

Because strategy never stops...

Infinity Journal



IN THIS EDITION

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A Note From The Editor

Infinity Journal has come a long way in four years. So much so that as Editor I would be forced to admit that the current issue no longer looks anything like the product we intended to create and fashion. Thankfully it looks better.

Our writers have forced a major change upon us. To paraphrase Niccolò Machiavelli: 'Find men as they are, not as you would wish them to be.' We have indeed been forced to find the debates and ideas on strategy as they in fact are, and not as we would have wished them to be.

Every article published in Infinity, represents about a half or a third of submissions received often leaving us in a quite desperate situation for articles. The result of the journey we have made, as a publication, is that we are now far less dogmatic in our judgement as to what articles may effectively produce insight for our readers. We may have been overly harsh in the past, but in this issue we now see the benefit of relaxing or reducing our list of definitional transgressions that might have existed before and we have arguably benefitted from that move.

However, the basics still apply. The only 'means' is violence or the threat of it, and if you are not connecting means with the creation, alteration or sustainment of political conditions and/or behaviours, then you are not talking or writing about strategy." Nothing about that prevents the asking of some serious questions, such as the Editor of our sister publication, The Journal of Military Operations, Jim Storr, asking if anyone really knows what they are talking about. It is entirely necessary to ask what use Strategic theory is, if you cannot apply it. Likewise it is useful to assume that the role of theory is to explain extant phenomena and enable a degree of prediction. Without theory, facts are essentially silent. How good is our theory if outside the pages of Infinity Journal there is a child like debate about defining strategy, and confusion as to the difference between policy and strategy is the norm?

Both Infinity Journal and The Journal of Military Operations exist to aid practice and understanding. We do not exist to provide academic credentials or a forum for academics to publish, nor are we a "web-based log" for a set of recently formed opinions. Essentially, this edition sets a benchmark for what Infinity Journal aspires to be. The fundamentals and teaching only exist in a useful form if they are held to rigour by an insightful discussion lead by those knowledgeable and informed in the relevant fields.

William F. Owen

Editor, Infinity Journal

November 2014

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Israel has to adjust its policy, strategy, conduct and use of force to the changing nature of the world. A significant tool in conducting these adjustments is a thorough review of Israel's national strategy, its National Security Doctrine, and its national security.

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The presumption that politics performs a restraining and controlling influence in war is embedded in liberal ideas of war to such an extent that it often obscures the energy that gives war its underlying motivation, which is passion. The consequence of ignoring this reality is a lack of direction in strategic formulation and a loss of will to act where it might be prudent.

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The current and future security landscape is more akin to that of pre-modern, rather than modern, history. Characterized by the proliferation of lethality and a plethora of strategic actors, the international arena will see prolonged and widespread, albeit low-intensity, violence along unstable frontiers. Effective use of force will require political preparation of the battlefield, through co-optation and division of the enemy, but it will rarely be decisive. As in the past, in the future states will have to prepare for recurrent counter-raids to mitigate threats to their security.



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Updating the 'Security Concept'

Shay Shabtai

Israel

Shay Shabtai received graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Tel Aviv University Executive Program for Middle East studies (MA). He has more than 20 years experience as an expert and practitioner in Middle East issues, Israel's national security, strategic issues and military issues. His current research include alternative strategies for Israel; the influence of human global trends on strategy; strategic communication and perception management; redefining the operational level of armed conflicts; and his doctoral research will be on the collapse of Iraqi statehood since the first Gulf war.

"The most dangerous enemy to Israel's security is the intellectual inertia of those who are responsible for security"

- David Ben Gurion[i]

From "security concept" to security strategy, security doctrine and security policy

National security is the preoccupation with safeguarding the existence of the state, defending its citizens and vital interests, and promoting national goals. Three fundamental levels of national discourse and documents addressing the issue are recognized worldwide - National Strategy or National Security White Paper;[ii] National Security Doctrine or National Security Guidance;[iii] and National Security Policy or National Security Review.[iv]

The State of Israel has no formal classification of security documents, as can be found in other leading nations of the world. In Israel, the term "national security concept" was formulated in reference to a partial discourse at the different levels. As a result, no organized, formal discourse has been held in Israel on the national security level, and no key general principles and concepts, regarding security doctrine, have been outlined (deterrence, decision, etc.). Thus, there is a clear need for a formal articulation of the national security

concept, which might also be called the National Security Policy.

no organized, formal discourse has been held in Israel on the national security level

A crucial point in the definition of Israel's security strategy is the supreme objective (policy). For the purpose of the present discussion, I will define this as preserving Israel as a safe, advanced, highly developed, Jewish Democratic State with a superior status among nations.[v]

Existing Strategic Principles

Israel's strategic security principles were formulated in the first two decades of the State under the leadership of David Ben Gurion as "the supreme objectives of the security concept". Ben Gurion understood that Israel must engage in a lengthy struggle, until the region recognizes the right of its existence. In light of its clear *geo-strategic inferiority* by comparison with Arab states (in terms of territorial size, numerical population and resources), the country had to establish five fundamental principles:[vi]

- a. Conventional quality advantage - the State of Israel strove for the IDF to have a clear advantage in terms of quality over its rivals at that time[vii] - the armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and other nations. This principle led to the preventive war of 1956, intended to curb Egypt's dangerously rising power, and to the preventive strike of 1967.
- b. Broad deterrence - David Ben Gurion aimed to create and maintain significant military deterrence based on Israel's qualitative edge.[viii]
- c. Special relationship with a superpower - David Ben Gurion laid down two principles that form the basis of Israel's security to the present day. One was a strategic decision to form a strong connection with the United States (US) as opposed to the Soviet Union; the other was the need for superpower backing. This principle was expressed through the formulation of ties with

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Great Britain and France in the Sinai Campaign and further strong military ties with the French. During the 1960s, relations with France cooled and Israel grew ever closer to the US. Thus, Ben Gurion's dual decision merged into one and became the "Special Relationship" with the United States.[ix]

- d. Technological and economic excellence - Ben Gurion understood that Israel, lacking natural resources and small in size and population by comparison with surrounding states, could survive only if it achieved technological and economic superiority over those countries, while maximizing the most important available resource - human quality.[x] From the mid-1950s and up to the Yom Kippur War, Israel generally enjoyed impressive growth rates. "The lost decade" following the Yom Kippur War heralded a change in that trend.[xi]
- e. National resilience - Ben Gurion also understood that it would not be possible to maintain Israel's advantages over its neighbors without fostering national resilience based on an Israeli ethos.[xii] This would form the basis for compulsory military recruitment as part of the principle of a "people's army"; to preserve Israel as an attractive country for world Jewry and thus encourage vital immigration; and to enable the country to thrive through times of economic and security crisis with no loss of resilience. A significant component of this approach is maintaining contact with and defending Jewish people around the world.[xiii]

Israel could survive only if it achieved technological and economic superiority

Further, Ben Gurion was aware of the considerable tension between these principles and Israel's strategic status. For instance, a sparse population and resources do not allow for the long-term maintenance of either conventional military superiority or technological and economic excellence. On the other hand, he recognized the great potential of Israeli society to direct its human and technological abilities towards a targeted military operation and ultimately a clear victory.[xiv]

As a result, national security strategy focused on *efforts at prolonged periods of calm and the postponement as far as possible of future military confrontations* and, where necessary, *a concentration of full capabilities in order to bring about a quick and decisive outcome to any such campaign*, which would then lead to a long period of quiet and stability.

Over the years three further principles were added to these original ones. Firstly, there was the "The Periphery Doctrine". The opposition of countries hostile to Israel resulted in Ben Gurion seeking alliances with other regional actors. Israel cultivated ties with countries in the Horn of Africa in Egypt's "back yard", and with pre-revolutionary Iran, Turkey and the Kurdish people, with the intention of distracting Iraq from dealing with Israel. The Second was "The Eshkol Doctrine" - "the poor weakling Samson"[xv] - by establishing an external

and domestic compromise approach, reinforcing "the strength of the weak" or "soft power", refraining from frequent aggressive action[xvi], and building up military strength (as seen in the high level of preparedness for the Six Day War). This approach did not survive after Eshkol's death. Lastly there was "The Begin Doctrine" - disrupting the build-up of nuclear military related projects in countries in the region.[xvii]

These principles indicate long-term vision, some of it far ahead of its time. But, in the spirit of Ben Gurion's decree to refrain from "intellectual inertia", they require reconsideration and updating.

These principles indicate long-term vision, some of it far ahead of its time.

The Principal Points of Change

Several basic assumptions concerning the environment remain unchanged in the past six decades. Essentially these are recognitions of Israel's geo-strategic inferiority in terms of territorial area, population and natural resources within an uncertain and unstable region, necessitating a strong stance by Israel because of an overwhelming refusal of the Arab States to come to terms with Israel's existence[xviii].

The continued importance of the US as a superpower in the global arena and Israel's ability to maintain deep and far-reaching relations is of course essential; plus the great significance of the human element in ensuring a clear advantage for Israel over its neighbors. However, over these years, and even more so in the past two decades, these two factors have been overshadowed by changes such as globalization, information technology and the increasing challenges of climate and resources, especially in the fields of energy, water and food. Most importantly the political characters of the Arab States surrounding Israel have changed.

There is also a perceived decline in the status of the nation state and the strengthening of non-state actors of various kinds. For example, international institutions are transformed into agents of long-term change and which has led to the creation of a world order based on commonly accepted policy norms, "ostracizing" any state or actor that does not conform and has the ability to impose sanctions on nations because of their policies.

Substantial changes materialize as a result of the ascension of new global powers, especially China and India, and the transfer of significant political, security and economic power to East Asia. Add to that partial regional recognition of Israel as a *fait accompli* and the creation of partnerships with a vested interest with some of the leading elites. There are also widespread changes in the value scale and social unification of the Israeli society.

The principles of a new security strategy

Three of the principles presented below are intended

to arrange Israel's modus operandi vis-à-vis the external strategic environment. These are initiative, assimilation and coping with threats. The other three aim at building sources of internal strength that will create the necessary conditions for Israel to promote its overall goals - leadership, unity and connectivity between government and non-government efforts.

Initiative

In light of the pace and depth of the changes, Israel needs to adopt a strategic initiative based on a future vision of the relevant region (the Middle East and its periphery), and on positioning its standing in the global arena. Such an initiative must be expressed in a proactive policy designed to promote the vision via political, military-security, economic and cultural means. At the same time, there must be a willingness to take security-related risks and pay the political and economic price for such a policy. For example this might be the allocation of financial assistance and/or participation in stabilization operations and peacekeeping forces.

Assimilation

Assimilation requires changing an existing principle into a distinct concept. In essence, this means creating in-depth links with different influential bodies in the global arena and in the region, while recognizing the existential strategic risks inherent in political isolation and the significant profits to be gained for Israel from cooperation. This is an almost entirely diplomatic endeavor.

creating in-depth links with different influential bodies in the global arena and in the region

These activities can be defined as:

- a. Global - a coordinated national effort that aspires to political leadership in the global arena in a defined number of key issues (e.g. alternative energy and water; changes in laws of war; the fight against terrorism; and prevention of proliferation).
- b. Public - opening up channels of communication with publics that are key to Israel - American, European and Arab.
- c. International - alongside the special relationship with the US, which is an existential necessity, creating relations with other key actors in the international arena - Europe - Germany, France, the UK and Italy in particular; economic and security ties with India and Brazil; and economic and cultural ties with Russia, China and Japan.
- d. Peripheral - promoting relations with relevant nations in the Middle Eastern periphery - countries in the Horn of Africa (not the entire African continent); Greece and South East European countries (Romania, Bulgaria); the Central Asian republics; and minorities in the middle east,

mainly the Kurdish people. These could serve to leverage influence in countries in the region.

- e. Regional - "shadow" coalitions and "silent" cooperative ventures in strategic, economic and security fields with Gulf nations, and in particular Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Turkey and strengthening local players in other countries.

Coping with threats

As concerns coping with threats, this means the military-security dimension of security strategy of disrupting and intercepting threats, maintaining an effective deterrence and overcoming them with far-reaching action where necessary. The main function of this principle is to achieve maximum strategic flexibility - even at the cost of risk-taking and refraining from a "hermetic" response to any security-related problem - in order to enable action within the bounds of the overall security policy.

Leadership

This is the national level preservation and reinforcement of a civilian advantage creating external and internal leadership stand. This includes three principal endeavors. Firstly, creating and sustaining economic and technological superiority, based on education and investments in R&D. This also requires maintaining a lead in Hi-Tech fields and creating growth engines of international worth. Secondly, the superiority in intelligence, security and the military, as seen in a blend of quality manpower, advanced technology and relevant, state-of-the-art modes of operation. Lastly, strengthen the special relationship with the US with more in-depth dialog and joint activity as an external foundation for a leadership approach. To support that effort, Israel needs to show long-term transparency, operational cooperation and a willingness to act in American interests.

Unity

There needs to be a strong social consensus on the objectives of security policy and the national partnership that is required to promote it.

There needs to be a strong social consensus on the objectives of security policy and the national partnership that is required to promote it. A number of processes are needed to achieve this end. For example, an economic-social vision that is far-reaching and connected to the leadership principle (Israel as a "technology greenhouse"). A new security contract between the country and its citizens - in-depth discourse on the three security resources: budget, manpower and home front resilience. And lastly, a national dialog between different

sectors of society, especially the ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations.[xix]

Connectivity

The strategic objectives are achieved through broad cooperation at national level within the government sector and between government, business and non-government sectors. This is a trivial statement in matters concerning economic and social objectives, but is no less appropriate for the achievement of political and security objectives.

Principles of the Existing Security Doctrine[xx]

The policy whose primary goal is to avoid military confrontations to the greatest extent possible and, where necessary, to concentrate all capabilities on a decisive outcome, is expressed in security doctrine in three central principles: defensive strategy and offensive action, the "people's army" and the "security triangle".

Defensive strategy and offensive action

Ben Gurion understood the tension between the advantage of action, within recognized internal lines, and the inability to go to war within Israel's limited territory, and especially its pre-1967 configuration. This resulted in the formulation of a defensive military strategy for Israel – namely, responding to threats as part of the desire to maintain international support and striving to act within internal lines. However, it is manifested in offensive action that transfers the fighting as early as possible to enemy territory, to avoid it taking place primarily on Israel's limited territory.

"The people's army"

"The people's army" of the IDF is based on compulsory conscription, which enables it to maintain a relatively small regular force handling ongoing security tasks; prepared the IDF for war; and insofar as necessary, should be able to provide defense at the initial stages of war. Beyond, and on the basis of that regular core army, a larger reserve force was created to be prepared at all times should war materialize. On receiving the command, and within a relatively short space of time, the IDF could become a force large enough to deal with a military coalition opposing the State of Israel in phased fighting between the various arenas.

"The security triangle"

"The security triangle" is a result of the need to avoid confrontation as far as possible or, in the event that such confrontations do erupt, to resolve them quickly. It led to the formulation of three basic concepts:

- a. Deterrence - Israel will maintain the basis for a clear superiority of capability over potential opponents and will project determination, in such a manner as to cause decision makers on the opposing side to hesitate

and defer a decision to enter into a combat situation. Deterrence is based on the fulfillment of all five security strategy principles. The concept of deterrence was expanded over time in order to ensure its relevance in the struggle against terrorism.

- b. Early warning - Israel will identify changes in the intentions of decision makers on the enemy side and the degree of preparedness of their military forces that could indicate preparation for confrontation, with enough early warning time for full IDF recruitment - focusing on reserve forces - for such an event. In order to fulfill this principle (though not only this one) Israel created one of the strongest intelligence communities in the world. The domain of early warning was actually broadened in recent decades to include all types of potential threats, resulting in a significant growth in the scope of the intelligence community's responsibilities.
- c. Decision - because of Israel's lack of operational depth, the IDF will launch an offensive attack as early as possible - preferably at the outset of any confrontation, and even at its own initiative ("preventive war", "preventive strike") - to transfer fighting to enemy territory. Such an offensive, which will bear the full force of Israel's might, will bring about a quick decisive resolution (a few days or weeks), which will result in severe damage to the enemy's capability and create conditions for a relatively long period of calm.

Decision is a concept embedded in the context of inter-state relations: by means of military force, one nation imposes on another to settle on a particular policy. In Israel's case, this means a preference for political relations rather than the use of military means. On this front, Israel achieved decision vis-à-vis surrounding countries as a result of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Recent decades have seen efforts to apply the idea of decision in other contexts - such as non-conventional weapons and terrorism - but the issue is complex and not always practical.

The Dan Meridor Committee, which was active between 2003 and 2006, decided on the inclusion of a new, fourth basic principle to be added to the "security triangle", namely "self-defense," in other words "defense". The State of Israel invests a significant portion of its budget and security efforts in defensive efforts. This has been largely realized with concepts such as the West Bank security barrier and Iron Dome. In addition there is a wide-ranging system of security in both the public and private domains. On top of passive defensive measures, those seeking to expand the idea of "self-defense" further into "defense" add specific offensive measures aimed at preventing, by the use of force not superseding the threshold of broad escalation, the launching of rockets and missiles or terror attacks.

What has Changed?

There are four principal changes in Israel's strategic and security environment, which affect the security doctrine:

- a. The increase in the complexity of security problems in all related areas, in terms of both analysis and response,

gravely enhanced in the past years as a result of the social and political changes in the surrounding Arab states.

b. The transition from a war or crisis once every ten years to the reality of a more limited military campaign, on average once every three or four years,[xxi] and an increasing preoccupation with the interdiction of threats and defense in the intervals between campaigns.

c. The change in the nature of threats to Israel. The conventional military threat - which, until the Six Day War was considered an existential threat - is weaker than in the past. At the same time the threat of terror attacks and unconventional warfare have become central to the focus of Israel's security system. The combination of terror and conventional weapons incorporates high-trajectory rockets and missiles on the national home front, both civilian and military.

d. Ongoing change in "battlefield" characteristics.[xxii] Today we face war "amongst the people"[xxiii] - the enemy is concealed within the civilian population and seeks to inflict harm on us; hence we have to reach that enemy within the population. The composition of relevant groups of the enemy within a population, the Israeli, the international and the regional (as distinct from past government positions) are a primary element when considering the exercise of force. Anyone who owns a 3G or 4G cell phone is potentially a "reporter". Cyberspace too is a growing sphere of hostile action. Information operations and attempts to influence public consciousness are new elements in campaigns. Financial and legal action represent growing areas of "soft action".

