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Infinity Journal



IN THIS EDITION

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Infinity Journal
ISSN 2312-5888
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The IJ Infinity Group, Ltd.

Company number: 514895630

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A Note From The Editor

It might be hoped that the positive outcome from the current events in Syria, like those in Libya in 2011, may provide some scope for the basics in educating people about strategy. Sadly the evidence is thin.

The opinion editorials in the US press mostly trumpet and display a complete lack of understanding because no one seems to understand that without sound policy all else is moot. Having "red lines" that forces an action that may be out of touch with political reality is a very silly policy choice, and there is ample historical evidence to prove this.

As with the UK in Libya, and more recently in Syria, the US and the "West" in general, has got to develop sound policy before all the largely vacuous pontificating about strategy begins. Policy has to be predicated on behaviours and conditions that the tools at hand can achieve, not some aspirational ideas about making the world a better place. If you doubt this, look at how all the attempts at "world domination" tend to pan out. Policy is about the art of the possible, and strategy is the art of possible via violence. If someone merely wants to claim that doing anything in Syria is not in the interest of France, the UK, the US, or even Israel, then so what?

What is the imperative unless the policy is predicated on the idea of R2P (*responsibility to protect*) which no one seems to have understood is not actually a policy that is workable in terms of anything other than selective and subjective application, as and when it suits existing policy. The reason for this is the UN itself. While laudable for its humanity, R2P is provably one of the stupidest concepts to hit the streets in many years because no one seems to have thought through the vagaries of its application in the real world. To quote Wavell,

"The principles of strategy and tactics, and the logistics of war are really absurdly simple: it is the actualities that make war so complicated and so difficult, and are usually so neglected by historians."

Where was such an imperative to protect when 250,000 people died in the Algerian Civil War in the 1990s or the countless dead in Darfur?

This is not about political opinion. The reason no one took such action in Algeria, Darfur or even Rwanda was that they were simply not important to interests of the day, so the strategist is forced to ask the policymaker, "So, why now?"

William F. Owen
Editor, Infinity Journal
Summer 2013

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Clausewitz famously said war has its own grammar, but not its own logic. Yet, eminent scholars and military practitioners have argued that war tends to create a veritable logic of its own, one that displaces the rationale of diplomacy with operational or tactical imperatives. Antulio Echevarria explores that issue through the historical example of the United States in the Second World War.

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Patrick Porter

The Weinberger Doctrine was laid down almost 30 years ago to guide the use of American force. It has become deeply unfashionable. Yet it offers a wise alternative path to the imprudent liberal crusading of our time. Contrary to the rhetoric of its critics, war for the United States is almost always a choice, not a necessity. America's military power remains valuable even when it is only rarely used. And the greatest challenge for statecraft is not widening the scope for war but its limitation.

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Nathan K. Finney

The U.S. has relied heavily upon the use of force over the last decade to achieve its goals, overlooking the equally effective role of the threat of violence. This is particularly the case in foreign policy issues that are of only marginal national interests, such as the ongoing conflict in Syria. In this article, Nathan K. Finney postulates that the U.S. should pursue a policy of containment, supported by a strategy of coercion by denial that leverages the threat of violence. This would deter adversaries and assure allies in the region, while ultimately creating a stalemate between the belligerent parties, exhausting all involved.

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The Coalition's current Afghanistan effort is ending and policymakers will determine if further military action or plans are necessary past 2014. NATO and the US have one last chance to get this right or continue with the same failed thinking and Centre of Gravity analyses that have arguably not achieved strategic objectives to date. Getting this mission analysis wrong by following "bridging strategy" advice and a counterproductive "better war" myth risks the very strategic goals that tie NATO and the US to Afghanistan in the first place. In this article the author argues that this framework must change, and it must change immediately.

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Given the many previous successes of covert action, it remains an indispensable option for policymakers. However, policymakers must be selective in the use of covert action in the fulfilment of foreign policy strategy. In order to fulfil foreign policy strategy, the expected outcome and the method of covert action used must align with the core goals that define the national interest. In this article, Troy E. Smith looks at key considerations that policymakers must take into account when deciding if and to what degree to use covert action.



Does War Have its Own Logic After All?

Antulio J. Echevarria II

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Professor Antulio J. Echevarria II is the Editor of the US Army War College Quarterly, *Parameters*. He holds a Master's and Doctorate in history from Princeton University. Professor Echevarria is the author of *Reconsidering the American Way of War: US Military Practice from the Revolution to Afghanistan*; *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*; *Imagining Future War*; and *After Clausewitz: German Military Thinkers Before the Great War*; among many other articles, essays, and monographs. Professor Echevarria served more than 20 years in the U.S. Army, and is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. He has also held a NATO Fulbright, and has been a Visiting Fellow at Oxford University's Changing Character of War Programme.

Nearly two hundred years ago, Carl von Clausewitz observed that war has 'its own grammar, but not its own logic.' [i] This analogy is still enormously popular, despite the fact that he used it only once in his voluminous masterwork, *On War* (1832). Among other things, it has become shorthand for the argument that military aims ought to remain subordinate to policy's goals. It also represents a convenient way to express what many see as the military's proper relationship to political authority. In addition, it accords well with another of Clausewitz's memorable expressions: that 'war is merely the continuation of policy (*Politik*) by other means.' [ii] These two observations have retained their popularity to the present for good reasons, not the least of which is the obvious need to control the destructive capacity of modern war. However, they tell us *not* that 'war begins where diplomacy ends,' but rather that war *is* diplomacy—though with the addition of violent means. [iii] Whereas contemporary wisdom holds that armed conflicts—even those akin to the bargaining model—represent a break in the normal flow of political activity, Clausewitz believed that war was a natural part of, and inseparable from, that activity. War's logic was, thus, determined by the objectives and level of effort set for it by

policy.

Since the end of World War II, however, a number of eminent scholars and military practitioners have taken issue with Clausewitz's view that war defers to policy's logic. In the late 1980s, historian Russell Weigley argued that policy often becomes an instrument of war rather than the other way around: 'War in the twentieth century,' he said, 'is no longer the extension of politics by other means.' Instead, it 'has always tended to generate a politics of its own: to create its own momentum, to render obsolete the political purposes for which it was undertaken, and to erect its own political purpose.' [iv] Similarly, Cold War strategists, such as Bernard Brodie, have long interpreted Clausewitz's *On War*, especially its first chapter, as saying that policy must maintain firm control over military activity lest war assume its own escalatory path in the direction of military victory. [v] In other words, Brodie and many of his Cold War colleagues tried to have it both ways: they claimed, on the one hand, that war had no logic of its own; while, on the other hand, they urged policy to do everything in its power to control war's escalatory tendencies, thereby implying that war did have its own logic after all.

Since the end of World War II a number of eminent scholars and military practitioners have taken issue with Clausewitz's view that war defers to policy's logic

As this essay shows, the experience of the United States in the Second World War suggests that industrial-age war on a global scale did, indeed, generate a politics of its own, and that collectively its imperatives functioned more like a 'logic' than a 'grammar.'

Terms & Perspectives.

The term 'logic' refers to the overall direction of the fighting, the 'why,' whereas 'grammar' is the sum of operational imperatives or principles, the 'how' of fighting. 'Policy' is typically defined by modern strategists as an official statement or position, such as the Monroe doctrine, hammered out through a

To cite this Article: Echevarria, Antulio J. II, "Does War Have its Own Logic After All?", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue 3, Summer 2013, pages 4-7.

combination of formal and informal processes. However, for Clausewitz, policy generally referred to the 'intelligence of the personified state,' or the 'trustee' or 'representative of the separate interests of the whole community.' [vi] Policy, in other words, was a living entity—an individual, an organization, or an institution—with the authority to decide what was 'best' for the state, rather than a formal position or set of aims. King Frederick William III and his body of advisors fulfilled this role for Clausewitz's Prussia; and, as history amply shows, the king's decisions did not always align with the interests of the aristocracy, the nascent middle class, the peasantry, or the military. To be sure, modern scholars are likely to see the relationship between war and policy differently than Clausewitz due to dissimilarities in their cultural and historical backgrounds. In brief, the former tend to view war from a liberal-democratic perspective, and regard it as an evil that is only sometimes necessary; they are thus inclined to see it as disruptive to daily affairs. Clausewitz, on the other hand, considered war from the standpoint of a guardian of the state, and saw it as neither inherently good nor intrinsically evil, but as a natural artifact of political activity. Nonetheless, the fact that their perspectives are diametrically opposed does not eliminate the possibility that war might have a logic of its own.

Defining the Problem.

As the first chapter of *On War* shows, Clausewitz considered wars of conquest to be just as political as wars of limited aims. Policy remained sovereign in either type of conflict, though its authority was not absolute. It could change the purposes and aims of the war as well as the level of effort to be expended, and it could decide when the costs of the conflict exceeded its anticipated benefits. By taking up the sword, policy duly accepted the 'grammar' of swordplay; but policy's hand still directed the thrusts and parries. Policy could select (or reject) specific operational imperatives, though some choices entail greater risk. However, Clausewitz did not address whether policy's freedom of action might be usurped by certain operational imperatives, thereby making policy's sovereignty more titular than real.

In contrast, modern scholars such as Weigley have warned that war's grammar tends to exert a controlling influence over policy. This tendency was particularly evident during the two world wars, where, according to Weigley, 'operational and tactical imperatives' reined-in the 'ambitious aims' of both strategy and policy: 'Instead of using war as an instrument of policy, [therefore] nations allowed operational and tactical feasibility to dictate policy.' As a consequence, 'long-range national purposes' took a backseat to the 'short-run expediencies of military strategy.' [vii] In short, the influence of war's grammar was great enough to reverse, or at least corrupt, the relationship between war and policy described by Clausewitz.

Grammar versus Logic

The experience of the United States in the Second World War lends more than a little credence to Weigley's view. Waging a global war in the industrial age did generate new policies, and new politics with them, particularly domestically.

Considerable give-and-take took place between policy's desires and war's imperatives. The Doolittle raid in April 1942, for instance, was driven largely by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's desire to strike back at the Japanese empire, and it was carried out despite significant operational limitations. It achieved little militarily; but it was immensely successful for Roosevelt politically and for the American public psychologically. As US General George C. Marshall wrote later about such psychological victories: 'the leader of a democracy must keep the people entertained. That may sound like the wrong word, but it conveys the thought.... People demand action.' [viii] On the whole, though, military imperatives exerted more force than one would expect of mere rules of grammar. Their importance, in fact, meant that the 'short-run expediencies of military strategy' did at times take priority over 'long-range national purposes.'

Waging a global war in the industrial age did generate new policies, and new politics with them, particularly domestically.

Military Imperatives

Perhaps the most important imperative in American military doctrine through the war was: to 'be stronger at the decisive point.' [ix] It was recognized as the 'first law' of military strategy, and it had changed little since the early nineteenth century. This imperative supported several modern corollaries (principles of war), such as mass, objective, maneuver, initiative, and others hammered out initially by Jomini and Clausewitz and later refined by J.F.C. Fuller, among others; it was also a hedge against the debilitating effects of chance and uncertainty. [x] A relatively new corollary in this period was air superiority, and 'being stronger in the air' quickly became a prerequisite for successful ground and naval operations. On the one hand, the 'first law' of military strategy and its corollaries made it possible to achieve breakthroughs against strong defensive positions, as at El Alamein in 1942 and Normandy in 1944; and it enabled deep penetrations and envelopments, the hallmarks of twentieth-century maneuver warfare, as at the Falaise gap in 1944 and the Ruhr pocket in 1945. [xi] It also proved critical in naval engagements, as at the battle of Midway in 1942, and in amphibious operations, such as at Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945. On the other hand, massive quantities of tanks, aircraft, ships, guns, ammunition, and other supplies were necessary for any major operation. The operational pattern thus became one of 'lunges,' limited not only by enemy resistance, but also by the flow of logistics. Operational and tactical imperatives thus allowed forward movement on land and sea, but also acted as a regulator on that movement, and more or less checked political desires as well.

