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Infinity Journal



IN THIS EDITION

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A Note From The Editor

In my last editorial I suggested that Infinity Journal would perhaps start being less authoritative, or less strident, about what we considered the rules of the strategic debate to be. The reason for this was because adhering to defined terms greatly reduced the number of people who could actually write articles. Better to have something than nothing.

...but now I ask should Infinity Journal even exist? The fact that the number of people who can usefully write about strategy, in its truest sense, is minute is one constraint but the other is far more basic. If the real lesson of strategic study is that policy is the guiding intelligence and only a few policies allow for the use of violent means, do we need to be producing a strategy journal at all? Should we perhaps be writing a policy journal?

Policy journals are of course just political opinions, because policy is the product of politics. Of course it could be useful to have someone from ISIS or Hezbollah write about their policies and how they seek to advocate them via violent means, but the chances of that are slim, and the hate mail from subscribers unable to differentiate personal politics from the nuances of constructing policies would probably not be worth the effort. As we are not a policy journal, we have no such stupid subscribers. In fact one of the things that would dissuade me from starting a policy journal would be the inevitable low quality of readers and writers we would have to accommodate.

.... but how much of the really bad writing on strategy comes from not being able to differentiate from policy from strategy and/or the assumption that tactics is somehow a policy free zone? Policy is very much the guiding intelligence and from it all else flows. The inability to realise this is why the Internet is awash with people amazed by what a bunch of clowns called "ISIS" have achieved, because those who are amazed or confused by ISIS lack the most basic standards of both strategic and tactical education.

Until that simple truth is understood we will have much work to do. So, Infinity Journal will continue to exist and forge ahead.

William F. Owen

Editor, Infinity Journal

March 2015

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Strategy is about security, and it is always made in a political process. The theory for strategy takes two forms, general (and eternal) and for the military instruments particular to time and place. Strategy always must be done tactically and operationally. A primary challenge is the need to achieve the strategic effect necessary for political success.

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Lukas Milevski

Operational art has been frequently discussed, but rarely from the perspective of strategy with the aim of examining what operational art means for strategy. Classical notions of strategy differed on the practicalities of achieving battle, but later developments focused attention on what would become, and thereby enabled, the operational level. Based on this historical overview, the relationship between operational art and strategy is explored to ascertain their compatibility. Both operational art and classical strategy recognize the necessity of nuance in thought and practice in the conduct of war, but operational art arguably prolongs the contemporary misunderstanding and misuse of strategy.

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The Post Operational Level Age: How to Properly Maintain the Interface between Policy, Strategy, and Tactics in Current Military Challenges

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Yacov Bengo is a Brigadier General and currently a Division Commander. He has an MA in Political Science and 25 years of experience in force build-up and operations in the tactical level and within the General Staff. His current research deals with the utility of military force in the evolving environment of operations and therefore the adequate principals of force build-up.

Shay Shabtai received his MA (*Magna Cum Laude*) from the Tel Aviv University's Executive Program for Middle East studies in 2014. 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 includes alternative strategies for Israel; the influence of human global trends on strategy; strategic communication and perception management; and redefining the operational level of armed conflicts. His doctoral research focuses on the collapse of Iraqi statehood since the first Gulf war.

Introduction

In this article we attempt to explain our opinion that the Operational Level is redundant in the response to current military challenges. By properly defining the problem and detailing the principles we can create the optimal connection in planning and action between strategy and tactics. We will base our concept on presenting the direct link between strategy and tactics, as described by Clausewitz, introducing the background for the development of the Operational Level in the 20th century and analyzing the new approaches and changes of recent years.

Clausewitz – Policy, Strategy, Tactics

Carl von Clausewitz began writing his book 'On War' in 1819 and by 1827 he had written six full volumes and the drafts for two more.[i] During this time his theory evolved. He gradually concluded that war was not only an absolute use of force to annihilate the enemy but also that there were wars for limited objectives.

This conclusion brought him to understand that war is merely the continuation of policy with other means. He therefore decided that he had to rewrite the six completed volumes. On July 1827 he noted that there was only one chapter in the book that he considered complete and that this chapter would point out the direction he wished to follow.[ii]

His return to active service, until his sudden death from cholera on November 16th 1831, and his focus on historical study of limited wars in order to properly establish his theory, stopped the process of rewriting. The posthumously published version of his work by his wife, therefore, contains a mix of older and newer ideas – some of them conflicting. This has led to mounds of interpretations that do not necessarily convey his ideas accurately.

war is not an independent act. It has a wider political and social context

The first chapter, which expresses his advanced thinking, creates the link between policy and strategy. He defines war as "an act of violence the purpose of which is to force the rival to do our will". It follows that war would bring both sides to escalate their actions to the most extreme levels of violence to defeat the enemy. But war is not an independent act. It has a wider political and social context and therefore rivals do not exert maximum force only a sufficient one. Because war is plagued with uncertainty and luck and because defense is inherently stronger than offense, it is important that the statesman and the supreme military commander define accurately the objectives of the war they are initiating and that they adjust the objectives as the war proceeds.

So, "war is not only an act of policy, it is a political tool, a continuation of political dialogue conducted by other means... the political objective is the goal, war is the means of achieving it and means are never analyzed separately

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from their objectives". It connects the emotions of the public (anger, hostility); risk and probability management of the military commander and it's being a tool of the decision-maker. The object is to develop a theory that connects these three components.[iii]

Clausewitz left us the insight that war is a tool of policy.

Clausewitz left us the insight that war is a tool of policy. Further in the book, in the volumes not yet adapted to this new insight, he divides the conduct of war into two levels – strategy and tactics.

Strategy he defined as

"the exploitation of engagements for achieving the goals of the war. The strategist must define the objective for the operational side of the war – an objective that fits the political purpose of the war... He will design a war plan with the objective defining the series of actions intended to achieve it. He will in fact design the individual campaigns and within this framework decide on the individual engagements".

Clausewitz adds that,

"since most of these plans will be based on assumptions that may likely be proven wrong, it is not possible to give detailed plans in advance and this requires the strategist to be personally involved in the campaign. Detailed commands will be given only in specific places and contexts, in a manner that enables amending the general plans as required by the evolving situation".

He noted that this was not the accepted approach – "it was customary to decide on strategy in the capital-city rather than in the field".[iv] Strategy, according to Clausewitz, is the art and science of the supreme commander as he conducts the war.

"The engagement is tactical" – "the means are the trained combat forces, and the objective is victory".[v] For Clausewitz, tactics are the actual act of fighting. There are distinct links between strategy and tactics – "changes in the tactical characteristics will immediately impact on strategy".[vi]

Thus, Clausewitz identified three levels – the political level which determines the objectives of the war; the strategic level which plans and manages the war to suit the policy; and the tactical level which is expressed in the combat itself and executes the strategy and which, therefore, also influences it.

Background to the Evolution of Operational Art

In his ground-breaking book, 'In Pursuit of Military Excellence – The Evolution of Operational Theory', Shimon Naveh characterizes the causes of the evolution of Operational Art in the Soviet military in the 1930s and 1940s and in the American military in the 1970s and 1980s. He begins by stating that

"the dramatic growth of armies through the 19th century reached monstrous proportions towards the end of that period and caused a no less dramatic growth of the spatial and temporal dimensions of military operations. This quantitative change created a new problem in the conduct of wars – especially in the middle-ground between the two traditional levels of military planning".[vii]

The basic understanding is that the increased size of war in the industrial age necessitates the development of an intermediary level so that human cognition is able to encompass the phenomenon. According to Naveh, "the Operational Level is not an independent entity separate from the entire complex of the phenomenon of war. Quantitatively and qualitatively it is not different from the tactical level, and fundamentally it is not different from the strategic level".[viii]

In his historical analysis, Naveh quoted the Chief of Staff of the Red Army, Tukhachevsky, who wrote in 1926, that "in modern operations fighting is dispersed over a series of battles and consequently, the tactics are much more intricate than those of Napoleon".[ix]

a tension exists between the abstract strategic objectives of the war and the mechanical tactical implementation of combat

Thus a tension exists between the abstract strategic objectives of the war and the mechanical tactical implementation of combat. Unlike Clausewitz, who identified a continuum of logic between policy, strategy and tactics, reality is more complex and translating correctly from level to level has proven difficult. The Operational Level is supposed to facilitate the translation of complex strategic issues (annihilation, Blitzkrieg) into mechanistic tactical solutions – between the mechanical context of the random activity and the context of abstract thinking. Campaigns are planned in a hierarchical three-level structure:

- a) Formulation of objectives and political restrictions – the strategies – by the supreme national authority.
- b) Clarifying the Operational Concept and definition of the main campaign objectives – by the appropriate strategic-operational authority.
- c) Creation of a battle plan – by the tactical command level[xi].

Analysis of the definitions of the three levels shows that in creating the Operational Level in order to solve the tension between the abstract thinking of the higher levels and the mechanical thinking of the lower levels, we could just as easily have used Clausewitz's three levels with some adjustments.

Based on his historical and conceptual analysis Naveh developed the thesis that Operational Art is uniquely connected to the General Systems Theory. Basing himself on the theory expounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Naveh characterizes this theory as follows: the system as a complex

of interactive elements; interaction between a large number of variables; three parameters – quantity, material and quality; the interaction is characterized as multi-layered and repeating itself; supreme and total control of the system's objective on its functioning; distinction between open and closed systems; and the afore-mentioned tension between the abstract cognitive generalities and the practical objectives and tasks given to the system's components.[xii]

Without elaborating General Systems Theory, it can be easily seen that the characteristics described by Naveh are very relevant for thinking about strategic issues and complex tactical issues as well. Naveh does not explain why this theory is relevant only for the new intermediary level and cannot exist on the other levels as well. Also, chronologically, the link between General Systems Theory and Operational Art was done at a late stage in the latter's development and cannot be regarded as one of the roots of that development.

Naveh elaborated a number of criteria, that in his opinion define the uniqueness of operational art – expression of the cognitive tension; creative maneuver; synergetic action; neutralizing rather than destroying the enemy system; articulation of the randomness; non-linear character; deliberate interaction between maneuver and attrition; independence of action within the boundaries of the mission; and linkage to a wide and universal theory.[xiii]

The historical analysis shows that Operational Art did indeed assist to create (sometimes only to emphasize) these fundamentals in military planning. They were especially prevalent in the conceptual contest that reached its height in the 1980s between the Soviet Deep Battle and the American Air-Land Battle in the context of war between two regular armies. It is probable that without the debate on the Operational Level these fundamentals would not have been assimilated into military doctrine. However, once they were integrated into military thinking – was there any more need for the "Operational Level inter-mediator"?

Naveh describes Operational Shock as the achievement of a fighting system[xiv] – in other words, the stripping of the rival system's ability to achieve its objectives. He defines the main characteristics of the concept as: unity of objective; striving to disrupt and dissolve the enemy system rather than to destroy it; action in two dimensions – the horizontal, frontal and linear, and the vertical, from the rear to the depth and non-linear; simultaneity of efforts; integration of efforts especially in regards to maneuver and fire; inversion of the enemy system by creating a concentration of critical mass behind its center of mass; deception and surprise as a central component in dealing with the enemy's center of gravity. Clearly this description is relevant for the collision of industrial-age armies.

Thus, what are the roots of Operational Art? Based on Naveh's research the answer might be that it expresses the search for creative solutions to complex operations at the height of the industrial age – facing a widespread and elaborate challenge composed of large masses, technologies and rapidly expanding military capabilities. Against these was needed a giant leap in existing military doctrines, that were mistakenly named Clausewitzian, tied to linear actions, annihilation and a faulty connection between policy and

military action.

New Concepts – Not Necessarily Operational Art

During the 1990s challenges of a different type escalated

During the 1990s, in the days after the end of the Cold War and the impressive performance of the Air-Land Battle in the first Gulf War, challenges of a different type escalated. First, the peace-making and humanitarian aid efforts, such as in former Yugoslavia and Somalia and after September 11 the takeover and stabilization efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Israel the expanding fighting against Hizbullah in Lebanon until the withdrawal in 2000 and immediately afterwards 'Ebb and Flow' against the Palestinians (the second intifada).

The frustration of the large advanced armies fighting ostensibly inferior opponents using guerrilla tactics aroused a wave of military thinking aimed at developing updated concepts for military operations that are not total wars. The process of adaptation included a redefining of the discourse between the strategic and the tactical that practically abandoned the medium of the Operational Level. We shall describe three of the new approaches to this discourse as developed by an Israeli, a Briton and an American.

Competition of Learning

In chronological order the first theoretician was IDF Reserves Colonel Shmuel Nir (Semo). Prior. Up until his untimely death in July 2003, Semo focused his thinking and writing on the conduct of Low Intensity Wars (called by the IDF – Limited Conflict).[xv] The foundation of his thinking was that because of its weakness, dearth of reserves and lack of ability to maneuver, the inferior side had little room for error. Therefore, its entire mode of operation is to seek out and attack only enemy weaknesses.

The strong side, in this case the IDF, must engage in a continuous effort to study the situation from all angles, so as to increasingly close ranks on the enemy's weaknesses and impede their ability to act, and over time gradually exhaust him and cause him to lose his will to fight. In Semo's view, Limited Conflict was a constant competition – which side could learn faster. The relevant concepts for military action were 'learning cycles', 'a culture of asking questions' and 'knowledge management'. The core of the military response to an enemy based on guerrilla tactics was to focus on constantly developing new knowledge, questioning existing knowledge and rapidly disseminating new insights in order to eliminate weaknesses.

The next theoretician is the British general Rupert Smith. Among his assignments was to command the UN forces in Bosnia – an experience that influenced him greatly. In 2005, he published a book – 'Utility of Force'. His main thesis was that the character of war had changed and that today it was being conducted among the people, rather than between

armies, and is therefore influenced by the opinions of the public and in turn influences those opinions.

To conduct war in this situation Smith proposes a number of principles. The first requirement is to change the method being used to analyze all political and military actions to enable a deeper and detailed understanding of the nature of the strategic result on the political, the military and the economic planes and the right context and means to achieve it. Better understanding the desired political result will lead the military planner to ask the right questions and to choose a relevant military objective that will properly describe the result of the military action.

Smith defines four types of relevant strategy – improving the situation, containing the situation, deterrence or the forcing of our political will on the enemy. Choosing one is the result of properly analyzing our will against the enemy's.

Another principle is the adherence to an action based on international law.

Another principle is the adherence to an action based on international law. This, because if we differ from our enemy by the fact that our political goal is according to international law, whereas he is attempting to subvert that law, then our tactical actions must also be legal in order to uphold that law. By adhering to the law in tactics we create a direct link between the strategic and tactical levels.

The next principle is the manner of planning military actions. Planning must be founded on two series of questions – one series on the context of the operation and one on the conduct of the operation. The first series require integrated, trans-organizational and even international thinking on the overall political and strategic context of the problem and the manner in which use of force is relevant to aid in solving it. The second series focuses on the tactical means relevant to serving this solution.

