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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

Ha'Neviim 26
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Tel Aviv, Israel

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A Note From The Editor

All strategists should own a dog. Not for the same reason that Pavlov owned a dog, but because of the perspective that dogs can bring to strategy.

Today, in a world where most people writing or commenting on strategy cannot tell the difference between strategy and policy, the dog can provide extremely potent input based purely on the fact that no one challenges dogs when its comes to their personal politics.

A dog belonging to a young and noted strategist recently remarked that Bashar al-Assad, the President of Syria, was doing 'good enough' strategy, and certainly better than the U.S. and the UN. The use of organized violence was maintaining his grip on power. Likewise, we hear the same dog is rumored to have remarked that Russian President Vladimir Putin seems to have used violence and/or the threat of physical force to achieve and maintain a position beneficial to his regime.

Had a human being pronounced the same thing, the usefulness of his observation would have been sunk under a tidal wave of political opinion, masquerading as moral outrage. The same dog would, of course, consider it utterly ridiculous to suggest that President Assad and President Putin should never have used violence to gain or sustain their particular policies.

It makes sense to listen to the dogs. They get it. They don't invoke political opinions. They don't care about the policy from a supposedly ethical perspective. They just want to know if violence can be used to achieve the desired end-state, and how violence may undermine or progress it.

In the future it may well be that a dog comes to write these editorials, if not actually take over the job of being editor!

William F. Owen

Editor, Infinity Journal

June 2014

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- In this article, William F. Owen illustrates how popular culture's demonstration and understanding of strategy is deeply flawed. For Owen, forms of popular storytelling have a quite superficial view of serious issues regarding the use of force, so much so that they exercise a less-than-useful influence on what many have come to understand about strategy.



Balanced Deterrence for the Asia-Pacific Region

Chad M. Pillai

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The U.S. preoccupation with the war on terror in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia since 2001, along with the financial collapse of 2007-08, has emboldened China to act more assertively in the Asia-Pacific region. This led to the administration's announcement of the "Rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific Region." [i] The foreign policy announcement is viewed negatively by China stating it would increase tensions [ii] and has created a sense of unease by Asian nations due to the perceived lack of commitment. [iii] In response, there have been an abundance of possible strategies and military concepts to deal with a more assertive China. However, most are without the foundation of a comprehensive national approach with a clear political objective that drives necessary policies and the supporting military strategies tied to the threat or use of force that can achieve such policies. This article attempts to offer a concise explanation of the political issue at hand, a possible long-term policy that could achieve a reasonable political objective, and various military concepts appropriately interwoven that could support the proposed policy through the threat of violence.

**War, as Clausewitz defined it,
"is nothing but a duel on
a larger scale."**

Understanding the Duel

War, as Clausewitz defined it, "is nothing but a duel on a larger scale. Countless duels go to make up war, but a picture of it as a whole can be formed by imagining a pair of wrestlers." [iv] In this analogy, the pair of wrestlers engages each other in a physical and mental duel because of "hostile feelings and hostile intentions" created through iterative interactions and competing interests. [v] In developing an approach to overcoming an adversary, one must understand the root cause of hostile feels or intentions between the two wrestlers. In the case of the U.S. and China, to begin to understand the strategic environment an examination of both China's and the U.S.'s core national interests is in order. While each interaction between the two actors is unique, an examination of national interests that can be seen as largely enduring across governments and strategic history, and therefore can be considered "core", can be illustrative of overlapping areas of interest and/or areas of friction that could lead to conflict. When looking across the strategic history of China, some enduring interests could be argued to be: upholding the stability created by the current system of governance; maintaining national sovereignty and territorial integrity; and sustaining economic and social development. [vi] In comparison, some U.S. enduring national interests are: providing security of the U.S. and its citizens abroad; increasing the prosperity of the U.S.; championing a respect for universal values as a part of the international order; and a peaceful and stable international order to ensure the previous interests. [vii]

With these competing interests in mind, one could apply Thucydides' primary motivators of fear, honor, and interest to determine similarities or differences. China's motivators could be seen as largely derived from fear and honor. They fear encirclement and loss of territory, [viii] especially from threats emanating from historical invasion routes from its western and northern borders. [ix] Additionally, China fears it will not

To cite this Article: Pillai, Chad M., "Balanced Deterrence for the Asia-Pacific Region," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 4-8.

be able to maintain access to markets, raw materials and energy to support economic growth and social development. [x] However, China also wishes to restore its honor through recapturing its historical preeminence in the Asia-Pacific and undo the impact of the last century's "unequal treaties". [xi] These motivators are driven by the political imperative of China's leadership to maintain their regime and "mandate of heaven" to hold together its vast territory.

In comparison, the key motivators of the U.S. are fear and interest. The U.S. fears that the currently unstable political and security environment will adversely affect the favorable international order it has enjoyed for over half a century. As such, the U.S. has great interest in maintaining its military and political power globally to ensure access to global markets and its economic prosperity, as well as national security. These motivators are largely driven by the need of the U.S. to maintain the current liberal international order it built and from which it continues to prosper.

While this is a broad look at the generally enduring interests of China and the U.S., it does provide a starting point to determine similar and competing interests of the two states. It also, however, fails to illustrate obvious friction points, but instead to a "convergence of shared interests that is driving the U.S. and China apart." [xii] In simple terms, what is creating the friction is the fear of unknown intentions towards one another as they seek to achieve convergent goals. China fears its ability to maintain its current regime and that the international community will deny the honor it seeks in re-establishing its historical preeminence in the international landscape. The U.S. fears the loss of its leverage over the international order, as well as its status if its global superpower status is challenged and superseded. [xiii] China's apparent abandonment of its "Peaceful Rise" strategy for a more forceful behavior depicted in the recent friction over the South China Sea and its establishment of an Air Defense Identification Zone raises the prospect of increased hostile feelings and intentions for all participants in the region. The central political question now for the U.S. will be how, as an established global power, it manages the aspirations of China, a rising regional power, while not sacrificing its core national security interests and not "ameliorating the growing U.S.-China security dilemma."

China fears its ability to maintain its current regime and that the international community will deny the honor it seeks in re-establishing its historical preeminence in the international landscape.

The Political Objective: Responsible Regional and Global Partner

The political objective for the U.S. is ensuring that China becomes a responsible regional and global partner that works within the established international order and respects the interests of the allies of the U.S. The challenge will be

convincing the Chinese of the benign intentions of the U.S. while not allowing our interests to be compromised. Fareed Zakaria best articulates the political challenge regarding U.S.-China relations:

How to strike this balance - deterring China, on the one hand, accommodating its legitimate growth, on the other - is the central strategic challenge for American diplomacy. The United States can and should draw lines with China. But it should also recognize that it cannot draw lines everywhere. Unfortunately, the most significant hurdle for the United States faces in shaping such a policy is a domestic political climate that tends to view any concessions and accommodations as appeasement. [xv]

The challenge will be convincing the Chinese of the benign intentions of the U.S. while not allowing our interests to be compromised.

Richard K. Betts recently posited that the U.S. will have to choose whether it wants to contain China as a threat or accommodate it as a rising super power. He further stated that it is wrong for policymakers to want both, unless China acts with sustained humility compared to previous rising powers. [xvi] Alternatively, Aaron L. Friedberg offered that the U.S. can and should attempt a "Balance and Engagement" strategy towards China that seeks to "gradually mellow" Chinese power while preserving our interests. [xvii] Such an approach aligns itself with the former Nixon Doctrine. President Nixon understood that China could play a pivotal role in the international scene and that it was better to engage instead of continuing to isolate a nation of a billion people. Nixon also understood that in order to ensure peace and stability, the world not only needed a strong U.S, but a strong Soviet Union, China, Japan, and Europe "balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance." [xviii] According to Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell, the diplomatic opening with China created by the Nixon Administration, and the subsequent economic reforms China instituted to join the global community, required sacrifices to China's security and its engagement with the world made it vulnerable to pressures from the rest of the world. They eloquently described China's predicament, "By moving from Autarky to interdependence, China increased not only its power over the destinies of others, but also the power of others over its own destiny." They further emphasized the impact of China's engagement:

In this sense, the engagement policy pursued by the United States since 1972 achieved its strategic goal of tying China's interests to the interest of the U.S.-created global order. Although China is in many respects dissatisfied with its level of economic, political, and military security and seeks to improve them, it has acquired too large a stake in the stability of the world order and the prosperity of the West to believe it can serve its own interests by frontally challenging the existing world order. [xix]

Based on the competing interests of the U.S. and China, as well as the strategic history detailed above, the U.S. should pursue

a political objective that focuses on a middle way – one in which there is a balanced approach that will encourage China to take greater responsibility as a global partner while ensuring the interests of other nations are not infringed upon by enhancing their limited deterrent capabilities.

U.S. Foreign Policy towards China – Restrain, not Contain, China’s Power

U.S. policies should focus on restraining, or mellowing, China’s power. The objective of such a “restraining policy” is to disarm the Chinese both psychologically and physically. Working through a bilateral and multilateral construct, U.S. policy would provide incentives for greater collaboration to resolve political and economic disputes while discouraging China’s saber rattling. In essence, the policy is to convince Chinese leaders that the enemy of their own interests is the unpredictability of war in the nuclear age.

To encourage collaboration, U.S. diplomatic engagements with China and its neighbors should seek greater integration by promoting the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.[xx] Additionally, the U.S. could offer resource sharing mechanisms to the competitions in the East and South China Seas akin to the Schuman-Monnet plan that diffused tensions post-WWII between France and Germany and laid the foundation of the European Union.[xxi] Such a plan would seek to balance competing interests between China and its neighbors with a more cooperative approach vice a zero-sum one. Moves toward economic integration alone will not serve as the ultimate guarantee of peace and stability, however. The economic interconnectedness of the European powers prior to WWI require one to be ever-observant of a shift where the perceived gains from interconnectedness is outweighed by the prospects and benefits of attaining preeminence.

In the end, the final arbiter of international peace and regional stability is the threat or use of violence to achieve desired political effect. In the case of the U.S. and China, the political effect desired is a restrained China that is not threatening U.S. allies or interests in the Asia-Pacific region. To achieve this policy, a possible military strategy is a balance between deterring Chinese military aggression while assuring regional partners as to U.S. capabilities and their own capacity for military power. The U.S. should seek to create a situation whereby the risk of challenging its power is not advantageous, presenting an unacceptable sacrifice to Chinese leaders.

In the end, the final arbiter of international peace and regional stability is the threat or use of violence to achieve desired political effect.

Military Strategy – Balanced Deterrence

In this journal, Adam Elkus rightfully pointed out the need to distinguish policy from strategy to ensure that policy

sets the desired conditions and the supporting strategy is the instrument that gives it meaning.[xxii] Accordingly, to achieve the policy of restraining China’s ambitions, the end state for a “Balanced Deterrence” strategy by the U.S. is to deter conflicts over territorial disputes and restrain escalation to avoid armed conflict between China and the U.S. or its allies. The way the U.S. military strategy can achieve this end state is by utilizing three simultaneous pillars: building strong defensive capabilities of regional nations to legitimize the threat of violence against Chinese forces attempting to expand outside their territorial borders; improve U.S. capability and capacity to swiftly defend of regional partners, with a focus on reinforcing and supplementing the use of force by its allies; and reaffirming the nuclear triad and ensuring the nuclear umbrella over Asian allies to prevent proliferation. Additionally, concepts such as Air Sea Battle (ASB), T.X. Hammes’ “Off Shore Control”, and a Naval Blockade can each provide ways to approach a balanced deterrence. Examining each independently offers both opportunities and risks without meeting the core policy goal of restraining China to deter a war. However, examining the various concepts as ways of implementing unified military strategies through the “Utility of Force” construct to deter, assure, coerce behavior (articulated through tactics as the means to achieve the end state) will offer policymakers the options needed to manage relations with China and its neighbors.

Assure – Off Shore Control

Off Shore Control utilizing the first island chain provides immediate, enduring, and friendly A2/AD deterrence value as a result of China’s lack of force projection capabilities to move its land forces. [xxiii] The synchronization of air, sea, land, and cyber assets along a defined line allows the U.S. and partner nations to restrict the movement of Chinese naval and air platforms. Measures taken by the U.S. and its allies and partners to harden their facilities, invest in air and coastal defense platforms, and increase the mobility of their forces will increase the survivability rate to repel any Chinese attack and assure them of the U.S. commitment to their security.[xxiv] However, the long-term goal of the U.S. needs to include improving the capabilities and capacities of regional partners to better synchronize kinetic effects that will allow the U.S. to redistribute the burden of security – particularly in regards to providing credible threats of force against Chinese aggression by non-US forces.

Deter – Security Force Assistance

The most cost effective means to deter Chinese aggression is bolstering the regional capabilities of allies and partners with a focused Security Cooperation Strategy for the Western Pacific. By focusing on improving the capabilities of regional partners to rapidly mobilize, move from dispersed locations, and conduct joint and combined arms maneuver operations, the credibility of regional forces will be improved, increasing their deterrence value.[xxv] Tactically speaking, large professional and static armies represent a solvable challenge. However, armies that are well trained, adaptable, and mobile with the capacity and capability to mass the appropriate amount of forces at the right time and place present a higher level of complexity for the Chinese

to overcome. And if the threat of force fails to deter, by increasing the capabilities of partner naval and air forces, the U.S. creates the space needed for the land forces of the U.S. to mobilize and deploy. U.S. and partner land forces provide the operational foundation for joint forces to operate freely behind interior lines of operation to posture, organize, prepare, and conduct offensive operations to coerce or compel a change in behavior.

