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# Infinity Journal



## IN THIS EDITION

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# A Note From The Editor

How do you teach Strategy? It's a good question; or rather it's a good question until you pick apart the basic idea behind it.

Infinity Journal uses the understanding of strategy that connects politics with violence. So how do you teach people to connect politics with violence? Strategy is after all a *practical* skill. More to the point it's a practical skill that very, very few people actually ever employ. Far more people input to tactics and policy than ever apply what they know to strategy. Almost no one can claim to be a "strategist."

However, understanding and studying strategy equips you with a whole range of understanding that other fields simply lack, but that can really only be accomplished by studying history through the lens that classical strategy provides, which is to say, history. If you debate the meaning of strategy, how it is done, or the mechanisms it is composed of, then all that history, as in over 5,000 years of evidence, is simply closed to you. History is the only source of evidence.

Strategic History (to use the phrase and definition coined by Colin S. Gray) is far more than just military history, and sadly current military history is mostly narrative in nature and consumed for entertainment purposes. That with insights relevant to understanding and practice is rare.

If you want to know why wars are won and lost, then only strategic history can tell you. For example, strategic history can, with relative ease, show how and why the US lost the Vietnam War and Rhodesia sealed its own fate, regardless of military skill. If we are to understand culture as shared ideas and beliefs, then the concept of "strategic culture" would struggle to accommodate perspectives of similar value.

It is worth noting that almost all aspects of understanding and comprehending military behaviour are best enabled by a detailed and structured study of history. That said, the required analytical framework must exist to do so. Undefined problems will always remain unresolved.

Want to study strategy? Applying the strategic theory that has been proven by practice, to an examination of the relevant history is pretty much the only way forward.

**William F. Owen**

Editor, Infinity Journal

May 2016

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# Risk Distance

**Geoffrey Demarest, Ivan B. Welch, and Charles K. Bartles**

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Geoffrey Demarest is a researcher at the US Army's Foreign Military Studies Office at Ft. Leavenworth. He holds a JD and a PhD in International Studies from the University of Denver, and a PhD in Geography from the University of Kansas. He is also a graduate of the US Army War College and of the School of the Americas. He is a retired Army officer and civil lawyer. He is the author of numerous works on military topics, including his latest book, *Winning Irregular War: Conflict Geography*.

Ivan B. Welch, PhD (LTC retired) has extensive academic and professional expertise in applied geography. He served some 27 years in the United States Army where he participated in peacekeeping operations, ground combat, coalition warfare, and joint military policy planning. For the past several years he has done extensive open source research and writing on foreign perspectives and international relations. He teaches cultural geography in interagency seminars and offers frameworks for analysis based upon geographic factors. He is currently doing field work regarding the interaction of place, people, and purpose as entangled systems in a cultural, economic, and political context.

Charles K. Bartles is a Russian linguist and analyst at the Foreign Military Studies Office at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has deployed in various assignments to Afghanistan and Iraq is now an imagery officer in the Army Reserve. He also has served as a security assistance officer at U.S. embassies in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. He has a BA in Russian from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, an MA in Russian and Eastern European Studies from the University of Kansas, and a Geospatial Information Systems certificate from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

This article discusses a geographic phenomenon we consider centrally relevant to military strategy and planning at all scales, *risk distance*. Risk distance is the distance to the theoretical point in space and time beyond which it would be imprudent to continue an activity or to remain in a place. That dangerous point is what many in the military refer to as the 'culminating point'.<sup>[i]</sup> When a commander calculates relevant distances to some likely confrontation in an armed struggle, the perceived costs and risks have an intimate relationship to the correlation of force at the points of potential contact. If, for instance, a point of *intended* future contact were so distant that a commander could expect to wield only inferior relative strength (at that contact point), he might be overreaching by forcing the contact, unless he at least assures that his force will have a safe escape. This question of the culminating point is central to rational strategy at every level, but has been short-changed in recent strategy literature. We emphasize it here, starting with a theoretical discussion of distance as the geographer knows it.

We take as axiomatic that competitive armed strength diminishes in accordance with the distance a force must travel away from its base or sanctuary. This 'law' is known in some circles as the *Loss of Strength Gradient*, a term proposed by economist Kenneth Boulding in 1962.<sup>[ii]</sup> A peace activist, Professor Boulding was nevertheless anti-communist enough that he wanted to enter the Cold War arms race debate in a reasoned way. It seems that to Professor Boulding it made a lot more sense to station forces in Europe than to increase the total amount of coercive force (especially nuclear) available to the United States. He believed that more ICBMs did not equal greater military advantage, a point he expressed in part through use of distance theory. The Loss of Strength Gradient is related to Professor Waldo Tobler's 'First Law of Geography' that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related"; as well as to the observation called 'distance decay' that is widely referenced in geography and economics literature.<sup>[iii]</sup> The loss of strength (or influence) caused by increasing distance has a geographic consequence. Theoretically, there will exist places on the earth where opponents, although they may possess greatly unequal amounts of total coercive strength, will nevertheless have equal amounts of practicable coercive strength.

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compelled a unit to carry more water than it would otherwise need. The higher cost distance (measured as an amount of needed water) shortens the perceived risk distance, that is, shortens the time or physical space beyond which it is not prudent to go.[vii] The careful military leader anticipates contacts, and, unless the mission involves some resigned contemplation of suicide, will make sure his line of withdrawal is secure in case he attacks or is attacked by a stronger force. Competent strategy implies the constant measurement of relative power, but with prudence to know that those measurements will often be wrong. Like so much else, this truth reigns in both the palpable world and the solipsistic one. The competitive leader wants to correctly interpret and shape physical reality in order to act prudently *and* to affect the perceptions and mindset of the opposing leader.

The perception in a leader's mind regarding the where or when of his culminating point is obviously affected by geographic circumstances. Less obvious, or at least less discussed, are certain specific kinds of places and moments in time that most affect calculations of risk distance. Mountainous up-slopes are an example. During a pursuit in mountainous terrain, the fugitive usually knows which direction he will take when he gets to a junction of watercourses. His pursuer, on the other hand, is often obliged to make a blind decision as to which stream to follow. If for no other reason than this mundane fact of water and gravity, an advantage is given to uphill escape.[viii] Some human geographic phenomena have the same effect.[ix] An international border can act in a way similar to that of upslope terrain. The two phenomena (border and mountain) have a commonly measurable effect – they each can serve to shorten the pursuer's risk distance more than they shorten that of a fugitive. With the international border the effect is not usually manifested directly in the perceptions of the small unit commander, but rather through a risk appreciation that is transmitted down from his leaders. For a squad in pursuit, an international boundary might be all but invisible, presenting little physical impediment to that squad's continuation of its mission. The fact that it is an international boundary, however, creates a risk in the minds of superior leaders in the squad's larger organization. Disciplined, the squad stops at the border – at what a more senior leader considers the culminating point. Sanctuaries of the FARC in Venezuela, or of the Taliban in Pakistan are common examples. Guerrillas often exploit administrative borders for the disparate advantages these geographic phenomena give to fugitive elements.

Renowned commanders and theorists counsel aggressive pursuit because an inferior force can be destroyed if it is unable to escape.[x] However, when a pursuing force presses beyond its risk distance, the pursued force may turn and counterattack, effect an ambush, or maneuver to cut off the pursuer from the erstwhile pursuer's own line of withdrawal. Care regarding calculations of distance and strength (not just as to one-off pursuits in irregular war, but every kind and mix of military encounter) is a hallmark of great leaders.[xi] Our strategic conversation has to be taken beyond the effect that costs might have on a unit's strength as distance increases, to the relative strengths of all forces, ours and our opponents' over time. A discussion that took place in our office (apologies for not being able to cite a written reference) regarded the cost of an American soldier's lunch in Arghandab. That meal might cost US taxpayers

around \$130.00, an expensive proposition over time. An ineffable rumor circulated that in getting that meal up from Karachi in 'jingle trucks', cash on delivery in Kandahar, \$20 of the \$130 easily might fall into Taliban hands in the form of willing and unwilling contributions along the way. Given all the relevant aspects of the human and physical geography, maybe it only took \$10 to serve the Taliban fighter *his* lunch, money left over for a few rounds of ammunition. If the rumor were true, in a palpable sense, we were paying for both sides of the contest – an effect of dissimilar cost distances.

Informed by Boulding's reminder of the obvious, we offer below a *mapamundi* that we are titling, *The Access Environment* (We include an appendix after the concluding paragraph of this article's text that elaborates the strategic and cartographic rationales).[xii] We could have perhaps called it the 'prudent risk map' or 'risk distances map', or the 'map of military culmination points and areas beyond them'. The map speaks for itself in great measure, showing that but for a minor percentage of the earth's land surface, the impediments presented to the planner charged to contemplate the moving and sustaining of significant regular US military units are formidable. The map says, loudly, that while it might be difficult to predict where a US armored brigade will be sent into combat in the future, it is not hard to reasonably assert where it is unlikely to be sent except at great (probably imprudent) cost financially, diplomatically, or politically. The map suggests that, at this moment in history, by far the greater expanse of the earth's land surface lies beyond the American military risk distance (at least if *military* were defined by the employment of an armored brigade). It would, in effect, be presumptively imprudent to send an armored brigade almost anywhere uninvited. If the reasons for going somewhere are great enough (newly perceived risks to the nation appear so great as to leave no option but to advance), then almost any costs will be born and hopefully some ameliorated. Today, however, (and posing the armored brigade as an appropriate standard unit for discussion) the following map makes an assertion, country-by-country, regarding how much of the world lies beyond the culminating point, that is, the world beyond which it would be imprudent to send an armored brigade in the absence of some new and startling knowledge.



Figure 6: *The Access Environment*

*The Access Environment* expresses strategic risk distance via three layers of phenomena that we believe will tend to influence some near-future (within twenty years?) American decision to send or maintain regular military units abroad. The first layer (which we depict in colors by country unit) is a

set of basic geographic (human and physical) impediments. It may be that the physical distances are great, as they are, for instance, in the middle of Africa. It may be that the moral impediment is extreme, as regards, for instance, the territory of our neighbor Canada. The second layer of the map we call the impunity layer. It depicts foreign territorial spaces wherein some negative set of conditions or events exist which might create an effective quantity of American desire to visit with force, uninvited. We base this layer on the notion that someone somewhere will be trying to get away with something that Americans, as a country and represented by the US government, find impossible to tolerate. In other words, there exist and will exist, even in the near-term, some basic reasons for the United States government to decide to run additional risk, and to bear costs in terms of human life, moral authority, diplomatic leverage or simple logistical expenditure. The third map layer depicts invitational deployment. Given the nature of American diplomacy, the evolution of defense treaties and other accords, and a dynamic quantity of what other peoples perceive as American empathy for their concerns, there also exists the possibility that a genuine invitation would be extended for the presence of ostentatious American military might in the form of conventional units. We only find three places where this seems reasonably likely to happen or continue, and as to all three (Kuwait, South Korea, and Eastern Europe) our prediction is based on the fact that some level of conventional US ground force structure is already there.

There is a fourth current or set of phenomena that we do not depict as a layer on *The Access Environment* map, but which would nevertheless be a significant ingredient in a decision to send or not to send US military forces into foreign territory. That set of phenomena could be referred to as 'national interests', and here refers to a set of motivations held by US senior leaders, but not necessarily known to or even shared by the US public. These motivations might include selective or preferential economic advantages or politically influential emotive or ideological values. They might also include validly perceived threats that become known to leadership via professional intelligence, but which cannot be openly revealed. In any case, we are not able to create a cartographic layer showing the influence that all these kinds of 'national interests' have on the likelihood of US global military movement and placement. They are exactly those factors not suited to visual depiction. We mention them, however, as an unmapped influence in order to underline that almost any amount of risk might be accepted, run, overcome, or costs paid if the rewards seemed sufficient or if the predictable costs of not running the risk were deemed too great by national leadership. We also admit as how the elements of the four layers (three fairly easy to depict and one not) are separable only in theory. Their overlap and inter-relationship cannot be dismissed or drawn away, and without the dimension of 'national interests', it is impossible to comprehensively discuss a particular case. Nevertheless, the map reminds us not that distances are neither wholly

determinant of our options nor determinant of the outcome of our endeavors, but that without an explicit, habitual calculation of distance we cannot reasonably compare relative military strength. We also cannot understand the culminating points of our various enterprises or how one affects another, and we will not do strategy well. Whatever levels of rectitude or existential imperative we might or might not be able to assign to the unmapped 'national interests', these latter will not be correctly framed without clarity regarding the other layers proffered here.

Risk distance is the relevant common denominator that allows a planner to compare the advantages and disadvantages produced by various seemingly disparate inputs, and it gives a strategic planner a tool for considering the effect that one seemingly detached military or non-military action (the employment of one or another element of national strategy) has on all others. In order to mount a bombing raid on Libya from a base in the United Kingdom, the distances might be far greater than the map might initially indicate if diplomatic relationships with France do not produce a right to overfly French territory on the way.[xiii] Diplomatic conditions with France might not put such a raid beyond the culminating point in the mind of a given American President, but they could certainly add cost distance. We could argue that the positioning of Outpost Keating in Afghanistan was beyond the prudent risk distance *ab initio*. It was operationally imprudent to place an outpost at the bottom of the valley near Kamdesh given the likelihood that the enemy could create a disadvantageous correlation of force that would compel our abandonment of the position.[xiv] We leave for a separate discussion at what point the compounding of imprudent tactical decisions constitutes imprudent strategy. We suggest, however, that if distance theory had been a staple in the diet of US military education - if Clausewitz' culminating point were as favored a theme as 'center of gravity' - then the design and deployment of American military force in recent decades might have been more effective. Going forward, in order to build a more grounded strategic education, we think that historical investigations of risk distance would be a healthy start.[xv]

*The Access Environment* is a map of risk distances. We invite challenge to specific assertions, to which we are hardly wed. [xvi] We believe that risk distance is a valid and centrally useful concept not only at the global scale, but at all scales of military competition. A *mapamundi* divided by county-size (county, not country) territorial units would perhaps be more useful to special operating forces. We did not build *The Access Environment* map or our argument from any presumption of geographic determinism.[xvii] Rather, inseparably mixing physical and human geography, we find distance, as measured in costs and risk, to have a singularly influential impact on decision-making. Failure to correctly interpret distance is a great fouler of ill-conceived plans. Failure to address distance at all is a failure of strategic theory.

