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On Strategic Foundations
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Our 2019 Spring/Summer issue of *Parameters* features three forums. In the first forum, *A2/AD Myths: Chinese & Russian*, Sam Tangredi’s “Anti-Access Strategies in the Pacific: The United States and China” puts Beijing’s A2/AD capabilities in perspective and encourages the United States to consider developing an anti-access strategy of its own to deter possible Chinese aggression in the South China Sea. Keir Giles and Mathieu Boulegue’s “Russia’s A2/AD Capabilities: Real and Imagined,” explode some of the myths concerning Russia’s A2/AD capabilities and recommend ways to promote a stronger defense of the Baltic states and Eastern Europe.

The second forum, *Enhancing Security & Stability*, considers how to address emerging and periodic challenges in regional and functional stability. In “Human Security in the Arctic: Implications for the US Army,” Tony Pfaff explains the growing importance of Arctic security for Army strategists. The challenges of climate change will require the Army, including the Alaska National Guard, to reallocate forces to this important region. In “Projecting Stability: A Deployable NATO Police Command,” Massimo Pani and Karen Finkenbinder propose methods NATO could use to project a stability force to crisis situations within 5 days, to be augmented with additional police forces and command elements within 30 days.

Our third forum, *On Strategic Foundations*, offers two articles that explore the reliability of some of the conceptual foundations of our strategic thinking. Richard Lacquement Jr. discusses the use of historical analogies as one of humanity’s most important adaptive techniques in “Analogical Thinking: The Sine Qua Non for Using History Well.” He suggests pattern recognition may aid in clarifying context and in guiding action in unfamiliar intellectual terrain. In “Reconsidering Sun Tzu,” John Sullivan challenges readers to be more critical of orthodox interpretations of Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*. After all, the unexamined theory is not worth teaching. ~AJE
A2/AD Myths: Chinese & Russian

Anti-Access Strategies in the Pacific:
The United States and China

Sam J. Tangredi

ABSTRACT: This article reviews the elements of anti-access strategies the United States and China might use in the event the latter begins to project power out from the South China Sea region. Requirements for the US Army to plan for land-based forces and the US Navy to contain China effectively in the first and second island chains are also provided.

The idea that China will employ an anti-access strategy against the United States has become conventional wisdom.¹ Most sources apply the term anti-access/area denial—or more frequently its acronym “A2/AD”—to describe the type of campaign China would conduct. The concept also corresponds to China’s goal of being able to win a regional war under high-technology conditions and “winning informationized local wars.”²

Indeed, for the past three decades, China has invested in combat systems—sensors, weapons, and battle management—optimized for an anti-access campaign against America’s forward-based forces projecting power in the region. Such systems include satellites for covering maritime areas, backscatter radars, intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) with anti-ship targeting capabilities, long-range cruise missiles, land-based maritime-capable bombers and attack aircraft, attack submarines, and advanced naval mines.³ Additionally, China has built artificial island bases over the awash features of the South China Sea. To be sure, China has also invested in ground-combat systems and amphibious assault capabilities, which would likely be necessary for a forcible annexation of Taiwan. But the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has prioritized its tremendous growth in military spending to its navy, air force, and rocket forces, while cutting army manpower.⁴

¹ For a typical example, see “Using Clever Technology To Keep Enemies at Bay,” Economist, January 25, 2018.
³ Andrew Krepinevich Jr., Barry Watts, and Robert Work, Meeting the Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenge (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2003); and Roger Cliff et al., Entering the Dragon’s Lair: Chinese Antiaccess Strategies and Their Implications for the United States (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007).
Nonetheless, its current posture toward anti-access does not mean China will stay with such a strategy after expanding its military. Since anti-access strategies are adopted by nations who perceive their potential opponents as strategically superior, China is likely to shift defense resources away from A2/AD systems and toward power projection and expansion capabilities once this perception of inferiority dissipates. Indeed, China is preparing to make this shift.\(^5\) This change will obviously affect US strategy toward the western Pacific, particularly in the East and South China Seas.

American forces are now focused on penetrating the A2/AD network designed to extend the PLA’s ability to contest American sea and air control to the so-called first island chain. In such a struggle, US forces would be operating offensively. But a PLA power-projection capability—comprised of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and People’s Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF)—that buttresses China’s existing A2/AD capabilities would put US forces on the operational defensive.

Current assessments indicate US forces can maintain sea control between the first island chain (the Aleutian Islands to the Philippines) and the second (the Japanese archipelago as well as the Bonin and Marshall Islands). But they would have a difficult fight for sea control within the first island chain. China claims its DF-26 intermediate-range missiles are capable of targeting US and allied bases in Guam, from the second chain, which is approximately 2,000 miles away.\(^6\) Moreover, the increasing range of China’s intermediate-range ballistic missiles forbids further expansion into the Pacific.\(^7\)

When this shift occurs, US forces may be required to adopt their own A2/AD posture—centered on the two island chains—to maintain the security of its alliance network in the western Pacific. In other words, the United States will have to shift its deterrence and warfighting strategy from breaking through the anti-access wall to creating its own barrier to confine China’s power projection within the island chains. The implications of a “mobile maritime barrier in the Asian seas” and the requirements of China’s strategic shift have only recently—and indirectly—been contemplated.\(^8\) Preliminary analysis of conflict scenarios in the western Pacific indicates there will be a greater requirement for land-based forces than originally envisioned. The air-sea battle may indeed change to an air-sea-land battle, but not in the way contemplated by the anemic Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons that replaced the Air-Sea Battle concept.

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The term A2/AD has become ubiquitous since its popularization over 15 years ago. It is used to describe practically all the military challenges—save counterterrorism and counterinsurgency—the United States has encountered since the Cold War. It is used as an adjective often to describe the types of weapons systems and networks expected to be used in an anti-access campaign and rarely to refer to underlying strategy.⁹

This ubiquity has recently caused some defense leaders to question the practical use of the term:

To some, A2AD is a code-word, suggesting an impenetrable ‘keep-out zone’ that forces can enter only at extreme peril to themselves. To others, A2AD refers to a family of technologies. To still others, a strategy. . . . The term “denial,” as in “anti-access/area denial” is too often taken as a fait accompli, when it is, more accurately, an aspiration. . . . the reality is much more complex. . . . but the threats are not insurmountable.10

Though A2/AD remains a standard term in the lexicon of defense debates, there is a significant divergence between anti-access as a strategy and A2/AD as shorthand for what may be described, at least initially, as asymmetric weapons systems designed to make a region unattainable. As a strategy, anti-access warfare focuses on driving a distant power out of one’s region, and optimizing one’s forces (and diplomatic and economic pursuits) to keep the distant power out. Thus, an anti-access strategy involves both a multidomain military campaign and an all-means-of-power effort to create a fait accompli.

Imperial Japan used such a strategy during the Pacific War. Judging incorrectly that its forces could prevent America from returning to the western Pacific until a negotiated armistice would allow Japan to retain its gains in China and the East Indies, the Imperial leadership chose to go to war with a much stronger, albeit distant, opponent. The attack on Pearl Harbor was not a prelude to an invasion of the Western Hemisphere but an attempt to destroy enough US forces to convince the Americans that returning to the Pacific would take too long and be too costly.

At the current time, and given the present “correlation of forces,” this strategy would include any forcible effort China makes to annex Taiwan or the territory of one of its other neighbors. In short, China would seek to drive America out of East Asia—or destroy US forces in place—and then use all tools, including effects on Wall Street and the global economy, to convince America to accept the new status quo.

One way to understand anti-access strategies is to identify their five fundamental elements: a strategically superior opponent; influential geography; maritime conflict; decisive information; and extrinsic events.

The perception of any opponent’s strategic superiority motivates an entity to adopt an anti-access strategy as a primary defense. This strategy does not mean the absence of offensive objectives, such as seizing territory or intimidating neighbors. In fact, such goals might be long-range intentions. Rather, an anti-access defense indicates a potential conflict is expected to involve an opponent of greater military, political, diplomatic, or economic power, possibly on a global scale.

Returning to the strategy of Imperial Japan during the Second World War, competent Japanese leaders—such as Fleet Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku—knew the United States was a strategically superior global

power. But they were committed to conquering the Asia-Pacific. This goal required driving US military forces out of the region, and ending America’s political, diplomatic, economic, and social influence in the western Pacific, including its possession of the Philippines. To protect these gains, Japan needed to create an anti-access barrier, fortified island chains and a powerful navy, to ensure the strategically superior, but now regionally ousted United States could not reenter the contested region.

The primacy of geography as an element that buys time for a defender and facilitates the attrition of an attacker is recognized in practice by all military planners and is certainly a major aspect of land warfare. Naval warfare is a bit different because of the vast expanses of flat maneuver space, which is why there is no strategic defensive in naval warfare. Without a barrier of islands (along with vast distances) in the western Pacific, Imperial Japan would have been hard pressed to adopt an anti-access posture against a US response to its conquests. Similarly, the islands and straits isolating the East and South China Seas from the vast maneuver space of the Pacific, allows China to adopt an anti-access strategy against potential military responses and the general political influence of the United States. Without vast distances of the Pacific, the maritime geography of relatively short distances from China to its neighbors would channel the US fleet as it reentered the first island chain.\footnote{Anthony H. Cordesman and Steven Colley, \textit{Chinese Strategy and Military Modernization in 2015: A Comparative Analysis} (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies [CSIS], 2015), 134.}

The maritime domain will be the main conflict space during an engagement between China and the United States. America lies across oceans from the areas of potential regional conflict. Thus, the sea, as well as the air and space above it, would be the predominant conflict space in any US counter anti-access contingency. But the second step to countering China would involve other domains.

In contrast, the determinative impact of extrinsic events is generally the element acknowledged least by those who conduct campaign- or tactical-level analysis of anti-access warfare. Yet, this factor is the most important. The current win-hold construct of building an American joint force that can defeat an opponent in one region while holding off another opponent in a different region until forces can be “swung,” does acknowledge simultaneous conflicts can occur. But events in other regions or in nonmilitary dimensions can have a profound impact on any conflict.

Research indicates most nations (or armed groups) that adopt an anti-access approach never actually defeat their strategically superior opponent in combat. Generally, the strategically superior power just quits fighting because the costs appear too high, especially when an event of even greater interest occurs elsewhere. Arguably, this affected US involvement in Vietnam. Similarly, Imperial Japan’s improbable alliance with racist Nazi Germany and tacit nonaggression agreement
with the Soviet Union can be understood as an effort to generate an extrinsic event (German victory in a war in Europe) to divert British, Dutch, French, and American attention and forces away from the western Pacific. Indeed, the French and Dutch could do little in the Pacific region and the United States, prompted by Britain, did adopt a Germany-first strategy.

**China’s Shifting Strategy**

The perception of superiority is the fulcrum on which the choice of adopting an anti-access posture tilts. For the present moment, the US Navy and US Air Force are perceived to be superior to China’s sea and air forces. Thus, the PLA has concentrated on developing asymmetric means to buttress China’s A2/AD posture—for example, the United States currently has no equivalents to Chinese IRBMs and anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs). But Chinese military literature acknowledges (albeit sometimes indirectly) the US Army’s greater experience, and by implication, capabilities in high-technology conditions. The tremendous victory in Operation Desert Storm promoted this perception and prompted the PLA’s revolution in military affairs.  

At the same time, however, China’s military buildup, which extends beyond A2/AD systems, has been tremendous and unrelenting. The Defense Intelligence Agency estimates Beijing increased the PLA budget by an average of 10 percent per year from 2000 to 2016. Comprehensive assessments based on programs and costs have proved elusive. But such estimates are difficult to compare with Western military budgets due to the lack of transparency and the lower wage scales and manpower costs that fuel the Chinese export economy. Nonetheless, many analysts have done so to provide reassuring assessments of America’s strategic superiority.

At the 19th Chinese National Congress of the Communist Party in October 2017, Chinese president and CCP leader Xi Jinping directed the PLA to “prepare for military struggle in all strategic directions.” He also set “three developmental benchmarks . . . becoming a mechanized force with increased informatized and strategic capabilities by 2020, a fully modernized force by 2035, and a worldwide first-class military by midcentury.” As part of this build-up, the PLA has acquired deployable weapon systems that US joint forces do not possess—the IRBMs and ASBMs previously described as well as orbiting anti-satellites (ASATs) and cruise missiles that increase to three times the speed of sound in terminal phase (Russian-designed SS-N-27). China has also shown a willingness to intersperse nuclear-armed missiles within conventional missile batteries, something Western decisionmakers would never contemplate.

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Moreover, China has increasingly demonstrated a willingness to deploy naval forces forward (anti-piracy patrols off East Africa) and establish forward bases (such as in Djibouti), activities once shunned as out of reach. And of course, it has built land bases on the disputed shoals of the South China Sea that harbor military aircraft, surface-to-air missile batteries, anti-ship cruise missiles, underground fuel tanks, and hardened weapons storage facilities. These activities indicate a growing focus on developing power-projection capabilities.

When viewed in isolation rather than as more abstract assessments of capabilities, these indicators seem less alarming: “The PLA is not close to catching up to the U.S. military in terms of aggregate capabilities, but it does not need to catch up to the United States to dominate its immediate periphery. The advantages conferred by proximity severely complicate U.S. military tasks while providing major advantages to the PLA.”

Yet, abstract assessments of capabilities reveal growth beyond parity and development of offensive capabilities with greater reach and greater numbers. During 2017, “The Chinese Navy became the world’s largest, with more warships and submarines than the United States, and it continues to build new ships at a stunning rate. Though the American fleet remains superior qualitatively, it is spread much thinner.” Some analysts quickly explain how vessel tonnage and quantity factor into the comparison.

Such responses neglect China’s effort to match US warships type-for-type and ability to build them at a faster rate. In 2015, China’s navy built its equivalent to the US Navy’s proprietary expeditionary transfer dock—despite the fact that the PLA does not yet have the expeditionary capabilities to use the vessel effectively. In 2018, China’s navy installed an apparent electromagnetic railgun, similar to the US railgun under development since 2005, on a warship for testing at sea. Debate has ensued whether China surpassed US development of this technology, which was originally intended for Zumwalt-class destroyers. Or perhaps, it is a deception for the propaganda value of being first.
Regardless, fleet size matters. Even if US ships remain more tactically capable than their Chinese counterparts, one ship cannot be in two locations at the same time. The PLAN fleet could exceed 400 battle force ships by 2030, while the US Navy will struggle to reach 355.\textsuperscript{22}

Such developments are not confined to seapower. China’s research into hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence have been widely trumpeted.\textsuperscript{23} Although PLA mechanization of land forces is behind that of the United States, a fact China has acknowledged, the PLA remains the world’s largest army. And since increased military capabilities eventually lead to shifts in military strategies, so will it be with China.

**America’s Anti-Access Posture**

If China is building superior strength to be a global, not just a regional military power, the logical focus in US strategy would be to deter China’s power projection by confining Beijing’s forces within the first and second island chains.\textsuperscript{24} American strategists perceive these chains to be areas in which US operating forces would be under great threat. But Chinese strategists originally perceived these features as potential barriers to their maritime access to the Pacific.\textsuperscript{25}

To make the Chinese perception into a reality, the US Navy needs to adopt a denial posture within the first island chain and establish defenses similar to the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap used during the Cold War: acoustic listening arrays; targetable mines; satellite and surface intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and frequent anti-submarine patrols by submarine, aircraft, and surface platforms (which can now include unmanned vehicles). Fortunately, geography favors this approach, since the first island chain is mostly made up of US treaty allies or de facto partners: South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore and Indonesia at the Strait of Malacca. The gaps between these allies are numerous. But the relatively small areas pale in comparison to open-ocean operations and the GIUK gap.

America’s anti-access posture would not be exclusively naval; nor would it have only maritime effects. Without unfettered ocean access, the PLA cannot move heavy land combat equipment or bulk supplies to out-of-area positions except at the sufferance of the United States.


\textsuperscript{24} Cordesman and Colley, *Chinese Strategy*, 134.

Some might see the change in US posture as ceding the South China Sea to China’s de facto control, with de jure control contested through Freedom of Navigation Program operations and routine air transit. Others, however, would view such a change as adjusting to reality.26 The US Marine Corps, reestablishing its maritime mission after decades of counterinsurgency, is already anticipating this stance.27 The US Army could also have a role supporting anti-access capabilities as opposed to countering A2/AD.28

**America’s Archipelagic Defense**

Throughout the A2/AD debate, the US Army has struggled to articulate its role in the joint campaign to counter China’s anti-access efforts. Once the Air-Sea Battle concept started to gain steam in the attempt to optimize US Navy and US Air Force resources to counter China’s growing A2/AD capabilities, particularly in the South China Sea, the US Army staff (and to a lesser extent Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps) started to get nervous. Counterterrorism had crept into the mission of nation building in never previously unified states, with mixed results. Countering A2/AD operations against China in the western Pacific seemed to offer little role for decisive land forces.

The political result was a strange alliance of bureaucratic concerns. It restructured the practical Air-Sea Battle approach, which was indeed loosely modeled on the AirLand Battle of the Cold War, into the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons.29 The Army-led demand for more jointness in the Air-Sea Battle effort resulted in conceptual anemia, and the bureaucratic fears behind it were misplaced. Forgotten was the fact that a counter anti-access campaign is only the first step in the majority of wars. The second step, the application of decisive power, occurs on land. That the Army had little involvement in the first step is perfectly logical since the United States is separated from the potential theaters of conflict by oceans. Breaking the great wall of an anti-access strategy is thereby a sea-air-space affair.

Rarely in history has crossing an anti-access barrier resulted in a victory without the introduction of landpower. Decisive land operations would have been required, and were planned, in the war against Imperial Japan had the atomic bomb not been invented. A counter anti-access campaign is, thus, a prerequisite and an enabler of joint operations—similar to how the Navy and Marine Corps have described...
themselves in the post-Cold War era: first responders and enablers of the joint force. Eventually, however, American decisionmakers would have recognized an army is necessary for decisive operations.

Admittedly, China is an outlying case since no contemporary American decisionmaker dares even to contemplate fighting a land war in Asia. Yet, the current expectation that a successful counter A2/AD campaign would cause China to capitulate to US objectives without any application of decisive power on the mainland has very little, perhaps no, evidence behind it. As Japan demonstrated at Pearl Harbor, one can destroy much of an enemy’s fleet and airpower without causing the enemy to give up. Thus, landpower is required as the second step or, hopefully, a final conventional deterrent.

Since the two-step was a forgotten aspect of the strategic dance, Army thinkers revisited the role of land forces in a counter A2/AD campaign without satisfaction. In 2015, one author explained most books on A2/AD say very little about the Army’s role because no one has quite figured out what it is—with the exception of missile forces that were then hobbled in range by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty).\(^{30}\) An earlier RAND study even focused almost exclusively on options to reduce anti-access threats to the Army, rather than methods for the Army to break the great wall.\(^{31}\)

Actually, there are very apparent joint tasks the US Army could perform to support the Navy and Air Force roles in overcoming A2/AD. The foremost of these tasks would be to provide air and missile defenses for fixed land bases, particularly, air bases. The employment of terminal high-altitude area defense (THAAD) and Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles to defend air bases in Guam, Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere in the western Pacific would seem an obvious requirement that would not merit detailed analysis. Naval theater ballistic missile defense could then focus on defending maneuver forces. In fact, THAAD has been deployed (2013) to Guam and South Korea (2017) in the face of North Korean missile threats.\(^{32}\)

Amazingly, however, a RAND study on Air Base Attacks and Defensive Counters not only fails to mention the historical role of Army ground forces in defending air bases, it dismisses ballistic missile defenses as “extremely expensive and hav[ing] limited effectiveness, particularly against large attacks.”\(^{33}\) Instead, its recommendations include passive defenses such as camouflage, concealment, deception, hardening, and aircraft dispersal, all essential but hardly reassuring in themselves. Perhaps THAAD and PAC-3 employment in the western Pacific does

\(^{30}\) Martin N. Murphy, “Kick the Door Down with AirSea Battle . . . Then What?,” Parameters 45, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 97–107.


\(^{33}\) Alan J. Vick, Air Base Attacks and Defensive Counters: Historical Lessons and Future Challenges (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), 34.
need to be analyzed rigorously against alternatives, if only to identify itself as a valuable. If the United States establishes an A2/AD posture in the first or second island chain, much of the US anti-access campaign will fall to the Army. The Navy and Air Force will likely concentrate on destroying China’s A2/AD assets and targeting its navy, its air force, and the Rocket Forces.

As previously noted, the US Marine Corps has embraced its land-based responsibility with enthusiasm. In 2016, the Marines began testing the high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) both from land and from the decks of amphibious warships in anticipation of acquiring an anti-ship missile suitable for HIMARS.34 Prompted by the commander of the Pacific Command, the Army similarly tested the Norwegian Naval Strike Missile using a palletized naval launcher during the 2018 Rim of the Pacific exercise.35 Meanwhile, the Marine Corps developed the intellectual groundwork for a combined countering and implementing A2/AD strategy in its concepts on littoral operations in a contested environment and expeditionary advanced base operations.36

But the Marines are keen to keep their objectives aligned with the blue-water Navy’s plans for sea control and countering A2/AD in the waters off China. There is no overt suggestion of this constituting an American A2/AD posture despite outside sources referring to it as such.37 As Marine Corps Commandant General Robert B. Neller states, “There’s a ground component to the maritime fight.”38

In opting to develop the concept of multidomain battle, US Army leadership appears to have avoided considering a static defense in the island chains. Some Army officers might have suggested a coastal defense artillery could have a role in countering and implementing A2/AD, but that discussion has not fully blossomed.39

One defense analyst who has suggested an American A2/AD posture in the western Pacific with a major Army role is Andrew Krepinevich Jr., former director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. Krepinevich did much to popularize the A2/AD and revolution in military affairs concepts. Coining the phrase “archipelagic defense” for a greater role for US ground forces—in conjunction with US allies and partners—in the first island chain, Krepinevich argues, “If Washington wants to change Beijing’s calculus, it must deny China the ability to

36 In deference to ADM Richardson’s dislike of the A2/AD terms, naval strategists use the term “contested environment” as a euphemism.
control the air and sea around the first island chain . . . [and] integrate allied battle networks and strengthen allied capabilities . . . those goals can be achieved with ground forces, which would not replace existing air and naval forces but complement them.”

Krepinevich describes archipelagic defense as a way of deterring China from seizing territory in the first island chain rather than an effort to contain Chinese power projection forces. He assumes, however, the United States will remain strategically superior on a global scale. As argued, this assumption is questionable given China’s strategic trajectory.

**US Army Missions**

Thus far, archipelagic defense has not gained much traction with policymakers even with additional writings by Krepinevich and a small group of commentators. In his initial article, Krepinevich identifies potential Army missions, but with only limited detail. Defense of land bases is an obvious mission to identify. Training of local forces is another obvious one—and one that is routinely carried out regardless of regional defense posture. Krepinevich (and others) characterize the acquisition of anti-ship cruise missiles as coastal defense, although, as the Marines conceive it, this could also be considered part of offensive maritime capabilities. Other suggestions include using coastal artillery units to deliver naval mines and anti-submarine torpedoes via missiles.

These suggestions are worthy of experimentation, particularly if the multiple missions could be conducted by simply switching warhead types on a common, mobile missile. Unfortunately, these capabilities hardly sound innovative, dynamic, aggressive, efficient, transformational, let alone decisive, all the adjectives needed to justify new acquisition programs. Linking Marines to coastal defense also identifies them with a mission the US Army gave up in 1945.

There are, however, at least five aggressive missions that can be identified as Army roles in the establishment of an American and allied anti-access posture in the island chains. All require significant investments in defense resources, but could have high payoffs in constraining PLA power projection capabilities: active defense of regional air bases, integrated fires and counter fires, anti-satellite fires, anti-ship fires and straits closures, and defense of Taiwan.

**Active Defense**

Admittedly, today’s active defenses could not cope with a saturation missile attack. But it makes little sense to wait for kinetic-effect electromagnetic weapons to be fully developed before deploying a modest capability to defend US air bases in Japan and elsewhere in the island chains. Since deterrence is a matter of perception, even a modest defense

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42 Krepinevich, “How To Deter China,” 82.
would be preferable to no defense at all. Despite justifications in reports, passive defenses—while necessary—are less effective as a deterrent.

An aggressive approach to air and other land-based defenses would require greater funding for an increased number of missile batteries as well as evolutionary improvements in accuracy and range. In recent years, both the US Army and Navy have relied on the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to fund such improvements, causing both services to fight for some control over the outputs of the programs. Since the MDA was created to provide national missile defense against nuclear weapons, not to focus on improving the defense of forward locations, the services must fund necessary improvements if they are to be timely.

Additionally, the services need to work more toward theater integration of air and ballistic missile defense rather than rely on coordination from the US Strategic Command or other combatant commands. This may be a fertile area for applying artificial intelligence to calculate the integration of multiple sensors and multiple shooters. That cross-service capabilities are at least conceptually compatible is evidenced not only in exercises but also in the recent decision to deploy THAAD to Romania while the Navy’s Aegis Ashore installation goes down for planned maintenance.

A more aggressive approach to air and missile defense at forward locations would include the Army assuming regional defense, based upon the RAND report that dismissed the utility of ballistic missile defense and identified the significant threat special operations forces pose to airbases. For this threat, the Army clearly has a comparative advantage over the Air Force.

Integrated Fires and Counter Fires

When the withdrawal from the INF Treaty is completed, the United States would be free to redevelop ground-based conventional-warhead IRBMs. Indications are the Department of Defense is planning IRBM tests. Despite the obvious focus on countering the Russian treaty breakout missiles, the new IRBM should be prioritized for defending the western Pacific region to eliminate the PLA’s asymmetric advantage that has thus far terrorized US planning for the region. Press reports have suggested the new IRBM “may see deployment on the U.S. territory of Guam.”