Coerce - Framework for Air-Sea Battle (ASB) and Naval Blockade

The most controversial concepts for the Asia-Pacific Region are Air-Sea Battle and Naval Blockade. While its detractors have argued that ASB is not a strategy, its chief architects have correctly identified it as a part of the strategy development process and as an operational concept needed to overcome enemy A2/D2 capabilities in order to allow the U.S. to conduct offensive operations.[xxvii] Properly integrated with the concept of "Offshore Control" to degrade enemy forces, the deterrence value of ASB increases due to the psychological stress placed upon the enemy who has to take into account the threatened force inherent in, as Army Chief of Staff General Odierno said, "kicking the door open" for land forces to seize the initiative, should the U.S. be required to compel China to modify its behavior through violence. Naval Blockade would provide the glue between Offshore Control and ASB, but its effects on China's economy and will to fight would take longer to measure. The key element to avoid escalation is removing the threat to the regime's survival or loss of mainland Chinese territory. When discussing the application of ASB and Naval Blockade, it must be limited to the threat and use of violence to deter Chinese aggression beyond their territorial boundaries.

Risk

The greatest risk inherent to conflict between the U.S. and China is the threat of nuclear escalation. To mitigate such a threat, the U.S. must reaffirm the nuclear umbrella in the region and maintain ambiguity regarding the posture of the U.S. nuclear arsenal and that of regional nuclear powers.

While nuclear war is the least preferred option to resolve a conflict, the Chinese must believe there is not parity in the nuclear arsenals. Additionally, China must be made aware that any threat of nuclear escalation on its part would result in the U.S., India, or Russia acting beyond proportionality, resulting in national suicide by China.

Conclusion

the U.S. needs a strategy that restrains China's ambitions in partnership with regional powers in the Asia-Pacific

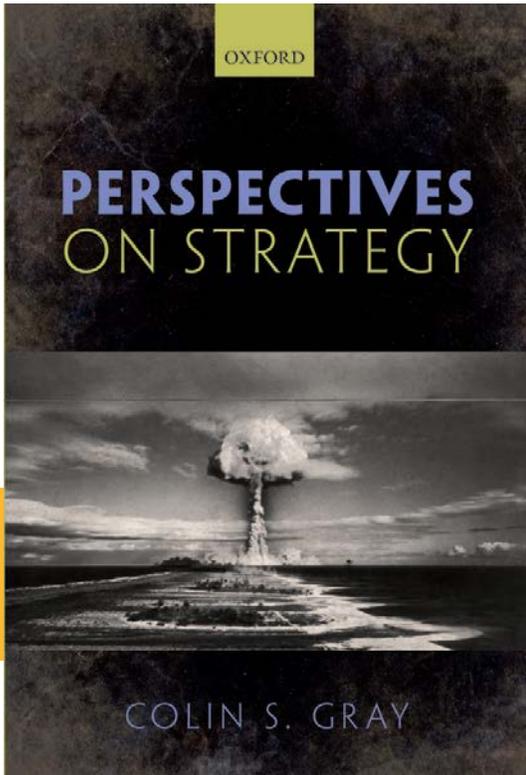
As the preponderance of global power (political, economic, and military) shifts to the Asia-Pacific, both the U.S. national security interests and need to protect those interests will grow. Unlike the U.S.-Soviet Cold War competition, the U.S. cannot afford to outspend China, whose economy is expected to become the largest in the world by the end of the year, on military expenditures. Additionally, it cannot contain China due to the integrated nature of the global economy. As a result, the U.S. needs a strategy that restrains China's ambitions in partnership with regional powers in the Asia-Pacific. The Balanced-Deterrence strategy offers such a solution in support of the Asia-Pacific Pivot to be effective by matching rhetoric with visible actions. The U.S. will need to evaluate its global interests and begin to prioritize resources accordingly.[xxvii] A balanced deterrence strategy integrating the various military concepts to restrain China's militarism will serve all nations in the region in the long run, but only if forces opposing Chinese aggression are credible in their capabilities to use force for U.S. and partner nations' interests.

Disclaimer: The views expressed here are the author's alone and do not reflect those of the US Army, Department of Defense, or any other organization of the US Government.

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Strategy Malpractice and the False Hope of Experts

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Strategy is the business of military professionals, but, far too often, they practice it improperly out of ignorance and lack of experience. The US military continues to struggle with matriculating ready strategic leaders from amongst their most successful tacticians. Adroit responses to the circumstances on the battlefield have not been accompanied by equally savvy responses to the policy logic driving US-led campaigns at the theater-strategic and national levels. As a consequence, operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan have drifted amongst ad hoc measures which have largely been sound tactically but bereft of strategic coherence.

Too many officers failed to discern the proper contribution of functional experts and to not mistake the experts' mastery of facts for strategic understanding.

Even as the US unexpectedly began two extended campaigns, the focus remained on optimizing our means and methods on the ground, getting our inputs right, instead of reassessing our governing strategies. American military leaders became enamored with the promise of experts as a lifeline to escape indecision regarding the battles it found itself tangled in. Too

many officers failed to discern the proper contribution of functional experts and to not mistake the experts' mastery of facts for strategic understanding. For at least two decades, US military strategy has been adrift because senior leaders have not understood strategy in theory as well as in practice and thus have not put expertise in its appropriate role.[i]

The Bush Administration's response to 9/11 created operational imperatives in the form of two wars that allowed senior leaders to abrogate their strategic responsibility of ensuring operations solved the necessary problem, not just those problems that were merely relevant to the national interests at stake. The counterinsurgency doctrine articulated in US Army *Field Manual 3-24* encouraged such behavior and eventually subsumed strategy by articulating a rationale for open-ended campaigns. It ultimately proved to be an incomplete guide for the coalition campaigns, precluding serious introspection at the highest levels about the direction of those military adventures and the wisdom of continuing them. The US military's infatuation with new ways of war and fervent acceptance of uncertainty as the great menace of our time is an extension of the underlying logic behind *Field Manual 3-24*. Such reckless modernism reflects a collective failure to apply strategic thought. It would be too strong to call this ongoing failure to be a dereliction of duty, but it is a problem that demands an intense discourse amongst military professionals about the substance of strategy malpractice and solutions for reducing it, if not to eliminate it.[ii]

That strategy malpractice occurs at all should be of great concern to everyone. Errors in judgment are forgivable given the dynamism and complexity of war, but blunders in practice stemming from theoretical ignorance and analytic ineptitude are less so. The US military, in the tradition articulated by Samuel Huntington, prides itself in providing expert advice to policymakers on the application of military power. Huntington argued that military professionals should be granted autonomy within their areas of expertise in exchange for apolitical behavior. His seminal work on the subject, *Soldier and the State*, was embraced by American military professionals as the authoritative articulation of their status in society. Huntington's book defends the professional sovereignty of uniformed experts to advise and manage the development, articulation, and conduct of tactics and strategy. While such autonomy is a rational basis for civil-military relations, the mediocrity of strategic advice should

To cite this Article: Mihara, Robert, "Strategy Malpractice and the False Hope of Experts," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 10-12.

raise important questions about whether military professionals are sufficiently competent to fulfill their compact with society. If professional sovereignty is to serve a common good and avoid merely creating a parochial preserve, American military professionals must have a firm grasp over the fundamentals of strategy in theory and in practice.[iii]

The practice of strategy is challenging for many reasons, but chief among them is the entry cost to participation. The fundamentals of strategic appraisal and planning require devoted preparation and consistent meditation to achieve competency, and they run against the grain of military conventions. Rising leaders in the military often mistakenly assume that they can acquire the essential aspects of strategic thinking by focused study without making fundamental adjustments to the way in which they see problems, understand context, and without changing the tools they apply to understanding and solving problems. Successive career advancements and the organizational culture of the military create and reinforce that assumption and mature it into a conviction. It is the belief that strategy is simply a matter of contending with large-scale, national-level, problems within the context of political bargaining that keeps the strategy bridge, which links policy to operations, in perpetual disrepair.[iv]

Strategy malpractice in the military has been the product of three tendencies: a failure to understand the unique character of the strategic, the misappropriation of history, and a desire to implement optimal solutions. In longstanding institutions, the fundamental tension that hinders intelligent strategy is between the functional expert, who often represents the institution's *raison d'être*, and the strategic planner, who ought to be focused on the imperatives of the institutional environment, rather than incumbent equities in the organization. Yet, officers are often not prepared in their careers for the task of moderating the discourse between expert and strategist in a time-sensitive decision-making environment. Military leaders are of necessity selected for advancement early in their careers, based on their capacity to rapidly grasp a situation and make decisions for action. This profile often produces excellent tacticians who are well-prepared to deal with tangible issues in a timely manner, but it is cognition of a different kind than that which is required for problems where the very terms of conversation lack fixed meaning. Fundamental ideas, such as security, have clearly articulated definitions in tactical doctrine, but can be frustratingly malleable in the domains of policy and strategy.[v]

Strategic appraisal and planning are of a different nature than the tactical problem solving approaches to which senior military leaders often revert. Most leaders recognize the complex nature of strategic problems which defy prediction, but, too often, they simplistically poach theoretical concepts from the social sciences to deal with uncertainty and find a bridge that might carry them from indecisive tactical actions and enduring national interests. The results have been plans and directives that are merely relevant, if that, and unnecessary to the essential policy aims we nominally ascribe to succeed, leading to contradictions and mission creep. As a consequence, military policies and plans often default to the intuitive and familiar, rather than to the option best calibrated to the realities of the problem.[vi]

In addition to misapprehending strategy's nature, many officers are ill-prepared to understand a historical narrative that is filled with siren calls to those convinced of their own wisdom.

In addition to misapprehending strategy's nature, many officers are ill-prepared to understand a historical narrative that is filled with siren calls to those convinced of their own wisdom. Those who see history as an easy companion will discover in the end that it offers many illusions upon which to shipwreck the lives of rulers and nations. To the sober-minded historian, the facts of history offer essential points of reference that guide and inform but are never mistaken for truth. Fact, taken simplistically, is the drug of fools and the weapon of knaves, becoming great impediments to understanding and wisdom. It is through such error that fortunes are wasted on ambition, and lives are crushed for the sake of illusory dogmas.

Confusing strategy with politics and the misapprehension of history are ultimately problems given full expression through individual aptitude and education. In the organizational context, where competing voices and personalities determine the course of thought and decision, strategy is about navigating the sub-optimal path most likely to achieve a desired aim and avoiding the finely engineered, optimal path that is doomed to failure or wandering. This vision of strategy is often tritely referred to as "preventing perfect from being the enemy of good enough", but the substance of strategy in practice is about more than a simplistic recourse to common sense.

Senior military leaders from the national, to the theater-level, can shun the allure of asinine perfection by understanding the imperatives which necessarily serve relevant policy aims and distinguishing them from the pressing demands of a battle or campaign. Merely accepting what is deemed "good enough" and operating on commander's intuition is a recipe for endemic mediocrity. Infusing tactical actions with power words like "atmospherics" or "strategic" does nothing to ensure that actions on the ground have any necessary or meaningful contribution to what matters to the national interest. The presumption that contextualizing actions with political-social concepts somehow bridges the deep divide that separates policy from tactics has been a chief culprit in ill-conceived campaigns in both Iraq and Afghanistan by both military and civilian leaders. Few things could be as misleading as believing that war and politics are of the same nature (i.e., the militarization of nation - and state - building) or that strategy is the echo of tactical actions heard in the media by policymakers (i.e., a high-profile bombing is a "strategic event"). The problem with misunderstanding strategy's nature is not merely cognitive dissonance. There are real consequences if generals and appointed officials do not understand the nature of strategy and apply narrow, or shallow, lessons from history to managing the conduct of military operations.[vii]

Few things could be as misleading as believing that war and politics are of the same nature

Tactically-minded leaders, thinking sequentially, respond to the dynamism and ironies of strategy by focusing on the tangibles of units in the field and by extolling the virtues of adaptability and initiative. They do this because the bias towards action and demonstrable results requires exactly this sort of approach to problems, and it can often be the best approach available to a commander or senior military advisor. However, the imperative of units in action drives appraisals and plans to look inward and increasingly give perfunctory attention to policy aims. Such a tactical focus cannot but lead to such an outcome because adaptability and initiative, in the strategic realm, represent an abrogation of strategy in favor of glorified crisis management. Whether based on brigades in the attack or so-called human terrain teams, organizational nimbleness based on information dominance is unlikely to produce meaningful gains against a competent and capable, or merely resilient, enemy. As the Wehrmacht demonstrated during the Second World War, adapting to circumstances and seizing the initiative may merely delay the inevitable demise of a strategically bankrupt campaign.[viii]

It is the tactical bias of US military culture that leads to the reign of experts in operational and strategic planning. The dominant voice changes with the issues of the day, but the predilection for action demands the surety and focus of experts rather than the ambiguities of strategic advice which call for measured action and oftentimes a view towards events well beyond the tenure of the commander. Because experts focus on the tangible and proximate, they typically do not see the opportunity costs they impose on the pursuit of strategic aims over many years and presume on the permanence of key aspects of the political or strategic environment. Commanders at the operational and strategic-

level of command, following expert advice, can work very well against the long-term interests of the nation, and of their nation's partners, by aggressively pursuing measures of effectiveness defined by functional experts.[ix]

This article is not a condemnation of functional expertise, but it is intended as a call for leaders to make themselves smarter consumers of expert advice in formulating and implementing strategy. Senior leaders that do not understand the nature of strategy, or how to discern the proper utility of history, can scarcely hope to sort through the cacophony of voices from above, as well as from below, that promise a straighter path to victory. Ill-informed tacticians, focused on getting "the inputs right", are drawn to the notion that ends-ways-means can be applied as a formula thus confusing the complex for the merely complicated.[x] It is in misunderstanding the nature of strategy that functional expertise becomes dangerous because it facilitates the leaps in logic that strategy-as-formula requires.