Other principles are: Intergovernmental Thinking – the harnessing of all the relevant functionalities and efforts to the thinking and implementation processes; Media – marketing the desired narrative of what is happening to the public; War Among the People – clearly showing the population within whom we are fighting that we are fighting for them against the enemy.

The utility of military force in a war among the people requires a different organization; creating a technological superiority relevant to this kind of war; emphasis on raids rather than on conquest; multi-capability staffs; knowledge management; avoiding over-simplifying complex problems; constant consideration of the wider context; and, in order to implement the principle of simplicity, the reduction of layers in the command hierarchy and delegation of decision-making authority.[xvi]

Towards the end of 2005 General David Petraeus was transferred from Iraq to become deputy commander of TRADOC, commander of the Command and General Staff College and commander of the Combined Arms Center

(CAC) at Fort Leavenworth. In 2006, an extremely bad year for the Americans in Iraq, he led a group of military and other experts in the formation of Field Manual 3-24 – Counter Insurgency (COIN) Operations. When the manual was published in December 2006, he was already designated to command American forces in Iraq. In 2007 – 2008, as commander during the 'Surge', he implemented the principles he had designed so as to reduce the violence in Iraq and stabilize the country. The assessment of COIN success in Iraq and Afghanistan is an ongoing heated debate, which is not relevant to this article.

Design, unlike Planning, is intended to analyze in depth an unknown problem

Chapter 4 of the manual discusses the Design of Campaigns and Operations against insurgencies.[xvii] The manual defines 'Design' as deepening the understanding, analysis of possible solutions to the problem and the basis for learning and adaptation. Design, unlike Planning, is intended to analyze in depth an unknown problem, to define its characteristics (Problem Setting) and to create concepts and hypothesis that enable finding a solution. Design exists also on the tactical level, in what American doctrine calls 'Commander's Visualization'.

Design is a broad dialogue that includes, in addition to military participants, also intergovernmental inputs and connections with local representatives in order to create Situational Understanding. It focuses on framing the problem and breaking it down from complexity to simple components in a continuous repetitive iterative process.

The components of the Design process are: the existence of Critical Discussion; Use of System Approach; Creation of Models, common terminology and principles. It creates the ability for Intuitive Decision Making, serving as a base for Continuous Assessment, the object of which is Structured Learning.

The Design Phase bridges between strategy and tactics and consolidates the commander's understanding of the situation. It begins by defining the desired military end-states as distilled from the political goals, and then defines the operational concept – the Commander's Intent – and guidance for planning. It is based on an intergovernmental holistic discourse with experts and instills the commander's insights of the situation among his subordinates in order to empower them, give them an area of initiative and flexibility and enable every component in the military effort to implement the essence of the concept of operations.

Design creates an initial awareness of the environment based on working assumptions. However, the operational environment is extremely complex and friction deepens and enriches this awareness. On the one hand, it requires a deep understanding and flexibility of action of subordinate commanders and on the other hand it requires transfer of accurate and qualitative information to the commander in order to enable him to adjust his perceptions as the campaign progresses.

Thus the updated concepts of military operations in complex environments - as seen in Semo, Smith and Petraeus' approaches - do not consolidate the existence of an Operational Level. They advance the dialogue between the strategic and the tactical levels in content and quality, on the basis of concepts and principles of learning, analysis, understanding the policy and the broader context; transforming complexity into simplicity without falling into shallowness; framing the problem with the design process; the commander as a key component in developing a discourse of experts; instilling his insights among his subordinates to enable them flexible responses to the tactical problems they face; continuity of the learning and analysis via friction with the changing situation; and reduction of the clumsiness of hierarchical command structures in order to strengthen the intuitive link between the strategic principles and the tactical actions.

Defining the problem in the post-Operational Level age

In the present environment and with the military problems it currently faces, conceptualizing of the Operational Level as a central component in methods of command, the structure of headquarters and processes of operational planning, creates more difficulties and failures than it does advantages. This is because of a number of problems created by the Operational Level.

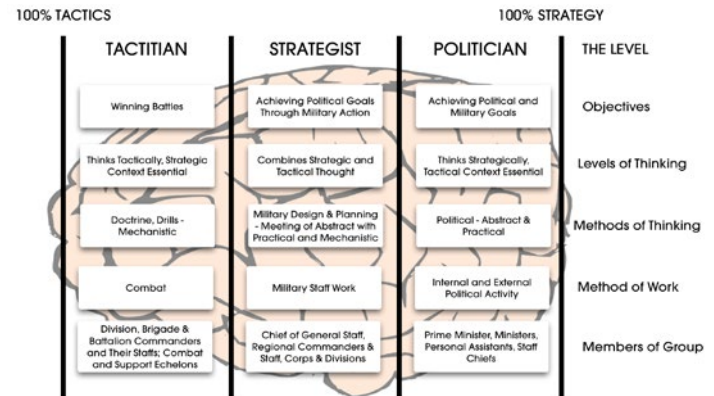
Firstly the Operational Level was developed to deal with the size and complexity of the military challenge in the 20th century wars of the industrial age. Facing the challenges of the 21st century, most of which are characterized by terror and guerrilla warfare, in which there is immediate connection between tactical action and policy consequences, some of the methods of the Operational Level are relevant, but the paradigm as a whole does not fit the needs. Strategy and tactics no longer need a conceptual bridge to connect them.

If the political level is characterized by thinking that combines abstract (strategic) and practical (political and diplomatic) whereas the tactical level is characterized by mechanistic thinking (doctrine, drills), thus, today it is better that these two levels meet directly. This direct encounter to strengthen the gain from the exchange of thinking modes rather than to create mediators (the Operational Level commanders), who are not professional at either level and might mistranslate the concepts and terminology of each level to the operators of the other.

To claim that the thinking methodology of design, learning and analysis according to the concepts of General Systems Theory does not allow them to be used in the strategic or tactical levels is erroneous. These thought patterns are relevant and even crucial for analyzing and solving the problems at both these levels.

The Operational Level has over-complicated the structure of the command hierarchy and the headquarters. Everybody, from the political heads of state down to the most junior tactical commanders should think, or thinks, politics, strategy and tactics. The difference is in the proportions. This can be illustrated by the 'Human Brain Model'.

The Human Brain Model



Slide property of Shay Shabtai

The politician and the tactician operate directly within the real world. If they do not then they are increasing the abstract at the expense of the real world. The politician is directly involved in the dialogue with other international leaders, sometimes also those of the enemy, and with the public. The tactician meets the enemy directly on the battlefield. Strategic headquarters are already dealing mostly with impressions of the strategic and tactical level engagements with the real world. Rather than coming into direct contact with reality they attempt to conceptualize the situation, the problem and possible solutions.

Adding another level of headquarters created solely for mediating between the existing levels is superfluous

Adding another level of headquarters created solely for mediating between the existing levels is superfluous, except in cases where there is a physical reason to do so - solving issues of size and span of control, dealing with a specific discipline of action that requires focus on this medium or as a response to a unique geographic area (unique topographically or demographically).

In armies that operate in theaters far-removed from their homeland, such as the American armed forces, the military commander and the senior civilian representative (usually the ambassador) in that theater are directly subordinate to the political leader and serve as his executors. Because of this they are often involved also at the political level. In contrast, in Israel for example, because of its size and the structure of the political system and government, the political level is concentrated directly in the hands of the government and the military commander is focused only on the strategic level.

Principles of the solution

The best response to the current military challenges is direct contact between the political, the strategic and the tactical by conducting a discourse of experts, utilizing thinking

practices that transform complexities into simple definitions of the problem, and assimilate the outcome of the discourse into the principles of planning and the common language between commanders.

We propose to base the thinking processes on the following ideas:

There needs to be a return to a three-level hierarchy of thinking and conceptualization – policy, strategy and tactics. These three levels of thinking exist at all levels of the command structure – from the Prime Minister who thinks mostly about policy but also considers strategy and tactics, down to the junior commander who focuses on the tactics of actual combat but also considers the political and strategic ramifications of the situation he is facing.

The senior level of the command structure – between the Chief of Staff and the Division commander – is the area where the significant friction between considerations of policy, principles of strategy and practice of tactics takes place. This friction occurs only in the mind of the commander. However, it is based on brainstorming between experts of policy, strategy and tactics. In this process the participants create simple insights (not simplistic or shallow) of the complex environment through learning, analysis and conceptual design.

When structuring the process it is better to define working methods such as groups of experts, knowledge networks and study groups led by the commander, rather than organizational structures. So long as the commander facilitates the meeting of experts, the process can be based on a variety of methods consistent with the personal command method of the commander, the character of the problems facing him and the character of the action and the organizations participating in the action. One of the possible tools in this process is analyzing the strategic and tactical contexts via the Systems Approach.

The result should be the creation of a common understanding between the senior commander and his tactical subordinates in all that pertains to his intentions for achieving the political goals, the central strategic concept and the principles defining the tactical actions. This understanding will be the foundation for the operational plan and expressed in the operational order.

It is a mistake to create new functions and add headquarters and levels to the command hierarchy

It is a mistake to create new functions and add headquarters and levels to the command hierarchy because these prevent free exchange of thoughts and knowledge between the senior commander, the junior commanders and the experts. Action in a complex environment, lacking in certainty, especially when using military force, requires constant study and brain-storming between senior and junior commanders and between the commanders and the experts.

Within this framework, the process is intended to provide the subordinate commanders with sufficient freedom of action and flexibility to respond, according to the spirit of the commander's intent, to any rapid change in the situation even before its implications have been fully explored in the study and brain-storming process.

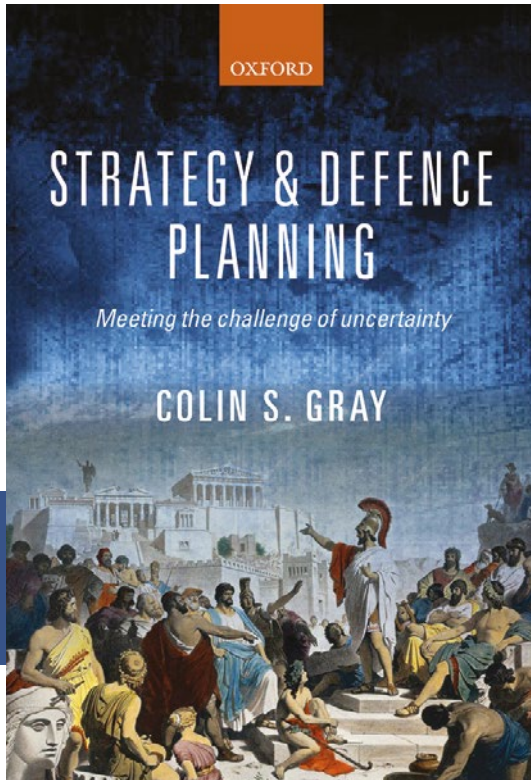
The process and its products must be expressed in simple terms – clear unambiguous terminology; structured expressions; maintaining differentiated professionalism and expertise; filtering of data relevant for drawing the situation; and creation of correct contexts between the various levels.

Thus the actual need for an operational level no longer serves the purpose it was designed to. It may actually be said to have become an impediment to the process required.

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Strategy and Security

Colin S. Gray
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Colin S. Gray is Emeritus Professor of Strategic Studies, having retired from the University of Reading in 2014. Professor Gray wrote a trilogy of works on strategy with *Oxford University Press*, 2010, 2013 and 2014. Currently he is writing books on *The Future of Strategy*, and *Strategy and Politics*. His advisory work and writing for government is focused at present on Special Operations.

There can be little disagreement with the proposition that security is a basic human need and therefore has to be of fundamental importance to the high business of state. But it can be almost embarrassing to ask seriously what it is. If a simple and straightforward answer to the question about its nature is hard to obtain, one is right to ask sceptical questions in follow-up mode that may reveal a troublesome void in official thinking. In addition to desiring to know just what security is, and therefore also (logically) is not, we would like to know how we buy it; indeed, can we buy it? From whom or what do we buy security? Is there a usable common currency to meet security concerns? And, probably most important of all, how will we know that we have bought it successfully and therefore should judge ourselves to be sufficiently secure?

As scholars we cannot evade the elementary question, 'how do we study security in order better to understand it'? To be blunt, what do we study with respect to security? You will discover readily enough that this basic question is not answered in the current literature and debate and you may well begin to suspect it is not answerable. This is the quite unremarkable reason why, over many years, I have refused the title of professor of Security Studies, and have resisted as best I could occasional institutional efforts to associate me with a Centre or Institute for Security Studies. The problem is not that the concept of security lacks meaning, but rather that it carries too much meaning that is thoroughly undisciplined. Alas, there is excellent reason for this unhappy condition. What we have in the concept of security is a boundary-free, not merely 'lite', idea. And this potent idea is overflowing with meaning to everyone, both individually and collectively. If I want to study security, what does that imply? What either

does or might promote insecurity? I suggest that security is a feeling measurable by human and institutional agents on little reliable empirical basis. And even if we can agree on potentially relevant facts, it is very likely that we would disagree on what the verifiable facts mean. This is a reality disturbing to many people; frank recognition that security/insecurity is a feeling and therefore is liable to influence by personality and mood swing chemistry and consideration of circumstances, but scarcely at all reliably by empirical data.

The beginning of wisdom on security is understanding that the concept is so generously inclusive as to be boundary-free. This is both fortunate and unfortunate. It is good news because it is prudent to be inclusive regarding what we should worry about. But it is bad news because the pervasive subjectivity that reigns over and within security debate means in practice that the sponginess of the concept, together with its positive public acceptance, renders it utterly open to abuse by politicians and other would-be opinion influencers. Alas, because security is about everything that does or might worry us, as a consequence it is really about nothing usable with prudence.[i]

Particular geopolitical or other metrics of potential alarm are not hard to invent for any state, but the problem is that they will lack integrity, even when they are developed honestly. Again, what can tell you how secure you really are? Indeed, is security an either/or condition, or is it a matter of more or less? Obviously, indeed unarguably, security is an important, perhaps the most important, concept in statecraft, but it is unmanageable. Can I measure national security and show it in a graph. I may be compelled to admit that at one time, when I was much younger, and therefore more credulous, I used to attempt to do this metric miracle with regard to the strategic nuclear forces of the United States. But, some greater wisdom did come with age.

is security an either/or condition, or is it a matter of more or less?