Aircraft technologies also gave rise to a new, though still theoretical, imperative in the form of strategic bombing. Prewar military and political expectations were that bombing a nation's vital population and production centers would bring an opponent to its knees without the need for costly surface campaigns. Implementing this theory during the war

consumed a great deal of resources, and inflicted massive amounts of damage: the Allied bombing of Hamburg in 1943 caused an estimated 90,000 casualties; the bombing of Dresden in 1945 resulted in 80,000 casualties; and the Tokyo raids in May 1945 inflicted some 125,000 casualties.[xii] These efforts failed to break German or Japanese morale, and thus to meet policy's desired aims. They did, however, prompt Axis combat aircraft and anti-aircraft weapons to be diverted from other fronts, and thus indirectly facilitated the advance of Allied ground and naval formations.[xiii] The theory was not validated by the events of the war; and it proved to be a false imperative, illustrating that military leadership can also be wrong about military capabilities.[xiv]

These efforts failed to break German or Japanese morale, and thus to meet policy's desired aims.

Wartime Policies

Operational imperatives also had a direct bearing on American military strategy, influencing not only the type of strategy chosen but also the measures necessary to execute it. Roosevelt succinctly articulated his strategy to Congress in February 1943: 'We set as a primary task in the war of the Pacific a day-by-day and week-by-week and month-by-month destruction of more Japanese war materials than Japanese industry could replace.'[xv] US military strategy was, thus, clearly one of attrition, and it required retooling America's industrial capacity to manufacture war material, and lots of it. By 1943, in fact, American production figures had surpassed those of the Axis by an appreciable margin: 47,000 US planes to 27,000 Axis aircraft; 24,000 American tanks to 11,000 Axis; six US heavy guns for every one produced by the Axis. By war's end, the United States had produced 303,000 aircraft; 88,000 tanks; 237,000 artillery pieces; 2.4 million motor vehicles; one billion rounds of artillery ammunition; 41 billion rounds of small arms; and was launching 16 warships for every one built by Japan.[xvi]

US military strategy was, thus, clearly one of attrition, and it required retooling America's industrial capacity to manufacture war material

Yet, achieving such production totals also necessitated introducing a host of new fiscal policies—such as the War Revenue Act, along with excess-profits taxes, and dozens of rationing programs—as well as the creation of 57 new organizations or agencies to oversee production, distribution, and to control prices.[xvii] Among these were the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, the National War Labor Board, and the War Production Board. Such measures were also accompanied by new personnel policies or the revision of those already in existence, such as the Selective Service Act (September 1940).[xviii] The need to raise a large military force to fight a global war in the industrial age

had necessitated new domestic policies, and the politics necessary to make them happen. As a graphic illustration of the change, Roosevelt's public image also transformed: by December 1943, he was no longer 'Dr. New Deal,' administering to a patient attempting to recover from years of economic depression, but 'Dr. Win the War,' writing prescriptions for Allied victory over the Axis.[xix]

Military imperatives also had a bearing on several of Roosevelt's strategic decisions during the war. For instance, his decision to stay the course on the 'Germany First' strategy, which had been agreed to in principle at the Anglo-American conference in February-March 1941, actually flew in the face of American public sentiment after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Yet, it made the most sense militarily because Germany posed the greater threat to his British and Russian allies. If either of them had been defeated or had concluded a separate peace, the goal of retaking Western Europe would have been tremendously more difficult, perhaps impossible. Likewise, Roosevelt's decision on the location and timing of Stalin's much desired 'second front,' the invasion of North Africa (Operation Torch) in 1942 rather than a direct assault across the English Channel either in that year or the year after, deferred to military considerations; Allied forces were simply not ready to undertake a major amphibious operation in western Europe. Even Roosevelt's desire for the political aim of 'unconditional surrender,' which he defended at the Casablanca conference (January 1943), was relaxed in the cases of Italy and Japan, largely to reduce the likely military costs.

Without Soviet offensives, it is not likely the Western allies would have been able to gain a decisive foothold on the European continent until much later in the war.

At the Yalta conference (February 1945), Roosevelt did give higher priority to the 'short-run expediencies of military strategy' than the 'long-range national purposes.'[xx] While some critics claim he gave away too much to Stalin at both conferences, the tradeoff does show how important military imperatives had become. The Soviet Union was carrying the lion's share of the war's human costs and tied down the bulk of Hitler's forces, destroying the equivalent of one division per day on the Eastern front. Without Soviet offensives, it is not likely the Western allies would have been able to gain a decisive foothold on the European continent until much later in the war. Military strategy did, at least in this important instance, take priority over grand strategy.

On the whole, then, the military imperatives associated with 'being stronger at the decisive point' carried great weight during the war. However, they served less as a set of rules (grammar) than as a collective antithesis (logic) to policy's thesis. This dynamic occurred largely because political leaders (and some military ones) did not fully appreciate what military capabilities could actually accomplish under wartime conditions against competent and determined foes. The synthesis, whenever it occurred, represented an acceptance of the realities of military power. These realities

made their presence felt in domestic policies as well as in high-level strategic decisions related to the changing circumstances of the war.

Conclusion

One can remain a student of Clausewitz while not necessarily agreeing with all of his propositions—or rather how they are represented today. The obvious conclusion that grammar and logic influence one another is unsatisfying. Clausewitz stated that ‘policy is interwoven throughout the whole activity of war and exerts a continuous influence over it insofar as its violent nature permits.’[xxi] However, influence does not necessarily amount to control: policy still influences the use of violence even if it must revise its thesis in response to war’s anti-thesis. Clausewitz said that ‘the art of war’ and ‘military

commanders’ have the right to demand that the aims of policy be consistent with the violent nature of war’s means; unfortunately, his precise meaning cannot be determined today.

In sum, the core question becomes which elements of war’s grammar, if any, are inviolable, and just how critical they are to success. It may serve us better to think of war’s collective imperatives less as grammar, and more as an integrated system of logic. Ideally, policy’s thesis and the collective antithesis of operational imperatives are reconciled in the dialectical process of formulating strategy; but clearly that does not always happen. In any case, it may be worthwhile to re-examine our understanding of small wars as well as large ones to determine more broadly how the dynamics between policy and war actually work. That knowledge could well lead to a new general theory of war.

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- [i] Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 19th Ed., Book VIII, Chap. 6B, p. 991.
- [ii] VK, VIII/3B, 970-74; *On War*, 592-93. Similarly, war takes on the nature of the systems (the customs and conventions) that govern political activity, and its nature changes as the nature of those systems changes.
- [iii] For an example of this view, see Alex Weisiger, *Logics of War: Explanations for Limited and Unlimited Conflicts* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2013), 13.
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- [v] Bernard Brodie, ‘A Guide to the Reading of *On War*,’ in *On War*, 641-714, esp. 646.
- [vi] VK I/1, 212; and VIII/6B, 993; *On War*, 88, 606.
- [vii] Weigley, ‘Political and Strategic Dimensions,’ 363.
- [viii] Mark A. Stoler, George C. Marshall: *Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 101.
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- [x] John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport: Greenwood, 1982).
- [xi] The invasion of Normandy involved some 4,000 ships and landing vessels; nearly 176,000 troops; 2,500 heavy bombers; and 7,000 fighters. Within a month, the number of troops ashore had grown to one million; and the quantity of vehicles had risen to 150,000. John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris* (New York: Penguin, 1994).
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- [xiv] The US Strategic Bombing Survey conducted after the war provided only enough evidence to conclude that bombing major population and industrial centers was necessary, but not sufficient. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, Summary Report (European War), 30 September 1945; Summary Report (Pacific War), 1 July 1946.
- [xv] Franklin D. Roosevelt: ‘State of the Union Address,’ January 7, 1943. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*; <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16386>.
- [xvi] James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington: GPO, 1966), 474-81. J. Garry Clifford, ‘World War II: Military and Diplomatic Course,’ in Paul S. Boyer, ed., *Oxford Companion to United States History* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 846.
- [xvii] To be more precise, 28 of these were created between September 1, 1939 and December 7, 1941; and 29 were created after December 7, 1941. All told, more than 100 agencies were created between 1940 and 1946, and only 17 were retained after the war. Hugh Rostkoff, *America’s Economic Way of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012), 181-82.
- [xviii] Maury Klein, *A Call to Arms: Mobilizing America for World War II* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 81-83, 212-24; Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607-2012*, 3rd Ed. (New York: Free Press, 2012), 370.
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- [xx] On the importance of these decisions, see John Keegan, *The Second World War* (New York: Viking, 1989), 541-42.
- [xxi] VK I/1, 210; *On War*, 83.



The Weinberger Doctrine: A Celebration

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Where would American strategic debate be without doctrines? 'Doctrine' is a simple concept. In the context of killing people and breaking things, it merely means the principles that guide action, or the ideas that underpin the use of force. It is about how, when, how much and why to bleed. The word has also taken on a deeper resonance, as the mark of presidential gravitas and a way to put whole chapters of diplomatic history into a nutshell. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 declared America's hemisphere off limits to outsiders. President Harry Truman's Doctrine of 1947 dedicated the country to a far-reaching struggle against Soviet communism and signaled the expanding horizons of American power. In our own time, the Bush Doctrine marked the era of the Global War on Terror. It announced Washington's bid to tame a world of rogues and terrorists back into order through a triad of preventive war, unilateralism and democracy promotion. We don't know how history will judge it. But the adventure in hawkish Wilsonian idealism has been a tiring and costly one.

Observers of American statecraft crave yet another doctrine to guide the superpower as it picks its way through the chaos. What should it be?

Observers of American statecraft crave yet another doctrine to guide the superpower as it picks its way through the chaos.

If we need a fresh doctrine, it does not have to be a new one. It does not even have to be one coined by a President. The most prudent doctrine for an era of protracted wars, debt-deficit crisis, political gridlock and psychological exhaustion is one that was laid down almost thirty years ago. On 28 November 1984 at the National Press Club, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger explained why and under what conditions the United States should use force. He spelt out six tenets: the vital interests of the United States or its allies must be at stake; once committed, the effort should be wholehearted; political objectives must be clearly defined; that objectives must be continually reassessed to preserve a balance between means and ends; there must be Congressional and public support; and war should be undertaken only as a last resort.

In other words, if America has to fight, it should do so for tightly defined and achievable goals, with strong backing from the political class and the masses, and it must strike hard. It became known as the 'Weinberger Doctrine', and was later reaffirmed by General Colin Powell in the debate about American interventions abroad after the Cold War. It was an attempt at strategy in its classical sense, the limitation of war to make it serve policy and the avoidance of wars where the chaotic violence escalates out of proportion and even control.

It was an attempt at strategy in its classical sense

The shadow of the Vietnam War (1955-1975) hung over this restrictive doctrine. Memories have dimmed for today's generation, but that struggle in South Asia bred a fear of

To cite this Article: Porter, Patrick, "The Weinberger Doctrine: A Celebration", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue No. 3, Summer 2013, pages 8-11.

fighting prolonged peripheral engagements that were increasingly divisive, where the costs outstripped the gains, where half-measures were seen to be ineffective and where military means and policy ends could not be bridged. In the eyes of many, it wasted American lives, not to mention Vietnamese lives, for a struggle that had perverse results. The war threatened rather than bolstered America's containment of communism. It eroded rather than strengthened Washington's credibility abroad. Instead of fortifying American democracy in the world, it polarized and poisoned it at home. And in expanding the war into Cambodia helped to produce a genocidal totalitarian nightmare in the Khmer Rouge. The fears bred by Vietnam were also geopolitical. In America's wider competition with the Soviet Union, its officials feared that deepening 'sideshow wars' could drain resources and political will from the main struggle.