The triune formulation of strategy certainly does not prevent the voice of the strategist from becoming lost in the more enticing suggestions of experts with their facts and trends. It is in situations where meaningful strategic victory is unattainable that this becomes most critical and, ironically, this is also when it is the hardest for strategic advisors to be heard. It is hard to imagine that the US military would ever willfully commit suicide as the Wehrmacht did in 1945, but one could conceive of a vested force driven by ambition and expert bias binding their nation to campaigns and wars for which there is no necessary benefit to the national interest. It is the deceitfulness of expert knowledge that leads aggressive and intelligent leaders to believe that the next success will bring what prior years, with their investments in blood and treasure, failed to deliver. Unless such confidence is grounded in solid strategic calculus, it is only a mirage.[ix]

Disclaimer: The views expressed here are the author's alone and do not reflect those of the US Army, Department of Defense, or any other organization of the US Government.

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Do Something: A model for the development of 21st Century Strategy

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Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat. The strategist's obligation is providing the framework through which tactical success is firmly linked to achieving policy and strategic objectives. Strategy must articulate the way in which we use engagements to the end of attaining the object of the war or use of force. As Clausewitz wrote, "The whole of military activity must therefore relate directly or indirectly to the engagement...the whole object...is simply that he (the Soldier) should fight at the right place and the right time."^[i] What good does it do the commander and her Soldiers to arrive at the right place at the right time if the purpose of the action is not linked to the attainment of strategic and policy objectives? Concepts of how to use the force of the future and even future focused war games also require knowledge of strategy and policy. Policy without strategy squanders military, economic, informational and human efforts. Clausewitz proposes a two step test to guide strategists in both interaction with policy makers and developing strategy. The first step reminds the strategist war is never autonomous but always an instrument of policy. The second step reminds

us given step one war will vary given changing motives and situations. This argument precedes the famous quotation, "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."^[ii] This essay proposes a model for strategists to use in the development of 21st century strategy. For the purpose of this essay the situation in Nigeria is most useful for application of this model and development of a proposed strategy.

What good does it do the commander and her Soldiers to arrive at the right place at the right time if the purpose of the action is not linked to the attainment of strategic and policy objectives?

Recent articles offering to "ctrl-alt-delete" our forces and "start from a blank slate" support a need for strategists and strategy.^[iii] In January 2014 Hew Strachan stated, "President Obama is "chronically incapable" of military strategy..."^[iv] The question which follows is why should the president formulate military strategy? One could conclude from Strachan's argument there are no strategists merely people involved in the process of divining policy and strategy. To suggest war is the mere extension of a policy is a serious error in thinking. War remains a continuation and instrument of policy and strategists must produce military objectives from statements of policy. There is a vital need for strategists just as there is a need for policy makers. More to the point there is a vital need for critical thinking and discourse in the development of both policy and strategy.

While the nature of war has not changed – greed, passion, fear, and honor – clearly the conditions of war do change. Strategists must recognize this fact. Strategists must also give the enemy/opponent/adversary his due, keeping in mind the enemy too develops policy and strategy. Given these conditions how do we develop the strategies we need to confront 21st century enemies and conditions? The tried and

To cite this Article: Benson, Kevin C.M., "Do Something: A model for the development of 21st Century Strategy," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 14-16.

true model of ends-ways-means alone no longer provides the answers required for 21st century strategy. There is any number of replacement models for consideration. A model first voiced by Eliot Cohen best fits the need for a 21st century model.[v]

While the nature of war has not changed – greed, passion, fear, and honor – clearly the conditions of war do change.

While Cohen proposed a consideration of assumptions, ends-ways-means, priorities, sequencing and a theory of victory, I propose instead substituting risks for priorities as a change to the Cohen model. Risk is ordinarily considered as risk to personnel and risk to mission. Strategic risk must also consider risk to the nation, its standing in the world, and perception of its ability to act in a determined and useful manner. Consideration of assumptions is the first step.

Assumptions are used in place of facts to continue planning. In developing strategy assumptions serve as forcing functions in interaction with policy makers. This drives home the point war is an instrument and continuation of policy not merely an extension of policy. In the 21st century policy makers often turn to the use of force in response to the pressure of “DO SOMETHING.” Even under conditions of restrained budgets the military will retain units and weapons optimized for “doing something” and doing it “now.” The use of assumptions as forcing functions gives the strategist a tool to use in the dialogue and thinking which must precede action.

Our policy vis-à-vis Nigeria could be best stated as #BringOurGirlsHome. The passionate responses to perceived and real Nigerian government inaction in the face of this Boko Haram outrage fuels the impetus to “Do Something.” Recent testimony before congressional committees also highlights the legal requirements restraining action.[vi] Thus a necessary strategic assumption is no US ground forces, conventional or special, will be committed to direct action in support of the Nigerian government. A second assumption, only specific intelligence related to finding the kidnapped girls will be shared with the Nigerian government. These two assumptions highlight the utility of the first step of the model. The second step is the consideration of ends-ways-means.

The strategist must demonstrate how forces (means) conduct operations/campaigns (ways) to achieve the ends of policy.

The tried and true ends-ways-means remain useful as a part of the model. The strategist must demonstrate how forces (means) conduct operations/campaigns (ways) to achieve the ends of policy. Following the development of our assumptions related to Nigeria our means consist of intelligence and surveillance forces along with the sustainment forces required for endurance and a headquarters for mission command as well as coordination with the embassy

and liaison with Nigerian Armed Forces. The ways to achieve the ends are the conduct of intelligence and surveillance operations in direct support of Nigerian efforts to find, rescue and return their children, the ends of policy. A further end should be a stronger, more stable Nigerian government and state as a result of US assistance. A consideration of broad strategic risk naturally follows step two.[vii]

Strategic risk ranges from risk of mission failure to national standing and prestige. Risk consideration includes friendly and enemy actions in the cyber and information domain. Thinking about how the portrayal of our actions would assist or hinder operations is well spent effort, as is thinking about the converse.

Returning to our hypothetical case the risks involved in operations in support of Nigerian efforts range from the loss of a US surveillance aircraft, manned or unmanned, to a failed rescue attempt, based on US intelligence which results in a “dry hole” or the deaths of kidnapped children. The positive perception of US capability and ability is at risk. Another risk is the potential of destabilizing the Nigerian government as a result of our supporting it. Step four, sequencing, must include consideration of risk mitigation actions.

The conduct of globally integrated operations considers the sequencing of the range of operations necessary for successful execution of strategy. Strategic sequencing includes deciding on the construct of the theater of war or operations. This decision cues diplomatic, information, military and possibly economic efforts which assume continued access to territories in the theater, over-flight permissions, and air and sea port of debarkation and resupply access. Strategists consider the sequencing of action in the cyber and information domains. Strategists consider how to exploit enemy weaknesses in these domains, the broad conduct of actions over time and so on.

Sequencing strategic actions in Nigeria clearly included presidential announcements of our intent to help. Sequencing our actions also takes into account consideration of the correct problem. How and why Boko Haram came into being must be addressed. It is the result of ethnic, religious and cultural dysfunction thus our use of force must bear in mind the problem we are assisting in solving as opposed to areas outside the correct problem. The decision to begin surveillance operations, when to deploy aviation units and where they operate, are strategic actions. Given recent announcements the operating area of our forces in support of Nigerian actions includes Chad. The final step is the development and constant refinement of the theory of victory.

In a personal e-mail Cohen wrote the theory of victory could be simply stated as “why do we think this (the strategy) will work.” [viii] “If the US commits force in accord with the strategy developed then we will be victorious because,” demands constant strategic level work and interaction with policy and decision makers. Cohen allows us to infer victory does not happen it is the result of hard work linking tactical success and effect to attaining strategic and policy objectives. Attaining policy objectives is victory in this century.

What might be our theory of victory in Nigeria and why do

we think what we are doing will work? Applying the modified Cohen model I suggest our theory of victory is we will provide intelligence and surveillance products along with advice on how to use these products at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels thus resulting in stronger ties with Nigeria which favor US interests in sub-Saharan Africa. A part of our strategic success is in our standing with Nigeria and countries in the region. We demonstrate we are reliable partners who will invest our resources and capabilities in support of right efforts. Clearly the hope is the return of all kidnapped children. Equally clear is this hope might not be attainable no matter the depth of the commitment. This statement is very cold-blooded but practical. Our strategy should not be an endorsement of humanitarian intervention but a reasoned effort to build better relations between our country and Nigeria. This is not the use of force in the abstract. Clausewitz reminded us war and the use of force is not waged against an abstract enemy. Boko Haram is certainly not abstract. We wage war and execute strategy against real enemies, a fact which must always be kept in mind.[ix]

Our strategy should not be an endorsement of humanitarian intervention but a reasoned effort to build better relations between our country and Nigeria.

Strategists think about the application of military power in support of attaining policy goals. Use of the modified Cohen model assists in thinking through the challenge of developing strategy. The strategist must also consider the question what is military power? BG (ret) Huba Wass de Czege, founder of the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, tells us wise strategists think of power, irrespective of its purpose, in relative as opposed to absolute terms. He notes, "All the sides in a conflict try to cause the humans on the other side to react

as they intend. The outcome of the conflict is determined by a relative superiority of potential specific to the case at the essential points of confrontation." The strategist then does not merely compare the relative military power of the two opposing sides in a conflict. Clearly the amount and quality of military capabilities available to each side are important, to say the least. Wass de Czege tells us "relative power is determined in the main by how these capabilities and resources affect the humans on each side of the conflict when they are brought to bear." The strategist, along with the policy maker, determines when and how military power is brought to bear.

Strategy is executed in war and war is conducted in the realm of chance, fog and friction.

Strategy is executed in war and war is conducted in the realm of chance, fog and friction. Again Wass de Czege offers this wisdom for the strategist:

Even when subject to overwhelming military force, humans do not always react as intended. This is so because force is not power, and because force potential is transformed by a logic specific to an intended purpose within a unique situation. And that logic needs to be based on a sound theory of the situation and how to apply force, or the threat of it, achieve desired reactions. Only then does applied force become power.[x]

The modified Cohen model offers the best method for developing strategy in the 21st century and for guiding the principled application of military force to become military power. Application of the model offers tools for disciplined, focused discourse with policy makers and staff. The model provides a framework flexible enough to develop strategies for action across the range of military operations in the increasingly complex 21st century.

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- [vii] On 22MAY14 Stephen Losey of *Defense News* reported 80 troops deployed to Chad to assist in the search for the missing girls. Forty will fly and maintain drones and forty are security troops.
- [viii] Cohen e-mail, 14JAN2012, parenthetical added. Cohen wrote, "My definition of a theory of victory is really simple – "why do we think this will work?" I wouldn't make it any more complicated than that, since nothing ever really takes into account everything the other side is likely to do."
- [ix] *On War*, page 161.
- [x] These two paragraphs were developed from a Plans List e-mail note written by BG (ret) Huba Wass de Czege, Sent: Saturday, April 26, 2014 12:35 PM, Subject: Re: The 11 Most Powerful Militaries In The World/ What is Military Power?

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Politics, Statecraft and the art of War

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There is a paradox at the heart of the contemporary understanding of international law. Use of force is considered appropriate only for humanitarian ends and must fulfill a set of predetermined axioms laid down in chapter 7 of the UN charter, developed in the convention of the responsibility to protect. Yet strategy, to be effective, requires a clear political aim which might deviate from the general rule; preoccupied with an abstract model applied generally, it has lost sight of the particular. The failure of contemporary western statesmen in the twenty first century to address this anomaly or to prioritize their political ends has thus led to strategic confusion from Afghanistan to Syria and Ukraine. In this context, it might be useful to reappraise the utility of modern rationalism and return instead to an earlier understanding of statecraft that prudently avoided 'premature generalisations'. [i]

The failure of contemporary western statesmen in the twenty first century to address this anomaly has thus led to strategic confusion from Afghanistan to Syria and Ukraine

The sixteenth century political thinkers who defined the modern understanding of sovereignty and the nature of political obedience had much to say about the relationship

between the state and the strategic use of force, yet this aspect of their thought is largely neglected. These early modern theorists of *raison d'état* clarified the identity of the modern state and how it maintained and defended its right to exist, offering a practical counsel that modern western democracies, in their efforts to maintain internal order or conduct wars of choice, could do well to attend to.