Anyone who owns a 3G or 4G cell phone is potentially a "reporter"

It is almost exclusively the political and thus policy dimension of Israel that these changes have appeared in.

Proposal for New Security Doctrine Principles

Firstly, there are three new principles of a proposed security doctrine

1. Continuity of campaigns.
2. Efforts to bring about a profound change in enemy strategy.
3. Combined defensive and offensive concepts.

Secondly, there are six key concepts of the new security doctrine:

1. Deterrence - to be redefined.
2. Understanding - to replace the concept of early warning.
3. Interception.

4. Cooperation.
5. Resilience - to replace the term self-defense or defense.
6. Continued superiority - replacing the term decision.

Continuity of campaigns

The principle of the continuity of campaigns is a change from the dichotomy of a back-and-forth switch between routine and emergency. It is felt on a daily basis in campaigns between wars, which always have the possibility of turning into large-scale wars in one operational arena or another. Campaigns between large-scale wars necessitate a wide-ranging national response, including meaningful links between political, diplomatic, security and military endeavors.[xxiv]

Efforts to bring about a profound change in enemy strategy

The principle of efforts towards a profound change in enemy strategy is aimed at the "end state" of security-military endeavors. That is to bring about a major change (effectively a transformation) in the opposing side's policy.[xxv] This differs from the principle of extending the time span between wars, which characterizes the existing doctrine. While Israel aspires to stability and peace on the security front, in the face of the increasing and changing nature of surrounding threats; however, this is not enough. The enemy must be forced to alter their agenda.

The enemy must be forced to alter their agenda.

Combined defensive and offensive concepts

The principle of combined defensive and offensive concepts differs from the existing doctrine characterized by defensive strategy and offensive approach. The new doctrine advocates the combination of a defensive and offensive approach. The correct mix for each individual arena will be defined by the enemy's policies and the constraints inherent to the environment.

Six key concepts

Deterrence Redefined

The deterrence principle strengthens in the security doctrine but there are changes in its nature. This derives from the fact that the increased complexity of challenges diminishes our ability to predict the likelihood that war will achieve the desired strategic aims and avoid undesirable results.

There are a number of changes in the characteristics:

- a. A bilateral analysis of deterrence between Israel and

its enemies is necessary. The issue to understand is the significance, for security policy, of Israel's refraining from action because of the actions that may be consequently taken by other parties.

- b. Deterrence also constitutes an objective of the exercise of force. Today the "in order to" element of military action also includes aspects of "regaining/improving deterrence". The issue to elaborate is what characteristics of deterrence address: both a suspension of war and its outcome. The overall aim should be to reinforce deterrence, not merely return the status quo.
- c. Today's deterrence is not only based on the bilateral power ratio between enemy or rival states. It is also connected to the position of other players - international and regional - and publics, with particular emphasis on those supporting the enemy and the Israeli public. The issue to elaborate is how to integrate those players in realizing the principle of deterrence. Strong support or condemnation of the use of force may itself influence the depth of deterrence.

Understanding

Recent years have seen the formulation in leading world nations of new security principles of understanding or knowledge and anticipation.[xxvi] According to this principle, in order to make decisions and take action at all levels of national security activity - strategic-political, strategic-security, operational and tactical - there is a need for profound yet specific and relevant knowledge of the enemy as well as the immediate environment and its broader context. Such knowledge must encompass all aspects - political, economic, security, military, social, cultural, consciousness and media and communications.

Information gathering and analysis for the purpose of understanding are not the exclusive domain of the intelligence community, despite it being a key player in the application of the principle. They are also the concern of other bodies responsible for maintaining a presence and ongoing contact with target publics and occupied with relevant topics.

Early warning really means the application of understanding, for the purpose of advance warning, in order to enable ample preparation for possible action to intercept threats and exploit opportunities. This is now only one element of this principle of understanding.

Interception

This is the effort to thwart the enemy's capability to threaten Israel and the implementation of such efforts. Within the principle of continuity of campaigns, this is manifested in different types of conflicts:

- a. Campaigns between wars - a range of efforts aimed at depriving the enemy of the possibility of developing, acquiring or implementing threat capabilities.

- b. Preventive strike as part of a campaign between wars or as an initial act of war - a strike aimed at a single operation with specific capability (non-conventional weapons, terror) in order to eradicate its existence or disrupt its imminent operation (such as the attack on the Iraqi reactor in 1981).
- c. Preventive war - a decision to engage in military conflict with the enemy in order to deprive it of its primary capabilities of inflicting damage on Israel.

Cooperation

Maximizing opportunities and thwarting threats through both military and broader security cooperation with countries in the international and regional arenas. Joint action with key players in the international arena can facilitate a significant increase in the scope and depth of Israel's intelligence coverage and operational activity capabilities when fighting common enemies. The cost of developing such cooperation is a willingness to expose Israel's *modus operandi* and operations, and agreement to curb their implementation as a consequence of the need to abide by the other party's terms and conditions.

Resilience

The threat to the national, military and civilian rear is a fundamental component in the changing context of the security doctrine.

The threat to the national, military and civilian rear is a fundamental component in the changing context of the security doctrine. This change led to the addition of the "self-defense" or "defense" component in the last decade. The current definition incorporates different methodologies - passive defense, active defense, attack for the purpose of minimizing threats from the enemy, and so forth.

The definition of the concept of resilience in the security doctrine is designed to turn the incorporation of such methods into an approach with a comprehensive rationale. Within this context, a comprehensive approach is used to enhance means: the capacity for resilience on Israel's home front in the campaign between wars and during wars. Examples of more conceptual aspects of the element of resilience are a dialog between decision makers and the general public and its local representatives;[xxvii] the distribution of people and important installations according to Ben Gurion's vision; [xxviii] the use of the underground sphere; and more.

Superiority

The security-military system needs to create a clear advantage over relevant enemies in all conceptual dimensions - deterrence, understanding, interception, cooperation and

resilience - and in all dimensions of warfare - defensive and offensive, combat and maneuvers, physical combat and even relating to perceptions and "soft war". In terms of security doctrine, superiority will facilitate the achievement of profound change in the opposing side's policy. At security strategy level, superiority would help realize the principles of strategic initiative, assimilation and of coping with threats.

The concept of superiority encompasses the existing concepts of victory and decision. Victory is the military objective of every tactical and operational encounter; its purpose is to create a decisive advantage over the enemy to the point of paralyzing its combative ability. Decision is an extreme form of superiority, whereby the enemy's security-military system loses its combat capability, at least in the short term. This should enable Israel to impose its will and pin the enemy down to formal arrangements.

Manifestation

There are significant challenges facing Israel in advancing structured dialog on national security. It is likely that attempts to set in motion a formal process to formulate a binding document will not be successful, even though such a prospect should be seriously considered. Hence, further preoccupation with this issue should be undertaken by the following means:

- a. Discourse on updating security strategy and security doctrine in academic institutions, think tanks and the media. The objective: to create a rich theoretical foundation for formal debate and promote understanding of the need therefor.

- b. Motivating informal national discourse under the leadership of the National Security Council and with the participation of all relevant actors to planning, policy and security. The objective: a foundation for joint inter-organizational understandings of the issues as a base for a discourse of decision makers.
- c. Discourse among decision makers on principles of security strategy and security doctrine. The objective: to create a common ground of understanding the challenge and perhaps even to formalize some of the principles with firm decisions.
- d. Annual re-examination processes: annual national assessment spearheaded by the National Security Council, aiming for adaptations necessitated by reality in security strategy and security doctrine, and the manner of their assimilation.

Israel has moved from a nation fighting for its very existence to a nation that now has to adjust its policies, strategy, conduct and use of force to the changing nature of the world.

Israel has moved from a nation fighting for its very existence to a nation that now has to adjust its policies, strategy, conduct and use of force to the changing nature of the world. A significant tool in conducting these adjustments is a thorough review of the National Strategy; National Security Doctrine; and National Security.

References

[i] David Ben Gurion, *The Israel-Arab War, 1948-1949*, Mapai Publishing, Tel Aviv, 1951, p.11. Quoted in an article by Avi Altman: "Militarism – Military Leadership at the Highest Echelons", published in *Ma'arachot Magazine*, No. 439. Note: the author was unable to ascertain whether this was published in English. Hence, a proposed translation (Endnote 1) may be for the overall book title, whereas this quote is taken from one section or chapter, whose title could not be traced in English.

[ii] examines the broad context of national existence (geo-political, economic, demographic, social, historical, cultural, political and security-military) and defines - in reference to the political principles of elected political representatives and resources - the fundamental strategic principles of national activity:

From: *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, October 2012, pp.9-12: "Our strategy reflects the country that we want to be... This Strategy outlines the international context in which we can best pursue our interests... A strategy is only useful if it guides choices... A national security strategy, like any strategy, must be a combination of ends (what we are seeking to achieve), ways (the ways by which we seek to achieve those ends) and means (the resources we can devote to achieving the ends)... A strategy must reflect the context in which it is developed, the particular strengths and skills that we can bring to bear..."

From: *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006, p.54: "The challenges America faces are great, yet we have enormous power and influence to address those challenges. The times require an ambitious national security strategy, yet one recognizing the limits to what even a nation as powerful as the United States can achieve by itself. Our national security strategy is idealistic about goals and realistic about means".

[iii] Focuses on the basic ways to cope with security-related and military challenges:

From: *Strategic Guidance – United States Department of Defense*, January 2012, p.7. "This strategic guidance document describes the projected security environment and the key military missions for which the Department of Defense (DoD) will prepare. It is intended as a blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020, providing a set of precepts that will help guide decisions regarding the size and shape of the force over subsequent program and budget cycles, and highlighting some of the strategic risks that may be associated with the proposed strategy".

[iv] addresses the definition of current lines of action, linking strategic security principles and security doctrine to a periodic evaluation of national status and the aspirations of political echelons:

From: *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, October 2012, p. 35. On the basis of security strategy: "Based on our assessment of the context, our national interests, the objectives we have outlined and the resources at our disposal", the National Security Council formulates Security Policy - "the National Security Council has overseen a full Strategic Defense and Security Review to implement this strategy. This will outline how we will achieve our objectives, and the balance of resources and capabilities we need to deliver them".

[v] And in comparison with the USA (ibid, p.1): "Our national security strategy is, therefore, focused on renewing American leadership so that we can more effectively advance our interests in the 21st century"; and the United Kingdom (ibid, p.9): "The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom is: to use all our national capabilities to build Britain's prosperity, extend our nation's influence in the world and strengthen our security".

[vi] See also: "Army and State", Ben Gurion's 1953 overview of national security (published in editions 279-280 of Ma'arachot, May-June 1981). Ben Gurion denotes three of the five underlying principles. In this document, which addresses the IDF, he does not refer to the nuclear issue and reliance on a superpower – p.2: "It is known that our security does not depend on the army alone. Non-military factors will be no less decisive than military factors: the nation's economic and financial capability..."; pp.4-5: "The advantages we have in comparison with the Arabs, who can determine an Arab advantage in manpower and arms: 1) a geographical advantage. We are located in the center (internal lines)... 2) we are a unified nation... 3) technical advantage... 4) spiritual advantage...".

[vii] Ibid, p. 5: "The aforementioned implies that that crucial direction is in the organization, equipment and training of our army. Since we are inferior in numbers – we must be superior in quality. Translating this clear principle from theory to action is not so simple or easy."

[viii] Avner Cohen states in Israel and the Bomb, Schocken Publishing, 2000, pp.96-97: "The second keystone of Israel's deterrence capability (alongside the reinforcement of the conventional deterrent mentioned before - S.S.) was the independent nuclear program, to be considered as a 'rainy day' option (this was one of the most widely used cloaked expressions in use by politicians and reporters to denote the program). Ben Gurion promoted efforts on both these fronts, while maintaining as much separation between the two as possible".

[ix] Ibid, p.96: "Ben Gurion also aspired to obtain guarantees for Israel's security from at least one Western nation. His efforts were reinforced after the Suez Campaign, but towards the end of the 1950s Ben Gurion reached a general conclusion that the United States, France or NATO would be unwilling to provide such guarantees (for Israel's security in the face of a surprise attack from the Arabs – S.S.) Nevertheless, he continued those efforts until the end of his term in 1963".

[x] Ben Gurion, "Army and State", p.2: "What made me deeply concerned in this examination was the non-military factors of our security: the economy, population settlement, immigration...".

[xi] See, for instance: "Israel 2008 – Vision and Strategy for Economy and Society in a Global World", Elishu Hurwitz, David Brodet, Samuel Neaman Institute, 2008.

[xii] Ben Gurion, "Army and State", p.9: "... and again the principle of high quality and inferior status in the Diaspora impose on the IDF educational functions that are shared by no other army. The fundamental thing that security – as well as all the rest – is in fact dependant on: the people, is readily available and a given in every country, even before there is a state; in Israel a Jewish people exists only by potential and not in practice."

[xiii] Ibid, p.10: "... the big problem – maybe the biggest of all – of the Jewish Diaspora in the Soviet Union and other Islamic nations. It seems to me that this must be our first concern in coming years – for this country, for population settlement, for its freedom and security. At least another two million Jews are needed...".

[xiv] Ibid, p.5: "We cannot maintain a regular army as the Arabs do, on both budgetary and economic grounds. For this reason our combat strength relies mainly on the reserve force".

[xv] Ezer Weizman, Lekha shamayim, lekha arets, Maariv Library, 1975, pp.301-302: "... in the course of the preparatory work we reached the conclusion that we would need a large number of airplanes, 'Skyhawks' and A-6 'Intruders'. When I came to Eshkol to present him with the plan... he just listened and said, 'Fine, no problem' – in the simplest Hebrew. I saw that he did not get worked up about the large numbers and then I said, 'Sir, I do have one small problem, perhaps you can help? On the one hand I need to present myself to the Americans as being somewhat weak so that they will be persuaded to sell us the airplanes. On the other hand, as Commander of our Air Force, I have the utmost confidence in our ability and I do not want the Americans to have any feeling whatsoever that they are dealing with some small, inadequate air force...'. Eshkol did not pause for thought even a second before responding with his famous suggestion to 'present yourself as "Shimshon der Nebechdikker!" [Yiddish for 'Samson the poor weakling', imparting a uniquely ironic meaning to the powerful capability of a nation as small as Israel]".

[xvi] As an expression of his desire to refrain from any counter-action to terrorist acts by the PLO, he made the well-known statement that "the ledger is open and the hand is writing".

[xvii] From a Foreign Ministry press release following the attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981: "Under no circumstances will we allow an enemy to develop weapons of mass destruction against our people. We shall defend the citizens of Israel in time, and with all the means at our disposal".

[xviii] It as an "irony of fate" that what Ben Gurion said in "Army and State", p.2, which was written against the background of military revolutions and coup d'états in the 1950s, is equally applicable to the current situation in the region: "intelligence personnel themselves admit that they are less familiar with the Arab world today than they were in the past, because in two countries – Egypt and Syria – and Jordan should also be added, regimes have been overturned and are now headed by new forces, which we were totally unfamiliar and had no contact with before the State. With the previous rulers, it was almost always possible to know in advance how they would react to this event or that situation or another: the new rulers are unknown quantities".

[xix] In this context, Ben Gurion's statement in "Army and State", p.11, is of interest: "The question of recruiting Arabs to the army should be looked into".

[xx] Unlike unwritten security strategy, security doctrine – which is effectively the core of the "security concept" – has been frequently referred to in writing. Among others: a Broadcast University lecture series on the issue by Major Gen. (Ret.) Prof. Isaac Ben-Israel; lectures by MK Minister Dan Meridor, including "21st Century Security Challenges: the Creation of a National Security Policy", at INSS (Institute for National Security Studies) on January 31, 2011; Ariel Levite, "Israel's Military Doctrine: Defense and Offense", HaKibbutz Hame'uchad, 1988; Ze'ev Schiff, Meridor Committee Report: "The Concern that Iran may Prompt other Mideast States to go Nuclear", Haaretz, April 24, 2006; et al.

[xxi] Since the end of the 1970s, Israel was faced with terror and non-conventional warfare situations in the First Lebanon War (1982); the First Intifada (starting in 1987); the First Gulf War (1991); Operation Accountability (1993); Operation Grapes of Wrath (1996); the Second Intifada (2000); Operation Defensive Shield (2002); the Second Lebanon War (2006); and Operation Cast Lead (The Gaza War – 2009). In the past two years Israel has been engaged in "rounds" of conflict in Gaza every few months.

[xxii] For more detailed coverage of the development of battlefield characteristics, see Shay Shabtai, "The War after the Next War", Ma'arachot Magazine, No. 440, December 2011, pp.4-9.

[xxiii] The main hypothesis in Rupert Smith's book, Utility of Force (Vintage Books, 2008), which defines the current era of war as "war amongst the people" – i.e. conflict among people and over their consciousness.

[xxiv] Shay Shabtai, "The Concept of the Campaign between Wars", Ma'arachot Magazine, No. 444.

[xxv] For a more detailed view of the principle of transformation, see Shay Shabtai, "The War after the Next War", Ma'arachot Magazine, No. 440, December 2011, pp.4-9.