## References

- [i] The term 'culminating point' dates back at least to Carl von Clausewitz, the Napoleonic era, and classic strategy. See on this point, Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by O. J. Matthijs Jolles in Caleb Carr, *The Book of War*, New York: The Modern Library, 2000, pp. 838, 886; Howard, Michael and Paret, Peter, eds. *Carl Von Clausewitz, On War*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, pp. 528, 566;
- [ii] Kenneth E. Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962, p. 162.
- [iii] See, on this point, Waldo Tobler, "A computer movie simulating urban growth in the Detroit region," *Economic Geography*, 46 (2) (1970): 234-240.
- [iv] Kenneth E. Boulding, *ibid*, p. 162.
- [v] This is adopted from Geoffrey Demarest, *Risk Distance: The Loss of Strength Gradient and Colombia's Geography of Impunity*. University of Kansas, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2013.
- [vi] Ike Skelton Library, "Elements of National Power" (bibliography) Joint Forces Staff College Norfolk, VA, 2011, [http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/library/publications/bibliography/Elements\\_of\\_National\\_Power.pdf](http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/library/publications/bibliography/Elements_of_National_Power.pdf) (accessed August, 2013). For the exception, see, K. Webb, "The Continued Importance of Geographic Distance and Boulding's Loss of Strength Gradient," *Comparative Strategy*, Volume 26, Issue 4, 2007.
- [vii] Meanwhile, the likelihood of a deadly encounter with an armed enemy is itself a factor in the measurement of cost. (Moving within range of the enemy's weapons, for instance, presents the potential for additional costs.) Thus the two, risk and cost, can be said to form what might be termed an endogeneity, that is, a cross-influencing relationship. The militarily relevant distance is the distance to the limit of prudence - to the 'bridge too far'. On Operation Market Garden in WWII, see, Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974.
- [viii] The assertion was inspired by Colombian terrain and the effect that Colombia's innumerable slopes have had on smuggling success, landmine placement and the difficulty of military pursuits. "Every left-or-right dilemma presented to the pursuer shortens the distance to the pursuer's culminating point (his prudent risk distance). With a little help from landmines and snipers, the fugitive can augment his enemy's perception of the cost-distances, that is, greatly shorten his enemy's risk distance." Geoffrey Demarest, *Winning Irregular War: Conflict Geography*. Leavenworth, FMSO, 2014, p. 359.
- [ix] As a matter of after-the-fact military critique, leaders are discredited who purportedly fail to press an opportunity to finish off a weaker force. Some will argue that Meade should have pursued Lee after Gettysburg. See, for instance, Center for Military History, *American Military History*, Washington, D.C.: United States Army, 1989, p. 254, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/AMH/amh-toc.htm>.
- [x] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 267; General Phillip Sheridan, according to Aradmin, "Civil War Cavalry Leaders Tribute Henry Riffe." *America Remembers*, July 26, 2013. [http://www.americaremembers.com/page/2/?taxonomy=product\\_type&term=simple](http://www.americaremembers.com/page/2/?taxonomy=product_type&term=simple)
- [xi] On this point we recommend James G. Reily, *Middle Eastern Geographies of World War I*, Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2010 (monograph). Reily applies the Clausewitzian idea of 'friction' especially well, *ibid*, page 8. [Not ironically cost-distance is also called friction-distance]
- [xii] The map itself was designed and created by Mr. Chuck Bartles.
- [xiii] The reference is to Operation El Dorado Canyon, a raid on Libya in mid-April 1986. On this episode, see, for instance, Joseph T. Stanik, *El Dorado Canyon: Reagan's Undeclared War With Qaddafi*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003; Robert E. Venkus, *Raid On Qaddafi*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- [xiv] On this episode, see, for instance, Jake Tapper, *The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor*, New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2012.
- [xv] As a prompt for understanding risk distance and for the Marine in us all, note Presley O'Bannon's exploits at Tripoli. The US Navy might move thousands of miles within prudent risk, but in order to be strategically effective, force had to be moved a few more miles - on land. On this episode, see, Richard Zacks, *The Pirate Coast: Thomas Jefferson, the First Marines, and the Secret Mission of 1805*, New York: Hyperion, 2005.
- [xvi] None of our assertions are formed from any classified documents or other forms of classified input whatever. The Access Environment map is informed completely by unclassified, publicly available knowledge.
- [xvii] Traditional military geography has concentrated almost exclusively on physical aspects of terrain. See, for instance, John M. Collins, *Military Geography of Professionals and the Public*. Washington D. C.: Potomac Books, 1998. We take the approach that it is only a didactic convenience to distinguish between human and physical geography; and that it is better to imagine geography as an interaction, not a separation of humans from their surroundings. As such, we tend to reject presentations that would divide 'human terrain' from physical terrain. Even in the militarily purest kind of combat, when a unit 'takes a hill', it takes the hill from someone or at someone's expense.
- [xviii] Please excuse our conflation of the electrical term 'impedance' in the layer title, along with its everyday cousin, 'impediment' in the color category subtitles. Webster's Second Collegiate defines impedance as, "1. The total opposition offered by an electric current to the flow of an alternating current of a single frequency: it is a combination of resistance and reactance ...." We do not wish to carry the analogy with electricity any farther. The appeal of the term impedance over impediment is in its denotation of overall blockage to passage presented as a combination of both passive factors and active factors, which is measured according to area and density, and is generally asserted in relation to a single opposing phenomenon. In our map, impedance is synonymous with implied risk (also describable as perils or hazards) and possibly synonymous with other expressions of difficulty or potential cost. 'Access denial', for instance, connotes to us those measures and preparations that might be taken by an armed force to create a greater degree of overall challenge for going into a given space. It would be part of the impedance, other parts including physical geography, population, intangible factors occurring at home, and so on.

## Map Appendix



**Layer I. Impedance:** World territories colored according to overall impediment to the uninvited sending of coercive US military force.

**Red.** *Utmost impediment, mostly intangible.* These territorial spaces present a prohibitive risk to the United States (in terms of US domestic politics and diplomacy) ante the sending of coercive force into their territorial spaces without a genuine invitation. The criteria for this risk status are centered on respect that these countries have generated for their way of life, form of government and positive relationship with the people of the United States.

**Orange.** *Extreme impediment, mostly physical.* These territorial spaces also present a prohibitive risk to the United States for the sending of ostentatious coercive force into their territorial spaces. This risk is not generated because they meet all the sentimental criteria of those countries colored in red, but rather through the presentation of physical impediments, especially armed force available to the government of these countries, which can impose grievous physical costs on a foreign intervening or invading force.

**Violet.** *High impediment, mostly intangible.* These territorial spaces present great risk to the United States for the sending of coercive force into these spaces. They have generated some intangible risk in the form of respect for their way of life, form of government and positive relationship with

the people of the United States (although perhaps not as much as those colored red), or the territorial space or government offers a specific geostrategic or economic advantage or utility especially prized by the US government (perhaps in spite of the country's not generating a high degree of intangible risk).

**Yellow.** *Moderate impediment, mostly physical.* These territorial spaces present considerable risk to the United States for the sending of coercive force because of physical impediments such as size, remoteness, or extreme environmental conditions; or because the armed forces of these *or neighboring countries* can impose substantial physical costs on a foreign intervening or invading force.

**Green.** *Low impediment.* These territorial spaces present the least degree of risk to the United States for the sending of coercive force into them. The lack of risk in terms of US domestic politics or US global diplomacy may reflect their inadequate observance of basic human or civil rights or because their systems are so corrupt as to invalidate any reasonable assertion that the autochthonous governments can represent the people resident within their borders. These countries do not possess armed forces capable of presenting a significant risk to a deployment of US regular formations into their territorial space, nor do their physical geographies present a challenging impediment to military movement. Also, no third government has an alliance, protective or tutorial relationship with these

places such as to present a consequential indirect risk.

**Layer II. Impunity:** World territories marked according to three reasonably envisioned categories of offending behavior.

*Impunity menaced.* 'X' marks. Reasonably, these territorial spaces might encompass sanctuaries for persons who will have created a reasonable fear in many US persons of impending traumatic harm to US persons or to nationals of countries closely allied to the United States.

*Impunity for in flagrante.* Slash lines. Reasonably, these territorial spaces might encompass sanctuaries for persons who will have perpetrated or abetted major, ongoing felonious violations of US law or violations of US citizens' rights (illicit trade, computer hacking, kidnapping, piracy).

*Impunity for immane behavior.* Dot pattern. Reasonably, these territorial spaces might encompass sanctuaries for persons who will have perpetrated (or materially abetted) atrocities.

[Unlike the impedance layer, the impunity layer *does* contemplate and categorize reasons why the US government might determine to send coercive force into a territorial space, but the layer does not presuppose that the US government *will* send coercive force, only that a threshold degree of impunity might reasonably exist in a given territory. The timing of entry, amount or duration of uninvited force that might be sent is also not contemplated.

In effect, perhaps, this layer offers a threshold set of national interests stated in terms of intolerable impunity.]

**Layer III. Invitation and Invasion:** Places to which regular US military forces (an armored brigade) might reasonably be invited correlate geographically with places where an invasion by the regulars of a third party might occur (although to us these invasions seem less likely than the invitations).

*Invitation.* Circles stars. Reasonably, the constituted and internationally recognized governments extant in these places might invite the United States to station heavy military formations within their territories.

*Invasion.* White arrows. It is feared (not unreasonably) by autochthonous analysts that an invasion by a neighboring country (to include the use of heavy military formations) could occur in these or nearby territories.

[The invitation part of this layer contemplates places that might extend to the United States a genuine invitation to canton heavy or conventional US formations (perhaps an armored brigade or equivalent, or more). Such an invitation, we presuppose, would be a result of fears not unreasonably held by a local government, along with the existence of a formal defense treaty between that government and the government of the United States. The invasion part of the layer contemplates locations where we believe that local populations might fear that an invasion of their, or a nearby, territory might be perpetrated and that such a perpetration would reasonably include heavy military formations.]

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# What's in a Name? Clausewitz's Search to Define "Strategy"

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Too often when writers use the word 'strategy' they do not make it particularly clear what they mean by the term. Many use it with abandon, making no effort to define it. Moreover, there is stunning variety in the way the term is utilized, something Lawrence Freedman's *Strategy* makes clear. [i] Colin Gray defines strategy as "the use that is made of force for the ends of policy." [ii] Edward N. Luttwak gives us an appendix of definitions in his *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* that includes this one from General André Beaufre: "The art of the dialectics of wills that use force to resolve their conflict." [iii] An issue for every serious writer on the subject is this: How does one define strategy in a meaningful, useful way? Carl von Clausewitz spent much of his life tackling this dilemma, whether he did it successfully is another matter.

Born in 1780 in Burg, Prussia, by the time he was in his early twenties Clausewitz had already taken up his pen and embarked upon the intellectual journey that eventually produced *On War*. In 1804, having graduated first in his class just the year before from the Berlin School for Young Officers, Clausewitz was serving as the adjutant to Prince August von Preussen, a cousin of Prussia's king. Clausewitz had been reading widely and his study of the military theory of his day produced in him a strong conviction of its collective weakness. He decided to fix this by writing his own book on

the art of war. His effort was largely a response to reading works on military theory such as fellow Prussian Adam Heinrich Dietrich von Bülow's (1757-1807) *The Spirit of the Modern System of War* (1799), as well as his conclusion that many of the authors were "sophists," or, as in the case of Machiavelli, too stuck in the ancient world. The never completed surviving text is published as *Strategie aus dem Jahr 1804*, but the work (in 30 numbered sections) deals with a variety of military issues stretching from tactics, to the defense of mountains, to operations, to strategy, to command. [iv] He will tread much of this same ground in *On War*.

*Strategie* provides our earliest known effort, by Clausewitz, to try and get at what 'strategy' actually means. When examining Clausewitz's quest we are regularly forced to consider his exploration of the terms 'tactics' and 'strategy' together because he often defines them in comparison to one another. In section 20 of *Strategie* he writes: "Tactics is the science of securing a victory through the employment of military forces in battle; strategy is the science of achieving the aim of the war through the linkage of individual battles, or to express it in more elegant terms: tactics is the science of employing military forces in battle; strategy the science of employing the individual battles to further the aim of the war. ... In general, one can say that the idea of battle underpins everything in which military forces are employed, since otherwise one would have no need to employ military forces." [v]

Moreover, in *Strategie* Clausewitz breaks with the thought and practices of Eighteenth Century warfare, a conclusion bolstered by his view on the utility of combat engagements in warfare. Eighteenth Century generals often preferred maneuver, sometimes believing this by itself could win a campaign. The French Revolutionaries increased warfare's pace and intensity. Clausewitz understood this evolution: "In war everything turns on the engagement, which has either actually occurred or is merely intended by one side or even feigned. Engagement is therefore to strategy what hard money is to currency exchange." [vi]

Critically, his discussions of strategy often encompass what today we would call strategy as well as operations, operational art, or campaigns. For example, in section 18, "The Operational Plan," the first sentence reads: "Strategic plans are a thing unique unto themselves." [vii] This is a strand

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in his work that continues into *On War*, and something that everyone reading any of Clausewitz's work should keep in mind.

Clausewitz's struggle to define strategy continued in 1805 in his first significant published work, an anonymous review essay of Bülow's aforementioned *The Spirit of the Modern System of War* in the journal *Neue Bellona*. Clausewitz found little to his taste in Bülow's work and wasted no time showing it, insisting in his second paragraph that Bülow "has given us nothing other than a new title." Clausewitz disliked Bülow's ideas and method, deeming "the author's pretension to a scientific approach laughable." [viii] Clausewitz's attacks echo ideas he developed in *Strategie* and lend weight to the idea that *Strategie* was at least partially a reaction to Bülow's work. Clausewitz took great issue with Bülow's definitions: "Strategy is the science of military movements beyond the enemy's vision, tactics is within it." Clausewitz's dislike of those failing to define the terms of their argument developed early and he found it intellectually lazy: "Behind this expression, just as behind the technical phraseology of strategy in general, there often lurks a shaky, poorly defined and hazy idea." He found Bülow's definitions arbitrary and also reminded readers that the meanings of terms change over time (something to keep in mind when reading Clausewitz's works). Clausewitz offered his own definition: "Strategy is nothing without battle; because battle is the agent which it uses, the means that it applies. Just as tactics is the use of armed forces in battle, strategy is the use of battle,—i.e., the linking of the individual battles to a whole, to the war's ultimate end. All that strategy can do is determine that the individual battles are given at the right place at the right time and under as favorable circumstances as possible." Of course, he insisted, you also want good results from these battles. You cannot achieve your end otherwise, "so you have to know how to fight." [ix]

But Clausewitz also learned from Bülow. Clausewitz's view of war's inherent political nature was influenced by Bülow's writing, which ultimately gives us the oft-quoted "war is the continuation of politics by other means." Even at 25, battle, war, politics, all hang together in Clausewitz's mind—integrated—and shot-through with purpose. [x]

He continued his effort during the years 1809-1812 to precisely define both "tactics" and "strategy," tackling this in a number of different texts. In an addition he made to his *Strategie* in 1809, Clausewitz writes: "Strategy will furthermore concern itself with the combinations of individual engagements in furtherance of the war's aim. It will seek to establish engagements at the most decisive points, and to secure victory as much as possible by means of the massing of military forces, and in this way also to make the most advantageous use of the military forces. It will determine and select intermediate goals, by means of which tactical success will link up with the war's aim, namely the destruction of enemy military forces, the conquest of his provinces, etc." [xi] He then tries to tie the two concepts together: "Tactics organizes the army in combat [in] such a way as to employ it appropriately for the purpose of obtaining a victory, while strategy does the same thing in war in order to make the best use of the individual engagements." [xii]

From 1810-1812, one of Clausewitz's duties was teaching

at Berlin's General War School, the future War College. In his lectures on 'Little War,' or 'Partisan War,' Clausewitz again defines strategy in relation to tactics. Tactics, he insists "comprises the teachings of the use of command of the **armed forces in battle**; strategy comprises the teachings of the employment and utilization of **the battle**." He adds in his notes that "We believe, therefore, that the battle is to war what hard cash is for the general trade," and goes on to insist that "strategy makes use of the battle as a means to reach its purpose." He added an important distinction: "To determine, that means to define, strategy according to its means instead of its purposes is appropriate because the means (that is the battle), of which it makes use, are singular and cannot be dismissed without destroying the concept of war itself. Potential purposes, by contrast, are manifold and cannot be exhausted." [xiii]

In an 1811 letter to his mentor August Neidhardt von Gneisenau, one in which he builds upon concepts presented in his lectures on "Little War" and returns to in *On War*, Clausewitz writes that "Tactics is the theory of the use of armed forces in battle." But he says that since this is generally agreed upon, "the task now is for strategy to be *defined* such that the actual art of war is precisely described by both." The problem though was clarifying what one meant by "the art of war." To Clausewitz, in 1811 at least, "the art of war is the use of the trained armed forces for the purpose of war." It did not include the physical preparations leading up to this. He built on this by breaking with the latter Eighteenth Century view of the decisive battle deciding the conflict's outcome by describing what today we would define as operational warfare: "If I now consider that each war is not a single uninterrupted battle, but rather is composed of multiple battles separated by time and place, and then I see not one *demonstration*, they are all battle *combinations*." But battle still mattered: "Like any other use of the armed forces, the idea of a battle is in its essence that one would otherwise not have any need of armed forces. For me this is of the greatest clarity and obviousness." He goes on to insist that: "Battle is the money and the goods, strategy is the exchange; only by these does this obtain importance. He who squanders the fortune of the Lord (he who does not know how to fight well), he might as well give up the exchange entirely." [xiv]

He continued his discussion of tactics and strategy in early 1812 in what is generally referred to as his "Political Declaration" (*Bekennnisdenkschrift*), something famously penned before leaving Prussia to serve in the Russian army. This exposition is succinct and more exacting, his concepts clearer: "Since war is no longer decided by a single battle as in barbarous nations, the Art of War is divided into two parts distinguished from one another by purpose and means. The first is the art of fighting. (Tactics). The second part of the Art is to combine several individual battles into a whole (for the purpose of the campaign, the war). (Strategy). The distinction between offensive and defensive war applies to both elements, and extends even into politics. The defense can thus be tactical, strategic, political." [xv] 'Strategy,' as usual in Clausewitz's writing, combines what today we classify as both the operational (campaign) and strategic realms. Moreover, his opening statement that "war is no longer decided by a single battle" is a clear indication of his recognition of the nature of war in what we have come to define as the modern era.