The century from the Counter-Reformation to the Peace of Westphalia was almost as bloody as the twentieth in terms of the devastation it wreaked upon Europe. Between 1550-1648, Europe suffered divisive internal as well as external war, and witnessed the often brutal severing of traditional political and religious allegiances from Prague to Edinburgh. Between 1618-48, the gross domestic product of the lands of the Holy Roman Empire (covering most of central Europe) declined by between 25-40 percent. The war devastated and depopulated entire regions of contemporary Germany, Italy, Holland, France and Belgium. In 1635, Jacques Callot captured the miseries and misfortunes of the war in a devastating series of lithographs (see fig 1).

It was in the context of confessional division and internecine war that the modern unitary state emerged unsteadily from the disintegrating chrysalis of the medieval realm. With it arose a new scepticism about morality, law and order that came to be termed 'politique', or reason of state. The realist thinkers that outlined this political project from Nicolo Machiavelli at the start of the century, to the neglected but far more influential Dutch humanist, Justus Lipsius, at its end, were notably wary of abstract moral injunctions when it came to difficult questions of war and governance. Instead they offered a distinctive counsel of prudence, or practical morality, when considering the use of force. Unlike the contemporary human rights lobby, practical sixteenth century guides to statecraft offered maxims or aphorisms, not axioms, to address difficult cases like war. This practical advice to princes and republics on morality and war contrasts dramatically with contemporary international law and its application of a universal moral and legal standard to all cases of the use of force for humanitarian ends.

Yet a return to a prudent rhetoric of reasonableness, especially in foreign policy debates, could restore the balance which abstract theoretical rationalism, and its preoccupation with certain rules and systems has disturbed. In a world of

To cite this Article: Jones, David Martin, "Politics, Statecraft and the art of War," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 18-24.

uncertainty and complexity, abstract rationalist rigour is less appropriate than the sixteenth century humanism of those like Michel de Montaigne, who exhorted his readers to live with ambiguity without judgement. Indeed as the late Stephen Toulmin has argued, an updated practical ethics, or casuistry, can still have value in resolving doubtful cases ranging from war to euthanasia in the twenty first century.

What then was the character of this practical case analysis, and what implications does it have for statecraft and strategy? To recover this prudential view, and what it means for contemporary strategic thought, requires first that we establish how a distinctive approach to difficult cases of obligation emerged in the sixteenth century, as a response to confessional division and political fragmentation. This evolved as humanist philosophers and statesmen adapted from Cicero's *De Officiis*, and the histories of Tacitus, Polybius and Livy, a practical case ethics and a set of maxims to address questions of war and peace. In the process of interrogating the classical world for advice on political conduct, they walked eyes backwards into a realist understanding of statecraft.

The Machiavellian Moment

It was the Florentine lawyer turned statesman, Nicolo Machiavelli who first drew attention to the gap between an abstract morality and the *virtu* required of a prince or republic if it wished to survive in a world of contingent uncertainty. As he explained in *The Prince*, it was 'more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done sooner effects his ruin than his preservation'. [ii] Moreover, in order to preserve the state, rulers needed both good counsel and to prepare for war. Indeed, 'a prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study than war and its rules and disciplines; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank'. [iii] Significantly, the only political work that Machiavelli published in his lifetime, *The Art of War* (1521), treated military virtue as a necessary precondition for political or civil virtue. Here again Machiavelli looked to the ancients for both strategy and tactics. As he noted in his *Discourses* on the Roman historian Livy, 'that if where there are men there are no soldiers, it arises through a defect of the prince and not through any other defect'. Effective rule required an armed citizenry and a close attention to strategy.

Machiavelli's work was controversial. His posthumously published writings influenced both the thought and practice of statesmen and princes as various as Thomas Cromwell and Henry VIII in England and the Duc de Rohan and Henri IV in France. However, later writers in a Machiavellian or realist idiom thought the Florentine delighted too much in the shock value of demonstrating the utility of amoral political action in extreme circumstances. [iv] Later *étatist* thinkers wrote in a cooler style, recognizing that Machiavelli had identified the mystery of rule or *arcana imperii*, but that it required a more nuanced application to the problem of internal and external

war. [v] In this style of thinking, the *arcana* acknowledged the necessity of morally questionable behaviour whilst simultaneously maintaining the virtue of rule for preserving and advancing the common interest. Although Machiavelli might be seen as reviving this understanding, its classical origin lay in the Roman historian Tacitus' discussion of the 'secrets of imperial policy'. [vi]

Moreover, by the end of the sixteenth century it was not Machiavelli, but the Dutch humanist Justus Lipsius who did most to clarify these secrets through a revised understanding of Roman military and political thought adapted to the contemporary needs of princes and their counsellors in sixteenth century Europe. In his masterwork on civil and military prudence, the *Politiorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex qui ad principatum maxime spectant* (henceforth *Politica*), he provided rulers with a compendium of practical advice. [vii] Shortly after its publication in 1589, the Vatican placed the *Politica* on the index of banned books. A modified version however went through more than ninety editions between 1591-1630, and influenced statesmen and counsellors from Prince Maurice of Nassau, whom he taught, to the protestant Leicester and Essex circles in England, and the catholic Cardinals Mazarin and Richelieu in France. He became something of a cult in Spain and constituted the leading source of early modern Spanish statecraft.

Lipsius (1547-1606) was educated as a Jesuit, yet taught first at the Dutch protestant university of Leiden before reconverting to Catholicism and finish his career at the university of Louvain. He taught the political elite of Europe how to maintain political stability and conduct internal and external war (the subject of the last three of the *Politica's* six books) in the context of mounting confessional conflict. Interestingly his ideas slipped effortlessly across the confessional divide that threatened to engulf Europe. This was because Lipsius considered religion too important to be left to individual conscience, the whim of the 'fickle' masses or enthusiastic preachers. He advised that princes 'burn and cut' those who countermanded official religious teaching. [viii]

The *Politica* adapted classical thought, notably Tacitus' histories and annals, via a careful selection of quotations to illustrate political and personal predicaments and the means for their prudential resolution. Lipsius considered Tacitus' *sententiae* particularly applicable to the predicament of rule in the late sixteenth century, as he articulated a political vision where the prince had to make difficult choices in an imperfect world. [ix] In Books 3 and 4 of the *Politica*, Lipsius synthesized Tacitus with a moderate Machiavellianism, thereby linking reason of state to classical imperial traditions of thought and counsel. It had the additional effect of emphasizing the mysterious and numinous character of the sometimes problematic tactics necessarily employed by the good prince.

As Lipsius observes in his *Notae* to Book 1 of the *Politica*, Tacitus is the leading Latin historian because he deals 'truthfully and briefly' with prudence and good judgment. [x] The work then was a political guidebook tailored to the office of counsellor to the prince. Tacitus was particularly valuable in this advisory context because, as Lipsius explained, 'this writer deals with princely courts, with the inner life of princes, their plans, commands and actions and he teaches us,

who have noticed the similarity in many respects with our own time, that the same effects may come from the same causes'.[xi]

The *Politica* not only established the foundations for the evolving early modern European 'art of policie',[xii] it also brought about a revolution in sixteenth century military affairs. As Geoffrey Parker has shown, Lipsius' counsel on military prudence in the *Politica* (Bk V: 13) and his later work *De Militia Romana*, influenced his former students Maurice of Nassau and Willem of Lodewijk to adapt Roman practices of discipline and drill to the infantry training and tactics of the Dutch Republic's armies. Via Lipsius' infantries across Europe learnt to maintain their files and ranks and use their muskets in volley fire.[xiii]

it also brought about a revolution in sixteenth century military affairs

The *Politica* then, not *The Prince*, suited the prevailing post-Tridentine mode of moral and political discourse. More precisely, what did Lipsian counsel involve and how did he adapt his classical scholarship on the Roman historians to the demands of statecraft?

State Right trumps Human Rights

Ultimately, the realist advice literature on counsel and statecraft that Machiavelli pioneered and Lipsius crystalized for elite consumption needs to be situated in the context of the political predicament that sixteenth century policy makers confronted, and the manner in which they deliberated upon their policy options. Sixteenth century counsellors recognized the rhetorical need to persuade their audience to view their actions in one way rather than another. This justificatory dimension might be termed presentation and it drew upon the dominant legitimating ideas available at the time. In sixteenth and seventeenth century discourse, these would include: justice; authority; law; right; virtue; utility; honour; the true faith; the common good; conscience; and obligation or duty.

Justificatory presentation attempted to define the contested religious and political space of the post Machiavellian world between 1550-1640 and legitimate the use of force for political ends. It established the rhetorical conditions for a counter presentation using the same set of ideas but organized in a different or opposed configuration or alignment. Sixteenth century humanists like Juan Luis Vives, Giovanni Botero or Justus Lipsius who imbibed and refined Machiavelli's ideas, offered their counsel to both protestant princes and catholic monarchs and were acutely conscious of the need to shape rhetorically the presentation of a particular policy option.

Machiavelli had identified the mystery of rule but that it required a more nuanced application to the problem of internal and external war

This predicament, moreover, must be distinguished from the very different process of deliberation that political actors followed in making particular decisions, for example, making war, pacifying Ghent, burning heretics or raising taxes. The test of successful presentation was whether the audience found it convincing. The conflict between presentation and counter presentation will typically occur over a political act depicted in idealist or normative terms (the justice or rightness of the act), whilst the counter move will accuse the presenter of self-interest, hypocrisy and illegitimacy. In France, the Netherlands and England in the period 1580-1650, political actors, attempting to present themselves in excessively idealistic terms, could lose credibility. More particularly, in the context of the debate over religion and its defence by force if necessary, the presentation and counter presentation of a policy expressed in terms of competing moral justifications for action could undermine its effectiveness. This was particularly the case where patriotism and compassion for a *patria* wracked by civil war might be redescribed by a *politique* like Lipsius in *On Constancy* as misguided pity, the most delusive of 'affections', a mask of self-interest facilitating moral, social and political chaos and an 'utter' enemy 'to this, our Constancy'.[xiv] Similarly, in the *Politica* he observes how 'the pretence of religion' has ignited 'the fires of strife' across Europe.[xv]

The conflict over presentation generated the conditions for two further possibilities. First, the recourse to a more vigorous reassertion of a single standard of rightness and the identification of cunning or misguided men as morally corrupt, duplicitous, and vicious. The alternative and realist response distinguished between different spheres of human life, allowing each a limited rightness of its own. This moral strategy was the work of *raison d'état* thinkers functioning within a casuist framework, influenced by the evolving sixteenth century interest in the Roman historians that Lipsius' humanist scholarship did so much to advance.

This moral strategy was the work of raison d'état thinkers functioning within a casuist framework

In this developing idiom of statecraft then, political acts may be represented in terms more powerfully persuasive than justice, namely, those of necessity and prudence.[xvi] This, of course, is the core message that the *Politica* transmits.[xvii]

Necessity and prudence, the latter itself a form of practical reason, recognized and accepted the potential for the dissolution of universal moral norms into different and sometimes competing spheres of life. Analogously, because of its pejorative characterization as preoccupied entirely with the deliberations of government and its darker arts, this approach to rule is frequently misunderstood. As J.H. Hexter observed, the English phrase 'reason of state' is an inadequate translation of the French *raison* and Italian *ragioni*, unfortunate because it obscures the fact that in French and Italian, the phrase implies a guiding concern with the actual *right* of the state in terms of maintaining, preserving and sustaining the common interest. [xviii]

This right, moreover, may be expressed in terms both of

the right of the state's survival, as well as the conditions for preserving or developing civic and military virtue. Applying these contextual considerations to the new realist thinking therefore suggests that they demonstrate a dual though equally acute concern; with the presentation of policy that reflects the prevailing casuistic conventions, together and less obviously, with the deliberation amongst the prince's counsellors directed to the maintenance of the state's 'right' and its capacity to facilitate a condition of civic order and public morality. This concern is particularly evident in Book 3 of the *Politica* devoted as it is to the quality and character of counsel, and Books 4 and 5 which explore the character of civil and military prudence.

Applying these contextual considerations to the new realist thinking therefore suggests that they demonstrate a dual though equally acute concern

Prudence and Casuistry

Lipsius, then, advanced his understanding of state right through a careful reading of prudence as a response to providence and the necessity that 'tames and subdues all things'. [xix] Prudence, as it did for the ancients, constitutes the supreme political and human virtue in the *Politica*. Virtue, Lipsius contends, consists entirely 'in Selection and Moderation'. Moreover as 'these cannot exist without Prudence. Virtue cannot. Just as architects cannot do their work properly without level and ruler, so cannot we without this ruling principle'. [xx] Lipsius defines prudence, therefore, as 'the understanding and choosing of what is to be sought or avoided both in private and public'. [xxi]

The adaptation of a supervening moral code to a particular case of conscience is casuistry and Lipsius' application of prudence to a particular case of civil disorder or strategic use of force follows this convention. The casuist attended not only to the general rule, for example not to commit harm, but also to the extenuating circumstances that might affect a particular case where 'someone takes away your possessions or a right', that might necessitate taking up arms. [xxii] Casuistry involved a 'dialectic between the principles which we bring to the consideration of particular cases and the facts of those cases as they are revealed to us through practical discernment'. [xxiii]

This somewhat mutable understanding of truth made possible a situational political morality.