The Doctrine irritated those who believe that America's armed forces are only valuable if they are used

Not for the first time, the National Press Club was a venue for a doctrine that fell out of fashion. Looking back, the Weinberger Doctrine has been dismissed as a relic of its age, an overreaction to the Vietnam syndrome that is a better guide to the anxieties of policymakers in the late Cold War than it is to our current problems. The Doctrine has drawn critical fire from several directions. Its concern for control and boundaries displeases those like George Schultz and Henry Kissinger who preferred that Washington reserve wide latitude for using force on its terms, scale and timetable, unfettered by prior limitations. The Doctrine irritated those who believe that America's armed forces are only valuable if they are used, overlooking their broader worth as means of deterrence or of insurance for a rainy day. That was the complaint of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, frustrated as she was by the caution of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell. In her words, 'What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?' [i]

For the historian Brian McCallister Linn in his landmark study of US Army traditions *The Echo of Battle*, the Weinberger Doctrine is guilty of control freakery born of 'the propensity to view war as an engineering project in which the skilled application of the correct principles could achieve a predictable outcome...a conviction that it was possible to wage a scientifically exact, one-sided war, making the enemy no more than the passive recipient of overwhelming military power.' [ii] For the theorist and practitioner of 'small wars' John Nagl, the strategic future is inevitably one of fighting to win over populations rather than convenient clashes like Gulf War One to expel an invader. This makes the notion of only playing to one's strengths naive wishful thinking. [iii] For former Secretary of the Navy James Webb writing only months after al-Qaeda's attacks on New York and Washington, the doctrine was just 'a "best-case scenario" for situations where the U.S. could respond at its own discretion, using a schedule of its choosing, against an enemy whose military makeup allowed such a response. But sometimes a nation must fight even when it cannot muster up an overwhelming advantage, as in the early days of World War II. And sometimes massive force is irrelevant, as in the anti-terrorist campaigns we are waging today.' [iv]

The gravamen of the disagreement between the doctrine's defenders and its critics is the question of discretion. How far can America select its wars? Where Weinberger and his followers impose conditions and criteria, their critics insist this is futile. In their fatalistic version of history, war comes to America unbidden, at times in highly inconvenient forms. The US cannot afford to plan on the basis of convenient wars, selecting its clashes from a menu. War is imposed upon it. When a Tojo, Kim Il Sung or Bin Laden attacks and shocks the US directly or assaults a vital interest, America must make war and not under conditions of its choosing. To ignore this pattern is to leave the country's forces exposed as it was in Iraq from 2003, designed for a swift interstate clash where it would find, fix and smash a conventional military, but then lost in a struggle against a different kind of opponent and a different kind of war it had not prepared for. For General David Petraeus, this is a lesson written in the blood of America's dead in the 9/11 wars. [v] For Max Boot, 'the United States cannot determine the nature of its future wars; the enemy has a vote, and the more evident the U.S. inability to deal with guerrilla or terrorist tactics, the more prevalent those tactics will become.' In this way, strategy (the big picture linking military means to policy ends) is reduced to an issue of tactics. The discussion focuses on the enemy's tactical vote on how to fight American troops, rather than America's strategic vote on whether and why to place them there in the first place.

The US cannot afford to plan on the basis of convenient wars, selecting its clashes from a menu. War is imposed upon it.

But on the contrary, America almost always does get to choose the wars it fights. That is one of the conditions its founders and leaders coveted. The ability to choose or refrain was one of the bounties of the gradual effort to maneuver European empires from their continent, make the country bicoastal, and establish hemispheric dominance. Being able to choose which fights to pick and avoid is part of being a nuclear offshore superpower with unthreatening enemies, strong maritime and air shields and a potent army and Marine Corps to boot. The United States is not interwar Poland, stuck between larger predators with few reliable friends and vulnerable to a snap invasion across contiguous territory. If ever a state existed that usually, emphatically, does not have to accept war being imposed by others, it is this one.

If ever a state existed that usually, emphatically, does not have to accept war being imposed by others, it is this one.

The phrase 'the enemy gets a vote' has become a recurrent cliché in the debate but deserves unpacking. Translated into this debate, it effectively means that the state and its military should obey its enemy's orders, and that the military especially should confine itself to preparing for counterinsurgency as its destiny without question. Adversaries may get a vote in

how the US engages them, but in the choice of conflicts and where, when and how to deploy troops, they have no vote. Whether or not to send an expeditionary force into terrain where there is an excellent chance of violent resistance is a matter for discretion, not compulsion. Unless Washington reverts to a rigid Prussian conception of a divide between war and politics, the military is not just there to obey orders silently. America's military is not just charged with devising tactics while awaiting orders for where and who to fight. It also has a broader and higher advisory role, and is involved in the formulation of strategy with its civilian masters. One of its responsibilities is to inform the choices of policymakers. In offering that professional advice, the military can advise not only on how to fight COIN campaigns, but whether they are a good idea. War itself is a choice. It is an elective political act, not a state of being that one power can inflict on another. Short of another state directly trying to annihilate the defender, there is always a value judgment to be made.

Enemies' 'voting' to send America to war is a concept rooted in collective memories of the past, namely the strategic shock of 7 December 1941. But World War Two was not imposed upon a sleeping, passive isolationist America. It resulted from an escalating conflict in East Asia against Japan over its brutal occupation of China, as the Roosevelt administration imposed crippling sanctions. Before America became a formal belligerent when Japan struck Pearl Harbor in December 1941, it was consciously fighting an undeclared war in the Atlantic, providing armed escorts, extending its defense perimeter, engaging in secret staff talks with Britain, and generally being a most un-neutral neutral. The United States did not have to enter hostilities with Nazi Germany in 1940-41 any more than Britain had to make guarantees to Poland in 1939. Even when it did, it made choices continually: where and when to fight, which theatres to prioritize, how to trade off sacrifices and gains, and how far to favor peripheral or direct operations.

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As for 9/11, that atrocity too was a violent political act that required interpretation. It did not have to lead to an ambitious war on terror. It did not have to result in a bid to bring democratic transformation to Afghanistan, where after a decade the US is fighting to preserve a kleptocratic regime barely ruling a fractured country, while bargaining with a Taliban that optimists once declared defeated. It certainly did not have to result in an invasion of Iraq. The US had wide scope to define its adversary (one terrorist network, terrorism itself, or beyond that to Iraqi Sunni supremacists, war lords or Hamas?), to define victory (containment or rollback?), and to balance risks and costs.

The most compelling argument for the Weinberger doctrine is the history of what happened when it was most radically abandoned.

The most compelling argument for the Weinberger doctrine is the history of what happened when it was most radically abandoned. Consider the Global War on Terror, which has had its victories, degrading Al Qaeda's capabilities, but at Pyrrhic costs, and its crescendo in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was undertaken in a spirit antithetical to the careful statecraft laid out by Weinberger. Against Weinberger's realist caution, it was launched in a spirit of self-celebratory triumphalism, reflecting the neoconservative vision of a politics of heroic greatness and its impatience with what it sees as an alien and un-American realism with its concern for limitation. Rather than carefully defining limited goals, the makers of war in 2003 ignored warnings that toppling Saddam could sow mischief in a fractured and frightened Iraqi population, assuming instead (with exiles urging them on) that overthrowing the regime would naturally call unleash a peaceful democracy. Instead of planning for a difficult 'post-conflict' reconstruction, Washington directed its energy into the campaign not the aftermath. In an in unipolar moment, hawkish liberal idealists argued, America should unleash its power and not pay heed to doctrines of self-restraint.

The cumulative indirect and direct financial costs of the Iraq conflict alone, according to the Novelist and former chief economist of the World Bank Joseph Stiglitz, exceed \$3 trillion, treasure that could have been used productively to address problems in Social Security Provision, oil dependence, or not spent at all. The war killed 4,500 U.S. troops, 3,400 contractors, and injured more than 32,000, including thousands with critical brain and spinal injuries. Looking after them will not be cheap, given the costs of long-term treatment and disability benefits flowing from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). It also resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed in communal violence. To be sure, Iraq now has a constitutional government of sorts, no longer under yolk of Baath party rule. But it is becoming an increasingly authoritarian state that is still wracked by communal violence. Thousands have been killed and wounded in bombings since American withdrawal. If there is an emerging winner geopolitically, it is Iran. And all of this to overthrow a regime crippled by sanctions, with no serious ties to Al Qaeda. These are disappointing gains for such heavy costs. It would be unwise to conclude that the grand lesson is to prepare to fight such an unforced war more competently. The essence of the Weinberger Doctrine, as in 1984, is to restore strategy to limit war, not just refine tactics to get it right the next time.

If there is an emerging winner geopolitically, it is Iran. And all of this to overthrow a regime crippled by sanctions, with no serious ties to Al Qaeda.

Moments of overreach have prompted debate before about strategic doctrines and the scope of military commitments. Two such moments were the crossing of the 39th parallel by American-led UN forces in the Korean peninsula in 1950, and the escalation of America's expeditionary land commitment to Vietnam in 1964-65. The former expanded what could have been a successful limited territorial war into a conflict against communist China, and after many credible warnings from the enemy and from informed observers were ignored. The latter proved to be the most polarizing, costly and demoralizing conflict of the Cold War, endangering the very legitimacy of containment. Both represented a shift from territorially-conceived and bounded security interests to psychological and universal ones. Without a disciplined concept of vital interests (literally, 'needed for life'), those interests become limitless, the strategic frontiers everywhere, and war begins to serve not policy but itself.

The embrace of a limitless concept of strategic interests and the scope for military action has weighty policy implications.

The embrace of a limitless concept of strategic interests and the scope for military action has weighty policy implications. In John Nagl's words, 'Sept. 11 conclusively demonstrated that instability anywhere can be a real threat to the American people here at home. Defeating instability through effective counterinsurgency operations is therefore a core mission of the Defense Department.' [vi] In fact, there are many measures short of expensive and difficult coin campaigns that can disrupt violent guerrilla threats against the United States from afar. Besides, military occupations are not, historically, optimum antidotes for addressing instability, either away or at home (as France found in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon or the Soviet Union in Afghanistan). Besides, September 11 was more

linked to American entanglement in the politics of the Arab-Islamic world than some generic condition of instability. But there is a darker implication of Nagl's statement. If American security relies on 'Defeating instability', and 'anywhere', then Nagl and his fellow small wars advocates are offering a doctrine of permanent revolution. In pursuit of absolute security, they would put America on a footing of endless war. In place of careful means-ends calculation, they offer a field manual.

There is, in fact, an alternative model, not only in the declaratory model of the doctrine, but in practice, America's response to a crisis moment that gave rise to the doctrine in the first place. It is the response of President Ronald Reagan in October 1983 to the bombing of the US Marine Barracks in Beirut, killing 241 people, one of the bloodiest days for America's military forces since World War Two. Reagan denounced the attack, pledged to stay, ordered retaliatory bombings but only months afterwards withdrew US Marines offshore. In response to Islamists using asymmetric methods, Reagan did not decide that America had no choice but to get into an ambitious land war of regime change and armed nation-building. He pulled the ground forces out. A disciplined and prudent choice was available and he took it. That decision is rarely spoken of as a great strategic blunder. For all Reagan's ringing rhetorical offensives and sunny visions of Cold War triumph, when it came to ground wars the Gipper knew when to stop. We can only imagine the pleas of today's small wars faction to act differently under similar circumstances.

If now is a time for fresh doctrine, it is no time for dogma.