The Theory and Practice of Strategy

All strategic practice reflects some theory, even if it is ill understood or, more likely, ill chosen. Strategic theory literally

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is unavoidable, no matter how hostile you are to abstraction or to academic pontification and pretension. After all, the primary value of theory simply is explanation. Unless you can act strictly with a flow of expressive doings that have inherent and incontestable significance, you will find it impossible to avoid the (possibly malign) influence of particular meaning. We theorize in order to make sense of our subject, whatever it happens to be. It is impossible to frame and develop a sensible argument hostile to theory per se. Of course, it is all too easy to be antagonistic towards particular theorists and/or particular theories. Important though it certainly is to comprehend the basic function of theory — which is to provide persuasive explanation — it is no less essential to understand that theory, including strategic theory, is fundamentally incomplete, indeed is impossible, in an absence of respect for the practice of strategy. Strategic theory only has meaning and value for its contribution ultimately to strategic practice. The theory does not yield explanation that is useful as understanding for its own scholarly sake. It must yield useful knowledge. Strategic theory is not pursued as a fine art that can be judged with no reference to practical utility.

Strategic theory only has meaning and value for its contribution ultimately to strategic practice.

Probably the single most important aspect of strategy that is known, indeed is uncontested, is the universal and eternal fact that strategy is always made by, in, and for a political process. It does not much matter which variety of political system is our focus of current attention, politics and political process both reign and rule. Decisions about strategy are made by individuals, usually acting in the name of some collectivity. There may well be, or at least appear to be, a process of analysis preceding strategic decision, but nearly all of the larger decisions in strategic history are made on the basis of the conviction and will of the most senior players in the politics of strategy making. The greater questions pertaining to significant strategic choice essentially are indeterminate. Because the future has not happened and never comes, how can you determine what should be bought, and by which dates? There is no magical mathematical formula that can enable future military adequacy to be calculated. Of course, this small problem of futurology in physics does not stop us from trying to pretend that the future is foreseeable, which it is not and never will be. We do defence planning anyway, and sometimes we try to persuade ourselves that this is something other than historically educated, or inspired, guesswork. There are methods for looking over the horizon at the great stream of future time, but do not believe anyone who tries to persuade you that any scientific, let alone social scientific, method can help you much — it cannot! [ii] To clarify: scientific knowledge is certain knowledge whose reliability is capable of being tested empirically. Since there can be no data from the future about the future, its scientific study is technically completely impossible, not merely challenging or difficult. Next time you run into that gloriously aspirational official concept, the “foreseeable future”, be sure to ask its perpetrator where he buys his or her crystal ball. Off and on over the past forty years I have worked for and directly with some brilliant scientists who were at RAND for many years. If there were reliable ways to conduct future defence planning

without resting unduly upon guesswork, I think I would have come across them.

There needs to be a general theory of strategy that is not specific to time, place, and technology. Moreover, obviously, it probably makes much sense to consider employing as a key concept the idea of strategic effect, though there are hazards in such expedient usage. Overall, it is sensible to think of strategic effect as being the strategists’ distinctive product. [iii] I need to try to aid clarity by insisting that we should protect the concept of strategy, and especially its adjectival employment, from inappropriate, indeed seriously inherently unsound, captured by contemporary fashions in weaponry. What is important is to preserve due respect for the eternal and ubiquitous truths in strategy’s general theory, while not hindering comprehension of the probable meaning in new military instruments or of the occasional need to change the focus and content of current strategy. In that regard, it is prudent to think about strategy and seapower, rather than seapower strategy or maritime strategy. The major point here is the need not to forget that seapower is, or should be, subordinate to strategy, not vice versa. We have become used to referring to airpower strategy and naval strategy. From time to time such usage has encouraged theorists to exaggerate the relative potency of the chosen physical agent, at the cost of some discounting of the weight that should be allowed to general strategic theory.

There needs to be a general theory of strategy that is not specific to time, place, and technology.

Strategy: Questions of Nature and Character

Many scholars are confused about the core of the subject of strategy. Although I believe that strategy, the function, is eternal and universal, apparently not everyone agrees. Some scholars, especially historians, prefer to believe that strategy is a relatively modern invention, indeed is one that has been migrating in meaning since it first emerged in French, English, and German in the 1770s. I must say that I find this belief in the modernity of strategy to be close to absurd. However, I have test-driven the view that strategy is a modern invention or discovery at gatherings of senior American historians, who, I must report, found the thesis to be ridiculous. [iv] The view that we could not have strategy ‘before the word’, was rejected almost out of hand. The point is that strategy as a function has always been understood and attempted, regardless of the availability or otherwise of a neat enough concept in the contemporary language of choice. Experience does not always require language that today we find to be conducive to appropriate thought. Over the course of the Twentieth Century, strategy substantially migrated from the Clausewitzian focus upon the use made of battle for the political purpose of a war, towards the paying of greater attention to the value of military power for the ends of policy, whatever they may be. The change was modest, but noticeable, in its post-Victorian deemphasising narrowly of battle as a principal engine of strategic history. We in the West became somewhat disenchanted with the strategic promise of and in battle by the grim protracted events of 1916

and 1917 in particular. We humans have always sought to behave strategically, in good part because there is not, and has never been, any practicable alternative. Functionally, the Greeks did strategy, as also did the Romans. The fundamental abstract architecture of strategic theory applied in all climes and circumstances. Just four words express the core of the matter — (Political) Ends, (Strategic) Ways, (Military) Means, and the Assumptions that inform and can well drive action.

Strategy is both singular, as a function including any and all purposive behaviour, and plural as in the strategies pursued in particular cases. Just as strategy has to be appreciated in the singular and the plural, so also it requires registration as both constant in nature, but ever liable to change in character as strategic history marches on. While we can recognize a general theory of strategy, and strategies of diverse character for individual cases, also it appears to be true to claim that particular general theory is appropriate for each reasonably distinctive character of military power (landpower, seapower, airpower, cyberpower, possibly nuclear weapons, and even special operations). I should mention that I spent several decades worrying at the issues raised by nuclear armed forces, while at the present time I am seeking to make sense of the relationship between strategy and tactics in Special Operations.

Strategic theory educates for understanding; it does not train for effective action. Clausewitz, in particular was admirably clear on this.

Strategic theory educates for understanding; it does not train for effective action. Clausewitz, in particular was admirably clear on this.[v] Moreover, while scientific theory should explain what can be verified as truth, social science and the arts do not and cannot. I deem it important to preserve in a disciplined way what is understood to be scientific, as opposed to that which is not. The critical litmus test for scientific truth should be empirical knowledge verifiable by testing. It is necessary to identify that which we know for certain to be true, and know we know (or, at least, think we know that we know), from that which is not certain knowledge. Former US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, was nearly correct when he said:

Reports that say something hasn't happened are always interesting to me because as we know, there are known knowns: there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns: that is to say we know there are some things [we know] we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns — this means we don't know we don't know.[vi]

I would like to add a fourth category to Rumsfeld's admirable three, which would refer to that which we believe we know, but which transpire to be erroneous when more and better evidence is available and applied.

Assumptions are not well understood, which may be a pity because, obviously, they have to dominate our planning for the future.

I need to emphasize the importance of adding recognition of the importance of Assumptions to the sacred three strategy elements identified as Ends, Ways, and Means.[vii] A remarkable assembly of items belongs in the Assumptions box. Actually, relatively little about strategy, especially for the future, of course, is known to be true — and such 'truth' turns out to be distinctly variable on ever closer examination. An assumption can be understood best as a 'working' and just possibly temporary truth that we choose to regard as being good enough for our needs now. But, as a matter of definitional discipline, we know that an assumption is categorized as such precisely because we lack certain knowledge as to its 'truthiness'. Assumptions are not well understood, which may be a pity because, obviously, they have to dominate our planning for the future. More usefully, I should point out that we ourselves tend to be unclear about what is known to be true and what is only believed to be true enough, and therefore is an assumption. Assumptions are absolutely critical to our security and are unavoidable. However, there is much to be said in precautionary mode about the probable value in paying greater attention to the belief and assumption category of knowledge. A government cannot be criticized for not knowing what is unknowable by any method of data collection and analysis. But it will be at fault if it is unwilling to admit, albeit privately, the variable fragility of understanding that has to be speculative about all aspects of the future.

A government cannot be criticized for not knowing what is unknowable by any method of data collection and analysis.

Thoughts on General Theory

It is useful and probably essential for aspiring strategic theorists to understand just what it is that good theory should bring to the table of understanding. Former 'Green Beret' Professor Harold Winton has offered the most helpful guide to military and strategic theory that I have found to date. Winton identifies four key tasks for theory.[viii] He argues that theory should

1. Define the field;
2. Break the field into constituent parts;
3. Connect the field to other related fields;
4. Anticipate (not predict) the future.

This is simple, but not simplistic, and it is plausible and doable. The purpose of applying general theory is education and not training, as noted already. Winton's fundamental approach accommodates the whole of strategy's domain,

while enabling us to retain some grip on its integrity as a unity.

The general theory of strategy can best be located, I believe in the writings (in several languages) of ten theorists

The general theory of strategy can best be located, I believe in the writings (in several languages) of ten theorists, with dates of composition extending over the course of 2,500 years. I choose to identify four categories of general theories, as follows in descending order:

Category 1: Carl von Clausewitz, Sun-tsu, Thucydides

Category 2: Niccolo Machiavelli, Antoine Henri de Jomini, Basil Liddell Hart, J. C. Wylie, Edward N. Luttwak.

Category 3: Bernard Brodie

Category 4: Thomas C. Schelling

While in taxonomic mode I need to confess also that I have found it possible and desirable to reduce the general theory of strategy to 23 Dicta (I have migrated from 21 to 23 over the past five years).[ix] I do not claim to have found everything that can be found, but I believe that my 23 dicta accommodate all that it is necessary to understand about strategy today. I must emphasize that in my version general theory is not vulnerable to technological obsolescence, and it could have been employed with little need for cultural amendment in a Greek or Roman staff college, had politics then indulged in such! The general theory has to be invulnerable to any and all real-world changes that have a distinctive temporal flavour.

As a helpful aid to competent strategic thought and behaviour, I will specify what I believe should be 'the strategist's questions'.

1. What is it about? What are the political (and other) stakes? How much do they matter?
2. *So What?* What will be the (strategic) effect of the behaviours we might do?
3. Will our chosen strategy meet its political goals?
4. What are the limits of our power to influence and control the enemy's will?
5. How can the enemy thwart us?
6. What are our alternatives? What are their costs and benefits?
7. How reliable is our home front?
8. How well does our strategic choice today fit with the education we can (glean) derive from history?

9. What have we overlooked?

Conclusion: The Practice of Strategy

There are two problems for strategy which render this subject extraordinarily challenging

The theory of strategy may appear complex, but it is not hard to understand. What is fiendishly difficult is the real-world attempted practice of strategy. There are two problems for strategy which render this subject extraordinarily challenging, and both are fundamental issues pertaining to the necessity for currency conversion between categories of effort. First, the strategist needs to wage warfare by ways and with means highly likely to lend themselves to conversion as strategic effect from the fuel provided by tactical military action. Second, the strategist needs to be able to serve his state's political ends with strategic effect converted from the coin of operations and tactics. In other words, the strategist is required by the nature of his job to provide/convert the real tactical 'stuff' of warfare that is needed ultimately in and as political coin. Bearing in mind that all strategy has to consist fundamentally of tactical action, it is apparent readily enough that the strategist needs to understand both tactics and politics sufficiently in order to render, if not himself perform, the essential currency conversion duty.

Warfare is always political in meaning, but it is not merely politics in overtly violent form.

Although all strategy is political in effect, and is decided by means of political process, nonetheless strategy and politics do not fuse into one. Warfare is always political in meaning, but it is not merely politics in overtly violent form. Although technical expertise is necessary as a part of the basis for strategy, there is no evading the persisting reality that strategy is produced by political choice, disciplined by tactical commands. I will leave this paper with four potent thoughts:

First, it has been said that 'strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory, but tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat'.

Second, ignorant people like to argue that strategy is easy, but tactics and especially logistics, are very difficult. In fact, 'tactics and the logistics that enable them comprise the doing of strategy'.

Third, although technical expertise is essential for strategy, the choices are political, though they are disciplined by tactical commands that typically take due notice of feasibility (i.e. can it be done?).

Fourth, for a luminous half-truth it would be hard to beat the words ascribed to an outstanding Roman general

(Gnaeus Domitus Corbulo) in a recent popular novel: 'It is swords which will bring victory now, not strategy'. [x]

The fourth thought may serve to remind us that all strategy

has to be built on a tactical foundation. If the troops can't or won't do it, strategic effect must be negative. There is a truly inalienable unity about this subject that needs full appreciation lest we stray inadvertently into the realm of unduly distinctive categories of thought and actions.

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Strategy and the Intervening Concept of Operational Art

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Dr. Lukas Milevski is a Visiting Research Fellow at the "Changing Character of War Programme" at the University of Oxford, having completed his PhD in 2014 under Professor Colin S. Gray at the University of Reading. He is the 2010 winner of the RUSI Trench Gascoigne Essay Competition and was one of the youngest winners in its history. His articles have been included in the syllabi of the Royal College of Defence Studies, the US Army and US Air War Colleges, and Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School. He has spoken at numerous academic and professional conferences. His research interests range the full gamut of strategic theory and practice.

Much of modern strategic theory, including theory as taught to practitioners in war colleges, includes a number of intervening concepts between tactics and politics, such as the operational level of war and grand strategy. The concept of operational art, or the operational level of war, was first introduced into western strategic thought thirty-odd years ago, almost without reference to the pre-existing notion of strategy, which had once occupied the same conceptual space as operational art does now. How the introduction of operational art or the operational level of war has modified the nature of strategy is a question which has only recently been broached and a debate which has yet to run its course. Yet much of the discussion has centered on operational art itself, with relatively little reference to strategy. To some extent, the debate consists of strategists and operational artists talking at rather than with each other, with rival dogmas sailing past each other like ships in the night. Such dissection exclusively of operational art, whether one advocates or denigrates the concept, produces more heat than light. It now seems fruitful to approach the debate from the other side, that of strategy.

What is the nature of strategy? Contemporary strategic thought generally places it at the policy level. David Jablonsky is typical in suggesting that "[t]he strategic level is dominant in the continuum of war because, as we have

noted, it is here that the war's political goals are defined." [i] This interpretation of strategy, a product of the Cold War and the advent of nuclear weapons, is a new one in the history of strategic thought. However, something has arguably been lost since strategy—our prime tool capable of enabling us to understand war—was redefined in this manner. [ii]

What is the nature of strategy? Contemporary strategic thought generally places it at the policy level.

Classical Strategy

Classical strategic thought is characterized by very different interpretations of strategy and of its role in war and politics than those prevalent during and after the Cold War. Two perspectives on strategy stand out from this era: that of Antoine-Henri Jomini, and that of Carl von Clausewitz. Although both agreed on much in their attempts to describe and explain the same phenomenon of Napoleonic warfare, they did disagree on strategy, although not necessarily on its principles. The main difference in their respective interpretations of strategy rested on the role of battle.