He treads some of the same ground yet again in two other extensive manuscripts composed from 1809-1812. They form part of the foundation of *On War* and show strong steps toward Clausewitz resolving what he saw as one of the problems with writing about military theory: having a coherent methodology.[xvi] The first of these two pieces begins by establishing the grounds of the discussion, which means—again—defining the differences between tactics and strategy. He goes on to argue the need for a new work on theory because of the confusion of terms and the lack of quality works on military history. He uses historical examples in his writing—his now standard approach—and is very critical of the existing military literature. He believes that part of its problem is that the relevant theory “is still in its infancy” and that as a result the excesses and quirky ideas in the current works should be considered “a kind of childhood disease.”[xvii]

The second major draft has this interesting passage: “The name, the scope, and the division of an art will be determined by its subject. The subject of the art of war is war. War is the manifest use of violence against others in order to force them to conform to our will, in other words it is the use the available means applied to the aim of the war. The theory of the art of war is the science of the use of available means for the aim of the war.”[xviii] War is the means to achieving ends. War is for a political purpose. War is to force the enemy to do our will. He has already laid many of the theoretical underpinnings of *On War*.

In mid-April 1812 Clausewitz was in Frankenstein, Prussia (now Żąbkowice Śląskie, Poland). While waiting for some much-needed money to arrive, he hurriedly scribbled his most important literary achievement up to this point: a manuscript meant for his student the Prussian Crown Prince. He told the prince he hoped to leave the young man some solid advice for when he was a soldier and told his wife Marie that he hoped the work “breathed a spark” into the young man’s soul.[xix] The work has come down to us as a little book called—in English—*Principles of War*. [xx] The work first appeared as an appendix to *On War*, but it really should be called “The Most Important Principles of the Conduct of War, to Supplement my Lessons to His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince.” A Russian translation appeared in 1888, and Hans Gatzke’s well-known English version appeared in 1942 in the midst of the Second World War.[xxi] Clausewitz said its contents were “not so much to give complete instruction to Your Royal Highness,” but rather that they would “stimulate and serve as a guide for your own reflection.”[xxii]

This book, like much of his earlier work, separates the study of war into tactics and strategy. He never defines tactics here, but he does define strategy: “the combination of individual engagements to attain the goal of the campaign or the war.” Again, Clausewitz’s definition encompasses what today we could call the operational realm, which is related to “the goal of the campaign,” as well as what we would call the strategic, which he would identify as the “goal of the...war.”[xxiii] Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini’s later nutshell definition doesn’t fall far from Clausewitz’s: “Strategy is the art of making war upon the map, and comprehends the whole theater of operations.” But Jomini’s more extended definition has 13 points, a survey touching on what today we call the strategic realm but dwelling largely upon the operational (or campaign) level

of war.[xxiv]

In the strategy section of his book for the Crown Prince, Clausewitz lays out three “General Principles” for action foreshadowing advice in *On War* on how to attack enemy “centers of gravity.” He advises attacking the army and public opinion, as well as the enemy’s material resources, which leads to attacking cities, fortresses, and such. He argues public opinion is injured by military victories and seizure of the enemy’s capital. He stresses acting with great energy, the importance of the “moral impression” resulting from your actions (a hint of the “moral forces” of *On War*), concentration, the criticality of time (never waste it), surprise (it “plays a much greater role in strategy than in tactics”—something, we will see, also repeated in *On War*), and the importance of pursuing an enemy defeated in battle.[xxv]

Clausewitz’s quest went on. In his history of the 1814 campaign in France written (probably) in the early 1820s, he doesn’t provide as solid a definition of strategy as usual, calling it “the art of war.” But in this text he does give us his belief that the war (of which he was a veteran) provided great examples to illustrate strategic thinking (but one must again keep in mind here that his definition of strategy encompasses what today we would call operations—campaigns—as well as strategy). Among these were the manner in which the diplomatic and political machinations impact the strategy and operations of both sides, even acting as brakes upon them and contributing to the “complete manifestation of the nature and purpose” of the war. The large forces involved, the distinct offensive and defensive phases, how events forced the diversion of forces and the related maneuvering, the use by one side or the other of operational bases, key lines of communication, and “mass mobilization,” and because “the moral factors that play such an important role in all wars are here clearly enunciated,” something fed by the fact that “the commanders and armies are familiar to each other in their character and essence such that this can justifiably be taken into account in the calculations. In most cases, however, at the beginning of wars these present a rather undefined and uncertain aspect.”[xxvi] To the critic of Clausewitz, who believes he is trying to lay down rules, he might offer the following defense from his work on 1814: “We are a long way from considering our principles regarding the art of war (strategy) as absolute truth and equally the result that arises from one such example.”[xxvii]

In 1816 Clausewitz began writing *On War*, which appeared in print after his 1831 death. His effort to define strategy culminates in this work and he tackles the old problem of definition in a similar manner. He writes: “tactics teaches *the use of armed forces in the engagement*; strategy, *the use of engagements for the object of the war*.”[xxviii] This is not far from what he wrote in *Strategie* in 1804. “Tactics,” he also said, “are chiefly based on fire power.”[xxix] Clausewitz believes that “Strategy is harder than tactics because you have more time to act and thus more time to doubt. Also, in tactics you can see what is going on, in strategy you have to guess.”[xxx]

What is in some ways more interesting, and arguably more useful to the modern reader, is his discussion of the task of the ‘strategist’: He writes that “strategy is the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war. The strategist must therefore define an aim for the entire operational side of

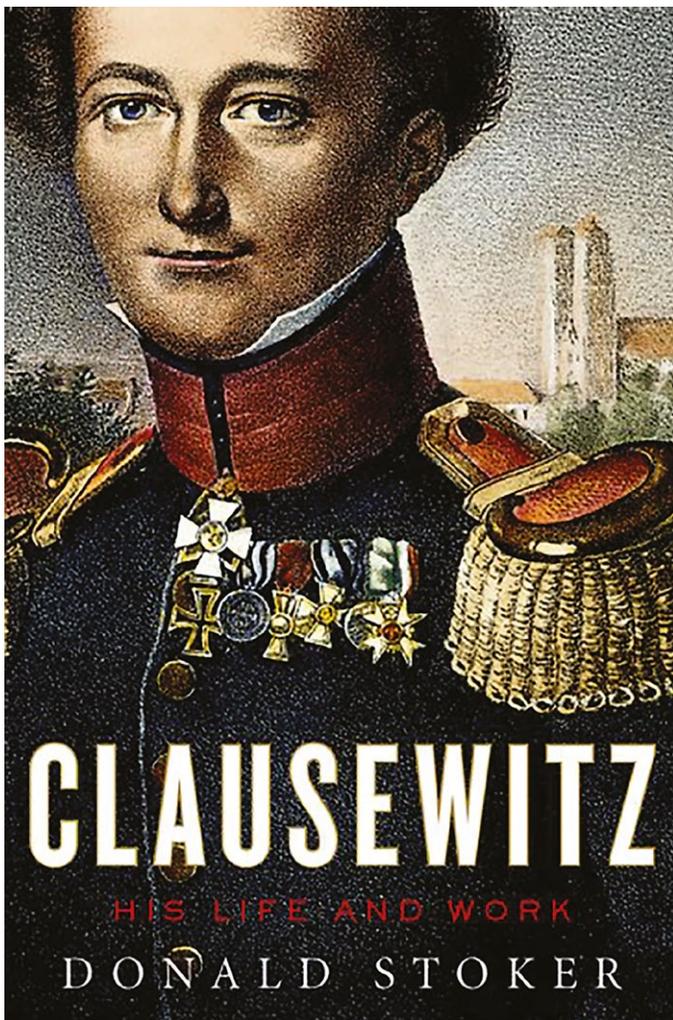
the war that will be in accordance with its purpose. In other words, he will draft the plan of the war, and the aim will determine the series of actions intended to achieve it: he will, in fact, shape the individual campaigns and, within these, decide on the individual engagements."<sup>[xxxi]</sup> Obviously, in many other places in *On War* Clausewitz goes on to discuss elements of strategy and many related factors, but first he had to work out the foundations for his discussion in his own mind.

Clausewitz's greatest legacy is as a military theorist, and arguably, at least for now, he is the most influential one. "*On War* remains the greatest work on its subject yet written," historian Daniel Moran writes. But importantly, Moran also

notes that "Its subject, however, is war, not strategy as such."<sup>[xxxii]</sup> This is a key distinction. Clausewitz's work is often cherry-picked to teach strategy (I know, I do it all the time), but Clausewitz intended it as for more than that. Like so many other serious theorists Clausewitz struggled to build a clear, sensible foundation that would stand the test of time. But did he do this successfully in regard to defining strategy as his definition clearly encompasses what today we would term both the strategic and operational realm? That is something for the reader to consider. But we will add that this problem does not in itself make what Clausewitz said incorrect or irrelevant, but it does force us to place it in the context of his times, and do the necessary intellectual translation to our own.

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# Haunted by the Preventive War Paradox

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During a recent hearing in the U.S. Senate Armed Services committee, Senator Lindsey Graham asked American military leaders to characterize the North Korean threat and he pressed them on the options available to respond to its growing nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. According to General Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of American forces in Korea, "all of these things, in about five or six years, are going to be a formidable problem." Admiral Harry Harris, the commander of U.S. Pacific Command, went further, agreeing with Senator Graham that military strikes were indeed an option to blunt North Korea's ballistic missile development. This was not the first time American officials talked about this particular problem in these terms.

In 1994, Secretary of Defense William Perry urged President Clinton to order airstrikes against North Korea's nuclear facilities at Yongbyon in response to its threatened withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Perry justified this bold recommendation with a warning: "whatever dangers there are in [the military attack option]", he argued, "these dangers are going to be compounded two to three years from now when...they're producing bombs at the rate of a dozen a year." [i] In 2006, Perry and his former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Ashton Carter (now Secretary of Defense under President Obama), spoke out again on the subject. In co-authored opinion pieces published in the *Washington Post* and *Time* magazine, they called on President Bush to launch military strikes "to destroy [North Korea's] missiles at their test sites."

While the security challenges posed by North Korea present their own distinctive features, when set in a broader historical

perspective there is nothing new in the strategic perspective embedded within these specific policy statements. The North Korean nuclear question merely illustrates the most recent flare up of the preventive war theory. In simple terms, the objective of a preventive attack is to seize the initiative and militarily beat back the rising power of a rival. This is not about defense against actual aggression, or even a first strike to preempt an adversary's imminent attack. It is the choice to strike a rival as it grows stronger, to avoid the mere possibility that it might one day be strong enough to pose a great danger, even though the future remains inherently uncertain.

The impulse to launch preventive attacks reaches back at least to the Peloponnesian War among the Greek city-states 2,500 years ago. Repeatedly, through history we find three key ingredients stirring a temptation to fight: shifting power, fear of the future, and strong voices warning of the terrible fate that lies ahead unless the growing threat is neutralized with military action.

Indeed, the allure of preventive attack remains vibrant in the United States. During a September 2015 speech at the Brookings Institute, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton drew from the same strategic logic used by Secretary Perry to address the potential threat from a different source. She proclaimed that as president "I will not hesitate to use military force if Iran attempts to pursue a nuclear weapon." [ii] Secretary Clinton's blunt language on Iran, and the broader reaction to her declaration, reveals the reflexive confidence reserved for the preventive war option in American security policy. While Clinton's assertion was widely covered in the press, the idea itself was largely met with collective silence from other political leaders and virtually ignored by opinion shapers and media commentators. An attack against North Korea or Iran would constitute one of the most serious initiatives imaginable in contemporary American foreign policy. Yet there was no debate over the merits of preventive attack against Iran, nor discussion of its viability as a solution to the security problems driving American fears.

The objective of this article is to jump into the vacuum that currently surrounds the question of preventive war to offer some observations that should inform deliberations over how to deal with the power-shift problem. The goal is twofold: first, it will outline how the central logic of preventive war rests on stunted strategic grounds, since it fails to recognize

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the difference between operational military effects and the strategic political effects that should guide how one evaluates the use of military force. Second, it will introduce a paradox through which operational battlefield success might actually produce strategic failure by undermining rather than bolstering the attacker's security. To help make these points, the article turns to an iconic figure in the history of preventive war—German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck—the most widely cited leader to weigh in on this question and think in a truly strategic way about its value and drawbacks. To set the stage for Bismarck's strategic assessment of preventive war and how it affected German decision making in the late 19th century, the next section will explain the paradox of preventive war as a security concept.

### The Preventive War Paradox

It takes little imagination to conjure up scenarios in which a rival translates increasing military capabilities into increasingly aggressive behavior. The more time goes by and the stronger the rival grows, the more dangerous the future appears. The implications of this fear of the future are immense: state leaders face a potent incentive to take action while they still enjoy a window of opportunity. In most cases through history we find some form of counter-balancing against rising power: declining states buy more weapons, conscript more soldiers, invest in more advanced military technologies, stage military exercises to improve combat readiness, or join forces with new allies. Each of these options is motivated by the same goal, to reverse the declining state's slide and avoid a future of increasing peril.

In some cases we find states taking this impulse to its logical extreme. Why merely *balance* when you can *dominate*? Instead of just racing ahead to outpace a rival's growth by amassing your own physical power, why not provoke a fight or launch an attack to destroy physically those growing military capabilities that haunt one's vision of the future? When balancing, one lives with the danger. One's safety rests precariously on one's rival's decisions, ambitions, the risks it is willing to endure, and ultimately on one's ability to fight and defend if the rival lashes out. Preventive war promises *deliverance* from that danger. Its allure comes from the hope that by initiating an attack—earlier rather than later in the power shift—it will be possible to destroy or degrade the target state's military capabilities so severely that this challenger no longer poses a threat.