If now is a time for fresh doctrine, it is no time for dogma. As Michael Cohen argues, a return to harder thinking about the criteria and purpose of war 'doesn't mean a slavish devotion to the criteria outlined by either Weinberger or Powell. There will always be times when the limited use of force is appropriate. But it does mean a far more rigorous consideration of costs and benefits, as well as the national interest, before such force is employed.' In that pragmatic recognition of the limits of power, a better way would lie. The greatest complaint about the doctrine is its greatest virtue: that if applied, it would raise the threshold for using force. We can only hope.

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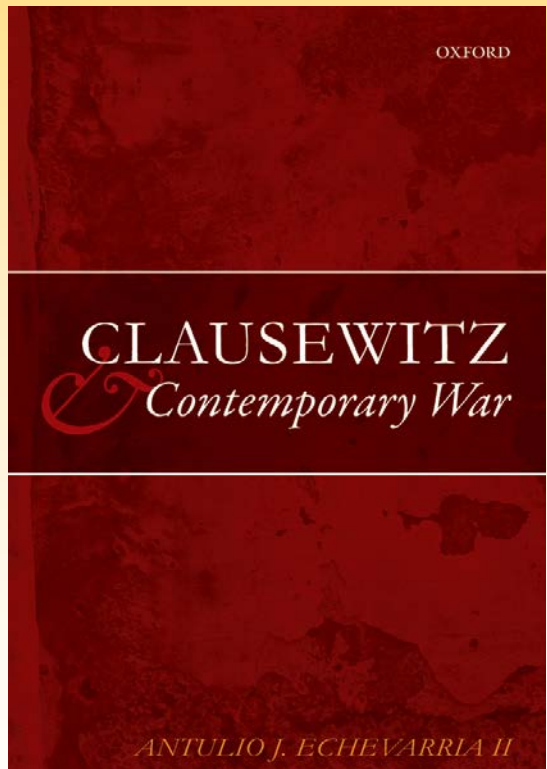
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Using the Threat of Violence to Contain Syria: An External Approach

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The conflict in Syria has replaced Afghanistan and Iran as the foreign policy and strategic issue of the day in the United States. Following on the heels of the professed humanitarian intervention in Libya, where U.S. and European forces used military force to prevent mass violence and depose an authoritarian ruler, many pundits and Congressional leaders have questioned why the U.S. has not taken the same approach in a bloodier Syria. Reported use of chemical weapons has only added to the call for intervention,[i] subsiding only slightly with the most recent reports of a diplomatic solution brokered by Russia and captured in a recent draft UN Security Council Resolution.[ii]

For the last decade the use of violence has been the primary tool of national power employed to solve problems worldwide.

It is understandable that some policy makers immediately reach for the sword when addressing foreign policy

challenges. For the last decade the use of violence has been the primary tool of national power employed to solve problems worldwide. However, the country has relied heavily upon the use of force to achieve its goals while overlooking an equally effective role for the military as part of U.S. strategy: deter thru the threat of violence.[iii] The threat of violence has been seen as leading to the most recent diplomatic break through on the possible removal of chemical weapons from the Assad regime, bringing Russia and Assad to the negotiation table.[iv] While a positive step, this simply removes a psychologically devastating weapon from the battlefield. It does not address the core issues in the conflict and will do nothing to stop the conflict.

With this in mind, the U.S. must take a new approach to the situation in Syria, which only marginally threatens core U.S. national interests. This approach should include the threat of violence to contain Syria, in effect assuring U.S. allies in the region and deterring the export of violence outside of the country. As noted strategist Edward Luttwak wrote recently, the U.S. will be disadvantaged if either side in Syria's civil war wins. [v] Instead, the U.S. should adopt a policy of containment, supported by a strategy of coercion by denial that creates a stalemate to exhaust all parties involved.

The employment of violence inside Syria should only be used to ensure the credibility of deterrence and achieve limited aims that deny outside support and the export of instability from the country. Recent reports of the possible missile strikes by the U.S. government to show displeasure at Assad's use of chemical weapons would not fall into this category. While using force in this manner (one in which coercion by punishment is employed to supposedly decrease the will of the Assad regime to use chemical weapons) was successful in bringing Assad to the negotiations table and would placate some of the more strident voices calling for action – any action – in response to the killing of innocents, it would more likely highlight the U.S. lack of will to do anything meaningful within Syria if actually conducted. Unless there are targets of great value to Assad that can be struck with missiles, thereby forcing a desired change in behavior, a strike would likely only leave the regime believing they have survived an attack by the world's remaining superpower. Much like Saddam Hussein or Al Qaeda after multiple strikes from the U.S. in the recent past, Assad could believe such an attack showed weakness, not strength. An inadequate attack

To cite this Article: Finney, Nathan K., "Using the Threat of Violence to Contain Syria: An External Approach", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue No. 3, Summer 2013, pages 13-16.

would instead decrease deterrence, not strengthen it.[vi]

A policy of containment regarding the violence in Syria would be different than the current U.S. approach, which seeks to remove Assad from power (largely through supporting the opposition) and thereby reduce the violence in Syria. The escalation by Assad to the use of chemical weapons is an indication that the approach is not meeting objectives. A containment approach focusing on denying the overflow of violence outside Syria would better align with U.S. national interests and can be developed by applying a rational analysis model to the situation in Syria and U.S. national interests in the region.[vii] Once complete, it will be apparent that U.S. interests in the region are peripheral, and U.S. actions should focus on factors external to Syria while denying the exportation of instability from Syria, which would mitigate the situation better than both the current approach and/or direct intervention in Syria.

The traditional rational approach begins by determining the U.S. national purpose, which is codified in expressed national values. These values, most recently found in the 2010 National Security Strategy, help formulate national interests and explain the lens through which the U.S. view issues affecting those national interests. The expressed national values of the U.S. are: American example/moral leadership in the world; comprehensive engagement with the world; and promoting a just and sustainable international order.[viii]

These values support the development of four core national interests: security; prosperity; respect for universal values; and a stable international order.[ix] The current administration, while focused on all four interests, appears to prioritize prosperity and international order over security and values in its decision-making.[x]

With the above factors in mind, we can derive the U.S. strategic vision as 'the U.S. is the world's source of moral leadership, a promoter of international stability, and a leader in increasing prosperity of the globe'. Security and universal values are addressed only in reference to how they will increase prosperity and/or the stability of the international system.

If the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, it would be unlikely to affect U.S. core national interests.

Understanding the values, interests, and vision discussed above, a strategic appraisal of U.S. interests in Syria (and the region) can be developed. This begins by determining the intensity of interests; namely, whether they are vital, important, or peripheral to the four national interests and strategic vision. [xi] In this case, U.S. interests in the region are peripheral. If the situation in Syria continues to deteriorate, it would be unlikely to affect U.S. core national interests. Even if the state collapses further and draws in more outside actors, the security of the American homeland, their economic prosperity, and the overall international order will remain secure. However, the situation will continue to impact the U.S. core interest of respecting universal values, which will affect the ability of the

U.S. to exert moral leadership around the globe. Domestic policy has taken greater precedence over issues like Syria since the beginning of the so-called Arab Spring and they do not look to abate. The U.S. government, and its people, is much more focused on economic issues and the size/capabilities of its armed forces than in intervention around the world. This assessment of U.S. interests will assist with choosing the types of military actions the U.S. should pursue in Syria.[xii]

General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in response to criticism from legislators on his duty to keep Congress informed as to the advice he has provided to the President, recently published a memorandum addressing the options available to the U.S. in Syria. The options included:[xiii]

- Training, advising and assisting the opposition
- Conducting limited stand-off strikes
- Establishing a no-fly zone
- Creating a buffer zone to protect certain areas inside Syria
- Controlling Syria's chemical weapons

These options cover the concerns of domestic and international audiences and include the use and threat of violence to achieve a policy of a reduction in violence and ultimately forcing Assad out of power. The options, which are not exclusive (i.e. they can all be done, or elements of one or more can be tailored to create an overall approach), include improving the capability of the forces fighting the Assad regime, striking key elements of the Assad regime to reduce their capability and capacity to fight, protecting rebel forces from aerial attack, creating safe zones for civilians (and ostensibly opposition forces), and gaining and maintaining control of weapons of mass destruction possessed by the Syrian government.

Each of these options assure allies and deter adversaries (including the Assad regime, its Iranian supporters, and Hezbollah), but is too focused on the internal dynamic in Syria. Given that our interests are peripheral and mainly concerned with maintaining the security of our allies in the region, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and deterring our adversaries in the region, an approach focusing on external factors and containing the spread of violence outside of Syria would be more appropriate. As Nobel Laureate Thomas Schelling pointed out, the threat of future violence withheld, not the violence that has already been committed, compels people to sue for peace.[xiv]

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Therefore, a policy of containment regarding possible further effects of instability in Syria better aligns with US interests,

particularly given current domestic concerns. It would allow the U.S. to maintain leadership and positive engagement with the region, provide increased defensive capacity to U.S. allies, and mitigate instability coming out of Syria that affect both the international system and the global economy.

This policy can be attained through the achievement of five objectives:

- Contain weapons of mass destruction (which is currently being attempted through the recent draft UNSCR resolution)
- Fix Iranian and Hezbollah forces in Syria
- Fix sub-state and transnational extremist forces in Syria
- Assure allies in the region, particularly those bordering Syria
- Prevent humanitarian disaster from overwhelming neighboring states

These objectives are focused on containing the export of violence and instability from Syria, not on solving the complex issues internal to Syria.[xv] While the ultimate form and function of the Syrian government will affect the future stability and prosperity in the region, the U.S. and its allies can do nothing definitive inside the country that will shape a favorable regime at this point. Instead, the U.S. should mitigate the overflow of instability and support the fixing of enemy elements within this conflict. This will weaken those opposed to the U.S. (primarily Iran, Hezbollah, and Islamic extremist elements), while simultaneously bolstering allies of the U.S. in the region and increasing their capacity to secure their borders.

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Each of the objectives described above address the desired policy of containment and provides avenues for the expression of all the elements of national power, with a large focus on coercion through denial attained by the threat of violence. The diplomatic element of national power will take precedence and be directed toward the states bordering Syria, as well as through the development support provided for humanitarian issues. The information element of national power will support diplomatic needs through reassuring allies in the region, as well as mitigating the strategic narrative provided by Assad, Iran, Hezbollah, and the extremist elements supporting the rebels. The military element of national power (including intelligence) will provide intelligence and surveillance support on enemy elements within Syria, identify and track weapons of mass destruction, and provide defense support to neighboring allies (to include theater anti-ballistic missile capabilities, counter-terrorism support, etc.).[xvi] Finally, the economic element of national power will undergird the other elements through the provision of the small amount of

resources required by the strategy.

The ways in which these objectives will be achieved will include such tasks as:

- Determine and track biological and chemical capabilities to prevent leakage from Syria (which could be achieved through the current draft UNSCR resolution)
- Identify and track forces/capabilities provided to Assad by Hezbollah and Iran; externally disrupt their ability to provide the Assad regime an advantage over the rebels (i.e. disrupt lines of communication from Iran/Lebanon to Syria)
- Identify and track extremist elements in rebel groups; mitigate their strategic communication narrative by supporting moderate elements with information operations
- Provide security support to allies that border Syria, including chemical and biological detection, anti-tank, anti-air, and anti-missile capabilities. Provide quick reaction forces in the region to support the use of force, if necessary
- Support UN/NGOs in the establishment and management of secure and stable refugee camps on the borders with Syria

These are not the only tasks that could be conducted to achieve the objectives outlined, but are the broad approaches that could to be employed.

The approach laid out above differs from the current American direction toward Syria in one significant way: a focus on objectives that can be achieved outside of Syria. The current policy is the removal of Assad from power and the provision of support regarding the imposition of stability on Syria through rebel groups. It is primarily internally focused, with less attention on the impact on neighboring allies. This has led to the creation of red lines that cannot be enforced with the current strategy (i.e. the use of chemical weapons) and the support of rebels with non-kinetic and kinetic means.[xvii] There is a high risk of escalation with the current scenario, pitting Assad's unlimited approach to the conflict (as he is battling for regime survival) against our limited desired ends (and even more limited desired means to be employed in the conflict).