For the needs of the general, Jomini divided his concept of strategy into thirteen considerations, ranging from "[t]he selection of the theater of war, and the discussion of the different combinations which it entails" and "[t]he determination of the decisive points in these combinations and the most favorable direction for operations" to "[f]or a given operation, the best strategic line, and the different maneuvers necessary to embrace all possible cases" and "[t]he marches of armies, considered as maneuvers." [iii] Alongside strategy he placed grand tactics and logistics. "The maneuvering of an army upon the battle-field, and the different formations of troops for attack, constitute Grand Tactics. Logistics is the art of moving armies. It comprises the order and details of marches and camps, and of quartering and supplying troops; in a word, it is the execution of strategical and tactical enterprises... Strategy is the art of making war upon the map, and comprehends the whole theater of operations." [iv] Jomini identified the first and most fundamental principle of war to be: "To throw by

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strategic movements the mass of an army, successfully, upon the decisive points of a theater of war, and also upon the communications of the enemy as much as possible without compromising one's own." [v]

It is apparent that Jomini's concept of strategy existed to enable the battle.

It is apparent that Jomini's concept of strategy existed to enable the battle. A successful battle is the reward of good strategy. Such an interpretation of strategy may well be the consequence of his experience as a staff member who worked in both Marshal Ney's and Napoleon's headquarters and eventually rose to become Ney's chief of staff. He would have been well placed to perceive and understand the amount of work required simply to reach the battlefield in fighting shape.

Clausewitz defined strategy in a rather different manner, arguing that "[s]trategy is the use of the engagement for the purposes of the war." [vi] This slightly abstract definition pulls into the core nature of strategy the political considerations which drive the war. (Jomini recognized these considerations as well, but did not integrate them into his conception of strategy as such.) Yet how does one use engagements for political consequence? Clausewitz was quite clear on this point: pursuit is the mechanism by which a battlefield victory takes on political consequences. "[W]hat remains true under all imaginable conditions is that no victory will be effective without pursuit; and no matter how brief the exploitation of victory, it must always go further than an immediate follow-up...Little positive advantage would be gained in the normal course of events unless victory were consummated by pursuit on the first day." [vii]

For Clausewitz, strategy *begins* with the battle. Battle is the basis of strategy. Such an interpretation of strategy may well have developed from Prussia's experience in 1805. Its armies were decisively defeated at Jena-Auerstedt, after which Napoleon relentlessly pursued its broken formations to the Baltic Sea and captured Berlin in the process. Clausewitz believed that Napoleon's conduct of warfare meant that campaigns rarely lasted after the main battle, for a relentless pursuit would lead to peace on his terms.

Pursuit was therefore seen as the essence of Napoleonic warfare. Clausewitz has been criticized for ignoring the importance of pre-battle maneuvers, not least by the French at the end of the nineteenth century.[viii] Clausewitz did indeed barely refer to maneuver. Book seven, *The Attack*, contains the only chapter on maneuver in *On War*, and it is all of two pages long. Moreover, it contains a somewhat bizarre treatment of maneuver, which probably stemmed from his opinions on the maneuver-heavy wars which preceded the French Revolution. "Maneuver must be distinguished, not only from aggressive conduct of the attack by means of major engagements, but from every operation that arises immediately out of such an attack...In its ordinary meaning the term maneuver carries the idea of an effect created out of nothing, so to speak—that is to say, out of a state of *equilibrium*—by using the mistakes into which the enemy

can be lured." [ix]

Unlike Jomini, Clausewitz ultimately gave very little thought actually to achieving battle in the first place. The integrity and utility of his definition therefore suffer in relation to Napoleon's campaign of 1812 in Russia, when post-battle pursuit and pre-battle maneuvering merge together into a longer campaign not decided only by a single battle. It is telling that Clausewitz grumbled about the battle of Borodino and did not consider it a complete engagement because it did not fit his strategic ideal. "The battle of Borodino, like that of Bautzen, is therefore among those that were *never completely fought out*...at Borodino, the victor chose to content himself with only a partial victory—not because he thought the issue was still in doubt, but because a total victory would have cost him more than he was able to pay." [x] Reality failed to live up to theory.

Set by the 1812 campaign in Russia, this trend of merging post-battle pursuit with pre-battle maneuver would only continue, due to the growth of armies in the nineteenth century. It was also significant to the evolution of strategic thought. First, it increased the difficulty of conducting a politically consequential pursuit, which reduces the apparent relevance of Clausewitz's interpretation of how to implement strategy. Second, the increased size of armies also exacerbated the challenges of moving these armies across theaters of operations. This led to a greater emphasis on logistics and mastering this difficulty, which necessarily favored Jomini's interpretation of strategy. Advantageously bringing the enemy to battle consequently also became more difficult, which therefore attracted ever greater attention as a strategic issue. Strategic thought before the First World War came to focus on bringing the enemy to battle rather than on exploiting battle. The advent of general staffs and codified war plans such as Germany's Schlieffen Plan and France's War Plan XVII attested to this shift of emphasis. The obsession, particularly in Germany, with the battle of Cannae also indicates this—the battle was a masterpiece of bringing one's army to action advantageously and of battlefield tactics, but was strategically bankrupt. However, at the time this focus seemed reasonable and indeed had been effective in the more recent past—it had worked for Moltke the Elder at Königgrätz, despite the fact that his armies were left in too poor a state by the battle itself to effect the Clausewitzian pursuit.

Introducing Operations

These developments led to an apparent need for a new, middle concept between tactics and strategy. Aleksandr Svechin, now considered to be the original codifier of this new middle concept of operational art, introduced the concept to the Soviet army in the 1920s.

Tactics and administration are the material of operational art and the success of the development of an operation depends on both the successful solution of individual tactical problems by the forces and the provision of all the material they need to conduct an operation without interruption until the ultimate goal is achieved. On the basis of the goal of an operation, operational art sets forth a whole series of tactical missions and a number of logistical requirements. Operational art also dictates the

basic line of conduct of an operation, depending on the material available, the time which may be allotted to the handling of different tactical missions, the forces which may be deployed for battle on a certain front, and finally on the nature of the operation itself.[xi]

Having introduced the intervening concept between tactics and strategy, Svechin defined operational art in a Jominian manner. However, Svechin was a scholar of Clausewitz who wrote a study of the man and his work which has yet to be translated into English. He defined strategy in a reasonably, albeit not purely, Clausewitzian way. "Strategy is the art of combining preparations for war and the grouping of operations for achieving the goal set by the war for the armed forces. Strategy decides issues associated with the employment of the armed forces and all the resources of a country for achieving ultimate war aims...A strategist will be successful if he correctly evaluates the nature of a war, which depends on different economic, social, geographic, administrative and technical factors." [xii]

Svechin strategy in a reasonably, albeit not purely, Clausewitzian way

Svechin attempted to solve the problem posed by the growth of armies and the challenges that growth brought by introducing operational art as an intervening concept, as applied to the particular circumstances of the Soviet Union. Others at the time also wrestled with these same issues, among them Basil Liddell Hart. He is commonly considered one of the progenitors of operational art in Britain but, while he certainly did theorize intervening concepts in strategy, operational art was not necessarily one of them. His approach differed from Svechin's, in that he did not actually place a new concept between strategy and tactics—although he did propound a way of strategy which in today's lexicon would be manoeuvrist. His solution was effectively to combine Jomini's and Clausewitz's definitions of strategy into one, although given his antipathy to Clausewitz he himself would probably never have considered his definition of strategy in that manner. Liddell Hart defined strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy." [xiii] Distributing military means is Jominian, whereas applying them is Clausewitzian. Liddell Hart thus avoided the need for a concept to intervene between strategy and tactics—although his biases in thinking and writing certainly privileged distribution over application wherever possible, in a manner consonant with the later concept of manoeuvrism.

Liddell Hart thus avoided the need for a concept to intervene between strategy and tactics

Modern Strategy

These original responses to the challenge posed by enlarged armies, particularly as experienced during the First World War, maintained the abstract Clausewitzian notion of strategy as a relational endeavor (which Jomini also recognized but did not enshrine within strategy itself, seeing it rather as an aspect of statesmanship), but simultaneously eschewed

its operationalization as pursuit after battle, which was specific to the Napoleonic context. Modern strategic theory maintains the basic structure introduced by Svechin, but the relational nature, which had been enshrined in strategy, has now become embedded in operational art. This shift in the meaning of strategy was not, however, caused by operational art, which only appeared in western military and strategic thought in the late 1970s. By the late 1960s Raymond Aron had already identified the shift in the meaning of strategy when he noted that "there is no difference between what was once called a policy and what one now calls a strategy. The substitution of the latter can probably be explained by the new awareness of the confrontation or dialogue of the actors." [xiv] The British author Ken Booth confirmed this observation, remarking upon "the mid-twentieth-century situation in which 'strategy' and 'policy' became almost synonymous." [xv]

This shift in the meaning of strategy stemmed from the influence of nuclear weapons upon strategy.

This shift in the meaning of strategy stemmed from the influence of nuclear weapons upon strategy. Modern strategic studies emerged in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, prioritized nuclear strategy, and caused the relative neglect of other forms of military force, particularly their actual use. Bernard Brodie in 1946 wrote one of the most influential foundational statements on strategy in a nuclear context.

Thus, the first and most vital step in any American security program for the age of atomic bombs is to take measures to guarantee to ourselves in case of attack the possibility of retaliation in kind. The writer in making that statement is not for the moment concerned about who will *win* the next war in which atomic bombs are used. Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose. [xvi]

Strategic thought thereafter focused in large part upon the distribution of military forces, the core of Jomini's concept of strategy in application, as well as the heart of Liddell Hart's strategic bias, but at an even higher level of consideration. In certain theaters, this applied as much to conventional military forces as to nuclear forces. Due to the emphasis on deterrence and preventing a superpower nuclear war, strategy ascended to the level of policy, and lost large parts of its relational nature as codified by Clausewitz and maintained by Svechin and Liddell Hart. This is reflected in official definitions of strategy used by armed forces today. "The strategic level of warfare is the level at which national resources are allocated to achieve the Government's policy goals (set against a backdrop of both national and international imperatives)...Military strategy...determines the military contribution, as part of an *integrated approach*, to the achievement of national policy goals; it is an integral, not a separate, aspect of strategic level planning." [xvii]

Operational art entered the scene to find a ready niche waiting for it in actual military campaigns, which strategic studies had somewhat neglected. As Edward Luftwak

complained, “[i]t is a peculiarity of Anglo-Saxon military terminology that it knows of tactics (unit, branch, and mixed) and of theater strategy as well as of grand strategy, but includes no adequate term for the operational level of warfare—precisely the level that is most salient in the modern tradition of military thought in continental Europe.”[xviii]

Operational art entered the scene to find a ready niche waiting for it in actual military campaigns, which strategic studies had somewhat neglected.

Once introduced into western strategic lexicon and thought, operational art swiftly gained popularity. Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan described its rise as devouring strategy – effectively supplanting strategy while failing to take on its relational responsibilities.[xix] Luttwak similarly describes operational art as an apolitical concern purely for military professionals. Yet others have ascribed to it some of the responsibilities of classical strategic thought: “The operational level of warfare is the level at which campaigns are planned, conducted and sustained, to accomplish strategic objectives and synchronise action, within theatres or areas of operation. It provides the 2-way bridge between the strategic and the tactical levels.”[xx] This definition sounds vaguely similar to Clausewitzian strategy, and indeed it is a common notion that what Clausewitz referred to as strategy we today label as operations. One recent commentator has described this transfer of responsibility as the consequence of civil-military relations.

Attempts to implement this theory have brought about an artificial distinction between the strategic and operational roles of statesmen and military practitioners. This in turn has necessitated an expanded conceptualisation of operational art that allows military practitioners to continue to legitimately discuss aspects of strategy (including campaign planning) that would otherwise be perceived as beyond their remit.[xxi]

Not all interpretations of strategy enshrine at their core relations between the foreign considerations of force and politics

One might wonder whether this is not actually reasonable. Not all interpretations of strategy enshrine at their core relations between the foreign considerations of force and politics, even in classical strategic thought. Jomini did not. Perhaps he assumed that such relationships would automatically be formed under the pressure of statecraft, making their codification in strategy unnecessary. Others, such as Clausewitz, Svechin, and Liddell Hart, perhaps in doubt about its automatic formation, did establish the relationship between force and politics as part of the conceptual core of strategy. Not consigning the relationship to any one specific level but emphasizing all the relationships among all the

levels of strategy, Luttwak remains somewhere in the middle. Yet as long as understanding of the relationship resides *somewhere*, whether it be in strategy or in operational art or—perhaps more dubiously—in the space between discrete concepts, does it matter under which label that relationship falls?

On Relationships

To answer this question, one must consider a number of separate issues. First, are the relationships in question actually the same? Does strategy relate to the same phenomena as operational art? Strategy relates force to politics and policy. Operational art relates tactics to strategy, strategy which has effectively become a policy-level concept. At face value, the relationships *are* the same. Yet this would be a false impression. Politics is concerned with who gets what, when, how.[xxii] It is the distribution and employment of power. Strategy, as understood in the first relationship, therefore seeks to change—or to confirm, should the strategist be defending his polity and its interests—the particular distribution and specific manner of employment of power in a definite context through the application of military force. Practicing strategists seek to understand the basic political questions which are at stake, and then to act to produce the contribution force may make to resolve those questions.

One cannot have a relationship to a relationship (i.e. relating tactics to strategy), nor can one cut a relationship into segments and study them in isolation.

Operational art, as understood in the second relationship, does not do this. The interpretation of strategy upon which it rests, and to which it must relate tactics, is not the relational activity described above. One cannot have a relationship to a relationship (i.e. relating tactics to strategy), nor can one cut a relationship into segments and study them in isolation. Instead, strategy has become a governmental bureaucratic process focused on resource allocation. As a result operational artists must identify operational-level objectives and tactically achieve those objectives within the limits of the military resources provided to them, but in practice frequently without the significant political guidance required to make the more fundamental strategy relationship work, which itself is the whole point of going to war. This situation is exacerbated when the operational level is not seen as a relationship, such as by Luttwak. In fact, the level of theater strategy, which he places *above* the operational level, is also wholly apolitical—or is meant to be.

While conditioning the interaction of the adversary forces in spatial terms, the logic of strategy at the theater level encompasses only factors of military significance: the length of fronts and the barrier-value of their terrain, the depth of territories, all aspects of access and transit, and so on. By contrast, it totally ignores the political, economic, and moral character of the territory in question, treating cherished homelands rich in resources or production

exactly on the same footing as alien deserts. It is not surprising therefore that in the making of military policies, the logic of strategy at the theater level is often ignored, even if it is fully understood.[xxiii]

Purely military considerations are privileged above all others in such a theory, even though actual practice militates against such an exclusive emphasis. As a result, the operational level is frequently treated by practitioners and considered by commentators as a politics-free zone of activity purely for the military professional.