The adaptation of political behaviour to what the circumstances demand, therefore, made best sense in the later part of the sixteenth century in the context of a probabilist casuistry that held it was possible to satisfy the

formal requirements of moral reflection by remaining in speculative doubt about the right answer to a question but believing in the permissibility of acting as if one answer were true. This somewhat mutable understanding of truth made possible a situational political morality. [xxiv] In the *Politica* it assumes the quality of mixed prudence, which 'is in reality unstable and changeable in every respect'. [xxv] In Book IV, Lipsius specifically addressed the prudence he wanted 'to be in the Prince himself' which 'is hard to bind to rules' because it 'covers a wide area that is fluctuating and veiled'. [xxvi] It possesses two branches: experience; and *memoria* (history), hence the importance of historical examples.

In Book 4 we learn, in addition, that the way of princely prudence is notoriously difficult and unclear, its matter 'veiled in deep darkness'. [xxvii] Lipsius, from the perspective of princely counsel resorts to what he terms mixed prudence (*prudencia mixta*). In this context, prudence, Lipsius contends, possesses two further divisions, namely, civil and military prudence. He additionally subdivided the first branch into religious and worldly categories. Significantly, it was in this 'dark field' that required the careful adjustment of general rules to specific circumstances. This is particularly the case in worldly affairs where opinion and passion, both transitory and unpredictable, influence the masses. Popular credulity and fecklessness [xxviii] necessarily affects the conduct of the prince who, in order to maintain the actual reality of stable and peaceful ruling', [xxix] must necessarily have recourse to the 'double fountain of prudence'.

all military prudence concerns war which consisted of two kinds

This was even more the case with military prudence, or strategy. Military prudence, Lipsius maintained, 'is necessary for a Prince before everything else, even so much that without it he is hardly a Prince'. [xxx] Even more than with civil prudence, the rightly guided Prince attended to classical modes of discipline and the examples offered by the Roman historians, who 'had described wars almost from the beginning of time... And not just this, but they often include in their relation of the facts... the most valuable warnings and counsels for the entire business of war'. [xxxi] In this strategic context, Lipsius noted 'plain and mere force is insufficient' for maintaining and defending a territory unless it is 'regulated by a certain degree of skill and planning, that is, by the Prudence of warfare'. [xxxii] Indeed, all military prudence concerns war which consisted of two kinds: foreign; and civil. In order to address foreign war, Lipsius subdivided the rules governing it to three heads, namely 'Starting it, Waging it and Ending it. If you neglect any of these', he continued, 'or execute it wrongly you are most unlikely ever to celebrate a Good Outcome'. More to the point, Lipsius argued that war should only be undertaken after 'slow deliberation' and never entered into rashly. Indeed, as he might have warned of recent military adventures in humanitarian intervention: 'Just as it is easy to descend in a well, but very difficult to get out again, so it is with War'. [xxxiv] More particularly war had to be undertaken only in order to secure peace. Paradoxically, however, he who desires peace, must prepare for war.

Ultimately, dealing with cunning men, the prince and his counsellors had of necessity, in civil and military affairs,

to mix the honourable with the useful.[xxv] This practice, 'departs from virtue or the laws in the interest of the King and Kingdom'.[xxvi] Lipsius' treatment of mixed prudence charted then a probabilist moral course. Prudence's fountain was by no means pure but mixed 'a little', requiring the addition of 'a bit of the sediment of deceit'.[xxvii] is permissible 'providing it is done moderately and with good aims'. This is permissible 'providing it is done moderately and with good aims'.[xxviii] Deceit, in fact, came in three varieties: light; middle; and grave. Light deceit entails distrust and dissimulation, the middle variety licensed bribery and deception and the grave accepted breaches of faith and injustice. Lipsius recommends the first, tolerates the second and condemns the third.[xxix] The wise ruler must practice dissimulation and equivocation. Indeed, 'he who knows not how to dissimulate, knows not how to reign'.[xl] Moving to more difficult cases and 'the middle degree of deceit', the Prince also needed to know when and how to lie. Thus, quoting Plutarch, Lipsius contended that whilst 'truth is better than falsehood... Experience shows the dignity and qualities of both'.[xli] For a 'good Prince', in difficult times, 'has almost no other means to defend himself and his environment against so many conspirators. And for this reason too I have said that this middle sort of deceit is tolerated by me'.[xlii] Princely conduct in a particular case might therefore, 'depart slightly from human laws, but only in order to preserve his position never to extend it'.[xliii]

This casuistic interpretation of what civil and military prudence might require also recognized how the advice to and practice of monarchy functioned within an evolving sensitivity to the state and its right.[xliv] Lipsius makes clear, in his rationale for the *Politica*, that his advice was not for the multitude, but for the prince, or more precisely his counsel 'to lead and direct' the Prince 'to that great goal that is the common good'.[xlv] As Lipsius explains in Book 3, the good prince requires counsellors and he sees it 'as the first task of a king's prudence to find wise ones'. Such counsel offers 'insights in peace or war'.[xlvi] Indeed, 'deservedly to be praised are the Wise whose task it is, then as now, to light the way of the ruler with the torch of beneficial advice'.[xlvii] This advice necessarily required cultivating a differential political morality, where the prudence practiced by the Prince, his counsellors and ministers differed from the injunction to patient obedience inculcated in the state's good subjects in order to maintain public order.

The implications of Lipsian casuistry for contemporary diplomatic ethics.

Lipsius held to an ideal of practical philosophical reason central to his conception of the constancy necessary both for personal virtue and the conduct of moral and political rule. Indeed, his continuing association with scholars, *contubernales* and elites in Germany, Holland, Spain and England suggests a shared engagement with a philosophical ideal that transcended the confessional divide.[xlviii] This engagement required both an awareness of providence and necessity, together with a common interest in the pursuit of practical wisdom rather than passion, religious enthusiasm and opinion. We might finally consider then how this late humanist approach would address contemporary problems in world politics.

Ultimately, the sixteenth century *politique* humanism that Lipsius pioneered evinced a preoccupation with prudence and *utilitas* at the expense of *honestas*. In this situation it addressed ethically the evolving predicament that the early modern (as well as the modern) politician faced, namely, the problem of deliberating and presenting controversial policies in contingent circumstances of change and uncertainty.

In the practical field of international politics immediate facts, particular and specific situations affect deliberation, presentation and judgement

This practical philosophic approach to difficult cases differs from international legal rationalism in its sensitivity to the difficulty of applying abstract norms to the lived experience of difficult cases. As Jonsen and Toulmin explain in *The Abuse of Casuistry*, in the rationalist 'way general ethical rules relate to specific moral cases in a *theoretical* manner, with universal rules serving as "axioms" from which particular moral rules are deduced as theorems'. By contrast, for a casuist, 'the relation is frankly practical with general moral rules serving as "maxims" which can be fully understood only in terms of the paradigmatic cases that define their meaning and force'.[xlix] Such an approach emphasises practical statements and arguments that are '*concrete, temporal and presumptive*'.[l] In the practical field of international politics, unlike the exact theoretical or natural sciences, immediate facts, particular and specific situations affect deliberation, presentation and judgement.

In our 'challenging period of confusion and change' David Fisher has recently argued that western statesmen need to apply early modern just war principles modified by rule utilitarian consequentialism to contemporary wars of choice. [li] The moral aim 'is to make war just and to make only just war'.[lii] Following this maxim, however, Fisher too quickly dismisses 'realist' *raisons d'etat*[liii] and contends that 'war is just only if it is undertaken with competent authority, for a just cause, with right intention as a last resort, and with more good than harm judged likely to result taking into account the probability of success; while in its conduct individual applications of force should be both proportionate and discriminate minimizing non-combatant casualties; and the war should end in a just peace'.[liv]

Fisher's problem is that he attends insufficiently to the particularity of case ethics by asserting abstract rules at the expense of the timeliness and particularity of circumstances governing any state action or inaction. Contra Fisher, *raison d'etat* was not informed by an amoral realism, but evolved a casuistic mixed prudence that Lipsius adapted to address the predicament of sixteenth and seventeenth century rule. Following this counsel we would arrive at a different and perhaps more practical set of maxims for difficult and ambiguous cases, whether it be the international community's response to Putin's intervention in Ukraine or the failure of the international community to intervene in Syria.

In such difficult cases a modern day Lipsian would contend

that the counsel offered to a Prime Minister or President would recognize the necessity of a situational ethical practice that lead and directed the prince to that 'great goal that is the common good'. This is particularly the case in global politics where opinion and passion, both transitory and unstable, influence the masses. Wise counsel must take into account popular credulity and fecklessness. This necessarily affects the conduct of the prince who in order to maintain stability and peace must of necessity have recourse to a mixed prudence that adjusts to a 'reality that is changeable in every respect'. Such prudence makes use of both simulation and dissimulation to advance the common good. Indeed, while truth is better than falsehood, as the ancients acknowledge 'experience shows the dignity and qualities of both'. In difficult cases, princely conduct might, in other words, 'depart slightly from human laws, but only in order to preserve his position never to extend it. For necessity being a great defender of the weakness of man, breaks every law'. [iv]

Wise counsel must take into account popular credulity and fecklessness.

Hence, mixed prudence and virtue are the two leaders of civil life, but prudence 'is the rudder that guides the virtues'. In particular it 'offers insight' into cases of war or peace and the state's right in such decisions. Here history and experience, rather than abstract norms, play a central role in determining a prudent course. Indeed, 'history is the fount from which political and prudential choosing flows'. Since the end of the Cold War, such a mixed prudential view of international politics has been honoured only in the breach both by US and European governments and their idealist critics.

By contrast, the wise counsellor to early modern monarchs recognized the danger of presenting them in overly idealistic terms that could lead to a damaging loss of credibility. Indeed, and in the context of NATO's eastward expansion and Putin's reclamation of the Crimea, 'the pretence' of

idealism often 'ignites the fires of strife' across Europe. A wise prince in such circumstances would prefer the mixed prudential application of the material of deliberation to the requirements of presentation. Ultimately, a prince in troubled cases like Syria or the Crimea would recognize, unlike Obama, that he 'must do not what is beautiful to say, but what is necessary in practice'. Indeed a contemporary Lipsian would be astonished at how little prepared the political class in the United States and Europe are for war. Lacking knowledge of military prudence they are unlikely to deliberate slowly over the reasons for the use of force or the outcome of using force. Lack of attention to history leads to the problems encountered in Afghanistan and Iraq and a failure to appreciate Russia's long term strategic interest in the Crimea.

More particularly, the West's conduct of international relations increasingly requires an awareness of the arcana governing all interventions and the need to practice a differential political morality. This would recognize the importance of Tacitean and stoic advice on the difficulty of political action. Linking *raison d'état* to active Roman virtue rather than Fisher's theoretically abstract rule consequentialism would, a contemporary Lipsian might argue, offer a limited ethical practice more easily adjusted to our 'troubled condition of confusion and change'.