This has led to the creation of red lines that cannot be enforced with the current strategy

In comparison, the strategy put forth here would draw a line between internal and external activities, focusing on the latter and minimizing the former. This approach would best address U.S. national interests by deterring adversaries that seek to export instability from Syria through the threat of

violence, while mitigating any negative effects outside the borders of Syria and assuring American allies in the region. Syria would be allowed to determine its own course while also providing an opportunity to fix and deplete the resources of U.S. adversaries in the area.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government

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- [x] Decisions such as the withdrawal from Iraq; the temporary surge in Afghanistan; the military support of operations in Libya, Uganda, and Mali; a focus on Free Trade Agreements with Colombia, South Korea, Panama, and the European Union; and domestic legislation such as the Affordable Healthcare Act all display a trend toward divesting expensive military operations, increasing the integration of allied nations and the burden sharing of international security, and improving the foundations of the American economic system over a strict focus on the promotion of universal values or security.
- [xi] According to the U.S. Army War College, the intensity of national interests can be described as: (1) Vital—If unfulfilled, will have immediate consequence for critical national interests; (2) Important—If unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect critical national interests; or (3) Peripheral—If unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect critical national interests.
- [xii] General Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has gone on record saying that our interests in Syria are peripheral and that the opposition's goals do not align with U.S. interests: UPI, "Dempsey: No Armed Role in Syria, Rebels don't back U.S.," http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2013/08/22/Dempsey-No-armed-role-in-Syria-rebels-dont-back-US/UPI-69601377153000/, accessed 23 August 2013.
- [xiii] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey, "Letter to the Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services on Options Regarding Syria," Washington, DC, July 19, 2013; also found at: Gordon Lubold, "Breaking: Every Military Option in Syria Sucks," http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/07/22/breaking_every_military_option_in_syria_sucks_dempsey_intervention_billion_dollars_a_month, accessed 23 August 2013.
- [xiv] Namely, Thomas Schelling in *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).
- [xv] Such measures that support bordering nations can be seen in the recent reporting of Turkey's security force's arrest of al-Qaeda-linked terrorists in their country with sarin gas: Foreign Military Studies Office, "Al Nusra With Sarin Gas?," OE Watch, http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Archives/GSW/201307/Turkey_02.html, accessed 29 August 2013.
- [xvi] These military missions support those described by the Defense Planning Guidance and the National Military Strategy, including: countering weapons of mass destruction; providing a stabilizing presence; and performing humanitarian operations as described in the DPG and countering violent extremism and strengthening international and regional security described in the NMS. See Barack H. Obama, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2012), 4-6 and Michael G. Mullen, *National Military Strategy* (Washington, DC: The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Office, 2011), 5-15.
- [xvii] Two reported chemical weapons attacks have been reported, the most recent in late August. While such attacks were declared as international "red lines", nothing has been done in response to their use, greatly reducing the ability of such red lines to deter adverse behavior or assure allies in the region. More can be found at: Max Fisher, "Five reasons the U.S. doesn't act on Syria chemical weapons reports," The Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/08/21/five-reasons-the-u-s-doesnt-act-on-syria-chemical-weapons-reports/>, accessed 21 August 2013 and John Wihbey, "Matt Baum on the Situation in Syria," Harvard Kennedy School of Government, <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/news-events/news/articles/jr-with-matt-baum>, accessed 29 August 2013.

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Why Did the US Adopt the Strategy of Massive Retaliation?

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Dimitrios Machairas is an independent researcher and writer in the field of international affairs, defence and security. He holds a Master's in War Studies from King's College London, and a Bachelor's in International Relations. His main areas of interest include the use of private military force, cyber warfare, nuclear proliferation, and other geopolitical, geostrategic, ethical and philosophical aspects of international security.

With the Korean War being irreversibly, as it turned out, bogged down in a stalemate, Dwight D. Eisenhower became President of the United States in January 1953, amidst a general public atmosphere anticipating a change in the country's deteriorating international situation, as well as in the policies that had brought it about. A year later, the administration was introducing the 'massive retaliation' strategy as the military component of the US's new foreign and security policy, the 'New Look'.

An examination of the factors that informed the new strategy reveals a core of military and economic imperatives which, in the eyes of Eisenhower and his advisers, had to be met if the nation's long-term security was not to be endangered. Along with these two key considerations, a set of individual, state- and system-level factors – such as the President's own perceptions and beliefs, a certain pre-existing US strategic thinking, technological developments, international events and structures, like the Korean War and the perceived belligerence of the communist bloc – all combine to give a multicausal picture as an explanation for the adoption of the doctrine.

Massive retaliation was essentially a deterrent strategy based on the threat of a direct, unrestrained nuclear response of massive scale in case of communist aggression, possibly aimed at the very centres of the enemy's economic life. The rationale behind massive retaliation, as well as the term itself, was first presented by the US Secretary of State, John Foster

Dulles, in a speech given before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on January 12, 1954. Through an implicit polemic against the Truman Administration's foreign policy, which was seen as short-sighted, passive and lacking initiative, Dulles introduced a strategy that would not simply consist of 'emergency action' against 'immediate danger', but one that would also enable the US to deter aggression in the long run, through a capacity and willingness to employ 'massive retaliatory power....at places and with means of its own choosing'. A potential aggressor should no longer be allowed to 'prescribe battle conditions that suit him', since he 'might be tempted to attack in places where his superiority was decisive'. However, these strategic objectives, according to Dulles, had to be achieved without risking economic exhaustion – a difficult twofold task indeed – so, what was needed was 'a maximum deterrent at a bearable cost'. [i] As he put it in his article published in Foreign Affairs three months later:

"Under the conditions in which we live, it is not easy to strike a perfect balance between military and non-military efforts and to choose the type of military effort which serves us best. The essential is to recognize that there is an imperative need for a balance which holds military expenditures to a minimum consistent with safety, so that a maximum of liberty may operate as a dynamic force against despotism. That is the goal of our policy." [ii]

Maximum Deterrent...

With the threat of the Soviet Union's indisputable superiority in conventional forces looming over Europe like the sword of Damocles, a magic formula had to be found which could provide the most effective and efficient deterrence against communist aggression. Dulles' massive retaliation speech, although officially a political communication on the part of a civilian statesman, was, according to Bernard Brodie, thoroughly imbued with strategically sound military tenets: the 'principle of concentration' of forces as opposed to their dispersal around the world; the idea of acquiring and maintaining the initiative, thus dictating the pace and the scope of the war to the enemy; as well as an ability to use all available means – in terms of weapon types – free of any, perhaps self-imposed, restrictions. [iii]

To cite this Article: Machairas, Dimitrios, "Why Did the US Adopt the Strategy of Massive Retaliation?", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue No. 3, Summer 2013, pages 18-21.

Eisenhower himself, later in his memoirs, described a set of five fundamental considerations that contributed to the shaping of the new security establishment in the beginning of his tenure as President. Three of them are of particular importance here, in virtue of their purely military nature: the first was the premise that the US would never initiate a major war, and the consequent inference that a capacity to retaliate decisively – and not necessarily in kind – was crucial after the absorption of the enemy's first strike. The second was the primarily deterrent character that the country's military forces should have in light of the potentially cataclysmic nature of a modern (i.e. nuclear) global war. The third was the need for a modernisation of the armed forces that would correspond to these new realities, so that the US would finally stop recklessly 'beginning each war with the weapons of the last'. [iv] These 'logical guidelines', as Eisenhower called them, which lent to the formation of the new strategy, apparently called for an equally logical solution to the complicated equation constituted by all the aforementioned military considerations, missions and objectives put forward by the President and his Secretary of State.

The 'new' weapons provided a relatively easy solution to this difficult task.

The 'new' weapons provided a relatively easy solution to this difficult task. Thus, 'the placing of greater emphasis than formerly on the deterrent and destructive power of improved nuclear weapons, better means of delivery, and effective air-defense units' became the central element of the administration's new national security policy. [v] It is worth noting that in the early 50's, the Soviet Union was generally believed not possessing yet a stock of nuclear weapons of a size that would enable it to attack on a massive scale, especially against the US. [vi] This assumption of the country's decisive nuclear superiority at the dawn of the Cold War can certainly be considered as a contributing factor to the adoption of massive retaliation, reinforcing the rationale that a threat of an all-out nuclear war would credibly deter aggression from the East.

The centrality of nuclear weapons in the newly introduced strategic doctrine seems perfectly consistent with a previously unseen appreciation of the full range of advantages that accompanied them. Under the Truman administration, nuclear weapons had yet to be integrated into a security strategy in a clear way that would translate possession of them into concrete political gains, because of the limited availability of weapons for much of the administration's tenure, and also the appeal of Kennan's view that nuclear weapons are distinctly different from conventional ones in terms of the practicalities and consequences of their use. [vii]

But by 1953, this had changed. Nuclear weapons could now be produced faster and in larger quantities, and their variety had increased revealing a broader range of possible uses. [viii] Also, the traditional distinction between conventional and nuclear weapons, as well as that between strategic and tactical nuclear weapons was gradually fading away. Dulles considered the development of nuclear weapons more or

less analogous to the introduction of gunpowder, that is, just another innovation in military weapons technology in the everlasting rise of their destructive power. [ix] In a similar fashion, Eisenhower argued that "where these things are used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else'. [x] But the most succinct statement about the newly acquired importance of nuclear weapons was maybe given by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

"atomic forces are now our primary force....nuclear weapons, fission and fusion, will be used in the next major war. Availability of fissile material, the economy of its use, the magnitude of its destructive effects, and the flexibility of its use makes it the primary munition of war. Victory will come to the side that makes the best use of it." [xi]

According to Freedman there was a direct connection between this new perception of America's nuclear capabilities and the essential role they were given in the context of the new strategy: now complementing each other, strategic and tactical weapons would form an all-round solution to countering the communist threat, with the former deterring aggression with their devastating power, and the latter working as force multiplier on the battlefield – exactly where the West's inferiority in conventional terms had to be compensated for. [xii]

In addition to all the above, somewhat theoretical, military considerations, there was also a tangible historical experience that helped shape the massive retaliation concept, and that was the Korean War, which claimed 33,000 American lives without any significant military or political objectives being achieved. It demonstrated that the US could be easily dragged into limited, yet highly expensive proxy wars in the periphery and drained of its military and economic resources. The lesson to be derived from Korea was, thus, 'no more Koreas', no more small, local wars of questionable strategic importance being fought by primary reliance on conventional ground forces. [xiii] Brodie has gone as far as to argue that the whole massive retaliation speech made some sense only as a condemnation of the inefficiency and inadequacy of the Korean War in terms of strategy and means, implying that the military rationale behind it was rapidly becoming obsolete and inappropriate in light of Soviet Union's recently enhanced nuclear capabilities after the development of its own hydrogen bomb. [xiv] In any case, the outcome of the war seemed to be reinforcing the desirability of an 'all-out' approach to war fighting, which was exactly the underlying assumption of the massive retaliation doctrine. [xv]

This concern with the concept of all-out war was, in fact, a highly entrenched theme in traditional US strategic thinking, stemming primarily from past experience, and perhaps collective psyche. In the immediate post-WW2 era, it revolved around the hypothesis that future war, just like the previous ones, would start as an overt, surprise attack against the US or its allies and evolve into a total global war, so a proper defence strategy would involve, initially, a swift retaliatory strike of maximum strategic destructive power, while the country's industrial and economic capacity would win

the war in the long run; a rationale that was never really challenged.[xvi] In fact, much of the literature on the subject seems to agree that massive retaliation was, in this respect, essentially nothing novel.[xvii] To the extent that this is the case – the unprecedented importance of nuclear weapons notwithstanding – the aforementioned traditionalism of the American military/strategic philosophy can be added as a typical state/group-level explanatory factor in the analysis of the origins of massive retaliation.