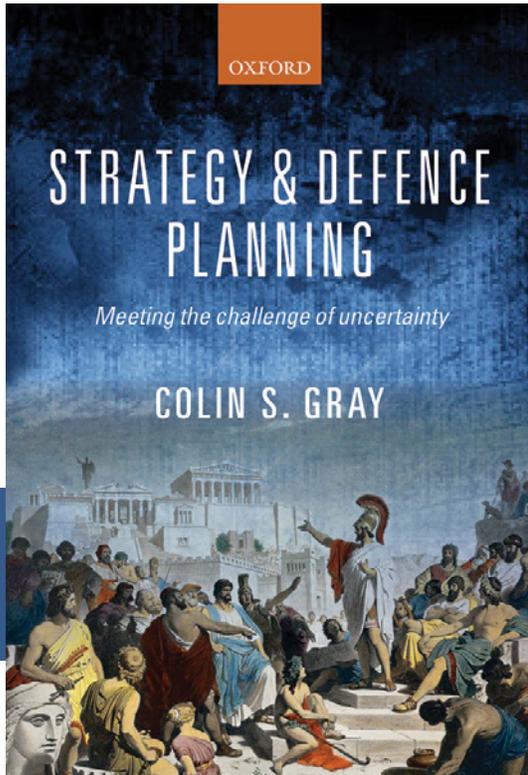
[xxvi] UK – Joint Doctrine Publication 04 (JDP 04), Understanding, December 2010, paragraph 101: "Understanding provides the context for the decision-making process which informs the application of national power. The purpose of understanding is to equip decision-makers at all levels with the insight and foresight required to make effective decisions as well as manage the associated risks and second and subsequent order effects".

France – The French White Paper on Defense and National Security, 2008, p.125: "In an international environment marked by great uncertainties and potentially extremely short warning periods, a country's first line of defense are its capabilities for knowledge and anticipation. These must offer decision makers, as much prior to the crises as possible, the necessary basis for assessing the situation (the variety and gravity of risks and threats, opportunities for French and European interests, etc.), enabling them to make better-informed choices between the different possible modes of action. Consequently, the knowledge and anticipation function has been elevated for the first time to the status of a strategic function in its own right and embraces several areas".

[xxvii] Winston Churchill's speeches in 1940 and throughout World War II can also be seen as such a dialog.

[xxviii] Ben Gurion, "Army and State", p.11 – "2) a more rational distribution of the population – the avoidance of excessive and additional concentration in the Tel Aviv area. The allocation of benefits to establish factories and workshops in the Negev, Jerusalem, the Jerusalem corridor, [and] north of Akko".

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From Grand Strategy to Operational Design: Getting it Right

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In 1997, Lieutenant General Paul Van Riper retired from the United States Marine Corps with more than 41 years of service. He remains active within the defense community participating in war games and conferences, and lecturing at military colleges. He also consults on national security issues. He currently holds the Kin T. Adamson Chair at Marine Corps University.

Policy, strategy, and planning are all interrelated, but the relationship among them and the purpose and use of policy, strategy, and planning are often misunderstood and misused in the national security environment. [i]

The method the United States Government currently uses to develop its “grand” or national security strategy is dysfunctional, and the approach its military uses to design campaigns and major operations is seriously flawed. This article describes how we got into this disturbing circumstance and suggests how the nation’s leaders might go about getting things right.

To understand how the policy-strategy-operations continuum got so far off track we need to review what happened over the last three-quarters of a century.

The nation did not arrive at this dismal and confused situation overnight; thus, it will take time to sort out and correct the many interrelated problems that contribute to the present state of affairs. To understand how the policy-strategy-operations continuum got so far off track we need to review what happened over the last three-quarters of a century.

Early in the Second World War the United States established the policy and developed a grand strategy to confront the German-Japanese-Italian alliance. Several documents codified that policy and the grand strategy. Among the most important were the Atlantic Charter signed in August 1941, where the United States and the United Kingdom agreed upon the goals of the war, and the Arcadia Conference in January 1942, where the two nations settled on the “Europe First” policy. To meet evolving conditions during the course of the war the United States modified the policy and the grand strategy delineated in these documents, but for the most part, these documents guided the war effort to a successful conclusion.

Similar operational planning began—especially with regard to Japan—even before the United States entered the war. This planning took on a coalition cast when American, British, and Canadian military staffs met in Washington DC from the last days of January 1941 until late March in a conference known as ABC-1. The creation of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (US Joint Chiefs of Staff and British Chiefs of Staff Committee) in April 1942 made formal a combined planning arrangement. Other Allies, though not members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), consulted with the CCS throughout the war. The members of the CCS as well as representatives to that body came to decisions and made plans through the practice of frequent discussions.

what transpired during the Second World War was a “textbook” example of how to establish policy, create a grand strategy, and design campaigns to support that strategy

Looking back it can seem like what transpired during the Second World War was a “textbook” example of how to establish policy, create a grand strategy, and design campaigns to support that strategy. In actuality, the process was far from smooth because there were numerous disagreements, and many of the participants experienced angst over what transpired. Still, in its totality the process serves as a worthy exemplar.

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In 1951, a few years after the start of what we came to know as the Cold War, President Truman approved National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68). This 58-page document was a statement of policy as well as an outline of the grand strategy the United States intended to employ as it confronted the Soviet Union and later the Warsaw Pact. The document expressed the basic ideas of George Kennan's policy of containment outlined in his famous "Long Telegram" of 1947 and ensuing article by Mr. "X" in *Foreign Affairs*, though with more emphasis on the military element of national power. NSC-68 guided the development of contingency plans that the United States used to contain and deter the Soviets and their allies until the Cold War ended with the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact and dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Once more, we have what at first glance appears to be a "textbook" example of how well thought out policy leads to sound strategy and detailed operational plans. Again, however, the creation of the policy and strategy was not without considerable contention among senior officials and there was much apprehension as to its potential effects. Yet, in its entirety, it is another worthy archetype of how to connect policy to actions.

From 1941 through 1945, national leaders gave minimal thought to issues outside of the ongoing conflict and its aftermath. Other foreign policy issues paled in comparison to the global war. Such was not the case in the years of the Cold War. Although the Soviet bloc was the focus of US strategic thinking from 1946 to 1991, other tangentially related issues occasionally required the United States to develop separate policies and supporting strategies, most notably for the Korean War, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam War. For these "lesser" cases the US defense establishment had no agreed upon way to create strategies that were in consonance with policies, the latter of which the Executive Branch often failed to articulate clearly.

I first became aware of these failing as a student in the Naval War College's Command and Staff course in 1977. As a mid-grade Marine Corps major, the tactical realm had been the center of my experience up until that point. The College's instructors introduced me to the larger world of policy and strategy in a rigorous and well-designed curriculum. Ironically, the title of the course was "Strategy and Policy" taught by the Strategy and Policy Department, putting the proverbial cart (strategy) before the horse (policy). I learned to dissect presidential speeches, especially the annual State of the Union address, various reports to Congress, and other similar documents to distill policy guidance that was to inform strategy. In many ways it seemed akin to "reading tea leaves," but as I discovered, this was the way the Pentagon carried out business in Washington DC. Fortunately for me, the operational assignments that followed the Command and Staff course did not involve any high-level planning, thus I did not have to practice what I had learned at Newport.

In many ways it seemed akin to "reading tea leaves," but as I discovered, this was the way the Pentagon carried out business in Washington DC.

Four years later, I was a student at the Army War College and once more immersed in the study of policy and strategy. My faculty advisor, the highly regarded Colonel Arthur Lykke, Jr., was an officer schooled in the intricacies of developing strategy and he shared both his knowledge and passion for the subject in papers he wrote as well as in interesting and informative lectures. Despite his talents, he could only explain how we were to translate policy into strategy and teach us the mechanics of creating strategies, not solve the inherent lack of policy and strategic direction. We studied the current Defense Guidance, Joint Strategic Planning Document, Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, and other related documents in an effort to uncover the policy goals needed to guide the development of strategy. It still appeared to me that we were learning to divine policy. Again, I was fortunate in that only one of my three subsequent assignments necessitated using the knowledge gained at Carlisle and this was at the relatively low level of a Marine expeditionary force command element.

It appeared to me that we were learning to divine policy

In summer 1988, I found myself on the other side of the academic equation. Posted as the Director of Marine Corps Command and Staff College I was responsible for teaching majors and lieutenant commanders the intricacies of the policy-strategy-operational plans linkage. I knew at the outset that my task would be far easier than that of those who had taught me in 1977 and 1981. The reason for my confidence was a product of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 as codified in Title 50, US Code 3043 (b), that is, the requirement for an annual National Security Strategy Report. Because the Command and Staff College's instructors could direct students to the *National Security Strategy of the United States* (NSS) published by the White House in January 1988 they no longer had to have students search between the lines of various documents to determine US policy and grand strategy. This was the second NSS and it overcame many shortcomings of the report the Reagan administration issued in 1987, and most importantly, it endeavored to spell out how the US would integrate other elements of national power. We surmised that the five national interests (derived from identified "enduring values") described in the 1988 NSS reflected presidential policy. Happily, a section early in this NSS specifically spelled out diplomatic, economic, and defense policies. This NSS also sketched out strategies for a number of geographical regions – the first recognition of the need for theater strategies.

NSS also sketched out strategies for a number of geographical regions – the first recognition of the need for theater strategies

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1991 further aided my successor at Command and Staff College—and others engaged in professional military education—with its requirement that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff submit to the Secretary of Defense a National Military Strategy

(NMS). This made the linkage from policy to grand strategy to campaign plans even stronger.

Regrettably, this promising start to national security planning too soon went awry. Fast moving events in Europe and a new administration caused President George H.W. Bush's White House to miss delivering a report on national security strategy in 1989, and its 1990 report did not have the coherence of President Reagan's 1988 report. Moreover, with the demise of the Soviet Union the NSS no longer had a threat-based character, which gave it less focus. Over the next decade a series of NSS's reflected the strain of defining a new foreign policy, identifying national security interests, and establishing priorities. In later years Congressional and Department of Defense (DOD) requirements to produce additional strategic documents at specific times—a national defense strategy, a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's risk assessment, national defense panel reports, and Defense Strategic Guidance—compounded the problem because they precluded coordinating the contents of these many documents.

The following discussion serves to illustrate the predicament the defense community finds itself in today.

Title 50, US Code § 3043 obliges the president to "transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States...on the date on which the President submits to Congress the budget for the next fiscal year." It requires "a comprehensive description and discussion" in five areas. Among these are interests "vital to the national security," "foreign policy," and "all elements of national power."

Title 10, US Code § 118 mandates that as part of the Quadrennial Defense Report (QDR) the Department of Defense "delineate a national defense strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy." Furthermore, the Department is to submit the National Defense Strategy as part of the QDR to the Armed Services Committees every four years "in the year following the year in which the review is conducted, but not later than the date on which the President submits the budget for the next fiscal year to Congress...."

Title 10, US Code § 153 (b) requires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to "determine each even-numbered year whether to prepare a new National Military Strategy...or to update a strategy previously prepared" and to submit it to the Armed Services Committees by February 15th.

Logically, subordinate strategies should "nest" with and flow from the NSS.

To summarize the problem: Congress requires the president to submit a budget for the next fiscal year "after the first Monday in January but not later than the first Monday in February of each year..." Congress also tells the president to transmit his NSS report at the same time. Logically, subordinate strategies should "nest" with and flow from the NSS. This cannot happen because Congress requires the DOD to develop a National Defense Strategy (NDS) every four years following the QDR

and submit it no later than when the president submits his budget request. This means that the DOD must base the NDS on the previous year's NSS unless the DOD creates its NDS in parallel with the current year NSS. To compound the problem, Congress instructs the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to update or prepare a new NMS by February 15th each year. This means the Chairman will in two years out of four look to a NDS that is older than the NSS as he prepares the NMS. Additionally, in all even-numbered years the Chairman will have to prepare the NMS in parallel with the NSS.

Common sense says there should be sufficient time after the White House issues the NSS for the DOD to develop its NDS. (This assumes there is a real need for the NDS, which I find a hard case to make.) In the same manner, there should be sufficient time after the DOD issues its NDS for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to prepare his NMS. Compelling the president to submit the NSS (the senior strategy) annually and the Chairman an updated or new NMS (the junior strategy) biennially as well as concurrently and the DOD the NDS on a quadrennial basis is illogical. A more reasonable alignment would ensure the NSS was enduring, while those strategies under it would manifest the character of the evolving security environment.

The review above only describes the trouble caused by the current scheduling for the development and issuance of the three strategies. There are other significant problems when it comes to the creation of strategies.

First among these is the general confusion of terms, in particular *policy* and *strategy*. Many people in key positions in the US Government and elsewhere conflate and misuse the two words. A noted military academic writes, "Today strategy is too often employed simply as a synonym for policy." [ii] He provides startling examples reporting a speech President George W. Bush gave in 2003 mentioning a "forward strategy of freedom" and a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office White Paper describing the "UK's strategy for policy." [iii] Freedom of course is a condition, not a strategy, and having a strategy for policy is meaningless. A number of authorities have observed also that government and defense officials use strategy so loosely that we have forgotten its original meaning. [iv] The US national security establishment would do well to adopt the definitions provided by Colin Gray, one of today's premier writers on strategy:

- *Policy*: The political objectives that provide the purposes of particular...strategies
- *Grand [national security] strategy*: The direction and use made of any or all among the total assets of a security community in support of its policy goals as decided by politics
- *Military strategy*: The direction and use made of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as decided by politics
- *Operations*: Combinations of purposefully linked military engagements, generally though not necessarily on a large scale [v]

Another significant problem arises from our national

leaders' disagreement over what actually constitutes policy objectives. Often leaders see these objectives in terms of national interests – principally those they deem vital.[vi] We have had presidents who thought of themselves as realists and defined such interests "in terms of a state's tangible power and sphere of influence relative to those of other states." [vii] We have had other presidents who were idealistic and therefore defined national interests "more broadly to encompass intangible, but nevertheless highly prized, values like human rights, freedom from economic deprivation, and freedom from disease." [viii] In practice, the many NSS' have presented national interests in ambiguous or broad terms or as statements of the obvious, making the value of the exercise suspect.[ix] There are respected public officials and scholars who feel strongly that the US must articulate its national interests if we are to successfully chart our future. One such group even developed a hierarchy of interests ranging from "vital interests," "extremely important interests," and "important interests," to "less important or secondary interests." [x]

I saw this problem first hand as a member of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel

I saw this problem first hand as a member of the Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, established by Congress to assess the 2010 QDR. Early on, panel members discovered they could find no meaningful and authoritative description of the nation's vital national interests. Members recognized that without such a description the panel could not effectively assess the QDR. To contend with the issue the co-chairmen established a subcommittee, which it was my privilege to chair, to determine "enduring national security interests of the United States and examine how emerging trends may affect those interests over the next 20 years." This subcommittee concluded that:

At the root of the Department's force-planning problem is a failure of our political leadership to explicitly recognize and clearly define these essential strategic interests. To be sure, it would have been easier for the Department had post-Cold War presidents provided more specific guidance on this subject. But what presidents actually do with America's military, on a bipartisan basis and over time, indicates what they believe must be done to protect America. It is, therefore, possible to discern the strategic thinking that has guided our country from the strategic practices it has followed.[xi]

A review of the United States' actual strategic practices over 65 years revealed that "American security rests on four principles:

- the defense of the American homeland;
- assured access to the sea, air, space, and cyberspace;
- the preservation of a favorable balance of power across Eurasia that prevents authoritarian domination of that region;

- and provision for the global 'common good' through such actions as humanitarian aid, development assistance, and disaster relief." [xii]

Adopting these or similar principles as policy goals would provide a sound foundation for a presidential statement enabling the creation of a solid NSS with long-lasting qualities.

A grand strategy needs to have enduring qualities. It should certainly be a strategy that remains viable for years if not decades

Compounding the problems I have discussed to this point is an even more fundamental one: Congress's demand that the president develop a NSS annually. A grand strategy needs to have enduring qualities. It should certainly be a strategy—barring the rise of a significant new challenge—that remains viable for years if not decades. Ideally, it should survive across administrations as NSC-68 did. I believe this is possible if our leaders—executive and congressional—based the NSS on principles derived from strategic practices such as those I have listed above and then treated the NSS as a "treaty" with ourselves. In other words, the president in consultation with Congress would create a NSS and then ask the Senate for approval through passage of a "sense of the Senate" resolution. Ratification would be undesirable because ratified treaties are of two kinds; "self-executing," that is, judicially enforceable and "non-self-executing," that is, judicially enforceable if Congress chose to implement it through legislation. No president is likely to want the NSS to be judicially enforceable. Moreover, seeking Senate ratification of a NSS would raise significant Constitutional questions.

To recap, "getting it right" relative to the nation's grand strategy requires the US Government to:

- Repeal legislation requiring the president to submit a NSS annually
- Create a true grand strategy based on long-standing practices that reveal vital national interests
- Publish a NSS that would survive through multiple administrations by seeking a "sense of the Senate" resolution supporting that NSS
- Enact legislation that requires the president to revise or develop a new NSS if the Senate revokes its "sense of the Senate" resolution supporting the current NSS
- Repeal legislation requiring the DOD to submit a NDS. The NDS serves no purpose that the NMS cannot meet
- Repeal legislation requiring the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to update or develop and submit a new NMS biennially and replace it with legislation requiring each new Chairman to update or develop and submit a new NMS when the president issues or updates a NSS or other circumstances warrant a revised or new NMS

Even if the US gets its grand strategy and military strategy right it is of little use if there are not operational plans that translate that strategy into the mechanics of tactics – the domain of battles and engagements. Our nation has experienced the great difficulties that occur when this “bridge” from strategy to tactics is missing or poorly constructed. No better example comes to mind than the Vietnam War where US forces won every battle—often at great cost—only to see the nation lose the war. In Vietnam, US forces fought at every opportunity because they were without a realistic campaign plan. Knowing when to accept and refuse battle and at what time and place is the crux of operational art. Campaign plans, the fruit of operational art, must support a military strategy that in turn supports a national strategy designed to accomplish war aims. As one knowledgeable historian and retired officer maintains, “the American way of war tends to shy away from thinking about the complicated process of turning military triumphs, whether on the scale of major campaigns or small-unit actions, into strategic successes.” [xiii] He notes we have “an American way of battle,” not “an American way of war.” [xiv]

Campaign plans, the fruit of operational art, must support a military strategy that in turn supports a national strategy designed to accomplish war aims.