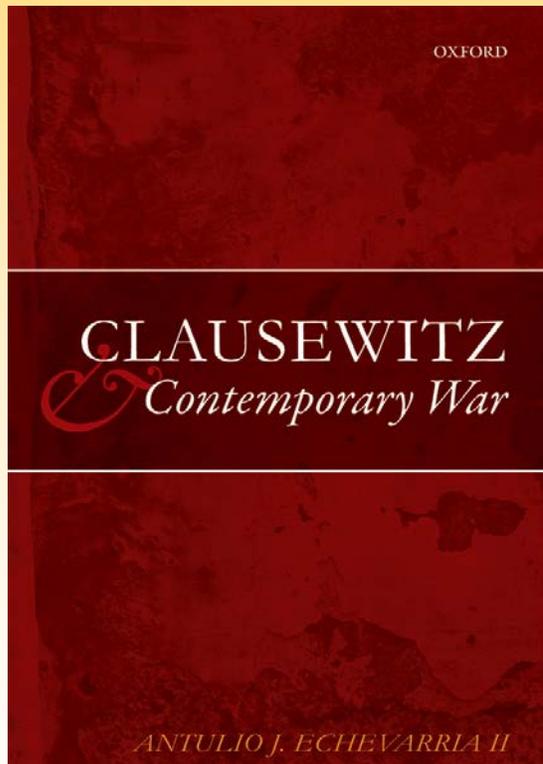
The Miseries and Misfortunes of War (1635) (fig 1)

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- [i] S.Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,2001) p.117.
- [ii] Nicolo Machiavelli *The Prince* (London: J.M. Dent 1944) ch.15.p.117
- [iii] *Ibid*, ch. 14, p.111.
- [iv] Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 55-56.
- [v] In the adjustment of casuistry to the counsel of the Prince, there is a clear affinity between Lipsius' *Politica* and Giovanni Botero's *Della Ragion di Stato* (1589) especially their concern with prudence and their shared desire to secure and expand the state. See G.Botero, *The Reason of State*, trans by P.J. and D.P.Waley (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956) especially chapter 2 p.34-72. Like Lipsius, Botero had close links with the Jesuits. See R. Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), p.182-86.
- [vi] Tacitus, *Annals*, trans. by Alfred John Church and William John Brodribb (New York: Random House, 1942), 2.59 .
- [vii] one copy of which included a loose title page dedicated to the protestant prince, Maurice of Nassau See Jan Waszink, 'Introduction', *Justus Lipsius Politica Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction* ed. J. Waszink (Biblioteca Latinitate Novvae, Royal Van Gorcum, Assen, 2004) footnote 93, p.114.
- [viii] Justus Lipsius *Politicorum Sive Civilis Doctrinae Libri Sex* (1589), Bk 4, ch.3. *Politica* for short. All references are from *Justus Lipsius Politica Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, ed. Jan Waszink (Biblioteca Latinitate Novvae, Assen, 2004).
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- [x] Lipsius, *Politica*, ed. by Waszink, p.97 and p.733
- [xi] Justus Lipsius, *C. Cornelii Taciti Opera Quae Exstant* 1. Lipsius quartum recensuit (Antwerp, 1588) f.4. Translated and cited in Jan Papy, 'Justus Lipsius and the German Republic of Letter', *Index Actorum Symposii Leitseite Kongress* (Munich 2002), p.2. Available at <http://phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/GermLat/Acta/Papy.htm>
- [xii] For Lipsius' influence upon English political thought see Adriana McCrae *Constant Minds Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm* (Toronto, Toronto University

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- [xiii] Geoffrey Parker, 'The Limits to revolutions in military affairs: Maurice of Nassau, the battle of Nieuwpoort (1600) and the Legacy'. *The Journal of Military History* 71,2, April 2007 pp.331-72.
- [xiv] Lipsius, *On Constancy*, ed. by Sellars, (Bristol: Scholars Press, 1991) p.52-3.
- [xv] Lipsius, *Politica*, ed. by Waszink 3.3. It occurs in the context of a casuist discussion of whether dissenters 'must always be punished, and all of them'. It is not Curiosity which drives me to this question, but the Common Interest, and the present state of Europe, which I cannot behold but in tears.' p.391.
- [xvi] Lipsius *Preliminary Matter, Politica*, ed. by Waszink, p.231. 'Machiavelli whose genius I do not despise, sharp, subtle and fiery as it is'. Again in Book 4's discussion of deceit, Lipsius notes that, 'the Italian reprobate must not be so categorically condemned'. *Ibid*, p.511.
- [xvii] Lipsius, *Politica*, ed. by Waszink, p.531. Italics in original.
- [xviii] See J.H. Hexter, *The Vision of Politics on the Eve of the Reformation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) p.168. See R. Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), p.183. Bireley writes that for Botero, 'the term reason carried a particular implication for him. He argued that the ruler who sought a powerful state did best to seek the well-being of his subjects in a fashion that was moral and so reasonable.'
- [xix] *Ibid*, p.58.
- [xx] Lipsius, *Politica*, ed. by Waszink, 1.7, p.283.
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Paradigms Reconsidered

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Despite the sheer number of books published these days, the publication of a single book that changes the way a society confronts an issue or thinks about an entire topic remains a very rare occurrence. One such rarity was Thomas S. Kuhn's 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. As Ian Hacking observed in his introduction to the fourth edition, "Thomas Kuhn was out to change our understanding of the sciences—that is, of the activities that have enabled our species, for better or worse, to dominate the planet. He succeeded".^[i] Perhaps the most pervasive of the several influences that *Structure* has had is the way in which it re-defined the common understanding of the word "paradigm". Prior to *Structure*, "paradigm" was used mainly in relation to grammar, where it described the base (or root word) of a set of forms that contained variations of this root. Today, the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "a typical example or pattern of something; a pattern or model; a world view underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject".^[ii] It is due to *Structure* that this contemporary definition exists.

Perhaps the most pervasive of the several influences that *Structure* has had is the way in which it re-defined the common understanding of the word "paradigm".

Given the nature of this post-*Structure* definition, it is unsurprising that the word "paradigm" has become commonplace. In Hacking's words: "Nowadays, *paradigm*, along with its companion *paradigm shift*, is embarrassingly everywhere. When Kuhn wrote, few people had ever encountered it. Soon, it became trendy...Today, it is pretty hard to escape the damn word".^[iii] Unsurprisingly, therefore, use of the word "paradigm" has become commonplace in discussion of strategy. However, those employing it have seldom defined or elaborated upon it. This omission is more significant that it may at first appear. At risk of oversimplifying for the sake of making a point, because a paradigm (as the word is understood today) establishes the common framework for understanding a problem and for developing solutions to it, the employment by a strategist of one particular paradigm instead of another can ultimately mean the difference between victory and defeat.

Given the nature of this post-*Structure* definition, it is unsurprising that the word "paradigm" has become commonplace.

It was encouraging, therefore, to see Justin Kelly's article "On Paradigms", which elaborated on the subject, featured in an earlier edition of this journal.^[iv] On closer scrutiny, however, it is apparent that Kelly's article conflates "paradigm" with "theory", an unfortunate result being that its discussion becomes muddled and in the process it misses several of the nuances of a "paradigm" as Kuhn construed it. This conflation is understandable: as Margaret Masterman later highlighted, Kuhn uses the word "paradigm" in no less than 21 different ways within *Structure*.^[v] Kuhn himself, in a postscript first included in the second edition, asserted that "the paradigm as shared example is the central element of what I now take to be the most novel and least understood aspect of this book".^[vi] This author, too, has previously attempted to tackle Kuhn's concept of paradigm in the military context, albeit through a discussion of limited scope.^[vii]

Together, Kelly's article along with my own prior research, have convinced me that Kuhn's definition of a "paradigm" and its applicability to strategy needs to be further explored. This article conducts that exploration, providing an overview

To cite this Article: Jackson, Aaron P., "Paradigms Reconsidered," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 26-31.

of Kuhn's seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and the concept of "paradigm" that emerged from it. Subsequently the article considers how this applies to strategy. It then concludes by addressing the implications for strategists.

Scientific Revolutions

As its title suggests, Kuhn's book set out to explain *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. This "structure", which culminates in the revolutions that Kuhn was interested in explaining, consists of the following sequence of events: (1) normal science, characterised by "puzzle-solving" within the confines of a paradigm; (2) the appearance of a significant anomaly; (3) crisis; and (4) revolution. In explaining this sequence of events, Kuhn challenged what had previously been the orthodox version of the history of the natural sciences, which postulated that science progressed in a linear fashion from one idea or discovery to another, with each building on those that had come before it.

Kuhn rejected this version of the history of science and asserted instead that scientific progression had lurched forward through a series of crises and revolutions, punctuated by (sometimes lengthy) periods characterised by little change at all. It is these periods of little change that Kuhn labelled "normal science", asserting that the majority of scientists conducted the majority of their research during such periods:

"[N]ormal science" means research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for further practise. Today such achievements are recounted, though seldom in their original form, by science textbooks, elementary and advanced. ... Before such books became popular...many of the famous classics of science fulfilled a similar function. ... [These texts] shared two essential characteristics. Their achievement was sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing models of scientific activity. Simultaneously, it was sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve.[viii]

This type of problem resolving Kuhn subsequently referred to as "puzzle solving". He also explained, in his first usage of the word "paradigm", that "[a]chievements that share these two characteristics I shall henceforth refer to as 'paradigms', a term that relates closely to 'normal science'".[ix] Paradigms, as defined at this juncture in Kuhn's text, are considered to be an overarching set of common beliefs that underlies a particular approach to the conduct of scientific research.

Although normal science often encounters phenomena that it cannot explain, such problems are usually dismissed as "mere curiosities" and are often "just put aside".[x] Eventually, however, normal science will encounter a particularly pervasive problem—or sometimes a series of related problems—that it not only cannot explain, but that is also so significant that it cannot be easily dismissed. Kuhn referred to such a problem as an "anomaly", and asserted that the discovery of an anomaly often leads to a "crisis". During a

crisis normal science and its puzzle solving activities break down, as "scientists take a different attitude toward existing paradigms, and the nature of their research changes accordingly".[xi]

Such a crisis precipitates a "revolution", the core idea explored within *Structure*. As a result of a revolution, a crisis is resolved through the discovery and promulgation of a new paradigm that is capable of solving puzzles that the previous paradigm could not. A new period of normal science ensues, wherein the new paradigm means that an entirely new array of puzzles now exists to be solved. Kuhn famously also referred to this process as both a "paradigm change" and a "paradigm shift", observing that "[w]hen the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals".[xii]

Kuhn famously also referred to this process as both a "paradigm change" and a "paradigm shift"

Kuhn on Paradigms

In light of the above summary of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, one could be forgiven for thinking that Kuhn's construction of a "paradigm" was fairly straightforward. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Despite his upfront definition of the term, Kuhn then proceeded to use it in a variety of ways within *Structure*—21, according to Masterman—and this obfuscation has (understandably) crept into subsequent literature.

To resolve this confusion it is useful to turn to Kuhn's subsequent writings on the topic, beginning with the postscript to the second edition of *Structure*. It is here that Kuhn asserts that many of the uses of the word identified by Masterman were due to "stylistic inconsistencies" that "can be eliminated with relative ease".[xiii] Once this elimination has occurred, however, two major uses of the term remain. As Kuhn explains:

[I]n much of the book the term "paradigm" is used in two different senses. On the one hand, it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community. On the other, it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, the concrete puzzle solutions which, employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science.[xiv]

The first of these major uses of the word "paradigm" is the one defined in the preceding section of this paper. Kuhn at this juncture refers to this as the "global" use of the word and explains that in this sense it describes a "disciplinary matrix". Asserting the existence of numerous elements within this matrix, which together constitute a paradigm, he singles out four prominent elements for further examination: symbolic generalisations; shared commitments to certain beliefs; shared values; and shared examples.[xv] This last element Kuhn refers to as an "exemplar", a term that he offers as a more suitable alternative to describe his second major use of the term "paradigm" in the original text of *Structure*—what he

also refers to as the “local” use of the term.[xvi]

This second major use of the term “paradigm”—as descriptive of a shared example—is the usage that Kuhn considers with the benefit of hindsight to be most problematic, and he thus clarifies this usage in both the postscript to *Structure* and in another paper entitled “Second Thoughts on Paradigms”. In a nutshell, this use of the word paradigm refers to an exemplary example that can be employed by a scientific community as a means of conveying, or perhaps symbolising, the shared commitments (or common set of rules or beliefs) of that community.[xvii]

This second major use of the term “paradigm”—as descriptive of a shared example—is the usage that Kuhn considers with the benefit of hindsight to be most problematic

Here another problem arises regarding the scale of scientific communities. While the examples Kuhn gives in *Structure* start off on a grand scale—he cites the major works of likes of Copernicus, Newton and Aristotle—he progressively narrows down his definition to the point where he asserts that a scientific community may consist “of perhaps one hundred members, occasionally significantly fewer”. [xviii] It is from this part of Kuhn’s discussion that the perception has arisen that a paradigm and a theory are synonymous. For Kuhn, however, a theory only constitutes a paradigm if it establishes a framework for further problem solving within the scientific community that subscribes to it.

Paradigms, the Social Sciences and Incommensurability

Before progressing to an examination of paradigms in strategy, two remaining conceptual issues need to be addressed. The first regards the applicability or otherwise of the term “paradigm”—both its global and local uses—within the *social sciences*. This issue arises because of Kuhn’s role as a philosopher and historian of the *natural sciences*. These two disciplines serve different purposes and employ different methodologies. Because strategy, understood herein to be the linking of strategic ways and military means to achieve political or policy ends, sits within the social rather than the natural sciences, there is a need to determine whether or not Kuhn’s conception of “paradigms” is actually applicable to strategy.

Again the starting point for resolution of this issue is Kuhn himself, this time in a short paper published well after *Structure*. Here Kuhn argued that paradigms do exist within the social sciences (which he calls the “human sciences”), however they function differently. This is because while the physical sciences seek to discover laws, the social sciences seek to understand behaviour. In *Structure*, Kuhn hypothesised that puzzle solving within a paradigm constitutes normal science, which is where the majority of scientists work. A crisis is the exception in the natural sciences, and a revolution may not even be recognised until well after the paradigm has changed. In the social sciences, however, the aim is to

identify and challenge the paradigm, to propose a better means of understanding and by doing so to change the paradigm.[xix] As a result—and Kuhn admitted that this hypothesis was untested—there may be no equivalent to normal science and puzzle solving within the social sciences. (This hypothesis did not, however, rule out the existence of paradigms themselves).