The strategic premise behind preventive war is therefore simple, security "grows out of the barrel of a gun," echoing Mao's famous aphorism on power. In other words, the assumption is that there is a straight line linking material power and security; the more relative power a state has, the more security it enjoys. In the field of international relations there is nothing inherently controversial about this claim. In fact, the relationship between power and security is the starting point for most assessments of international politics.

Drawing on this assumption, observers tend to evaluate the strategic viability of the preventive war option from a narrow operational military perspective. That is, success or failure of preventive war is measured by target destruction, terrain seized, or an army defeated in the field, relative to the costs

of achieving these military effects. Which state is most likely to stand victorious on the battlefield when the smoke clears? Will the state that pulls the preventive war trigger be able to deliver a sufficiently crushing blow to free itself from its rival's rising power? Or is it taking a foolish gamble that could just as easily lead to operational failure?

While an important part of the calculus, this approach leaves our evaluation of the strategic implications of preventive war grossly incomplete. As the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz pointed out in the early 19th century, purely military criteria ignores the central *strategic* purpose of war. War is not about winning battlefield victories. War is about the political objectives that states seek through military means and—as many leaders in history have painfully discovered—brilliant operational success on the battlefield will not automatically produce the strategic political outcomes they desired. According to Clausewitz, "there can be no question of a purely military evaluation of a great strategic issue, nor of a purely military scheme to solve it." [iii] Echoing Clausewitz, B.H. Liddell Hart observed that the "objective in war is a better state of peace," and Colin Gray asserts warfare is about the "character of the subsequent peace" it produces. [iv]

From this strategic vantage point one must then ask, what "better state of peace" is preventive war meant to serve? The operational objective of any preventive war would therefore be to deliver a physical blow against a rising adversary sufficient enough to weaken its military capabilities to some degree. But even if preventive war were to produce this immediate military effect, Clausewitz would insist on evaluating whether it had the strategic effect desired: did it produce a more secure future? While preventive attack is meant to eliminate the threat posed by a rival's rising power, Clausewitz warned that "in war the result is never final...The defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date." [v]

This is the perspective Otto von Bismarck brought to the problem of shifting power. He looked beyond the prospects of victory on the battlefield to consider the likely political effects of preventive war on Germany's security. He was pessimistic because he recognized that security is not merely a function of the distribution of power, it is a function of the political relationships among states that shape whether they pose a threat to each other, how they perceive the severity of these threats, and the likelihood of armed conflict among them.

Advocates of preventive war have universally claimed self-defense as their motivation. Yet by definition, it is an act of *war initiation* against another state in the absence of any immediate threat or demand for urgent self-defense measures. This makes preventive war radically different from alliance formation and arms-racing. While one may win victory on the battlefield or destroy a rival's key power assets through preventive war, one might also sow dragons teeth that yield a political order stewing with hostility, one that is ripe for even greater violent challenges. Unless it leads to the complete annihilation of the adversary state, preventive attack will likely intensify security competition, push adversaries to redouble their efforts to recover and advance their military capabilities, entrench enduring rivalries, and generate passionate demands for revenge. In time, a preventative attack could

make an even more violent armed conflict more likely than it otherwise would have.

### Bismarck on Preventive War

Otto von Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor of Prussia and Imperial Germany from 1862 to 1890, is the most widely cited historical figure on the question of preventive war. His opposition to this strategic option is routinely highlighted in security studies literature, biographies, histories of great power politics, and by commentators weighing in on contemporary policy problems. His opinions were often delivered through colorful metaphors that warned against breaking eggs “out of which very dangerous chickens might hatch,” or that pointed to the absurdity of “committing suicide for fear of death.”

It was not the risks of war *per se* that troubled Chancellor Bismarck. This is clear from his enthusiastic embrace of war in 1864 against Denmark, in 1866 against Austria, and in 1870 against France to serve his most cherished political goal: unification of the Germanic states under Prussian leadership. Bismarck once declared that “to my shame I have to confess that I have never read Clausewitz.” [vi] Nonetheless, it is perfectly clear that he shared his fellow Prussian’s most important views on the relationship between war and the political objectives of the state. Success in war cannot be measured by the amount of physical destruction inflicted on the adversary or by tallying the relative costs suffered by each of the combatants. The success or failure of war can only be judged by its political effects, the character of the peace left in its wake. [vii]

And for this reason, Bismarck stood virtually alone in the German government, successfully holding the line in a series of policy battles against well-positioned rivals like General Helmut von Moltke, chief of the German General Staff, and General Alfred von Waldersee, Moltke’s deputy and later successor, who pushed the logic of preventive war repeatedly as the solution to a shifting threat environment. But for the Iron Chancellor, it was the political character of *preventive* war specifically that was troubling.

In the decades that followed unification in 1871, we find an intense preventive war temptation at work within the German government during two crisis periods: in 1875 in response to French economic and military recovery from its devastating defeat by German forces a few years earlier, and between 1886 and 1888 targeting both France and Russia. In each of these crises, Bismarck agreed with the champions of preventive war that Germany risked increasing vulnerability over time as its relative power slipped. He too was afraid of hostile French and Russian intentions in the years to come, and he never questioned the General Staff’s optimistic calculations of Germany’s military advantages in a near-term fight.

Even so, Bismarck refused to sanction war under these allegedly favorable conditions. In his counterintuitive reasoning, Bismarck was afraid of the *costs of victory* in the preventive wars that German military leaders were confidently advocating. Rather than eliminating the security problems Germany faced, preventive war would undermine its security by generating an even greater adverse power

shift and magnifying the level of hostility and likelihood of aggression Germany would face in the future.

For Bismarck, this assessment crystalized during the “War-in-Sight” crisis of 1875. By 1873, Bismarck and his colleagues were watching France’s rapid recovery with growing alarm. Its economy had rebounded from the war with remarkable speed, allowing France to pay off its heavy war indemnity ahead of schedule. An even more alarming indicator of French recovery was a bill working its way through parliament that would reorganize its army by adding an extra battalion to each regiment. General Moltke’s assessment was that reorganization would quickly add 144,000 soldiers to the French army’s ranks, it would allow France to field 19 army corps compared to Germany’s 18 corps, and each French corps would have eight more battalions than Germany’s. [viii]

In the early months of 1875, the preventive war temptation that had simmered during the previous year intensified. In February, the German government learned that France was pursuing the purchase of 10,000 saddle horses to equip its growing military. To Bismarck, this “bears the stamp of a preparation for war,” [ix] and he ordered an embargo on German horses destined for France. In April and May, European newspapers and diplomats buzzed about agitation at the highest levels of the German government over the advantages of launching a preventive war to deal with this problem. On April 8, a story in the Berlin newspaper *Die Post* laid out the dangers of rising French power and its hostile intent, then suggested that a German preventive attack might be the necessary response. General Moltke concluded that France would be ready for a war of revenge by 1877, a war he estimated would cost the lives of an additional 100,000 German soldiers compared to a fight in the near term. [x] With these calculations in mind, General Moltke argued “urgently and insistently” in favor of preventive war in discussions with the Kaiser and the Chancellor. [xi]

The European reaction to this drum beat of preventive war cemented Bismarck’s opposition to this security option for the rest of his career. The British government—from Queen Victoria on down—heaped criticism on every hint of the preventive war temptation emerging from Germany and Bismarck was left in no doubt about the damaging political effects an preventive war would generate. Queen Victoria worried that Chancellor Bismarck was becoming “so overbearing, violent, grasping and unprincipled... *all* agreed that he was becoming like the first Napoleon whom Europe had to join in putting down.” [xii] Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli concurred: “Bismarck is really another old Bonaparte again, and he must be bridled.” On May 6, Disraeli directed Lord Derby, his foreign secretary, to explore the prospects of an alliance with Russia, and perhaps Austria and Italy, that could keep German ambitions contained. [xiii]

Bismarck’s memoirs frame the security problem this way: other states, he explained, “tolerate[d] the new development of German power, and... regard [it] with a benevolent eye,” particularly “after the astonishing proofs of the nation’s military strength” in the earlier wars, only because of the subsequent “peaceful character of German policy.” War in 1875, “which could have had no other motive than preventing France from recovering her breath and her strength,” would have destroyed this tolerance for Germany’s new position. He

continued:

A war of this kind could not, in my opinion, have led to permanently tenable conditions in Europe, but might have brought about an agreement between Russia, Austria, and England, based upon mistrust of us, and leading eventually to active proceedings against the new and unconsolidated empire...Europe would have seen in our proceedings a misuse of our newly acquired power; and the hand of everyone...would have been permanently raised against Germany, or at any rate been ready to draw the sword.[xiv]

In 1887, when the fear of approaching war once again swept across Europe, Russia became the most serious target of preventive war agitation. For a growing number of senior officials, in the military and the foreign ministry alike, a two-front war against a Russian-French alliance no longer seemed abstract or avoidable. In an eerie preview of the strategic worldview that underpinned the march to war in 1914, those who were caught up in this fear of inevitabilities sought relief through a preventive showdown with Russia.

To Bismarck, his colleagues' fear of a coming war was not groundless or overblown. From 1886 to 1888 Bismarck was distressed by turbulence in French domestic politics and a serious spike in revanchist agitation that made the threat of war more palpable than at any other time since 1871. He also could not ignore a simultaneous surge of anti-German sentiment in Russia, or the fact that a number of well-placed Russians were growing more interested in closer relations with France. Perhaps Bismarck was overstating the threat, but he put it bluntly to Lord Salisbury: "Given this state of affairs, we must regard as permanent the danger that our peace will be disturbed by France and Russia." [xv] The question German leaders debated in this period was not whether the security situation was becoming more dangerous—all agreed that it was. The debate was over what should be done in response.

For a remarkably large number of influential officials, the answer was obvious: preventive war against Russia. It was a conclusion grounded in widespread acceptance of the inevitability of conflict and calculations that Germany's relative battlefield capabilities were peaking in 1888 with the completion of rearmament that included repeating rifles for the infantry, new artillery, high explosive shells and shrapnel ammunition. This window of opportunity, however, was expected to close over the next several years. [xvi]

Friedrich von Holstein, an influential political counselor in the foreign ministry, observed in a diary entry from March 1888, "the generals...think time is running against us, that 1889 will be a particularly unfavorable year, and that we ought not to allow certain [Russian] military preparations along our frontier or the Galatian frontier." [xvii] Two months earlier, Prince William, soon to be Kaiser, felt the same pressure imposed by time and shifting power; as he put it to Holstein, "The Chancellor...doesn't want another war...I shall have to pay the interest on this delay later on." [xviii] As early as 1885, General Alfred von Waldersee, Moltke's deputy and eventual successor as chief of the General Staff, had dismissed Bismarck's confidence in a political solution to Germany's vulnerability within Europe; for Waldersee, security would only be found "in a Great War in which we lastingly cripple an

opponent, France or Russia." [xix]

In November 1887, Moltke and Waldersee together called explicitly for preventive attack against Russia during the coming winter. In a memo written for the emperor, the military leaders showcased improvements in the Russian army since its war with the Ottoman Empire a decade earlier and continuing Russian work on fortifications and railroads in Poland. According to the memo, "there could be *no doubt* that Russia is arming for immediate war and is preparing the deployment of her army by a gradual or rather by a spasmodic process of mobilization." In his cover letter to Bismarck, General Moltke argued that "only if we take the aggressive in company with Austria and at an early date will our chances be favorable." [xx] In early December, Germany's ambassador to Austria reported that Waldersee was secretly in Vienna advocating for war with Russia, [xxi] and just days later he and Moltke met with the Kaiser, without Bismarck present, to push the idea of war. [xxii] In the summer of 1888, General Waldersee, now chief of staff, was still assuring Bismarck that Germany could successfully fight both France and Russia. [xxiii]

Despite this uncompromising warning about the threat and confident predictions that they could still beat the Russians in the field, Bismarck's response was forceful and unwavering: there would be absolutely no German preventive attack against Russia. If Austria launched an offensive on its own initiative, Germany would leave Austria to meet its fate.

For Bismarck, this was the only question that mattered: even if the German army beat its rivals on the battlefield, would preventive war actually solve Germany's security dilemma? He believed the answer was clear: absolutely not. Even in military victory, Germany would lose strategically. "Holy Russia," he reminded the Reichstag, "will be filled with indignation at the attack. France will glisten with weapons to the Pyrenees. The same thing will happen everywhere." [xxiv] He made this point fervently to Crown Prince William in the spring of 1888, just weeks before his father, Kaiser Frederick III, died and William inherited the throne. "Even after a successful war Germany would *gain nothing*, for Russia would be filled with hatred and desire for revenge, and Germany would be in a *hopeless position* between two defeated states of great potential military strength." [xxv]

## An Enduring Dilemma

This article began by pointing to the enduring allure of preventive attack among American leaders worried about the evolving threat posed by North Korea and Iran. When set alongside the security problems Bismarck faced, the differences between these two time periods are immanently clear: the distribution of power, the character of the states, and the technological details of warfare create profoundly different security environments for early 21st century America and late 19th century Germany. It is also clear that the preventive war paradox would not play out for the United States in the same way it could have for Germany. It is important to recognize, however, that the United States is not immune from the basic dynamics of this security paradox. Those tempted by the promise of preventive war to neutralize shifting threats should not ignore the warnings embedded

within the preventive war temptation's cautionary twin.

Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is perhaps the most forthright public official to weigh in on the strategic logic of preventive war in decades. He frequently went on record to suggest that he actively opposed a preventive attack against Iran's nuclear infrastructure because it would set back Iran's program by no more than one to two years. But most important, Gates recognized its paradoxical effects, worrying that a preventive attack would give Iran an incentive it might not otherwise have to produce nuclear weapons. In a private memorandum for President Bush in 2007 he argued that an American or Israeli attack would "guarantee that the Iranians

will develop nuclear weapons, and seek revenge." [xxvi]

Some might argue that we should avoid a public discussion of the paradox altogether, because the threat of an American attack might serve as a deterrent and prevent Iran from reneging on the nuclear control agreement reached in July 2015. Ignoring the preventive war paradox, however, will not make the potential dangers of this dilemma disappear. It is better to think through the implications of this problem and what it means for the strategic utility of preventive attack as the means to address these modern challenges, guided by a blunt appreciation of how this option might end up undermining American security.

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# Feeding Chaos: Why Air Campaigns Didn't Defeat the FARC and Won't Defeat ISIL

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In a nation torn apart by internal strife and rivalries for power, a terrorist organization emerged in the ungoverned spaces, bent on imposing its extreme ideology on the populace. This group laid out a multi-year plan to take the capital of the country, expand its territory, and recruit tens of thousands of fighters to its banner. In areas where it held power, this organization became the *de facto* government, dispensing social services and security to the occupied population. Coupled with a robust illicit funding stream, the organization grew and grew in power until it commanded the attention of major western powers and touched off an international struggle to defeat it. While this description could easily apply to the most notorious terrorist organization of today, the Islamic State (ISIL), it does not. Instead, this is a description of the origins of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia, abbreviated FARC in Spanish, a 50-year-old terrorist organization. While not perfect mirrors of one another, understanding the rise and endurance of the FARC, even in the face of massive intervention in Colombia by the United States, sheds useful light on potential ways forward in the struggle against ISIL. Central to this understanding will be the nexus of ungoverned space, radical ideology, and access to illicit funding key to the survival of both the FARC and ISIL. In light of this, efforts to defeat ISIL cannot only consist of kinetic strikes against fighters and funding sources, but must also recognize that separating the group from its funding sources means separating ISIL from the population it oppresses.