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The second major question concerning operational art is that of practicability and responsibility for practice. Justin Kelly resurrects Jomini's old structure of strategy as pre-battle maneuvering to secure the battle and suggests an adaptation wherein lie battlefield tactics; grand tactics/operational art involving maneuvering to secure advantage prior to battle; and "the operational level of strategy, which is about breaking up strategic propositions into executable campaigns that accommodate the full dynamism and complexity of the strategic situation that provides their context...Operationalising strategies is a higher order activity than merely conceiving them" due to the level and breadth of knowledge and experience demanded.[xxiv] Defenders of operational art argue that this conceptual structure is unacceptable, since "splitting the responsibility for campaign orchestration between design and execution is not a happy recipe for success, nor would it provide the firm link needed between strategy and tactics." [xxv]

Yet specifically because operational art is an *intervening* concept between tactics and strategy, responsibility for practice must be split no matter how any of the involved concepts are defined. As Antulio Echevarria has suggested, "the operational level of war may have inadvertently created an excuse for tacticians to avoid thinking strategically, and for strategists to avoid considering military problems from a tactical perspective." [xxvi] Official British usage describes strategy as the process of allocation of military force, and the operational level as the actual employment of that force. Yet it is counterproductive to attempt to divorce the two. While the basis of what sort of strategic effect may be achievable does stem from the particular character of the means chosen and employed, it is the actual performance in the theater of operations that determines whether or not that effect is actually to be achieved.[xxvii] For strategy to be successful, allocation of forces cannot be anything other than intimately related to their actual employment. A concept of operational art or an operational layer separate from strategy interrupts this intimacy even if it was not the interruption's original cause.

One recent suggestion for restoring this intimacy has been to fold operational art into tactics, for both emphasize

the destruction of the enemy's armed forces. "Armies are destroyed or defeated by tactics. Wars are won and lost by strategy...At best, it would appear that the operational level of war is just an odd articulation of the need to be good at tactics" [xviii] Yet operational artists do claim, with some justice, that the operational level is distinct from tactics. If tactics and strategy were distinct in classical thought, then tactics and operational art can only be distinct today because the operational level now occupies the conceptual space once taken by classical interpretations of strategy. The major difference between classical strategy and operational art is the question of strategy's relational nature. Operational artists and classical strategists even make the same or similar points. John Kiszely argues that "[w]ithout consideration of the operational level, it is easy to see the achievement of strategic success as merely the sum of tactical victories, and but a small step from there to believing that every successful battle fought leads to strategic success." [xxix] Clausewitz likewise argued that

[i]f Paris had been taken in 1792 the war against the Revolution would almost certainly for the time being have been brought to an end. There was no need even for the French armies to have been defeated first, for they were not in those days particularly powerful. In 1814, on the other hand, even the capture of Paris would not have ended matters if Bonaparte had still had a sizable army behind him. But as in fact his army had been largely eliminated, the capture of Paris settled everything in 1814 and again in 1815.[xxx]

Yet operational artists do claim, with some justice, that the operational level is distinct from tactics.

Clausewitz's argument was that not all tactical successes, nor conquests of politically important cities, even capitals, necessarily lead to strategic success. Both authors argue for a nuanced understanding of any strategic situation and come to approximately the same conclusions, merely using different labels.

Conclusion

Operational art has not changed the nature and understanding of strategy, which arguably had already changed before operational art entered the west's lexicon and framework of strategy. If one accepts the premise that the relationship between force and politics should be embodied within strategy, as posited by Clausewitz, Svechin, and Liddell Hart, however one may imagine the practice of that relationship, then the advent of nuclear weapons was decisive in shifting the direction of strategic thought, as noted by Raymond Aron and others. Instead, strategy emphasized, at the policy-level, Jominian concerns of (not) bringing the enemy to "battle" i.e. nuclear engagement. In mainstream, frequently official, understanding strategy now generally inhabits a range of meaning from force allocation on one end to setting the political objectives of the war on the other. No definition within this mainstream spectrum embodies the necessary relationship between force and politics as

do Clausewitzian and some other succeeding definitions of strategy. It is the prevalence of the mainstream definitions which created the niche now occupied by operational art.

It is possible to suggest, however, that by diverting it from properly considering the relationship between force and politics and providing the suggestion of a relationship, operational art currently prolongs the misuse of strategy. If the theoretical structure of mainstream strategy assumes that operational art approximates Clausewitz's or Liddell Hart's definitions of strategy, and strategy itself provides the political goals which guide operational art, then a proper and workable relationship effectively exists. Yet changing all the labels (i.e., strategy to operational art and policy to strategy) appears gratuitous and unnecessary, although now that it has been effected it may well be gratuitous and unnecessarily confusing to try to change them back. Frequently, the relationship operational art embodies is not the relationship necessary to navigate the challenges of war—that between force and politics—but is rather that

between tactics and bureaucratic process, frequently concerning force allocation.

Does the nature of strategy accommodate intervening concepts?

Does the nature of strategy accommodate intervening concepts? Operational art, for all the good it did early on in enabling a reemphasis on the actual and skillful conduct of war, has perhaps run its course and should be folded back into those concepts which existed prior to its development. Yet the classical home of operational art is not tactics, but strategy. Indeed, the most accommodating generic definition of strategy into which operational art may be folded may well be that proffered, despite his operational style biases, by Liddell Hart: "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy."

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British Mark I male tank Somme 25 September 1916 Ernest Brooks, via Wikimedia Commons

Strategy and Arms Races: The Case of the Great War

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The centennial of 1914 has given rise to a great many publications, some insightful, some less so concerning the causes and consequences of the First World War. It has also renewed the perpetual debate over the value of history for present-day soldiers and diplomats. Can an understanding of what really happened in the run up to 1914 help us avoid a similar catastrophe a century later? One answer is a loud and unequivocal no: history holds few, if any, lessons because the conditions of the past will never be replicated to the degree necessary to make those lessons applicable again. The proverbial "devil is in the details," and the nature of those details makes it unwise to transfer insights from one time and place to another. It is not easy to "get history right" in any case; we are, one hundred years later, still correcting our understanding of what happened in 1914. So, how can we have any confidence in whatever history decides to teach us? The contrary answer is an equally vocal yes: some, perhaps most human knowledge is believed to be generalizable; entire academic disciplines are in fact founded on that assumption. History's details notwithstanding, humans and their political, military, social, and economic institutions are said to have behaved in similar ways over time, and these generate continuities which can prove instructive. In other words, for proponents of this view, it is not necessary for all past conditions to be replicated, only those that matter. It is not even necessary for the next war to be yet another "Great War," only that it be both sudden and avoidable.

neither devilish details nor virtuous continuities hold sway over the past; history is about both

Perhaps a more reasonable answer to the debate is both yes and no: neither devilish details nor virtuous continuities hold sway over the past; history is about both. It may well be a devilish virtue to know how to use one to improve our understanding of the other. In any case, human knowledge, whether drawn from the humanities or the sciences, has always been imperfect and has always required revision. Imperfect knowledge is probably the state of nature, and yet empires have risen and fallen on less. Nonetheless, the events of the past are too important, too dear in terms of the human suffering they inflicted, not to examine them. If, as Socrates reportedly said, the unexamined life is not worth living; then the examination of lives, our own and others', has value, even if our conclusions are neither universal nor final.

One such "life" requiring closer examination is the phenomenon of an arms race, that is, a competition among rival powers to keep pace with, or surpass, one another militarily. The literature concerning such competitions is extensive, and much of it contends arms races take on "lives" of their own. They create a sense of urgency within political and military leaders, causing them to act in ways that are not always in their or their states' best interests, while at the same time blinding these leaders to the full range of options available to them.[i] In some cases, arms races are said to exercise more "agency" than human actors, since they are the cause rather than the effect.

The Great War is viewed as one of the classic examples of this phenomenon. Germany's two key decisions are said to have been driven by fear of falling behind the Entente in the armaments race then underway. The first of these decisions was to back Austria-Hungary fully with the infamous "blank check" during the July crisis; the second was to launch a "preemptive" attack against France in August 1914.[ii]

However, a closer look at some of history's details suggests this arms race was driven by another force or cause, namely, the great powers' use of the strategies of deterrence and

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coercion (or armed diplomacy) to intimidate or outmaneuver their rivals. Each of these strategies was a traditional and essential part of great power politics. In the thirty years or so before the outbreak of the First World War, these strategies, or rather the great powers' use (or misuse) of them, caused the arms race to escalate at various times. Put differently, political and military leaders saw the arms buildups not just as threats or security dilemmas, but as opportunities; the arms race was as much a tool of policy, as was the potential or actual use of force. As a consequence, state armaments programs became more like the grammar to policy's logic.

Strategy is nothing if it is not the art of reducing our adversary's physical capacity and willingness to resist, and continuing to do so until our aim is achieved.

Strategy is nothing if it is not the art of reducing our adversary's physical capacity and willingness to resist, and continuing to do so until our aim is achieved.[iii] This holds true for any level of strategy, and whether we are at peace or at war; strategy can be effective in either environment, as well as the gray area between them. For purposes of this essay, deterrence is simply making people decide *not* to do something, such as launching an attack or smuggling illegal substances across our borders. The converse of deterrence is coercion, which is simply compelling people to *do* a particular thing, such as conceding territories or privileges.[iv] Deterrence requires being strong enough to make an adversary believe an act of aggression will be defeated or will cost more than it gains. Coercion, or armed diplomacy, implies using force to intimidate, punish, or deny.[v] In the decades prior to the First World War, armed diplomacy sometimes took the form of threatening an adversary by mobilizing one's forces, conducting maneuvers or training exercises at or near a rival's borders, or ratcheting up one's armaments' programs.

The arms race that preceded the Great War is a particularly interesting case study as it involves naval, land, and—for the first time—air power. It played out in obvious quantitative dimensions, as well as some less visible qualitative ones. It also benefited from the full infrastructure and techniques of the Industrial Revolution, as well as the late nineteenth-century Technological Revolution which spurred innovation on an unprecedented scale. It was, unquestionably, the world's first modern arms race.[vi] Two examples serve to illustrate how deterrence and coercive diplomacy worked through the medium of an armaments program.

I

The first is Great Britain's naval bill of 1889 which formally announced the two-power standard—meaning the Royal Navy would maintain a fighting power at least equal to the strength of any two other countries. Historians agree the bill was aimed at deterring rivals from competing for naval supremacy. At the time, the Royal Navy was already as strong as the next two largest navies, the French and Russian. However, both countries increased their naval

expenditures in direct response to British measures. Britain, in turn, added 3 more battleships to its original target of 10, and by implementing a new five-year plan designed to add 12 additional battleships and 20 cruisers by the end of the century.

At the time, the Royal Navy was already as strong as the next two largest navies, the French and Russian.

The Japanese and Americans, too, soon entered the race in part to protect their own maritime interests and in part to aspire to great power status.[viii] By 1905, the Japanese navy listed 6 battleships, 17 cruisers, 24 destroyers, and over 60 torpedo boats.[ix] By 1898, the United States had expanded its navy from a handful of obsolete vessels to a modern fleet of 6 battleships, 2 armored cruisers, and several light cruisers.[x] The US victory in Spanish-American War had essentially established America as the preeminent power from the Philippines to the Caribbean.

By 1906, *Jane's Fighting Ships*, a popular yet authoritative military science publication, ranked Britain first among major naval powers; the United States, France, Japan, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Austria-Hungary followed in order.[xi] By 1913, *Jane's Fighting Ships* still ranked Britain first by a wide margin; however, Germany had moved into second, displacing the United States, which dropped to third; France and Japan were tied for fourth; while Russia, Italy, and Austria-Hungary had fallen much lower.[xii] In other words, the bill of 1889 had indeed set in motion a naval arms race; but the dynamics driving it were as much the desire for great power status as insecurity. The British empire had meant to discourage competition by setting the bar too high for others to reach; but at the same time it had enhanced the prestige associated with being a great power, and thus encouraged competition.

II

The second example concerns coercion. Undoubtedly, the most infamous instance is the so-called risk theory (*Risikogedanke*) introduced by Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, Secretary of State of the Imperial Naval Office in the years before the Great War. Tirpitz's intent was to intimidate Britain into a power-sharing relationship that might include access to bases and other markets by building a fleet strong enough to pose an unacceptable risk to London's overseas interests.[xiii] It was hoped such a relationship would enhance German influence and prestige, a metaphorical "place in the sun." It was also hoped a ratio of 2:3 German to British capital ships would suffice. Accordingly, Germany's naval bill of 1898 appropriated funds for a navy of 19 battleships, 42 cruisers, and sundry supporting vessels; this bill was followed two years later by a second that set a seventeen-year deadline for building a fleet of 2 flagships, 36 battleships, and 45 cruisers.[xiv]

However, as historians have noted, the assumptions

underpinning Tirpitz's theory were too rigid for the fluid nature of the strategic environment. His first assumption was that Germany's growing industrial capacity could successfully challenge Britain's and achieve a 2:3 shipbuilding ratio. That belief was reasonable given Britain's substantial cost outlays in the Second Boer War (1898-1902), and Germany's skyrocketing economic growth: between 1889 and 1913, its gross national product had doubled, while that of Britain had grown by only two-thirds.[xv] By 1914, Germany was second only to the United States in industrial power. Even so, it struggled to match Britain's vast ship-building complex. Second, Tirpitz assumed Britain would not become allies with another naval power, given its express goal to maintain naval supremacy relative to the two-power standard. However, London did conclude an alliance with Japan in 1902, which would endure until 1921 and engaged the Russians in a formal entente in 1907. These arrangements essentially secured the Royal Navy's flanks in the western Pacific and in the Mediterranean Sea and invalidated the risk theory. Third, Tirpitz did not take into account the bleed-over demands that would come from the arms race's land and air dimensions, each of which required increasing expenditures and detracted from Germany's ability to keep pace with Britain in ship building.[xvi]

By mid-1913, the naval arms race between Britain and Germany ended, albeit rather anticlimactically; the Kaiserreich had failed to coerce its way to a "place in the sun," as it desired.[xvii] While Germany had moved into second place in surface ships, it had not achieved its strategic goals.[xviii] Several opportunities for formal arms-control agreements between Germany and Britain arose between 1906 and 1912; these included the 1907 Hague conference, British efforts to negotiate an understanding from 1908 to 1911, and the Haldane mission of 1912.[xix] However, as is so often the case when one party senses a better bargain can be had by holding out, no formal agreement was reached; instead, Germany had "coerced" Britain into a stronger position.

A few more examples show how coercion or armed diplomacy helped "spike" the arms race.