much of the literature on the subject seems to agree that massive retaliation was, in this respect, essentially nothing novel

...At a bearable cost

Eisenhower's 'New Look' involved a deep preoccupation with the state's economics, with characteristically conservative concerns over budgetary deficits, taxes and inflation. The economy was to be restructured in a way that would allow it to endure what was foreseen as a long struggle against communism. Balancing the budget meant reducing, among others, military expenditures, and consequently a general, yet cautious, demobilisation. Official reports were presenting bleak pictures of the economy: by 1953, the federal debt had multiplied more than five times since just before WWII, reaching \$267.5 billion, and would continue to rise by 10 billion each year if the previous administration's spending rates were to be maintained, even with taxes set as high as wartime taxes; at the same time, the military budget accounted for almost 70 percent of federal expenditures, that is, more than 50 billion dollars per year.[xviii]

The changes that the new administration was ideologically committed to make started taking place almost immediately. In the fiscal year 1954 budget, submitted in May 1953, the requested defence expenditures dropped to \$36 billion, considerably lower than the previous years' or even the \$41 billion that the Truman administration had initially requested for the same year; for the 1955 fiscal year, this figure would be further reduced to \$31 billion.[xix] At the same time, Army manpower shrank significantly from 1.5 million in December 1953 to 1 million in June 1955, while the Air Force manpower and budget actually increased, in accordance with the reorganisation of force structures and goals taking place.[xx]

This new approach to state economics was not rooted simply to party politics and ideology, but involved a strong individual element, and that was the President's personal perceptions and beliefs. Eisenhower was a staunch supporter of free-market principles, and therefore extremely sensitive about the evils of taxation, debt and inflation, which, if left unchecked, could undermine the stability of the American economy, and by implication, the country's ability to resist external threats.[xxi] The connection between economic health and military power was more than clear in his mind when he stated that if 'these two are allowed to proceed in disregard for the other, you then create a situation either of doubtful military

strength, or of such precarious economic strength that your military position is in constant jeopardy'.[xxii] Germane to these concerns was Eisenhower's Clausewitzian belief that the means must be subordinated to the ends, which, in the situation faced by the US at the time, meant that the nation's ideals and long term interests, its very way of life, should not be endangered in a reckless and purposeless pursuit for military security.[xxiii] Eisenhower's statement during his 1952 presidential campaign that a 'bankrupt America is more the Soviet goal than an America conquered on the field of battle' was not just another pre-election big talk, but rather a genuine declaration of his view as to what constitutes the gravest threat to US national interests.[xxiv]

Germane to these concerns was Eisenhower's Clausewitzian belief that the means must be subordinated to the ends

Given these economic concerns problematising the designing of a military doctrine that would not sacrifice prosperity for security, or vice versa, massive retaliation, with its reliance on the perceived deterrent capacity of the asymmetrical nuclear retaliation with which potential aggressors were threatened, seemed to serve all objectives in an effective and frugal way. Promising 'a bigger bang for a buck', nuclear weapons would offset the demobilisation and withdrawal of conventional forces, allowing the US government to balance the budget by decreasing defence spending.[xxv] For the military, the adoption of a comprehensive nuclear strategy in which the terms and conditions for the use of nuclear weapons would be much less ambiguous than before meant lower manpower requirements and, hence, a reduced budgetary burden of exactly the most costly element of the armed forces structure.[xxvi] And in declaratory terms, as Samuel F. Wells, Jr. put it, 'massive retaliation provided the rhetorical clout with which the administration could achieve its most cherished policy objective in national security affairs'.[xxvii]

Promising 'a bigger bang for a buck', nuclear weapons would offset the demobilisation and withdrawal of conventional forces

Conclusion

Faced on one hand with the self-appointed task of saving America from what was believed Soviet leaders were fervently anticipating and skilfully precipitating, namely, overextension and 'practical bankruptcy', and on the other, with the duty to protect the nation's military security against communist aggression across the globe, the Eisenhower administration came up with the massive retaliation strategy as the most efficient solution to the complex problem at hand.

Based on a set of military considerations and premises; consistent with an enduring US strategic philosophy regarding the all-out nature of war; fitting in nicely with the

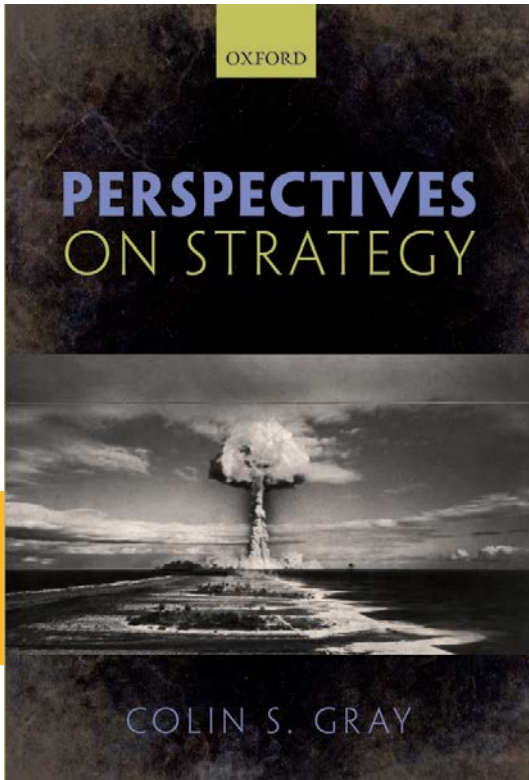
strong personal perceptions and convictions of the President and the Secretary of State, the two main masterminds behind its conception; and empowered by the country's constantly expanding, yet maybe only recently strategically appreciated nuclear capabilities, massive retaliation was

developed to be the most affordable, and at the same time persuasive, possible antidote to Soviet conventional superiority. Essentially it substituted capital – here in the form of nuclear weapons – for manpower, being, in this respect, a doctrine as Western as it could be.

References

- [i] Dulles (1954a), pp. 107-8
- [ii] Dulles (1954b), p. 354
- [iii] Brodie (1959), p. 248
- [iv] Eisenhower (1963), p. 446
- [v] *Ibid.* p. 451
- [vi] Buzzard (1956), p. 230
- [vii] Gaddis (2005), pp. 145-6
- [viii] *Ibid.* p. 146; Freedman (1982), p. 78; Dulles (1954b), p. 358
- [ix] Gaddis (2005), p. 147
- [x] Quote in Freedman (1982), p. 78; Using similar language, the NSC-162/2 paper stated that in a possible conflict with the Soviet Union or China, 'the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other munitions'. (1953), p. 22
- [xi] Kaplan (1991), pp. 183-4
- [xii] Freedman (1982), p. 77
- [xiii] Kaplan (1991), p. 177; Referring to massive retaliation, Kissinger writes 'here is the pre-Korea United States military doctrine buttressed by the lesson we have drawn from the Korean conflict, which have come to symbolize the frustrations to be experienced in waging peripheral wars'. (1957), p. 55
- [xiv] Brodie (1959), pp. 250-1; Apparently building on Brodie's argument, Freedman has described the strategy as 'more retrospective than prospective'. (1981), p. 90
- [xv] Hamburg (1974), p. 17
- [xvi] Kissinger (1957), pp. 29-31
- [xvii] *Ibid.* p. 31, 55; Brodie (1959), p. 254; Eisenhower administration's inheriting the two operational elements (the strategic strike force, and the variety of nuclear weapons) and the doctrinal assumption (threat of nuclear retaliation deters) which were the heart of the strategy from its predecessor, Wells (1981), p. 46-7
- [xviii] Figures in Dulles (1954b), p. 361-2 and Kaplan (1991), p. 176
- [xix] Wells (1981), p. 33, 44
- [xx] Eisenhower (1963), p. 452
- [xxi] Kaplan (1991), p. 176
- [xxii] Quoted in Gaddis (2005), p. 132; On Eisenhower's strong personal view of the role of economics in grand strategy also in Metz (1993), p. 41, 55
- [xxiii] Gaddis (2005), p. 133
- [xxiv] Quote in Kaplan (1991), p. 176; On the threat of extravagant expenditures also Craig (1998), p. 44
- [xxv] Freedman (1982), p. 78
- [xxvi] *Ibid.* p. 81
- [xxvii] Wells (1981), p. 52

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A Response to 'Voices From the Field: Towards a Successful Outcome in Afghanistan'

Anonymous Serviceman

Deployed Abroad

The author, who began formal training as a strategist in 2007, has since received masters degrees in Strategic Leadership (MS) and Strategic Security Studies (MA) from military universities and language, political, historical, and cultural training relevant to Afghanistan in Washington DC. The author is currently deployed abroad.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense, the United States Army, or ISAF.

Recently, NATO Defense Ministers approved, in theory, the concept of operations for the next NATO mission in Afghanistan, Rolute Support, to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and associated government entities post-2014. "That concept will guide our military experts as they finalize the plan in the course of the coming months," says NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. This approval represents important and necessary political and military guidance at this stage of operational planning. However, before further detailed planning occurs and, more importantly, before NATO and US policymakers decide on ISAF military recommendations for troop levels for this next mission, it must be recognized that the current and future military missions in Afghanistan are at a turning point. The only military objective and national policy interest is limited and simple: to ensure Afghanistan cannot once again be used as a safe haven or launching pad for terrorist attacks on the United States or our allies. This limited goal, however, is at risk due to continued mission creep and strategy which again strays from policy. Military planning efforts are underway; efforts which are too prepared to take the advice and recommendations of contracted and well-connected think tanks over and above the political requirement necessitating a limited strategy. As with the President's strategic review in 2009, a mission is being crafted right now for which there is no political requirement, national interest, or military necessity. A mission is being planned around the false assumptions and anachronous

recommendations of contracted think tanks resurrecting the same tired, dangerous, and failed promises.

In order to meet US and NATO military objectives for shared political interests, one course of action is suitable, feasible, and acceptable: 1) force the Government of Afghanistan to deal with the causal factors (political, legal, and economic) of their war; 2) if that is unachievable, cease funding to underwrite and support the government and military, as the result will directly contravene our remaining strategic goals (which this paper will fully explain); and, 3) continue with post-ISAF counter-terror operations with or without the approval of the Afghan government (as with Yemen, Pakistan, etc.). Yet largely because of flawed assessments and bad policy/strategy recommendations generated by contracted think tanks like CNAS, this is not what we are poised to do. Strategy can still be set on a better course but only if we cut loose from a particularly enduring, yet unsound logic. This paper will show that the current direction of strategy development for the next US/NATO mission is contrary to long-term national and coalition goals. Ultimately, the experience of recent ISAF and Afghan government cooperation and, in fact, the past 12 years, should force a wholesale reassessment of a future NATO mission in a contrary direction to that recommended by the latest report from CNAS.

Strategy can still be set on a better course but only if we cut loose from a particularly enduring, yet unsound logic.

The CNAS report 'Voices From the Field: Towards a Successful Outcome in Afghanistan'[i] is yet another 'Better War' argument trying to snatch victory out of the clutches of defeat. If anything, what can still be achieved is 'something resembling victory' from the jaws of US think tanks and paid consultants who make hollow promises that drive policy and resultant strategy. What strategic success now looks like, contrary to the CNAS report, is keeping the US and NATO from falling into one final and very similar trap again in Afghanistan; to not extend this effort any longer or grander than it needs to be...by *our* definition, not the Afghan government's. At the very least, the 'bridging strategy' called for by the report is

To cite this Article: Anonymous Serviceman, A Response to 'Voices From the Field: Towards a Successful Outcome in Afghanistan'", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue No. 3, Summer 2013, pages 23-26.

a solution to neither a problem the US can affect nor one that is even supported by political goals; i.e., it is not strategy at all. Ultimately, strategy should follow policy. The CNAS report follows a standard Better War template; it provides strategy recommendations wildly out of sync with political requirements and continues tying the US/NATO coalition to past failure; a strategy by 'sunk costs.' A never-ending morass of false promises, a widening black hole devouring political and financial capital, and a course of action which still fails to respect the environment and the goals military forces operate under is a bridging strategy to nowhere. This will be the result of the Better War myth if recommendations like CNAS's are executed.