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Anti-Satellite Fires

Critical nodes in any reconnaissance-strike complex for an anti-access warfare strategy are space-based sensors. Without warnings from this technology, the oceanic movements of a strategically superior force could not be targeted. Likewise, the appropriate initial tactic in any counter anti-access campaign would be the destruction of the enemy’s satellites. American decisionmakers have long viewed reconnaissance satellites as strategic elements of nuclear deterrence. But the United States has been slow to match the tests conducted by the former Soviet Union, and now Russia, and China—and presumably the hardware developed by them.

Fears of further militarizing space have also been a factor. And the United States has never demonstrated an orbiting ASAT, although the Soviet Union claimed the primary purpose of the American space shuttle was to capture their satellites. The US Navy did demonstrate the destruction of a decaying satellite by the AEGIS system-controlled Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), which was designed for theater ballistic missile defense (TBMD). 48 This missile, however, had been modified for the purpose, and was, presumably, a single production model of the variant.

Engaging or deterring ASAT warfare would obviously require a missile model that could be readily produced since warship inventories are inevitably limited by space and volume. Logistical concerns thus cause the mix of offensive and defensive missiles to be a perpetual concern. For this reason, the Navy would position at least some part of US theater missile-launched ASAT capabilities ashore. Aegis Ashore would appear the most likely system, but the Army should examine and experiment with the potential to launch ASAT warheads against low earth-orbit sensors using THAADs or a follow-on system. The disadvantage of land-based ASATs is that they are potentially targetable by coordinates. Road mobility, however, mitigates that in part, and such systems provide an advantage since a larger inventory can be stored in hardened shelters.

Anti-Ship Fires and Straits Closures

Perhaps the PLA’s anti-ship ballistic missiles are not quite the “carrier killers” they are popularly portrayed to be. 49 Certainly, their effectiveness depends largely on satellite sensors, particularly at maximum range. Shooting down Chinese satellites, as well as neutralizing backscatter and sky-wave radars, would significantly reduce their threat. That solution may not do much for the security of land bases, since only coordinates are needed to target them, but naval TBMD assets would be free to complement ground-based interceptors.

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But US land forces should also pursue the capability to fire anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles against targets at sea. The value of a modest anti-ship ballistic missile capability is that it changes the calculus of deterrence: no longer would the DF-21D be perceived as an unanswered PLA advantage. Indeed, the ability of warships to call for fires from land- and air-based systems would recast naval warfare in the near seas, and particularly in narrow straits.

Contrary to some claims, ASBMs and land-based cruise missiles are as capable of enhancing the value of naval surface forces as they are of making them obsolete. It is all dependent of how forces and capabilities are combined. Perhaps multidomain battle can include the Army’s roles for supporting the other services’ capabilities rather than a struggle to get it a share of their domains.50

Land Defense of Taiwan

If China’s economy were to falter and the CCP’s internal control would appear to be threatened, the forcible annexation of Taiwan might rise on the CCP’s agenda.51 As PLA doctrine indicates, this island is China’s top power-projection target around which much of its forces have been developed, even as the party has bided its time in the hope that a more peaceful unification would occur. Annexation is more likely to occur if the CCP perceives its internal control is in question because it would end the Chinese civil war once and for all, demonstrating the CCP has a mandate from heaven. In Western historical terms, it would be similar to the Argentine junta’s decision to invade the Falkland Islands in 1982: it was intended to bolster a faltering regime by generating patriotic unity in the face of foreign opposition to a long-standing national claim.

Even though Taiwan is not a formal treaty ally, many interpret the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 as a requirement for the United States to defend Taiwan in the event of an attack by China.52 A forcible annexation or reunification would have dire long-term effects on the US alliance system as well as the established world order. Chinese control of Taiwan would also eliminate the first island chain as a constraint on China’s global power projection. Even though the second island chain (or perhaps a modified chain and a half) would remain, such a success would enable and motivate further projections of power.

Currently, the Army cannot publicly plan to position forces on Taiwanese soil in event of an emerging crisis. Perhaps the future political situation will not allow such planning either. Nevertheless, that does not mean the Army should not carefully examine its capabilities to do so. The availability of and training for the use of pre-positioned war materials, as well as the readiness state of heavy-lift sealift vessels for use

50 Megan Eckstein, “‘Multi-Domain Battle’ Concept To Increase Integration Across Services, Domains,” USNI News, October 4, 2016.


in potentially contested environments, however, should be examined. It is easy to conclude these are not capabilities over which Army leadership lost sleep during the conflicts of the last two decades.

Such an examination would require considerable collaboration with the US Navy and Marine Corps to prioritize lift and provide maritime defenses. Unfortunately, these capabilities are not usually funded in periods of fiscal austerity, such as might be emerging. Yet, an honest evaluation of whether the Army can rely primarily on pre-positioned material and sealift during a conflict will allow decisionmakers clearer insight into prospective options. This process will also familiarize at least part of the Army with the service’s potential for operations in a soon-to-be-contested environment.

The Army will unlikely have the future resources to fund all these A2/AD-enhancing capabilities. But these missions must be seriously examined and considered if we expect to deter China from using military power to overturn the world order. The key to limiting expansion of PLA bases in distant places, such as Djibouti, lies in the first island chain.

**Conclusion**

As China’s military buildup continues, it is only a matter of time before the Chinese Communist Party determines it is appropriate to shift from an anti-access strategy to one of power projection. The CCP is intent on rewriting the international system to make it safe for domestic authoritarianism, as well as convenient for achieving its international objectives. The key will be the party’s determination that the United States no longer possesses strategic superiority, one of the elements that prompts the adoption of an anti-access warfare strategy.

The United States—a western Pacific nation by virtue of Hawaii, Guam, and the Marianas, and a guarantor of the security of its Asia-Pacific allies—that will need to adopt the tactics (perhaps even the strategy) of anti-access warfare in conjunction with those allies to contain a significant part of China’s power projection capabilities within the island chains. Although primarily a naval task, and one already envisioned by the Marine Corps, such planning is also appropriate for the US Army.

There are at least five aggressive missions the Army could conduct in an A2/AD posture: active defense of regional air bases, integrated fires and counter fires, ASAT fires, anti-ship fires, straits closures, and land defense of Taiwan. Army leadership may, however, be reluctant to place much emphasis on them because they do not appear to be applications of decisive force. Nevertheless, they do deserve emphasis, examination, experimentation, and resources. The leadership must content itself with the realization that if deterrence fails and there is a conflict with China, decisive force will eventually need to be applied. In sum, implementing an A2/AD posture that can confine the PLA’s power projection capabilities may be the most effective way the United States can deter conflict.
ABSTRACT: This article discusses the myths surrounding Russia’s A2/AD capabilities and the risks associated with the current counter A2/AD efforts among NATO countries. It offers recommendations for investing in a stronger defense of the Baltic states and Eastern Europe.

References to Russia’s anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities are now standard in assessments of America’s ability to protect its allies and its interests in Europe. Unclassified briefings on European military security now routinely include a slide showing a map of Europe with the reach of advanced Russian interdiction systems extending over a range of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries.

While awareness of the challenge posed by these capabilities is important, widespread and often unqualified reporting in open sources by both media outlets and nonspecialist think tanks has had unfortunate consequences. Exaggeration and hype suggesting Russia has the ability to interdict its adversaries across large areas of European air and maritime space in particular leads to a distorted picture. If left uncorrected, these inaccuracies could influence policy by constraining response options for assertive Russian maneuvers. A public perception that allied reinforcement of the Baltic states is not possible during a time of conflict, for example, will falsely limit the options palatable to US policymakers.

Neat circles on a map, while important for drawing attention to the problem, also foster the public impression of “no-go zones” that would be lethal for US or allied military assets. But Russian A2/AD systems will not prevent NATO forces from getting to frontline states. They could, however, prevent NATO from trying at all. This article, therefore, seeks to mitigate this problem by countering the deliberate effort of Russia to spread disinformation on its A2/AD systems.

Detail and Background

Since relations between Russia and the West entered their current crisis in 2014, Western military analysis appears to have rediscovered the classic use of interdiction capabilities as a tool of foreign policy. While discussion of China’s A2/AD systems has been ongoing, Russia’s recently increased activity in this domain has attracted sudden attention
due to perceptions of Russian behaviors: unpredictability, irrationality, and overt hostility toward the United States.

Russia’s systematic deployment of A2/AD capabilities along NATO’s northeastern and southern flanks is a genuine cause for concern. These offensive and defensive capabilities, especially in Kaliningrad and Crimea, form a perimeter around Russia’s western periphery and into the Mediterranean Sea and Syria. The apparent reach of Russian systems over the airspace of key US allies, especially from Kaliningrad and the Kola Peninsula, poses obvious challenges to freedom of movement in times of crisis.

Map 1. Map of the Baltic and Black Sea region by Pete McPhail
Nevertheless, public analysis routinely underestimates the limitations of Russia’s interdiction systems imposed by the range and effectiveness of their designated radars, the capabilities and limitations of their missiles, and the constraints of geography. Additionally, there has been little serious consideration of the policy limitations on Russian employment of these systems in anything short of direct and open war. Consequently, there is an urgent need to deconstruct exaggerated fears around Russia’s A2/AD bastions.

Current Western public hype on this topic is detrimental to US interests because the sense of Russian technological superiority it creates emboldens Moscow. The relationship between Russian capabilities and intentions can be addressed by closely examining the gap between what Russian A2/AD systems can do and what the Kremlin wants US and allied politicians to believe they can do. Even though the capabilities of Russian interdiction assets have progressed significantly, they do not pose an insurmountable threat to the NATO Alliance and US military forces.

Moreover, Russia’s conventional weapons systems do not represent the totality of its capabilities for interdicting the movements of the United States or its European allies. In times of crisis, when NATO might seek to reinforce its easternmost member states, Moscow will likely seek to deny joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration efforts by a wide range of nonmilitary measures such as conducting cyberattacks, sabotaging logistics hubs, recruiting or coercing key personnel, applying political pressure and subversion, and supporting semideniable operations. While not part of classic A2/AD capabilities, these gray-zone tools can deliver comparable effects and should be the subject of future detailed study.¹

Understanding Russian A2/AD

The term “anti-access/area denial” does not exist in Russian military planning concepts or doctrine, except when discussing Western capabilities.² Like cyber and hybrid warfare, A2/AD is a Western construct imposed on Russian military thought with no intrinsic value in Russian military analysis. Contrary to what Western planners may have been led to believe, the Russian General Staff applies the concept merely to describe its perceptions of Western military actions.

Instead of a limited concept of exclusion using A2/AD capabilities strategically, Russian military planning considers military operations as a holistic approach that integrates assets. In this context, interdiction capabilities represent one component among a broad and coordinated range of others that make up a joint combat operation.³ Thus, A2/AD is not an end in itself but rather an enabler for additional action.

In addition to assigning maritime defense and territorial capabilities, Russia’s military planners also create several layers of cross-domain standoff systems, such as coastal, air defense, and anti-submarine warfare. Any gaps in these conventional weapons are filled with electronic warfare systems. Interdiction capabilities, therefore, are present “at almost every level of the Russian Armed Forces,” especially within the Air Defense of the Ground Forces (PVO SV).4

Russia’s continuity with the Soviet legacy of “concentric circles” to protect territory, especially to conduct out-of-area operations in contested maritime domains, creates Russia’s modern A2/AD capability.5 The strategic bastions for conventional forces, especially in Kaliningrad, in the Kola Peninsula (where the Northern Fleet is deployed), and in Crimea (since its annexation in 2014) also provide examples of the influence of Soviet logic on Russia’s interdiction capabilities.

This approach not only offers greater strategic depth but also deters Russia’s near-peer competitors from attacking, avoiding escalation and contact warfare.6 Interdiction capabilities are, therefore, a defense-in-depth tool for deterrence, if not compellence, that limit the enemy’s choices and freedom of action.7

Russian interdiction capabilities focus significantly on maritime and littoral protection, especially in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea. Anti-submarine and costal air defense systems are therefore paramount for effective A2/AD operations. Such capabilities are developed in line with the current Russian naval strategy of strengthening the projectability of its fleet of smaller surface vessels (frigates and corvettes) through the systematic procurement of standoff missile systems, such as the 3M-14 Kalibr land-attack cruise missile, the P-800 Oniks surface-to-surface anti-ship cruise missile, and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

Standoff assets—notably the Iskander short-range ballistic missiles, the S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missiles, and the Kalibrs—deployed in the region present an access challenge for US and NATO troops in the event of a conflict with Russia. This vulnerability means NATO allies will only be able to gain superiority after neutralizing or successfully negotiating the interdiction threat. It also means Moscow would have an early advantage in escalation control, especially during the initial phase of a war.8 Reducing these interdiction capabilities would require combined naval and air operations, and offensive capabilities that NATO does not possess in the shared neighborhood of Eastern Europe.

Russia’s military presence in the region creates a “reinforcement trap,” whereby (a) NATO reinforcements may risk interdiction from

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4 Gorenburg, Kofman, and McDermott, “Russia’s A2/AD Doctrine.”
6 Matthew J. Wemyss, “The Bear’s Den: Russian Anti-Access/Area-Denial in the Maritime Domain” (research paper, Air Command And Staff College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL, May 2016).
7 Interview with US military expert, December 2017.
8 Gorenburg, Kofman, and McDermott, “Russia’s A2/AD Doctrine.”
Russia and face important losses while (b) a lack of reinforcements would decrease NATO’s security.\(^9\) It also means Moscow’s deterrence strategy could successfully disrupt NATO’s decision-making process and willingness to intervene. The net result would be a substantial increase in the operational and strategic challenges the Alliance would encounter while defending frontline states.\(^10\)

Russia commonly demonstrates its air defense capabilities and exploits the myth of A2/AD “bubbles” among its neighbors to sow doubt among NATO allies. In doing so, the Kremlin uses Western insecurities regarding ensured access to its advantage and feeds a perception that NATO cannot operate effectively in a contested environment. The ongoing debate thus becomes a self-constructed psychological threat that reflects Western insecurities toward Russia, thus constituting a way for the Kremlin to be blamed for the West’s capability shortfalls.\(^11\) Emboldened by this response, Moscow continues to expand its A2/AD bubbles, and escalation dominance, on NATO’s eastern flank.\(^12\) In this manner, intentions and threats deter adversaries as effectively as actual military deployments.

The differences between notional maximum missile range in a straight line, missile range when maneuvering, and radar detection range are crucial to assessing A2/AD capability. Thus, simplistic assessments that use a single figure for the theoretical range of Russia’s weapons are highly misleading. Missiles mounted on the S-400 system, for example, are routinely said to have a range of 400 km, but this range applies only to large, nonmaneuvering targets flying at high altitudes, which limits their application in operational terms.\(^13\)

Furthermore, A2/AD environments are not glass domes that will cause all systems to stop operating or functioning after they have been penetrated.\(^14\) Although freedom of action and movement will be more challenging in the presence of a missile threat and in an environment where communications and command and control are degraded, it is not necessarily impossible to operate there without first destroying the defensive missile systems.

Russia does not have an inexhaustible quantity of precision-guided missiles and, thus, is likely to expend its stocks cautiously. Russian A2/AD systems can be saturated, therefore, and target acquisition and engagement capabilities will also be as susceptible as any others to failure against swarm attacks. To saturate Russian systems, however,

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casualty-averse Western forces must expose themselves to risk and the likelihood of losses. More broadly, risk and casualty acceptance is an essential component of defeating Russia in the event of open conflict.

Recognizing Russian Bastions

To project power and to protect its outer approaches, Russia has systematically positioned interdiction capabilities on the northern, eastern, and southeastern flanks of the NATO Alliance in Europe. This deployment includes several concentrations of A2/AD capabilities: Kaliningrad, covering the Baltic Sea and the Scandinavian region; Crimea, covering the Black Sea; and the High North, covering the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea, and the Arctic region. Russia is also deploying A2/AD systems in out-of-area locations such as Syria and the South Caucasus. All of these areas demonstrate a pattern of positioning mobile air defense systems supported with electronic warfare capabilities.

Baltic Sea. The Kaliningrad exclave represents a Russian forward defense outpost located in the Baltic and Scandinavian region; thus, it is key for Russia’s regional A2/AD architecture. Russia’s A2/AD assets in Kaliningrad, mostly located around the naval bases harboring the Baltic Fleet, create a tightly knit mobile air, sea, and land interdiction bastion. Combined with mainland assets, the interdiction area essentially covers the Baltic states, one-third of Poland, southern Scandinavia, and the Gulf of Finland, as well as parts of Belarus. During the Zapad 2017 exercise, Russia’s armed forces used the exclave to practice an increased forward presence and strategic air operations.15

As such, Kaliningrad presents the primary region NATO forces must neutralize to guarantee unrestricted access and freedom of operation in the Baltic Sea area.16 In the event of a crisis, however, Moscow could swiftly deploy additional capabilities intended to convince NATO that forced entry would be costly and potentially fruitless. Nevertheless, Kaliningrad’s complicated geographical position renders it hard to defend in a general conflict and the risk inherent in large-scale westward military movements to preempt NATO operations would present a challenging strategic choice for Russia.17 In a conflict, Kaliningrad would be entirely isolated from Russia by land, barring invasion of Belarus, Poland, and Lithuania. This represents a vulnerability for Russia that NATO allies should openly acknowledge.

Kaliningrad will likewise prove complicated for NATO to deal with as any military movement on behalf of the Baltic states would first need to pass through Russia’s integrated layers of A2/AD assets. It follows that, in a time of crisis, NATO would need to isolate Kaliningrad as efficiently as possible to mitigate its own access vulnerabilities and to

turn the exclave’s isolation into its own strategic advantage. Short of hostilities, NATO could achieve this position by increasing force posture in the region and using its own A2/AD capabilities such as air and coastal defense systems and minelaying at sea.

**Suwałki Gap.** The Polish-Lithuanian border is emblematic of the Kaliningrad conundrum. Instead of Kaliningrad itself becoming isolated, Russia could potentially prevent land access to the Baltic states during an armed conflict by blocking key road and rail assets in the border area by moving in force or infiltrating from Kaliningrad or Belarus (if Minsk could be persuaded or induced to cooperate). Both the initial move by the Kremlin onto NATO territory and any NATO response intended to evict Russian troops would have a high potential for escalation, with a presumption of an Article 5 discussion within NATO. Any Russian intervention would, therefore, be designed to remain deniable and below the threshold for a NATO response.

**Gotland.** In a crisis or an armed conflict, the Swedish island of Gotland could be used preemptively to position Russian A2/AD capabilities and to impose interdiction in the Baltic Sea. Mobile air defense systems and electronic warfare capabilities there would severely hinder NATO’s freedom of movement and reinforcement capabilities. A bastion in this location could also isolate the Baltic states, the Gulf of Riga, and the Gulf of Finland. Since Sweden is not a NATO member, support from Sweden’s European partners and the United States, while expected, could not be assumed. Moscow might consider such a move an

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18 Frühling and Lasconjarias, “NATO.”
acceptable risk, especially if other measures could prevent Sweden from escalating responses to Russian action.

Åland Islands. Finland’s Åland Islands present a similar scenario with the additional complication that they are demilitarized under treaty and, therefore, unlike Gotland, have not been recently reinforced against potential Russian intervention. The arrival of Russian A2/AD assets there would both interdict Swedish and Finnish air and maritime space for NATO forces reinforcing the Baltic states. But if astutely leveraged, an expanding Russian presence could also present Finland with difficult political choices over its support for the Western alliance.

Bornholm. Despite some similarities with Gotland and the Åland Islands, Bornholm presents substantially greater challenges. The Danish island also presents a hypothetical target if Russia preemptively places interdiction assets there to block the Danish straits and the southern Baltic Sea. Russian forces would need to cover a much greater distance to reach Bornholm and would risk triggering an Article 5 response to even a covert and denied military intervention in Denmark, a NATO member state. Of the three popular “island grab” scenarios for Russian action in the Baltic Sea, a move on Bornholm, therefore, appears the least likely.

Crimea. Since its annexation in March 2014 and its subsequent militarization, Crimea has, in many ways, transformed into a military outpost, mirroring Kaliningrad, at the other end of Russia’s border with Central Europe. From the seaport of Sevastopol and across the peninsula, Russian armed forces have established a comprehensive and multilayered A2/AD environment intended to challenge NATO allies at sea and in the air, potentially complicating deterrence and reassurance efforts in the region.

Black Sea. With its regenerated capabilities, the Black Sea Fleet has extended its interdiction assets. Air defense systems can potentially reach as far as the ballistic missile defense assets deployed at Deveselu Air Base in Romania while surface vessels and submarines can deploy south toward Turkey and the Mediterranean. Compared to Kaliningrad, Russian A2/AD capabilities in the Black Sea offer greater strategic depth. Access for the United States and NATO could be potentially restricted by a combination of anti-ship, anti-submarine, air defense, and electronic warfare systems across multiple domains.

Yet the Black Sea does not constitute an environment in which NATO forces face systematic or damaging interdiction. In fact, the arena is far more open than it was during the Cold War when Bulgaria and Romania were members of the Warsaw Pact. The Alliance would still be able to reinforce its members in the region during an armed conflict more easily than those in the Baltic Sea since the primary role of

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Russian A2/AD assets is to interdict NATO’s access to Russian territory from the southern flank.  

The Russian approach to interdiction in the Black Sea reflects NATO’s less pronounced presence and level of attention there and the increased constraints of geopolitics. Should Russia decide to interdict US or NATO forces in the Black Sea onwards to the Mediterranean, it would have to extend the reach of its A2/AD sea-based assets to the Turkish straits—a potentially dangerous situation risking escalation with NATO. But differences of opinion between Turkey and the United States, and instances of Bulgaria’s overt opposition to a NATO presence there, complicate NATO’s goals for the region. In that sense, the level of Russia’s offensive strategy in the Black Sea will heavily depend on NATO’s posture in the region.

High North and the Arctic. The High North and the Arctic comprise the only officially designated region strategically important to Russia. The Kola Peninsula is particularly vital for protecting the Northern Fleet, one of the two Russian fleets that host submarines with nuclear-powered missiles crucial to Moscow’s nuclear deterrent. The Arctic region is also systematically depicted as paramount for Russia’s future energy security.

In July 2017, Russia updated its naval strategy and for the first time expressed in it clear Arctic ambitions. As these ambitions encompass ensuring access for Russia and restricting the movement of potential competitors, interdiction capabilities are instrumental to delivering Russia’s Arctic strategy. The aim is to transform the region and its sea lanes into a strategic base that projects power in the region and counters the anticipated strategic competition for military access and energy resources in the Arctic.

In late 2014, the Russian Ministry of Defense created a special Arctic Joint Strategic Command, which included the Northern Fleet, to secure Russia’s northern border and the Arctic and to increase its military footprint in the region. Air defense forces and anti-aircraft defense systems are deemed a priority for the development of military infrastructure in the Russian Arctic, both onshore and in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation. The Northern Fleet is also operating multilayered air defense and coastal defense capabilities. During 2018, two Arctic motorized brigades were created and an Arctic naval group

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23 Sukhankin, “Russia Pours.”
26 “В России сформирована 45-я армия ВВС и ПВО Северного флота” [The Northern Fleet 45th Air and Air Defence Army was formed in Russia], RIA Novosti, January 29, 2016.
was established. A new command and control center for the Northern Fleet was also scheduled for delivery at the Severomorsk-1 airbase during 2018.

In addition to structural changes in the Russian armed forces, the Ministry of Defense has been remilitarizing the Arctic region by investing in the construction and modernization of airfields and bases in northern Siberia and on Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land. These facilities will eventually constitute a chain of air defense radar stations, early warning assets, and electronic warfare systems. The Nagurskoye airbase on Alexandra Land, Franz Josef Land, for example, is intended to host Su-34s, MiG-31s, and a range of A2/AD systems.

All of these systems create a comprehensive front that could be used to deny NATO naval and air forces access to the region, particularly to the Barents Sea and onwards to the High North. Nevertheless, Russia’s current interdiction capabilities in the Arctic remain incomplete and relatively weak compared to other areas. Furthermore, Russia is not yet able to threaten the North Atlantic sea-lanes between North America and Europe.

**Kola Peninsula.** Harboring the Northern Fleet, the Kola Peninsula is critically important not only to Russia’s but also Norway’s regional defense and access to the High North. With the peninsula now heavily equipped with A2/AD assets such as Iskanders, S-400s, and shorter-range Pantsir S-1 surface-to-air missiles, the reach of Russian interdiction could potentially extend as far south as the Norwegian Sea. In addition to interdiction capabilities, Russia’s bastion defense system is designed to protect the nuclear assets of the Northern Fleet and safeguard second-strike capabilities by keeping enemies away from the Kola Peninsula.

**Svalbard.** Even though Moscow has no stated plans to increase its military footprint on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, placing interdiction assets in its vicinity could challenge US and NATO access to the Norwegian and Barents Seas as well as hamper reinforcement efforts along commercial sea lines. It could also strengthen its naval presence surrounding Svalbard for the same effect, potentially without violating the Svalbard Treaty that established a 200-nautical-mile boundary around the archipelago. Such activities would also disrupt coordination between NATO forces and Norway as well as their Swedish and Finnish partners.

**Syria.** Russia’s use of A2/AD assets in Syria expands its A2/AD coverage over the eastern Mediterranean and extends the reach of its Black Sea interdiction assets. In addition to direct military goals, the Russian A2/AD complex in Syria serves the purpose of suggesting to foreign military forces that their access to the eastern Mediterranean depends on Russia’s goodwill. These out-of-area assets are not formidable, yet they are sufficiently capable of complicating the entry of US and allied forces into the region. Russia bolstered its A2/AD assets

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Map 3. Map of the High North region by Pete McPhail
and military presence in Syria with long-term lease agreements of the port in Tartus and the Hmeimim airbase in Latakia. After declaring “mission accomplished” in Syria during December 2017, Russia slowly replaced the combat air wing in Hmeimim with more interdiction assets. Meanwhile, Russia conversely relies on Turkey for the safe passage of Russian naval assets and cargoes to and from Syria through the straits.\textsuperscript{28}

**South Caucasus.** The South Caucasus also extends Russian A2/AD coverage in the region. In June 2016, the Armenian parliament ratified a bilateral united regional air defense system with Moscow, consolidating interdiction capabilities for the Russian Southern Military District.\textsuperscript{29} The deployment of S-300 surface-to-air missiles at the Russian 102nd base in Armenia during 2014 further strengthened Russia’s interdiction capabilities over the eastern part of the Black Sea and eastern Turkey.\textsuperscript{30} Such assets could prove problematic for NATO reinforcements and overflights in the eastern part of the Black Sea and Turkey.