Although, on a few occasions professionally competent officers—usually self-educated—have enabled US forces to accomplish substantial operational success—Operation Desert Storm being the most notable instance—it has been in spite of the shortcomings of existing planning doctrine. [xv] Contemporary doctrine continues to espouse a procedure for decision-making, which cognitive psychologists have told us for a half-century has limited utility. Each service and the joint community have a slightly different model of this procedure, but all models have as their foundation the rules of systems analysis; identify a problem, determine criteria that relate to the problem, assign weights to those criteria; develop and compare alternative solutions (courses of action) based on those criteria; and decide on the “optimal” solution.

A systems analysis procedure works well when determining how to degrade an integrated air defense or disrupt an electrical power grid or similar man-made systems. It is of no value when it comes to designing the concepts that drive campaign or operational plans. Instructors at the Naval War College’s Command and Staff course and at the Army War College taught me the intricacies of this formula. It proved inadequate on nearly every occasion I tried to use it. Yet, this was the only procedure the US military acknowledged until the late 1980s when officers began to learn of emerging research on decision-making. Literature on this research explained how recognizing patterns of activity enabled people to make decisions intuitively. [xvii] In essence, as people perceive a problem they tell themselves stories of how to respond to those problems and then they “act out” their stories.

Over the past 25 years, the US military has accepted, with reluctance, an intuitive approach to making decisions, principally when in a time-compressed situation. Often,

however, officers still make their default mode the standard military decision-making process, which for them is “received wisdom.” [xviii]

In 2004, retired Brigadier General Shimon Naveh of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) offered an extended idea on intuitive decision making to the US Army and US Marine Corps. His approach, which he called systemic operational design, appeared uniquely useful to planning campaigns and major operations. [xix] Based on an understanding of the chaotic nature of war, systemic operational design focuses on discerning the logic that makes a situation a problem. Through discourse a group that has expertise on some aspect of the situation structures or frames the problem, which frequently causes a counter-logic or solution to emerge naturally. In intuitive decision making a person aware of a familiar pattern enables construction of a story that makes sense; in systemic operational design a pattern materializes during discourse and facilitates a sense-making story. Failing to find the logic that makes a situation unacceptable and in need of change means planners are not able to discern a counter-logic, the conceptual element essential to begin planning.

Naveh’s explanation of systemic operational design was for many officers difficult to grasp despite the simplicity of his idea. Much of this difficulty was due to language issues and US officers’ poor understanding of the nonlinear nature of war. [xx] Fortunately, researchers learned of an important paper during the Army-Marine Corps experiments evaluating systemic operational design, which US officers found easier to comprehend. [xxi]

Close study of the systemic approach to operational design, coupled with a series of carefully constructed and capably executed wargames conducted over five years, validated systemic operational design. The final product, though, was a modified version of Naveh’s original structure and form. The US Army, which led the evaluation, provided the results to service and joint doctrine writers with the expectation they would revise planning manuals and incorporate this new approach to operational design. Universally, this failed to happen. In every case, doctrine writers merely affixed the new approach to the front end of the standard analytical military decision making process, which stresses creating and testing multiple courses of action. To illustrate the illogic of this, recall that systemic operational design is to uncover the logic or “pattern” of the situation and offer a story—the counter-logic—that will resolve the problem. In other words, the planners employ the approach to create a story that makes sense. What the standard analytical process demands is the creation of additional stories in the form of other courses of action. Why would any commander or staff want to waste time developing alternative stories when they have one they believe will work?

In other words, the planners employ the approach to create a story that makes sense.

This is another example of “received wisdom” preventing people from seeing the anomalies fracturing the existing

planning and decision-making paradigm. Despite all the credible research providing solid evidence of other ways to decide and plan that are clearly superior, those invested in the old ways hold on to what they know best.

It is time for the US military to scrap all existing planning manuals and to start afresh. Few officers read these voluminous and poorly written documents except to meet academic requirements.

It is time for the US military to scrap all existing planning manuals and to start afresh. Few officers read these voluminous and poorly written documents except to meet

academic requirements.[xxii] The new manuals must begin with recognition that there are three approaches to decision-making, not one. These are intuitive, analytical, and systemic. None is better or worse than the others are; officers must know which to use in the situation at hand. The analytical approach cannot remain the default choice.

To conclude, the US national security community must overhaul the way it currently acquires policy, which it needs to develop the nation's grand strategy and in turn its military strategy. The 1988 NSS did this best. To translate strategy successfully into campaign plans and operational plans the national defense community must adopt a systemic approach to operational design. In doing so, the community will replace analytical checklist-like procedures with discourse. The latter method enables planners to discern what makes an unfavorable situation a problem, thereby uncovering the counter-logic needed to resolve that problem.

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- [xiv] *Ibid.*, p. vi.
- [xv] Planning is actually anticipatory decision making; we do not benefit separating one from the other.
- [xvi] See in particular information in Gary Klein, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998.
- [xvii] Patterns can be visual, auditory, or sequential. To illustrate, think of drivers who to drive safely continually watch the pattern of cars moving around them, listen for horns, sirens, or squealing brakes, and notice when something familiar happens ("A" + "B") that the next thing in the sequence is liable to be ("C").
- [xviii] Thomas Kuhn in his influential *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* observed that practitioners were reluctant to abandon the rules of the paradigm that guided their field. They learned these rules, which he called "received wisdom," in their initial education. This supports John Maynard Keynes' belief that "The difficulty lies, not in new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones. . . ." This quote comes from the preface to *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* published by Harcourt Brace and Co. in New York in 1935.
- [xix] After the 2006 Israeli war with Hezbollah, several critics blamed use of systemic design for the failings the IDF experienced. I have reviewed these reports and found that the critics misconstrued systemic operational design and effects based operations, seeing them as the same thing. They are polar-opposite ways of making decisions.
- [xx] The term nonlinear here does not refer to the geometric connotation inherent in the "nonlinear battlefield," but to the disproportion between cause and effect often found in open systems.
- [xxi] Horst W. J. Rittel, and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Science*, 1973, 155-169.
- [xxii] I can attest to this having taught or lectured during the past 20 years at Marine Corps University, Joint Forces Staff College, Army War College, Naval War College, and National Defense University. In addition, I have discussed this issue with officers who have served on joint and service staffs finding few who saw much value in current planning publications. These manuals include Joint Publication 5-0, *Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*; Joint Staff J-7 *Planner's Handbook for Operational Design*; Army Doctrinal Publication 5-0, *The Operations Process*; and Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process*.

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Warfare and Strategy

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Professor Jim Storr was an infantry officer in the British Army for 25 years. For the last four years of that period he wrote high-level military doctrine. He is now a consultant in the defence sector, with interests in consultancy, teaching, writing and research. He is the Editor of Infinity Journal's sister publication, The Journal of Military Operations.

I have been asked to write an article on the importance of understanding warfare when studying strategy.

Let us start with definitions:

Warfare is the conduct of war;

Strategy is either:

- (1) The art of generals; or
- (2) The application of force for the purposes of the state (at the state or national level); or
- (3) The direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as defined by politics.

I will look at the definitions for a while, then discuss strategy and warfare, and then make some observations about the importance of understanding warfare when studying strategy.

Definitions

The definition of warfare seems quite simple. In essence, it is 'how it is done'. So, for example, much military history is the history of warfare; how wars have been fought. That could refer to war at: the national level; the theatre or campaign level; or the battlefield, tactical level. Much of the history of warfare looks very much at the mechanics of the tactical

level: for example, studying trench warfare in the First World War; or the tactics of the Battle of Britain.

A separate aspect of warfare refers to how armed forces can, do or should operate. That is the non-historical part. In war, history is often our only guide to the future; so the history of warfare really should inform future practice. It could be said that the only real value of the study of the history of warfare is how it informs practice (other than as an interest in itself). Many people, mostly men, do find it intensely interesting. I do. However, to reiterate, the only real value of the study of the history of warfare is in how it informs practice. (I restrict myself largely to land warfare simply because that is what I know most about).

The definition of strategy seems more problematic.

The definition of strategy seems more problematic. Let us take the three options above. They are intended to be broad and cover a range of areas. So, if you don't agree that strategy is one of the above, please ask yourself whether it is close to one of them.

When defining strategy as (1) 'the art of generals', we open up a can of worms. Firstly, 'art' probably should mean 'craft'. It probably doesn't mean 'art' as opposed to 'science' so as to differentiate it from the technical aspects. It probably means 'craft' as in 'what generals do'.

If one defines strategy as 'the artistic or creative bit' you run into problems. Do you, for example, imply that the creative aspects of a Brigadier General's plan in, say, the Western Front in the First World War is strategy? Probably not. It's probably better to consider 'what generals do' as an aspect of warfare, recognising that some aspects of warfare are intensely human and therefore involve creative and inspirational elements. So, let's put aside definition (1).

Defining strategy as (2) 'the application of force for the purposes of the state (at the state or national level)' has much to recommend it. Effectively it equates strategy with the national level. It implies that there is a theatre or campaign level (which might be called 'operational') and a battlefield or engagement level (which might be called 'tactical').

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However, one immediately observes that only a fraction of what is considered 'strategy' falls under this definition.

That definition also leaves open the question of 'what is a state', which we won't look at here, except to say that most definitions involved in collective human behaviour should be broad and have relatively loosely-defined boundaries

To define strategy as (3) 'the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as defined by politics' seems to encompass most of what writers describe as 'strategy'. However we should immediately note that this does not make any reference to the level of warfare ('strategic, operational and tactical'). If it does, it implies that 'politics' are national politics. That may be reasonable; using force (or the threat of force) for reasons of local politics is probably not war as most people would understand it. However, definition (3) still permits the conclusion that tactical matters (that is, how violence is applied at the tactical level) is a question relevant to strategy. That causes some difficulty, as we will see below.

Strategy

So, we observe strategy to be a field of intellectual endeavour in which writers discuss the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as defined by politics. What can we say about that?

The first thing that strikes me is that several of the people who write on strategy seem to be acting under false pretences.

The first thing that strikes me is that several of the people who write on strategy seem to be acting under false pretences. Dogmatic assertion is not respectable. Circular argumentation is not respectable. Weak points forcibly made do not make them any more valid. I have seen several of those writers speak and am even less impressed for the experience. Strong presentational mannerisms do not make weak points any more valid. Using the platform to refute criticism of flawed argument is not respectable.

Much strategy writing seems to be consequence-free. The term 'armchair generalship' is derogatory but it is notable how many policy wonks or academics indulge in it; usually wrapped up in sophistry and in the full knowledge that none of their proscriptions will ever result in action or policy change. Privilege without responsibility is the tart's charter.

Related to that, but not entirely overlapping with it, is a perception of cleverness. A number of strategy writers do not (or perhaps cannot) use simple clear language. Here are a few examples:

'shun the allure of asinine perfection';

'stylistic inconsistencies' related to a 'disciplinary matrix';

'cherry picking and confusion finds its way into the historiography of manoeuvre proponents';

'interactively complex systems are not additive systems...'; and

'triune' and 'cohere' in the same sentence.

Einstein reputedly said (or wrote) that if you can't describe something simply, you don't understand it well enough. That may be the case here. Alternatively it may be that those writers are only writing for a self-selected audience, or are subconsciously demonstrating how clever they think they are. Neither is particularly helpful.

However, in my opinion the worst sin is that of theology and dogma. Some strategists, and notably some 'classical strategists' (the term is indicative) seem to grant Clausewitz godlike status. Time and again an assertion 'must be true' because Clausewitz said so. That raises a number of problems.

Firstly, how do we know? Very few (if any) strategists are really expert in early 19th Century High German. So we get into issues of translation, with its cultural baggage. I have been told repeatedly that 'such and such' is the only proper translation of Clausewitz. I fundamentally disagree that there is such a thing. I observe that 'such and such' is the translation considered to be accurate by a number of strategy writers. Excuse me: is that the Orthodox or Liberal view? The Catholic or Protestant view? (And, even then, Lutheran, Calvinist, or Church of England view; to mention just a few alternatives?) The Sunni or Shia view? I observe that the Howard and Paret version stands in the same relation to many strategy writers as the Authorised (or King James) Version of the Bible does to the Church of England. I then observe that (for example) the admonition that 'thou shall not suffer a witch to live' tells you more about King James the Sixth of Scotland than it does about original Old Testament scriptures. That is not a criticism of Howard nor Paret. It is a criticism of the attitudes of some strategy writers.

There is in places a slavish and dogmatic view that what Clausewitz wrote must be true because Clausewitz wrote it. I'm sorry, that's just not good enough.

There is in places a slavish and dogmatic view that what Clausewitz wrote must be true because Clausewitz wrote it. I'm sorry, that's just not good enough. In which other discipline so vital to man's existence do we grant almost divine reverence to one long-dead German? If Clausewitz's writings are the last word on the subject (which I seriously doubt), then there is, at the very least, a gap in our understanding as to why that should be. What is the underlying mechanism or causation which makes that so? Clausewitz did not have Godlike powers of creation.

Dogmatism is a problem in itself, but is it related to a second? The whole field of conflict studies is dominated by paradox. Even Clausewitz refers to 'paradoxical logic'. The writers of a

recent US manual described nine paradoxes of COIN. Well, a rudimentary knowledge of philosophy indicates that a prevalence of paradox indicates that the basic, underlying phenomenon is insufficiently well understood.

That is troubling, on three levels. Firstly, *the basic, underlying phenomenon is insufficiently well understood*. That is a major problem in itself. Secondly, some writers seem to accept that descriptions of paradox are part of the orthodoxy of writings on conflict (which may explain why those US writers identified nine of them). Thirdly, many (if not most) writers on strategy *have not realised* that prevalence of paradox indicates that the basic, underlying phenomenon is insufficiently well understood. That causes one to (a) doubt the depth of their perception (their thinking is actually shallow) and (b) reject much of what they write, for that reason.

In my view the reasons why we grant almost divine reverence to one long-dead German are twofold. Firstly, the subject *is* difficult. Conceptual development will be hard. Secondly, those who have written on it since the 1830s have not been sufficiently perceptive, and not nearly as perceptive as some of them like to think.

Next comes the problems of interpretation. For example, much of strategy makes an issue of ways, ends and means. That makes sense to me. Then many strategists say it is Clausewitzian.

No, it isn't.

Clausewitz wrote of a *dialectic* of ends and means, or similar. No matter how you interpret German words like 'Zweck' and 'Ziel', you cannot translate a *dialectic* as having three elements. It simply doesn't.

**No matter how you interpret
German words like 'Zweck'
and 'Ziel', you cannot translate
a *dialectic* as having three elements.
It simply doesn't.**

'Ah, but that's what Clausewitz meant.'

No, that's what those thinkers ascribe to him, and then dogmatically assert the truth of that. What rubbish. Where is the rigour in that?

'Ways, ends and means' comes into American thinking due to issues such as the House of Representative's Ways and Means Committee, which was designed to match policy to resources. The term 'ways and means' comes to American usage from British parliamentary procedure. Its application to strategy strikes me as being entirely sensible. It is relatively recent. It seems to have come into use via an American writer, who would probably have thought of it (perhaps subconsciously) in terms of US Congressional practice. It is *not* Clausewitzian.

Dogmatism is one bad aspect of strategic thought. Seemingly theological argumentation is another. Church scholars used

to argue how many angels could stand on the head of a pin; as if that mattered in the real world. Moslem scholars argued about how many camels could pass through the eye of a needle (ditto). Some strategic discourse is just so pointless. Another problem is the tendency of writers to discuss the discourse, rather than the phenomena at hand. It really doesn't matter whether relatively minor unknown academic 'A' wrote 'B'. Whether or not 'B' was important, sensible, realistic, pragmatic or whatever is far more important. Some of this is stylistic convention beloved by academics. It does, however, seriously obscure the real issues. There are too many people writing about excessively arcane and complex ideas in complex language, seemingly for their own gratification. Luckily much of it is destined to be consequence-free.

Warfare

A lot of people know something about warfare; particularly at the moment, after two protracted wars in west Asia. That can be good thing, or a bad thing. It is good that there is a large body of first-hand, recent knowledge. Unfortunately there seem to be a reluctance of many of those people to write and make their knowledge public. There may be many reasons for that. The bad aspect of recent knowledge comes with reflection. People tend to believe strongly in what they have experienced from first hand, so when writing about how armed forces *could* or *should* fight, there is sometimes a strong rejection on the grounds that 'that's not the way I *did* fight'. 'Not the war I fought' can be a big institutional problem.

**As a consequence, first-hand
knowledge is important, but
(of itself) insufficient.**

As a consequence, first-hand knowledge is important, but (of itself) insufficient. One needs to study warfare in breadth and depth, and to reflect on first-hand experience; one's own and others. I believe that Clausewitz wrote something like that.

At times we see strategists writing about warfare. I was perplexed to see a lengthy chapter on the tactics of the Battle of Britain in a book on strategy, for three reasons. Firstly, at the time I saw strategy in terms of 'the application of force for the purposes of the state (at the state or national level)' ((2) above). The tactics of the battle of Britain was clearly not that. Then I reconsidered the passage on the basis of strategy as 'the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy, as defined by politics' ((3) above). Nowhere in that discussion of the tactics of the Battle of Britain did I see any discussion of policy nor politics. So I am still perplexed as to why the writer discussed it.