A few more examples show how coercion or armed diplomacy helped "spike" the arms race. During the Bosnian Crisis of 1908-09, Austria and Serbia each attempted to intimidate the other by initiating partial mobilizations and military demonstrations. In the end, the Russians and Serbs backed down, but it was largely because they had that they resolved to be stronger next time, and thus added to their arms expenditures. Germany attempted to use armed diplomacy during the First and Second Moroccan Crises, 1905 and 1911, respectively; but succeeded in merely rallying other states to stand against her. Stung by their humiliation

in the Second Moroccan Crisis, Germany's leaders resolved to be stronger next time, and the Reichstag subsequently passed two army bills (1912 and 1913), which collectively added 166,000 troops to the army and authorized several technological, organizational, and logistical improvements. [xx] These measures were as much a reaction to Germany's run of diplomatic setbacks from 1905 to 1911, perhaps more, than her concern over Russia's military resurgence. [xxi] She and the other powers had every reason to believe armed diplomacy would remain a viable strategic tool for the foreseeable future. It was only prudent to ensure that instrument was as strong as possible.

Conclusions

This brief examination of the "life" of the arms race that preceded the Great War shows that it was less a cause than an effect. The strategies driving it were developed and used by the political and military leaders of the day. It may well be that further research will revise this knowledge by showing how, in other times, and other circumstances, the players involved were controlled by, as much as they controlled, the very arms races they put in motion. However, that was not the case with the world's first modern arms race. This time the devilish details win.

**Today, we assume the goal of
deterrence is to preserve peace,
and the goal of coercion is to get
something short of going to war for it;
but that was not always
true of either strategy.**

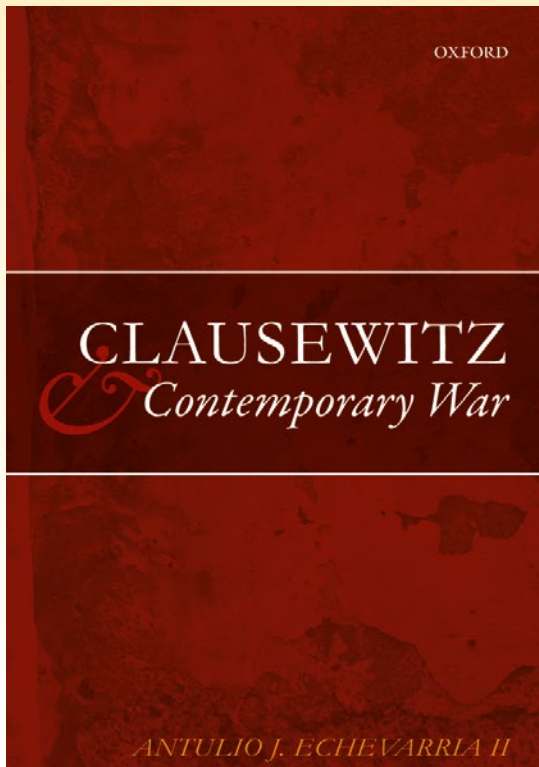
Today, we assume the goal of deterrence is to preserve peace, and the goal of coercion is to get something short of going to war for it; but that was not always true of either strategy. [xxii] "A state's aim with either strategy was just as likely to be a stronger position and greater influence, and it may well have been prepared to back up its maneuvering with the actual use of force, despite the era's concerns that war might soon become "impossible." The great powers, and those that were not great but wished themselves to be thought of as such, played much the same game of intimidation and coercion as they had for generations. One key difference by the dawn of the twentieth century was that they now played that game with some new pieces. However, the same rules still applied. The strategies of deterrence and coercion were instruments of policy every bit as much as armed conflict. It was great power politics, even if not all the players were great. In 1914, just as always, some of the players misjudged others, misread situations, overplayed their hands, and otherwise mismanaged the game they were playing. That is one continuity not likely to be undone by history's details.

References

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- [ii] Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge and New York, 2001); Niall Ferguson, *Pity of War* (New York, 1999); David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of the War: Europe, 1904-1914* (Oxford, 1996); David G. Herrmann, *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* (Princeton, 1996). Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany and the Coming of the Great War* (New York, 1992); A.J.P. Taylor, *War by Time-Table: How the First World War Began* (London, 1969). Recent interpretations prefer contingent explanations over causal ones; representative is Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (New York, 2014).
- [iii] For further elaboration, see Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, forthcoming).
- [iv] See Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002). Four types of deterrence are commonly recognized: direct, discouraging an attack on oneself; extended, dissuading an attack on a friend; general, deterring a potential but not imminent threat; and immediate, dissuading an imminent threat. Paul K. Huth, *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (Yale: Yale University, 1991).
- [v] Some define coercive diplomacy as a form of mediation or negotiation, and thus as an alternative to war rather than a type of military strategy. Alexander L. George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1997).
- [vi] Antulio J. Echevarria II, "The Arms Race: Qualitative and Quantitative Aspects," in *War. Volume IV: War and the Modern World*, Roger Chickering, Dennis Showalter, and Hans van de Ven, eds., (Cambridge, 2012), 163-80.
- [vii] Compare: Jon Tesuro Sumida, *In Defense of Naval Supremacy: Finance, Technology, and British Naval Policy 1889-1914* (Annapolis, 2014); Lawrence Sondhaus, *Naval Warfare, 1815-1914* (New York, 2001), 161; Roger Parkinson, *The Late Victorian Navy: The Pre-Dreadnought Era and the Origins of the First World War* (Suffolk, 2008). Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1991 [1976]). The bill added 10 battleships, 42 cruisers, and 18 torpedo gunships to be built over the next five years.
- [viii] Japan's naval victory over the Chinese established it as Asia's preeminent power. US Secretary of the Navy, Hilary A. Herbert, remarked that "Japan had leaped, almost at one bound, to a place among the great nations of the earth." S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Power, Perceptions, and Primacy* (Cambridge, 2003), 3.
- [ix] David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, MD, 1997); R.M. Connaughton, *The War of the Rising Sun and the Tumbling Bear—A Military History of the Russo-Japanese War 1904-5* (London, 1988); J.N. Westwood, *Russia against Japan, 1904-1905: A New Look at the Russo-Japanese War* (Albany, 1986).
- [x] Al Nofi, *The Spanish-American War 1898* (Conshohocken, PA, 1996), 100-11.
- [xi] Fred T. Jane, *Jane's Fighting Ships* (New York, 1906-07). In the same year, the naval arms race took a qualitative turn when the British commissioned the HMS Dreadnought, which rendered all previous designs obsolete, including some 50 capital ships already in service in the Royal Navy. In 1905, a state-of-the-art battleship displaced 13,000 tons, and was armed with four 12-inch guns with a range of 6,000 yards. The HMS Dreadnought displaced 18,000 tons, was armed with ten 12-inch guns, and could reach speeds of 21 knots. Nicholas Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (Columbia, 2002).
- [xii] Fred T. Jane, *Jane's Fighting Ships* (New York, 1912-13).
- [xiii] Paul M. Kennedy, "Tirpitz, England, and the Second Navy Law of 1900: A Strategical Critique," *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 8 (1970): 38; Mombauer, "German War Plans," 66.
- [xiv] Annika Mombauer, "German War Plans," in *War Planning 1914*, Richard F. Hamilton and Holger Herwig, eds., (Cambridge, 2010), 65-66; Michael Epkenhans, "Wilhelm II and 'His' Navy, 1888-1918," in *The Kaiser: New Research on Wilhelm II's Role in Imperial Germany*, Annika Mombauer and Wilhelm Deist, eds., (Cambridge, 2003); and *Die Wilhelminische Flottenrüstung, 1908-1914. Weltmachtstreben, Industrieller Fortschritt, Soziale Integration* (Munich, 1991). Rolf Hobson, *Imperialism at Sea: Naval Strategic Thought, the Ideology of Sea Power, and the Tirpitz Plan, 1875-1914* (Boston, 2002).
- [xv] While steel production grew by 350 percent in Britain, it increased almost 1,500 percent in Germany (and by more than 8,600 percent in the United States); coal output rose by 650 percent in Germany, compared to 250 percent in Britain. S.B. Clough, *The Economic Development of Western Civilization* (New York, 1959), 377, 385; W.O. Henderson, *The Rise of German Industrial Power, 1834-1914* (Berkeley, 1975), 233-4; B.R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750-1970* (London, 1975), 818-26.
- [xvi] In fact, the Reich's production of heavy battleships actually declined after 1912, as the focus of German armaments shifted to land power via the army bills of 1912 and 1913. German investments in fixed-wing aircraft also skyrocketed, increasing from 36,000 marks in 1909 to 26 million marks by 1914. John H. Morrow, *German Airpower in World War I* (Lincoln, 1982), 7.
- [xvii] Germany had put into service 46 capital ships (17 dreadnoughts, 21 pre-dreadnoughts, and 9 cruisers); however, Britain had built 103 capital ships (29 dreadnoughts, 40 pre-dreadnoughts, and 34 cruisers). Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London, 1987).
- [xviii] Furthermore, it had fallen behind in other areas, such as submarines. By 1914, Britain had 88 submarines; the French owned 76; the United States had 32; and the Kaiserreich had produced only 22, the bulk of which were by then obsolete. Robert Hutchinson, *Jane's Submarines: War Beneath the Waves from 1776 to the Present Day* (New York, 2005).
- [xix] John H. Maurer, "Arms Control and the Anglo-German Naval Race before World War I: Lessons for Today?" *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (1997): 285-306.
- [xx] Herrmann, *Arming of Europe*, 161-66; for more context see Gordon Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (Oxford, 1978); Hew Strachan, *The First World War. Vol. I: To Arms* (Oxford, 2004), 1-34.
- [xxi] In fact, the Russian military recovered relatively quickly given its losses in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), the fracturing caused by revolution of 1905, and the chaos induced by the mutiny within its officer corps. Dennis Showalter, *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires* (Hamden, 1991), 125-38.
- [xxii] Hence, the famous quote: "If you want peace, be prepared for war." (*Si vis pacem, para bellum*). Its origins are unclear, but it is usually attributed to the Roman military writer Flavius Vegetius Renatus.

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Strategy and the role of the enemy

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The role (as opposed to the simple presence) of the enemy in strategy is one that is often overlooked by strategic studies, and yet it should be a central component of strategic analysis. Strategic thinking is greatly concerned with the introspective consideration of one's own ends, ways, and means. This is definitely a necessary component of strategic analysis, and should remain so: greater sophistication however, can only be achieved if the trinity of ends, ways, and means are considered with relation to the enemy, as strategy is necessarily adversarial. To lose sight of the enemy, both literally and figuratively, can be fatal. As Colin S. Gray stated: "Often, indeed, politics appear genuinely to forget that strategy must have value in adversarial terms." [i] This failure to recognise the enemy, taken in the context of defence planning, leads to situations whereby the practice of strategy is more compromised than usual, due to the inability to adapt to the actions of a specific enemy. Flawed appreciation of the enemy is not merely a semantic issue, but has real-world implications for military practitioners. In the UK at the recent Iraq Inquiry, Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely revealed that the refusal to recognise the situation in post-invasion Iraq as an insurgency influenced the approach to combating it, compromising the effectiveness of the Coalition's response. [ii]

The enemy as definitional necessity

In war, adversarial actors attempt to achieve their policy goals, and ends, by utilising the means which they have at their disposal in different ways. As war is adversarial, it follows that the ends of these opposing actors are not compatible with each other at the outset of the conflict, as otherwise there would be no need for the resort to violence. Thus, the enemy must be viewed in strategy as an actor seeking to deny one the achievement of one's ends, and an actor with ends which one must seek to deny, as these are incompatible with one's own ends. With regards to ways and means, these are what the enemy seeks to employ in order to deny one's ends, and also to achieve his own; additionally the enemy may well seek to deny one access to means, and to prevent one from operating in preferred ways. As such, the rationale of the ends one actually desires from a conflict, the ways in which one is able to achieve these ends, and the means one has at one's disposal to use in these ways, are in a constant state of alteration as a result of the presence of the enemy, and thus require strategy to be a constant activity.

As Carl von Clausewitz related, war is nothing but a duel on a larger scale.[iii] Without an enemy there can be no duel; ends can be achieved without opposition in a walkover. Therefore, the enemy is a necessary component for the conduct of strategy: the strategist must direct strategies of which he conceives against the enemy. Without the possibility of adversarial elements there can be no need for strategy, or the strategist: ends can simply be achieved as a matter of policy, without the requirement for the employment of strategic ways and military means. To simplify, without an enemy there can be no strategy. The existence of an actor which has ends incompatible with those that one wishes to achieve is the precursor for the activity of strategy.

In war the enemy is the principle source of friction. While other sources of friction - the weather, disease, logistical weakness - are plentiful, and may even be introduced by oneself, the enemy is exceptional for being the only source of friction that actively seeks to increase the difficulty one suffers. As Helmuth von Moltke the Elder famously stated: "no plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond the first contact with the main hostile force." [iv] As discussed previously, the enemy seeks to deny freedom of action and to obstruct the achievement of one's ends. Any action the enemy takes

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necessarily acts to increase friction, as any action that advances the enemy's pursuit of his ends is antithetical. Thus, the simple act of having an enemy is a source of friction. One can, at least, rest assured that the enemy suffers the same issues. In addition, the enemy may sensibly actively seek to cause friction. For example, through attempts at deception the enemy can cause us to believe windmills are giants and to tilt quixotically at them. In the Operation Allied Force, the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, the Yugoslavian Forces were able to exploit the fact that the desire for no NATO casualties forced the operation of aircraft from great height, and employed simple deception methods in order to induce the use of expensive ordnance against dummy targets. NATO therefore suffered friction as a result of concerted enemy efforts. In order to achieve success in warfare it is a necessary activity to attempt to increase the friction suffered by one's enemy. Increasing the friction suffered by the enemy allows one to make things more difficult for him, enhancing the possibility of successful action.

Forgetting to consider the character of the enemy can be fatal to strategy. Just as every conflict has its own character, so does every enemy. Different enemies present different challenges, different ends, different rationalities to conceive of these ends and differing levels of commitment to these ends; different strategic ways in which they can operate, and different strategic cultures. These dictate what ways they will operate in; the different means at their disposal and their different abilities to generate means. The strategist cannot assume that there will be any similarities between one enemy and another, no matter how superficially similar they may appear: strategy must be tailor-made to the specific enemy faced in order to best allow the achievement of ends in the face of an enemy that seeks to deny this. For the occupation of Iraq, it was assumed by the British Army that methods it had perfected and employed for the maintenance of peace in Northern Ireland would transfer to southern Iraq. This assumption failed to consider a multiplicity of differences, including those of the character of the enemy, and caused difficulties for the British.[v]

Strategy must be tailor-made to the specific enemy faced in order to best allow the achievement of ends in the face of an enemy that seeks to deny this.

The enemy and considerations for ends

War can be conceived of as a conflict between two incompatible policy ends. The aim, therefore, is for one side to engineer a situation in which the other accepts the ends of his adversary - the Clausewitzian imposition of will. The enemy, therefore, is a key factor when considering one's ends: not only does the enemy seek to prevent the achievement of one's ends; he also has ends of his own, incompatible with one's own, which he seeks to impose. The enemy presents, therefore, an existential crisis to one's policy ends, as without altering the enemy's will one's ends cannot be achieved, and if the enemy is able to achieve alteration in one's will,

one faces the imposition of undesirable ends as promoted by the enemy.