Civil wars are exacerbated and prolonged by the presence of lootable wealth. This wealth can take many forms, from so-called blood diamonds to drugs to oil. The fundamental characteristics for lootable wealth are the portability of the commodity and the existence of an unregulated, or "black", market for the goods. Furthermore, the commodity is generally lootable when terrorists or other non-state actors can use relatively simple means to extract the resource from the surrounding environment.[i] In the case of diamonds, for example, the ability to extract the stones by simple means and then smuggle them across borders to waiting markets directly affected their influence on civil wars. In situations where complicated mining machinery or specialized expertise was required to extract diamonds, they played a smaller role in prolonging conflicts. Interestingly, in the case of secondary, or alluvial, diamonds, widespread smuggling routes and markets often existed prior to the outbreak of conflict.[ii] Insurgent or terrorist organizations then co-opted these networks to funnel lootable wealth out of the conflict zone. In both Syria and Colombia, these pre-existing smuggling routes and robust unofficial economic activity were instrumental in the genesis of both the FARC and ISIL. The presence of these mobile, valuable goods created an opportunity for terrorist and insurgent organizations to finance their operations while also creating business relationships with smuggling networks able to move guns and currency in and out of the conflict zone.

In the case of the FARC, the primary lootable good was, of course, drugs. Just as in the example of diamond-fueled conflicts in Africa, the presence of cocaine cultivation in Colombia provided vast amounts of funding to the FARC and enabled its rapid growth. Gauging this growth, the FARC consisted of 802 fighters across nine fronts in 1978. By the 1990s, this group was 18,000 fighters strong and held territory exceeding 42,000 square miles in size. This growth was the result of the \$250 to \$400 million annually generated by the FARC's drug trafficking network.[iii] Just as important, the nature of the drug trade lent itself to the growth of the FARC as a pseudo-state in the jungles of Colombia. Many units within the FARC were content to leave the cultivation and purification of cocaine and its precursors to the farmers and residents of the territory it occupied. Instead, the FARC levied a series of taxes on these groups, from drug protection fees to an outright "war tax" to defray the costs of the struggle against the central government.[iv] This exchange provided

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the vestiges of statehood to the FARC as it extracted funds from the population in return for rudimentary social services, security and a type of trade authority in this case. Similarly to the taxation policies of the FARC, ISIL generates a significant amount of its wealth through taxation of the population under its control. In fact, some estimates place the revenue generated through taxation as a greater source of funds than illicit oil sales. The Geneva Centre for Security policy estimates that ISIL generates \$360 million a year in taxation ranging from business and income taxes to personal "protection" taxes levied against Christians.

Additionally, by predominately taxing the drug trade instead of directly engaging in it, the FARC also gained a valuable propaganda tool when the governments of Colombia and the United States started to directly attack the coca plant through aerial fumigation. Many of the coca growers in Colombia were small farmers, rather than drug lords, and grew coca to supplement their meager incomes. These coca eradication tactics threatened the livelihood and even the health of many of these small farmers and drove them to the FARC for protection.[v] This had the dual effect of both legitimizing the FARC as a source of security for local peasants as well as providing an effective recruiting narrative for the organization. It remains to be seen if people living under ISIL control will view ISIL as a protective force against western air attacks that strike at oil production infrastructure.

In taking oil rich regions of Syria and Iraq, ISIL gained control of an oil industry complete from extraction to refinery. By some estimates, this production system provides ISIL with between \$1 million and \$2 million a day in profit.[vi] This enterprise also frees ISIL from the need for external state support as, between other criminal activities and oil smuggling, ISIL generates all the income it needs to fund its operations.[vii] There is an interesting parallel here to the experience of the FARC in the 1990s. The FARC, ostensibly a communist guerrilla organization, received initial support from the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, but rapidly progressed to an independently funded organization with the rise of its drug trafficking enterprise.[viii] This allowed the FARC to survive the fall of the Soviet Union and continue to operate decades after its initial financial benefactor ceased to exist. The organic funding sources of ISIL insulate it in a similar fashion, particularly in comparison to other Islamist groups such as Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda, highly dependent on fundraising from external donors, found itself vulnerable to financial sanctions aimed at restricting transfers of funds aimed at supporting the organization.[ix] ISIL, however, with its access to self-generated income from smuggling and criminal activity, is immune to many of these tactics. As in the case of the FARC, self-generated income streams effectively inoculates these organizations from the effects of many financial sanctions.

The influence of lootable wealth on organizational cohesion is also apparent in examining the genesis of the FARC. In the 1970s, the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the government of Colombia. This also marked the end of financial aid to the FARC from the Soviet government.[x] As a result, the FARC experienced a number of setbacks into the 1980s as pro-government paramilitary groups scored a number of victories. The FARC, desperate for funding, attempted to extort funds from the Medellin cartel, a growing cocaine trafficking organization. This backfired, however,

as Pablo Escobar, the cartel's leader, chose to use his own paramilitary forces to fight the FARC rather than pay taxes.[xi] The combined pressure of government forces and the Medellin cartel alongside difficulties in securing funding left the FARC limited in its ability to grow. However, in the early 1990s, the FARC took advantage of a Colombian offensive against Escobar and successful efforts by the American government to dismantle the Medellin cartel. The FARC pushed back into the Middle Magdalena Valley while the fight against the Medellin cartel occupied Colombian forces elsewhere and the Cali cartel rose to take the place of the defeated Medellin cartel.[xii] By the early 1990s, the FARC had recovered significant amounts of lost terrain. More importantly to the FARC, the Cali cartel approached the drug trade in a far more low profile way than the Medellin cartel and agreed to pay taxes to the FARC. With renewed funding and the removal of one of its chief competitors, the FARC mushroomed in size and power, doubling its available combat forces to 7,000 fighters from 1986 to 1995.[xiii]

The long-term influence of drug money influenced the cohesion of the FARC. By the late 1990s, the FARC chose to eliminate many of the middlemen involved in the drug trade and started collecting the basic coca paste precursor to cocaine directly from the farmers.[xiv] This marked a shift from simply exacting taxes and protection fees from the drug cartels to becoming directly involved in trafficking. This direct involvement boosted profit margins, further feeding the success of the organization. It is not coincidental that the two largest coca-producing areas under FARC control, Caqueta and Putumayo, were also the sites of the largest battlefield successes the FARC saw against the Colombian army.[xv] Drug money appeared to have a direct link to combat effectiveness. Yet, the FARC struggled with how drug profits played into the narrative behind their organization. Indeed, the organization has gone out of its way in the past to assert that the drug trade is not vital to their operation and the presence of coca cultivation in their territory is simply a means to financially assist the peasant farmer.[xvi] Thus, the FARC faces a dilemma. Drug money is certainly necessary, perhaps even the most necessary contributor to military success. However, connections to drug trafficking open the FARC to political criticism and even schism within its own ranks. Increasingly, the FARC has found itself fighting against smugglers and even other left-wing organizations such as the National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN) over control of the drug trade.[xvii] The FARC may find itself fighting its own members as it pursues a peace settlement with the government, an arrangement sure to require the FARC to cease its involvement in the drug trade. Despite any such agreement, however, the strong possibility exists that some FARC members will be loath to relinquish their hold on a lucrative activity and continue to traffic drugs in a post-conflict scenario.[xviii]

Returning to consideration of ISIL and its link to lootable goods, several parallels to the experience of the FARC emerge. ISIL, as previously noted, garners a staggering amount of wealth from its control of oil smuggling in its controlled territory. Just as in the case of the FARC, the wealth ISIL has amassed has, in no small part, fueled the growth and reach of the organization. Interestingly, while the drug trade threatened the political reputation of the FARC, ISIL has no similar problem with oil smuggling. The commodity oil itself

is innocuous, yet, in a reversal from the experience of the FARC, the political reputation of ISIL may impede its ability to conduct its smuggling business. ISIL relies upon unaffiliated intermediaries to smuggle oil to buyers and even establishes fronts at refineries to hide its involvement in the illicit oil.[xix] Post-refinery, ISIL remains almost completely disengaged from the movement or sale of the refined oil and gasoline. It does, however, levy taxes on traders in a fashion similar to the FARC. While the FARC coined it a protection tax, ISIL uses the term *zakat*, or tithe, to justify its taxation.[xx] In a further similarity, ISIL appears to focus its revenue generation on the earliest stages of loot generation, just as the FARC did when it focused on coca cultivation.

The focus of ISIL on revenue generation in the earliest stages of production provides a illustrative parallel to the FARC when considering methods by which opponents could disrupt their revenue stream. Simply striking the sources of production from the air may be ineffective. A principal tool in the anti-drug campaigns of the United States and Colombia has been the aerial spraying of herbicides meant to cut off the raw materials used to produce drugs. The efficacy of this policy, however, has been in doubt since the earliest days of the tactic's use in Colombia.[xxi] The eradication of a particular coca-growing site through herbicide use lasts from 4 to 12 months as coca growers work to plant new crops or salvage those that survived the aerial fumigation. The FARC retains control of the land, despite its temporary incapacitation as a coca producer. Thus, the aerial fumigation is, at best, a temporary setback and does nothing to affect the structural process behind coca production and its ability to generate revenue for the FARC.[xxii]

Further, the aerial fumigation plan may have been counterproductive in stemming the flow of support to the FARC. Coca growers, often otherwise employed as subsistence farmers, are understandably opposed to this policy and turned to the FARC for protection. Aerial fumigation also engendered ill will towards the Colombian government as it propagated the FARC's narrative of a war on the peasantry by the Colombian government as well as raising legitimate concerns on the health effects of aerial fumigation.[xxiii] Given the failure of aerial fumigation to alter significantly the supply chain structure for coca paste as well as its temporary effects on individual coca fields, it appears that aerial fumigation is a less than optimal anti-drug technique. When viewed as a counterinsurgency tactic aimed at reducing the revenue flow to the FARC, aerial fumigation appears even less optimal as the negative effects it has on the population's opinion of the legitimate government further compound its poor anti-drug effects.

Returning to ISIL, the parallels between aerial fumigation of coca fields and air strikes aimed at the illicit oil networks in ISIL held territory is apparent. Just as in Colombia, the focus of ISIL on the early stages of production for revenue generation means that effective supply reduction tactics need to target the sources of crude oil production and its refinement. Attacking post-refinery networks would be just as ineffective in attacking ISIL as arresting drug dealers in the United States was ineffective in attacking the FARC. It would appear that many counter-ISIL coalition members concur with this assessment as news reports indicate Russian, French, and American airstrikes have all targeted ISIL controlled refineries

and oil pumping stations.[xxiv] Going further, recent U.S. strikes have also targeted dozens of oil trucks in an attempt to disrupt ISIL's ability to move crude oil from source locations to refineries. However, the effects of these actions remain difficult to measure.

Just as with the example of aerial fumigation in Colombia, counter-ISIL efforts must take care not to exacerbate the overall strategic problem to create temporary tactical gains. Strikes on oil pumping sites may disable ISIL's ability to generate crude oil but, as with Colombian coca field eradication, such effects are temporary. Coca growers replanted their fields and oil traders will repair their pumping sites. Indeed, attacking pumping stations could also inadvertently generate and additional black market in repair parts and materials for these pumping stations, much as the bombing campaign in Iraq in 2003 created a black market for power generation and transmission equipment.[xxv] This would likely compound the problem of cutting off ISIL revenue as the existence of any black market provides the organization with an opportunity to tax illicit trade. As noted previously in this paper, stopping ISIL's ability to tax populations may prove a more effective financial weapon than strictly destroying illicit oil infrastructure.

The United States recently destroyed dozens of oil transport trucks in ISIL held territory with the stated goal of dismantling the group's ability to smuggle crude oil. While, at first glance, this tactic seems sound and in line with other strikes on ISIL refineries and pumping locations, the U.S. and its allies must be careful and heed the possibility of this tactic backfiring as aerial fumigation did in Colombia. Clearly, the destroyed trucks were a valid target, but the wisdom of striking them may be suspect. The trucks were, at a minimum, civilian driven if not outright owned by their operators. The United States, aware of this fact and anxious to avoid civilian casualties, dropped leaflets prior to attacking in an effort to warn the drivers and get them away from their vehicles.[xxvi]

Just as subsistence farmers in Colombia turned to coca cultivation as a way out of poverty, it is just as likely that these truck drivers are smuggling ISIL oil out of financial need and not ideological zeal. Destroying the means of their livelihood presented a tactical success in degrading ISIL's ability to move oil, but it also potentially drove more civilians on the ground to seek protection from ISIL. Truck drivers deprived of their jobs will not likely look favorably on the countries that attacked them. The attack of ordinary citizens, rather than armed militants, also provides ISIL a potent recruiting narrative as well as an opportunity to present the group as fighting to protect citizens from foreign attackers, regardless of the legitimacy of such a statement. As in Colombia, the destruction of transport vehicles yields a temporary tactical gain in exchange for a potentially long-term negative strategic effect. Colombian subsistence farmers lacked options besides coca cultivation and banding with the FARC. Creating a similar situation for civilian truck drivers in ISIL held territory would be just as counter-productive.

The Colombian example does not only provide cautionary tales against what not to do. The more successful later years of the counterinsurgency efforts against the FARC also provide some potentially effective ways forward for dealing with ISIL. These efforts highlight the second portion of this

paper's thesis, the siphoning away of new recruits for the organization, and how that effort can be synergistic with efforts to cleave ISIL from its funding sources. Integrating military operations with concurrent governmental efforts has always been the hallmark of successful counterinsurgency efforts. Colombia is no different. Beginning in 2002, the Colombia government adopted a coordinated approach against the FARC that sought to simultaneously separate the FARC from its funding sources as well as compete with the local populace for their allegiance. In broad strokes, this plan meant to expand the control of the legitimate government over areas held by the FARC. Once established, governmental organizations would follow to provide alternative economic opportunities and restore criminal justice operations against illicit drug traffickers.[xxvii] This tactic is emblematic of the classic counterinsurgency strategy of "clear, hold, build" adopted by many governments faced with an insurgent population. In the case of Colombia, it appears that this effort has been effective in reducing militant numbers as well as reducing coca production in government held areas.[xxviii] Planners cannot directly overlay this technique on the struggle against ISIL, but it does illustrate potential ways forward, particularly in the integration of military and governmental efforts.

The three legged stool formed by Colombia's strategy consisted of reestablishing governmental control over an area, providing alternative outlets for the population's economic needs, and reestablishing a functional criminal justice system to combat drug traffickers. The corollary when applied to ISIL may look like this: reestablish non-ISIL control over an area, provide alternative outlets for the population's grievances, economic or otherwise, and create a fair and functioning method for the creation and distribution of oil wealth. While similar, the subtle differences between the Colombian example and its application against ISIL are important and provide key guidance on the way forward.

The first divergence between the Colombian example and its application against ISIL is the lack of a trusted government partner in Syria to retake control of ISIL held areas. Northern Iraq may offer a more encouraging situation as the central government has managed to bring some Sunni tribal forces into their struggle to retake Anbar province. The Colombian government, albeit imperfect, provided a capable partner to the United States and was able to both militarily push the FARC from areas and then have the political legitimacy to hold the ground afterwards. The Assad government is unable to fill this role on its side of the border in Syria out of both military weakness and its political odium on the world stage. While Russian intervention may create a diplomatic window to include some version of the Assad regime in the wider counter-ISIL struggle, it is unlikely that the U.S. will tolerate its inclusion in its current form as a strategic partner. While this lack of government partners appears to doom the Colombian analogy, looking to other forces provides an alternative. The Kurdish regional government and its *Peshmerga* forces have already demonstrated themselves to be able combatants against ISIL[xxix]. While their use complicates relations with a number of regional partners, not least of which is Turkey, the Kurds may be the best option for pushing ISIL out of oil producing regions and establishing governmental control. Similarly, the moderate rebel groups within Syria are a potential ally to create non-ISIL controlled regions in the area.