Warfare suffers from some of the same problems as strategy. That's not surprising, since the two are interlinked, as discussed above. In particular, in writings on warfare we sometimes see good pragmatic advice as to how armed forces could or should operate, with no good explanation as to why. The 'why' typically seems to reduce to the fact that historic or recent advice seem to point that way. That is empirical and pragmatic. In the absence of an underpinning theoretical explanation, it serves well. It would be nice if we could do

better.

A particularly unappealing aspect of warfare is what I tend to call 'military pornography'. It tends to dwell on the past exploits of special forces or perhaps the Waffen SS. It tends to lionise their seemingly mythical achievements. Many readers will know of SS Captain Michael Wittman. Of all the graves in the cemetery in Normandy where his remains are buried, his is the only one where the grass is worn down. There *is* a story to be told about Wittman. It includes appallingly bad tactics by the British 7th Armoured Division at Villers Bocage, and the sterling qualities of the British 17pdr antitank gun. But those aspects are rarely told. Dispassionate accounts of the fighting qualities of Waffen SS formations tend to say that the best were very good indeed, largely because they were well led. Conversely, the worst (including some of the most famous) were an ill-disciplined rabble and not very good at all. But those aspects are rarely told.

Perhaps the most important aspect of warfare, however, lies in its definition. Warfare is about how armed forces do, could or should operate. It is therefore directly useful to a practitioner. I study it, write about it, and at times teach it in the hope that it will be. The same may apply to strategy. But, logically, the number of people who can actually practice strategy is inevitably very small.

Observations

We have used the definition of strategy as 'the direction and use of force and the threat of force for the purposes of policy as defined by politics.' Logically, therefore, there are four (or perhaps five) important questions:

- (1) What are the policy goals?
- (2) What (violent) means are available?
- (3) How should those means be applied in pursuit of those goals:
 - (a) in general? and
 - (b) in a particular set of circumstances?
- (4) What interactions, or emergent behaviours, occur as a result?

Question 3a (how means should, in general, be applied) is the general subject of warfare. Question 3b (their application in a given set of circumstances) is a subject for military commanders and doctrine writers, although others can give advice and guidance; both on the battlefield and off. All five questions are legitimate questions for strategy. Therefore an understanding of warfare is an important aspect of strategy.

There is a critical consequence. It is that if you are writing about strategy but don't understand warfare, you are writing rubbish.

It is notable that few, if any, academic departments of war studies teach warfare. They tend to teach military history and international relations. Some have courses on strategy. If they do, they tend to focus on questions one, two and four above. It is also notable that many people who write on strategy clearly know little or nothing about warfare. If that is you, please re-read the previous paragraph.

In an earlier part of this article I wrote disparagingly about indulgent policy wonks and academics. I should refine my remarks. Some policy advisors have hugely important positions that can shape the fate of nations and hence the world. Academics should study, write, and teach the next generation. The world needs some of both. *Some* writers who are neither paid policy advisers nor tenured academics can, and do, make significant contributions in this field.

'Some'.

Earlier, I mentioned the tart's charter. I would remark, non-judgmentally, that some prostitutes can earn a huge amount of money and live well. The most successful are the most respectable. They need not walk the streets, and the man in the street generally does not realise that their lifestyle is essentially one of prostitution. Most prostitutes are, however, good at their craft. Their lifestyle depends on it. That is because, at some point or other, the punter samples the goods.

That is not the case for many strategists.

Conclusions

I was asked to write an article on the importance of understanding warfare when studying strategy.

I am deeply unimpressed by many strategy writers, and especially some of the most widely-respected. I think that some are dogmatic. I consider that thinking on strategy has yet to explore the underlying phenomenon. I find the fixation with Clausewitz to be unhealthy.

A knowledge of warfare, defined as the study of how armed forces could, do or should fight, is a critically important aspect to the study of strategy.

A knowledge of warfare, defined as the study of how armed forces could, do or should fight, is a critically important aspect to the study of strategy. Without a good knowledge of warfare, strategy writers will inevitably write rubbish. Some do.

The two previous paragraphs seem to be causally linked.

Defeat Mechanisms: The Rationale Behind the Strategy

Eado Hecht

Israel

Dr Eado Hecht is an independent defense analyst specializing in military doctrine and its interpretation. He teaches at Bar-Ilan University, Haifa University and in various Israeli Defense Force courses and is an Editorial Panel Member at The Journal of Military Operations.

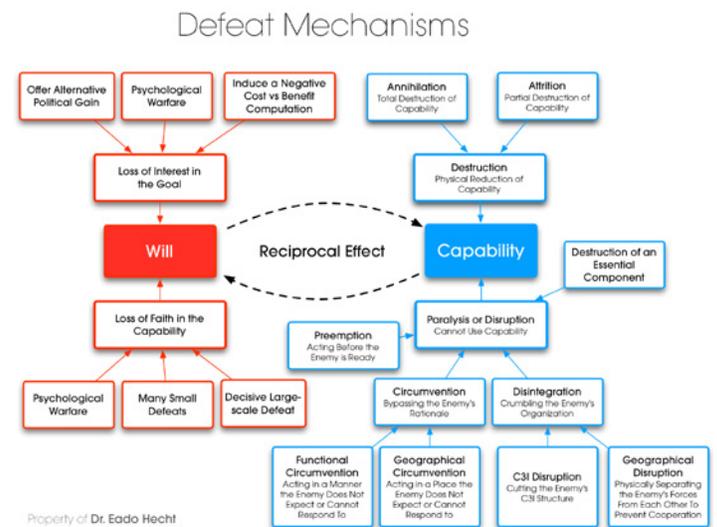
War is deliberate reciprocal violence between two or more groups of people, each trying to achieve its own objective at the others' expense. It is conducted simultaneously on two planes: the psychological and the physical. On the psychological plane collide the rival *wills* of the conflicted groups, whereas on the physical plane collide the rival *capabilities* of the conflicting groups. These planes are not unconnected, though for the purpose of this discussion it is useful to separate them. The interactions are complex, but to simplify we can argue that a reduction in *will* reduces *capability* and when *capability* is low it tends to reduce the *will* to fight – any sporting person can attest to this basic interaction. It requires enormous willpower to overcome a limitation in physical capability – to suffer the physical consequences of material inferiority, casualties, and damage to one's assets, and yet persevere. In Vietnam, the Communists suffered several times the casualties suffered by the Americans and South Vietnamese, but they managed, through superior willpower to achieve victory. Conversely, all the American material superiority was not enough to compensate for a lack of will. Prussian military theoretician Carl von Clausewitz referred to the connection between will and capability when he stated that the basic military objective of any commander should usually be the destruction of the enemy force – but that, in fact, it is rarely necessary to actually kill every enemy fighter in order to cause the enemy army to cease to exist[1].

Defeat Mechanisms are the various processes that cause the physical and psychological damage that drive armies to defeat. They describe the theoretical rationale behind the operational plan. It must be emphasized that, though they will be described below separately, in practice they

are usually combined, and a single act may trigger more than one mechanism in the enemy force. This article offers a taxonomy and a theory for the various Defeat Mechanisms and the relationship between them as a basis for conscious decision-making when planning a war, a campaign or a battle.

Defeat Mechanisms are the various processes that cause the physical and psychological damage that drive armies to defeat.

The suggested separate mechanisms and their inter-relationships are depicted in the following diagram.



Physical Defeat Mechanisms: Reducing the Enemy's Capability

There are essentially two ways to reduce the enemy's capability: one is to *destroy* all or a portion of the physical elements that make up that capability – kill, wound or capture men and destroy or damage equipment; the other

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is to impair the enemy's ability to use that capability even if it still physically exists.

Destruction

Spilling blood is the essential driver of the act of war and determines its result.

Destruction is the intuitive act of war – physical violence begets physical destruction. As previously mentioned, Clausewitz believed that this was usually the best way to defeat an enemy. Spilling blood is the essential driver of the act of war and determines its result. However, he was fully aware that actually killing all the enemy's troops might not be needed – usually killing some and convincing the others that their fate would soon be the same was enough to cause military units to crumble and cease to exist, except as a mob of fleeing or surrendering individuals. However, historical experience shows that it is impossible to answer the crucial question: "How many must I kill for the rest to give-up?". The percentage of casualties required to cause an organized force to disintegrate is not a constant – some units have disintegrated after suffering only 10% casualties, others have fought on even when 90% had been killed or wounded. Indeed, the same unit might exhibit different levels of staying power on different occasions – an example of the complex relationship between willpower and physical capability.

Not only is the percentage of casualties suffered important – the rate at which casualties are incurred also affects a unit's psychological staying power. The faster the unit is reduced the more likely the survivors will surrender or retreat.

Taking Clausewitz's idea to the extreme, German Chief of the General Staff Alfred von Schlieffen determined that in order to ensure the desired result as efficiently as possible an army must first surround its enemy. His ideals were the battle of Cannae in 216 BC and the campaign of Koenniggratz in 1866. However, when his successors attempted to surround the French army in 1914, they failed. Instead of rapidly annihilating the French army, the Germans themselves were gradually ground-down till their troops and commanders lost faith in the possibility of victory.

With the gradual rise of machines as the main weapon in the military arsenal, destroying them became the focus of planning.

With the gradual rise of machines as the main weapon in the military arsenal, destroying them became the focus of planning. During the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, in the Sinai Peninsula only a fraction of the approximately 90,000 Egyptian soldiers were killed, wounded or captured before the Egyptian army ceased to function effectively. Instead it was the rapid destruction of aircraft, and of tanks and

artillery pieces that wrought the Egyptian defeat. In fact, more Egyptian soldiers died from thirst during their disorganized retreat than from Israeli military action.

The discussion above focused on High Intensity Wars (HIW); however, one of the central arguments in modern strategic theory is the issue of whether *destruction* is a viable tool for conducting Low Intensity Wars (LIW). In the past it was undoubtedly a victorious strategy – ask the Native Americans in North America or the Boers in South Africa. However, the casualty ratios in Vietnam and many other LIWs seem to bear out the hypothesis that given the cultural limitations imposed on contemporary armies, denying them the right to directly attack civilians and the physical difficulty of separating the civilians from the combatants, this is no longer true. On the other hand, there are examples of armies that managed to break the enemy with a series of accurate attacks directed by excellent intelligence that enabled them to identify then kill or capture the combatants and reduce civilian casualties to a minimum. One example is the series of Israeli operations that began with Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002 and gradually destroyed the Palestinian military infrastructure in Judea and Samaria (The West Bank), thus compelling the Palestinians to drastically reduce their attacks on Israel. The American 'Surge' in Iraq also achieved something similar – albeit, for a variety of reasons, the result was more temporary than the one achieved by the Israelis. Whilst undoubtedly not a panacea, mostly because of the cultural and political norms that today limit an army's freedom to kill indiscriminately, it is certainly still a useful strategy when applied properly.

Paralysis or Disruption

A military organization can recover from paralysis or disruption (from paralysis quicker than from disruption), but until it does, its capability has been reduced.

Paralysis means that though the military organization still exists physically, it is unable to function effectively. Disruption means that even though the component units of the organization or individual people might still physically exist, they are not capable of functioning cohesively as an organization. A military organization can recover from paralysis or disruption (from paralysis quicker than from disruption), but until it does, its capability has been reduced. One might therefore regard it as having been temporarily destroyed, whether partially or totally.

Pre-emption

Preemption is the initiating of action before the enemy is ready. One can either surprise the enemy (i.e., he is not aware of the intention to act at that point in time) or be quicker than him in planning, preparing and conducting one's operations (i.e., he is aware of your intentions but cannot keep up with your tempo of operations). A preempted force will respond

much less efficiently as it struggles to understand what is happening and hastily adapt its plans and prepare its forces. In extreme cases preemption will induce almost complete organizational paralysis in the surprised army or even cause units to disintegrate as their men abandon the field.

Witness, for example, the ineffective, consistently tardy, response of the French army to the German advance through France in May 1940 – every attempt by the French to establish a new defence line was thwarted because the German forces had crossed that line before the French forces had deployed along it. A year later the same happened to the Russian army in the first weeks of Operation Barbarossa. The success of the first wave of the Israeli air force's attack on the Egyptian air force on the morning of the 5th of June 1967 can be ascribed to the physical result of surprise – the Egyptian aircraft were caught on the ground. However, it was the residual paralyzing effects of that surprise which prevented an effective Egyptian response against the next waves of the attack which struck air fields untouched in the initial wave.

To preempt a rival army, the preempting army must decide and prepare its actions quicker than the rival. This, however, often requires it to forgo some of its own planning and preparation processes – meaning that it too will be less than fully prepared for action. Achieving surprise is supposed to compensate for this lack of preparedness but there is a fine line between being quicker than the enemy and being overly hasty and initiating action while insufficiently prepared, and thus transferring the deleterious effects of surprise from the enemy to one's own forces.

To preempt a rival army, the preempting army must decide and prepare its actions quicker than the rival.

Circumvention

Another option is conducting the war in a manner or at a location the enemy has insufficient capability to counter or does not expect.

Examples of the first category (insufficient capability) are the Iranian offensives against Iraq in the mid-1980s. These were conducted mostly in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq and the marshes of southern Iraq, thus neutralizing Iraqi superiority in armored forces, forcing them to fight an infantry battle in which the Iranians had numerical superiority. In Iraq in 1991 and in Kosovo in 1999 the Americans preferred to exploit their aerial superiority – conducting a virtually one-sided war because neither the Iraqis nor the Serbs were capable of competing. In these cases even if the enemy knew in advance what the American plan would be he had no possible counter except to try to enhance his survivability and wait. Protracted irregular warfare has often proven effective when facing an enemy with limited time to achieve victory or significant cultural limitations on its use of force.

It is an accepted military truism that he who defends everywhere or attacks everywhere is weak everywhere.

It is an accepted military truism that he who defends everywhere or attacks everywhere is weak everywhere. Therefore commanders deploy their forces according to an assessment of where they expect the enemy to defend and where they expect him to attack. Attacking in an unexpected direction that requires the enemy to rapidly change his plans and shift his forces can disrupt the cohesive functioning of those forces. This can occur even if the direction chosen is one considered possible but unlikely – this was the true story behind the German thrust through the Ardennes. The French were not surprised by the ability of tanks to operate in the Ardennes, they themselves had conducted exercises with armored units there, but they considered it a less-likely scenario than an attack through the open plains of central Belgium. French intelligence discovered the German Ardennes thrust on the first day and once the French high command ascertained the seriousness of the threat they began to deploy reserve forces in that direction. However, both they and the German High Command were surprised at the rapidity of the German advance and the success of the German forward troops to cross the Meuse River on the fourth day of the war. French reserves began to arrive on the evening of the fourth day – had the Germans been 12 hours later or had the French responded 12 hours sooner, there might not have been a resounding German victory in the summer of 1940.

Disintegration

Another option is to disintegrate the rival army into its constituent parts by severing its lines of communication. Whereas in the past the term was literal – the routes of transportation between areas were also the routes on which messengers could carry messages, today one has to differentiate between blocking transportation routes for movement of forces and supplies and blocking communications, which no longer suffer measurable delay even if they must be detoured through indirect routes.

C3I

C3I refers to the communication of reports and commands along the hierarchy of command – the lower levels reporting the situation to the higher levels and the higher levels ordering the lower levels what to do. Communications are essential not only up and down the hierarchy of command, but also between neighboring units. They enable them to discuss the situation, form a general view of that situation and decide how best to support and reinforce each other – even without the involvement of the superior levels of command.

Disruption of this system can be done by blocking the transmission of communications (jamming radio frequencies, cutting wires, capturing messengers etc.) – or by inserting inaccurate information so that the reports and the orders are

no longer realistic (deception operations and psychological warfare) causing commanders and subordinates to lose faith in each other and to begin to ignore each other. The concept of mission-command and pre-set drills is a way of hastening the response and bypassing possible interference to the flow of reports and orders by allowing lower levels some latitude in deciding what to do by assuming what the senior commander would order them to do if he received their report. It can however backfire if a subordinate is deceived by the enemy into believing the situation warrants a particular response whereas his superiors or neighboring commanders believe the situation to be different and therefore react differently. A military organization that begins to act incoherently gradually loses its effectiveness.

Geographical

Severing the transportation routes connecting the component units of the military organization prevents them from supporting, reinforcing and supplying each other.

Boundaries between the areas of responsibility of neighboring units are especially vulnerable to penetration because the units on either side report to different commanders with separate agendas (i.e. the separate missions) that define what is more important to them. Inserting units to block the routes of transport and communications along these boundaries tends to make cooperation between the units on either side more difficult than it already is and, even if they do cooperate, prevents neighboring commanders from actually sending help to each other.

Blocking the transportation routes between forward units and the units, reserves and supply depots behind them is more difficult, but not impossible – with long-range artillery, aircraft, and airborne troops and in some cases infiltration via gaps in the opposing array.

Inserting forces to physically block lateral and longitudinal transport routes also facilitates blocking communications – it is technically easier to block radio transmissions when the jammer is located between the two prospective communicators.

The German response in the first days of the Normandy invasion in 1944 was considerably less effective

The German response in the first days of the Normandy invasion in 1944 was considerably less effective because Allied deception operations and the cutting or blocking of all main roads and rail-tracks leading to the invasion beaches by Allied air forces, paratroops and the French Resistance delayed the decision to send reserves from other sectors and then slowed the movement of those units once the decision was made. The Israeli's cross-canal counter-offensive in 1973 exploited and widened a lateral gap between two Egyptian armies, prevented them from cooperating by forcing each to protect its own flank and rear and then surrounded the southern army, cutting it off from its sources of supplies and

reserves. Finally, the NATO concept of FOFA was based on the idea of longitudinal separation of the Soviet offensive formations.

Destroying an Essential Component

The final option is to destroy a specific component of the enemy's military or national system psychologically or materially essential to its continued functioning; for example killing the supreme commander, destroying the supply and maintenance system, cratering airfield runways, etc. This differs from regular destruction, as described above, in that defeat is induced not by the relative number of casualties but by the physical or psychological criticality of the specific component to the functioning of the entire organization.