Strategy cannot, however, merely be an activity for wartime, but must take place in anticipation of war. If ends can be conceived that cannot be achieved without the compliance of another actor, then it may be necessary for the strategist to conceive of strategic ways in which military means may be utilised to attain these ends. Looking at the recent crisis in Crimea, Russia and its Crimean allies had to conceive of strategic ways by which they may achieve their ends. That the government of Ukraine de facto accepted the imposition of Russian will does not detract from the pro-Russian strategy. Indeed, just as Sun Tzu stated "the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy without fighting at all" [vi], the ability to conceive of a strategy by which one achieves one's ends and is not opposed by an enemy, in spite of his opposing ends, is a demonstration of exceptional strategic planning. Nonetheless, these strategies must be conceived of with the assumption that actors holding opposing ends will act to deny one's ends.

the ability to conceive of a strategy by which one achieves one's ends and is not opposed by an enemy, in spite of his opposing ends, is a demonstration of exceptional strategic planning

How then, is the strategist to engineer a situation by which one is able to achieve one's policy ends, at the expense of the enemy's? Two ways present themselves: firstly, to alter the enemy's ends through use of strategic ways and military means; secondly, to alter one's own ends to make their imposition more acceptable to the enemy. The first way is the classic rationale of the activity of war, as by doing so it is hoped that the application of strategic ways and military means will cause the enemy to alter its ends in order to bring him in line with our own. A classic example of this can be seen in Operation Allied Force, through which NATO hoped to bring the Yugoslav ends (the continued territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and the defeat of the Kosovo Liberation Army) in line with NATO's (Yugoslav withdrawal from Kosovo, introduction of United Nations peacekeepers and the enforcement of the Rambouillet Accords). Ultimately, this method of achieving one's policy is the most desirable once war has begun, as it promises the greatest possible benefit, which is the achievement of one's initial ends, and the denial of the enemy's.

The imposition of one's will upon the enemy has an implicit basis that the enemy will behave as desired, and not seek to revise the status quo introduced by victory. As Clausewitz reminded us, however, "the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final." [vii] Given that one's ends had been incompatible with those of the enemy, how is it possible to engineer a situation whereby a competitor's ends can be made compatible with those articulated by the victor, not just for the immediate period, but for the long-term? The answer is that this is largely impossible. Unaltered ends - ends

that are not changed to a position more conciliatory to those of the enemy - may require a situation whereby the enemy is defeated militarily, and therefore has no choice but to accept the imposition of will. Thus, while the enemy has to conform to ends incompatible with his own, it is not necessary that he accept these, and may seek to revise the status quo when the opportunity offers itself. The most obvious case is that of the Paris Peace Treaties of 1919 that concluded the First World War: the ends imposed by the Allies served to create a political atmosphere within defeated Germany whereby political parties that sought to revise the status quo were brought to the fore, eventually causing war to break out again in 1939. A more recent example would be that of South Ossetia. In the 1991-1992 South Ossetia War the Georgian state was forced to accept the de facto independence of South Ossetia. This peace was not acceptable to Mikheil Saakashvili's Georgian government, and in 2008 it was believed that the time was ripe to revise the status quo and bring South Ossetia back under the control of Tbilisi, as had been done in 2004 in Adjara.

Dealing with the second, the attempt is made to alter the enemy's cost-benefit analysis so that he views the benefits of accepting the imposition of will as greater than the costs thereof, or the benefits of continuing to refuse the imposition of will as less than the costs that could be imposed upon him. The achievement of one's ends through their alteration can often be seen in the resolution of civil wars: in the Kivu Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for example, a 2009 Peace Agreement between the government of the DRC and the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) was achieved through the alteration of both sides' ends. The government of the DRC agreed to accept the CNDP as a legitimate political party in return for the cessation of the conflict, whereas it previously sought the defeat and end of the CNDP as a functioning actor. The CNDP agreed to accept the government of the DRC as legitimate and to incorporate its armed forces into the Armed Forces of the DRC and Congolese National Police in return for its recognition as a legitimate political party, whereas previously it had sought a separate existence in order (ostensibly) to protect the Tutsi population of the eastern regions of the DRC, as well as to take advantage of weak government control in the eastern regions, and to control and exploit the mineral wealth thereof. This method of achieving one's ends at the expense of the enemy's is obviously less desirable, as it requires the compromise of one's ends, and is a tacit recognition that one cannot or is not willing to achieve one's ends with the ways and means acceptable and available for use; a sign of weakness, which may compromise one's negotiating position.

While altered ends may be acceptable to both sides, there may remain factions that find these altered ends unacceptable, as they had originally sought the unaltered ends, and may seek recourse to strategic ways and military means in order to continue seeking said ends. In the Kivu Conflict, the 2009 Peace Agreement left factions within the CNDP dissatisfied with the altered ends that had been achieved, and so they split off, forming Mouvement du 23-Mars (M23), continuing to apply strategic ways and military means in order to achieve its ends in contrast to those supported by the Peace Agreement. What this means for the strategist is twofold: first, that he should attempt to conceive

of ways that will achieve his ends not just immediately, but also for the long-term, as far as this is possible; second, that he should not view the achievement of ends as the ends of strategy, as the enemy remains a potential enemy in the future, as he may likely seek to revise the status quo created by the imposition of will.

Ends can, and do, change during the conduct of conflict requiring strategy to be a constant activity. As the role of the strategist is to conceive of ways in which he can deliver the desired ends through application of the means at his disposal, when ends undergo alteration so must strategic ways. Ways which were first conceived of in order to deliver the original ends may become incompatible with the ends now oriented, or, if still compatible, may not now be the optimal ways to deliver the ends now desired.

Ends can, and do, change during the conduct of conflict requiring strategy to be a constant activity.

The enemy and considerations for ways

The achievement of ends is carried out through the conception of strategic ways which allow the use of military means for said ends. As Lukas Milevski has stated, "The strategist's first logical step is to control his opposite's freedom of action." [viii] By doing so, one reduces the ways available for the enemy to achieve his ends. By denying an enemy actor the use of certain strategic ways, he is left to resort to strategic ways that are possibly less ideal, compromising his ability to achieve his ends. Denial of strategic ways is an ideal situation, as forcing the adoption of sub-optimal strategic ways increases the risks undertaken by one's enemy, increasing the chance that he will be unsuccessful, and have one's will opposed upon him.

It logically follows that this denial of strategic ways is what the enemy seeks to do unto oneself. Just like in chess (another simile favoured by Clausewitz) [ix], one must conceive not only of strategic ways which allow one to deny an enemy freedom of action, one must think some moves ahead, and deny the enemy the ability to reduce one's own ways. In doing so, one maintains freedom of action and access to the most desirable ways for the achievement of one's own ends. By neglecting to anticipate the enemy's ways, one is left open to attack, and faces the prospect of having strategic ways denied, forcing one to adopt sub-optimal ways and reducing one's freedom of action.

Just as with ends, the conduct of war has an altering affect upon the strategic ways available to oneself. Ways previously available may be denied, physically, legally or practically. New ways may become available. Existing ways which were previously less optimal may become more optimal, or most optimal. For example, advances in the technology of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) over the last decade have increased the plausibility of conducting the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan with greater utilisation of RPA, rather than relying on personnel to insert themselves into physically endangering situations. The conduct of war

also changes the ways that are available to the enemy. As a result, with ways undergoing constant evolution, so too must the strategy which seeks to wed these strategic ways to the policy ends. This creates a role for the strategist, who, as the enemy affects one's own ways, and as one affects his ways, must conceive of new and different ways in which he can achieve his ends.

The enemy and considerations for means

The final element of the strategic trinity is military means. Whereas the central aspects of means, these being tactics in battle, do not have a physical form, by necessity they must make use of physical resources. These can often become targeted by the enemy, as he seeks to deny one access to resources, or the freedom of action to use said resources. When one targets an enemy's military means, it is done so in order to reduce the strategic ways available to him, and also to reduce his resolve to achieve his aims - the assumption being that the enemy's centre of gravity is located within the military means at his disposal.

When one targets an enemy's military means, it is done so in order to reduce the strategic ways available to him

When strategists consider their approach toward the enemy, they must consider how their means relate to those of their enemies. Military means can only have value in their relation to those of others: through consideration of the relative strengths and weaknesses of one's means as opposed to those of the enemy, the strategist is able to make evaluations of both how to best utilise his military means in order to best achieve strategic effect; and also what means the enemy has at his disposal should suggest to the strategist ways in which the enemy will most likely deploy these against him.

The military means one has at one's disposal, and those of the enemy, are crucial not only when considering the strategic ways in which they may be employed, but also the policy ends which can be achieved through their use. The question is not simply "Can I use my means in ways which will achieve my policy goals?", but is increased in complexity by the role of the enemy. The logic introduced by the enemy requires that the military means are employed in ways which allow the achievement of aims in the face of an enemy who seeks to deny the achievement of one's aims; and that the military means can be employed in ways which also deny the enemy from achieving his own ends. If the ends one has are unachievable, or become so as a result of the interference of the enemy, through the means at one's disposal. Then the requirement is that different ends are identified that fit with the means available.

As means contain the physical resources available to an actor, and these are necessarily finite, their use cannot help but to affect said means. This has a knock-on effect on the strategic ways that can be used, and the policy ends that can be achieved through these strategic ways. This is as

Edward N. Luttwak has stated: "Force, on the other hand, is just that: if directed to one purpose, it cannot simultaneously be directed at another, and if used, it is ipso facto consumed." [x] It is possible to go further than Luttwak does, and state that the conception of strategic ways affects means: certain strategic ways demand certain means be generated; their generation means that the resources expended cannot be used for other strategic ways. As a result, the generation and use of military means has a necessary narrowing affect on the ways in which they can be used. The enemy is naturally a key factor in the exploitation of the finite nature of resources, principally through their destruction. By directing force against one's resources, the enemy can therefore ensure that these are unavailable, and affect the strategic ways that are available, forcing the resort to strategic ways less desired. The strategist must, therefore, do the same, and conceive of ways in which he might deny the enemy means, be it through the direct destruction of his resources, or impeding the ability of the enemy to employ his means.

By directing force against one's resources, the enemy can therefore ensure that these are unavailable, and affect the strategic ways that are available

The enemy as a tool for learning

The strategist can use the enemy as a tool for learning. Just as the strategies one devises are unavoidably affected by one's own assumptions, so are the enemy's. As a result, observation of the enemy's ways can offer the opportunity to learn about the enemy's assumptions. As the first logical step is to deny ways, it is possible to gauge the enemy's assumptions regarding one's ways. For example, if one's enemy seeks to deny air control, then one can identify that the enemy assumes that air control is an important way in which one might force him to submit to the imposition of one's will, and that it therefore presents a great threat to his ability to impose his will; or that he assumes that one's will is somewhat dependent on having air control, and that to deny air control will enhance his ability to impose his will. This should therefore prompt the strategist to re-evaluate ways. If the enemy's actions can reveal his assumptions about what strategic ways he fears or values, the strategist should seek to exploit these in order to better achieve one's ends.

The ability to learn about the enemy's assumptions is incalculably valuable to the strategist. Previous to its interaction with the enemy, all strategy is generated with only the introspective view able to be taken. This is necessarily limiting as assumptions do not necessarily encapsulate any objective truth, and may in fact produce detrimental strategies. The enemy provides an extrospective perspective, previously unavailable to the strategist, who can now utilise this in order to generate new strategies based upon what is learned from the enemy. As Scott Sigmund Gartner has said: "The battlefield provides leaders with information that helps them assess their strategies." [xi] One should not think of the battlefield merely as a setting for internal actors to generate

information, but also as a setting where one can study the enemy, thus deriving information from the actor one seeks to deny. This does come with a caveat, obvious but worth recognition: any attempt made to identify the enemy's assumptions will unavoidably be affected by the assumptions one holds about the enemy himself and the nature and character of war, not to mention the incomplete perspective that one can generate. Thus, there will be natural limitations to the strategic effect that can be generated through learning about the enemy's assumptions. Nevertheless, while with its limits, the enemy is an often overlooked source that can be utilised for strategy-making.

Even aside from the action of and against the enemy causing changes in ends, ways and means on both sides of a conflict, the existence of the enemy forces strategy to undergo change. A moderately intelligent actor should be able to learn from his enemy and adapt his strategy to best counter and defeat said enemy. The reverse of this is that there should be a recognition that one's enemy is also a moderately intelligent actor, and that engagement with said enemy provides him with experience of our strategic approach, and therefore the ability to refine his own strategy in order to better conceive of ways in which he may counter one's strategy and impose his will. Additionally, not only are current enemies able to learn from ways that one employs, but future enemies will also be taking note of these ways. It is, therefore, necessary for strategy to undergo constant development and alteration: in order to learn lessons from the enemies' ways and to adapt to counter these. In addition, it is necessary to prevent both the current enemy and potential ones from being able to learn anything of permanent use from one's own application of ways.

Conclusion

The enemy is a crucial, yet often overlooked, element of strategy. This is not, and cannot be acceptable, as the enemy is a necessary element for war, and therefore strategy. As strategy is relational, it is necessary that the strategist consider one's own ends, ways and means with reference to those of the enemy. To do so is to create the conditions which best allow for the creation of strategies which will allow the imposition of one's will upon the enemy: the ultimate goal of strategy.

In addition, the enemy presents a source of learning for the intelligent strategist. By observing the enemy, one can attempt to understand his assumptions about oneself, and the nature of war. This can be exploited, and so the strategist gains opportunity from the consideration of the enemy. Additionally, the extrospective perspective that the enemy is able to provide on one's own strategy, in stark contrast to the introspective one that necessarily dominates strategy-making, is invaluable.

As strategy is contextual, no strategy can be effective without explicit consideration of the enemy. No two enemies are the same (though some may be more the same than others!), and so no two strategies should be the same. To fail to consider the enemy can prove detrimental, as one can become deluded and attempt to 'template' strategies without regard to the context in which one finds oneself.

the existence of the enemy, or the potential for actors to oppose one's ends and therefore act as an enemy, necessitates the constant conduct of strategy

Furthermore, the existence of the enemy, or the potential for actors to oppose one's ends and therefore act as an enemy, necessitates the constant conduct of strategy, especially in wartime as the enemy affects the policy ends one can achieve, the strategic ways in which one can achieve said ends, and the military means that can be applied in said ways. Additionally, just as one may learn from the enemy, it should be recognised that the enemy is in turn learning from oneself, and so strategies must be evolving in order to take on board what is learned, and prevent the enemy from learning anything too useful for use against oneself.

In summation, the enemy in strategy is not just a necessary evil, only existing to be defeated, but an incredibly important factor in the activity of shaping strategy. To consider the enemy is to enhance one's strategic effect, while to ignore the enemy is detrimental and harmful.

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Mass Killings of Civilians in Counter-Insurgency: Killing More, Winning More?