However, neither the Kurds nor the Syrian rebels currently have the military power to completely remove ISIL from the region. Western military assistance is likely required for this effort, yet it is clear that without Syrian government partners, these forces may be the only option for a viable counterinsurgency strategy against ISIL that permanently separates them from their means of funding.[xxx]

Turning to the second leg of the counter-ISIL strategy and its divergence from the Colombian example is the problem of the underlying grievances that lead to the rise of ISIL in the first place. The FARC was ostensibly a communist guerrilla movement with a political goal of overthrowing the state and establishing a socialist government. ISIL, on the other hand, seeks a religious caliphate and the establishment of *sharia* law over its territories. While initially incongruous, a deeper examination of these differences demonstrates the continued validity of this paper's thesis. The FARC's appeal was that it addressed the crushing poverty much of the rural population lived in. The political message of the group resonated with many of the people living under its control as the FARC ably painted the central government as indifferent to the plight of the peasantry.[xxxi] Similarly, the religious motivations of ISIL resonate along the deep sectarian lines within the region. ISIL is a Wahhabi organization at its core, a version of extreme Sunni Islam. It appeals in particular to Sunni Muslims in the region who feel oppressed by local Shia majorities in their governments or view Sunni governments as apostate regimes inextricably corrupted by the West.[xxxii] Successful counterinsurgents must address the appeal of this ideology, particularly to Muslims living under the Shia dominated governments of Iraq and Syria. Just as the Colombian example was anchored by finding alternate means for the population to address its economic grievances, any successful counter-ISIL campaign must recognize the need for a religious outlet for minority groups that feel oppressed by sectarian governments. Failure to address this fundamental grievance will doom any counterinsurgency strategy to failure.

The third and final leg of the stool of a counter-ISIL strategy is the restoration of oil wealth production and its fair and equitable distribution. This, again, appears to diverge significantly with the third leg of the Colombian strategy and its focus on restoring law and order in opposition to the drug trade. Yet, as in the previous two counterpoints, further examination of this difference yields instructive insights on ways to succeed against ISIL. At its core, the problem of both the drug trade and oil revenues is an issue of inclusion and fairness. In the case of the Colombian drug trade, peasant farmers felt locked out of the wider economic system and saw coca cultivation as their only means for advancement. This further exacerbated the feelings of isolation from the central government as coca cultivation only drove the peasantry closer to the FARC. The distribution of oil wealth in Iraq tells a similar story. While the Iraqi Constitution calls for the equitable distribution of the country's oil wealth, the lack of effective systems to do so or to decide on fair distribution has resulted in a majoritarian, "winner take all" approach to the money.[xxxiii] With the Iraqi government dominated by Shias, many Sunni minorities have felt disenfranchised and isolated from these economic opportunities. As this paper argues, it is vital to cleave ISIL from its funding sources. Just as importantly, however, is that once counter-ISIL forces capture

those sources of wealth they must fairly distribute that wealth across ethnic groups and sectarian lines to avoid reigniting passions and creating a sense of isolation from the central government. This will be particularly difficult if the counter-ISIL forces do not actually come from the Iraqi government, but from sectarian groups like Kurdish *Peshmerga* forces or Shia militias. Recent progress by Iraqi security forces allied with Sunni tribal fighters is encouraging. If this partnership can lead to a political discussion that heals some of the divides between the Sunni tribes and the central government, particularly over oil revenue, more permanent progress may be possible.

Despite the differences, planners constructing an effective counter-ISIL strategy will benefit from learning the lessons of past counterinsurgencies such as Colombia's struggle with the FARC. While the two situations are certainly not identical, nor even completely analogous in places, the overall lessons are still instructive. If nothing else, planners must acknowledge that the presence of lootable wealth, particularly in the form of oppressed and taxable populations, and a robust smuggling economy are certain to prolong the conflict. The FARC's struggle against the Colombian government would have certainly collapsed without drug money. Instead, the insurgency is past its fiftieth year. It is likely that Syria is on a trajectory for a similar fate without intervention.

The cases of Syria and Colombia point to two key factors disposing those conflicts towards the exploitation of lootable wealth and the subsequent prolongment of the war. The first, already explored in this paper, is the presence of lootable wealth. The second, and more distressing factor in the case of Syria, is the preexisting smuggling nodes in both countries that were rapidly coopted by the insurgencies. Colombia has a long history of a well-established contraband network, moving goods from gemstones to untaxed cigarettes across the porous borders of South America.[xxxiv] Once coca paste became the most profitable good to smuggle, drug cartels quickly retooled these smuggling routes to serve the narcotics trade. Turning to Syria, a similar situation exists for ISIL to exploit. The pre-war Syrian economy was already extensive, with some estimates placing it at as high as 24% of the official GDP reported.[xxxv] There are two hazards that arise from this preexisting condition. The first, and more obvious, is that ISIL already has access to a well-established and robust smuggling network to move illicit goods and funnel weapons and fighters into the conflict. The second, and potentially more troubling, is that a large portion of the Syrian population is profiting from the current state of civil war. Garnering popular support for conflict resolution will be that much more difficult when some parties have a financial interest in seeing the conflict continue. This factor certainly complicated Colombian peace talks and will be an issue in any attempt to resolve the conflict in Syria.

The presence of lootable wealth, however, is not entirely a negative situation for counterinsurgency efforts. Civil wars and insurgencies where the illicit trade of lootable goods finances combatants certainly do last many times longer than conflicts where these goods are unavailable. The presence of this wealth allows insurgencies to become self-sustaining movements, attracting recruits and financing operations. However, this wealth can also be a source of weakness as it can undermine the original ideological narrative of the organization. This could create a fissure between "true believers" and those motivated more by adventure and profit. Ultimately, successful counterinsurgencies will exploit this by simultaneously choking off the stream of illicit funds while creating political outlets to express grievances and draw away recruits. This effort, however, requires careful thought on the long-term consequences of efforts to stem illicit funds on the overall legitimacy of the insurgencies narrative. The Colombians experienced this in the practice of aerial fumigation of coca fields and the counter-ISIL coalition risks the same in airstrikes aimed the illicit crude oil distribution network. Even if these efforts to destroy smuggling assets prove necessary, a potent counter-narrative to ISIL propaganda must accompany them lest these attacks drive more of the population to the terrorists for protection. As the Colombian example illustrated, success required both choking off funding sources from the FARC as well as defeating their attempts to recruit more fighters. While destroying funding sources is possible through kinetic means, defeating a recruiting effort is not.

Ultimately, the lessons of Colombia paint an effective, if grim, way forward against ISIL. The existence of lootable wealth and a robust smuggling network in the region means that this will likely be a protracted struggle. Simply assaulting the group from the air or striking at their means of production is unlikely to yield a decisive result. Instead, counter-ISIL forces must prepare themselves for an extensive ground campaign to both cleave ISIL control of illicit funding sites and to restore governmental control of those assets. Most importantly, counter-ISIL strategies must include a way to wrest away ISIL's pseudo-governmental control of populations. Concurrently, planners must find strategies to counter ISIL's recruiting narrative and propaganda efforts. Ultimately, a synergistic effort will both wrest away ISIL's physical control of oil facilities while addressing the underlying grievances and schisms within the populations of Syria and northern Iraq will be necessary. While difficult, the Colombian example shows that this type of coordinated strategy is possible and highly effective at defeating even an entrenched insurgency like the FARC. With a template in hand and history to guide them, what remains for the governments forming the counter-ISIL coalition is to find the political will to implement a counterinsurgency strategy that permanently divorces ISIL from both its sources of lootable wealth and the population it seeks to control.

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# The Strategic Bystander: On Mayhem in Century 21

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The strategic studies literature has for a long time apprehended an acutely problematic dimension to increasing connectedness—the acceleration of transactional flows of people, things, and ideas generally popularly known as 'globalisation'. It appears to disempower, to a greater or lesser degree, state actors while empowering non-state ones. This was the gist of Marine General Charles C. Krulak's remarks at a conference of the Royal United Services Institute in 1996. Even earlier, of course, it was the core argument of Martin Van Creveld's *The Transformation of War*, which opened with the line 'A ghost is stalking the corridors of general staffs and defence departments all over the "developed" world—the fear of military impotence, even irrelevance.'<sup>[i]</sup>

But back to Krulak's speech, which at around twenty years distance from us today provides a convenient benchmark. In it, he said in one off-repeated colourful passage, that future wars will be not like the agreeably inept conventional one fought by Saddam Hussein in 1991 but rather 'the stepchild of Chechnya and Somalia', and in a lesser-quoted passage that our enemies 'will not be doctrinaire or predictable, but... far more deadly.'<sup>[ii]</sup> This seems still very accurate. We are still drawn to settle 'other people's wars', though without much

sense of the policy that such interventions are supposed to serve, let alone prospect of victory in them, howsoever defined.

Recent debates over intervention in the Middle East generally, and in the ex-Iraqi and Syrian heartlands of Islamic State specifically, exemplify this interventionist rodomontade. Our opponents obviously do not insist on playing by any fixed rules except, contra Van Creveld, that war is comprised of a wonderful trinity that includes passion, in addition to reason and chance, which they harness very effectively to the achievement of political purpose (while we do not). And all of this now takes place under the unblinking eye of a camera somewhere, inevitably beaming its imagery globally, potentially everywhere 'bringing the village to the world and the world to the village.'<sup>[iii]</sup>

## Where are you Son of Desert Storm?

It is fair to say that within the defence establishment at the time, Krulak's views were in the minority. The rest of the American military, with the armed forces of many of its major allies following eagerly, was haring after a different sort of war—the one they thought they saw in the extraordinarily lopsided outcome of the 1991 Gulf War. That event seemed to herald the arrival of a fast, cheap, and decisive form of war that was subsequently christened the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'. Quite obviously, that has failed to materialise.<sup>[iv]</sup> Nonetheless, there's a good question here.

According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies' annual *World Military Balance* defence expenditure for 2014 by all countries amounted to \$1.6 trillion. The United States alone accounted for over a third of that spending and China, the next biggest spender, accounted for just under a tenth. Over half of the remaining top ten countries are American allies. This is a colossal amount of investment by any measure and it amounts in aggregate to a gigantic amount of latent combat power in all domains—land, sea, air, space and cyberspace—and it is able to touch essentially anywhere on the face of the planet.

Estimating the power of non-state actors is intrinsically more difficult, given their nature—but even the strongest and most capable of them, for instance Hezbollah, are noteworthy

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for possessing only a fraction of state-like capability and even then over a very narrow range. In other words, in terms of straight up *military power*—the capacity to destroy the largest possible force over the largest possible territory for the smallest possible attacker casualties in the least possible time—there really is no comparison between state and non-state actors. [v] This has been the case in the West for several centuries now, a fact which informed this salient warning by one of the most adept theorists of revolution, Friedrich Engels, who warned those contemplating revolt:

...never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. The forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organization, discipline and habitual authority; unless you bring strong odds against them, you are defeated and ruined. [vi]

Despite the preponderance of power, however, the last three decades have witnessed multiple occasions in which non-state actors tactically flummoxed and exhausted and strategically confounded and foiled several major powers. The forces of organisation, discipline, and habitual authority—you should call it civilisation—keep losing to barbarian, neck-chopping, myth-invoking weaklings.

A list of such encounters would include: Russia's travails in subduing irregulars in Chechnya, one of its small Caucasus provinces; Israel's eighteen-year long war in Lebanon from 1982 to 2000, the fruit of which was a still continuing confrontation with Hezbollah; Ukraine's inability to quell Russian-backed separatists in its eastern regions; and, both major expeditionary campaigns of the War on Terror, in Afghanistan which hovers on the brink of defeat fourteen years after the initial invasion, and in Iraq out of the maelstrom of which was born Islamic State—an enemy that appears more virulent and puissant than Al Qaeda, the original enemy that is also still undefeated.

For point of illustration, though, two scenes surpass all others as benchmarks in the popular consciousness of ragtag militiamen humiliating the forces of a vastly superior power—the October 1993 'Blackhawk Down' incident in Mogadishu, Somalia in which eighteen American soldiers were killed, seventy eight injured, and one pilot captured, and the September 11, 2012 attack on the American Embassy compound in Benghazi, Libya in which the ambassador was killed along with another diplomat and two CIA contractors. Both events have spawned popular films, Ridley Scott's *Blackhawk Down* (2001) and Michael Bay's *13 Hours*, which tell similar stories of tactical prowess and heroism combined with strategic failure and rudderlessness.

It's perplexing, no? Sometimes big powers lose small wars—this is known; [vii] but why of late do they seem to lose all of them and so demonstratively?

### False Memory Syndrome

Part of it is just a historical false consciousness, a blindness to the real state of affairs, that is peculiarly endemic to Western military thinking which has for the last hundred years had the predominant tendency of believing in a dichotomy between 'conventional' as opposed to 'unconventional' war.

The former is supposed to consist of two generally equally matched forces organised in a more or less alike manner manoeuvring in relation to each other prior to a decisive clash that results in a clear battlefield victory followed by an armistice and a mutually recognised new status quo. Such wars have relatively well defined beginnings and ends.

The latter consists, by contrast, of mismatched forces one of which seeks to avoid direct engagements through guerrilla tactics while the other conducts infuriating sweep after sweep in the hope of bringing its will o' the wisp foe within sight of its big guns. Lawrence of Arabia described the essential dynamic of such wars with poetic accuracy with reference to the Arab Revolt against the Turks in the First World War:

Armies were like plants, immobile as a whole, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head. We might be a vapour, blowing where we listed. Our kingdom lay in each man's mind, and as we wanted nothing material to live on, so perhaps we offered nothing material to the killing. It seemed a regular soldier might be helpless without a target. He would own the ground he sat on, and what he could poke his rifle at. [viii]

There has never been a time when imperial forces were immune to tactical setbacks. Pick any wall in the Officers' Mess of any old British regiment to find the evidence.

For instance, one of the first paintings you see in the rotunda of the UK's Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham is a grand one by Lady Butler entitled 'Rescuing the Wounded Under Fire in Afghanistan'. Painted in 1903, it shows a trooper hauling a wounded comrade onto his horse as his fellows bolt from the field fleeing certain death at the hands of Afghan ambushers. [ix]

Very occasionally in the past, such events impinged upon the larger public consciousness. The slaughter of Quinctilius Varus' legion at the hands of Arminius' German tribes in the Teutoburger Wald in AD 9 profoundly shocked the Roman Empire, ending its efforts to *directly* govern territories beyond the Rhine River. [x] The 1883 defeat in Sudan of an 11,000 strong British detachment by forces of the Mahdi sent out a similar shockwave—compounded in 1885 when General Gordon ('of Khartoum') commander of the force, sent to evacuate non-combatants from Sudan, was also slaughtered.