Thus, the killing of one man, Goliath, precipitated the collapse of the entire Philistine army. The success of the naval blockade instituted by Britain on Germany in the First World War prevented the import of food and raw industrial materials essential for the existence of Germany's population and the functioning of its military industry. The gradual starvation of both was one of the deciding factors that brought Germany to surrender in autumn 1918. In the Second World War, British targeting of the ships transferring supplies from Italy to North Africa drastically reduced Axis military capabilities there and was, again, one of the deciding factors in the campaign. The destruction of the Egyptian air force on the first day of the Six Day War, though not conceived as such by the Israeli planners, proved to be such a component. It took the Egyptian high command nearly 24-hours to collect and understand the results of the Israeli aerial assault, and when the reality sank in it psychologically shattered Marshal Amer, Egypt's supreme military commander, who, believing that without air cover his ground forces were doomed, immediately and hysterically ordered a hasty withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula. This precipitated the disintegration of the Egyptian ground forces, many of whom had not yet even seen Israeli forces, let alone fought them or been defeated. The Israelis' original operational intention had been to destroy the Egyptian air force to ensure their civilian rear from Egyptian air strikes, but they had in fact decided the war on the Egyptian front. In 1991, American planners identified the Republican Guard Forces as an essential component of the Iraqi defense system in Kuwait – they assessed that destroying this component would trigger the collapse of the rest of the Iraqi forces. In 2003 the American invasion of Iraq began with an attempt to kill Saddam Hussein – had this attempt succeeded it is very likely that the initial conquest of Iraq would have been even easier than it proved to be. In their continuous war with the Palestinians, the Israelis have often achieved temporary respites by killing top-echelon leaders – for example, in early 2004 the Israelis killed in rapid succession the leader of Hamas and his replacement, causing a drastic reduction in Hamas attacks for a few months.

In most of the examples presented above, one can discern that the material damage, paralysis or organizational disruption also affected the enemy psychologically. We therefore now move on to discuss the psychological defeat mechanisms.

Psychological Defeat Mechanisms: Reducing the Enemy's Will

Losing Belief In One's Capability

Sooner or later, a group of people that is defeated every time they fight the enemy will lose confidence that they can win the war. The military defeat might be inflicted in a single resounding blow, as happened to the French in 1940, or it might be inflicted by a succession of small blows, as happens in most victories achieved by guerrillas. The defeats do not even have to be real – sometimes the semblance of defeat is enough to cause loss of confidence. This happened to the American public after the Communist Tet Offensive in early 1968 – the Communist forces were almost annihilated, suffering ten times the casualties they inflicted on the Americans and South Vietnamese, and yet the American public saw a defeat and lost confidence in eventual victory.

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Losing Interest In The Objective

People lose interest in the objective of the war when they feel that the price of continuing the war is higher than the price of accepting the enemy's political demands or abandoning the military mission.

Military forces focus on computing the cost in resources expended and casualties – human and equipment, but political leaders also compute economic costs, diplomatic and cultural costs, and the expected effect on public support for the war effort. It is impossible to compute a fixed common price list according to the objectives of the war – different cultures measure costs and benefits differently and the same group of people can change their opinion over time or on different occasions. However, the computation is not simply a matter of numbers but also of emotions – psychological warfare can affect the way a people view the price they are paying and are expecting and willing to pay in the future relative to the benefits they are accruing in return. A good example, though perhaps extreme, is the American involvement in the Somalian civil war (late 1993 to early 1995) – intervening with the best of intentions it took only 22 soldiers killed (18 of them in a single incident) to break the will of the American people and the American forces were withdrawn from the fight. On the other hand nearly 4,500 Americans were killed in Iraq before the project there was abandoned. In both cases the issue was not the physical inability of the American military to sustain these losses and continue fighting, but the cost-benefit computation of the American politicians and public that brought the withdrawal of American forces.

Often loss of confidence in the ability to win is the first step towards losing interest in the objective. In 1965 the American government and a vast majority of the public supported intervention in Vietnam as important for American values and interests, but three years later, after it became clear that victory was not certain and even if it were achievable would take many years and an exorbitant price, views changed and by 1970 the USA was simply looking for a quick way out. On the other side, the Vietnamese Communists, who had already suffered many times more casualties than the Americans and the South Vietnamese combined in real terms, and even more in relative terms (the percentage of troops and civilians killed per population size), were willing to suffer many more casualties and economic difficulties and to continue fighting for many more years.

Approaches to Activating the Defeat Mechanisms

There are a variety of approaches on how to activate the Defeat Mechanisms. These approaches can be divided to three groups:

- Time – striving to achieve a decision rapidly versus gradually.
- Means – destruction versus disruption.
- Order of Priority – attacking strengths versus attacking weaknesses.

Rapid versus Gradual

Generally, *rapidly* achieving victory requires a concentrated effort aimed at quickly destroying or disrupting the enemy's physical capability to conduct war, whereas *gradually* achieving victory usually focuses on the psychological aspects of the enemy's will to fight. Most high intensity and medium intensity wars are fought with a view to achieving a rapid result, whereas low intensity wars are generally decided gradually.

**It should be stressed that the actual
result is not always the
planned result**

It should be stressed that the actual result is not always the planned result – all the armies entering the First World War planned their campaigns to achieve a rapid victory, however all failed and the war became a drawn-out struggle of physical and psychological strength. It was finally decided when the Central Powers lost faith in their ability to win (because of a gradual accumulation of casualties slightly higher than their ability to replace those casualties and the gradual starvation of their populations and industries by the Allied naval blockade that prevented them from procuring food and raw materials at a rate commensurate with their consumption). The Iraq – Iran War (1980 – 1988) was similarly decided by the Iranian population gradually losing confidence in victory before the Iraqi population.

Destruction versus Disruption

The Destruction approach is based on the assumption that only the physical reduction of most, if not all, the enemy's military capability and, in extreme cases, the destruction of a significant proportion of his civilian population as well, will compel him to surrender. The German doctrine of war from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, based on an extreme interpretation of Clausewitz, focused on destroying the enemy army – therefore their plans were generally designed to surround that army, compelling it to either surrender or die fighting.

The Disruption approach assumes that, even if the actual destruction is minimal, it is enough to deny the enemy the ability to actually use his forces effectively in order to convince him to surrender. Achieving disruption can make the fighting cheaper in blood, but it is more complicated and situation-sensitive. The Israeli army has generally preferred to apply this approach by surprising and out-maneuvering its foes, or focusing its attacks on perceived critical components of the enemy forces. However, in 1973 the Israelis found it more difficult to achieve as the Egyptians and Syrians were aware of this preference and attempted to counter it.

Achieving disruption can make the fighting cheaper in blood, but it is more complicated and situation-sensitive.

A mid-way approach is to try to capture what Swiss theorist Jomini termed 'the keys of the country' – geographic locations that confer an advantage so great that holding them compels the enemy commander to choose between risking destruction or withdrawing. The offensive plans of the French supreme commander in 1914 – 1916, Joffre, were focused on capturing rail and road junctions vital for the transportation of supplies to the German army in France, thus compelling that army to withdraw. This approach failed because of the tactical strength of German defenses, and in 1916 Joffre turned to gradual destruction – the *guerre d'usure*.

Targeting Strengths versus Targeting Weaknesses

Military planning focused on targeting strengths is based on the assumption that defeating the enemy where he is strongest will almost automatically bring about the collapse of the rest of his forces.

Military planning focused on targeting weaknesses is based on the assumption that this ensures a series of small-scale victories which will gradually accumulate a psychological and perhaps also physical advantage, or perhaps open a route giving easier access to an enemy's critical component.

One of the central disagreements between British and American decision-makers in the Second World War was when and where to invade the European mainland – immediately on joining the British the Americans wanted to attack the Germans directly by landing in France and driving

to Germany, whereas the British preferred to first 'nibble' at the weaker extremities such as North Africa, the Balkans, Italy, gradually eroding German forces there before tackling the German strength head-on.

Liddell-Hart's concept of the Indirect Approach was to a great degree focused on avoiding enemy strengths at all costs and targeting only weaknesses ('soft spots') in his capabilities and deployment. Fuller criticized the rigidity of Liddell-Hart's approach: "In war, a general should aim at a decisive point; if this point is also a soft spot so much the better, but if it is only a soft spot and he still aims at it he is not a great general" [ii].

Influence of the Type of War on the Defeat Mechanism

The type of war, as determined by the intensity of fighting, has a significant effect on the choice of mechanism: the rate of destruction is a direct function of the intensity of combat; therefore, in Low Intensity Wars it is virtually impossible to achieve victory by destroying enemy capabilities faster than they can be regenerated. Consequently, in Low Intensity Wars the rivals focus on applying the psychological mechanisms. Psychological defeat still requires physical pain, but the resonance achieved by each attack is more important than the amount of actual physical damage caused – therefore, the rivals aim their attacks at symbols. Such symbols might be important people (political, spiritual, economic, military leaders) or cultural values (religious sites, governmental institutions, school-teachers, doctors) or life styles (such as economic institutions, freedom of movement or entertainment – see for example the Palestinian attacks on Israeli buses, discotheques, coffee-shops etc.). In High Intensity Wars the rivals tend to focus on attacking each others' capabilities in order to rapidly destroy or disrupt them faster than the rival can generate replacements. Of course, if the two sides in a High Intensity War are evenly matched, so that neither manages to achieve victory via destruction or disruption, then the physical 'slogging' match becomes also a psychological struggle and one can see planners adding psychological targets of the kind mentioned above.

The fact that one rival chooses a particular mechanism does not necessarily compel his opponent to compete in exactly the same way. The Germans in the Second World War preferred a rapidly fought battle of destruction between the rival armies – the actual concept behind the term 'Blitzkrieg'. The British preferred a long drawn out struggle of national perseverance, focusing on gradually destroying Germany's industrial infrastructure and starving its civilian population with aerial bombardment and naval blockades. In the specific circumstances of the Second World War neither side was able to defeat the other in the manner it preferred. In the first two years of the 2000 – 2006 war between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the Israelis tried to "play the game" according to the Low Intensity War rules set by the Palestinians, but after Israeli casualties gradually increased and national morale began to plummet they broke from the mold, increased the intensity of their operations and instead of conducting a psychological campaign began a physical man-hunt for the Palestinian combatants aimed at capturing or killing as many as possible. The first effect of this new strategy was a drastic reduction in the rate the Israelis suffered casualties

and after approximately a year of repeated failures and mounting loss of capabilities the Palestinians began to lose heart and gradually stopped fighting.

Influence of the Hierarchy of Command

Though all the Defeat Mechanisms can be applied at all the levels of command, from the Grand Strategic to the Minor Tactical, the different characteristics of the conduct of war at the various levels of command affects the relative value of each Defeat Mechanism and the manner it is implemented.

At the tactical level more emphasis is placed on physical destruction, and the other mechanisms are applied either to assist this or are side-benefits of the accumulation of destruction

At the tactical level more emphasis is placed on physical destruction, and the other mechanisms are applied either to assist this or are side-benefits of the accumulation of destruction – for example, an enemy unit breaks psychologically and flees after suffering partial destruction or a surprise attack.

When employing larger forces at the higher command levels, destruction becomes harder to achieve and commanders focus on achieving paralysis or disruption of the enemy forces that might be sufficient in themselves, or subsequently enable destruction of a large part of the enemy force thereby, perhaps, precipitating a crisis in confidence.

At the senior military levels, where civilian leaders and military commanders meet, the focus is on creating a plan that leads to the enemy losing confidence in his ability to win.

At the top level, civilian leaders think in terms of strengthening the resolve of their own public and weakening the resolve of the enemy – creating a rational or an emotional discussion in enemy ranks as to the worthiness of the political objective versus the price being paid to achieve it. Unlike military commanders, civilian leaders can also add alternative inducements to the enemy (e.g. why fight and suffer for *this* when we can give you *that* instead?)

Summary

Defeat Mechanisms are the processes that damage the physical and the psychological stock of an army and, eventually, render it unable to perform.

War is a violent physical and psychological encounter between two or more parties. Defeat Mechanisms are the processes that damage the physical and the psychological stock of an army and, eventually, render it unable to perform.

The physical capability of an army can be damaged by the actual destruction of its manpower and/or equipment but one does not necessarily need the complete annihilation of the enemy's manpower and equipment. Often partial destruction is sufficient to prevent an army from performing its tasks because of the psychological effect of accumulating casualties on that army's personnel and/or civilian population. However, there may be other ways of preventing an army from functioning properly. Thus, preempting the enemy army's preparations for offensive or defensive action, circumventing its capabilities, disrupting its lines of communication, or destroying of an essential component in its structure may also prevent that army from fulfilling its tasks.

Obviously, the inability to fight saps the will to fight. However the psychological will to fight can also be uprooted by convincing the enemy that, in view of past experience, he can not win, or that the price of the encounter is higher than the value of the objective.

The Defeat Mechanism ought to be an inherent part of any strategic or tactical plan. For methodological purposes this article separated the various mechanisms, but in reality they are intermixed and affect each other, so that a military plan could be directed to activate a number of mechanisms simultaneously or in tandem to each other. The activation of a Defeat Mechanism must consider the time, the means and the order of priority allocated to it. It must also consider the intensity of the encounter for which it is planned, the effects of the level of command and size of forces involved and the unique background circumstances in which it is applied.

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[i] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Book 1, Chapter 2.

[ii] J.F.C. Fuller, J.F.C., War and Western Civilization 1832 – 1932 (Freeport, New-York, 1969 – original London, 1932), p 220.

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Politics and Passion: The Neglected Mainspring of War

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The practice of war resides within the strategic paradigm, being in Carl von Clausewitz's words, an *'act of force to compel our enemy to do our will'*.

Strategy is about the linking of means to ends. The practice of war resides within the strategic paradigm, being in Carl von Clausewitz's words, an *'act of force to compel our enemy to do our will'*. [i] The fulfilment of one's will constitutes the end point of war and is forever associated with Clausewitz's most cited aphorism that war is a continuation of politics by other means. [ii] The supposition is that politics – the ostensible goals and values that find their expression through political will – gives war its purpose. It is political purpose, then, that makes war instrumental as a goal-seeking enterprise through the act of combat.

Implicit within the idea of war as a political purpose is that effective strategy requires the application of skill and judgment. For war to be fully instrumental the goals sought need to be in proportion to the efforts exerted to achieve them. The further implication follows that when practiced well war is, in effect, managed in accord with pure reason. Reason is thereby often seen as a moderating element in war, constraining reckless behaviour and delineating where the application of force can be best employed. In matters of war and strategy, in other words, it is far preferable to have a calculating and careful Bismarck, than a wild, irrational Hitler.

This brief article argues that the presumption that politics performs a restraining and controlling influence in war is

so deeply embedded in liberal social thought that it often obscures the energy that gives war its underlying motivation, which is passion. Liberal social thought often places a premium upon the values of diplomacy, negotiation, and compromise. These are elements that are perceived to characterise and govern politics in a mature democratic system, which is thus inclined to sometimes disparage the kinds of 'politics' that are associated with more visceral energies. However, the effect of the ignoring, downplaying or obscuring of the role of fundamental, motivating, element of passion, it will be contended, can impact negatively on Western appreciations of strategy because it underestimates the role of moral forces. In doing this, Western strategic discourse is often reduced to either over-simplified technical appreciations of complex political problems or a questionable ethicism that seeks to extinguish popular passions from all political calculation, seeking only the validity of a detached set of supposedly universal humanitarian 'norms' to sanction any kind of military action. The consequence is a lack of direction in foreign and defence policy and a loss of will to act where it might be prudent. [iii]

Liberal social thought often places a premium upon the values of diplomacy, negotiation, and compromise.

A Post-Clausewitzian Setting? Taming the Passions of War

An over-emphasis in liberal thought upon the tempering influence of politics on war also leads to the erroneous comprehension of sophisticated military thinkers like Clausewitz. The brutal wars of so-called ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and Transcaucasia following the end of the Cold War led John Keegan to claim that these were examples of 'primitive war'. He pronounced: 'Such conflicts... are fed by passions and rancours that do not yield to rational measures of persuasion or control: they are apolitical to a degree for which Clausewitz made little allowance'. [iv] Here we can see clearly the supposition that politics is separate from 'primitive' passion and that the notion of political conduct is fashioned by rationality and restraint.

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Keegan's views were not exceptional but highly illustrative of prevailing opinion about the relationship between policy and war. The assumption that war – in its elemental form – was but one step from sheer barbarism that required taming by the rational hand of politics has been a prevalent assumption within Western strategic thought for decades, if not centuries. The response of the liberal polity to this assumption has been either that rational states should stay out of such barbarous conflicts since little or nothing can be done to manage or guide them toward diplomatic solutions, or on rare occasions that intervention can be contemplated, this should be driven by an ostensible humanitarian impulse conducted under the aegis of a 'responsibility to protect'.