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Insurgency, a form of war whose first manifestations could be traced back to antiquity, stands out as one of the deadliest and cruellest types of conflict. As a closer study of the recent political history reveals, mass killings of civilians by governments have occurred in much greater magnitude and frequency during COIN campaigns than conventional wars throughout the second half of the 20th century.[i] For example, some of the worst crimes against humanity and genocides in human history – e.g. the genocides during the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971) and the War in Darfur (2003-2014)[ii] – occurred when governments tried to quash insurgencies by using mass violence against civilians.

mass violence remains one of the most prevalent types of state response against an insurgency

At the dawn of the 21st century, mass violence – i.e. the systematic and intentional targeting of non-combatants by a government[iii] – remains one of the most prevalent types of state response against an insurgency. Assad, the absolute ruler of Syria, has repeatedly committed acts of mass violence against civilians (from indiscriminate aerial bombardments of towns and villages to the use of chemical weapons) in an endeavour to eliminate the armed opposition during the

Syrian Civil War (2011-Present).[iv] Why does an established state authority like the Ba'athist regime in Syria strive to counter an insurgency by means of mass violence?

Various explanations have been propounded for the use of mass violence. The first category of explanations contains the various psychological reasons behind such violent policies: the blind fury of a government over the military failures at the hands of the insurgents or the terror of the insurgents against government loyalists (e.g. assassination of key political figures),[v] the growing despair of a government over the protracted and uphill struggle against an invisible enemy,[vi] the proclivity of the security forces of a government to pillage and terrorise civilians (e.g. due to the social and cultural background of the government troops)[vii] and even the salience of totalitarian ideologies (e.g. the Nazi ideology of race superiority) within a government's security forces.[viii]

Another category of explanations concentrates on the impact of specific political and military variables on the overall policy of a government: the influence of a military culture that prioritises victory at all costs[ix] (e.g. the Japanese military ethos in the first half of 20th century), the despotic character of the political regime that permits the use of all means and methods possible in pursuit of victory[x] (e.g. the dictatorial regime of Assad in Syria) or the existence of belligerent factions within the state or security apparatus that push for aggressive policies (usually army officers who wish to crush opposition solely by brute force).[xi]

Finally, another explanation suggests that a government may use mass violence against non-combatants with the intention of isolating the insurgents from the (local) people who support the former.[xii] In such cases, a government does not treat civilians cruelly in a purposeless or random way; instead, a government implements a calculated policy to sever the ties of the (local) people with the insurgents and rout the weakened armed opposition. Why should a government strive to isolate the (local) people from the insurgents even at a cost of such violent methods? The answer lies in the crucial importance that the support of the population holds for the insurgents and the government alike.

Insurgency essentially amounts to a contest for the control of the population between a non-state actor (in particular,

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an organised armed movement) and an established state authority.[xiii] In other words, insurgency constitutes a war fought within the population of a particular society.[xiv] a war "waged by the few but dependent on the support of the many".[xv] Mao Tse Tung – the widely celebrated theorist and practitioner of guerrilla warfare – encapsulated the importance of popular support in this type of conflict with a now famous metaphor: "Guerrillas are fish and the people are the water in which they swim. If the temperature of the water is right, the fish will thrive and multiply".[xvi]

In summary, decisive support from the population constitutes the most crucial determinant for victory in this type of conflict; whichever side (the government or the insurgents) succeeds in imposing its control over the population will certainly prevail.[xvii] As numerous cases have shown, without concrete support from the population, neither the insurgents nor a government can secure victory[xviii] – unless of course external actors intervene in support of either side in a forceful way. For example, the communist government in Afghanistan (which was set up in 1978 after a coup) did not command strong support among the conservative and pious tribes of Afghanistan and, as a consequence, only the aggressive intervention of the Soviets in 1979 in support of their Afghan comrades sustained this unpopular regime for ten long years. How does the use of mass violence against non-combatants impact on the policy of a government against an insurgency? Does mass violence facilitate or hinder the isolation of the insurgents from the population?

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The Impact of Mass Violence

One theorist on guerrilla warfare once asserted that "no measure is more self-defeating than collective punishment [of civilians]".[xix] echoing the widely popular opinion among the academic community that mass violence against non-combatants markedly exacerbates an already difficult situation for a government. Another prolific scholar on the subject of civil conflict systematically studied a large number of historical case studies and concluded that mass violence against non-combatants has on most occasions reinforced rather than reduced the popularity and legitimacy of the insurgents.[xx] As a matter of fact, mass violence against non-combatants has on most cases proven militarily successful for a government in the short run and counter-productive in military and political terms in the long run.[xxi]

For example, the April Uprising (April-May 1876) by the Bulgarian nationalist insurgents was brutally quashed by the Ottoman Empire within two months. However, the atrocities committed by the Ottoman troops and paramilitaries against the civilian population of Bulgaria shocked the liberal public opinion and politicians of Europe (such as Gladstone in Britain) and prompted the Great Powers of Europe to jointly demand from the Sublime Porte the immediate cessation of

the atrocities and the adoption of radical reforms in favour of the empire's Christian subjects. A few months later, the Russian Tsar (the official protector of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire) declared war on the Sultan on account of the violent treatment of the latter's Orthodox Christian subjects and defeated the Ottomans after a two-year savage war. Eventually, the routed Ottoman Empire ceded territory and recognised an autonomous Bulgarian state.[xxii]

Many scholars have remarked that the acts of mass violence against civilians by a government reduce or even remove the "collective action problem" of the insurgents.

Many scholars have remarked that the acts of mass violence against civilians by a government reduce or even remove the "collective action problem" of the insurgents.[xxiii] The "collective action problem" (also called the "rebel's dilemma") refers to the common difficulty of the insurgents to obtain recruits from the (local) populace. Indeed, the "insurgents must convince individuals to assume the private risks of combating the state, despite the obvious threat of costly sanction (i.e. death), when the benefits of insurgent victory are mostly non-excludable".[xxv]

These scholars have reasoned that mass violence against non-combatants by a government has in countless cases compelled the victimised civilians to swell the ranks of the insurgents with the intention of wreaking vengeance upon their tormentors or securing protection from a murderous and unpredictable government.[xxvi] Mass violence fails to motivate the (local) population to work with a government against the insurgents: a brutal government will most likely punish the (local) population with savage reprisals for the activity of the insurgents whether the (local) people have indeed collaborated with the insurgents or not.[xxvii] For example, the three Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Bulgarian) occupying Greece during World War II committed atrocities (e.g. induced hunger and mass killings) invariably against sympathisers and opponents of the Greek resistance organisations and, as a consequence, curtailed the incentives for collaboration among the Greek civilian population.[xxviii]

Unsurprisingly, in several cases the insurgents have welcomed and even incited cruel reprisals against civilians in order to turn the population against the government. For example, the Soviet partisans during World War II provoked the German occupying authorities (e.g. by torturing any captured soldiers) to commit atrocities against the (local) civilians with the aim of compelling the reluctant people to participate in the resistance.[xxix] The Germans eventually alienated their subject peoples in the Soviet Union with their ruthless reprisals – even those who had in the initial stage of Operation Barbarossa embraced the Germans as liberators from the Russian yoke and, above all, the Stalinist reign of terror.

However, a closer study of military history reveals surprisingly

that the use of mass violence has been crowned with success on several occasions. The Ba'athist regime in Iraq under Saddam Hussein – though severely weakened by its crushing defeat in the Gulf War (1991) – drowned in blood the uprising of the Iraqi Shia in 1991 while the international community simply voiced its vehement disapproval of the regime's atrocities.[xxx] Years earlier, the Bolsheviks had quelled the Tambov Rebellion (1919-1921) in Central Russia with extreme savagery. In fact, the Bolsheviks terrorised the peasantry into submission by using mass violence (such as the destruction of whole villages and the use of poisonous gases).[xxxi] As a matter of fact, the use of mass violence against civilians can, under very specific circumstances, exacerbate rather than eliminate the "collective action problem" of the insurgents.[xxxii]

Mass violence against non-combatants can indeed cause insuperable operational and logistical complications to the insurgents.[xxxiii] Indicatively, the deportation (in several cases under appalling conditions that caused many fatalities) of civilian populations (even whole tribes or nations) that supported the insurgents has been credited as the leading factor for the quashing of insurgencies over the centuries. For example, between 1928 and 1932 the Italian colonial authorities in Libya deported over half the total population of the Arab nomadic tribes of Cyrenaica to concentration camps under cruel circumstances: the deportees were ordered to travel across the desert to these camps without any provisions and the stragglers were shot. The civilians interned in the camps were not humanely treated either: within three years, 40% of them had succumbed to disease and starvation. The Italians thus deprived the insurgents from the Senussi nomadic tribe the popular support needed to continue their armed struggle.[xxxiv] Years later, the British forcibly resettled one million members of the Kikuyu tribe (the main ethnic group in Kenya) to special reserves in an effort to separate the Mau Mau insurgents (who were recruited predominantly among the Kikuyu people) from their principal source of internal support (the Kikuyu people) during the Mau Mau Uprising (1952-1960). The British did eventually isolate the insurgents from their friendly tribal population and overpowered the increasingly weakened insurgents; the Kikuyu, however, paid a terrible price: tens of thousands of internees perished due to starvation and disease.[xxxv]

In other words, mass violence could effectively separate the insurgents from the friendly local population.

In other words, mass violence could effectively separate the insurgents from the friendly local population. In several cases, civilians have appealed to the insurgents in earnest to suspend their operations near their settlements for fear that insurgent activity might provoke an overwhelming response from the side of the government; such incidents were recorded repeatedly in the Soviet Union and Greece during World War II since the civilians of the two countries dreaded the cruel reprisals perpetrated by the occupying troops of the Axis Powers.[xxxvi] And although the population may defect to the camp of the government for various reasons (e.g. the opposition to the policies of the insurgents or the promise of material benefits), the pursuit of protection from the vicious

retribution of a brutal government does constitute a powerful incentive for such defections. For example, many villagers defected en masse to the side of the government to avoid cruel reprisals from the "death squads" that the omnipotent Guatemalan military had established and operated free from political supervision.[xxxvii] In the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), the savage retributions against the local Arab non-combatants by the French colonial army compelled many Arab villages to openly declare their support for the French rule.[xxxviii]

Mass violence against civilians could reinforce the perception within the population that the insurgents "cannot credibly protect the population nor respond in kind".[xxxix] In essence, the people may view the insurgents as the weaker side in the conflict whose actions threaten the lives of the civilians. Such an impression may generate a strong desire among the suffering population for a quick termination of the conflict no matter how violently the government may have behaved in previous times.[xl] The Kurds in Turkey, for example, suffered severely at the hands of the Turkish state authorities during the separatist Kurdish insurgency (1984-1999): in fact, several hundred villages were forcibly evacuated and destroyed, while thousands of supporters of the insurgents disappeared under suspicious circumstances. Since the insurgents could not protect the Kurdish civilian population from ruthless reprisals and the repression by the Turkish state authorities did not cease, a substantial section of the minority grew tired of the cruel conflict and greeted the end of the war in 1999 with relief – even though the Turkish government had won.[xli]

Alexander Downes, a scholar who has written extensively on the occurrence of mass violence against civilians in war, outlined four principal conditions under which mass violence could be crowned with success: a) a small population to target with mass violence b) a small geographical region within which to undertake military operations, c) the parallel isolation of the insurgents from their external allies and d) the solid commitment of the local population to the cause of the insurgents. He warned, nonetheless, that only when all four conditions are met can a government wipe out an insurgency through mass violence against non-combatants.[xlii]

The recent victory of the government of Sri Lanka over the separatist insurgency of the Tamil Tigers (1983-2009) validates Downes' theories. Between 2006 and 2009, the government of Sri Lanka pursued a military-intensive policy with the intention of routing the prolonged insurgency of the Tamil Tigers conclusively. Several characteristics of the insurgency played into the hands of the government in Colombo. The insurgents received support only from a small section of the population – the Tamil minority which inhabited principally the northern and eastern areas of the island and strongly supported the armed struggle of the Tamil Tigers for an independent Tamil state in northern Sri Lanka. The Indian Ocean separated the insurgents from their supportive co-brethren in southern India and, consequently, the insurgents remained isolated from the outside world. In the final months of the war, the Sri Lankan army staged vigorous offensives against the insurgents and used mass violence against Tamil civilians to sever the ties between the minority and the insurgents. Isolated from the outside world, weakened by the steep decrease in support

among the civilian Tamil population and overwhelmed by an enemy with improved tactics and combat strength, the Tamil Tigers were swiftly crushed.[xliii] However, victory came at a heavy cost as thousands of Tamil civilians perished due to acts of mass violence.[xliv]

The above practice of targeting non-combatants remains "selective at the collective level, but indiscriminate at the individual level". In effect, the government uses a method of "profiling" to identify those social, religious and/or national groups that support the insurgency, isolates them from the rest of the population and subjects them to mass violence.[xlv] In other words, this method of "profiling" serves the strategic objective of the government – though in an "unorthodox" and ruthless way: to seize control of the population and overwhelm the (weakened) insurgents. The Greek monarchist regime used such a method of "profiling" during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). The regime identified those segments of society that supported the communist insurgents (namely, the lower middle class, the workers and the peasants of Northern Greece) and subjected them to ruthless repression: thousands were imprisoned and executed and hundreds of thousand villagers (over 700,000 souls) were evacuated to refugee camps under tragic conditions.[xlvi]

Mass Killings of Non-Combatants in Perspective

In summary, various trends can be identified with regards to the use of mass violence against civilians by a government in a COIN campaign. A government, for example, might commit acts of mass violence against civilians owing to the heavy influence of a racist ideology or even the authoritarian nature of the regime. Occasionally, however, a government targets non-combatants with mass violence in the context of

a calculated policy to sever the ties of the (local) population with the insurgents and, as a result, deprive the latter of the means necessary to continue their armed struggle.

various trends can be identified with regards to the use of mass violence against civilians by a government in a COIN campaign

The effectiveness of mass violence against non-combatants in the context of COIN still sparks controversies among academics. A detailed study of the RAND Corporation examined 30 case studies of insurgencies that occurred between 1978 and 2008, analysing systematically the core policies adopted by the governments in each case. The study showed that mass violence against civilians succeeds militarily in the short run but produces adverse effects in the long run (such as a relapse to violence after a short period of time).[xlvii]

Quashing an insurgency has always been a challenging task for any government – no matter how much power the latter might wield.[xlviii] Insurgencies erupt more frequently and endure much longer than conventional wars as a careful study of military history demonstrates. Insurgencies have by far outnumbered conventional wars since World War II and, in addition, have required an investment in blood, treasure and time since "on average, the successful counterinsurgent will need 12 to 15 years to defeat an insurgency".[xlix] Henry Kissinger's classic aphorism reminds the theorists and practitioners of COIN that "the conventional army loses if it does not win. The guerrilla wins if he does not lose".[l]

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