### The Death of Phlegmatism

Gordon's body was thrown in the Blue Nile but his head, severed post mortem by a local chief, was stuffed in a leather bag whence it was brandished before his lieutenant Rudolf Carl von Slatin who is said to have remarked:

What of it? A brave soldier, who fell at his post. Happy is he to have fallen. His sufferings are over. [xi]

Scholars who are interested in the effect of the increasing connectedness of humanity, most recently and aggressively as a result of the dawning of the so-called 'information age', are fond of the phrase 'the death of distance'. [xii] The point of the remark is more metaphorical than literal—it is not, obviously, meant to suggest actual physical shrinking

of the globe, the distance from Khartoum, or Benghazi or Mogadishu, for that matter, to London or Washington D.C. today is unchanged since 1885. Rather the speed and volume of communications, not just of ideas but also people and things, has accelerated by an order of magnitude.

In strategic terms the difference caused is that between a veteran commander, a professional colonial administrator, a man actually with blood on his hands and mud on his boots, being presented with the head of his commanding officer and a suburban housewife, a government clerk—the average citizen—a strategic bystander—comfortably at home, in other words—being presented with the same. It is one thing to experience this at a distance, through the prism of a dispassionate newspaper report many weeks later, or as presented through the brush strokes of an artist, such as Lady Butler interpreting the scene romantically on canvas; it is quite another to see the *cinema verite* arterial spray from the severed neck of one's own plenipotentiary and listen to the gurgled aspirations of their demise in near to real time on the Internet as millions have done with more recent affronts to imperial power.

In the case of the former, there is the possibility of imposing on events a narrative more conducive to strategic ends. In the case of General Gordon, his death is recorded, in a popular painting, visually gloriously—surrounded by the bodies of his enemies he is seen in the last seconds of life firing his last pistol round, like Boromir pierced by arrows surrounded by a parapet of dead Uruk-Hai in *The Lord of the Rings*. An elegiac quality may be attached to such a death. Compare, by contrast, the image of Master Sergeant Gary Gordon, one of two Medal of Honour winners from the 1993 battle of Mogadishu, a Delta Force commando who also fought to the last bullet, his naked body dragged through the streets by exuberant Somali militiamen—the whole scene beamed into the comfortable living rooms of Americans at home.

The upshot is that in our densely interconnected world of highly mediated conflict it is extremely difficult for governments to maintain domestic support for expeditionary campaigns—indeed for anything seemingly qualifying as a 'war of choice'. 'Why are we there?' becomes a practically inevitable and fiendishly difficult question for politicians to answer. Even worse is when the public comes to believe that the war, if even it is presented as such, is not worth it. In itself, this is not a new dilemma; it is, indeed, a strategic reality that has been building for a generation at least. Andrew Mack famously argued in the aftermath of the Vietnam War that when 'big nations lose small wars' it is because a fundamental asymmetry of will exists between the intervening foreign power and the local belligerent: for the latter, the stakes of the conflict are likely to be mortal and total; for the former they are discretionary and limited.[xiii]

The connectedness of the world has simply massively accentuated the problem. There is a wonderful scene in the classic novel *Things Fall Apart* by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe. When it was written in the early 1950s it seemed to have significance primarily to the local context:

'I have heard', said Okonkwo. 'But I have also heard that Abame people were weak and foolish. Why did they not fight back? Had they no guns and machetes? We

would be cowards to compare ourselves with the men of Abame. Their fathers had never dared to stand before our ancestors. We must fight these men and drive them from the land.' [xiv]

But nowadays the context is not local—in fact, the import of such words—strategies, to name them precisely—are global. It is supremely doubtful that Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, both British-born Muslim converts of Nigerian descent, who in May 2013 hacked to death the off-duty British Army drummer Lee Rigby outside Woolwich Barracks in London, had ever read Achebe. Nonetheless, the words above would not seem odd coming from their mouths. Their actual testimony, captured on the mobile phone of a random passerby was this:

I apologise that women had to witness this today but in our lands women have to see the same. You people will never be safe. Remove your governments. They don't care about you. You think David Cameron is going to get caught in the street when we start busting our guns? Do you think politicians are going to die? No, it's going to be the average guy, like you and your children. So get rid of them. Tell them to bring our troops back. Leave our lands and you will live in peace.[xv]

On the whole, citizens presented with such scenes, on YouTube let alone outside the doors of their own homes on the streets of their capital city, are unprepared to respond with Slatin-esque phlegmatism. The question of the moment is whether they will respond by cringing surrender or fall in line with those demanding unhinged crusade. Either way the *status quo* is melting away—indeed, things fall apart.

### Everybody's got the Maxim Gun

In 1898 the Anglo-French poet and essayist composed an anti-imperialist satirical ditty called 'The Modern Traveller' in which he placed in the mouth of William Blood (the buccaneering capitalist co-protagonist of the tale, alongside Commander Henry Sin, the mercenary trigger man) the immortal words, 'whatever happens we have got the maxim gun, and they have not'. The piece was clearly informed if not inspired by scenes such as the Battle of Omdurman from the same year in which a punitive expedition led by General Kitchener paid back the Mahdi for the killing of General Gordon. About 10,000 Mahdists were killed in the engagement by quick-firing British field artillery, accurate rifle-fire, and newly-invented machineguns—less than fifty British troops died:

It was not a battle but an execution. ...The bodies were not in heaps—bodies hardly ever are; but they spread evenly over acres and acres. Some lay very composedly with their slippers placed under their heads for a last pillow; some knelt, cut short in the middle of a last prayer. Others were torn to pieces.[xvi]

At the end of the Cold War, in the West the principle 'knowledge is power' became firmly impressed on the consciousness of military leaders and their political masters alike. The belief took hold in the wake of another incredibly lopsided engagement with a troublesome oriental potentate, Saddam Hussein

whose rout in the 1991 Gulf War—as congenial to the victors as Alexander’s rout of the Persians at Granicus—but it came to be understood narrowly, as primarily a matter of efficiently mechanically aligning weapons with targets.

Then, on this rather limited concept was anchored a much more ambitious strategic hope that the fundamentally chaotic nature of war could be largely if not completely compensated for by technology, practically a la Belloc. At first, the swift campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq seemed to confirm the theory. The curious thing about it, though, was how blind it was to the idea of the enemy as a living, thinking opponent rather than merely a target to be serviced by long-range weapons—an enemy, that is, who would not mutely comply with demands when presented with furious manoeuvres, no matter how swiftly they were performed, but who in time would develop effective countermeasures.

Recent wars show quite well that ‘the rest’ has got the measure of the ‘new’ Western way of war, on the one hand turning its preference for decisive battle into a millstone by relentlessly offering it few opportunities for straight up engagements, while on the other hand showing a great deal of resilience in the face of the occasional barbs thrown its way in the form of stand-off missiles and aerial bombing.

The irony is that both sides clearly recognise the new reality as a matter of practice, even if policy-makers do not. To loop back to the beginning of this essay, Krulak warned in another off-cited essay that the enemies of the West had,

...seen the might of our technology. They’re not going to fight us straight up. We’re not going to see the son of Desert Storm anymore. You’re going to see the stepchild of Chechnya. You’re seeing it right now. It’s called Kosovo. Our enemies will attack us asymmetrically. They will take us where we’re weak, and they will negate our strengths, which is our technology, and so the best way to do that is to get you into close terrain—towns, cities, urban slums, forests, jungles. [xvii]

The trouble now is that everyone has got the maxim gun, metaphorically speaking; or at any rate a very convincingly solid rejoinder to its contemporary equivalent—air power. It is fitting given the Krulak quote above to use a Chechen one to illustrate, though many others abound. In this one a fighter armed with just an assault rifle, anti-tank grenades, and a martyr’s conviction, is heard declaring on the eve of a December 1994 battle in Grozny, during which a Russian mechanised brigade was effectively wiped out:

It’s better for us in the dark and in the city. Here, they’re our guests and we’re the hosts. They have come in, but they won’t leave. They’re not fighting for anything, but we’re fighting for our homeland—we’re not afraid to die. They have planes and tanks and all we’ve got is Allah and the RPG. But we know what we’re fighting for.

But the truly alarming thing is not really that non-state actors can stand up to some state forces on their own ground in ways that in the past they struggled to do as assuredly. Sure, the Mahdists lacked the maxim gun but they were redoubtable fighters in their own right in their own day even without it. Their key deficiency was that they had no way of bringing meaningful force to bear on their enemy where it would have counted most—on the streets of their own cities, amongst their citizens, in the rubble of their homes and public buildings. That is no longer the case.

### Welcome to the Bataclan

It is self-evident that our lives are increasingly intertwined with those of distant others—economically, politically and culturally. Technology is knitting together societies. The effect of this is to erase the distinction between inside and outside, no longer can things occur to people completely ‘over there’ without bearing on ‘how people in all other places live, hope, or expect to live.’ [xviii] It is the deeply ingrained strategic habit of mind that holds that Western populations are insulated from war, even small wars, by distance, by solid frontiers, and by a surfeit of conventional armaments that is most worryingly challenged today.

The attack by jihadists on Paris in November 2015 in which 130 people were killed, including 89 in the Bataclan theatre is but the most recent in a trend that stretches back at least as far as the attack by Chechen rebels on the hospital complex in the Russian provincial town Budyennovsk over twenty years ago. Now every place is potentially a Bataclan or Budyennovsk. How this particular genie can be put back in its bottle and what havoc will be wreaked in the effort is another good question. No answer to it is immediately apparent.

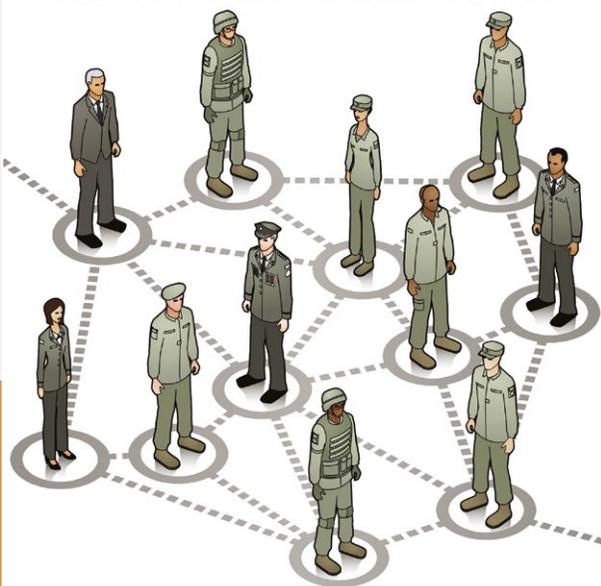
While writing these concluding lines I am watching the newsfeed from the attacks of allegedly Islamic State militants on the airport and a metro station in Brussels on 22 March 2016. Over thirty people have been killed and two hundred have been injured, many very severely. The point is not the number of dead and suffering in the abstract, because just as many died and were maimed on Europe’s motorways today, the same yesterday, and will be tomorrow. Society has long since normalised that level of carnage as an acceptable cost of mobility. What it will not and cannot do, I think, is to normalise even a fraction of the losses as an acceptable cost of diversity, which globalisation’s advocates have argued is essential to economic growth if not an intrinsically good thing in its own right. One doubts that Krulak envisioned ‘three block war’ on the streets of Europe, but when you think about it that is where we are. Sadly, the West’s decades long effort to bottle up passion in war, its well-meant denial of the purchase that hatred and enmity has on the collective psyche of a population that believes itself at war, has produced a surfeit of it—seething to be unleashed.

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# André Beaufre in Contemporary Chinese Strategic Thinking

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Comparing and contrasting Sun Tzu with other great military thinkers of the West has produced invaluable insights, and, as Michael Handel put it, "allows us to better understand these works on their own terms."<sup>[i]</sup> Prominent comparative analyses of Sun Tzu with others include: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Jomini;<sup>[ii]</sup> Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, and Machiavelli;<sup>[iii]</sup> Liddell-Hart and Sun Tzu.<sup>[iv]</sup> Yet so far, based on the author's knowledge, General André Beaufre has not been subject to comparative analysis with Sun Tzu in English academic discourse. This, though, is not the case for Chinese discourse. Chinese scholarship has taken André Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy* and, based on content analysis, juxtaposed it with Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. This paper commences with a brief introduction of André Beaufre and his major concepts of total strategy; then it proceeds with sketching the probable value of Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy* in Chinese military science. Finally, this writing expounds how Chinese scholarship views similarities and differences between Beaufre and Sun Tzu, and how Beaufre's total strategy might have influenced aspects of China's grand strategy.

## André Beaufre

The French military strategist General André Beaufre (1902-1975)<sup>[v]</sup> is probably most famous for his *An Introduction to Strategy* (1963), translated in 1965. His most important books include: *An Introduction to Strategy*, *Deterrence and Strategy* and *Strategy of Action*. These three books together form a

triptych which set out in outline the components of a theory of total strategy.<sup>[vi]</sup> Beaufre's ideas were shaped by his service background as a French military officer. André Beaufre's concept of strategy is not purely a military one. He strongly believed that "a positive strategy of action will have to rely not only upon nonnuclear but also upon nonmilitary means."<sup>[vii]</sup> Beaufre's definition of strategy in essence encompasses "the art of applying force so that it makes the most effective contribution toward achieving the ends set by policy" and "the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute."<sup>[viii]</sup> Beaufre was the first who coined the word total strategy.<sup>[ix]</sup> Beaufre's definition of total strategy refers to the choice of means laid out by policy.<sup>[x]</sup> The major concepts of his total strategy encompass:

- *Total strategy*: It is located at the top of the strategy pyramid and is under the direct control of the government which also decides how all other strategies are coordinated and employed.<sup>[xi]</sup>
- *Direct strategy mode and indirect strategy mode*: Direct and indirect strategy are two different modes of total strategy. Both are classified according to the role played by force, ranging from the most insidious to the most violent methods. In the direct mode military strategy plays a preponderant role; in the indirect mode military force plays a secondary role.<sup>[xii]</sup>
- *Strategy of action*: Due to the confines of nuclear or political deterrence, within the context of the strategy of action "it is the *indirect strategy* that is very important and not the *direct strategy's* adoption of material force. Although the means that direct strategy and indirect strategy are employing are different, but both are fighting for the country's ultimate purpose which is the freedom of action."<sup>[xiii]</sup>

For Beaufre total strategy must remain subordinate to national policy.<sup>[xiv]</sup> In his view the military sphere and the political sphere of policy and strategy go hand in hand; you cannot separate one from the other. Therefore, politics must be a part of military action.<sup>[xv]</sup> Regarding the interdependence between political and military affairs, Beaufre advocated that the implementation of all policy should additionally be assisted by the meticulously planning methods of military strategy.<sup>[xvi]</sup> In its relation to politics, strategy should

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recommend not dictate. It is the role of policy to lay down the aims to be achieved by strategy.[xvii]

Beaufre's total strategy is made up of deterrence strategy and strategy of action. Deterrence is the negative mode of strategy, to prevent the adversary from initiating an action; while strategy of action is the positive mode of strategy, which helps someone achieve something in spite of what others may do.[xviii] Due to the stalemate situation between the two major military powers (the United States and the Soviet Union) during the Cold War, Beaufre argued that the risk of a thermonuclear war had become very small. This, in turn, means that "in the rest of the world the powers in general, whether strong or weak, have very wide freedom of action; but this freedom of action can be exercised only outside the nuclear field and it is less wide for the nuclear powers than for the others."[xix]

### The Value of Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy in Chinese Military Science*

*The Summary of the Famous Works on Western Military Science*, edited by Liu Qing, lists Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy* among the 31 most valuable military books written by western military strategists on the theory of warfare;[xx] and recommends it as a must-read book for students of modern strategic thought in the age of nuclear weapons. In fact, Beaufre's broad framework of total strategy for the nuclear age is preferred over other narrower frameworks, which are seen as inferior in their systematic discussion of integrating nuclear weapons in a broad strategic framework.[xxi]

The Sun Tzu Research Institute of Binzhou Academy is China's elite institute for Sun Tzu scholarship.[xxii] The institute's website recommends the ten most authoritative reference books for the study of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. On this list the book *Sunzi San Lun*,[xxiii] authored by Niu Xianzhong,[xxiv] which includes a comparative analysis of Beaufre and Sun Tzu, ranks fifth.[xxv] Listed among the ten most important standard works for serious students of Sun Tzu, it can be assumed that Sun Tzu experts are also familiar with the parallels between Beaufre and Sun Tzu.