The fear that war was always inherently in danger of assuming a visceral, and therefore, apolitical character, was a notable feature of the atomic era. After 1945 the belief that there could be any rational concept of war-fighting involving forces of such destructiveness was comprehensively disavowed. According to Senator William Fulbright: 'There is no long any validity in the Clausewitzian doctrine of "carrying out policy by other means." Nuclear weapons have rendered it totally obsolete'. [v] That the nuclear stand-off had established a post-Clausewitzian setting that severed the link between the practice of war and any kind of coherent, or sane, strategic conduct found its expression in the idea that superpower relations had to be managed by the dry, technocratic, apolitical war avoidance techniques embodied in theories of nuclear deterrence and arms control. [vi] To the extent that politics should exert itself it should be through the hand of skilled nuclear diplomacy to manage superpower tensions. [vii]

Consequently, as Keegan's statement indicated, any residual sense of war as the reasoned expression of goal-seeking activity was further denuded by the seeming prevalence of identity politics below the level of the state in the post-Cold War era. In the minds of many analysts the outbreak of war among ethnic or religious groups represented 'new war' that did not yield to established conceptions of war as an extension of rational action. [viii] In this new dispensation, for those like Martin Van Creveld: 'If any part of our intellectual baggage deserves to be thrown overboard, surely it is...the Clausewitzian definition of war'. [ix] The ostensibly new age ushered in by the end of the Cold War was to be reinforced by the post-9/11 epoch, which was to see the practice of apocalyptic and 'apolitical' violence underline how far modern conflicts were perceived to have moved beyond the Clausewitzian paradigm. [x]

primordial forces at work. He is explicit that 'Military activity is never directed against material forces alone: it is always aimed at the moral forces which give it life, and the two cannot be separated'. Furthermore, in an extended comment on the essence of military activity Clausewitz highlights the primal elements that war inevitably embraces:

Essentially combat is an expression of *hostile feelings*. But in large-scale combat that we call war hostile feelings often have become merely hostile *intentions*. At any rate there are usually no hostile feelings between individuals. Yet such emotions can never be completely absent from war. Modern wars are seldom fought without hatred between nations: this serves more or less as a substitute for hatred between individuals. Even where there is no national hatred and no animosity to start with, the fighting itself will stir up hostile feelings: violence committed on superior orders will stir up the desire for revenge and retaliation against the perpetrator rather than against the powers that ordered the action. That is only human (or animal, if you like) but it is a fact. Theorists are apt to look on fighting in the abstract as a trial of strength without emotion entering into it. This is one of a thousand errors which they quite consciously commit because they have no idea of the implications. [xii]

Interestingly, then, far from emphasizing that war is an expression of detached, reasoned, action Clausewitz accentuates the very opposite, that war may be an expression of aggressive, animalistic energy. While some wars may indeed, due to their circumscribed aims, be governed by pure calculation, many are not. As Anders Palmgren's recent study has observed, Clausewitz felt that to understand strategy effectively, one has to comprehend that moral force, physical exertion and political purpose merge in a warlike act. [xiv] In other words, in complete contradiction to Keegan's assertion, a fairly basic reading of Clausewitz reveals that he made every allowance for the fact that 'primitive', 'passions and rancours' are central in war.

Clausewitz, we might surmise, would have seen those like Keegan and the other 'New Wars' advocates as symptomatic precisely of those 'Theorists' who are inclined to conceive war as something to be waged out of pure calculation and without emotion. War could not, as Clausewitz well knew, be reduced to a clinical act of dispassionate and restrained purpose shorn of passion. Indeed, the very notion of war undertaken without the motivating force of passion would, contra Keegan, constitute a more truly 'apolitical' understanding of the act of combat in war.

Reconnecting with Moral Forces

Contrary, then, to liberal understandings, the scale and intensity of war is governed not by codes of humanity, science, ethical, legal, or educational knowledge or by a cold cost-benefit calculus but by the depth of hostile intent. The operation of the political element in war is thus a fusion of emotion, violence and purpose. Effective strategy should therefore encompass the attempt to understand and where necessary harness these elements in an act of intelligent calculation, being neither an act of blind passion, nor of pure reason. [xv]

If we look closely at Clausewitz's actual writings about war we find a theorist who is profoundly aware of the moral, emotional, and primordial forces at work

If we look closely, however, at Clausewitz's actual writings about war, rather than the constructions that others have – often erroneously – placed upon them, [xi] we find a theorist who is profoundly aware of the moral, emotional, and

In exploring what constitutes efficacious strategy the contention of this assessment is that it is necessary to reconnect Western traditions of war with Clausewitz's appreciation of the proper role of passion. This reconnection should begin from the understanding that the desire to achieve something in relation to someone else, be it at the level of the individual or the state, springs from an emotional urge: passion, or as Clausewitz saw it, hostile feeling. Depending on the depth of hostile interests, passion may find its material expression in physical force.

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The intensity of any clash of arms, in Clausewitz's classic formulation, is governed by a trinity of popular passions, the play of chance, and political purpose. 'As a total phenomenon', Clausewitz observed, war comprises 'a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam: and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone'.^[xvi] The *politics* of war is thus a combination of all these elements, they exist in tension with each other, and which Clausewitz likened to a magnet suspended between these three different poles of attraction.

To give practical illustration, we can assert that the act of force constitutes the military part of Clausewitz's concept of war. Political leadership has the first responsibility to manage hostile feelings and, if so chosen, set goals accordingly, determining whether force is necessary to achieve them. It is the armed forces and their commanders who are charged subsequently with giving hostile feeling direction, seeking to apply violence effectively in the face of friction. In other words, the military task is to steer passion towards something that has meaningful political effects. The politics of war is, accordingly, to give passion – derived from the popular passions of the people – its ultimate purpose. In summary, we might say that politics is the purpose of passion, while the military is the efficient application of force to passion.^[xvii] Thus, we can further disclose that there is something about strategy that reconciles the will to act (passion) with the capability to act (instrumental means) that seeks to bring these two dimensions into harmony.

Escalating and De-escalating Passions

Breaking down this construction further, we can recognize that politics in war is fundamentally about manipulating passions. We can see that the operation of strategy *in* war itself comprises two choices involving either escalation or de-escalation. First, one can choose to up the ante of popular passion in order to generate sufficient public sentiment to support one's goals. There are numerous historical examples that illustrate the point. Passion can be stirred by highlighting

specific short term warnings or threats, such as the appeal by the government of prime minister Tony Blair ahead of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which invigorated public support by accentuating that Britain was potentially threatened by Iraqi weapons of mass destruction that could be launched at 45 minutes notice. That this warning turned out to be knowingly exaggerated is beside the point: the intention was purely instrumental, to galvanise public support behind the controversial overseas military intervention. In contrast, more totalitarian polities, from the Nazis to Al-Qaeda linked jihadists, focus upon ongoing preparations to stoke the passions: an idea embodied in notions of total war propounded by those like Erich Ludendorff in the 1930s who thought that popular will should be continuously heightened even in, or especially in, periods of peace to prepare the population for the coming struggle.^[xviii]

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The second, de-escalatory, view is that passions have to be lowered to prevent populist rage from getting out of hand, which might endanger the principle of proportionality. This was the overriding concern during the Cold War following the nuclear stand-off of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. De-escalating passions emphasised superpower summitry, arms limitation agreements and confidence building measures in order to reduce tensions. Worries about where popular passions might lead, however, very much pre-dated the Cold War. The particular anxiety from the late nineteenth century was that a confrontation among the great powers of Europe would explode in convulsive war unless popular sentiments were controlled. Such apprehensions can be seen in military writings leading up to World War I, from Colmar von der Goltz in Germany, Ferdinand Foch in France, and Julian Corbett in Britain, to Ivan Bloch in Poland.^[xix] (A slightly different but complementary view pre-1914 was that military preparations were so advanced and highly developed that a small incident could ignite the 'powder keg' – regardless of popular passions). The view reached its most piquant expression when the former German Chief of Staff, Ludwig Beck, from 1938 onwards challenged the Nazi/Ludendorff idea that passions should be unrestrained.^[xx] For those like Beck, excessive passion led to war for war's sake, detaching war from its ostensible purpose to attain specific goals and outcomes.

Two Strategic Traditions

The faultline evident in these debates – passion as motivation versus passion to be controlled – corresponds to the two great strategic traditions since 1945. The first tradition emphasizes the interior aspects of war, and was exemplified most graphically in Mao Tse-tung's conception of protracted people's war. As the phrase suggests, war *is* the people, an expression of people's passions. The whole point is to empower strategy by harnessing popular will to the cause. Such thinking was prefaced in Clausewitz's dissection of

the reasons for Prussia's defeat at the hands of the forces of French revolutionary armies led by Napoleon. He discerned a social actor's commitment to war was the product not of some set of clinical principles of military conduct, but a reflection of motivating values, such as ideas of patriotism, identity, freedom, honour and dignity that animated hostile intent.[xxi] Clausewitz, of course, had seen how France mobilized its people for war and argued that Prussia had no choice but to do the same.

Against this understanding has been the contending tradition that passions should be controlled through outward technique rather than interior popular will. In contrast to Maoist and other totalitarian ideas about war, the subordination of passion to technique represents the classic liberal-capitalist way of war that in advanced democracies is averse to high casualties, and thus seeks often to minimise popular involvement through technocratic solutions. Here, the efficient application of force through such techniques as small professional armies, elaborate operational doctrines, and most obviously, the employment of high-end war fighting technology substitutes for populist energies.[xxii] Indeed, the emphasis of this tradition is the attempt to reduce war to pure reason. The price, however, is that policymaking disengages itself from any sense of popular struggle because democratic societies allow people to preserve their interiority, thus relegating the 'the people' to mute onlookers in a game of what Colin McInnes has called 'spectator sport warfare'. [xxiii]

The Dangers of a Liberal Neglect of Moral Force

In effect, the liberal polity neglects the preparation of the 'home front' with the potential consequence that it fails to commit the necessary resources to fulfill the task, or worse, permits the interior space for people to dissent that leads to the undermining of war aims. Popular passions, in this sense, become diverted down avenues that are unaligned to the goals of decision makers resulting in mass protests that were witnessed, for example, in the US against the Vietnam War in the 1960s or demonstrations in Western capitals against the prospect of invading Iraq in 2003.

Plainly, these potentially negative strategic impacts are a result of the liberal-democratic polity, which does not seek to control the personal realm (stressing the 'potentially negative' impact is important here – the US might, of course, have done better in terms of its national interest by heeding the calls of protesters against the Vietnam War and withdrawing years earlier). Western states have tended to ignore the interiority of war because, being liberal societies, they do not wish to mess with people's private space: that would be Orwellian. Yet, to overcome this strategic deficit democratic politicians, learning from episodes like the Vietnam era, indulge in practices that seek to manipulate passions through other techniques: news management, spin, and soundbites, or else they attempt to subordinate passion to universally acceptable 'feel good' ideas of humanitarian intervention.

The cumulative impact of the neglect of moral force is that some have come, in the view of Margaret Thatcher's former foreign policy advisor Lord Powell, to doubt the 'West's will to act' with the consequent decline of the quality of strategic

thinking. For Lord Powell, the 'false doctrine of soft power' and 'creeping legalism' have made it increasingly 'hard to galvanise democratic societies to meet new threats'. In other words, the West 'has gone soft', lacking the 'ability to convey a sense of the West's destiny to lead in world affairs'. Further, he lamented, 'we lack a strategy, a clear sense of direction'. Significantly, Powell noted:

There is none of the passion, none of the moral sense that inspired foreign policy in the time of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. We are not driven by the desire to see freedom triumph. We can't articulate the need to respond to the challenges we face, and, as a result we can't make the sacrifices that have to be made of our global needs are to be advanced.[xxiv]

In contrast, the Maoist model and its variants from al-Qaeda to Putin's Russia are keen to stir the passions, often displaying an inordinate concern with interiority

In contrast, the Maoist model and its variants from al-Qaeda to Putin's Russia are keen to stir the passions, often displaying an inordinate concern with interiority: wishing to abolish the private sphere, get into the mind, and present people with absolute truths. Twentieth century totalitarians, from the Bolsheviks, to Ludendorff, and Goebbels in Europe, from Mao to Kim Il-sung in Asia, have consequently been hugely interested in the moral arena as a battlefield. For them tracts like Orwell's *1984* function not so much as a warning, but as a strategic blueprint.

The problem for authoritarians is that they need massive resources and organization to sustain North Korean levels of social control. Moreover, lacking the ultimate power to enforce a Disneyland of the Mind,[xxv] an authoritarian system is liable to break down, as evidence from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria recently testifies, when people begin to perceive dissonances and start to question things. Stalin asked contemptuously 'how many divisions does the Pope have?' But, in the end, a Polish Pope helped bring down Communism in Europe precisely because the Kremlin lacked the ability to control the interiority of a vast empire, whereas the Catholic and other churches had far more purchase over people's minds.

Conclusion: Interiority Matters

Political power – to use Tom Hill's intriguing counter-Maoist phrase – does not grow out of the barrel of a gun.[xxvi] Political power is about creating legitimacy to rule, and violence in the service of politics serves this end as much as any other tool of statecraft. Totalitarian systems seek to assert their legitimacy by controlling the private realm and inserting absolute truths. Yet, at the same time, this very attempt to abolish interiority transgresses notions of legitimacy. Why? Because as Clausewitz recognised, 'the result in war is never final':[xxvii] we fight our wars in the mind in order to secure our values against those of others. This is a point echoed by

Thomas Schelling who argues that rarely in war is 'complete extermination' of the adversary the principal goal, instead 'winning in a conflict does not have a strictly competitive meaning; it is not winning relative to one's adversary. It means gaining relative to one's own value system'. [xxviii]

What matters is the primary motivating force in social conduct, which is the spirit, as philosophers from Marx to Nietzsche maintained. Ultimately, 'we' – that is the liberal West – win or lose in places like Afghanistan or Iraq on the basis of thoughts. As Lawrence Freedman observes, wars are 'won in the cognitive (intellectual and emotional) sphere rather in the physical domain'. [xxix] As a consequence, the key challenge of strategy, broadly defined, is how to link physical effects with political/cognitive results. For if we think we have gained in relation to our values – our interior world – then in

one's own terms we have been successful, regardless of how this might appear to any other external audience.

What matters is the primary motivating force in social conduct, which is the spirit

Consequently, we return to the idea of the centrality of moral forces in war: those intangibles, which can be just as important as material combat power and technical proficiency. Moral forces boil down to passion, the motivating spirit that animates war. In this realm, mass interiority matters. Clausewitz gets this in a way that Western liberal societies often do not.

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The return of ancient challenges

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We analyze international relations through the lens of modern history, and as a result we remain puzzled in front of current strategic realities that have no apparent historical equivalents. Instead of well-demarcated states jousting for influence and power by waging wars and engaging in diplomacy, we see fierce groups rising in ungoverned areas, revelling in violence and eschewing negotiated settlements. Modern history does not offer many analogies for such security conditions. We have to move farther back in time and study ancient history to find more appropriate parallels. The security landscape we face is, in fact, acquiring tints of ancient times, characterized by proliferation of lethality, the pursuit of violence as a social glue, and the existence of unstable frontiers. The length, the place, and the purpose of violence were different in ancient times, and we ought to start looking at current and future strategic challenges through the lens of ancient, rather than exclusively modern, history.

We have to move farther back in time and study ancient history to find more appropriate parallels.

I examine here reasons for this different – ancient and, I suggest, future – security environment, focusing on the proliferation of lethality and on the pursuit of violence as a source of social cohesion, suggesting parallels with current trends. These features result in strategic landscape characterized by unstable frontiers and the necessity of using constant force to manage them. As in ancient history, the future may see prolonged low-level conflicts that cannot be resolved through negotiations or through a decisive application of force. It will demand recurrent offensives to

mitigate rather than eliminate the threat.

1. The modern vs. ancient mindset

What ancient history can show us is, in some ways, the flip side of the lessons of modern history

What ancient history can show us is, in some ways, the flip side of the lessons of modern history, which imbue the study of international relations in general, and of war in particular. The impression one receives from studying the past two or three centuries of international politics is that strategic interactions among states, and war as their violent expression, are defined by clear geographic boundaries, are marked by precise dates delimiting the beginning and the end of a period of violence or of peace, and can be mitigated by traditional tools of statecraft such as diplomacy or deterrence. This view is not wrong. Take, as a timely example, World War I: it begun on a specific date (28 July 1914 when Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia, followed by a cascade of declarations of war in the following week); it was fought in well defined geographic theater, and the Western Front in particular was a thick bloody line separating combatants; it also had a clear conclusion (11 November 1918, the day of the Armistice, followed by its formal end on 28 June 1919). The time and space of conflicts are also defined by the attempts, not always successful to be sure, to contain and circumscribe them. The very purpose of strategy is, after all, to translate violent behavior into political effects and, to do so, violence needs to be channeled and controlled. Civilian oversight of the military is the most immediate means that comes to mind, but the issue is broader. Diplomacy and deterrence before, during, and after the eruption of violence are key tools to direct the use of force toward the desired political objective.

This simplified version of modern history contains three sets of informed assumptions that are at the basis of our understanding of war and politics. They deal with the length, the place, and the purpose of violence. Violence is a moment, often relatively brief, in political interactions; it has a well-demarcated space where it occurs (the frontline); and it is meant to achieve finite political effects (usually associated

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with territorial defense or expansion).

Ancient history tells a slightly different story. An even cursory perusal of the histories of Classical Greece, Republican or Imperial Rome, or Late Antiquity (but one could extend this period up to the 15th or 17th century) shows that violence was more persistent and geographically diffuse, spanning decades and often without clear boundaries, and was not very amenable to negotiated settlements. As a historian, John Guilmarin, put it: "more common in the broad sweep of history are prolonged conflicts where the transition from peace to war is blurred, where guerilla and positional operations are more important to the outcome than field or naval campaigns of limited duration, and where objectives tend to be total. This type of conflict – the term war is frequently inadequate- tends to end only with the elimination or cultural absorption of the losers." [i] In brief, violence was longer, geographically diffuse, and more difficult to control. The question is why, and in what follows I try to provide some answers.

2. Diverse strategic actors because of proliferation of lethality

The first reason for the persistent instability and insecurity of ancient international politics is that there was a plethora of strategic actors roaming the known world. Cities, empires, medium size states, tribes, migrating groups, mercenaries, or simply bands of bandits were all interacting with each other, often violently. This is in striking contrast with modern history when this complex strategic mosaic became more monochromatic as the modern, territorial, nation state rises starting in the Renaissance and continuing until the mid-20th century, when the world map was neatly drawn.