**Implications and Recommendations**

Russian A2/AD is a multilayered problem that raises the costs of deterrence by forcing NATO to make highly challenging military and political decisions.\textsuperscript{31} Addressing this challenge requires acceptance of risk. But facing the challenge is necessary for the United States and NATO to maintain global freedom of movement and thus preserve the credibility of the Alliance’s conventional deterrence. Allies must be prepared either for kinetic action to neutralize defensive systems or for complex operations in their areas of coverage. In a preconflict phase, regional access has to be ensured while carefully managing the potential for escalation that might increase the risk to NATO forces deploying into a disputed environment.\textsuperscript{32}

**Debunk the A2/AD Myths**

Russia maintains an advantage as long as its A2/AD capabilities remain widely misunderstood. Even though the concept of A2/AD is misapplied, it should not be abandoned as a term Western military planners can use to explain Russia’s military modernization. The concept also captures the evolution of Russia’s way of war to maintain deterrence and territorial defense.\textsuperscript{33} Within NATO, A2/AD is a comprehensible

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\textsuperscript{29} Eduard Abrahamyan, “Russia Creates Area Denial System in South Caucasus,” Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, July 24, 2016; and “Соглашение между Россией и Республикой Армения о создании Объединенной региональной системы противовоздушной обороны в Кавказском регионе коллективной безопасности,” Pravo.ru, October 28, 2015.


term useful to lobby for resources as well as the attention of policymakers. Characterizing the Russian threat as A2/AD also helps to identify Western shortcomings in technology and doctrine effectively.

The Army should lead America’s armed services, allied armed forces, and the wider strategic community in debunking the myths surrounding A2/AD through efforts such as conducting military educational outreach programs and increasing information-sharing on Russian interdiction capabilities. Of critical importance, the public and political leaders should be included in efforts to communicate the real, rather than notional, range and reach of Russian systems. In addition, the impression that allied systems beyond that range are safe, but those even slightly within that range are doomed is false and must be corrected.

The government should facilitate the Army’s education efforts since any action against Russian capabilities will require public support.

**Develop a Counter A2/AD Toolkit**

Alongside the need to burst A2/AD bubbles, a comprehensive approach for countering nontraditional A2/AD systems in the military and political domains must be developed. A doctrinal “toolkit” could help military planners and government policymakers adapt existing assets, produce new assets, develop new procedures, and foster information sharing to assess weaknesses and vulnerabilities in Russia’s capabilities.

The Army should lead the armed forces and NATO in the creation of a counter A2/AD toolkit—consisting of assets, strategy, doctrine, and political preparedness. By conducting exercises with NATO allies, especially Sweden and Finland, possible A2/AD scenarios with Russia can be tested to help anticipate Russia’s operational responses. Military exercises for countering Russian A2/AD assets should be held in the region as a way to demonstrate the Alliance’s readiness, and to deter Russian aggression. The Army should also share data from the collaborative exercises to inform NATO efforts to develop a functioning doctrine to counter the Russian A2/AD threat. The Army should encourage military leaders of partner nations to convey the knowledge they gain during such exercises to their governments’ leaders to inform assessments of NATO’s conventional deterrence posture. In this way, the Army can help NATO determine whether new doctrine that encompasses Russia’s interdiction capabilities and its implications should be developed or if the Readiness Action Plan should be updated to ensure NATO members, especially the frontline states, retain unimpeded access.34

The government should allocate funds and resources to facilitate military measures to achieve kinetic and information superiority over Russian A2/AD assets. By systematically engaging NATO partners, including Sweden, Finland, Ukraine, and Georgia, the government can reinforce the importance of a comprehensive approach to developing a NATO strategy for countering Russia’s A2/AD challenge. The United

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States should continue to recognize the critical importance of Turkey in regional security by avoiding policy decisions that could undermine Turkish willingness to take assertive action in support of NATO.

**Establish A2/AD Surveillance**

Accurate knowledge of the movement of Russian A2/AD assets and forces will help NATO anticipate future deployments of Russian A2/AD and thus help mitigate the risks to US and NATO forces. Since increased activity in the electromagnetic spectrum is considered an early indicator of the activation of A2/AD assets, electronic warfare monitoring will also be instrumental to maintaining a clear understanding of Russian A2/AD capabilities.

The Army should prioritize the development and fielding of technologies that provide early detection of A2/AD and electronic warfare assets as well as other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. Surveillance assets should yield information about Russia’s command and control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, which are fundamental to assertive interdiction operations. The Army should further deepen relationships with Norway, the Baltic states, and Poland, as well as Sweden and Finland, to increase collaborative surveillance capabilities and information- and intelligence-sharing arrangements and to provide reassurance.

The government should encourage the Navy to expand maritime surveillance and rotational presence, especially in the Black Sea and on the northern flank of the Alliance members’ territory, as well as to leverage relationships with its partners in the Baltic Sea to monitor Russia’s A2/AD deployments.

**Raise the Cost of Interdiction**

The perceived costs to Russia for employing its interdiction assets can be raised (and the perceived benefits can be reduced) by rendering active use of A2/AD capabilities a less politically attractive option.

The Army should increasingly confront Russia with the technological limitations of its A2/AD systems. When Alliance forces operate uncontested and without degradation of their capabilities in a Russian A2/AD environment, Moscow’s narrative on the invincibility of its defenses is challenged. Key examples are US and allied strikes on Syria in April 2017 and 2018.

The government should make the failure of Russian and Russian-supplied defensive systems to engage incoming missiles—whether due to a lack of capability or an operational decision—a key component of its narrative on these systems. Care should be taken, however, not to place excessive emphasis on the limitations of Russian A2/AD capabilities.

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35 Jyri Raitasalo, “It Is Time.”
systems since decisionmakers may then underestimate Moscow’s A2/AD capabilities altogether.

**Invest in Countering A2/AD Capabilities**

As previous recommendations imply, the United States alone cannot gain overwhelming out-of-area interdiction superiority against Russia. The Army can make Russian A2/AD operations harder to implement and less effective. But military and technological superiority over Russia is best leveraged through NATO allies working with frontline states to develop the states’ capabilities in a coordinated and coherent manner that avoids financial overburdening. Strengthening the defensive and force protection capabilities of US and allied militaries to distribute systems capable of countering Russian A2/AD reach more evenly would complicate Russia’s interdiction capabilities.

The Army should support efforts to encourage frontline states to build and operate a layered and integrated Alliance system of at least minimal A2/AD capabilities. The Army should also rotate interoperable counter A2/AD assets—especially regional air and missile defense systems—in the Baltic states, Poland, and Norway within the framework of the European Reassurance Initiative. Some counter A2/AD assets that could extend protection in Eastern Europe include positioning radars; elevated sensors; interceptors, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and electronic warfare.

The government should encourage its NATO allies, such as the Baltic states, Poland, and Denmark, and partners, such as Sweden and Finland, to invest in their own A2/AD capabilities. It should encourage NATO to reinforce multinational forces in Romania and Poland as well as bolstering defensive measures there. America should demonstrate its commitment to countering the Russian A2/AD threat by financially assisting in the development of baseline adapted counter A2/AD assets, particularly air defenses. The United States should also consider limited technological transfers from the Third Offset Strategy to selected NATO allies.

**Conclusion**

Russia might consider US investments in countering A2/AD capabilities in Eastern Europe to be a threat to its security interests in the shared neighborhood. Past patterns of Russian behavior suggest, however, that despite alarmist rhetoric from Moscow, building counter A2/AD capabilities would be seen more as a normal and natural development of NATO’s defensive capability.

The United States must establish an accurate understanding of the real threat posed by Russia’s A2/AD capabilities by educating the public and policymakers. As a clearer picture of the threat emerges, America

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37 Altman, “Russian A2/AD.”
can work to develop a counter A2/AD toolkit that can be used, first by the US military and then NATO members and allied partners, to respond to Russia’s A2/AD threat. The United States should establish a network of surveillance systems that can monitor existing Russian assets as well as new ones entering the shared neighborhood. These steps will raise the technological and political costs of interdiction because Russia will have to take steps to prove the validity of its rhetoric. It will not be possible, however, to remove the risk completely or to eliminate casualties entirely in the event of an open conflict.

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ABSTRACT: This article explains the growing importance of Arctic security issues to Army strategic planning. While the effects of climate change will complicate the Army’s ability to protect the nation, they will also increase the challenge of securing the population for which the Army, including the Alaska National Guard, may be the best-equipped force to respond. Adequate planning is necessary to ensure the Army remains ready to respond to these challenges.

In September of 2018, the Venta Maersk became the first ship to sail successfully through the ice-free waters of the Northeast Passage.1 The long-anticipated trip signaled a new era for security in the Arctic. But increased commercial shipping is not the only activity expected to raise security concerns in the region. Extractive industries such as oil and natural gas drilling, mineral mining, and commercial fishing are also expected to attract more industry and, consequently, more people. As resources become more accessible, Arctic states will not only expand their defensive posture to protect areas where extraction occurs but also to assert new claims in areas where boundaries have not been established. Thus, the security situation in the Arctic Ocean could soon resemble that in the South China Sea where seven countries have competing territorial claims.2

It is easy, however, to overstate this concern since most of the Arctic states are either allies or have favorable relations with each other. Even states with adversarial relationships have thus far demonstrated a willingness to settle disputes using diplomacy rather than arms, though the chance of violence still exists. By exploiting vulnerabilities such as poorly defended facilities or disrupting maritime traffic, Russia, the state most capable of operating in the Arctic, could attempt to impose its will to establish additional sovereignty claims or to retaliate for actions against its interests elsewhere. China might also apply a strategy similar to its efforts in the South China Sea. But so far, such retaliation has not happened despite provocations in areas closer to Russian and Chinese interests.

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Perhaps a greater concern is the potential for increased activity by transnational criminal and terrorist organizations. If such organizations establish an active presence in the north and the United States maintains a limited ability to interdict illicit activity encouraged by the new southern-bound routes, the region could become a dangerous place. Unchecked, parts of Alaska could begin to resemble areas of Mexico where rival cartels terrorize the population and challenge law enforcement’s monopoly on the use of force.

What should be concerning are the combined effects of people migrating toward the economic opportunities associated with the new industries, of rising sea levels, and of changing weather patterns that will disrupt current ways of life and place established communities in danger. While the responsibility to respond to these conditions does not fall directly to the US military, the Army, particularly the Alaska National Guard (AKNG), is in the best position to respond. Thus, mission creep will likely occur as the need to respond to human-security crises resulting from the changing environmental conditions overwhelms the military’s efforts to maintain national security.

Canada, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Finland also have coastlines or territory near the Arctic Circle. These countries, with the United States and Russia, make up the Arctic Council, whose main purpose is to promote cooperation among Arctic countries. Other states in the European Union and China have also expressed interests in the Arctic and hold observer status on the council. So far, these states have chosen to cooperate rather than to confront each other over territory and other disputes in the Arctic.

In the event that legal disputes are settled unfavorably or provocations elsewhere in the world spill over into the Arctic, there is much these states could fight over. A naval confrontation over passage rights could arise between the United States and Russia or China, especially in the Northwest Passage, which Canada claims, and the Northeast Passage, which Russia claims. Such tensions could easily disrupt US commercial and military traffic similar to the situation in the South China Sea until China could procure more permanent basing solutions. The most dangerous course of action, however, might be Russian aggression to seize territory by force, which is currently believed to be the least likely one in the absence of Western provocation. Indicators of this position include Russia settling its conflict with Norway over the Barents Sea.

3 Nikoloz Janjgava, “Disputes in the Arctic: Threats and Opportunities,” Connection 11, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 96.
6 Stephanie Pezard et al., Maintaining Arctic Cooperation with Russia: Planning for Regional Change in the Far North (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2017), xii–xiii, xvi.
in 2010, representing its interests regarding the Beaufort Sea and Hans Island peaceably, and adjudicating other disputes under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).\footnote{Pezard et al., Maintaining Arctic Cooperation, 44.}

The potential for a number of Arctic resources to become reasons for war, however, increases as resources in more temperate climates are depleted. In addition to the 240 billion barrels of oil and natural gas that have already been found, there may be more than 412 billion barrels undiscovered.\footnote{Charles Emmerson, The Future History of the Arctic (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 191.} The Arctic region also contains significant quantities of coal, iron ore, zinc, lead, nickel, precious metals, diamonds, and gemstones. And fishermen have harvested over eight million tons of fish from Arctic waters since 2011.\footnote{"Arctic Natural Resources," National Ocean Economics Program, accessed October 18, 2018.} Although most of these resources are in undisputed areas, few reliable estimates exist regarding resources in the disputed areas.

Even though opportunities for industries and nations to extract resources from the undisputed Arctic areas abound for the foreseeable future, interested parties may decide to stake and defend claims for the disputed areas soon. Of the eight potential state disputants, five are members of NATO, and Sweden and Finland have good relations with the United States and other Arctic countries. As previously mentioned, Russia often has adversarial relationships over non-Arctic concerns; however, it has thus far demonstrated a willingness to settle Arctic-related disputes diplomatically.

In contrast to the reasons for claiming Arctic resources, diminishing economic returns will likely temper international competition for the region. The high costs associated with extracting natural Arctic resources in the harsh environment and unpredictable weather patterns will not decrease, even with the ice melt. And the US Geological Survey suggests Arctic reserves total only 10–15 percent of the world’s oil and natural gas, though these estimates are uncertain.\footnote{Emmerson, Future History, 191.} Moreover, extracting Arctic oil and gas in large quantities may not be worth considerable expense as global reliance on renewable and alternative sources of energy increases. For perspective, Shell Oil Company spent $7 billion to extract oil in the Arctic waters near Barrow, Alaska, but halted efforts in 2015 because of low productivity, high costs, and increasing protests regarding the potential threat to the environment.\footnote{Wendy Koch, “3 Reasons Why Shell Halted Drilling in the Arctic,” National Geographic, September 28, 2015.} If the Soviet Union had been a free market economy during the Cold War, it would not have been able to develop the Arctic as much as it did because the return on investment was just too small.\footnote{Emmerson, Future History, 31.}
Arctic Expansion

As Charles Emmerson notes, “If there is a scramble in the Arctic it is a scramble in slow motion.” Making territorial claims in the Arctic “is complicated not because there is an absence of the law, but because there is a surfeit of it.” The United States, for example, is not a signatory of the customary, international law of the sea—which captures many different legal rules for land, sea, and sea bed—but does recognize it and accept it as a constraint. The United Nations, which many parties use to settle their Arctic disputes, could take years to consider this law and decide any particular set of competing claims. Thus absent a compelling reason to exploit such resources in the present, the potential for military conflict seems low.

It is difficult to assess the likelihood of Russia or China establishing a constant military presence in the Arctic. Even with climate change, the probability is somewhat diminished by the fact that, despite recent buildups of forces and presence, no country is well postured to conduct military operations in the Arctic, especially on the ground. Moreover, where the ice has melted, the terrain is not favorable for offensive operations and unpredictable and extreme weather patterns make large-scale operations difficult if not impossible. As the former Canadian Chief of Defense General Walter Natynczyk stated, “If [anyone] invades the Canadian Arctic, my first challenge is search and rescue to help them out.”

Despite the alarming buildup of Russian military forces in the Arctic, they do not appear capable of conducting significant operations far outside their own territory. The militarization consists of the reactivation of six Cold War bases, adding support bases, the forward stationing of up to three Arctic brigades and increasing air defense assets as well as establishing special Arctic coastal defense divisions. These developments focus more on defense as well as a number of noncombat tasks, including “environmental cleanup, search and rescue, support for oil spill cleanup, monitoring poaching, and combatting smuggling and illegal migration.”

The buildup appears much less threatening when one considers Russia has 24,140 kilometers of Arctic coastline and the United States only 1,706 kilometers. Given the ratio of forces, roughly three Arctic brigades on the Russian side and two brigades—one mechanized infantry and one airborne—on the US side, the Russian border is far more thinly defended than that of the United States. This imbalance

13 Emmerson, Future History, 83, 94.
17 “Russia,” Arctic Institute, accessed October 22, 2018; and “United States,” Arctic Institute, accessed October 22, 2018.
does not suggest the Russians would not take aggressive military action in the Arctic, whether in response to some perceived provocation or to shape the behavior of the United States and its allies. But Russian land forces, as currently deployed in the Arctic, are unlikely to play a major role.

**American Defense**

Regardless, the US Army should be prepared to play a role in defending against small offensive operations intended to impose political or economic costs on US activities. As suggested by the tasks assigned to Russian Arctic units, however, greater nontraditional security challenges remain. Unfortunately, the traditional national security framework is inadequate for anticipating what those challenges are or developing a response to them. Therefore, to determine an Army response to changing conditions in the Arctic, the Army needs to consider human security to be its main concern.

**Human Security**

The United Nations Development Program first described human security as a twofold concept, comprised of both positive and negative duties summed up as “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear.” This conception places an obligation on governments to not harm their own people and to take active and preventive measures to ensure people are protected from a variety of harms. These harms include external threats as well as the threats of hunger, disease, crime, and repression, as well as protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of their daily lives, whatever the source of that disruption may be. When considered in the context of emerging norms associated with the responsibility to protect (R2P), these obligations can even extend beyond a country’s own borders.

Human security, however, is broader than R2P, which emphasizes protection from massive human rights violations and humanitarian disasters. Human security shifts the focus from the state to the individual, and from securing the borders to securing the environment, including protecting people’s access to food, water, health care, and other necessities. Human security requires governments to address conditions associated with the rule of law, unemployment, criminality, extremist ideologies, and anything else that might prevent individuals in communities from obtaining basic needs and leading relatively healthy and free lives.

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The norms of addressing human-security concerns are different from those associated with just war theory and the law of armed conflict. Where just war theory treats sovereignty as a limit on action, human security considers it a responsibility that motivates action. Where just war theory emphasizes reaction, human security emphasizes prevention. Finally, where just war theory focuses its attention on limiting harm, human security focuses its attention on promoting the good, not just for people within one’s borders, but anywhere people are threatened.

This shift in emphasis from the state to individuals within threatened populations is driven by the observation that insecure people do not stay put; it is much more likely and much easier for them to export their collective insecurity than it is for them to stay and endure it. As Mary Kaldor points out, “Violence and resentment, poverty and illness—in places such as Africa, Central Asia, or the Middle East—travel across the world through terrorism, transnational crime, or pandemics.”

While the scale is arguably different, the point is equally valid when considering the security of the Arctic: the US Army should not prioritize human-security needs over national security, but the Army may find itself in a far better position than other government agencies to address them. As the melting ice of climate change opens new territory and places pressure on Arctic populations, the Army may be compelled to assume human-security missions. Thus, it makes sense for the Army to prepare itself to undertake such missions without compromising its ability to respond to external threats. The next sections will discuss what those human-security challenges are in an Arctic context and suggest measures the Army can take to address them without abandoning national security priorities.

Global warming. The first factor degrading Arctic security is global warming, which transforms the Arctic ecosystem and biosphere in ways that threaten indigenous ways of life, food security, and the global environment. Not only could the Arctic be ice-free by the summer of 2030, but the winter ice, which melts faster than the older ice it replaced, will also be younger and thinner. The subsequent acceleration of the ice melt will have significant regional and global consequences. A warmed Arctic may be less icy, but likely stormier, putting increased strains on local populations, maritime shipping lanes, and Arctic states’ search and rescue capabilities. Moreover, just because ice does not form on the sea, it can still form on vessels traversing that sea, suggesting that Arctic routes, even in an ice-free summer, will remain risky for improperly equipped vessels.

While warmer seas may attract more fishing activity, they can also attract invasive species that could decimate local populations through

24 Emmerson, *Future History*, 162.
predation, competition, or disease. Furthermore, as temperatures change, fishing grounds move. Experts expressed concern as early as 2010 that Norwegian fishing grounds may be moving east into Russian waters. Moreover, if Chinese fishermen practice unsustainable harvesting, as they have elsewhere in the world, an increasingly assertive China, which was listed as the least preferred partner by all but one of the Arctic states, could significantly increase tensions in the region.

Climate change. Perhaps most importantly, climate change will affect the quality and the quantity of food sources for indigenous populations. These populations have already noted a change in the taste and the nutritional quality of traditional food sources even where it is not scarce. Compounding that concern is the fact that food does not just sustain indigenous populations but provides a fundamental basis for social and cultural identities. When cultural food sources disappear, often so do the ways of life that evolved around them. This dynamic makes indigenous communities especially vulnerable.

Human activity. Increased economic and social activity associated with extraction industries, fishing, and maritime shipping also raises the potential for humanitarian disasters. Such disasters and environmental degradation could result from industrial pollutants, accidents, oil spills, and radiation leakage. Russia, for example, has dumped a number of old nuclear reactors and other nuclear material on and around the Kola Peninsula. An accident or widespread leakage involving this waste could have significant implications for the region.

Increased maritime activity will likely mean increased incidents, to which Arctic states may not be able to respond effectively. In June 1989, for example, the Norwegian coast guard rescued the crew and passengers of the Russian cruise liner Maxim Gorky after it struck ice near Svalbard and started taking water. The incident highlighted infrastructure concerns regarding poor hydrographic data and inaccurate marine charts, incomplete communications and monitoring coverage, limited search and rescue (SAR) capability, as well as limited deepwater ports, salvage, and towing services. This infrastructure will be necessary to sustain the potential increases in shipping, especially in areas currently

31 Emmerson, *Future History*, 162.
out of the range of SAR assets.\textsuperscript{34} Given that an ice-free Arctic will attract not only commercial shipping vessels but also cruise ships with thousands of passengers on board, Arctic states could find themselves in a position with insufficient assets to rescue, or even to find, individuals in need. Enforcement of the Polar Code, which calls for increased safety standards for ships transiting the Arctic, would decrease the likelihood and severity of accidents.\textsuperscript{35} But without effective enforcement, many shipping companies may forego the expensive modifications believing that the warmer Arctic is safer for shipping.

\textit{Socioeconomic factors.} A more geostrategic, socioeconomic concern is the impact of increased revenues and wealth from improved Arctic access on local, regional, and global politics.\textsuperscript{36} This wealth could be significant if the Arctic indeed holds 13 percent of the world’s undiscovered oil reserves and 30 percent of the world’s natural gas.\textsuperscript{37} Not only will traditional security concerns associated with sovereign control of territory impact the Arctic but the competition to obtain that wealth may also make Arctic management difficult, if not impossible. This concern would be exacerbated by the introduction of non-Arctic states like China into the competition.

Another socioeconomic concern involves the impact on local populations. Four million people live in the Arctic today, with the indigenous population comprising about 10 percent.\textsuperscript{38} This population has already been dramatically affected. In 1989, journalist Kevin McMahon reported on the disruption a group of Inuits in Canada experienced when a military base was built nearby. The young men quickly abandoned traditional means of sustenance to search the building sites for “easy food and money.” A generation later, the people had embraced modernity and lacked the traditional skills necessary for living in the harsh northern environment and had little inclination to try.\textsuperscript{39} As a result of coastal erosion and estimates that Shishmaref, Alaska, will not be viable past 2021, this largely Inuit community voted in 2016 to relocate over the next five or so years at a cost of $100–200 million.\textsuperscript{40} These examples illustrate additional military forces and infrastructure can come with their own human-security concerns that should be addressed before they are introduced into the Arctic environment.

As the Arctic opens up, problems will only get worse. Building the infrastructure necessary to support increased oil and natural


\textsuperscript{36} Järvenpää and Ries, “Rise of the Arctic,” 119.

\textsuperscript{37} Tarnes, “Arctic Security,” 54.

\textsuperscript{38} “Arctic Peoples,” Arctic Council, November 3, 2016.


\textsuperscript{40} US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), \textit{An Examination of Erosion Issues in the Communities of Bethel, Dillingham, Kaktovik, Kivalina, Newtok, Shishmaref, and Unalakleet} (Soldotna, AK: USACE, 2006); and Lisa Demer, “Shishmaref Votes To Relocate from Eroding Barrier Island to Mainland,” \textit{Anchorage Daily News}, August 19, 2016.
gas extraction north of Greenland, which only has a population of
58,000, could require as many as 300,000 workers to settle there at
least temporarily over a five to ten year period.\footnote{Järvenpää and Ries, “Rise of the Arctic,” 133.}
Unless that growth is well managed, Greenland’s people and resources will be significantly
stressed. Moreover, should such development take place, Greenland’s increased economic resources would likely enable it to forgo subsidies from Denmark and encourage it to declare independence. Adding another Arctic state could impact Arctic management as well as traditional security concerns in unexpected ways, such as allowing the Chinese, whom the Danish government has so far denied basing rights in Greenland, to gain a foothold in the Arctic.\footnote{Järvenpää and Ries, “Rise of the Arctic,” 133–34. See also Matzen, “Denmark Spurned Chinese.”}

Legal immigration may not be a great concern of the Arctic states. But as the Arctic becomes more accessible, the region could become a significant avenue for illegal immigration and transnational criminal and terrorist organizations. In addition to the national security challenges such groups represent, they also present human-security concerns. The presence of large criminal and terrorist organizations in Alaska could make it a dangerous place. Even if the groups simply use the land for transit, criminals bring illicit activities, such as violence against rival gangs and against the local populations the organizations choose to exploit. As the resources available to sustain the native communities degrade, participating in criminal activity may become an attractive option for many citizens.

The limited surveillance and monitoring capabilities of Arctic states suggest they would be incapable of effectively responding to the challenges associated with illicit activities. Comparatively, in Norway, Russian immigration facilitated by organized crime has significantly increased in recent years from only one to two people through the northern border per year during the Cold War.\footnote{Emmerson, Future History, 104.} While the United States has yet to experience a significant increase, there is no reason to believe it cannot happen or it would be less reliant on criminal networks.

