that democracy is "the only game in town," participation in electoral competitions has become a popular route for ex-warlords to attempt to integrate into systems claiming to offer legitimate governance, thus allowing them to convert military power into political influence. Through this well edited volume, a diversity of case studies seeks to address whether these actors' participation in societies after a civil war has positive or negative effects, and what the manifestations of those effects have been across seven African states.

From the 1990s on, the international community's preference for using the democratic template in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations sought to impose a governance structure that would enhance stability. Yet many former warlords and rebel leaders have struggled in their pursuit of legitimacy within a formal state structure of governance. The transition from illegitimate to credible power brokerage has ranged from efforts to address and mitigate the root causes of conflict, to those who merely seek to maintain the immediate postconflict status quo to preserve their own positions of power. Four main explanatory factors emerge across the seven chapters to explain the warlords' freedom of action in a series of postconflict environments. These include electoral constraints, the capacity for warlords to misbehave, the expected cost of doing so, and personality traits that influence how they perceive and act on these considerations.

Each case study discusses these shaping factors via a structure/agency perspective, allowing the reader to observe the extent to which the individual exerts authority as either a free agent or within existing social contexts. In chapter 1, Judith Verweijen traces the postwar trajectories

of former leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Kisangani-Liberation Movement Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, who has showed unique prowess in quietly rekindling conflicts for the purposes of publicly resolving them. Chapter 2 sees Lars Waldorf focus on Rwanda's Paul Kagame and his quest to centralize power in Rwanda after the genocide. In chapter 3, Carrie Manning and Anders Themnér analyze the behavior of two Liberian former military leaders as they seek to navigate elections. Chapter 4 has Alex Vines tracing the country's transition from war to peace via a former Mozambican National Resistance Movement leader's efforts to ensure continued political relevance. In chapter 5, Henrik Vigh follows Guinea-Bisseau's multifaceted João Bernardo Vieira before chapter 6's Mimmi Soderberg Kovacs and Ibrahim Bangura compare the experiences of three Sierra Leonean warlords after the civil war. Johan Brosche and Kristine Hoglund's chapter 7 investigates the political maneuverings of South Sudan's Riek Machar, who played a pivotal role in cementing his party's dominance in political and economic spheres after the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. This is followed by Anders Themnér's excellent concluding chapter, which compares the postwar experiences of the ten individuals analyzed in this volume and offers prescriptive commentary on how best to navigate the half decade following the conclusion of open hostilities, the period within which civil war relapse is most likely to occur.

As with many multiauthor volumes, there is some discontinuity in the collection's tone. Some chapters possessed more value-added analysis than others, which instead veered toward historical recitation. Out of necessity, the book also bore a proliferation of acronyms and actors, which sometimes made for dense reading. A density of acronyms and briefly introduced complex sociopolitical dynamics may preclude this book from acting as an introductory work to the case studies. To its credit, the book offers diversity of chapters from some providing background on well-known figures such as Prince Johnson of Liberia and Paul Kagame of Rwanda, to others providing apparently original analysis of the origins and motivations of lesser-known "strong men" such as Alfonso Dhlakama of Mozmbique, Riek Machar of South Sudan, and João Bernardo "Nino" Vieira of Guinea-Bissau.

On the African continent, successful transitions to legitimate governance are rare. The essays document kleptocracies, criminalization of the political system, extractive exploitation, human rights abuses, and capitalization on social, political, and economic cleavages that already existed within their fragile states. Even reflecting on implications of leadership outside of the ruler's home territory, author Lars Waldorf recognized that Kagame's contribution to multilateral interventions on the continent was not wholly altruistic and notes that "for one thing, it keeps his soldiers busy outside Rwanda" (74).

A footnote reveals that Kagame has also used Rwanda's provision of troops as leverage within the international community when he threatened the withdrawal of 3,300 Rwandan peacekeepers from Darfur in 2010 after a United Nations report documenting Rwandan crimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was leaked, undermining his own transformation into a peacelord by strong-arming the international community into capitulating to his wishes. Further, this book's detailed look at the aftermath of such engagements is both timely and salient to

other contemporary scholarship and touches on some of the follow-on repercussions of international sponsorship of foreign military training—both Rwanda's Kagame and Liberia's Johnson via the United States as well as Guinea-Bissau's Vieira via China.

The volume does, however, offer a few glimmers of hope. One of the few successful transitions of power can be credited to Liberian politician and former rebel leader Sekou Conneh, who after losing an election was, "Gracious in defeat and acted in a statesmanlike manner when he called on the supporters of the opposition to accept the results and uphold peace. . . . After his electoral defeat Conneh left the political scene and went back to being a businessman" (109). Observing this rare, but exemplary behavior, editor Anders Themnér wrote in his concluding essay that "the best chance to support peace and democracy may be to transform 'warlords' into 'peacelords'" (222). Although this catchphrase tells us little about facilitating such a transformation, there is recognition that many of these figures played on their wartime credentials to mobilize support for their political agendas. Understanding how they capitalizied on their postelection accomplishments might also be useful to the design of postconflict political civil society engagement strategies.

Themnér's editorial prowess in securing such diverse, thoughtful contributions is evident. So is the volume's overall call for further attention to the role such transitioning "strong men" can play in shaping democratization and peacebuilding after civil war. This work's examination of patron-client relationships is essential reading for any individual interested in postconflict stabilization and the reintegration of former state adversaries within state governing structures.

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