More specifically, ancient history is characterized by the ability of groups of men to survive and prosper without a state. In fact, they frequently inflicted heavy defeats on the armies of established empires, an anomaly in modern history. For instance, Xenophon's description of the "Ten Thousand" is the story of a mercenary Greek army that, after a series of military setbacks and a loss of leadership in Persia, managed to march through enemy territory in a constant running fight. It was an incredible feat not only because they kept united in extremely difficult circumstances (the Greek mercenaries are often referred to as the "marching republic") but also survived with no logistical support against large and hostile imperial forces and then against battle-tested warrior tribes. While even in the 5th century BC this was a military exploit, this story points to a certain parity of force among actors who are otherwise vastly different in territorial size (indeed, the mercenaries have no territorial control), logistical support, or organizational structure. The greatest power at that point in history, Persia, could not vanquish a bedraggled band of Greek mercenaries running for their life.

This rough equality of very diverse strategic actors stemmed from the fact that it was difficult to hold exclusive monopoly on violence, the quintessential trademark of political modernity. Multiple strategic actors were constantly vying for glory and wealth, within and between ancient polities (states, empires, cities), resulting in a persistent albeit low-intensity violence (as opposed to the momentary and industrial-scale violence

of modernity). A polity, even the most powerful like Persia or Rome, could not impose order through a monopoly on force. In Xenophon's description of the "march to the sea," the Greeks encounter in Persia several local tribes that do not pay allegiance to the king, who in any case can at best send occasional forces to keep them in check. As the Greek historian writes, "a royal army of a hundred and twenty thousand had once invaded their country, and not a man of them had got back." [ii] The likely difficulties and costs associated with an imposition of imperial control would have been greater than the potential benefits, leaving a swath of land under only a nominal imperial control.

A polity, even the most powerful like Persia or Rome, could not impose order through a monopoly on force.

The difficulty of imposing order through a monopoly of violence was due in large measure to the wide availability, relative cheapness, and ease-of-use of weapons. A disorganized group, a rabble of refugees in fact, could turn quickly into a lethal and devastating force when it was fortunate to acquire arms through trade or battlefield spoils. In 376 AD, for instance, a large group of Goths arrived on the Danube, asking to be settled by Roman authorities. Admitted on Roman land, the Goths never gave up their weapons and almost immediately revolted, spurred also by the incompetence and brutality of local Roman administrators. This rebellion of Gothic refugees managed to harass Roman troops for months and in the end defeated a large army led by the emperor himself in the battle of Adrianople (378). Augmenting their lethal capabilities with the weapons abandoned by the Romans, these Goths ended up being a security menace throughout the region for years to come. [iii]

There are some current trends that are strikingly similar. Technological developments appear to be leading to a democratization of violence, allowing the amateur to be lethal and thus a strategic actor. The ease of use, combined with the wide availability of many dual-use technologies, is leveling the field between states and non-state groups. A case in point is the rapid development and spread of drones, the possession of which is no longer limited to states. But the whole spectrum of tools of violence, from automatic weapons to nuclear bombs, is affected by this trend of proliferation and democratization. One way to put it is that the link between industrial capacity and lethality, a key feature of modern history, is breaking. A state or a group no longer needs to have an efficient industrial base or even a well-run economy to be able to cause serious damage to a rival and be a source of enormous instability. Poverty is not a hindrance to lethality as a nuclear North Korea demonstrates; neither is absence of a stock market or industrial capacity as ISIS is proving in the Middle East.

Proliferation of lethality leads to a proliferation of strategic actors.

Proliferation of lethality leads to a proliferation of strategic actors. The modern world of states is being replaced by a

world of states vying for influence with each other but also with non-state groups.

3. Violence as social glue

The second feature of ancient history, one that I suggest is also reappearing, is the role of violence as a source of social cohesion. In a nutshell, violence attracted, peace repelled. Fighters joined the group that conducted the most aggressive raids against a neighboring community. The social cohesion and numerical size of a group on the frontier was directly proportional to the level of violence it directed against nearby targets. When a leader was incapable or unwilling to conduct assaults against the frontier settled communities, he quickly lost prestige and ultimately power. Men stopped following him, and a new warrior chief, promising a more belligerent lifestyle, replaced him. Violence, in other words, was the social glue that kept together a warrior band on the frontier.

An offensive military posture was therefore politically appealing. Warrior tribes, the barbarians of ancient times, were constantly poised to raid nearby communities, creating a wide band of permanent insecurity. The frontier along the Rhine and Danube in the 4-5th centuries AD comes to mind, but this type of situation was not limited to Roman times. For instance, the *ghazi* warriors of the early Ottoman Empire, who targeted Byzantine territories, were similar in that their numbers swelled as they attacked Christian lands.[iv] The source of their strength was the fact that they were on a constant offensive against the wealthier neighbors who, in this latter example, professed a different religion deemed to be heretical or in any case inimical to the "true faith."

As Michael Howard correctly observed, for leaders of warrior societies "prolonged peace was often ... a disaster." [v] Peace was dangerous because it deprived the Huns or the *ghazis* (or later on, in the 18th and 19th century, the Comanches, one of the last groups with similar traits of the ancient "barbarians") of their source of unity.[vi] As a result, it was difficult to deter such groups because to be deterred meant to cease to survive in their existing configuration. Deterrence was revolutionary for them, in the sense that their leadership would have been rejected and most likely replaced by one that maintained an aggressive stance and continued war. Deterrence was riskier and more dangerous than war.

We are witnessing a similar development in today's world. Some groups, such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria, are drawing in men who are seeking to fight.

We are witnessing a similar development in today's world. Some groups, such as ISIS in Iraq and Syria, are drawing in men who are seeking to fight. In fact, the strength of such a group is in the very attraction it generates through its violent acts. The more violent it is perceived to be, the greater its appeal for potential recruits. Were such a group to cease its violent behavior, accepting a negotiated settlement or claiming a

satisfaction of its objectives, its appeal would diminish and its ranks shrink. They seek war, not ways to avoid it.

In a strategic interaction with such groups, deterrence is less effective, as ancient history indicates. In fact, we may be in fact entering a period in history when deterrence is in decline. Many contemporary analyses point to the diminishing willingness of the United States, in particular under the Obama administration, to shore up the credibility and capability necessary to deter increasingly more aggressive rivals (Russia, Iran, China). Deterrence is diminished by American retrenchment.[vii] This view is correct, but I think incomplete. Deterrence is in decline because violence is becoming a source of attraction and a social glue. Fighters are flocking to zones of war, from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush, but also in the Caucasus and to a degree Eastern Ukraine. The resulting fighting forces are not prone to be deterred because an end to the hostilities would mark also their political demise.

4. Frontiers, not borders

As a result of these two features, namely the proliferation of weapons and the rise of violence as a social glue, the security landscape is changing in ways that resemble the political map of the ancient world. First, the wide availability of weapons makes controlling territory very difficult. In the ancient past, ruling the provinces was an exercise in never-ending counterinsurgency. A recurrent theme in, for instance, Roman history is the fact that local populations were quick to arm and thus to revolt. Even skilled commanders, such as Julius Caesar in Gaul or Agricola in Britain, who were capable of great tactical and political achievements had to face annual revolts, and the aura of their success was written for domestic consumption rather than being a faithful description of the political reality on the ground. Proliferation of lethality means absence of monopoly of violence, and the result is a low-intensity but geographically pervasive insecurity.

Second, warrior groups coalesced near their preferred targets, settled and wealthy communities that promised low-risk and high-reward raiding. They flocked to the frontier of imperial power, creating a zone of instability and insecurity. As a result, ancient states were demarcated more by frontiers than borders. The latter draw lines neatly separating the sovereignty of one state from another, and they constitute a key line of defense. An army crossing a border, for instance, constitutes a clear act of war. Frontiers, on the other hand, are wider bands of land, grey zones of sorts where the exclusive influence of one power is ambiguous and contested. A hostile military force roaming on the frontier was an accepted, if unwelcome and threatening, reality. Ancient empires, from China to Rome, attempted to draw a more distinct line separating themselves from the other side, often a region too difficult to conquer and lacking a civilization (that is, settled people). China's Great Wall or Rome's Hadrian Wall were such attempts, in different circumstances and with slightly different tactical purposes but broadly in line with the desire to fix a defensive line.

The difficulty of clearly demarcating one's own territory carried two security challenges. First, it was difficult to arrest

movements of people. In Late Antiquity, in what was called the "great wandering" of people, various groups entered the Roman Empire essentially unopposed. A historian termed it a "seepage of people," rather than a series of invasions. [viii] Frontiers are porous and, unless reinforced by natural obstacles (e.g., high mountains such as the Alps, or wide rivers such as the Rhine and Danube), are not effective tools for controlling population movements.

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The second related challenge of frontiers is that they require constant military engagement. Borders can be defended, frontiers have to be managed. The uncertain, even chaotic, nature of a frontier makes it difficult to establish a fixed defensive posture. Preclusive defense is simply impossible on a frontier; it requires a border. Instead, the outer edges of imperial influence are a constant work in progress. When Julius Caesar reached the Rhine, for instance, he could not hold the line because Germanic tribes constantly harassed what he now deemed Roman territory. As a result, he was forced to conduct several expeditions across the river, as punishment for the raids of these tribal groups. These short expeditions, however, were nothing more than shows of force that never met the hostile tribes and, therefore, that never defeated them. He described his first excursion across the Rhine as motivated by the desire "to make the Germans less inclined to come over into Gaul by giving them reason to be alarmed on their own account." After more than two weeks of military operations during which he met no enemy and managed only to burn "all the villages and farm buildings and [cut] down their crops," Caesar returned to Gaul, deeming that "he had done all that honour or interest required." [ix] Needless to say, this did not settle the situation once and for all, and recurrent projections of force across the Rhine were required. Security, if we can even call it that, had to be maintained by being on constant alert and by conducting periodic offensive operations.

There are striking parallels with today's security environment.

There are striking parallels with today's security environment. Borders are becoming increasingly more porous. They are turning into frontiers of sorts, wider bands of instability where various groups and powers compete and no one has the exclusive legal authority and monopoly of violence. The modern view of borders is that they are a source of stability because they demarcate clearly the sovereignty of neighboring states. Frontiers on the other hand are grey areas where there is a constant pushing and pulling, and they radiate instability. The Southern Mediterranean, Eastern Ukraine, or Northern Mexico are some examples of what may be in store for the future. The traditional maps that we use, with clear lines separating one polity from another, no longer reflect the underlying political realities in these regions. The case of ISIS is one example: the border between Syria and Iraq is crisscrossed by veins of territory controlled by this

terrorist group, resulting in a region that sees multiple forces clashing. But, in different circumstances and with different actors, Eastern Ukraine is also turning into a wide band of land where authority is unclear and violence is widespread. Moreover, even a clear Russian military penetration in this region has not been unequivocally condemned as an act of war by most states, in part because this would require a stronger response to Moscow. This is a tacit recognition that there is an area of unclear sovereignty, a frontier where a conflict can fester. Like the frontiers of ancient history, Eastern Ukraine and the Iraqi-Syrian area, for different reasons and in different ways, will require constant management to mitigate the instability and violence.

5. Lessons

The study of ancient history exposes us to a strategic reality that is different from the modern one. Pervasive, geographically diffuse, low-intensity and yet difficult to abate violence was the characteristic of much of human history, and the modern world ordered by nation states may turn to have been a relatively short period of time. This knowledge of ancient history, however, will not translate immediately and directly into policies that we can apply in Iraq or Libya or Ukraine. Rather, it can serve only as a background to help us think through the security problems we are facing and are likely to face in the future. In particular, three sets of broad and related lessons can be drawn.

Force was not futile, but it certainly was less effective in achieving lasting political control.

First, the fundamental challenge facing ancient strategists was in a certain sense the opposite of the one facing modern policymakers. Modern history indicates that the key strategic question is how to translate military force into political effects, or how to turn the outcome of war into a stable political settlement. War is a means to achieve a political reality deemed to be more beneficial. In ancient history, it seems that in many cases the question was turned upside down: how to turn political efforts into conditions that allowed for a more effective use of force, or how to turn the outcome of policies into a more decisive military effort. Force was not futile, but it certainly was less effective in achieving lasting political control. War was ineffective against some strategic actors, such as the barbarian warrior groups, unless its path was prepared by political means.

Second, there were two specific political strategies that paved the way for the use of force: cooptation and sedentarization. For example, members of hostile tribes were coopted by imperial authorities through bribes or promises of future political support. Not only this brought much needed knowledge of local geography, cultural norms, and tribal structure (the ancient version of "human terrain"), but also it divided the enemy, depriving him of manpower. Julius Caesar conquered Gaul not by a mass invasion and military occupation of the region, but by seeking alliances with local leaders, who hoped to increase their own influence through a Roman victory. It was an attempt to manage and

direct the political balance internal to these tribes in favor of Rome. It meant getting deeply involved in tribal politics, which often baffled an external observer and were akin to understanding and managing the dynamics of an unknown family. In fact, in one of the early campaigns, Caesar had to navigate between two brothers, Diviciacus and Dumnorix, the former on Rome's side while the latter in opposition.[x] This intimate *divide-et-impera* approach was necessary for military operations. It gave states much needed manpower, expanded the understanding of local geographic and social conditions, and supplied logistical needs.

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Similarly, in our times, conquering and controlling territory is becoming increasingly more difficult as it is relatively easy to counter the invading army by inflicting high costs through widely accessible weapons. It is striking that in the past decades several industrial powers had been essentially unable to control territories that they had invaded, regardless of their motivations. Russia in Afghanistan and Chechnya, the U.S. in Afghanistan and Iraq, Israel in Lebanon are some of the examples. The costs of maintaining control over these territories were higher than the potential benefits. It appears that, like in the ancient past, political control over a territory needs to be prepared and exercised through the cooptation of local groups and leaders. Direct control is simply too costly, if at all possible.

The other political approach was a process of sedentarization. Warrior groups tended to be highly mobile, making them difficult to target and defeat in battle. In fact, they often avoided large, set piece battles, preferring hit-and-run tactics, a "skulking way of war,"[xi] that maximized their strength (e.g., topographical knowledge, ability to fight in small independent groups, skillful adaptation of weapons) while minimized their casualties. Hence, in the past, states tried to settle these warrior groups, hoping that they would switch from plunder to agriculture as a source of wealth. Such a change would put a premium on leaders who were interested in administering a stable community rather than leading plundering raids. In reality, pursued by itself, this strategy often backfired: it merely strengthened the hostile tribe, which then continued to engage in aggressive behavior. Settling down did not pacify these groups. But if this approach was merely a precursor for the use of force, it had greater chances of success. By fixing the enemy to a place, it created a more defined target for the employment of force, if necessary. Roaming groups were menacing in large measure because they were more difficult to find and defeat; a settled group, even if hostile, had a clear "return address."

Today, the territorial control exercises by groups such as ISIS or even Hamas can be seen as an opportunity, not because it will change their motivations and interests but because it establishes clearer targets. It is a political development that is

unpleasant, violent and dangerous but one that also allows a more effective use of force by the Western powers that oppose these modern barbarians.

**Short of annihilation or assimilation
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Third, the use of force will be recurrent and never decisive. Short of annihilation or assimilation which are lengthy, unappealing, and difficult processes, ancient warrior tribes and current non-state groups were not easy to eradicate as a threat. An individual group could certainly be defeated, disappearing from history, but the larger threat of similar strategic actors could not, because it arose from deeper trends, such as the above mentioned proliferation of lethality and rise of violence as a source of social cohesion. Like in the past, the threat could be only mitigated, not eliminated.

To mitigate the threat, however, states had to adopt a military posture that matched the enemy. As historian William McNeill observed in his classic book, *The Pursuit of Power*, steppe nomads could raid civilized territories "almost with impunity, unless rulers were able to replicate barbarian levels of mobility and morale within their own establishments." [xii] In other words, one had to become like one's own enemies in order to defeat them. This was true in more traditional state-on-state contests such as the Peloponnesian war, in which the first combatant to master the sphere of power of the other would win. In this case, Sparta (a land power) became a sea power like its rival Athens through an alliance with Persia. It is, however, more difficult for states to turn into "barbarian" forces because this requires shedding at least in part some foundational characteristics of a settled – that is, civilized – polity.

But, historically, there were two complementary approaches that are worth keeping in mind for the future. First, states tended to engage in recurrent counter-raids: rapid projections of power meant to inflict material and reputational damage on the enemy warrior group but rarely resulting in conquest, which as mentioned earlier was inherently difficult. The current U.S. return to Iraq (with expected forays into Syria) can be seen as such a counter-raid, however unwanted and unplanned by Washington's political leaders. But the counter-raid will not eliminate, and may only abate, the threat, which will require constant attention and perhaps future offensive actions.

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Second, the mobility of warrior groups in the past meant that they could raid deep inside the territory of the neighboring state, affecting local communities without threatening the

existence of the entire state. Similarly, it is plausible to see a future when groups such as ISIS or their permutation will conduct relatively small yet tragic attacks not on the border, but inside Europe or the United States. The various attacks conducted so far, from 9/11 in the U.S. to Mumbai, Madrid, London or the Boston Marathon bombing, may be only the first of many more. What such a situation will demand is resilience of local communities, namely, the ability of provinces, cities, and even urban neighborhoods to prevent, and if not, to respond quickly to such attacks. This may lead to a trend away from political modernity, which has seen greater centralization of force by the state driven by the fact that only a modern nation state could defeat another modern nation state. Some form of security decentralization may be necessary, allowing local communities to provide their own safety rather than *de facto* subcontracting it to the central state authorities and military forces. If violence

will occur not just on the border, but inside the state, then security will have to be provided accordingly. The beginning of such a decentralizing trend can already be seen in the growing ability of cities, such as Los Angeles and New York, to provide their own local and foreign intelligence as well as to field their own rapid response security teams.

In the end, we have to be aware of the main lesson of ancient history: contests and rivalries were and, I suggest, will be prolonged, along unstable frontiers, characterized by low-intensity but widespread violence, and with means to mitigate their effects but not to eliminate them. The security challenges of the past decade, and the disorder described in today's headline news, are here to stay. We will be better prepared if we look at them through the lens of ancient history.

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