If Arctic management concerns transform into Arctic crises, two sources of tension will arise. The first source will be the clash between those actors who emphasize ecological norms, regulation, and enforcement and those who emphasize sovereign rights and exploitation. This tension will play out between the states as well as the actors within states in ways that could be difficult to manage. Even if the actors agree to a management framework, tensions could still arise over implementation and policy. Discussions to determine responsibilities for enforcement, disaster responses, searches and rescues, as well as to develop the domain awareness and communication systems necessary to coordinate international responses will produce tension between Arctic

\footnote{Emmerson, Future History, 104.}
actors and complicate effective Arctic management, even if all parties involved maintain a general disposition to cooperate.44

Thus, a perfect storm in the Arctic could exist as concerns regarding climate change, newly accessible resources, shortened transportation routes, and competing claims to Arctic waters, seabed, and islands encourage conflict among multiple state and nonstate actors.45

**National Security**

According to the Army Vision, the Army’s mission is “to deploy, fight, and win our Nation’s wars by providing ready, prompt, and sustained land dominance by Army forces across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the Joint Force.”46 This mission implies Army support for a range of activities necessary for meeting the changing national security needs in the Arctic. Before discussing how the Army can posture itself for meeting the Arctic’s challenges, it is important to understand the potentially competing national security requirements and how climate change will impact them. One thing is clear: melting Arctic ice leads to more ocean, not more land. Thus, the Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard will have to reconsider if their current posture will meet the increased requirements associated with more open Arctic water and increased human activity. Beyond traditional roles associated with territorial defense, such as air and missile defense, the demands that should fall on the Army are less clear.

What makes determining Army requirements even more difficult is that many of the human-security requirements are better addressed by good Arctic governance and not more military forces. Fortunately, there has been much progress. The Arctic states have signed the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, which provides a framework for international cooperation on SAR operations; the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, which provides a framework for international cooperation on limiting pollution and responding to oil spills; and the Fairbanks Declaration, which addresses a wide range of the human-security concerns including climate change, indigenous people’s rights, biodiversity, and a host of other issues.47 In addition, the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea provides a legal resource outlining economic rights and imposing requirements on sustainable fishing practices.48

These agreements are not comprehensive. The 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment noted that despite the multitude of laws and

44 Järvenpää and Ries, “Rise of the Arctic,” 135.
48 Hassan, “Climate Change,” 520.
treaties applicable to the Arctic, the region’s actors will still need to
enhance maritime safety, protect indigenous peoples, improve maritime
infrastructure including SAR and disaster response capabilities, enforce
the Polar Code, improve domain awareness, and set aside certain areas
as environmentally sensitive.\textsuperscript{49} Despite the hefty requirements, most do
not seem to demand a significant Army role.

The general spirit of cooperation in the Arctic suggests there is little
requirement for the Army to change its posture in Alaska significantly
or to introduce new capabilities. But the Arctic security environment
will be increasingly complex and unpredictable, and anticipating what
circumstances or conditions may lead to conflict will become more
difficult. The Army will want to pace potential adversaries, such as the
Russians, to ensure it maintains a credible deterrent to military action
in the event of a crisis. In preparation, the Army should consider some
modifications to its current Arctic posture, priorities, and activities.\textsuperscript{50}

To maintain credible deterrence capabilities, the Army should
either reconsider plans to eliminate the Airborne brigade at Joint Base
Elmendorf-Richardson or consider rotating other forces to Alaska. Even
if the Army keeps the brigade, rotating additional units to Alaska may
be a wise, but problematic, approach for enhancing Arctic capabilities
and preparing more forces to deploy to the region. The fieldcraft soldiers
need for Arctic capabilities includes knowledge of vehicle and weapons
maintenance, survival skills, and Arctic-specific equipment associated
with mobility and logistics.\textsuperscript{51}

The Army should continue to increase the number of personnel and
units that attend the Northern Warfare Training Center in Black Rapids,
Alaska, from the 1,400 soldiers who completed the course in 2016 and
the 7,100 soldiers trained over the last decade since the numbers suggest
Arctic fighting expertise is limited to soldiers stationed in Alaska.\textsuperscript{52}
To build that expertise even further, the Army should regularly conduct
exercises with its Arctic partners, especially along the northern border
of Alaska. While cold-weather exercises can occur in other cold-weather
areas such as Fort Drum, conducting them in Alaska will show potential
adversaries that the US military is ready and capable to defend the
Arctic frontier.

The ability of our adversaries to deploy aircraft closer to the United
States requires America review its air defense, early warning capabilities,
and specialized equipment. Russia, for example, recently established
forward air bases and fielded a range of air defense systems capable of

\textsuperscript{50} For the introduction of these recommendations, see COL Michael J. Forsyth, “Why Alaska
and the Arctic Are Critical to the National Security of the United States,” \textit{Military Review} 98, no. 1
(January–February 2018): 118.
\textsuperscript{51} Trey Braun (research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College), in
discussion with the author, October 29, 2018.
\textsuperscript{52} Todd South, “A New Cold War: How the Army Is Preparing for a Fight in the Arctic,” \textit{Army
off-road operation in the Arctic.\textsuperscript{53} Thus to maintain a credible deterrent, the United States will need to ensure it can not only penetrate those defenses but also prevent Russian attempts to reciprocate.\textsuperscript{54} Similarly, the Army must modernize its Arctic equipment. The M973 small unit support vehicle, the Army’s only Arctic-specific vehicle, entered service around 35 years ago and is no longer a program of record.\textsuperscript{55} In contrast, the Russian Army employs a number of combat and combat support vehicles designed specifically for the Arctic environment.\textsuperscript{56}

To prepare comprehensively for future Arctic security challenges, the Army should also take steps to address human-security needs. The 2016 Department of Defense Arctic strategy asks the services to “partner with other departments, agencies, and nations to support human and environmental security” as well as to “provide support to civil authorities, as directed.”\textsuperscript{57} In the discussion on the former, the strategy calls on the services to “support interagency partners in maintaining human health; promoting healthy, sustainable, and resilient ecosystems; complying with applicable environmental laws and regulations; and consulting and coordinating with Alaska tribal entities on relevant policies and activities.” The discussion on the latter emphasizes responding to “chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks or accidents” and specifically states, “defense support of civil authorities and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief do not drive requirements for the size or shape of the force.” It simply states that in the event of a disaster, the Defense Department will provide available military equipment to civilian authorities.

The Army mission statement suggests that limiting Army requirements to meet human-security needs on an ad hoc basis is a reasonable compromise to the range of challenges posed by a warming Arctic. Historical precedents exists for the Army to embrace the broader human-security requirements, suggesting that no matter how severe the human-security demands are, they could fall to the Army anyway. For most of the Army’s history, its mission was described as an acting constabulary force, tailored to protecting settlers and facilitating westward expansion.\textsuperscript{58} As the frontiers were settled and effective local law enforcement infrastructure emerged, the Army relinquished these missions to focus outward. But the conditions that created the need for the Army to play a constabulary role could resurface in the Arctic as a result of increased human activity and environmental stresses associated

\textsuperscript{53} Osborn, “Putin’s Russia.”
\textsuperscript{56} Boris Egorov, “Top Ten Weapons the Russian Army Deploys in the Arctic,” Russia Beyond, February 7, 2018.
\textsuperscript{57} Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Policy), Report to Congress on Strategy to Protect United States National Security Interests in the Arctic Region (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2016), 2.
with climate change. Given the potential for these conditions to impose additional demands on the Army, it makes sense to take several steps.

**Recommendations**

The Army should conduct an analysis to determine the worst and the most likely crises as well as to draft contingency plans, in conjunction with other services and civil authorities that identify the Army’s role in any response. Such plans should incorporate the Alaska National Guard and determine if it has sufficient funding and resources. Currently, the AKNG has 1,700 personnel, composing one infantry battalion, one battalion of lift aviation, and a separate medevac company. These units already address human-security needs in support of civil authorities. The force could, however, be easily overwhelmed in the event of significant or multiple disasters. The active Army should have plans to augment the AKNG should such events occur.

The Army should integrate human-security requirements into exercises and encourage participation by civil authorities to ensure rapid resource integration in the event of a crisis. As the northern frontier becomes more accessible, the Army should consider establishing a rotating presence along the areas transnational criminal and terrorist organizations are most likely to transit and supporting civil authorities in disrupting the illicit activities. This effort could be modeled after the Defense Department’s support on the southern US border.

Forward positioning of combat and lift aviation assets that could facilitate movement and surveillance over Alaska’s open spaces would also be beneficial until civil authorities develop and assume those capabilities. This early and sufficiently robust presence will discourage criminal organizations from establishing a stable presence in the region. Joint exercises and operations with the Canadian military and civil organizations like the Royal Mounted Police would allow the US Army to learn from an established model and develop experience and skill sets useful for supporting civil authorities in the far north.

The Army should also develop infrastructure for moving troops in the event of external attacks and for delivering humanitarian aid in crisis situations. The Army, along with other services and civil authorities, should continue efforts to develop domain awareness capabilities and ensure they are integrated with search and rescue organizations. As James Kraska observes, “Right now, polar operations are hampered by a lack of robust command, control, communications, computers, intelligences, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) infrastructure for network-centric” operations, which would include policing and SAR. There should also be a method for the Arctic states, including Russia, to share

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relevant information regarding weather patterns, ice flows, and maritime and air traffic more effectively.

**Conclusion**

Not all results of Arctic ice melt are bad. More wealth, and the greater economic and political influence that comes with it, are morally neutral. Such power can be used for good or evil. Managed properly, Arctic wealth can provide more resources for addressing the concerns in the region. To the extent that indigenous people retain some authority over and ownership of the resources in the areas they inhabit, they could be politically empowered to manage the changes that will inevitably come. The capabilities of indigenous populations to deal with human-security concerns may, in fact, pace, or even outpace, military efforts. Thus, it is not unreasonable to proceed with caution, or even take some risks, when determining resources for expanding the Army mission in Alaska to meet human-security needs.

The worst-case scenario would be for the Army to fail to anticipate how the changing long-term Arctic conditions can force it into a role much like the one it played during America’s westward expansion: it directed its efforts at infrastructure development and internal stability to the exclusion of defending the nation from external attack. If that happens, the Army could find itself diverting resources away from national security requirements, undermining its capability to meet them.

Addressing the full range of human-security needs will require increased cooperation among the Arctic parties to procure new capabilities, to develop emergency response facilities, to pool resources, and to act in concert with the international community as other states attempt to take advantage of the opening Arctic. As noted earlier, a human-security approach views sovereignty not as a right but a responsibility. Governments should conduct “proper policing, surveillance, search and rescue, and other services” to responsibly exercise their sovereignty. Without a plan, and one in which the Army plays at least a transitional role, exercising this sovereignty is only going to get more difficult as time goes on.

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ABSTRACT: This article proposes a method for developing a NATO deployable police command capable of responding to international crisis situations within 5 days and providing a stability police force of 1,000 officers to support local forces in 30 days.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) recognizes national security depends on regional stability.¹ As the Alliance analyzes deteriorating security conditions around the world, it appears less likely to engage in overt peer-to-peer warfare but rather to respond to gray-zone actions used by revisionist powers to change the international order without provoking conventional war.² Mechanisms to identify and to counter these efforts to harm or interfere in civil security, communications, civility, or elections do not currently exist. But well-trained police forces and internal security organizations, not military forces, may offer the best response.³ Many police organizations are incapable of providing the necessary protections against gray-zone activities. Nonetheless, NATO may be able to conduct crisis management better by establishing a deployable police command.⁴

The United Nations recognizes police officers are equal to, if not more important than, military forces in establishing security: “Good soldiers . . . cannot fully perform police duties among local populations.”⁵ This philosophy is reflected in the three separate but equal components of the integrated United Nations (UN) mission: the military, the police, and the civilians.⁶ Military commanders today are rarely responsible for implementing the police portions of the UN Security Council Resolution; hence, policing must be delegated to another organization. As the UN security mission matures, the organization has removed structural impediments to operational effectiveness, built upon the

⁴ Díaz-Plaja, “Projecting Stability.”
⁵ Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 107th Cong, 42 (2001) (General Wesley Clark quoted in testimony of Robert M. Perito, Senior Fellow, Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace, USIP).
successes made by the military component, and filled power vacuums before they could be exploited by malevolent actors.7

But NATO has not changed its structure or its practices to accommodate the increasingly important role of stability policing. While stability police are recognized as necessary, they remain under the authority of NATO. This article argues that NATO should develop a deployable police command with police and justice personnel who have been specially trained in stabilizing gray-zone conflicts.

Background

International interventions over the last two decades have increasingly focused on confronting conventional threats from traditional armies and have increasingly responded to decentralized, nonstate actors applying unconventional, asymmetrical, and irregular tactics. Army stability tasks frequently “coordinate with other instruments of national power” in such circumstances “to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential government services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.8

Traditional military forces, which are ill-suited for this shift to postwar stability operations and operations other than war, have struggled to operate within the “fog and friction” created when multiple participants coordinate conventional and asymmetric capabilities. When combined, megatrends—such as shifting socioeconomic conditions, accelerated urbanization, rising geographic mobility, increased connectedness—and rising criminal activities—such as weapons and drug trades, human trafficking, murder, and politically motivated violence—will further erode the capability of states to secure and govern themselves.9

International responses to the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate how stability operations suffer when a variety of approaches are incongruously applied. Thus, the effectiveness of police response to violence, crime, and disorder determines whether the people will support a new government, and predetermines the success, failure, or sustainability of an operation.10 Notably, disagreements and a lack of coordination generate incoherent and ineffective stabilization

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actions, disconnect program efforts, duplicate training resources, and inappropriately prepare police for operations.  

For successful stability policing operations, a lead agency must be established to coordinate training and to provide the police assets required to quell crimes and manage public order. As demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq, stability policing operations should not be treated as secondary priorities for military interventions. Instead, they must be regarded as equal, if not more important, requirements for long-term stabilization. America’s emphasis on the military as the main security actor, as well as the subsequent neglect of police forces, is, in hindsight, a major shortcoming of these early interventions.

To make the situation worse, local police forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan were inadvertently militarized when they were trained as counterinsurgency assets. In the aftermath of a crisis, the local police must investigate crime, manage public order, use intelligence-led policing to reestablish the rule of law, counter terrorism, and combat organized crime. Yet police cannot be the main instrument for fighting insurgency. As experts such as Joshua Bachner explain, “Military and police serve very different functions and ideally should not serve the role of the other.”

Policymakers recognize these problems. But despite continuing improvements, the existing system still has several drawbacks. As the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction observed, “Developing and training a national police force is best accomplished by law enforcement professionals in order to achieve a police capability focused on community policing and criminal justice.” Likewise, a senior UN official, stated before the intervention in Kosovo in 2000, police forces must improve the rule of law and break the cycle of impunity of those who have committed acts of violence. This is especially true in forced regime changes. The ability of the police to manage crime, violence, and disorder will determine whether or not the population will support the new government and the new regime.

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15 Sopko, Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense, 123–25.


17 Sopko, Reconstructing the Afghan National Defense, 177.

18 “In Remarks on Behalf of Secretary-General, His Kosovo Special Representative, Bernard Kouchner, Condemns Murder of Defenseless Farmers,” SG/SM/7077, United Nations, July 26, 1999.

19 Heiduk, “Rethinking ‘Policebuilding’”; 73; Bachner, Flip Side, 84; and Wither and Schroeter, Police Primacy, 4.
therefore becomes a legitimization of the intervention, especially from the perspective of the population.

The police force in the stability operation will also have to bridge the gap between military and local police forces to assume duties not clearly set in either camp—an area known as the security gap. Such gaps may arise outside of traditional postconflict stability operations when law and order break down and public order must be immediately reestablished to save lives. A tsunami, for example, could reduce the number of available security forces, or massive protests may exceed the state’s security capabilities. Thus, the state may ask outsiders to intervene.

**Stability Policing**

Most opinions on this topic indicate the best asset to fulfill the security gap is a Carabinieri-like constabulary force that can prevent power vacuums and anarchy. Only such robust policing organizations with military status capable of performing specialized missions in disciplined groups can overcome the three distinct public security challenges plaguing stability operations: the deployment gap, the enforcement gap, and the institutional sustainability gap. Temporal deployment gaps, which can have profound negative consequences on missions, result from a lag time between the arrival of the military contingent and the fielding of operational contingents. Enforcement gaps refer to discrepancies between the availability of lethal force in a combat unit and the minimal level of force available to an individual police officer. Institutional sustainability involves the government’s incapacity to establish and sustain the rule of law.

Some parties can readily see a role for military police forces (MPs) in future stability operations. But critics contend such forces are ill-suited to perform stability policing operations for several reasons. First, MPs must perform other important duties during military operations, which leaves an inadequate number of units and personnel available to fulfill both functions. Second, servicemembers charged with stability policing generally lack expertise and experience in peacetime civilian law enforcement capacities, such as community-based policing.

Specifically, military police forces can only be successful at determining the local community’s threats to NATO or coalition forces. Military police officers conducting stability operations experience a radical change of ethics, values, mentality, and procedures as they develop the flexibility and heuristics to handle complex social problems.

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21 Dziedzic, *Criminalized Power Structures*.
they would otherwise have limited exposure to. Likewise, interactions with the population during stability operations generally intersect with law enforcement problems, which generate biases that MPs rarely have the opportunity to resolve in a conflict environment. Thus, military operations to quell insurgencies and enforce stability often provoke controversy among local populations.

Finally, though military police may understand the nuances between the use of force and the rules of engagement better than other soldiers, their nature and their training remain focused on combat. A police force serves and protects; a military is trained to conquer and defend using maximal force. Conversely, a population’s opinions of the military are often tainted by a concept of tyrannical force that makes comprehending military police officers as partners of the people difficult.26

Regardless of the pitfalls, the United Nations has discovered there are not enough military police officers available to meet the growing demand for stability police units.27 Using military police in conjunction with stability police may therefore be necessary, ideally only for a short period of time and a limited number of tasks. The blending of the two forces can, for a short duration, alleviate personnel shortages while mitigating some of the concerns inherent in an all-military force. It should be noted, however, that the UN does not accept military police in the police component of UN operations unless they are police forces with military status.28

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A Deployable NATO Police Command

To support local police reforms during a regional crisis while mitigating costs to the United States and the European Union, NATO should establish a deployable police command. This command would guarantee NATO could react quickly, fill security gaps, offer common and integrated doctrine and approaches, and set force standards that could apply under different oversights, such as the European Union or the United Nations. Given the prevalence and the increasing capability of criminal networks, these forces will need a creative combination of community policing, constabulary work, criminal investigation, and special branch work.

The commander should lead a rule of law unit composed of a headquarters; approximately 300 experts divided into groups of legal, government, and political advisors; a training unit; special operations units; stability policing units; a special investigative group, and a special weapons and tactics group. It should be capable of deploying within 5 days and of reaching a full operational capability of 1,000–4,000 police officers—with forces from such nations as Italy, France, and Spain—in 30 days. The latter response time is a goal of the European Gendarmerie Force for similar forces responding outside of the European Union that NATO could achieve by combining existing units on a rotational basis.29 With 3 police officers per 1,000 people sufficient in a high-threat environment, the international force should be capable of deploying up to as many as 4,000 police officers.30

By including public prosecutors and judicial authorities in the deployable police command, NATO could assure and legitimize transitional justice and establish a criminal justice system to help maintain law and order. Such efforts could prevent mayhem in postconflict or regime-change scenarios when judicial and legal authorities often become broken, nonexistent, or corrupt.31 A mixed domestic and international tribunal could also pursue mass atrocities, guarantee human rights, uphold the rule of law, implement curfews, and most of all, guarantee an independent, fair, and lawful process to indicted people. Similar hybrid courts have already been used in Kosovo, East Timor, and Sierra Leone to great effect.32 These interventions have taught that focusing only on police is shortsighted because legitimacy is threatened when corrupt judges release convicted offenders, corrections officers abuse detained inmates, or poor prison conditions threaten prisoners’ well-being.

The team of government advisors should be high-ranking experts who can assist a country’s ministries of interior and justice in developing institutional guidance and coordinating support from the stability policing operation and the stabilization mission. These advisors, in coordination with tribunals and judicial authorities, should mentor and monitor ministries, top officials, and their ancillary staffs on police administration, community policing, and criminal justice. This team should constantly link its work with mentoring, monitoring, and advising units for local police forces to offer guidance, provide feedback, and assist with implementing policies and procedures.

A social specialist, cultural heritage protection expert, legal advisor, gender consultant, and strategic communication advisor constitute a political advising team. The information about the operational scenario, cultural and social setting, religious traditions, and ethnic integration provided by this team can be used to inform command decisions. The commander can also share this information among the staff responsible for planning, personnel management, administration, logistics, communication, intelligence, and security. A doctrine and policy section might also keep this information in mind as they promote best practices and review current policies.

Highly trained experts with a clear track record of field work experience in crisis areas comprise a training unit that mentors, monitors, and advises. These specialists should be selected primarily on the quality of the civilian policing experience they gained in their respective countries. This team includes forensic laboratory experts, counterterrorism advisors, investigation experts, public order specialists, community policing officers, border guards, counternarcotics experts, and sexual and gender criminologists who can equip the police cadre with a comprehensive array of capabilities.

These experts should be devoted professionals capable of vetting participants. Experience teaching, mentoring, and coaching police officers, ideally as field training officers in an international mission, is important to this team’s success—especially when local recruits may be illiterate. In contrast to the shortsighted efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other stability operations, experts estimate it can take at least five years to create or to reform a law enforcement organization. 33

To complete the command’s capability, a special operations unit comprised of special investigators, Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams, and counterterrorism experts must be added. This unit is necessary for protecting VIPs, capturing war criminals and terrorists, and conducting high-threat police missions. Other paramount tasks include conducting sensitive investigations, collecting intelligence, seizing evidence, and supporting the training of local special investigations units and SWAT teams.

Conclusion

The most notable aspect that authorities and military commanders must understand about building a stability police force is that large numbers of novice police officers, swiftly equipped and hastily instructed, are detrimental to the success of security and stabilization operations: a competent police officer takes longer to train than a soldier. Areas handed over to inadequately trained police officers can just as quickly fall back into the hands of criminals or insurgents. Developing an effective, community-based police force depends more on the values and attitudes of the members of the force than the officers’ technical skills. Unfortunately, developing technical skills is easier and generally receives greater attention than reforming behaviors and attitudes.

During the last 20 years, the European Union, the United Nations, and NATO have adopted different interpretations and models for reforming police in crisis areas with mixed results. Political constraints and policymakers’ inertia continue to have a negative impact on the policing dimension of stability operations. Hopefully, the lessons learned from their experiences can be institutionalized and more successes can be achieved. Radical cultural and conceptual changes will be required not only to implement effective policies but also to reorganize NATO’s stability policing efforts. Recognizing police are essential to maintaining stability and to consolidating gains made by the military, NATO must create the organizational structure—a deployable police command—required to maximize its effectiveness.

Massimo Pani

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ON STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

Analogical Thinking: The Sine Qua Non for Using History Well

Richard A. Lacquement Jr.

ABSTRACT: This article discusses the use of historical analogies as one of humanity’s most important adaptive techniques. Recognizable patterns enable us to clarify context and provide guides for our actions when facing unfamiliar intellectual terrain. Thoughtful strategists should, however, be mindful of the substantial drawbacks associated with using analogies as sources for prescribed action amidst a constellation of contingent circumstances.

The use of historical analogies is one of humanity’s most important adaptive techniques. Our ability to learn from our own and others’ experiences to guide our judgment for future action is central to progress. To reason by analogy is to draw insights from two or more similar situations to speculate about other potentially corresponding respects. Historical analogies infer similar events may agree in some respects despite occurring in different periods.1 Confronting the unknown, people grasp for recognizable patterns from past experiences to clarify context and provide hypotheses for subsequent choices and behaviors. Reasoning by analogy helps us make sense of the world. Analogies are inviting because they offer great promise for cutting paths through unfamiliar intellectual terrain.

As comprehensive guides to action, however, analogies are severely limited. Thoughtful strategists must be mindful of the natural appeal and value of analogies. Especially during the early stages of confronting new or mysterious challenges, strategists must recognize the substantial drawbacks of using analogies to prescribe action amidst constellations of contingent circumstances that rarely, if ever replicate perfectly.

History and Experience

Personal history and experience are valuable components of individual theories of how the world works. In that regard, Sir Michael Howard provides an evocative metaphor for some key challenges soldiers face.

My thanks to Tami Davis Biddle for her insights on decision-making in stressful situations and Stephen J. Gerras for his perspective on self-awareness and team thinking, as well as Conrad C. Crane, Michael S. Neiberg, anonymous reviewers, and panel attendees at the International Studies Association and Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society conferences for commenting on earlier drafts of this article.


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A soldier . . . in peacetime is like a sailor navigating by dead reckoning. You have left the terra firma of the last war and are extrapolating from the experiences of that war. The greater the distance from the last war, the greater become the chances of error in this extrapolation. Occasionally there is a break in the clouds: a small-scale conflict occurs somewhere and gives you a “fix” by showing whether certain weapons and techniques are effective or not; but it is always a doubtful fix . . . . For the most part you have to sail on in a fog of peace until at the last moment. Then, probably when it is too late, the clouds lift and there is land immediately ahead; breakers, probably, and rocks. Then you find out rather late in the day whether your calculations have been right or not.²

Mindfulness of the “fog of peace” should extend to our understanding of how cloudy our view remains even as we seek clarity in historical experiences.

How and why individuals and groups choose analogies for national security applications are important questions that draw upon history and psychology. For national security professionals, using history well, particularly when it intersects with professional experiences, is a constant challenge. Meeting this challenge is especially important in professional military education (PME) where interwoven study of history and psychology should foster national security professionals’ ability to understand war and to develop sound discretionary judgment.