Masterman offered an alternate possibility in her own study of paradigms. Asserting the existence of “*multiple paradigm sciences*...in which, far from there being no paradigm, there are on the contrary too many”, she stated that “[t]his is the present overall situation in the psychological, social and information sciences”. In the social sciences this state of affairs results in each paradigm covering a narrower area of research than in the natural sciences, however normal science and problem solving nevertheless exist. This situation increases progress on puzzle solving and results in an increased rate of local paradigm change, but also in a slower rate of change to global paradigms over the longer term.[xx] As will be shown in the next section, Masterman’s hypothesis appears to be accurate in the case of strategy.

This is one of the most important aspects of *Structure*, although many of those subsequently seeking to apply Kuhn’s conceptualisation of a paradigm have overlooked it.

The second issue that needs to be addressed before examining paradigms within strategy concerns what Kuhn referred to as “incommensurability”. This is one of the most important aspects of *Structure*, although many of those subsequently seeking to apply Kuhn’s conceptualisation of a paradigm have overlooked it. In a nutshell, Kuhn asserted that a core characteristic of paradigms is that they are irreconcilable with one another, as each sees the world in a different and often conflicting way. (This does not mean that one is right and the other wrong; rather, it simply means that each understands reality differently).[xxi] In subsequent writings he elaborated on this point, asserting that “incommensurable...does not mean ‘incomparable’”. Analogising paradigms to different languages he explained that that people may speak more than one language, that languages are translatable into other languages, that they may have certain elements in common, but that two languages cannot communicate directly.[xxii] The next section will show that in the case of strategy the incommensurability of paradigms functions in this manner, and that the incommensurability of their respective paradigms underlies some of the prominent debates between strategists.

Paradigms in Strategy

This paper has thus far explored Kuhn’s work on “paradigms” to enable a greater appreciation of the nuances of the term. This section discusses how paradigms apply within the field of strategy. The above exploration having consumed most of the available space (a justifiable measure given its importance), this section is by necessity brief and should be

considered an overview rather than a panacea.

Turning first to global paradigms, an initial observation is that the very definition of "strategy" constitutes a paradigm. Strategy is the linking of strategic ways and military means to achieve political or policy ends. Or is it? In fact, this understanding of the word "strategy" has evolved slowly over time from antiquity to the present, and for much of history the contemporary meanings of the words "strategy", "operations", "tactics" and "military instructions" have been muddled and interchangeable.[xxiii] The "anomaly" and "crisis" that led to the separation of these definitions and terms was the Napoleonic wars of the early 19th century and their unprecedented scale in particular. It was in their wake that Clausewitz declared that war is "a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means".[xxiv] This set the scene for today's generally accepted understanding of the term strategy to take hold more-or-less by the end of the 19th century.

Strategy is the linking of strategic ways and military means to achieve political or policy ends. Or is it?

So encompassing is this paradigm today that any paper seeking to address strategy *must* comply with this understanding of the term. Otherwise by default it is discussing something other than strategy. This global paradigm therefore corresponds to what Kuhn called "the most global community of all natural scientists". Here, the paradigm is so broad that it does not readily present major empirical problems. These emerge at lower levels, with the next down from the most global community being that of "the main scientific professional groups".[xxv] The equivalent to these groups within the field of strategy is the major types of strategist. From the divisions that exist within many of the major textbooks on strategy, one may deduce that these types include (at a minimum) maritime strategists, land power strategists, air power strategists and nuclear strategists. To these older and more established communities may potentially be added the more recent and numerically smaller communities of space power strategists and electronic warfare (or dare one say it, cyber) strategists.[xxvi] Each of these "communities" of strategists has its own global paradigms and its own accompanying views of reality.

Within each community there are, of course, sub-communities, sub-sub-communities and so on, each with their own paradigms. For example, within the community of land power strategists a major division presently exists between advocates of conventional warfare and advocates of unconventional or "small wars".[xxvii] While working towards a common goal of determining the best way to prepare for and prosecute land warfare, members of these sub-communities nevertheless adhere to incommensurable paradigms, a factor that explains the intensity of the animosity between them. Ultimately, according to Kuhn's definition of incommensurability, neither of these communities' views of reality is "right" nor "wrong", despite what members of each community regularly say about one another. Both communities simply see the world differently and both are as theoretically valid as each other. What is important is therefore

not which paradigm is "right" per se, but which is more useful for the conduct of strategic planning for the future. The cases made by members of either community may well be stronger if they developed more fully this aspect of their respective perceptions of reality, in preference to directly attacking and attempting to undermine one another's arguments.

Once one has delved sufficiently into the constituent elements of each sub-community, local paradigms begin to reveal themselves. Although space constraints prevent a detailed analysis from occurring here, some examples of local paradigms include the battleship, aircraft carrier and submarine schools in maritime strategy, the city bombing, military targeting and leadership decapitation schools in air power strategy, and the offensive and defensive schools in land power strategy. Debate between proponents of some of these paradigms continues to rage while in other cases it does not (allowing for multiple paradigms to coexist and each address their own set of internal problems, as Masterman hypothesised). Other paradigms have through process of crisis and revolution been discarded, most often because of either the failure of practise to live up to the expectations of theory (as in the case of conventional city bombing), or because technological advances have precipitated a "paradigm shift" (as in the case of the shift in dominance from battleships to aircraft carriers during the Second World War).

It will come as no surprise to most strategists, however, that the situation is actually not this simple.

So far this description of paradigms in strategy has been linear and hierarchical, with a global community of strategists divided into major communities and those into sub-communities, etc., each with their own global or local paradigms (or both). It will come as no surprise to most strategists, however, that the situation is actually not this simple. Some ideas seem to transcend the communities and paradigms previously discussed. For example, Beatrice Heuser determined that older communities have influenced more recent ones, leading in one case to the air power and nuclear strategy communities' "adapting primarily the [maritime] concepts of blockade, deterrence and the 'fleet in being'".[xxviii] In this case, the concepts are not paradigms; rather, variants of them are applicable within different paradigms. Each variant fits within each paradigm's unique world view and is formed accordingly to suit that view, in the same way that the English language has adapted certain parts of French to suit its speakers' own linguistic purposes.[xxix]

Heuser also asserted the existence of what she called "the Napoleonic paradigm", which emphasises the centrality of decisive battle, the concentration of forces against key enemy weaknesses (what Clausewitz called the "centre of gravity") and the pursuit of total (rather than limited) victory over an opponent as an end in itself. Importantly, Heuser has argued convincingly that this paradigm dominated the global community of strategists from the mid 19th century until at least the end of the First World War. Just as importantly, she has noted that multiple challenges to this paradigm

have emerged since the end of the Second World War.[xxx] This may indicate that a major (i.e. global) paradigm shift is underway, and possibly has been for the last 70 years![xxxi]

most of the “popular” strategic theories at any point in time are not actually paradigms at all

It is also possible in light of Kuhn’s writings in and after *Structure* to determine that not all military theories are paradigms. In fact the opposite is true: most of the “popular” strategic theories at any point in time are not actually paradigms at all. Instead they are shaped by the beliefs and values that underlie the paradigm to which their proponents subscribe. For example, the Revolution in Military Affairs, Network Centric Warfare, the Effects Based Approach to Operations and AirSea Battle are all manifestations of what could be labelled the “technological solution” paradigm, which (as the label used here implies) advocates that the application of new technology is the best means to solve strategic problems. [xxxii] This is another example of a paradigm that appears to transcend the aforementioned strategic communities. Yet on closer examination it can be seen that over time it has developed its own community of adherents who have brought with them background knowledge from the other communities (and who resultanty speak two languages, to continue Kuhn’s analogy).

Conceptually, what ties all of these paradigms together is that they are either (in the case of local paradigms) the exemplars that Kuhn ultimately preferred to label them, or (in the case of global paradigms) they constitute a disciplinary matrix. To fit within this matrix, global paradigms are at once symbolic generalisations, shared commitments to certain beliefs, shared values and shared examples. The words *beliefs* and *values* in particular underlie one final and very important point that needs to be made, which is that the existence of some paradigms is not necessarily consciously realised by those adhering to them. Recent observations about the difference between “design” and the “military planning process” have brought one of these previously unacknowledged paradigms to the fore: that most strategic (and for that matter military) planning is based on a positivist world-view.[xxxiii] Although this article is not the forum for debate about this observation, it is nevertheless pertinent to note that paradigms in strategy, as elsewhere, may operate without their adherents realising that this is the case.

Conclusion

Ultimately the employment of paradigms by strategists is not an option, as paradigms contain the world-views that dictate how they react to the environment and events around them. Strategist therefore cannot develop strategy without employing some kind of paradigm when doing so. Although

paradigms may be (and often are) subconsciously applied by strategists acting in accordance with their beliefs, values, intuition or the like, developing an explicit knowledge of the paradigms they are applying allows strategists to better answer such questions as “is this strategy the best available?” and “what assumptions have I made in developing this strategy?”

Developing an explicit understanding the nuances of paradigms, and subsequently applying this understanding during the development of strategy, therefore provides strategists with a very powerful tool to assist in ensuring that ways and means are best suited to the desired end. The debate that has unfolded within the US military establishment over the last decade or so about whether conventional or unconventional (specifically counterinsurgency) ways and means are better for prosecuting war in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan is an example of a debate between adherents of different paradigms. As far as paradigms are concerned, however, this debate has not yet entered the realm of explicit consideration. A move to explicit consideration of these competing paradigms may well reveal new and hitherto unrealised aspects of each paradigm, in the same way that the aforementioned critique of traditional military planning as positivist in nature emerged through the conduct of analysis using previously underemployed mechanisms such as philosophy and systems theory.

The operation of paradigms within strategy is both more subtle and more complicated than has been previously acknowledged. Perhaps most importantly, it is worth remembering that theories are not necessarily tantamount to paradigms, yet they are where the majority of analysis seems to be focused. In modern military bureaucracies, a great deal of jostling by various interest groups (particularly where the push for funding is concerned) often leads to the rebadging of old theories and their presentation as new, when in fact they sit neatly within an established paradigm, sometimes even one whose prior theoretical and conceptual manifestations have been thoroughly discredited. In particular, many of the theories developed within the technological solution paradigm identified above tend to follow this pattern.

The development of a more detailed and explicit knowledge of paradigms—especially global paradigms—may therefore offer new insights that allow for the evaluation of theory from a fresh and, importantly, an intellectually coherent perspective. As the employment (either consciously or otherwise) by a strategist of one particular paradigm instead of another can ultimately mean the difference between victory and defeat, a better understanding of the operation of paradigms will help maximise the chances of strategists’ developing sound paradigms before the employment of military means, rather than in the wake of defeat as is so often and tragically the case.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this paper are the author’s own and are not necessarily those of the Australian Defence Organisation or any part thereof.

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- [xxiv] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard & Peter Paret (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 87.
- [xxv] In the natural sciences these professional groups include physicists, chemists, biologists, etc. Kuhn, *Structure*, pp. 176-177.
- [xxvi] The division of strategists into these types has been made following an analysis of the content of several texts that discuss the evolution of strategy. Even those sources consulted that proceed chronologically tend to include separate chapters or sections dedicated to the evolution of strategic thought within each of the major communities identified here. For example, see: Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Heuser, *Evolution of Strategy*; Elinor C. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012); J. Boon Bartholomees, Jr., ed., *US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy* (Carlisle: US Army War College, June 2012). The division between these communities is also evident between (and within) each of the Services. Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1989).
- [xxvii] It must be noted that numerous terms are used by members of each of these sub-communities to describe themselves and their competing paradigms. For a summary of the debate between them, see: Mark N. Popov, "COIN or Conventional? Resolving the Small Army Conundrum", *Canadian Army Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn 2012), pp. 95-107.
- [xxviii] Heuser, *Evolution of Strategy*, pp. 503-504.
- [xxix] This example is thus comparable to the linguistic analogy Kuhn used when discussing incommensurability between paradigms and serves as evidence that incommensurability operates in this manner within the field of strategy.
- [xxx] Heuser, *Evolution of Strategy*, parts III & VIII.
- [xxxi] Perhaps this is what Masterman meant when she observed that multiple paradigm sciences exhibit a slower rate of long term change to their global paradigms.
- [xxxii] On the history of this paradigm and the various exemplars that it has encapsulated, see: Antoine Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare: Order and Chaos on the Battlefields of Modernity* (London: Hurst and Co., 2009).
- [xxxiii] Positivism advocates a methodology in which the subjects of study should be observed from a neutral viewpoint, with the results of observation being subsequently assessed in a rational and objective manner to allow the researcher to determine the universal laws governing the relationships between them. This methodology is generally reductionist, linear and relies on predictable cause-and-effect relationships. Phil Johnson & Joanne Duberley, *Understanding Management Research: An Introduction to Epistemology* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 11-37.

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B L O O M S B U R Y



Strategy Is For The Bad Guys: Why Modern Pop Culture Struggles to Understand Ends and Means

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The premise of this article is that popular culture's demonstration and understanding of strategy is deeply flawed. This matters, perhaps to a greater degree than many realize. The reason is that it influences the way in which people perceive how violence is used for the gaining or sustaining of a political behaviour or condition, which is to say, policy. Storytelling usually seeks to advance or challenge ideas about morality and ethics, thus has a strong influence on shared beliefs and ideas as to how violence or force should be used. The argument here is that most of the more popular storytelling forms have such a simplistic view of these issues that they exercise a generally less than useful influence on what many have come to understand about strategy.

