The Russia-Ukraine War has given a glimpse of the future of modern warfare. Russia and Ukraine’s approaches indicate the character of modern warfare has changed, and US forces are now at a strategic inflection point. In this book, the authors analyze the Russia-Ukraine War from various angles, including warfighting functions or groups of systems commanders use to accomplish missions, domains of warfare, and history. This book identifies the US Army’s current weaknesses and the lessons it must learn from the Russia-Ukraine War as the service reexamines all aspects of its composition to prepare for future conflicts.

The narrative of conflict is a key component of modern warfare. The history surrounding who should rightfully control Ukraine has been central since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine War, and public perception has influenced support in Ukraine. In addition, the communication of threats, or lack thereof, has played an important role in deterrence in which one power uses the threat of force to preclude an adversary’s attack. Ukraine’s experience shows how the United States can control the narrative of an ongoing war both to equip US allies and to inspire the public to assist willingly.

The war has shown how effective leadership is executed and what role it will play in future conflicts. Internationally, allies have been crucial to supplying Ukraine, and the need for more joint training and interoperability between allies is clear. Within the Ukrainian military, a leadership strategy based on newly adopted mission-command principles has seen repeated success against the hierarchical Russian army. Because commanders can take disciplined initiative, acting without orders but within commanders’ intent, Ukraine has been more effective than Russia in maneuver, fires, agility, and other areas. Ukraine’s success underscores the importance of developing mission command and risk acceptance in the US Army.

Some of the greatest changes in the character of war are technological—for example, the use of drones, electromagnetic detection, signal interception, and open-source intelligence. Drones’ surveillance implications and potential to target traditionally secure locations have changed the battlefield. Additionally, the war has shown how cyber warfare exposes military and civilian infrastructure to attack, revealing vulnerabilities in current US battlefield logistics. Ukrainians have used artificial intelligence to identify potential threats and to target with artillery more effectively. Artificial intelligence improves force integration, which is increasingly crucial as multidomain operations—the combined use of air, land, and sea defenses—play an increasing role in conflict.

Often overlooked, sustainment functions have proven crucial in the Russia-Ukraine War. Both Ukraine and Russia have struggled with equipment and manpower sustainment. In the first year of the war, Russia’s logistical unpreparedness contributed to the country’s failure to accomplish objectives. The United States would likely face similar difficulties in large-scale combat operations as a result of the country’s insufficient munitions-manufacturing capabilities and its manpower crisis.