Historical cases provide natural foundations for analogical thinking that powerfully enhance security studies. According to Eliot Cohen, “To study military and strategic history in depth is to acquire vicarious experience of the variability of warfare, to acquire a certain kind of flexibility that neither military doctrine nor any individual’s military experience can supply.”³ The natural commingling of individuals’ personal, idiosyncratic analogies with the theories, models, and frameworks that PME programs seek to impart requires close attention from educators and students alike. Broad, rich, and diverse student and faculty experiences of professional practice and previous education offer tremendous benefits in the classroom. But there are also significant disadvantages—such as students, and sometimes faculty, anchoring on more readily available personal experiences (especially emotionally searing ones)—that may inhibit the consideration of less familiar but more useful possibilities.

As our students mature and gain real world experience, the interplay between direct (personal) and indirect (educational) experiences of history increases in scope. The typical career progression from tactical to operational to strategic assignments has parallel educational opportunities from junior to intermediate to senior to general/flag officer PME. Moreover, on each step up the PME ladder, individual students bring an accumulating portfolio of personal historical


experiences ripe for analogies. The propensity for reasoning by analogy and the recognition of likely analogy sources deserves close attention from students and faculty. In the present era, for example, servicemembers bring personal experiences and assessments of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq into the classrooms in ways that cannot be ignored.

A strategic leader may apply a compelling personal historical analogy to diagnose and treat a national security issue like a doctor identifies symptoms, diagnoses conditions, and recommends treatments for health issues. In 1965, for example, decisions on escalation in Vietnam were significantly influenced by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s and other senior leaders’ analogical thinking about momentous events they had lived through—such as the implications of the Munich Agreement to the beginning of World War II in Europe (inappropriate appeasement) and the nature of the American and Chinese clash during the Korean War (policy overreach and conflict expansion after the Inchon landing).

The use of the past, however, is limited by contingency and context. Projecting past experience to the future will likely be complicated by major variations in technology, social organization, geopolitics, or other elements that may have slight or no analog to the past. The relevance or irrelevance of history to new challenges is an important element for framing the context of expert judgment.

The past furnishes no precise formulas for solving present problems or predicting the future. History does, however, provide the best possible backdrop for putting strategic concepts in perspective before theoreticians frame recommendations and decisionmakers fit them into plans.

**History, Psychology, and War**

There is extensive literature on the historical value of case studies and the psychological relevance of analogical reasoning. Observations from several influential authors provide a firm foundation for understanding the important interdisciplinary connections between history and psychology.

Among Carl von Clausewitz’s keenest insights are the ones regarding human psychology and emotion in war. As Clausewitz pointed out, “The human mind . . . has a universal thirst for clarity, and longs to feel itself part of an orderly scheme of things.” Clausewitz rightly placed moral and intellectual factors at the center of war and its remarkable trinity of “primordial violence, hatred, and enmity . . . the play of chance and probability . . . and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.”

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7 Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.
For Clausewitz, there was no way to understand war in the absence of politics and genius. As Peter Paret notes, given the rudimentary nature of psychology in Clausewitz’s time, he had a limited vocabulary for it. Nonetheless, Clausewitz’s concept of genius captures much of his analysis of the human mind: “Any complex activity, if it is to be carried on with any degree of virtuosity, calls for appropriate gifts of intellect and temperament. If they are outstanding and reveal themselves in exceptional achievements, their possessor is called a ‘genius.’”

As Paret explains, “Genius served as [Clausewitz’s] favorite analytic device to conceptualize the various abilities and feelings that affected the behavior of more ordinary as well as of exceptional men.” Among the appropriate gifts of intellect, Clausewitz put great store in military history as a means for understanding war. To him, any theory of war must meet practical standards of applicability in the real world. Clausewitz’s chapters “Critical Analysis” and “On Historical Examples” are excellent models for considering the appropriate use of history. Clausewitz summarized four ways historical examples could be used: “as an explanation of an idea,” “to show the application of an idea,” “to support a statement,” and “the detailed presentation of a historical event, and the combination of several events . . . to deduce a doctrine.”

If, however, some historical event is being presented in order to demonstrate a general truth, care must be taken that every aspect bearing on the truth at issue is fully and circumstantially developed—carefully assembled, so to speak, before the reader’s eyes. To the extent that this cannot be done, the proof is weakened, and the more necessary it will be to use a number of cases to supply the evidence missing in that one. It is fair to assume that where we cannot cite more precise details, the average effect will be decided by a greater number of examples.

In short, Clausewitz suggests the manner in which causes and effects can be attributed to multiple cases strengthens the general theories of war that can be deduced from historical examples. Furthermore, Clausewitz cautions about the applicability of historical examples with respect to the time that has elapsed since the particular event: “The further one progresses from broad generalities to details, the less one is able to select examples and experiences from remote times.”

Robert Jervis gives great attention to the sources of biases, particularly those related to direct personal experience, and their pitfalls, which can influence individual behaviors as well as international politics. Discussing how decisionmakers learn from history, Jervis notes,

People pay most attention to what happens to them and to those they identify with. . . . A person learns most from events that are experienced firsthand, that influence his career, or that have major consequences for his nation. This sample is idiosyncratically biased because of the accidental

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8 Clausewitz, *On War*, 100.
nature of what the person happens to experience firsthand or the fact that one dramatic event rather than another occurs in his lifetime.\textsuperscript{12}

Decisionmakers tend to focus on superficial aspects of historical examples, particularly those that accord with preexisting biases and are reinforced by society. The most powerful collective events that shape individual perceptions are revolutions that establish or reshape a society and the most recent major war.\textsuperscript{13}

Richard Neustadt and Ernest May provide a superb analysis of the uses and misuses of history.\textsuperscript{14} After highlighting major events shaped by policymakers’ uses of history, such as success in the Cuban missile crisis and problems while defending South Korea, Neustadt and May focus on how decisionmakers can better use historical examples and vignettes. Explicit in their work is the understanding that individual experience is very influential. Their analysis captures the tension between using history and the limitations imposed by reliance on individual experience.

Neustadt and May suggest several methods policymakers can incorporate to use history more effectively. The methods are a good starting point for establishing the relevance of historical analogies to specific problems and understanding the circumstances for a decision, to include known, unclear, and presumed elements. When individuals apply principles of good journalism, they can figure out what the story is rather than what the problem is. With this approach, analysts explore the degree to which an historical example is similar to or different from the contemporary circumstance to which it might be applied. The methods help analysts avoid group biases or groupthink, give decisionmakers pause to analyze responses, challenge prevailing assumptions, and avoid the trap of superficial similarities, biases, and other common pitfalls that can lead to premature or incomplete decisions.\textsuperscript{15}

Yuen Foong Khong provides an even more constructive approach with his analogical explanation framework that applies cognitive social psychology to improve decision-making.\textsuperscript{16} Khong’s framework explains the routine and predictable manner in which people use analogies to address new phenomena or gaps in experience. He compellingly applies this information to analyze major US escalation decisions early in the Vietnam War to show how an intelligent group of decisionmakers framed options using historical analogies related to the Munich Agreement and the US intervention against communists during the Korean War. Senior leaders arrived at problematic, at best, escalation decisions that flowed from their flawed analogical diagnoses.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Jervis, \textit{Perception and Misperception}, 262–70.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Neustadt and May, \textit{Thinking in Time}, 234–36, 273–75.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Khong, \textit{Analogies at War}, 19–46.
\end{itemize}
Khong’s framework clarifies how analogies provide shortcuts to help deal with complex situations and identifies six diagnostic tasks analogies help perform for decision-making.

- Diagnosis and Prescription
  - Define the nature of the problem
  - Give policymakers a sense of the political stakes
  - Imply or suggest possible policy prescriptions

- Evaluation
  - Predicting chances of success
  - Assessing moral rightness
  - Warning of dangers

Khong further explains the complex relationship between applying history and psychology to decision-making: “The problem lies less with a failure of intellect than with the psychological processes associated with the way humans pick analogies and use them to process information.”

Humans have limited cognitive capacity and tend to take the easiest paths to make judgments in conditions of uncertainty. Key elements of this laziness or satisficing include an overreliance on the availability of and the tendency to focus on superficial similarities between a current situation and the historical experience in the decisionmaker’s repertoire. Once chosen, the analogy tends to persist as a tool for top-down analysis. This perspective can also reinforce confirmation bias that causes discrepant information to be discounted and for ambiguous information to be more likely perceived as confirming existing beliefs and preferences.

Daniel Kahneman, often drawing on his collaboration with Amos Tversky, provides an insightful corrective to the concept of rationality that carries important implications for analogical analysis. Kahneman provides a useful underlying context for understanding the human impulse to find quick answers to new challenges among the repertoire of experiences and analogies readily at hand. In *Thinking Fast and Slow*, Kahneman lays out many biases and tendencies of fast thinking—often conceived as intuitive, quick, and instinctual—and identifies how they can often lead us astray.

Drawing insights from the field of behavioral economics, Kahneman provides a persuasive approach to understand the manner in which individuals make decisions. He distills his analysis to System 1 (fast, intuitive thinking) and System 2 (slow, deliberate thinking) and highlights how readily individuals rely on fast thinking for most tasks. The overwhelming propensity for fast thinking, which draws heavily on biases and heuristics, challenges assumptions of rational decision-making.

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grounded in slow thinking. Indeed, slow thinking frequently rationalizes the results of fast thinking rather than investigating alternatives.21

When we think of ourselves, we identify with System 2, the conscious, reasoning self that has beliefs, makes choices, and decides what to think about and what to do. Although System 2 believes itself to be where the action is, the automatic System 1 is the hero. . . . System 1 . . . effortlessly originates impressions and feelings that are the main sources of the explicit beliefs and deliberate choices of System 2.22

With respect to historical analogies, it is thus very likely that individuals use intuition heavily conditioned by past experience to make a decision before looking for analogies that support their decision, and then fall prey to confirmation bias that prevents them from searching for other perspectives or being open to other analogies.

Conditioned to think fast first, individuals tend to pillage a grab bag of possible solutions from among which they often settle for the first and most easily accessible (the availability heuristic). It is important and natural for people to make these snap judgments in the blink of an eye as a basic coping mechanism for moving through life. Nevertheless, it is possible to induce slow thinking to work deliberately through possibilities and alternatives that the mind might not select in a rush for quick answers. The selection of specific historical analogies, which is often done poorly, is mainly a function of default, fast thinking approaches that help everyone cope with day-to-day living. Such psychological defaults or short cuts are even more attractive in stressful situations characterized by information overload and tight deadlines common for high-pressure decision-making. This element helps explain why individuals frequently fail to thoroughly weigh costs and benefits against valued ends when making major decisions.

Circling back to Clausewitz’s foundational analysis, we benefit from his placement of individual genius at the center of his theory of war. Even without a scientific understanding of the influence of psychology or genius on war, Clausewitz came close to the matter with the language and frameworks he had at hand. He captured the essence of slow thinking and the dangers of fast thinking in his numerous exhortations for commanders to ignore first reports and emotional stimuli that often come from the realm of battle and to stick with the convictions developed more rationally and coolly. This sense of the importance of psychology and history is one of the many reasons On War continues to resonate. Jervis, Neustadt and May, Khong, and Kahneman offer useful complements for understanding how history and experience inform discretionary judgment.

To summarize, reasoning by analogy is natural and useful for understanding the dynamic between history, psychology, and war. But the misuses of history for which decisionmakers are faulted are more predictable and inevitable than most of us would like to

imagine. Humans are predisposed to time-saving and psychologically comfortable shortcuts to make sense of complexity and unfamiliarity as quickly as possible. Once chosen, analogies persistently tend to influence analysis and diagnosis of the circumstance to which they are applied. Understanding the psychological habits that make analogies attractive is fundamental to exploring their effective employment in PME.

**Educating for Judgment**

Individuals will use analogies to make professional judgments, and as the literature above suggests, they are prone to do so poorly. Thus, practitioners and scholars should remain attentive to the implications of misusing history, especially when making national security policy decisions. It is wise to be as self-aware as possible (individually and organizationally) to mitigate the poor use of analogies. As Khong notes, analyzing analogies, especially their similarities and differences, is more problematic in international affairs where the context is less familiar and generally less accessible. A major challenge is to figure out how to improve upon or at least to mitigate the negative aspects of reasoning by historical analogy.

Education can provide critical elements for understanding, prioritizing, and selecting analogies. Individuals can use this information to build a rich repertoire of professionally relevant history for nesting their experience and analogies. With a solid framework and a habit of exploring the elaborate texture of historical cases, individuals will be less likely to rely on simple or superficial analogies for important decisions.

Short of actual war, simulating or replicating the key dynamics of war is valuable to preparing leaders—civilian and military—for the situations they might face in war. Wargames, case studies, reading assignments, and other forms of study are among the useful techniques for exploring the thought processes, strategic choices, and interactive dynamics of war necessary for developing potentially useful analogies.

Historical case studies remain exceptionally valuable techniques for educating national security professionals for the same reasons business case studies are effective:

> The case method creates a large repertoire of secondhand experiences from which students can reason. . . . Students will seldom, if ever, encounter a situation exactly like one they discussed in the classroom. But having studied and debated hundreds of cases from diverse settings, [they] can draw upon a large set of vicarious experiences as they make choices.23

Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*, for example, is a widely used source for exploring strategic choices in war and develops potentially useful analogies regarding international power dynamics (the rise of Athenian power and the fear induced in Sparta), strategic overreach (the Sicilian Expedition), and other strategy and policy

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connections (domestic political will, treatment of allies, war termination, and morality). Students, particularly broadly experienced and mature midcareer practitioners, arrive with a repertoire of analogies distilled from personal experiences and previous education. Professional military education can help students develop self-awareness about the power and pitfalls of analogies as well as introduce other perspectives that enrich existing sources of or create new sources for analogical thinking.

Three threads of advanced education converge in important ways. First, individuals are predisposed to draw upon their own experience as a basis for analogizing and implicitly theorizing about cause and effect with respect to new phenomenon. Second, members of groups are able to communicate with one another, often in abbreviated fashion, using analogies or other references to key events that are often freighted with supposedly, collectively agreed upon lessons. Third, education develops valuable individual and collective historical repertoires for future use.

In war, stakes are especially profound and personal experiences are particularly acute. Moreover, the infrequency of such experiences in a typical individual’s career heightens the importance of educational opportunities to analyze other historical experiences rationally. Education should also include endeavors that increase individuals’ self-awareness about the pitfalls of analogical thinking and to emphasize team thinking to get candid feedback on chosen analogies. Leaders need to learn to ask important questions about analogies, to include the first order question, Is this a good analogy?

In the development of an analogy to explain the past, organize disparate information, and inform future assessments, institutions like the armed forces have advantages in framing and promulgating understanding of particular historical analogies in ways that can have important bearing on civil-military relations—for example, in the wake of the Vietnam War, many members of the armed forces, particularly those in the Army, developed an explanation for the tragedy that blamed civilian leaders. As specious as the argument proves when subjected to rigorous examination, the result was a version of analogical thinking that connected civilian micromanagement to strategic failure. Hence, civilian micromanagement of military operations in contemporary or future conflicts could lead to Vietnam-like strategic failure. Education should play an important role in helping students to analyze such claims more thoroughly.

Conclusion

Field Marshal Viscount William Slim, one of the military giants of World War II, provides wise counsel regarding the pitfalls of using history as a predictor, rather than a foreshadowing, of events:

Generals have often been reproached with preparing for the last war instead of for the next—an easy gibe when their fellow-countrymen and their political leaders, too frequently, have prepared for no war at all. Preparation for war is an expensive, burdensome business, yet there is one important part of it that costs little—study. However changed and strange the new conditions of war may be, not only generals, but politicians and ordinary citizens, may find there is much to be learned from the past that can be applied to the future and, in their search for it, that some campaigns have more than others foreshadowed the coming pattern of modern war.27

Individuals will always employ history of one kind or another. The challenge is to ensure strategists and decisionmakers deploy history as well as possible.

In addition to using historical analogies well, professionals must be mindful of how the natural and routine oversimplification and adoption of preferred versions of historical logic can affect the development of strategy and policy—similar to the dysfunctional ways that preferred military analogies about excessive civilian micromanagement in the Vietnam War negatively affected subsequent US civil-military relations. After more than 17 years of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, an important test for professional military education will be to conscientiously consider how students’ recent experiences may influence analyses, diagnoses, and prescriptions for other missions.

History provides an invaluable and inescapable foundation upon which to build future national security policy. The inevitable use of historical analogies demands continued attention from scholars and national security professionals. The professional challenge is to use analogies that are developed as fully as possible and to be mindful of the limitations of human habit and reasoning that make analogies an imperfect tool for diagnosis and prescription in security affairs.

ABSTRACT: This article challenges readers to reconsider the implied meanings of Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*, which contemporary strategists commonly assume to be true. An analysis of the text within the context of global warfare during the period, and juxtaposed with recently recovered manuscripts, offers a new understanding of this strategic handbook.

A recent newspaper article carried the headline, “Lack of Oxford Comma Could Cost Maine Company Millions in Overtime Dispute.” At issue was the wording of a statute meant to designate which workers were eligible for overtime pay. The absent serial comma made it unclear if the regulations applied only to those who pack items for shipment, or also to those who actually transported goods.

In the landmark US Supreme Court case, District of Columbia v. Heller, Justice Antonin Scalia began the majority opinion with a 10,000-word dissertation outlining his understanding of the link between the two clauses that make up the Second Amendment. Despite the effort, Scalia was unable to convince four of his eight colleagues that his detailed interpretation of the amendment’s text, composed of a mere 27 words, was ultimately persuasive.

None of this is surprising. Textual ambiguity seeps into even the most careful efforts to distill highly complex thoughts into concise written form. The fact that fierce debate over the interpretation of our own Constitution and laws still exists hardly seems worthy of note. Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, however, appears to escape this fate despite being well over 2,000 years old and written in a language radically different from even its own modern equivalent. Accepted as the oldest military treatise in the world, the work amazingly maintains a sterling reputation for providing clear, direct, and applicable strategic guidance to its modern adherents.

Our Western assessment of Sun Tzu’s lucidity and continued relevance was most famously articulated by the British military theorist Sir Basil Liddell Hart. In the foreword to General Samuel B. Griffith’s 1963 translation of *The Art of War*, Hart drew a sharp distinction between Eastern and Western philosophies of war, noting “the clarity of Sun Tzu’s thought” serves as a counterweight to “the obscurity of

Clausewitz’s.” In Hart’s view, The Art of War had “never been surpassed in comprehensiveness and depth of understanding. . . . Sun Tzu has clearer vision, more profound insight, and eternal freshness.” Half a century later General David Petraeus, in the foreword to an updated translation of Sun Tzu’s work, declared it to be “every bit as relevant now as when it was written.”

The notion that Sun Tzu represents the multifaceted brilliance and timeless appeal of Amadeus Mozart to Clausewitz’s dour and overwrought Antonio Salieri maintains a powerful grip over our collective imagination. But we have not yet come close to cataloging fully the good, the bad, and the plainly ugly within this endlessly fascinating, but ultimately flawed document. Sun Tzu commentator Mark McNeilly insists the text’s principles “are much like the laws of physics; they exist whether we know them or not. . . . if a commander is ignorant, does not understand or (worse) ignores these principles, he does so at his peril.” In fact, almost every principle McNeilly believes he properly lifted directly from the text is open to challenge. Contrary to popular sentiment, Sun Tzu’s The Art of War remains far from a settled law.

**Violent Delights, Violent Ends**

The main characteristic of Sun Tzu’s work is its seemingly bold rejection of violent means in the pursuit of strategic ends. People’s Liberation Army Colonel Liu Mingfu articulated this key difference in his manifesto predicting China’s conflict-free displacement of the United States as the global hegemon within the next few decades: “On War has been called Europe’s Art of War. But the character of European and Chinese military strategy is as different as their representative works. . . . China’s art of war is a peaceful, defensive, benevolent, moral, civilized art of war, one that uses softness to overpower steel, and quiet to overcome force.”

Many Westerners certainly agree with this assessment. Arthur Waldron, a professor of Chinese history at the University of Pennsylvania, attempted to quantify this distinction between a pacifist Eastern philosophy of war with the conflict-prone West.

Above all, virtually all strains of Chinese philosophy frowned on the use of force. Even Sun Tzu’s description of war and conquest avoids much talk about violence. He uses the word  to, force, only nine times in his entire Art of War, while Clausewitz uses Gewalt eight times alone when defining war in the two paragraphs of Book I.2. Furthermore, when Sun Tzu does use the

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4  Hart, foreword, v.
word force, he does so almost always to stress the need to conserve it... China's preeminent military theorist shrank from the use of direct force.8

The first issue is a simple comparison of word frequency in works of vastly different length and scope. Without deeper analysis, it can lead us to facile conclusions. The insinuation that Clausewitz’s eight usages of Gewalt within his description of war indicates a preference for using force, as opposed to a scholar’s careful and thorough definition of a key term in his theory, is misplaced. As a counterpoint, what are we to make of the fact that Clausewitz uses the German word for “peace” (Frieden) 27 times in the first of his eight books that make up On War, while Sun Tzu uses the Chinese equivalent term for “peace” (he) only once in his entire text? Moreover, in a work composed of slightly over 6,000 characters, with only 762 of them being unique, the appearance of a single character nine times in The Art of War is far from insignificant; it puts li in the top 15 percent of all characters used within the text based solely on the frequency of its occurrence.9

Furthermore, the character li is not the proper linguistic equivalent of Gewalt. As used in The Art of War, li is better translated as physical strength, vitality, or intensity, not force as Clausewitz defined it in his work.10 In one instance, Sun Tzu uses li in an analogy conceptualizing an inconsequential achievement: “Lifting up a strand of fine animal hair newly grown in autumn does not require great strength [li].”11 In another, he uses li to describe the intensity of a fire set amongst enemy troop formations: “Once the fire has peaked in strength [li], if conditions are right, follow up with an attack.”12

The term does not equate directly to Clausewitz’s Gewalt. But this does not mean the concept of Gewalt is absent from The Art of War; nor that Sun Tzu’s idea of using force is any less violent than what is advocated by his Prussian counterpart. In fact, Sun Tzu chooses to conserve li (strength) for the purpose of more effectively inflicting violence on the enemy at the most opportune moment. If we are looking for the key difference between Sun Tzu’s and Clausewitz’s thinking, we will not find it in the former’s alleged rejection of violence in war.

**Divine Strategic Order**

Even if Sun Tzu did not shy away from using force in battle, strategically he favored less violent and catastrophic methods to conquer the enemy. This is a defensible viewpoint, most likely derived from the well-known third verse of the third chapter, “Offensive Strategy”: “Thus

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11 Mair, *Art of War*, 89.
the highest realization of warfare is to attack the enemy’s plans; next is to attack their alliances; next to attack their army; and the lowest is to attack their fortified cities.”

We must initially note a few discrepancies. First, the text clearly states that for each of the objects of the four methods, one needs to “attack” them. If we choose to interpret the idea of attacking the enemy’s plans and alliances as indicating a reliance on primarily nonviolent means, we need to lay out clearly what evidence in the text leads us to that conclusion. This has never been satisfactorily accomplished.

Second, while the text unmistakably lists the four methods from best to worst (literally, highest to lowest), Sun Tzu does not explain to the reader what criteria is being used to assign this ranking. Is the order based on best to worst in terms of minimizing violence, most to least in terms of effectiveness, or some other ranking principle? Before we can properly assess the impact of this verse on strategic choices, we need to determine what criteria Sun Tzu uses as the basis for his recommendations.

The most popular interpretation is that this ordering reflects Sun Tzu’s desire to minimize enemy casualties. Thomas Huynh, moderator of a website about The Art of War, explains the sequential logic as follows: “The progression from most desirable to least desirable focus of attack is inversely proportional to the amount of physical damage an army can inflict on its enemy: the less damage inflicted, the more desirable the outcome.” In line with this thinking, Huynh highlights what he believes to be “the value Sun Tzu places on compassion.”

According to this logic, the ordering appears rational and there is a simple and clear explanation for the strict prohibition on attacking cities. Conducting sieges, historically, was often one of the most brutal methods of waging war, resulting in death by starvation and disease (particularly affecting women, children, and the elderly), followed by vicious house-to-house slaughter of unarmed civilians once the walls were breached. Even after victory, the cruelty of the methods used remains in the hearts and minds of the vanquished populace.

But another interpretation is possible. Although Sun Tzu did not provide a clear rationale for assigning order to the first three modes of attack, in the next verse he furnishes an uncharacteristically detailed exposition as to why attacking cities ranks last.

Attack cities only when there is no alternative. . . . To prepare the shielded wagons and make ready the necessary arms and equipment requires at least three months; to pile up earthen ramps against the walls an additional three months will be needed. . . . If the general is unable to control his impatience

13 Sawyer, Art of War, 177.
16 Huynh, Art of War, 32.
and orders his troops to swarm up the wall like ants, one-third of them will be killed without taking the city. Such is the calamity of these attacks.\(^{17}\)

Notice, though, that Sun Tzu expresses absolutely no concern over the fate of the women and children trapped within the city walls. His empathy extends only to the besiegers, not the besieged. Preparing for a siege takes a lot of time and effort, and once the attack begins, one’s own soldiers might suffer heavy casualties. The tragedy, therefore, is not that too many enemy soldiers or noncombatants might perish, but that conducting a siege saps too much of one’s own time, energy, and combat capability.

If one could develop a method to prefabricate siege equipment, train specialized crews to erect ramps quickly, and ensure commanders keep their tempers in check, one might plausibly infer attacking walled cities could move up in the rankings. By the time Sun Bin’s military treatise appears in the fourth century BC, the prohibition on siege warfare was removed and distinctions are made regarding fortifications ripe for attack.\(^{18}\) While it is comforting to believe Sun Tzu’s strategic order is based upon an enlightened desire to limit enemy casualties, the text does not support this reading.