The majority of what we see and read essentially leads to a popular view of real strategy; that it is somehow a form of negative activity, done by the bad men. It is worth noting that two of the most successful novel and film combinations of all time, "Lord of the Rings" and "Harry Potter", take a grossly simplistic view of what would be termed "strategy" in their storytelling. Harry Potter would have been on thin ice if the Dark Lord had advanced some quite reasonable ideas or had Harry's parents been radical extremists advocating violent means. In Lord of the Rings, the enemy is quite literally demonic; so much so that his actual extermination will be the only thing that delivers a tolerable end state. The real world only rarely, if ever, mirrors these conditions.

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The fundamental premise of strategy is the use of violence to gain a political condition or behaviour. All good strategic theorists understand that only certain "policies" will accept the use of violence; what varies massively is when and why that will be the case. In storytelling the answer is always obvious: what is "evil" or "wrong" has to be stopped, and what ever it is, it is so wrong or so evil that violence is clearly justified. Only very rarely does the opponent in a story have a reasonable policy to which he may well be entitled. Thus, the opposing policies sought by the bad men are always grossly unreasonable; for example world domination, a criminal empire, and/or possession of something they are clearly not entitled to. Popular storytelling thus conceives the very basics of policy in black and white terms, whereas real world policy, and thus strategy, is in fact many shades of grey. A notable exception is perhaps the story of the Native Americans, which has seen a complete reversal from the films of the 1940s to the "Dances with Wolves" of the 1990s.

The Kobayashi Maru

The much discussed on-line Star Trek fleet training simulation, "The Kobayashi Maru" shows just how odd pop-cultures' view of politics actually is. The simulation basically sets a Star Fleet captain on a mission where the civilian star ship, the Kobayashi Maru, with 300 passengers, is floundering as the result of hitting a mine in a "neutral zone," and all will be lost unless the Star Fleet captain moves swiftly to the rescue. The problem is that in doing so he violates the neutral-zone and risks sending the Federation to war with the Klingons. For real world strategists, this is so simple it almost defies the description of being a problem. Simply put, saving 300 people is clearly not a cost worth starting a war over, in the same way that the populations of Rwanda, Srebrenica, and today Syria, are simply not worth the cost. If 300 dead is worrying to a Star Trek captain, then he should probably seek life elsewhere, because a Federation tax payer expects decisions to be made in line with policy and not based upon a course of

To cite this Article: Owen, William F., "Strategy Is For The Bad Guys: Why Modern Pop Culture Struggles to Understand Ends and Means," *Infinity Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 1, summer 2014, pages 33-36.

action designed to save himself from bad dreams.

If one wants to see 'good strategy' even being discussed in modern storytelling, then you have to watch shows such as "Sons of Anarchy", "The Shield", or even the classic trilogy, "The Godfather." While not about state or even sub-state politics, these stories show criminals and/or clearly corrupt policemen plotting how much and what levels of violence, and against whom, will get them the conditions or behaviours (i.e. power) to do what they want. From the supposedly moral perspective, violence almost always goes un-rewarded or extracts too great a cost. The need is selfish, thus negotiable, not clearly good, and thus not requiring all and any means necessary. In other words, strategic excellence is required.

If one wants to see 'good strategy' even being discussed in modern storytelling, then you have to watch shows such as "Sons of Anarchy"

It could well be claimed that using the mirror of strategy to examine pop-storytelling risks seeing nuance and insight that simply is not there because the writer of the story was completely unaware of it. However, it is also fair to suggest that many writers and screenwriters are more aware of strategy than certainly most members of the US Army. To paraphrase Tom Clancy, "fiction has to make sense." Put simply, characters need a pretty good reason to fight and risk death.

Some exceptions do exist. The series of books and films "Game of Thrones" or "A Tale of Fire and Ice" set in an entirely fantasy world, do to some degree deal with complex and complicated strategic problems. However the bad men are very bad indeed and the good men are not all that good, but there are clear distinctions which means the reader or viewer will side with the "policy" of the less evil.

Policy

At the heart of the problem lies the fact that the policy that the storyteller usually assigns to the hero is the one that the audience is clearly going to support, even when it may actually make no sense to do so. The movie "Avatar" is a good example of this. The central premise for humans being on Pandora is to mine the appropriately named "unobtainium." Clearly an expensive and risky undertaking, so we can assume that humans both want and need "unobtainium." Exactly "why", however, is never explained. The need is just predicated on the fact that it has massive commercial value - "20 million per kilo." Much like diamonds, oil or illegal narcotics, the policy must have the power to extract this mineral in order to sell it. However in order for the story to make sense, all the normal policy discussions, such as existing policy, available intelligence, legality, oversight, and even the media are almost entirely absent. In the end the humans decide to use force in a clumsy and ultimately ineffective way with no consideration of actual cost or negative consequences. In fact almost every action taken by humans with the film makes little tactical, strategic or policy sense - which is presumably what James Cameron, the writer

and director, needed to do to tell the story he wanted to tell. The opposing policy, that of the ten-foot tall blue-skinned natives, the Na'vi, is so innocent, wholesome, and ethical that in the end even the planet itself rebels against the human invader. Whatever the debates may be about the films intended themes, allegorical and metaphorical, it is not a film that can inform any student of strategy, because the humans are so catastrophically unintelligent, and the Na'vi so blessed with an undoubted and unquestionably good policy, that the audience is left with no doubt as to who should prevail.

Whatever the debates, it is not a film that can inform any student of strategy

Real Power

The real value of the previously mentioned "Game of Thrones" is that real political power is at stake and the nature of that power is distinctly undemocratic. Fantasy, myth, and legend seem remarkably unconcerned with the nature of political power, as long as it is good, thus having policies all can agree with. As far as we know Snow White did not immediately call for fair and democratic elections as soon as she became Queen, and we will never know how much violence she and her husband were prepared to use to maintain their hold on power. They were probably pretty ruthless. For example, in the original Grimm fairy tale, Snow White tortures her "allegedly evil" step mother to death, in public, by having her dance herself to death in red hot iron shoes. Peace and reconciliation was clearly not on the table and it could be suggested that this incident raises some real concerns about Snow White as a political leader. In fact, being written by 19th century Germans, Snow White does contain some interesting "policy" questions. Being "the fairest in the land" obviously equates to political power, and the evil Queen obviously opts for poisoning Snow White because a UAV launched Hellfire missile, or exploding cell phone, would smack of political assassination and thus undermine any perception of being the fairest, and thus the very political legitimacy of the Queen's beauty. You cannot be the most beautiful if you are suspected of assassinating people who may be as, if not more, beautiful than yourself. Nonetheless, Snow White is clearly targeted because of her relevance to policy.

As Clausewitz so brilliantly explained, "Policy" is the thing that drives everything. The vast majority of modern storytelling just assumes a good policy, in that the condition or behaviour sought, via violence, is one that justifies whatever length the hero is willing to go to. Only very rarely is any hero called upon to question if the ends justify the means, when the requirements of policy are so clearly overwhelming. The 2010 movie "Unthinkable" was so grossly simplistic in this sense that it had to place the nuclear annihilation of 4 major U.S. cities at stake to justify torture. The undeniable reality that torture is a proven method of gaining accurate and timely intelligence had to be placed in an extreme context to even allow for a squeamish audience to understand the strategic question. Real life is rarely that extreme. Real life is substantially more ambiguous. No one died or was even physically threatened during the whole "Watergate" saga that eventually lead to

Richard Nixon resigning the Presidency, yet how many stories see body counts accumulate while attempting to avoid lesser outcomes than Presidential impeachment? It may be that even saving a President is not worth killing over, and yet drug dealers and various regimes torture people, sometimes to death, for banal pieces of information, as any cursory review of South American history would show.

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While many may suppose that a conflict of ends and means is an excellent source of dramatic tension, stories often dodge the exam questions. For example, even when the dragon has negotiated a policy where it will only kill/devour one virgin a year, in exchange for not killing entire villages, there is always some hero who wants to suggest that this state of affairs is so unreasonable the dragon must die. Sensible villagers might tell the hero to get lost or at least point the dragon to where the hero may be found sleeping. Even dragons have rights. They may even be a protected species, yet often the "political" considerations that are advanced in these stories are clearly meant to be seen as cowardly or compromising. Witness Ellen Ripley's constant battle in the Alien stories, with those who wish to learn about, study, and exploit the Aliens, in contrast to her policy of total annihilation. Clearly Ellen Ripley does not support a captive breeding program. In fiction, "right" is usually an absolute concept.

Might is Right

Storytelling, and mythic structure in general, requires someone to face adversity and overcome it. There has to be something someone wants and they have to be prepared to fight and die, sometime literally and/or metaphorically, to get it. Whatever "it" is, it has to be worth fighting for. In terms of storytelling, this is only rarely real political power, so the true nature of the thing to be obtained can often be entirely irrelevant. Hitchcock went so far as to label such things "McGuffins", as in something everyone wants, so it does not really matter what it is. The "unobtainium" in Avatar was clearly a "McGuffin." In storytelling that requires fighting, as in violence, and it has to be assumed that the "McGuffin" is worth it. In Alastair McLean's "Ice Station Zebra", the "McGuffin" is an impossibly and illogically malfunctioning satellite that managed to photograph US, as well as its intended Soviet, missile sites, thus making it highly prized by both sides so a struggle to find it first ensues. The problem is that policy is not a McGuffin, and modern storytellers mostly or generally look with suspicion upon political power, which after all is the basis for policy. The ability to obtain policy is almost the definition of political power in its widest sense. For a story to really understand strategy, there has to be a policy which is worth fighting for, but not for absolute cost. To take the most absolute example, Aliens from another planet wish to conquer earth. That is their policy. Conquering earth is clearly worth doing, so massive expense and sacrifice is worth expending. Likewise the continuance of a politically

independent human race is worth everything. The only debate in the outcome of the story is who wins. Even if the Aliens are of our own making, such as in the Matrix trilogy or the Terminator series, the premise is essentially a struggle for survival for which all and any cost is worth paying.

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However, suppose the Aliens just want to occupy and live in Peru, which requires the enslaving the indigenous population. Will we trade world peace for Peru? Can we persuade the Aliens to perhaps occupy North Korea instead? What if the Aliens turn out to be a lot better at running earth than we are? "What have the Aliens ever done for us, apart from the limitless free energy and ending diseased and poverty?" It might be that the Aliens have some pretty good policies. Not much of a story now, is there. Well not until the actual division of power becomes a point of contention. This was actually the premise of the TV series "Earth: Final Conflict". Obviously most audiences are not going to be sympathetic to the "I welcome our Alien Overlords and happily serve them" point of view. Struggle against tyranny is seen as something noble, even if the tyranny is probably pretty beneficial. However, every struggle has limits. If we rise up against the Aliens, are we prepared to kill, kidnap and torture their women and children to gain the political conditions we want? Are they prepared to do the same? Is what we are fighting for worth it?

Any student of strategic history will take all these questions as banal and obvious, but a movie-going or novel-reading public will probably find them deeply disturbing, thus very unpopular. They say they want complicated, but actually they want black and white. Book sales and Movie revenues prove it.

Any student of strategic history will take all these questions as banal and obvious, but a movie-going or novel-reading public will probably find them deeply disturbing

Power

Characters are not policies. The art of storytelling allows almost any good writer to make almost anyone, how ever apparently evil and degenerate, appear both rational and reasonable given enough facts to justify their actions. Witness the remarkably sympathetic view we have of Hannibal Lecter, insane and as cannibalistic as he may be. Where storytelling falls down in the strategic sense is having causes or policies that are ambiguous or driven by complex conditions. How do you make necessary but unpopular ideas seem necessary? "Freedom" is a classically imprecise but clearly good cause, which underpins most simple storytelling. "Control"

is something clearly necessary, but almost impossible for storytellers to address, because control obviously contains elements of oppression and coercion. In contrast, control is a fairly easy idea for anyone in the real world, faced with real world problems, to sell.

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However, what this all leads to is the fact that however real, required, and necessary violence for political aims may be, the predominant popular culture, and to some extent culture itself extant in the western world today and for some time now, finds the idea essentially repugnant, despite the fact that the popular moral compass of the western world is essentially imprecise, ambiguous and hypocritical, in the eyes of those who stand against it.

At the end of the day the world seen by storytellers has to have an essential moral truth as they see it. It has to reflect the moral compass of the audience who will buy the book, the movie ticket or even the DVD. Strategy, by sharp contrast is amoral, and entirely instrumental, or it should be; the means merely have to match the ends. The purveyors of what is ethical and what is not are the politicians. In the real world, ethics are politics. In storytelling ethics is what the writer wants the reader or viewer to believe.

At its heart modern storytelling is the antithesis of strategy.

At its heart modern storytelling is the antithesis of strategy. In the real world a desired political end-state requires some form of measured or cost effective action. In storytelling, the story is the action. It is about the journey and not the destination. It is the doing of the thing that has to be done by the hero, and thus a political condition has to be invented to make that story make sense. For real strategists, storytelling has it all the wrong way around. Is it any wonder that modern soldiers and politicians struggle?

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