The CNAS report provides strategy recommendations wildly out of sync with political requirements

The military-centric limited approach based on Afghan Army corps headquarters as outlined in "Voices from the Field" defines the grandiosity of what this think tank recommends; it is above and beyond vital necessity. This scope will feed into the calculus for further military planning efforts. Yet what must finally be considered are realistic goals and vital national interests; what is needed out of Afghanistan and not what Afghanistan needs from the US or NATO. That is not what this report provides. In contrast, it makes an entire argument out of wrong assumptions and furthering flawed logic; if the US only applies better counterinsurgency techniques and training and more money and time, even at this late hour, the coalition and the corrupt Afghan state can still 'win' this war. Arguably, this is wrong and will be a further and inexcusable waste of blood and treasure.

The reality is that the coalition is considering disengagement and limiting the astronomical resourcing current and future proposed

Forming the entire foundation for the report's thesis is the authors' claim that the coalition is considering accelerating disengagement or under-resourcing commitments to Afghanistan due to "frustration with Karzai or domestic budgetary pressures." If it was this simple the claim might be warranted. The reality is that the coalition is considering disengagement and limiting the astronomical resourcing current and future proposed Afghan strategy requires simply because the truth of the past twelve years is unavoidable. It was necessary over time to roll back our strategic objectives from the scope and grandeur they promised due to reports like "Voices From the Field." The US has had to realize that, in opposition to assessments like CNAS's, we cannot affect our policy with uncoordinated and unmatched military strategy which does not address political objectives, operational realities, or a consideration of the environment. In a counterinsurgency, as in all war, the politics of the host nation form the crux of that operating environment. Vietnam (or a study of *any* insurgency) should have taught this. The past twelve years should have taught a lot more but, apparently by the thesis in this report, it has not. Disengagement is finally

being considered because the insurgency is waiting foreign forces out. Because previous strategies have arguably only superficially addressed the political and cultural causes of Afghanistan's insurgency, the government of Afghanistan is unlikely to bring it under control after our withdrawal. In 2013 this fact must be realized.

Disengagement and 'the zero option' must be considered because the insurgency has no political incentive to stop fighting either the coalition or the host nation. This insurgency, like all insurgencies, will only cease when the host nation addresses the underlying political and legal causes. However, as strategy has not been tied to policy, coalition actions have had the effect of institutionalizing and protecting the very system that keeps the Taliban in business: the framework and inefficiencies of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) itself and especially its sub-national governance policy. Because planners and strategists looked at the insurgency and its mitigation through one lens, an enemy-centric one, we generated and executed one solution: militarily. But this insurgency and civil war arose from something more fundamental, deeper, and more political - as all insurgencies do - and will require a more holistic approach to dealing with it. The ANSF will not crush the insurgency just as the US Army has not. As a recent Afghan military official has said, "We don't fear the enemy. We don't need better equipment and technology, because those are things they don't have. What we need is a stronger and better government," "People are dissatisfied with all the corruption..." That is the crux of the failure of the CNAS and Better War thesis (and, to be frank, the entire 12 years of the ISAF campaign plan) but we look the other way and intentionally focus on the wrong factors. Since the false logic and premises of FM 3-24 and hollow strategy recommendations from paid consultants to ISAF and the DoD (CNAS, AEI, Institute for the Study of War, et al), the convenient myth of the Better War thesis forced the US military to entertain delusions of grandeur forcing the misapplication of resources and efforts.

What has solidified over the past twelve years while military planners selectively chose to focus elsewhere (in order to protect the myth and perception of *Afghan sovereignty*) is a dangerous fault line between the strong central state Kabul wants to maintain (that is, after all, where all the money siphons upwards to), and the bottom-up traditional processes that can, up to a point, provide effective political governance. That point is at the District level where the people's first encounter with the State occurs; this is where the State reaches its farthest downward point through political appointments, patronage, and direct, centralized control of policy and budgets. It is at this level where the population loses control of their political fates as all accountability flows up to Kabul, not downwards to the people (Chiefs of Police, governors, and development councils work for the Ministries in Kabul or the President, or their own gain, and not the people; the population recognizes this). It is from this level that all transparency, participation, and connectivity *starts* to evaporate. This is where the insurgency begins and this is why the insurgency is resilient, even more so the further out from Kabul or other major metropolitan centers one travels. This has never been seriously addressed and, if anything, CNAS's report only exacerbates that fault line.

Yet the authors of the report and a clouded enemy-centric

mindset would wash that away. 'If we just spend a little more,' the reasoning goes, 'if the focus remains on training the ANSF a little harder for a little longer at the same things we have been trying,' and even if something militarily different could be endeavored, 'we and GIRoA can still win.' That is the 'Better War myth' perpetuated by Pollyannaish contracted advocates trying to rescue previous illogical proposals with more of the same thinking. Our policymakers should follow through with their intent and demand strategy that matches policy; they should demand accountability. Contracted think tanks and defense leadership is too wedded to past planning mistakes, have too much ego and political capital wrapped up in sunk costs, and can do nothing else but continue to provide the same failing recommendations as if it could result in any other end. Limited policy goals demand limited strategies and operations; not wholesale nation building, forced cultural and political sea changes, and an unlimited war on ideological enemies that in some respects our occupation created.

In order to match current and future tentative Resolute Support strategies with policy, I would plead with the military planners of the coalition to "*focus on the illness, not the symptoms*" even this late in the game. Centers of Gravity affecting resources and foci of effort need to be adjusted to reflect true critical factors. Up to now they never have because it would entail forcing an inconvenient realization; current US/NATO efforts have the unintended consequence of helping to enable the very insurgency they are meant to fight. Yet doing this would break the counter-productive cycle of the Better War myth in Afghanistan. This war will never be won by killing insurgents and GIRoA or the ANSF cannot be trained, advised, and assisted to win their war by killing insurgents after ISAF stops with the end of the mission in 2014. The next Resolute Support mission will similarly not achieve this goal because it leaves the cause and fuel of the insurgency (corrupt, self-serving, and ineffective GIRoA governance itself) up to GIRoA to solve. Twelve years shows that this is the last thing they wish to address.

Even if the coalition *could* militarily pound the insurgency into the ground over time, it will sit there, below the surface, smoldering until foreign combat power leaves.

The insurgency exists because of the dynamic between the centralized government's relationship with sub-national governance and, in turn, its relationship with the people. Even Afghanistan's own government entity responsible for sub-national governance policy, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), acknowledges that laws are conflicting, disjointed, and written in seclusion from the overall governance context they are supposed to sustain. The insurgency feeds off this entrenched disconnect. Even if the coalition *could* militarily pound the insurgency into the ground over time, it will sit there, below the surface, smoldering until foreign combat power leaves. And insurgents and other anti-GIRoA forces know it will leave; it must. This is not the coalition's war. What took the United States arguably over 180 years to accomplish (with respect to rule of law, human and

individual rights, states' relations with the federal center, etc. between our Revolution to the signing of the Civil Rights Act) is impossible to build and sustain in a foreign culture in the finite time allotted.

Since the underlying political issues have never seriously been addressed, the insurgency will always have a ready supply of fuel for their fire while the US military focuses on recommendations of reports like "Voices From the Field" – bridging strategies concentrating on the wrong areas and the wrong efforts. Because of the pervasive "Better War" myth, the conditions-based war has turned into a timeline-based war that can just *barely* transition security responsibility to the Afghans by 2015. That is why a fallback bridging strategy is necessary in the first place. Not only have conditions become unachievable, they always were. A classic case of policy-strategy mismatch. The superficially simple logic saying it is critical to continue the training, advising, and assisting effort would be sufficient if the ANSF were being trained and resourced to fight a conventional war from within a stable nation-state. But that is not the environment the coalition is dealing with. Because the population is not politically satisfied with GIRoA governance or provision of services (to the point of enabling an insurgency), because GIRoA *cannot and will not govern effectively*, the insurgency will continue to live and feed on the governance failure and misallocation of resources of the system *the coalition* defends.

What does it say that the strongest military in the history of the world cannot defeat a decentralized, ill-commanded, under-resourced militia using tactics (and in some cases, weapons) beyond generations old? What does it say that the United States Army, the same army that beat back fourteen Nazi divisions across the Hürtgen Forest in three months, could not hold ground against the Taliban over twelve years? It says that GIRoA gets a vote in how this insurgency ends. To date, they have not voted in good faith and the US has not executed good strategy. What that should say too is, unless this situation radically changes as the US plans to transition into the next NATO mission, coalition efforts in Afghanistan have culminated. The 'Golden Hour' of fighting the Afghan insurgency and civil war is, for the West at least, over.

If addressing Afghanistan's polity is a bridge too far in the time it can still be funded (or for the period in which we can convince our own populations that the prize is worth the effort), then forces and resources should be disengaged now, ANSF funding and all. Keeping an incapable, and in many cases corrupt, rentier state afloat with a strong Praetorian Guard will be worse for the people of Afghanistan and its overall stability in the long run than ceasing this course of action with the end of the ISAF mission. If, as the report states, the most the West can hope for is to enable the ANSF to be that Praetorian Guard, keep Kabul or the major metropolitan centers protected, and Afghanistan's form of predatory centralized government barely hanging on, the U.S. *will fail* in achieving its last remaining strategic objective.

The goal of the report's bridging strategy and ultimate end state is incapable of providing the long-term requirements and criteria for success for long-term policy objectives. The course of action this report calls for will likely become the very conduit shaping catastrophic consequences for US goals and interests. In order to survive *with the insurgency*

intact, GIRoA will be forced to cede much autonomy to the provinces and rule via patronage networks. That strategy has worked well for Afghanistan in times past. Yet if that occurs again, US policy will have failed: at that point GIRoA will not be able to secure its country and provide stability in order to ensure it cannot once again be used as a safe haven or launching pad for terrorist attacks on the United States or our allies, the last positive goal. Cutting deals and proffering large swaths of autonomy to the provinces is, by definition, antithetical to that goal. This could be the best outcome to hope for according to CNAS. When GIRoA and the ANSF cede territory to the Taliban, local powerbrokers, warlords, drug kings, and tribal structures (as they must to maintain any semblance of stability after coalition combat power leaves) they will not control and secure the territory the US and NATO have determined necessary to preclude al-Qaeda's return. At this point military and political realities in Afghanistan will dictate that US strategic aims have been wasted and any further large- or small-scale train, advise, and assist effort is for naught. The US does not need to train the ANSF and GIRoA to secure the major cities and the Ring Road (which will always be the extent of their capacities); they must be trained to secure the rural areas and places GIRoA and the ANSF have no intention of extending the writ of governance or security to; that is where insurgency started and that is where it will still live after the ISAF mission.

The United States and willing partners will still most likely continue with an effective counter-terror role in the region in some way, shape, or form post-ISAF and post-2014 (under the Authorization for the Use of Military Force mandate of 2001). So why then continue with the counterproductive façade of training, advising, and assisting GIRoA to provide security and stability when, by CNAS's own logic, this is untenable and counterproductive to longer-term strategic objectives? As long as the US and ISAF planning efforts maintain the direction the report calls for, strategic goals will be unreachable. As long as the West allows the political causal factors of the insurgency to be ignored and *allows GIRoA to continue to ignore them*, ultimately achieving what is collectively necessary in any future timeframe becomes impossible.