In his recent book, Deciphering Sun Tzu, Derek Yuen offers a slightly different take by claiming “Sun Tzu is actually comparing the four [options] in terms of their efficacy in leading to victory.”\(^{19}\) If this were correct, we would expect the text to spend considerable effort describing in some detail the two most efficacious strategies, attacking stratagems and alliances. Oddly, this is not the case. Consider Sun Tzu’s listing in the first chapter of the most vital assessments one needs to make prior to engaging in conflict:

Therefore, to gauge the outcome of war we must compare the two sides by assessing their relative strengths. This is to ask the following questions:

Which ruler has the way (tao)?
Which commander has the greatest ability?
Which side has the advantages of climate and terrain?
Which army follows regulations and obeys orders more strictly?
Which army has superior strength?
Whose officers and men are better trained?
Which side is more strict and impartial in meting out rewards and punishments?

On the basis of this comparison I know who will win and who will lose.\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) Griffith, Art of War, 78–79.
\(^{19}\) Derek M. C. Yuen, Deciphering Sun Tzu: How to Read the ‘Art of War’ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 106.
\(^{20}\) Ames, Sun-Tzu, 104.
Note what Sun Tzu chooses to omit from his list. If “attacking alliances” is the second most effective method to achieving victory, as Yuen posits, why would Sun Tzu not include an evaluation of the enemy’s alliance structure as a necessary consideration when making a decision to go to war? The majority of Sun Tzu’s assessments, counterintuitively, would fall into what would be the third most efficacious strategy, attacking the enemy’s army. This observation suggests the order is not based on increasingly effective methods to realizing victory.

Yuen’s theory is further eroded later in chapter 3, when Sun Tzu considers the force ratios necessary to support various strategies, including initiating an attack if one is five times the enemy’s size. Given Yuen’s interpretation, the idea of recommended force ratios is moot, since even if one holds an overwhelming numerical advantage, attacking the enemy’s army is still considered one of the least effective methods to achieving victory.

Another interpretation, is the order reflects Sun Tzu’s desire to limit the possibility of his own army suffering catastrophic defeat. Under this thinking, the order does not necessarily reflect the best or most efficacious strategies, but rather the most prudent given a clear-eyed reckoning of one’s own inherent weaknesses and liabilities. To substantiate this view, though, we would need to see evidence within the text itself of Sun Tzu’s pessimistic views regarding his own army’s ability to fight and to win. The evidence exists. But we must search for it in one of the most fascinating but also underrated chapters of the text.

Death Ground

The eleventh chapter, “The Nine Terrains,” has often confounded students of The Art of War. It is by far the longest chapter in the book. Its organization seems chaotic; some sections are corrupted, and others drift aimlessly. Moreover, given the descriptions of various terrains found in chapters 8, 9, and 10, this chapter is often thought of as simply a summary of previous sections of the book.

Chapter 11, though, is unique and worthy of careful analysis. More than any other portion of the text, this chapter follows a close approximation of modern operational design. The sequence of terrains outlines Sun Tzu’s vision for how an offensive operation should ideally unfold in terms of both time and space, from the initial invasion across the enemy border to the culminating decisive battle that will achieve victory for one’s army.

There are two main elements to Sun Tzu’s operational concept: drive deeply into the enemy’s territory, then seek “death ground” for your soldiers before initiating the attack. He counsels against engaging the enemy either within one’s own territory or even close to the border once the invasion is initiated, even if the actual terrain would be favorable to one’s own forces. Historical commentators of the text have noted Sun Tzu’s main concern is soldiers are likely to desert en masse if drifting back home is a viable option. This accords with Sun Tzu’s claim: “When
the troops have penetrated deeply, they will be unified, but where only
shallowly, will [be inclined to] scatter."\textsuperscript{21}

It is clear that the conscripts that made up Sun Tzu’s army lacked
the dedication and courage of the small group of elite warriors tasked to
fight in earlier eras. “On the day they ordered out to battle, your soldiers
may weep,” he warned, “those sitting up bedewing their garments, and
those lying down letting the tears run down their cheeks.”\textsuperscript{22} Sun Tzu’s
dismal assessment of his own army’s reliability permeates the entire
chapter. He feared his soldiers would refuse to reinforce one another
voluntarily during the heat of battle. Concerned about his own forces,
he notes, “The men of Wu and Yüeh hate each other. Yet if they were
crossing the river in the same boat and were caught by gale winds, they
would go to each other’s aid like the right hand helping the left.”\textsuperscript{23}

The fact that Sun Tzu exemplifies sworn enemies forced to find
common ground in a crisis within a lament that his own soldiers might
not display the same level of comity toward their fellow comrades
in arms is remarkable. He goes on to say reliance prior to battle on
“tethered horses and buried chariot wheels”—so one’s own soldiers
cannot flee—is an insufficient remedy.\textsuperscript{24} Although he drives his army
deep into enemy territory in part to let them know there is no easy route
back home to safety, this measure will not be enough. Terrain is the
missing key necessary to lock his army into the psychological brig he
feels compelled to construct.

Sun Tzu analyzes all nine terrains. But he clearly has one final
terrain in mind for his own army: death ground. All other areas are to
be endured, avoided, or exploited. Only on death ground does one have
the hope of tasting victory. He describes it as terrain where “there is
no way out,” and “ground on which you will survive only if you fight
with all your might, but will perish if you fail to do so.”\textsuperscript{25} Only on this
inescapable terrain, bereft of any alternate means of survival, will the
army be mentally prepared to unleash the violence necessary to defeat
the enemy decisively: “Throw the troops into a position from which
there is no escape and even when faced with death they will not flee. For
if prepared to die, what can they not achieve?”\textsuperscript{26} There is only one catch.
His own army might not willingly follow him onto the sacrificial altar.

When Sun Tzu notes in the first chapter that all warfare is based
on deception, most interpreters infer the deception focuses solely
against one’s enemy. But in chapter 11, Sun Tzu primarily employs
deceptive practices against his own soldiers. He states the business of
the commander is to keep his own army ignorant of his intentions; they
should be led like a flock of sheep being dragged to-and-fro without

\textsuperscript{21} Sawyer, \textit{Art of War}, 333.
\textsuperscript{22} Sun Tzu, \textit{Sun Tzu’s The Art of War: Bilingual Edition Complete Chinese and English Text}, trans.
Lionel Giles (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle, 2016), 51.
\textsuperscript{24} Ames, \textit{Sun-Tzu}, 159.
\textsuperscript{25} Minford, \textit{Art of War}, 79; and Ames, \textit{Sun-Tzu}, 155.
\textsuperscript{26} Griffith, \textit{Art of War}, 134.
being aware of their final destination. When he finally maneuvers them onto death ground, he likens it to scaling a great height and then kicking down the ladder so that escape is impossible. Only when the ruse is complete does Sun Tzu feel confident enough in his own army’s forced positioning to launch the attack: “He assembles his whole army and leads it into danger so that his troops have to fight fearlessly for their lives. All this is what a general should master.”

**Fear and Loathing**

Many look at Sun Tzu’s inclination to avoid battle or to engage the enemy directly, and rationalize these actions as manifestations of Sun Tzu’s innate desire to limit the destructive impact of war, especially on the enemy. Instead, these verses reflect the logical consequence of his fear. Fear that, at the moment of testing, his soldiers will ultimately come up short. Fear that his army will abandon the enterprise before the battle even begins. But concern over the enemy’s welfare is nonexistent within the text. Some may point to the second chapter as evidence of Sun Tzu’s compassion in dealing with prisoners of war. This view is mistaken. Sun Tzu’s shielding of prisoners, according to the text, only extends to a small subset of the enemy’s army (charioteers) who possess a unique skill Sun Tzu most likely wanted to exploit for the purpose of continuing his assault on the enemy forces.

To counteract fear, Sun Tzu chooses not to rely on the unreliable. He will drive his army deep into the enemy’s domain to forestall desertion. He will deceive his own troops as to his intentions. And then, he will callously throw them onto death ground to ensure they will fight. He will maneuver them onto terrain offering a distinct positional advantage, so momentum will overcome the deficiencies in training and morale. Many will die in the process. But with the ferocity of a cornered animal and the latent power of a torrent channeled through a narrow ravine, Sun Tzu’s army just might tip the scales in their favor and grasp victory from the jaws of certain defeat.

To be fair, this method of manipulating an army into withstanding the crucible of battle does not necessarily make a brute, especially given the historical period in which the text was most likely composed. Prior to the moment of conflict, Sun Tzu’s leadership style is neither overly harsh nor naively permissive. At the end of chapter 10, he assesses his army’s potential to face the enemy head-on in battle: “Because such a general regards his men as infants they will march with him into the deepest valleys. He treats them as his own beloved sons and they will die with him.”

But in comparing his soldiers to infants and children, he also tacitly acknowledges they may not be up to the task of defeating the enemy.

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without the assistance of significant external pressure. For this reason, our modern lexicon rejects patriarchal terms, instead preferring to view the profession of arms as a brotherhood, not a father and son filial relationship. A modern commander, leading a competent, well-equipped volunteer force, would not feel compelled to toss his or her troops onto death ground simply to motivate them to fight better. When we claim *The Art of War* is as relevant now as when it was written, we must not overlook its bleak view of the necessity of developing highly trained, motivated, and empowered subordinate leaders and soldiers.

To be sure, other historical references to Sun Tzu, such as the infamous concubine army tale, indicate he held a dim view on the importance of training. In the story, Sun Tzu is asked to demonstrate his military methods through the use of palace concubines. Accepting the challenge, Sun Tzu assigns the palace ladies into one of two groups under one of the king’s favorite concubines. Each woman is given a halberd and asked to face left, right, or about-face when ordered, but all burst out laughing when the commands are issued. Repeating the instructions, the concubines again giggle instead of following orders. Declaring that after instructions are issued twice and still disobeyed, Sun Tzu assigns the fault to the subordinate commanders and immediately beheads the two leaders despite the protests of the king. The remaining concubines, quickly grasping the gravity of the situation, studiously follow instructions. After the “training” is complete, Sun Tzu presents his army to the king, claiming they are prepared for battle.

Many commentators focus on the brutality of the beheadings, or the civil-military issues inherent in Sun Tzu’s refusal to grant the king’s plea for clemency, but most miss the implied criticism over the quality of soldiers and their training. During an era long predating gender equality, Sun Tzu’s willingness to train palace concubines as soldiers is a sharp indictment of the mettle of the recruits making up its newly formed conscript armies (the same men who will wet their garments with tears before battle). Furthermore, after only an afternoon’s work of running the women through the most basic parade ground drills, Sun Tzu declares his unit fully combat capable, highlighting the extremely low-level of martial skill expected out of one’s cannon-fodder soldiers.  

**Fox, Hedgehog, or Rooster**

Appropriating Isaiah Berlin’s famous categorization of canonical authors, conventional thinking too readily assigns Sun Tzu the role of the proverbial fox, able to shift fluidly from the grand strategic to the tactical levels of war and seamlessly pivot from applications of psychological coercion to physical force. A more judicious and historically grounded analysis of the text reveals him to be more akin to the hedgehog: the knower of one big thing, he uses physical terrain to compensate for

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the lack of morale rotting at the core of each newly formed conscript army. Ensuring your own force occupies advantageous physical terrain while simultaneously denying the enemy awareness of its positional disadvantage is the sine qua non of Sun Tzu’s thinking.

Military theorist John Boyd, often lauded as the intellectual heir to Sun Tzu’s philosophy, attempted to simplify the key distinction between the Chinese sage and his strategic antipode: “Sun Tzu tried to drive his adversary bananas while Clausewitz tried to keep himself from being driven bananas.” A closer reading of the text, however, reveals Sun Tzu might be more obsessed with maintaining his sanity. As a result, much of the text devises a highly creative, albeit negligently risky, method to counteract the inherent weakness of the army he was tasked to lead.

If we subscribe to the popular theory that the historical Sun Tzu was an itinerant philosopher-general using his book as a calling card to seek employment from various rulers, this view should not surprise us. A wealthy state with a powerful and well-trained army would have little incentive to contract a hired gun to lead its soldiers in battle. An impoverished state with a weak military force would be much more receptive to the idea of turning its army over to an outsider, especially one whose lessons promise cheap and quick methods to offset critical deficiencies and to achieve stunning victories even over more powerful neighboring states.

A popular view is Sun Tzu’s text was an ancient proponent of guerrilla warfare. That view is problematic. First, he demanded a swift victory, and discouraged prolonged operations. Second, he insisted wars be conducted only on the enemy’s terrain, thereby denying himself the support of the local populace. Third, he recommended maintaining the unity of his own army at all times and discouraged dispersed operations. Of the three key components to insurgency operations, therefore, Sun Tzu applied none.

Conclusion

Perhaps we allow too much of our own modern critique of war into our contemporary interpretation of Sun Tzu’s ancient tome. Many can recite from memory one of Sun Tzu’s most celebrated verses: “For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

Yet few seem to reflect much on the fact that subduing the enemy remains the required end state necessary to justify this forbearance of arms. Nowhere in the text did Sun Tzu use the equivalent terms for negotiate, compromise, or limiting one’s own objective. When the Mongol warlord Tamerlane besieged the Turkish town of Sivas, he

34 Griffith, Art of War, 77.
informed the defending garrison if it surrendered immediately, no blood would be shed. Upon capitulation Tamerlane made good on his promise by burying them all alive. We deceive ourselves if we believe Sun Tzu would never consider such cruelty worthy of the “acme of skill.”

These opinions are not the definitive version of Sun Tzu. Many will disagree. But these interpretations highlight how critical verses are open to alternative readings. We need to examine all assumptions. Interpretations should be tied to textual evidence and grounded in historical realities, not driven by ephemeral impressions born of a desire to correct perceived flaws in Western theoretical approaches. We certainly can read whatever we want into The Art of War. But we should consciously avoid distorting it whenever possible.

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COMMENTARY AND REPLY

On “Social Media Warriors: Leveraging a New Battlespace”

Stephen E. Stark

I was quite fascinated to read “Social Media Warriors: Leveraging a New Battlespace,” by Buddhika B. Jayamaha and Jahara Matisik. The authors clearly know this very troubling topic. I was also deeply (and depressingly) surprised to learn of Chinese actions in New Zealand and elsewhere.

I was, however, disappointed the authors did not explore why social media makes such fertile ground for this poisonous seed. It is not just freedom of speech. It is not just bots and troll farms.

The inherent problem with social media is the manner in which developers have created the “stickiness” that keeps people glued to their services. A big part of the problem is “likes,” and the all-too-human propensity for rating content against no standard whatsoever.

I have read more than one article about some outrageous action taken by an individual or a group just to score likes. Recently, a reporter on National Public Radio outlined how her simple act of watching inflammatory content on YouTube caused more and more inflammatory content to appear. Outrage seems to be the coin of the realm, and everything seems to get turned up to “11” on social media.

It is not the job of social media to provide news. The job of social media is to keep users jacked into that social media platform so that it can exploit their attention by collecting data, selling that data, or selling products, and, preferably, all three simultaneously.

Social media companies use artificial intelligence to promote this agenda. They use techniques of gamification. They use color psychology. Likes on a social media site is the metric users have to gauge their impact on the world, and likes have been shown to give users a little dopamine boost. That is exactly what games (and some drugs) do. That is why they are addictive. I do not suppose it matters if likes come from a bot or servers in an AI troll farm.

The weaponization of social media will continue so long as gamification persists. Relationships should not be a game. My personal and preferred solution would be to shut down social networks like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. None of them have shown themselves to be particularly good corporate citizens—but all of them make people rich. And we know they are not going to shut down. So, if we cherish our republic and its liberal democracy, we have to do something.

Mr. Stephen E. Stark, senior editor of Army AL&ST magazine, writes about the military as well as science and technology.
Much needs to be done, and I have no idea how to fix the big issue. But removing the like button would be an obvious way to unarm bots. Other techniques might further reduce the gamification of social media. Perhaps we could also outlaw the tracking and trading of personal data.

Not long ago, I was walking down a very crowded street near midtown Manhattan. As a thought experiment, I tried to imagine how the crowd might respond on social media if a passerby dropped a subway card. “Hey, what are you, some kind of —— moron? I think you dropped your subway card. I can’t believe what an ugly face you have.”

Someone might say something nice. Someone else might smile. Others might take offense. Fights might break out. People gather to see what is going on. That breeding of offense and violence is going to travel a lot faster and remain a lot longer than a simple act of kindness. . . or even a massive act of kindness. In fact, the nastiness could erase the kindness as violence spreads.

Finally, I was disappointed the authors descended into the same kind of false equivalence between left and right (Charlottesville and Houston) that we often see too much of in the mainstream media. The kind of manipulation by social media that causes such social rupture (schismogenesis—what a great and scary word) has been shown in any number of experiments to be much more effective and “sticky” with people on the right of the political spectrum, regardless of where it happens.

I hope the authors will continue their research and find some creative solutions to a situation that is perilously close to out-of-control and in serious danger of wrecking society as we know it.

The Authors Reply

Buddhika B. Jayamaha and Jahara Matisek

We are grateful for Mr. Stark’s thoughtful comments since our article was meant to generate a lively discussion on a new battlespace, one that has been leveraged by adversaries. Their actions pose an existential threat to American democracy, civil society, and foreign policy.

The internet is revolutionary precisely because it created a new domain of social interaction that fundamentally altered the way individuals and communities relate to one another locally and across the globe. Alas, it is also a domain with no stop signs and no regulatory mechanism to shape the nature of social interactions. In this context, Mr. Stark correctly points out the underlying economic logic of private entities—from smartphone makers and social media sites to gaming platforms—seeking to monetize aspects of this broad domain, which is an elemental aspect of the broader problem. The irony, of course, is that so much of this technology brings us “closer together” in a centripetal way that should increase societal cohesion. But if it is misappropriated by hostile actors, it can lead to centrifugal tendencies that fragment and polarize society.
The danger, though, is that the monetizing logic of the internet makes weaponizing social media and the subsequent social schismogenesis easier. But only partially, because as we point out, schismogenesis is easier when there are already deep-rooted social cleavages. We used the left-right dichotomy and the subsequent empirical information as an example to point out how schismogenesis is very much about creating new social divisions as well as deepening existing ones. As Mr. Stark correctly noted about the “false equivalence between left and right (Charlottesville and Houston),” we admittedly did this to prevent most readers from viewing our analysis as being politically biased. But we agree with his findings on schismogenesis being “much more effective and ‘sticky’ with people on the right of the political spectrum.”

The left-right dichotomy in the United States today is symptomatic of an empirical, verifiable polarization of society. Unlike years past, American politicians have adjusted to new societal realities by trying to win an election through procedure and technicalities, as opposed to winning over the median voter that has long characterized American national elections in a two party system. That structural condition—gerrymandering—creates a domestic political logic where hyperpartisanship pays political dividends while centrist pragmatism creates costs. This shift has given malicious actors a new entry point into the discourse of civil society that can be used to deepen existing divisions or to create new “false” points of contention.

Our article attempted to remain neutral and apolitical, so as to raise awareness while defining the broad contours of the dangers lurking in this domain. The underlying economic logic of the internet requires keeping users in a constant interactive mode and profiling them to generate a better user experience and to monetize private data. As economic agents trying to maximize revenue, they rely on psychology, color theory from art and design, behavioral economics, and deep pathologies inherent to human beings; each of us relate very differently to negativity. Even in print news, bad news trumps good news: a metro that runs efficiently is not news, but a crashed metro is a profit-generating narrative keeping users constantly engaged. In this milieu, “banning” sites that add to misconceptions would be counterproductive to American values and society.

This is not to say we should not identify outlets that decidedly convey opinions in the guise of empirical truths. There are many mainstream news outlets that increasingly focus on generating revenue, rather than disseminating facts, because such narratives appeal to certain demographics. This practice leads to the generation of parallel realities in the United States where the average citizen can live in a “bubble.” Because of the internet, citizens who are unable to relate to others living in equally isolated bubbles can remain on opposing spectrums.

We have to be mindful that internet-based interactive forums are technologically empowered, socially interactive domains where individuals are the protagonists. As long as there is utility, we will use them. And as long as we use them, there will be underlying monetizing opportunities, which means banned sites will reincarnate in innovative forms. What would be advisable is to generate guidelines to shape interactions on the one hand and generate an external and internal distinction on the other.
Shaping guidelines could begin with verification mechanisms. Asking social media companies to verify the identities of users would minimize automated activity and empower local law enforcement agencies to prevent abuse of citizens online, as they do in normal social contexts. To date, independent of Congressional action, outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, have taken steps to mitigate the propagation of extremist information while limiting the ability of certain outlets to promote narratives that are destructive to democracy and civil society. Moreover, developing external-internal distinction capabilities would better enable security institutions to identify and to isolate malicious actors with foreign origins. With this approach, offensive and defensive cyberactions can be employed as needed.

Lastly, Mr. Stark’s rumination about his “thought experiment” in New York gets to the heart of the broader schismogenesis puzzle. As Frank Sinatra clairvoyantly pointed out, “I want to be a part of it, New York, New York . . . . If I can make it there, I’m gonna make it anywhere.” New York is an urban domain of intense social interaction. It is as a global city with a unique sense of decorum and civility. Could we possibly attain Sinatra’s vision in web-based interactive domains?

Mr. Stark’s emphasis on the “why” contributes to important puzzles. We are happy to confirm we are currently grappling with the issues he raised in our ongoing research project on the issue. We intend to publish the findings in Parameters and other scholarly journals.
Matthew Kroenig argues nuclear superiority, “a military nuclear advantage over an opponent,” matters—especially for the United States (3). Nuclear superiority requires more than the possession of a secure second-strike capability. As he explains, nuclear superiority is a situation in which a state’s expected costs in a nuclear war are lower than its adversary’s, even if the expected costs are high for both states.

Kroenig states, “A robust nuclear posture reduces a state’s expected cost of war, increasing its resolve in international political disputes, and thus providing it with a coercive advantage over states more vulnerable to a nuclear exchange” (3–4). He makes four contentions: a US posture of nuclear superiority is more likely to contribute to international stability than a position of nuclear parity; there is no observable link between the size of the US nuclear arsenal and the proliferation of nuclear weapons among other states; nuclear arms races are uncommon and have sometimes proved to be advantageous to the United States; and a robust US nuclear force is costly, but affordable. In addition, the US nuclear arsenal must support extended deterrence commitments to more than thirty other states, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These arguments are supported by many references to the literature and original quantitative analysis.

One of Kroenig’s more interesting points is that, regardless of academic debates, actual US nuclear strategy and force structure have been based on the assumption that relative nuclear advantage matters. Forces in excess of the minimum requirements for assured destruction or assured retaliation have been deployed during and after the Cold War, partly on the assumption that a state with superior nuclear capabilities will have an advantage in a competitive brinkmanship during a nuclear crisis. But it is also true forces within American domestic politics have driven much of this nuclear buildup during and after the Cold War.

More than one US secretary of defense has found congressional interest in weapons systems as a challenge to rational defense planning. In addition, the assumption that larger nuclear forces necessarily confer advantages in coercive bargaining is contested by some of the important research literature. The historical research and quantitative analysis of Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann, for example, found, “Compellent threats from nuclear states have not been more successful than threats from nonnuclear states, even after accounting for other factors that influence coercive diplomacy outcomes. Moreover, this finding is robust to a wide variety of measurements of nuclear superiority,

Another issue is whether nuclear superiority can be conceptualized as narrowly as a relative military advantage over the opponent. Qualitative issues, including the character and experience of a state’s political and military leadership, are also important in the bargaining games of nuclear deterrence and compellence. It mattered that the more experienced John F. Kennedy was in charge during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, compared to the less experienced John F. Kennedy who presided over the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Kennedy had learned important lessons about crisis management in the intervening months including the need to test expert opinion and policy advocacy against the realities of brinkmanship and the expected costs of a nuclear war even for the winner. Studies of the Cuban missile crisis have shown US participants were less impressed by their relative nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union than they were by the absolute destruction that might be inflicted on the United States by Soviet missiles launched from Cuba—even if more destructive US responses against the Soviet Union were to follow.

In discussing these matters, it is also necessary to keep in mind the distinction between nuclear declaratory and employment policies. America’s nuclear employment policy has usually called only for capabilities in excess of deterrence, including limited nuclear options, intrawar deterrence, escalation control, and escalation dominance, as well as war termination under favorable circumstances. Accordingly, US nuclear targeting has included enemy nuclear forces, leadership and command and control systems, conventional military forces, and economic industrial recovery targets. The challenge has been matching available policy guidance, which is sometimes vague, to national strategy as understood in the defense establishment and then to specific war plans and target assignments. But the paradox was the more ambitious the plans and employment policies, the more demanding were the requirements placed upon the command and control systems—arguably more vulnerable and fragile to imminent destruction than the forces themselves.

In this regard, the author might have better served his purpose by arguing nuclear superiority should not be conflated with larger numbers of offensive weapons. True nuclear superiority would require meaningful advantages in offensive weapons together with preclusive defenses that would limit the other side’s second-strike retaliation to acceptable levels—as well as flexible and enduring command and control systems and substantial capabilities for intrawar deterrence and escalation dominance. On the other hand, a self-evident US sprint for nuclear superiority could encourage compensatory responses from Russia and China, including the possibility of a renewed arms race. There is no last move in strategy, nuclear or otherwise.

America’s nuclear policy and force structure are parts of a larger national policy and strategy matrix. In this regard, nuclear strategic planning will have to grapple with the need to preserve US military advantages in the commons of space and cyberspace—for example, future space-based weapons could be used as interceptors for boost-phase missile defenses, and left-of-launch cyberweapons have already
been employed against ballistic missile launch sites. Space enables US command and control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance on which both nuclear and conventional forces depend. Therefore, an integrated cross-domain strategy for deterrence and defense with nuclear and conventional weapons will require hard choices about investments.

True nuclear superiority as defined above is not “over the horizon” for American or other nuclear weapons states, and not only because of daunting technical challenges in the way. There is also humanity to consider. Even small nuclear wars are perverse contradictions of the relationship between war and politics that Clausewitz emphasized. Beyond deterrence, there is only uncertainty. Notwithstanding these caveats, this study is worthwhile for military professionals and for other students of national security policy in challenging nuclear deterrence and arms control orthodoxy. Kroenig forces us to think more clearly about how much is enough.

The West’s East: Contemporary Baltic Defense in Strategic Perspective

By Lukas Milevski

Reviewed by Mr. Ben S. Wermeling, a graduate of George Washington University’s master of arts program in security studies and a Department of Defense contractor

Even after entering the European Union and NATO, the Baltic countries have rarely been part of the West’s strategic calculus. This focus changed in 2014 due to Russian aggression in Ukraine, which Moscow attempted to justify by claiming its actions were in the interest of Ukraine’s Russian minority. Fearing similar Russian designs on their vulnerable members, analysts within the NATO defense community quickly made the study of the Baltic region and its security a top priority. Lukas Milevski notes there has not yet been a comprehensive study of Baltic defense from a strategic perspective informed by the geopolitical history of the region. His book, The West’s East, aims to provide such a study. Informed by this analysis, Milevski argues preparing to defend the Baltic states is in NATO’s best interest because assuming Russia will not attack is wishful thinking rather than strategy.

The book begins with a succinct summary of the Baltic region’s geopolitics and history. Even prior to the existence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the region was composed of small states struggling to maintain their independence from more powerful neighbors. Throughout the overview, several themes, such as the active role these countries play in securing and maintaining their independence, are emphasized. Another theme relates to the circumstances in which the Baltic states can maintain their independence. Historically, the countries could be independent if the great powers surrounding the states were weakened or disinterested.

The aftermath of World War I exemplifies these themes. The newly independent Baltic states used military force to fend off German and
Russian attempts at reconquest. The victory was possible due to the status of the regional powers. Russia was wracked by civil war, and Poland was defending itself from Russia. Meanwhile, Germany was in the process of surrendering and handling internal unrest.

Finally, Milevski emphasizes the varying strategic significance of the Baltic Sea. At times, the region was an open and transitory route for shipping valuable materials from Eastern Europe’s hinterland. But the sea could also be blockaded for economic pressure. Another feature is the contrast of sanctuary versus vulnerability. For the German navy during the World Wars, the Baltic Sea offered a sanctuary from its stronger counterparts; however, modern long-range precision weaponry turned it into a place of danger.

A set of historical analogies currently employed to understand the current situation in the Baltics is also provided. One analogy compares Russia’s foreign policy to that used by Nazi Germany to claim territories with large ethnic German populations. Another involves Russian President Vladimir Putin and the late Soviet leader Yury Andropov. Milevski argues these analogies are especially useful to policymakers unfamiliar with the region’s history. Although this is a unique approach, the necessity of such depth is unclear considering the author views analogies as having limited utility.

The book also addresses the strategic dispositions of countries in the eastern Baltic region and in NATO. In addition to Russia and the NATO countries, the book analyzes the potential role and capabilities of Sweden and Finland, which are sometimes overlooked. Of note is the consideration of the nonmilitary vulnerabilities of the Baltic states, namely, demographic decline, Russian energy reliance, propaganda, and subversion. The section on Russia begins with an examination of Russian geopolitical thought and strategic culture. Milevski writes the current tenor of geopolitical thought emphasizes Russia’s unique position as a Eurasian power, as well as themes of defense from instability and a perceived threat of Western aggression. Moscow’s attempts to sow discord among Russians living in the Baltic states are the focus of the section on Russia’s regional policy. A final section discusses Russian military reforms and recent operations in Syria and Ukraine.

With this information, the author assesses military strategy in a hypothetical war between Russia and NATO over the Baltic. Although deterrence would be preferred, it is an uncertain prospect. In the event of a conflict, Milevski believes the warfare strategy used in Ukraine, is unlikely to succeed due to less favorable circumstances in the Baltic. Moscow, therefore, will likely prefer a conventional invasion that disrupts the balance of forces in the Baltic and allows Russia to deny or hinder NATO attempts to access the region.

A strength of the book is the consideration of the political implications of such a hypothetical conflict, which could also leave NATO at a disadvantage. From this perspective, the Alliance would need to consider the risks of potentially escalatory strikes on Russian territory versus leaving it as a sanctuary. The Alliance would likely struggle to terminate a war favorably even if the Baltics were secured, as Russia may have few incentives to stop fighting.
The conclusion of the book analyzes NATO’s Baltic defense requirements through the lens of a strategic theory developed by scholar Colin S. Gray. Considerations in the event of a conflict that are briefly elaborated on include political goals, doctrine, and logistical challenges. Given Russia’s strong regional capabilities and its possibly hostile intentions, Milevski concludes it is prudent to be prepared for full-scale war. While Milevski’s observation provides a reasonable analysis and conclusion, it provides little guidance on actual requirements.

*The West’s East* has numerous strengths. Most notable is the comprehensive nature of the research, which encompasses geopolitics, history, the status of regional militaries, and strategic analysis. Each of these perspectives offers unique insights that could have been missed if Milevski had only focused on contemporary diplomacy and military operations.

But there are several shortcomings. A geographical overview of the region is strangely placed at the very beginning of the book. The status of Belarus is given limited consideration despite its potentially important role in the region. A deeper analysis of the hypothetical war would have been useful, but perhaps is more in the realm of tactics rather than strategy. Despite these modest problems, the book is an impressive and timely strategic analysis that is recommended reading for all who are examining Baltic security issues.
Nonstate conflict dominates contemporary discourse on war and peace yet a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of insurgencies, revolutions, and national movements—collectively known as rebels. Some rebellions succeed and others fail. Many factions, competing groups, and challengers seek to dominate rebel movements. In Rebel Power, Peter Krause, an assistant professor of political science at Boston College and a research affiliate in the MIT Security Studies program looks at the factors that determine who wins and loses in one form of rebellion: national movements.

Specifically, Krause assesses the organizational factors contributing to the success of national movements. To do so he employs four case studies of well-documented national movements: two that succeeded and two that have yet to achieve their full goals but have experienced partial successes. The cases examined are Israel, Palestine, Algeria, and Ireland. In Israel, the Zionist movement was successful. Conversely, the Palestinian national movement has yet to achieve its goals. The Algerian national movement dealt a death knell to Algérie Française, while the Irish nationalist movement achieved a moderate success with the establishment of the Irish Free State and the Irish Republic but has yet to achieve a united Ireland despite experiencing a limited success in the Good Friday Agreement (1988).

Krause’s scholarship is impeccable. He looks at four well-known national movements through an analysis of 40 groups in 44 campaigns over 140 years of nationalist aspirations and struggle. The result is well-documented and articulated support for his theory of rebel organizational prowess and power known as Movement Structure Theory. He relies upon a comprehensive blend of fieldwork that includes interviews with members of the nationalist movements such as Zohra Drif, the milk-bar bomber from the Battle of Algiers; Irish republican Gerry Adams; Palestinian activist Leila Khaled; and Irgun member Yoske Nachmias. These interviews are augmented by studies, archival sources (both primary and secondary) and detailed modeling of the timelines of success and failure. For Krause, the success or failure of a national movement is determined by the relative power of its constituent groups. Internal balance of power rather than ideology and external factors are more likely to determine a movement’s outcomes. Four types of organizational actors are identified: hegemons, leaders, challengers, and subordinates.

The text is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1, “Power Violence, and Victory,” provides an introduction, identifies the shortfalls of competing theories, provides definitions and describes the research design. Chapter 2, “Why National Movements Compete, Fight,
and Win,” elaborates on Krause’s Movement Structure Theory, the importance of power relationships within the national movement, success, failure, and the instrumental use of violence. The roles of hegemonic groups in defining a movement’s purpose that lead to a “hegemonic movement” capable of moderating violence is crucial. Fragmented movements comprised of strong leading groups (leaders) with competitors (challengers) and subordinates (weak participants) are less likely to succeed and more likely to act as spoilers using violence to strengthen their position and to gain relative political strength.

The case studies are presented in the following four chapters. Each of these succinctly presents the timeline of organizational struggle and relative success with the respective national movements. The cases are terse and analytically sound. What they miss in color commentary and detail they more than make up for in analytical rigor. While at times dense, the ample use of tables and figures summarizing the movements’ revolutionary progress makes the argument accessible and illuminates the cases.

Chapter 3, “The Palestinian National Movement: The Sisyphean Tragedy of Fragmentation,” shows how the Palestinian Movement has been limited by internal struggles for power and domination leading to a series of failures punctuated by moderate successes when a hegemon (Fatah) dominated the movement. Chapter 4, “The Zionist Movement: Victory Hanging in the Balance,” looks at the conditions that led the Haganah to become the hegemonic ruler and control their rivals the Irgun and Stern Gang (Lehi) and consolidate power at the founding of the State of Israel.

Chapter 5, “The Algerian National Movement: The Long, Bloody March to Hegemony,” tells the story of the ultimate success of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in gaining Algeria’s independence from France. The Algerian revolution was bloody and only through brutally suppressing competing factions and conducting spoiling attacks on civilians was the FLN able to gain hegemonic status. The Battle of Algiers was won by France but the aftermath was exploited by the FLN. The hegemonic lock on power gave the FLN the stature needed to gain international support and a seat at the bargaining table with the Métropole in Evian. The rhythm of fragmentation and violent contest is described ably in the text, figures, and tables.

Chapter 6, “The Irish National Movement: Where You Stand Depends Upon Where You Sit,” looks at the Irish nationalist and republican movements and their internal competition for power. It describes the conditions where Sinn Féin held hegemonic control over the movement that led to a moderate success in the establishment of the Irish Free State. The years of fragmented intramovement competition that persisted through The Troubles were partially reversed when Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Army became hegemonic and embraced nonviolent political action.

Chapter 7, “The Politics of National Movements and the Future of Rebel Power,” provides a conclusion, summarizing each of the cases studies and associated variables. It also discusses potential gaps in the theory and provides suggestions for future research. All in all, the text is an excellent contribution to understanding the internal dynamics
of nationalist movements and their prospects for success under disparate conditions.

As the case studies make clear, the French, British, and Israeli intelligence services recognized the weaknesses deriving from internal fragmentation and sought to exploit them. When a group overcame these internal struggles and gained supremacy, they demonstrated the ability to govern and gained a seat at the bargaining table. Policymakers, senior strategic leaders, intelligence analysts, and hopefully war college students will read the lessons and apply them to their strategic intelligence assessments.

The Sword’s Other Edge: Trade-offs in the Pursuit of Military Effectiveness

Edited by Dan Reiter

Reviewed by Dr. Benjamin Jensen, associate professor at the Marine Corps University Command and Staff College and Scholar-in-Residence at the American University School of International Service

This edited volume complements the literature on military effectiveness in political science and history. The editor, Dan Reiter, has been at the forefront of debates about the attributes of effective military organizations along with Allan Stam, Risa Brooks, Elizabeth Stanley, Caitlin Talmadge, Jason Lyall, Austin Long, Jenna Jordan, and Stephen Biddle. Similarly, historians have long examined major campaigns, with a particular emphasis on the Second World War, to identify what makes effective military organizations. This question is central to the military profession and should be explored across the professional military education continuum.

The book’s major contribution involves trade-offs in its pursuit of military effectiveness that fall into three categories: political support, security threats, and warfighting. Multiple chapters explore political support as it relates to domestic politics and how gaining support for contemporary security operations comes at the expense of important constraints and restraints. Trade-offs with respect to security threats are treated broadly as seen in Rosella Cappella Zielinski’s analysis of how war financing affects public support and an array of political and economic challenges beyond the battlefield.

With respect to warfighting, chapters by Jason Lyall and Michael Horowitz explore how tactical-level necessities, from political officers motivating troops to the susceptibility of unmanned systems to hacking and spoofing, can generate suboptimal returns at the strategic level. The book also explores critical trade-offs at the level of campaign plans: how military effectiveness can create escalation traps. Caitlin Talmadge’s chapter is a particularly important reminder of the value of escalation control and how military effectiveness could lead to strategic failure and nuclear exchange.

The book points to the need for a larger research agenda on military effectiveness. Despite the wealth of literature on the subject, there are still open questions and major conceptual issues that warrant
further investigation. First, future work could explore the extent to which adaption and military innovation are hallmarks of effective organizations, and what factors produce more flexible and creative military bureaucracies. Second, future efforts could explore strategic mismatches such as the difficulty military organizations confronted when learning in Iraq and Afghanistan and the larger relationship between strategy and campaign planning.
Redefining the Modern Military: The Intersection of Profession and Ethics

Reviewed by COL Douglas Winton, chair, Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, US Army War College

Nathan K. Finney and Tyrell O. Mayfield, active duty officers in the US Army and US Air Force respectively, have leveraged their network of national security authors from the Military Writers Guild and The Strategy Bridge to produce a unique assessment of contemporary Western military service as a profession. This assortment of academics and officers from four countries do not collaborate to provide a coherent or consistent evaluation of contemporary military professionalism. Rather, each provides their perspective on some aspect of the evolving and somewhat amorphous topic to provide the reader an opportunity to reflect on the condition of the profession and why that status matters.

The editors divide the collection of essays into two parts. Part 1 describes or elucidates some aspect of the military professional ethic. Pauline Shanks-Kaurin argues military professionalism is an aspirational goal whose value is more in motivating one to strive nobly than in codifying a baseline standard. Thus, a hallmark of a true professional is questioning and redefining the essence and limits of the profession. Jo Brick, a lawyer for the Australian Army, examines the centrality of trust in the military profession by drawing from her deep understanding of fiduciary law. She shows how military professionals have a special obligation to maintain the trust of society, the profession’s client. Casey J. Landru provides a concise history of the changes in the American military profession from the World War II through the post-Cold War. He demonstrates the profession must change as the society it serves and the character of war continually change. Hugh Michael “Mike” Denny Jr. argues from his combat experience that the mark of a true professional is knowing when to break the rules. While many will rightly question how much is to be learned from one engagement, Denny shows the importance of military professionals applying guided reflection as they mature into positions of greater influence in the profession.

Perhaps, the true mark of a professional is knowing how to prevent conditions in which subordinates feel compelled to be insubordinate. Tony Ingesson, a former Swedish Army officer, challenges the value of the military desiring the status of a profession. He argues military decision-making is sufficiently distinct and noble from that of standard professions and that servicemembers should embrace their distinctiveness and eschew the needless label of “professional.” Rebecca Johnson closes out part I by examining the relationships and obligations of the military profession, the professionals it comprises, and the society it serves. Her incorporation of the ethical responsibilities of the client towards the profession expands the understanding of the military profession in important ways.
The authors contributing to part 2 illuminate the role of education in developing and conveying the professional ethic described in part 1. William M. Beasley Jr. opens with an overview of the evolution of professional military education in the US Navy from the era of steam-powered propulsion to contemporary challenges, arguing each service is a distinct profession with distinct expert knowledge. He critiques the Navy’s prioritization of technical seamanship over the intellectual demands of maritime strategy.

Simon Anglim, from the United Kingdom, contends education steeped in history, politics, and culture is indispensable for military professionals to understand the world and its people. Such understanding develops the narrative that explains why the military is employing violence on society’s behalf. A military professional’s education must also address the ethics that govern the use of violence, the doctrine that prescribes its employment, and the methods for integrating joint and interagency partners.

Raymond A. Kimball argues from his military experience that mentoring is as essential as education in conveying the professional ethic from one generation to the next. Exploring literature of workplace mentoring, he argues military services should not force mentoring relationships but rather should invest in creating the places that draw professionals together and encourage the mentor-protégé relationships to emerge. Steven L. Foster, another US Army officer, provides a broad overview of the origins of military professionalism and a personal assessment of the current status. He concludes that despite recent emphasis, the status of the US Army as a profession is very much in question. He whimsically hopes potential changes in personnel management systems and leader development programs will change the Army’s culture and inspire a needed professional renaissance.

Holly Hughson uses her experience as a humanitarian aid worker to maintain military professionals charged with managing violence share an ethic with professionals who mitigate violence. Although shared experiences in dangerous places provide an insufficient basis for forging a shared identity, she rightly insists military professionals in the twenty-first century should anticipate the employment of their expert knowledge to be increasingly impacted by others interested in, but not experts in, that knowledge. Brian Laslie concludes part 2 by examining the development of the US Air Force’s professional identity and thus provides an interesting bookend to Beasley’s description of the US Navy’s professional military education that began part 2. Laslie describes how pilots solved the oxygen deprivation problem that grounded the F-22 fleet in 2011 and 2012, how the missile community recovered from the 2014 cheating scandal, and how the drone pilot community developed out of necessity. From these cases, Laslie claims the Air Force’s professional ethic remains rooted in the insubordination (euphemistically called pragmatic professionalism) of Brigadier General William “Billy” Mitchell. This culture, he argues, enables the service’s stovepiped communities to find independent solutions to independent problems without relying on the service’s cumbersome bureaucracy.

Despite the wide variance of the authors’ experiences and training, a few themes recur throughout the book. Most of the authors rely on Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Soldier and the State* (1957) as the foundation
for exploring military professionalism. Although none of the authors sought to address civil-military relations between senior generals and civilian policymakers, their collective recognition of Huntington as the touchstone of military professionalism endorses Eliot A. Cohen’s assessment of Huntington’s theory of objective civilian control as the normal model embedded in contemporary understanding of civil-military relations.

The editors emphasize the roles of Morris Janowitz and Sir John Hackett, alongside Huntington, in defining the profession. But the contributing authors pay them infrequent lip service. Throughout the book, the authors collectively emphasize developing and safeguarding trust within the profession and with the society client it serves. They advocate that to be a profession, servicemembers must develop and convey a unique body of knowledge and corresponding ethic. These reminders seem quite timely in this era of rapidly evolving and diffusing technology, polarizing social and political views, and swelling fiscal constraints.

The editors of this volume have done the profession a great service by collecting and refining the ideas in this volume. They have not sought to develop a coherent and consistent assessment of the profession and thus tell us what we should think of its status and future. Rather, they have gathered contributors who disagree with one another without trying to win a debate. Thus, each contributor has added to the conversation in a unique and helpful way and they have collectively reminded military professionals and educators of their responsibility to join them in developing and conveying the profession’s expert body of knowledge and ethic.

Policing Sex and Marriage in the American Military: The Court-Martial and the Construction of Gender and Sexual Deviance, 1950–2000

By Kellie Wilson-Bufford

Reviewed by Dr. Daniel Beaudoin, professor of conflict resolution, civil-military relations and humanitarian diplomacy, Tel Aviv University, Israel

Kellie Wilson-Bufford’s Policing Sex and Marriage in the American Military: The Court-Martial and the Construction of Gender and Sexual Deviance, 1950–2000 makes an original and incisive sociohistorical and legal contribution to the understanding of civil-military relations in the United States. Much of the academic literature in the field of military studies turns around hard questions of mission preparedness, strategy, weapon systems, training, cyberwarfare, and force protection.

Contrarily, Wilson-Bufford’s refreshing work focuses on the sociological and legal aspects of civil-military relations in the United States and exposes the inordinate degree of involvement of the military court system with the intimate private lives and the consensual sexual relations of US servicemembers. Principally, she argues, “Sex and marriage [became] extremely important areas of surveillance and control in the second half of the twentieth century” (237). So central was marriage...
to the military during the Cold War that one judge advocate stated in a written opinion, “Marriage is not an exclusively personal relationship; it represents a status in which the Sovereign has an interest” (117).

The notion that sex and marriage are critical areas of societal regulation in which the sovereign has a vested interest is not novel. The French sociologist and philosopher Michel Foucault, arguably the champion of this school of thought, maintained sexuality is not only socially constructed, it must be socially regulated to maintain hierarchies of dominance. A number of social institutions were, and are, involved in this regulation. Schools, armies, families, police, prisons, and others, contribute to the discipline of the body by participating in social discourse.

In Foucault’s construction, sex cannot exist outside of an institutionally supported rational law that creates and defines it. “Sex,” writes Foucault, “is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures” (Sexuality and Psychoanalysis, 1978, 155).

One may assume Wilson-Bufford had Foucault in mind, considering she applied Foucauldian analysis to the military as a social institution. Her analysis illustrates how this surveillance, control, and social regulation in the military was rooted first and foremost in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which demanded “good order and discipline” among the troops (article 134). This included idealizing servicemen as the courageous protectors and loyal providers of the families and codified into military law a set of rules and values aimed at achieving uniformity in thought and action among members of the military community (44).

This drive for uniformity was a national as well as an international endeavor. Nationally, in the post-World War II era, US political legal and social institutions idealized nuclear families as the antidote to political sexual radicalism: “Insecurities abroad motivated many Americans at home to seek stability and happiness through marriage, parenthood, and traditional gender roles” (18). Moreover, the military’s model of heterosexual marriage, which promoted powerful masculinity, was a sacred medium through which service husbands and dependent wives transmitted cherished beliefs about morality, responsibility, and social obligation to younger generations of military children (20). Even those alien wives who married American servicemen overseas were strongly encouraged to participate in command-sponsored guidance classes, where military chaplains counseled them on Western moral values and the importance of maintaining “high standards of social conduct” in their new military communities (76).

An interesting question left unanswered in the book, and perhaps worthy of further scrutiny is to what extent does this sexual regulation impact US military mission capabilities and readiness? Furthermore, articles 133 and 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice have not been amended to reflect the changing ratio of sexes within the US armed forces. It would be intriguing to learn whether such social movements as Me Too will lead to societal pressure on the military to modify those articles (241).
For female servicemembers seeking justice in military courts, the implications from this study are disturbing. In numerous cases of rape and sexual assault in the 1980s and 1990s, “active-duty female victims were blamed for making themselves vulnerable to attack simply by pursuing careers in male-dominated fields” (241). This accusation is particularly concerning considering recent reports of sexual assault in the US military increased by nearly 10 percent in 2017 according to the Pentagon’s annual study. Are women to blame for stepping outside the dictated legal and normative constraints of an archaic system?

The lessons learned from Wilson-Bufford’s book are salient and pressing. The military is a microcosm of society, and it remains vital to encourage a critical discourse between the two in order to allow the military to carry out its mission without compromising the sexual and gendered rights of its members.

**The Ethics of War and Peace Revisited**

Edited by Daniel R. Brunstetter and Jean-Vincent Holeindre

Reviewed by Dr. C. Anthony Pfaff, Research Professor for Military Profession and Ethic at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Traditional just war theory (JWT) can be a clumsy tool for analyzing contemporary conflict. Its standard categories of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* govern the behavior of states and often draw a bright line between conditions of war and peace, where absent a violation of sovereignty or territory, military force is not permitted. Of course, the theory, or at least its application, has evolved. Notable in this evolution is the emphasis on addressing gross human rights violations or humanitarian crises. Scholars have also added the categories of *jus ad vim* (justice of force short of war), which governs the use of force below the threshold of violating sovereignty and territory, and *jus post bellum* (justice after war), which governs the termination of conflict.

These additions, while welcome, have proved inadequate. The rise of nonstate actors, hybrid warfare, and the proliferation of weapons of mass disruption and destruction do not so much challenge state sovereignty as much as make it increasingly irrelevant. This is the subject of *The Ethics of War and Peace Revisited*, edited by Daniel R. Brunstetter and Jean-Vincent Holeindre. This volume addresses what is probably the twenty-first century’s biggest security problem: the erosion of sovereignty. The essential premise is conflict arises where sovereignty is either contested or fragmented. Sovereignty is contested when brutal acts against a population undermine the absolute nature of sovereignty as a state’s right. It is fragmented when states cannot control all the territory and permit the rise of terrorist groups or other nonstate actors who project force beyond those borders. In such an environment, permission to conduct humanitarian interventions seems too anemic and the permission to conduct relentless and ongoing drone strikes against terrorists seems to be too much. What is needed is another way.

This book, however, does not offer a revision of the theory. Rather, it seeks to identify and then analyze the challenges this erosion of
sovereignty creates and in doing so introduce the reader to the broader discussion regarding contemporary security challenges—for example, the fact some states cannot or should not control all their territory can place incentives, if not obligations, on other states to intervene. But as the intervention in Libya clearly demonstrated, even interventions motivated by the best of intentions can lead to terrible outcomes. Since it is hard to know in advance, should they be avoided?

To answer these and other questions, the book takes on four broad themes: when to intervene, who bears the risks, how do we judge, and finally, what to do when the conflict is over. Within these themes, the book takes on a number of critical debates.

The first of these debates regards humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect. Responsibility to protect is an emerging set of norms that places an obligation on the international community, or at least those who can, to intervene in areas where state failure (intentional or unintentional) creates conditions for massive human rights violations or humanitarian crises. While certainly noble in sentiment, Aidan Hehir in his chapter notes too often such interventions, like the one in Libya, turn out badly, leaving a “humanitarian intervention hangover” that discourages future interventions. The only way to overcome that hangover, he argues, is to establish a suprastate actor who can intervene independent of other states’ interests or endorsements.

Thomas Lindemann and Alex Giacomelli, taking up Hehir’s concern about self-interested interventions, argue identity plays an arguably more important role in motivating intervention than strategic or economic interests: some states just see themselves as “hero-protectors,” though that does not mean they see every victim as worthy or able to be rescued. Nigel Biggar argues perhaps we are over thinking the problem. One can never predict all the consequences associated with interventions, so all that should be required is a just cause and the necessary means to achieve that cause.

The use of drones also figures prominently in this volume. Contributors like Kerstin Fisk and Jennifer Ramos see the increased use of such technology as a function of the precedent set by the US invasion of Iraq, which enabled preventive, open-ended, but limited use of force. As a result, a number of states are investing in the means to do so, which risks a rise in cross-border attacks by adversary states. In this regard, one of the values of this book is it takes up a range of issues, including this one, from different perspectives. In particular, Jean-Baptiste Jeangene Vilmer examines the drone debate from the French perspective, ultimately arguing to the extent drones are a better alternative to more conventional means in terms of limiting collateral harm, states should consider their use. Shannon French, Victoria Sisk, and Caroline Bass examine the problem in terms of its corrosive effect on the “warrior’s code,” arguing that as drones distance combatants from the experience of war, it also risks undermining their commitment to its rules.