The CNAS report is full of assertions and arguments that are simply wrong, misleading, or a misinterpretation of insurgency theory and Afghan history or law. But when the report's fundamental thesis is so fatally flawed, the rest becomes minutia. The thesis itself would be minutia if it were not so close to current planning efforts (as evinced by ADM (ret) Stavridis' article "The 15,000 Troop Option" [ii]). Possibly as a result of Iraq and Afghanistan our nation will realize that our political and military leadership should once again think for themselves. The DoD maintains organic "think tank" capacity which must be further resourced and expanded with the relevant expertise and experience as necessary. GEN

Odierno's Strategic Studies Group, the Army War College's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, and the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies and Center for Technology and National Security Policy feature on this list, among others. The US Army has also separated out an entire functional area career track devoted solely to Strategy development and Strategic Planning professionals. The DoD has the skillsets and experience to work together with civilian leadership to develop rational strategy from national policy. Military professionals working with civilian policymakers are fully capable of dealing with the tasks of policy and strategy development while working within the civil-military relationship that has gotten us this far over the past 237 years. If we use Iraq and Afghanistan as metrics of the DoD's incestuous relationship with closely partnered for-profit think tanks, the US has gotten exactly zero return on investment.

Military professionals working with civilian policymakers are fully capable of dealing with the tasks of policy and strategy development

The NATO Secretary General recently continued, "Over the last 11 years we have given the Afghans the space to build their future." What we have actually done and what we are prepared to continue to do, in no small part because of contracted advice like this report's, is fight a holding action for a government who literally chooses not to govern effectively. Strategy can still right that course but the behemoth of Western political inertia and military planning is already rolling ahead and deciding a course of action the only way it knows how, in no small part because of advice like CNAS's: fight the insurgency militarily, ignore the causes, and hope to maintain a "decent interval." Because of thinking like this, the coalition is planning on a size and scope for the future mission without any basis in political requirement or national interest. What this report, entrenched in the "better war" myth proposes, is nothing more than appeal to assumed (and hollow) counterinsurgency tradition and agendas driven by validating sunk costs of previous failures. In reality it is an exercise in logical fallacy. By this advice, to get from where GIRoA is now to where NATO needs them to be according to defined end states is pure and unsupportable *non sequitur* logic; the conclusion does not follow from the premise. In lieu of a new direction at the eleventh-hour, *disengagement* should be the word of the day and for reasons which the CNAS report's authors apparently have no comprehension.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense, the United States Army, or ISAF.

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B L O O M S B U R Y



When Should Covert Action Be Used in Fulfillment of Foreign Policy Strategy?

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The history of covert action extends far back, even before the Cold War Era, where it was used not only by the United States of America and the former Soviet Union, but also by many other countries. It is generally accepted, that covert action has formed a part of United States foreign policy strategy since 1947/48, when it was used by policymakers in efforts to stymie the expansion of the Soviet Union's power.[i] The extensive history of covert action has provided a substantial framework that can be accessed to ascertain when covert action should be used. Unfortunately, covert action proves quite resistant to analysis, since much of the content of many operations remains classified.[ii] Additionally, covert operations, according to the publication of National Security Council (NSC) 10/2 in June 1948, can comprise "propaganda, economic warfare, preventative direct action, including sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures, subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground movements, guerrillas and support of indigenous anti-communist elements".[iii] This broad definition exemplifies how covert action can vary considerably in size, scale and application. The size, scale and application vary to suit the foreign policy strategy it supports. This undoubtedly gives rise to the dynamic nature of covert action, as what is considered national interest within the context of the international system is constantly changing. National interest can be divided into four core goals; power, peace, prosperity and principles. Each time covert action is used, each of these four goals

must be considered and preferably all accomplished. In order to fulfil foreign policy strategy, the expected outcome, and the method of covert action used, must align with the core goals that define the national interest. The efficient and effective implementation of any strategy is essential for its success. Policymakers must think and act strategically when implementing strategy, they must assess when and in what form to use the tools that form parts of their strategy. In this article attention is paid to the when: when should covert action be used as part of foreign policy strategy? Several factors can be considered when deciding if covert action should be taken, each with its own merit. Overall assessment of covert operations comprise of a cost to benefit ratio, where cost can be human, financial, social or political. Is the possible result or attainment of a foreign policy objective worth the risk of losing lives, use of substantial resources or loss of trust by other governments and/or the public if the covert operation is discovered?

National interest can be divided into four core goals; power, peace, prosperity and principles.

One of the primary considerations must be the loss of lives, whether it is operatives or foreign resources, as this can undermine even a considerably successful operation and result in international media attention and political catastrophe. This is an essential consideration, as any foreign policy strategy includes maintaining a positive international image of the United States and encouraging peaceful relations. Loss of lives undoubtedly can affect the ability of the United States to have peaceful relations, as it can affect trust and invoke deep seated feelings of hate. A prime example of the eradicable stain left by a covert operation is one which resulted in thousands of deaths: the 1958 attempt to overthrow Sukarno, the leader of Indonesia. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), trained large numbers of Indonesian dissidents and mercenaries and returned them to Sumatra, where they recruited other rebels. This subsequently resulted in the Indonesian generals beginning a campaign to eliminate all communist sympathizers throughout Indonesia. Estimates of the numbers killed ranged from a low of 30,000 to a high of 1 million.[iv] Although the undertaking was much larger in scope than the later Bay of Pigs invasion, it was so far

To cite this Article: Smith, Troy E. "When Should Covert Action Be Used in Fulfillment of Foreign Policy Strategy?", *Infinity Journal*, Volume 3, Issue 3, Summer 2013, pages 28-30.

away that it attracted little attention.[v]

Secondly, can covert action facilitate a more favourable environment for overt action and make overt action and other intelligence gathering efforts more financially feasible? In these cases, it is more about choosing the right type of covert action. Technical systems can be employed based on the objective of the operation; however, this is quite expensive and should be reserved for major targets. Alternatively, covert operatives can be deployed to a wide variety of targets inexpensively, allowing them to recruit sources and report the need for technical intelligence when it is appropriate. Conversely, the question can be asked if covert action now will result in saving money on operations in the future. A global presence of undercover agents may provide crucial information, such as when to empty the bank account of a crime boss or whom to pressure to get to a terrorist group, at a low cost, relative to technical intelligence.[vi]

covert operatives can be deployed to a wide variety of targets inexpensively

A third factor to consider is the need for resources. While covert action offers expediency and flexibility, as officials need not explain their plan to the public or allies, the accessible resources are decreased. In order to keep things secret, operation security would dictate that knowledge of the plan is highly restricted, and activities that could create identifiers and result in the loss of critical information are limited. Hence, it must be determined if the operation can be achieved without external resources, such as ally intelligence or military force. The inclusion of covert action, as part of intelligence, also poses operational risks where intelligence agencies conduct covert operations without proper coordination with other agencies, leading to the compromising of operations, agents and resources. While compartmentalization and restriction of information is necessary for covert operations, it can lead to parallel operations and mission important information not being obtained. If other parties do not know what is taking place, they may treat mission critical information with a lower priority level, as their understanding at the time may be that it is unimportant.

covert operatives can be deployed to a wide variety of targets inexpensively

Another consideration is will the use of covert operations achieve any goal(s) that an overt operation would not be capable of achieving? For example, if voters in Italy knew that the CIA funded the Christian Democratic Party in 1948, the Communists would have labelled the Christian Democrats as U.S. puppets and the CIA support would have failed. Also, in some cases covertness can help persuade countries or groups to support your efforts, as they desire a similar conclusion, but want to have plausible deniability as they do not desire direct confrontation with another government. For example, when the United States supported the Afghan Mujahedeen in the 1980s, if this had not been done covertly,

the Soviet leadership could have attacked U.S. allies, who assisted in the process. Consideration must be given as to whether covert action will lead to the government, or its allies, avoiding retaliation for an act that would have otherwise definitely led to conflict. The possible deterioration of an already fragile situation, due to overt action, must also be considered. In the late 1940s, for example, the Soviet Government knew that the CIA was supporting resistance fighters in the Ukraine, since Soviet intelligence penetrated most of the resistance groups. If U.S. leaders had admitted responsibility, Soviet leaders would have felt it necessary to retaliate, as was the case when President Eisenhower owned up to U-2 over-flights in 1960, with the result that Khrushchev felt compelled to cancel the Paris summit conference.[vii] In tantamount, covert action can be used to support a larger war effort by hampering efforts of enemy regimes whilst bolstering the abilities of allies.

can deniability be maintained and is it necessary for the operation?

As highlighted previously, one of the most fundamental questions is, can deniability be maintained and is it necessary for the operation? Berkowitz commented that the covert operation launched by the United States to eliminate Saddam Hussein in the 90's was doomed from the start, as the Kurdish leader, forming part of the operation, could not be fully controlled and he freely released information to the press. In the case of the operations against Saddam, deniability was probably unnecessary as he already knew the United States intended to get rid of him; even if that meant assassination. Also, he had already prepared himself for conflict with the United States and would assume any action against him to be initiated by the United States, hence, making deniability unnecessary.

During the Cold War, agencies engaging in covert activity had no significant concern of covert action coming into the light, but now it is expected that it will eventually be exposed. As such, covert action must respect basic human rights and morality. It should be planned with consideration of international conventions and the stated policy for relation with combatants as stated by the foreign policy of the agency's government. In the aim of avoiding international and even domestic consequences, as human rights have become a much greater concern since the times of the Cold War, covert action must be undertaken under strict ethical and moral guidelines for it to stand the test of time.

The assessment of all the above factors before utilising covert action is essential but is not the only thing necessary for the long-term success of covert operations. Simply knowing what must be done is often not enough; there must be written guidelines in the form of standard operating procedure for oversight purposes. Ideally what must be achieved is a situation where the necessary accountability and control can be achieved without being intrusive, myopic and/or dragging the intelligence community into partisan politics. Oversight is currently covered in the Intelligence Authorization Act of 1991, which requires the congressional committee in both the House and Senate to be kept fully informed of the intelligence activities of the United States. According to the aforementioned Act, the President must

submit his 'findings' to the intelligence committees within forty-eight (48) hours of launching any covert operation. Also, as the Congress has some degree of power in the form of budget control, some improvements can still be made as even this can be bypassed as the Congress has no veto powers and the president can operate from a discretionary fund until the next year's appropriations.[viii] To prevent a similar phenomenon to the Iran-Contra affair, the President should be required to notify the Congress before foreign financial assistance is acquired for covert action. To prevent mishaps where an administration starts an operation and then does not receive Congressional support, which can lead to failure and possibly compromising positions, reports should be generated from the executive, indicating changes in relationships and foreign policy, so that operations can be tailored to parallel these policies. Also, even before the mandated 48 hours the 'Gang of Eight' should be notified as this should not be too time consuming and will allow some action to be taken if necessary.

Covert action may change over time, but the need will never cease

While covert action may come with certain risks, these can be mitigated by thorough planning and agreement between the Congress and the administration. Covert action may change over time, but the need will never cease, so long as threats to the freedom and security of a country's citizens and economy exist. Covert action forms an inescapable part of foreign strategy, as it allows the core goals that define the national interest to be achieved when direct intervention may be counterproductive. However, its use must be controlled by oversight which must exhibit a balance of control, accountability, foresight, alignment with foreign policy, efficiency and effectiveness. To achieve a truly effective level of oversight a committee must be flexible and be staffed with persons both willing to serve, and qualified to do so. These people must understand the limits of covert action, co-operation, tradecraft, international politics and the consequences of failure, both nationally and internationally. Therefore, committees should be comprised of a combination of select members of congress, planners, military officers and intelligence personnel with years of experience so that each operation can be examined holistically.

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