Brunstetter helpfully observes part of the problem is that the erosion of sovereignty creates space where the rules we have do not seem to fit: the rules of war seem to permit too much; however, the rules of law enforcement seem to permit too little. Thus, what is needed is not a revision of JWT, but an alternative. In this regard he sees jus
ad vim not as a component of JWT but an alternative that has its own corresponding ethics of not only when force is permitted (jus ad vim), but what force is permitted (jus in vi) and what counts as a just conclusion of the conflict (jus post vim). In this vein, Frederic Ramel suggests the problem is not in the rules, but in how we think about security in the first place. Rather than the state-centric approach described by JWT and jus ad vim, he argues for a human-centric approach that orients actors away from borders and towards freedom from want and freedom from fear. If those conditions supplanted sovereignty as the things defended, we could make better sense of what counts for when to use force and how.

The book ends on this last point: what obligations do states have when the conflict is over? In this regard, Brian Orend argues while wars may be fought to punish aggression, they should end with the rehabilitation of the aggressor, a burden which falls to the victorious party. Cian O’Driscoll helpfully argues whatever those obligations are, what is missing from JWT is an account of what victory is. What sense does it make to say the United States has jus post bellum obligations in Iraq and Afghanistan if it is not at all clear the war is over? O’Driscoll does not have a firm answer but argues more work needs to be done to understand the relationship between victory and JWT.

By focusing on how the breakdown of sovereignty challenges our traditional norms of war, this volume opens up space not just to better understand the application of JWT, but also to consider alternatives. This point does not mean the book is not without its faults. The discussion on preventive war, for example, which takes place in the context of drone strikes, seems to conflate preventive war with preventive strikes. Traditionally, the former has never been permitted while the latter always has. But even where the book lacks clarity, it still frames the debate in useful ways scholars, students, and practitioners can get beyond the simple application of the “old rules” and get into the discussion of what the “new ones” should be.

**Bourbon and Bullets: True Stories of Whiskey, War, and Military Service**

By John C. Tramazzo, foreword by Fred Minnick

Reviewed by Dr. Paul R. Kan, professor of national security studies, US Army War College

As a former bartender turned scholar who teaches at the US Army War College and co-owns a local craft brewery, I was excited to read John Tramazzo’s Bourbon and Bullets. So I poured myself some Bulleit bourbon and opened the book.

From the early pages, I learned the founder of the Bulleit brand, Tom Bulleit, was a US Navy corpsman during the Vietnam War. This military connection is reflected in the core of the book, which seeks to understand the significance of American whiskey and its “unbreakable connection to our pursuit of happiness and the occasional call to arms” (2). Through stories of past and present American veterans with links to the uniquely American alcohol, bourbon, the book explores the
“enduring relationship between American military service and American whiskey, from the bottom shelf to the most elite heights” (11). The book is a combination of Reid Mitenbuler’s *Bourbon Empire*, which details the rise of bourbon along with the expansion of American capitalism, and Colin Spoelman and David Haskell’s *Dead Distillers*, which catalogs the individual biographies of American makers of spirits. Whiskey drinkers and bar patrons will recognize the names Maker’s Mark, Jim Beam, and Buffalo Trace but may not be aware of the links veterans have with the brands. This book fills in this gap with anecdotes, biographies, illustrations, and photographs of patriots who were also distillers.

Written with a flavor a general audience can appreciate, the approach of discussing bourbon’s history sets the book apart from other social histories that examine the important role of commodities in shaping societies. Many social histories of alcohol, in particular, are overly reductionist by arguing the market for a particular alcohol caused individuals to act in ways to protect its manufacture, distribution, and sale. These social histories reduce the outbreak of some wars to what is poured into and out of a bottle. Tramazzo mostly avoids such material determinism by having the bulk of his book discuss the warriors behind the bourbon rather than bourbon behind the wars.

But the book is unable to avoid diluting its focus in the early chapters. The first three chapters read as a hurried catalog of ways in which military members not only produced bourbon but also when and where military leaders such as General Ulysses S. Grant drank whiskey and what veterans of wars wrote about bourbon. That today’s bourbon has been “helped by strong sales among the military community” can be said about any alcohol, or practically any readily available consumer good (10). Given the sheer number of veterans in the United States, their economic power is felt broadly throughout the American economy. The book does not offer any supporting figures to demonstrate the armed forces as a community have uniquely bolstered the bourbon industry, past or present.

The strength of the book lies in the chapters profiling the veterans and their families who were part of bourbon’s history. Kentuckian George Thomas Stagg, for example, who joined the Union Army during the Civil War because of his moral opposition to slavery and used his sense of injustice after the war to break the widespread corruption between whiskey distillers and federal tax officials who were choking his bourbon company’s growth. These chapters are well-researched and include solid sourcing; the latter chapters include interviews with some of today’s veterans who are pushing the bourbon industry into the twenty-first century. Contemporary craft distillers include former US Air Force mechanic Donnis Todd who showed up unannounced at the new, and only, Texas bourbon distillery, Garrison Brothers. He proclaimed, “I’m Donnis Todd, and I want to make bourbon” (171). After working without pay and living in a condemned trailer without air conditioning or running water for months, Todd eventually became the company’s master distiller. These and other anecdotes make bourbon’s history come alive.

A more full-bodied explanation of what makes military service and bourbon an interesting connection, beyond noting the various ways they have been connected, would have added a richer dimension.
Did experiencing war change how distillers produced bourbon? What qualities of a leader in the military and on the battlefield helped these people contribute to whiskey’s history? There is some choppy writing, and the need for better copyediting is noticeable in some glaring typos. For example, there is an unfortunate typo in the last sentence of what should have been a punchy end to a paragraph about President Taft’s 1906 whiskey labeling requirements—a decision that “lices (sic) on” (17). These issues do not significantly detract from a delightful book, but like having a good bourbon served in a chipped glass, they are hard to ignore.

Any well-stocked bar would have many of the bourbons made by the veterans detailed in this book, and any well-stocked library should include this book on its shelves. After making the military-themed cocktail recipes contained in the appendix, I am keeping the book close to my bar at home.
Presidents of War: The Epic Story, from 1807 to Modern Times

By Michael Beschloss

Reviewed by Dr. John C. Binkley, professor of History and Government, University of Maryland University College

Article II, section 2 of the US Constitution states in all its simplicity that the president “shall be [the] Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States.” While the language conveys a title, it tells us nothing about how the president is supposed to undertake such responsibility, especially during times of war. To help understand the gloss on this simple constitutional command, presidential historian Michael Beschloss authored *Presidents of War*, which explains how presidents from 1807 thru the Vietnam War attempted to undertake this most complicated of responsibilities—acting as a war president.

Beschloss’s approach is simple. Starting in 1807, with the decision by Thomas Jefferson not to engage in war over the British attack on the American frigate *Chesapeake*, Beschloss explores how presidents dealt with their responsibilities not only during war but also, in some cases, the more important role of a president before a war. Prior to a conflict, a president must oversee diplomacy and convince the public a military option is the best choice. This latter function becomes important when one considers it is the role of Congress to declare war, and public opinion becomes all-important in the decisional process.

Several patterns become evident from reading *Presidents of War*. The first is the role of public opinion in supporting the decision to go to war. In most cases, there is an incident that triggered public support. Sometimes the incident was prevocational, such as the Mexican-American War when James K. Polk ordered the US Army into the disputed territories near the Texas and Mexican borders and then blamed Mexico for the ensuing combat. The Gulf of Tonkin incident at the outset of the Vietnam War is another example of such a prevocational incident.

At other times, an accident supplied the trigger for war. The destruction of the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor became William McKinley’s casus belli for the Spanish-American War. Finally, aggressive action, either in the form of a direct military attack such as Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and North Korea’s invasion of South Korea or by provocative diplomatic action, such as the Zimmermann Telegram during World War I, was all that was needed to solidify public support. In each case, the president used the incident to gain public support for a war, which the public had little appetite for entertaining prior to the incident.

A second pattern is a constant conflict between the president and the Congress, especially during the run-up to war and could continue during the war. Abraham Lincoln was constantly fighting congressional interference during the Civil War, and Franklin D. Roosevelt had to work around Congress to provide support for Britain during the 1940–41
period. To avoid congressional conflicts, some presidents have resorted to duplicity. This approach has the appearance of “mission creep” in which the war’s original goals are substantially expanded.

Sometimes presidents have intentionally hidden an expanded goal from the public, understanding fully they would oppose this type of bait and switch. In other cases, presidents have expanded their goals as a result of wartime exigency. McKinley’s occupation of the Philippine islands is a good example of the former while Harry S. Truman’s decision to cross into North Korea is a good example of the latter. A third pattern is the difficulty presidents have in ending wars. This is especially true in the case of a declared war in which Congress has a role. James Madison, Polk, McKinley, and Woodrow Wilson all confronted congressional difficulty at the end of their wars.

Truman learned from Wilson’s failure to get Senate support for the League of Nations and involved Congress in the process of creating the United Nations. Undeclared wars raise an entirely different set of problems regarding their termination. Yet they have proliferated since World War II in an effort to avoid congressional involvement. But the War Powers Act of 1973 reflects the reality that Congress can still demand to participate in the process.

As excellent a book as this is, there is one problem which struck this reviewer—the scope of the study. Why Beschloss selected Jefferson’s decision regarding Britain as his starting point and omitted John Adams’s Quasi-War with France 1798–1800, or for that matter, George Washington’s management of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 is a mystery.

The omission of Adams’s conflict is particularly mystifying given the fact his involvement with the French set many precedents. At the end of the book, we confront the same problem. There is no real analysis of George H. W. Bush’s handling of the Persian Gulf War; nor is there much discussion of George W. Bush’s decisions regarding the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. While Beschloss may have felt the historical record since 2001 was still unclear, the same reasoning does not apply to the 1990 war record.

Notwithstanding this minor issue, Beschloss has authored a beautifully written book, which is deeply researched and brings a human touch to a president’s decision-making process. This book is traditional history at its best. Too often, books written about the power of a commander in chief tend to forget presidents are human beings who make mistakes. This is a book which should be read by both the general public as well as the specialist in military history or civil-military relations.

Crusader: General Donn Starry and the Army of His Times

By Mike Guardia, foreword by Martin E. Dempsey

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

An easy and engaging read heavily laced with extracts from General Starry’s personal papers, this book provides a combination of...
biography and history. Of greatest interest to professional soldiers are Starry’s observations on the art of linking operational design with technology, doctrine, and training. The operational concepts enshrined in doctrine must flow from a thorough understanding of the qualities of the technologies available or demanded. Likewise, the soldier and leader training must mesh juniors and seniors into effective instruments for the next war. These principles must be inculcated into the thinking of senior commanders before they are translated into concepts for the effective employment of military power. The author describes Starry’s constant struggle to accomplish these aims in the face of fixed attitudes, sloppy thinking, and occasional laziness.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this story is Starry’s periodic inability to find sound, factual analysis as a basis for change because the analysis he encountered was often weak or wrong because the “facts” were not validated before changes were initiated.

Starry derived his contribution to the 1976 Active Defense doctrine—established in the US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, of that year—directly from his investigations of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the work he had performed in the Pentagon with later-Training and Doctrine Command Commander William E. DePuy. While at the Pentagon, Starry and DePuy had wrestled with not only what the Army ought to be preparing to do, but also how to go about it. Starry was tasked by Army Chief of Staff Creighton W. Abrams Jr., under whom he twice previously served, to ferret out how the Israelis were able to overcome the odds they had confronted in war, seeing it as a possible preview of a conflict between NATO and the Soviet Union.

The most important contribution Starry made to the defense of the nation and NATO, however, was in his development and carefully crafted support for AirLand Battle doctrine and the 1982 version of FM 100-5. This reviewer arrived in Europe in 1977, as Active Defense was being digested (or indigested accordingly). With what seemed to have been almost no thought given to offensive action, which was actually not the case, the document lacked emphasis and felt un-American to those of us on the ground. The lack of a deep-attack concept was not articulated at the time, as the Army was wrestling with the more normative remark that quantity had a quality all its own: the knowledge that an imbalance in forces between NATO and the Western allies, in both numbers and quality, simply invited NATO to resort to nuclear weapons early. Starry and DePuy had realized it was the best they could do with the equipment and manpower available at the time.

Previously, this reviewer participated in a wargame at the Naval War College in which Colonel Richard H. Sinnreich, then-director of the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), managed the ground war. Sinnreich launched a deep attack in accord with Starry’s 1982 operational concept of how to stop the Soviets. The move caught everyone except the SAMS players unaware, leading to intense discussions. Sinnreich stood his ground arguing this was the new US Army doctrine whether anyone liked it or not.

The contrast between this and the former doctrine is perhaps best exemplified by another moment of truth in an earlier wargame played out under the Active Defense doctrine at SAMS. With a German officer
playing the role of commander in chief of the Central Army Group, the Active Defense strategy reached its limit and nuclear weapons offered the only hope, the request for release of nuclear weapons was forwarded. The acting commander in chief of the Central Army Group authorized the employment of nuclear weapons so long as at least one nuclear weapon falls on the Soviet Union. Starry had expertly described the ultimate bankruptcy of Active Defense which made the early release and targeting of forces arrayed in East Germany the final act. The wargame ceased at that point, and energetic debates followed.

By 1982, the deficiencies of 1973 were well on the way to being healed. Guardia is careful to include Starry’s evaluations of Soviet reactions thereto, which are among the most interesting passages in the book. In every major event recorded in this work, Starry follows pretty much the same process: seek the truth, understand the context, search out possible solutions, and look downrange. In analyzing performances of Starry and several senior officers for whom he developed “no regard” (a phrase of as serious condemnation as he would utter in public), the reader gains a reasonably solid picture of a man on a mission who has mastered a technique for positive, measurable progress.

I admit partiality to General Starry. But this book will easily serve as a starting point for deeper investigations, which must include the interviews contained in the US Army Heritage and Education Center.
Thunder in the Argonne: A New History of America’s Greatest Battle

By Douglas V. Mastriano

Reviewed by Dr. James Scudieri, chief, Military History Institute, U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center

This book assesses strategic, operational, and tactical details of the American Expeditionary Forces’s (AEF) 1918 Meuse-Argonne offensive under General John J. “Black Jack” Pershing. Chapters 1–5 provide a prewar background, the war to date, American unpreparedness, Allied planning beyond reaction to the German 1918 offensives, and the AEF’s preliminary battle at Saint-Mihiel. Chapters 6–15 follow the AEF chronologically: commencement, a slowdown in late September, and stalemate in October. Separate chapters showcase the famous “Lost Battalion,” Corporal Alvin York, and efforts to break the German’s Siegfried Line. Chapter 16 ranges from AEF expansion to French Premier Georges Clemenceau’s frustrations with Pershing, for which Supreme Allied Commander Ferdinand Foch was intermediary to temper. Chapter 17 closes the October stalemate. Chapters 18–21 dissect American operations in November: the long-awaited crossing of the Meuse, the mad dash to Sedan, and finally war’s end.

Among the book’s several themes is a familiar indictment of Woodrow Wilson’s administration. The perspective would benefit from an appreciation of the president’s challenges as articulated by Justus D. Doenecke in Nothing Less Than War: A New History of America’s Entry into World War I (2011). Another theme is Pershing’s severe shortcomings. He had fanciful tactical notions unsuitable for the Western Front and was impatient, both of which resulted in costly frontal assaults. Pershing also fostered a poor command climate that squelched subordinates’ initiative and innovation. Inadequately credited in this book is the astounding growth of an officer who had been a mere captain until 1906.

There is much tactical detail involved with dissecting how the AEF learned its trade in the most demanding, merciless form of on-the-job training, wherein battles were learning laboratories. These assessments are balanced, and the depth of research provides similar details for the enemy, specifically Bavarians, Saxons, and so forth. This comparative analysis is most effective.

Various chapters comment on military concepts, such as principles of war, the center of gravity, and decisive points as well as current Army doctrine. These references often seem contrived. They, nonetheless, provide grist for deeper thought. Although a campaign study heavy in tactical details, the book also provides numerous insights, if not lessons learned.

More specifically, aspects of the AEF experience explore organizational readiness at multiple levels and preparedness for the changing characteristics of warfare any army will face. Success often
rested upon the ability to think and to act in terms of what is now today’s Army mission command. The Meuse-Argonne campaign demanded leadership and staff skills to orchestrate combined arms operations at the multidivision and multicorps levels, whether in allied or coalition environments, and the learning curves were steep.

The AEF’s adoption of the creeping barrage on November 1–4, 1918, employed techniques that the British had matured since the disastrous first day on the Somme more than two years earlier. The book notes the importance of French assistance, especially liaison officers. Of greater importance would have been an analysis to determine the extent British and Australian planners had supplemented American staffs. Readers also miss how the AEF transitioned from positional trench warfare in 1917–18, to maneuver warfare in late 1918, to military occupation and stability operations in late 1918 into the early 1920s.

AEF General Headquarter’s mindset of “On to Sedan” set the stage for one of the greatest catastrophes of the war. General Headquarter’s favoritism for 1st Division and its commander’s decision to get to Sedan rapidly by cutting across the fronts of both 42nd and 77th Divisions on the American side of the Meuse, wrought havoc. More damning still is the description of American casualties suffered in the last five hours of war from sunrise just before 6:00 a.m. to the armistice at 11:00 a.m. on November 11.

This work performs a great service to remind current generations about what their army accomplished in record time. The integration operations and battles from the army to the company level with many, little-known individual stories is powerful. Victory rested upon soldiers and marines called to war from all walks of American society.

More contentious is the AEF’s accomplishments in perspective. The text gives fleeting rather than substantive credit to the Allies. AEF divisions were too few and too late to play a major role in stopping the five German offensives in 1918. The author notes the AEF was approximately twice the size of Allied divisions, which were reduced to nine infantry battalions. But the raw numbers of riflemen only tell part of the story. Progressive Allied organizational and procedural changes from the squad to the division and through the corps and the army made them formidable. The Canadian Corps and the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps incidentally maintained their 12-battalion divisional structure to the war’s end, the former, in particular, with a daunting artillery capability.

More problematic is the idea that French and British morale was broken, which the AEF had to save. New civilian overlords Clemenceau and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George demanded victory at less cost in lives. The French Army of 1918 was not the mutiny-stricken force of 1917 seen after the failed Robert Nivelle attacks. Similarly, the British Expeditionary Force in 1918 was not the malaise-ridden force seen after the Battle of Passchendaele. Neither force was the army of 1914. Their troops defeated all five German offensives and counterattacked. These counterattacks, the Second Battle of the Marne in July and “the black day of the German Army” at Amiens in August were one and two months before even Saint-Mihiel. But, the text makes bare mention of them even though British church bells have rung on November 21, 1917,
the day after Cambrai, and Armistice Day, since 1914. This reviewer also notes there are excessive generalizations on Allied diplomacy and postwar implementation.

The author’s penultimate chapter on recent efforts to restore memory and provide recognition is both refreshing and inspiring. The last chapter reinforces history’s value and the cost of unpreparedness. Perhaps a digression for some readers, the text also bemoans the current state of the US government.

The AEF’s challenges—successfully met—inspire questions for today’s Army. Is the force ready for similar challenges and complexities in the third decade of the twenty-first century? Is the Army prepared for a return to major combat operations within the joint range of military operations? How are the current brigade combat teams and combat aviation brigades prepared to fight and win the nation’s wars in the context of multidomain operations? How are the often-ignored support brigades and the echelons above brigade and division levels postured to provide the requisite support to sustain such complex and varied operations?

**Sons of Freedom: The Forgotten American Soldiers Who Defeated Germany in World War I**

By Geoffrey Wawro

Reviewed by MAJ Nathan K. Finney, planner, US Army Pacific

It is often said that, despite common understanding, the decisive winner of the Second World War was the Soviet Union; its relentless pressure on the Nazi regime (and Stalin’s willingness to throw millions of Russian lives against the Eastern Front) ultimately defeated Hitler and his generals. In *Sons of Freedom*, Geoffrey Wawro posits a somewhat analogous claim of decisiveness about the American contribution to the First World War:

The German army, still three million strong and defending positions in France and Belgium behind the Meuse River, decided to ask for an armistice, not because it had been beaten by the British and French—who seemed incapable of beating the Germans in 1918, or arguably ever—but because it was beaten by the Americans, who broke through the eastern bastions of the Hindenburg Line, advanced on both banks of the Meuse, and surrounded the German army in France. (xxiii–xxiv)

From this strong opening statement, Wawro spends more than 600 pages backing up his thesis with research conducted in the archives of five of the six major belligerent nations of the conflict. Most impressive is the ease with which Wawro transitions from the national strategic aspects of the war to the tactical actions conducted by American soldiers, each provided with clarity and excitement that allows for an ease of intellectual consumption for the reader. While few histories of this type can be called page-turners, Wawro has achieved just that.

*Sons of Freedom* covers the entire relationship of the United States with World War I, from ambivalence to strict neutrality, then a reluctant associated power to a decisive fledgling force who tipped the balance
toward the Triple Entente. In the first six chapters, Wawro ably navigates the nuances of global politics, state of the war on the European continent prior to the entry of the United States, and finally the triggers for participation and mobilization of American troops. The remaining 10 chapters zoom in on American soldiers fighting first among, then beside, and ultimately independently of their French and British counterparts. His treatment of the major battles in which the Americans participated in 1918 is an exemplar of the fusion of traditional military history, which covers tactical action by military units and the diplomatic and political impact seen by those actions.

Of particular interest to readers of Parameters is Wawro’s treatment of the major leaders of the war, especially the Americans. His assessment of John J. Pershing is complex, acknowledging the general’s rare experience with large troop movements from the punitive expedition into Mexico prior to his selection as the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, as well as his unbending but paternalistic (in a positive sense) leadership skills and understanding for what was required of a new, mass American army. Sons of Freedom also details Pershing’s failures as a field commander, “foolishly believ[ing] that he would ‘consume’ German troops, [through frontal assaults and a near-religious belief in open warfare] when, in fact . . . they would probably consume him” (308).

Wawro is equally critical of other leaders of the American Expeditionary Forces, who like Pershing, were quick to demand initiative from their subordinate leaders, but did not recognize the bureaucracy of the Army—or the lack of training the leaders and soldiers had received prior to throwing them into combat—did not provide the experiences or background to foster leaders capable of adaptation. Indeed, most AEF leaders were unable, and in some cases unwilling, to provide the resources required to backstop the little initiative found on the Western Front, leading those who displayed such qualities to fail and to be sent packing to the depot at Blois (and such an officer’s career would have “gone Blooey”). Much of what Tom Ricks described in The Generals (2012) about George C. Marshall firing Army leadership who did not meet his demanding standards in World War II was likely learned firsthand as he ran American operations for the demanding Pershing decades earlier.

Sons of Freedom is an engaging, yet deep read of one of the major conflicts at the foundation of the US Army as a modern institution and America on the world stage. I highly recommend all Army leaders make time to read and study this comprehensive account by Wawro, as the First World War holds not only many lessons of our past but also key dynamics we will likely face again in our future.
Yesterday There Was Glory: With the 4th Division, A.E.F., in World War I

By Gerald Andrew Howell, edited by Jeffrey L. Patrick

Reviewed by Dr. Dean Nowowiejski, associate professor, Distinguished Chair for Art of War Scholars Command and General Staff College Office of the Dean of Academics

One of the trends in World War I historiography is the initial publication or republication of a variety of personal memoirs to accompany the centennial of the war. *Scarlet Fields: The Combat Memoir of a World War I Medal of Honor Hero* by John Lewis Barkley; *Poilu: The World War I Notebooks of Corporal Louis Barthas, Barrelmaker, 1914–1918*, by a French soldier; and *The World War I Memoirs of Robert P. Patterson: A Captain in the Great War*, by the future undersecretary of war, are among these recent additions. Now comes Gerald Andrew Howell’s memoir, *Yesterday There Was Glory: With the 4th Division, A.E.F., in World War I*, which adds to the story of doughboys and the 4th Infantry Division that are still on active service today.

This memoir of a private in the 39th Infantry Regiment is really the story of a soldier and the friends in his squad. How it came to print through the editorial work of Jeffrey L. Patrick, the librarian at Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield, is an interesting tale. Howell wrote this work shortly after World War II, and his perceptions are colored by the experience of a second global conflict. Howell offered the work to a variety of potential publishers, but it was never published. Patrick bought the manuscript at an auction on the internet and has done a masterful job in bringing it to life.

Patrick’s notes are carefully researched through primary source analysis in the National Archives and elsewhere. Howell’s descriptions through the course of the narrative were matched by Patrick with pertinent and captivating Signal Corps archival photographs. Patrick is obviously versed in all the latest references and the evolution of World War I historiography. And when you match this editorial work with the intriguing perspective originally offered by Howell, this book becomes a welcome addition to the common soldier’s historical account of the war.

There is much officer bashing as well as concern for food, clothes, and shelter as you might expect from Howell, a private soldier. There is also a sense of the unrelenting suffering from service in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, as Howell’s retelling is a continuous narrative of steadily impacting artillery, advances through dense woods, marching at night to avoid German observation, and the misery of hunger, cold, and filth. It reminds the reviewer of another period memoir mentioned above, *No Hard Feelings* by Missourian John Lewis Barkley, a Medal of Honor recipient, reprinted by the University Press of Kansas as *Scarlet Fields* in 2014. That work similarly captured the bravery, tenacity, endurance under raw conditions, and search for human comforts of the doughboy.

In *Yesterday There Was Glory*, Gerald Howell captured the good-natured banter of a World War I infantry squad throughout the war, complete with the social jibes that reflected the evolving prejudices of soldiers.
who themselves were a melting pot. Howell’s account tells the tale from mobilization to return home, with accounts of ship travel, training, rest, and combat at Château-Thierry, Saint-Mihiel, and the Meuse-Argonne.

One of the unique elements of Howell’s book is his take on the Third Army’s march into Germany at the end of the war and what it was like to occupy the land of a recent enemy. He echoes other sources on the length of the march, describing the exhaustion brought on by the hike to the Rhine. He also reinforces the idea that the doughboys quickly came to identify with the common German people as victims of war. The focus seems appropriate to the centennial of the conflict, and there is still much for the serious military professional or historian to gain through the study of individual experience.
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