Experts and studies attest that the thoughts expressed in Sun Tzu's *Art of War* are a significant part of Beijing's military thoughts. Sun Tzu's advice is taken to wage cyber war against America, argued Major Richard Davenport, a psychological operations officer in the U.S. Army Central Command, in the *Armed Forced Journal* in 2009.[xxvi] A thesis which researches *The Art of War's* influence on China's military in a case study of the 1962 Sino-India War found that "the thoughts expressed in *The Art of War* could possibly be used as a practical tool for penetrating Beijing's military thoughts."[xxvii] Due to his many personal encounters with high-ranking officers from China's military establishment, Former Director of the Japanese Defense Intelligence (Vice Admiral) Fumio Ota opined, "Since all Chinese military personnel seem to memorize Sun Tzu, Chinese strategy must be based on Sun Tzu." As he was told by the Vice President of PLA National Defense University (PLANDU)," Sun Tzu is the centerpiece of the education in

PLANDU." And, by 2006, the PLA made the decision to adopt "Sun Tzu as the educational textbook not only for officers but also for all enlisted soldiers/sailors."[xxviii]

Just as Sun Tzu's thinking has a tremendous clout on Beijing's military thoughts and therefore on its strategic behavior, it is very likely that Beaufre—dubbed as the western Sun Tzu—has also been studied extensively by Chinese strategists. Due to André Beaufre's similarities with Sun Tzu, the works of Beaufre are seen as the key for in-depth studies enabling a fruitful reinterpretation of Sun Tzu's wisdoms and their application to contemporary strategic thinking and its resultant decision-making. Niu wrote:

By making a comparison and contrast of a selection of suitable expressions from Sun Tzu and Beaufre one can claim that the thinking of both men is very similar. Now we only need to make the next step in the discussion and try to compare both men's system of thinking. Beaufre has a complete system of thought and as a modern person his system of thought is of course distant and more complex: 1) total strategy, 2) indirect strategy, 3) strategy of action, 4) strategy for tomorrow. These words have all been created by Beaufre, but they are not really completely new concepts. They have only been changed and put in a new packing.[xxix]

In other words, Niu's book *Sunzi San Lun*,[xxx] canonized among the ten most authoritative reference books for the study of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, suggests that if you want to have a better understanding of Sun Tzu study Beaufre; or, if you want to have a modern outlook on Sun Tzu, Beaufre will be very helpful for that undertaking. Very careful not to aggrandize Beaufre above China's greatest strategist, Sun Tzu, this advice, which is tantamount to the idiom old wine in new wineskins, may have been followed without greater opposition.

### Sun Tzu and Andre Beaufre

For Sun Tzu specialist Niu Xianzhong, André Beaufre is the only Western strategist that he ranks to be on par with Sun Tzu.

Among the great masters of western strategy the person who deserves the most esteem is the French general André Beaufre. Regarding the history of western strategic thought, only Beaufre's qualifications really match those of Sun Tzu in terms of what he mentions and discusses. Therefore, one can say that Beaufre is the Western Sun Tzu, only that he was born 2500 years later.[xxxi]

Just as J. Mohan Malik found that "there is a remarkable similarity between the views of Liddell Hart and Sun Tzu,"[xxxii] Sun Tzu pundit Niu Xianzhong concluded in his comparison and contrast of text passages from Sun Tzu and Beaufre that both of them are very similar in their views.[xxxiii] Whereas it is possible to make a connection between Sun Tzu's military ideas containing many of the tenets of the indirect approach and Liddell Hart's formalized concept of the 'indirect approach'[xxxiv], linking Sun Tzu and André Beaufre in terms of the former shaping the thinking of the latter is not possible.

It is true that Beaufre acknowledged that at least part of his concepts originate from Liddell Hart,[xxxv] but Beaufre never mentioned the strategist Sun Tzu in his books. Furthermore, there is no sufficient evidence that demonstrates that Beaufre had ever read Sun Tzu. Finally, as Niu Xianzhong saw it, Liddell-Hart had a rather shallow understanding of Sun Tzu. This is why, even if André Beaufre had been very much inspired by Liddell-Hart, Beaufre's work displays his qualities as an original thinker.[xxxvi]

The following paragraphs roughly delineate the parallels which Sun Tzu pundit Niu Xianzhong, apparently translator of the first Chinese version of Beaufre's *An Introduction to Strategy*,[xxxvii] saw between Sun Tzu and André Beaufre.[xxxviii] The focus of the discussion lies on the similarities and differences which can be extrapolated from Beaufre's thinking in *An Introduction to Strategy* and Sun Tzu's thinking in *The Art of War*.

For both Sun Tzu and Beaufre, cognizance and ignorance of strategy are the major reasons for victory or defeat in battle. Beaufre, who witnessed France's decline from a first class to a third class country as it repeatedly encountered disasters such as the military defeat by Hitler, the loss of Indo-China, and the fearful political defeat associated with Suez, summarized the entire experience of defeat in the following manner: "For me the inescapable conclusion is that in most cases ignorance of strategy has been our fatal error." [xxxix] In this sense, Beaufre believed that every defeat in the final analysis could be traced back to ignorance. This idea almost completely tallies with what Sun Tzu said[xl] when he made reference to the five constant factors governing strategy and determining the deliberations of decision-makers: " He who knows them will be victorious. He who knows them not will fail" (知之者胜, 不知者不胜).[xli]

Although there is no doubt that the two strategists equally attached importance to knowledge, both differed in their approach to knowledge. While for Sun Tzu the possession of knowledge is one of the most important concepts in his entire system of thinking, because without knowledge it is impossible to act, and, even more important, impossible to win, Beaufre adopted a rather passive attitude towards knowledge. Beaufre only emphasized ignorance as an error that gets you killed, yet he was not clear-cut in pointing out that knowledge is the major prerequisite for victory or defeat. By comparison, Sun Tzu's statements seem to be more active regarding the attitude towards the attainment of knowledge and the role it plays for victory or defeat.[xlii]

Like André Beaufre, Sun Tzu believed that different circumstances require different strategies. Regarding the choice of method, Beaufre stated that it isn't "limited to the military field only" but also includes the political, economic, and diplomatic fields.[xliii] Sun Tzu was also convinced that in the choice of method you can select among different strategies.[xliv] In the passage *Attack by Stratagem* Sun Tzu wrote: "Thus the highest form of generalship is to balk the enemy's plans; the next best is to prevent the junction of the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; and the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities" (故上兵伐謀, 其次伐交, 其次伐兵, 其下攻城).[xliv]

The content of André Beaufre's concept of strategy is very similar to everything Sun Tzu associated with "laying of plans" (計, 計),[xlvi] argued Niu.[xlvii] Beaufre had an original idea about the meaning of strategy. He believed that strategy does not manifest itself as a single defined doctrine but as method of thought, its objective is "to codify events, set them in order of priority and then choose the most effective course of action." [xlviii] Although it is unclear whether Sun Tzu ever believed that strategy is a method of thought, Sun Tzu's concepts of strategy are very similar to those of Beaufre. Sun Tzu said: "The art of war is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field" (經之以無, 校之以計, 而索其情).[xlix] To clarify the meaning of *laying of plans* (計, 計) requires an exegesis. This is done with a macro approach and micro approach. According to the macro approach, *laying plans* either refers to the first chapter of Sun Tzu's Art of War, which Giles dubbed *Laying Plans*, or it explains the general meaning of the character (計, 計). Similar to Beaufre's abovementioned words, the chapter Laying Plans as well as the intrinsic meaning of the character 計 (*laying of plans*), when linking it with a method of thought, suggest that Sun Tzu's concept of strategy was tantamount to organized thinking, including categorization of phenomena, prioritization of events, and selection of the most effective course of action in order to attain a given objective. The micro approach of the meaning of the word *laying plans* in this passage makes reference to the selected quotation found in the passage *Laying Plans* as a part of Sun Tzu's concept of strategy. Like in Beaufre's concept of strategy (method of thought), the words taken from the quotation found in the passage Laying Plans as a part of Sun Tzu's concept of strategy suggest that both strategists' concept of strategy is very similar in its meaning: "The art of war is governed by five constant factors, to be taken into account in one's deliberations, when seeking to determine the conditions obtaining in the field."

Both André Beaufre and Sun Tzu's thinking on the whole tallies with praxeology.[i] In *An Introduction to Strategy* Beaufre wrote: "Our civilization requires a science of how to take or to use the word coined by Raymond Aron, a 'praxeology' "[ii] The Polish scholar Krzysztof Gawlikowski praised Sun Tzu as the founder of Chinese praxeology. Gawlikowski noted that all conclusions that western scholars came up with on praxeology are more or less identical with what Sun Tzu discovered 2000 years earlier, although these scholars when developing their thinking about praxeology had never studied Sun Tzu's book.[liii] Whereas Sun Tzu is considered to be the founder of Chinese praxeology, Beaufre constructed an entire system of how to take action.[liiii]

Like André Beaufre, Sun Tzu was a dialectical thinker. Both Beaufre and Clausewitz, in many respects holding identical views, had been to some extent under the influence of dialectics.[liv] In his famous definition, Beaufre conceptualizes the essence of strategy as, "the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute." [lv] Since Sun Tzu lived more than 2000 years ago, it is only natural that he didn't use this neologism. But the basis of his thinking was also nevertheless dualism. For this reason, concluded Niu, the difference between Sun Tzu and Beaufre is only a matter of appearance, but both strategists share the same kind of

theory as their philosophical basis.[lvi]

For Sun Tzu planning had top priority; similarly, Beaufre also attached importance to strategic planning. Beaufre believed that planning had to overcome the resistance of the enemy until being able to attain one's ideal objective. In other words, "If the plan is a good one, there should be no risk of set-backs. The result will be a 'risk-proof' strategy, the object of which will be to preserve our own liberty of action." [lvii] In Sun Tzu's book one can find corresponding expressions that accord with Beaufre's aforementioned ideas, only that the manner of expression in the classical Chinese prose is more concise than that of the French strategist and that is all. Sun Tzu said: "He wins his battles by making no mistakes. Making no mistakes is what establishes the certainty of victory, for it means conquering an enemy that is already defeated" (故其战胜不忒, 不忒者, 其所措必胜, 胜已败者也). [lviii] Sun Tzu's so-called "bù tè, 不忒" perfectly matches the meaning of Beaufre's 'risk-proof', according to Niu. Moreover, when Sun Tzu emphasized that, "Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him" (故善战者致人而不致于人), [lix] he, like Beaufre, had the objective in mind to guarantee our side's freedom of action. [lx]

Beaufre believed that when waging war there are two basic doctrines one has to adhere to. One is the rational application of force doctrine. The other is the doctrine of guile. Whereas the former "fits the case where we are stronger than the enemy [...], or the case where the enemy is the stronger but is dangerously dispersed," the latter "is imperative if we are the weaker." [lxi] Similarly, Sun Tzu said: "In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack—the direct and indirect (战势不过奇正)." [lxii] A juxtaposition of Beaufre's doctrines with Sun Tzu's quote shows that the first is the *direct method* (zhèng, 正) – the rational application of force –, and the second is the *indirect method* (qí, 奇) – guile–. Beaufre believed that the former originated from Clausewitz and that the latter was brilliantly expounded by Liddell Hart. [lxiii] In their approaches in maneuvering, the former emphasized the direct method, but he didn't stress the indirect method; the latter stressed the indirect method, but he didn't emphasize the direct method. Only Sun Tzu was really able to master the change between the direct and indirect method. [lxiv] Therefore, Beaufre and Sun Tzu have in common that both believed in the existence of two major doctrines in warfare.

Like Beaufre, Sun Tzu believed in the importance of being well informed and exercising foresight. [lxv] Beaufre advocated "the creation of highly effective intelligence and research organizations" enabling decision-makers to "control the process of evolution of force by fully-thought-out decisions arrived at in good time." [lxvi] Similarly, Sun Tzu emphasized foresight, resourcefulness, and the confirmation of intelligence as the basis for strategic planning. [lxvii]

According to André Beaufre and Sun Tzu, a superior strategy can produce a desired result without any serious fighting. In this the psychological dimension of warfare is the decisive factor which either makes or breaks your opponent before any physical fighting occurs. [lxviii] Moreover, these points

are also illustrated from a slightly different angle by the approaches of both strategists which categorize battle into two phases. For Beaufre, the design of a battle can be roughly divided into two phases: First, a preparatory phase; and, second, a decisive phase. The crux of victory and defeat is the psychological factor. In the first phase one has to cause the psychological collapse of the enemy. If this has been done successfully the requirement for a decisive battle may have been overridden. [lxix] Very coincidental, this is exactly Sun Tzu's so called "supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting" (不战而屈人之兵, 善之善折也). [lxx] This requires further explanation and a corrected translation: Sun Tzu's "zhàn" (战) means making war "huìzhàn" (会战) [lxxi] and not fighting a battle. Furthermore, "bǎizhàn bǎishèng, 百战百胜" means winning one hundred times making war [lxxii] (war preparation), and not really fighting one hundred times a battle (a decisive battle). [lxxiii]

For André Beaufre the major tenet for winning a decisive battle in pre-eighteenth century warfare was to force the enemy to accept battle under unfavorable conditions. Under these circumstances, the winning side would ensure victory through either great numerical superiority at the decisive point or "a highly advantageous position on the ground." [lxxiv] These concepts bear striking resemblance to some of the principles found in Sun Tzu's Chapter 6-Weak Points and Strong such as "whoever is first in the field awaits the coming of the enemy" (先处战地而待敌), [lxxv] "but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him" (致人而不致于人), "By discovering the enemy's disposition and remaining invisible ourselves" (形人而我无形), [lxxvi] "Numerical weakness comes from having to prepare against possible attacks; numerical strength, from compelling our adversary to make these preparations for us" (寡者备人者也, 众者使人备己者也), [lxxvii] and other principles. [lxxviii]

Both André Beaufre and Sun Tzu had a very similar understanding of maneuver. Apart from the many different Chinese characters which Lionel Giles translated with maneuver, there is one Chinese word which Sun Tzu used in his text that accords with André Beaufre's concept of maneuver. Beaufre believed that all decisions in strategy must be made within a framework consisting of three main coordinates: time, space, and the armed forces. Another even more complex factor governing "the order and inter-relationship of successive situations," which has to be taken into consideration, Beaufre designated as maneuver. [lxxix] According to the *Far East English-Chinese Dictionary*, the translation of the verb maneuver into the Chinese is as follows: "-v.t. 1 调遣。(diàoqiǎn) 2 计透(jìtòu) to maneuver the enemy into (out of) position. 诱敌深入( 离开)某地。" [lxxx] In other words, to maneuver implies using strategems to lure the enemy to adopt some kind of action which is beneficial to our side. [lxxxi] Sun Tzu's employment of the characters *dòngdí* 动敌 suggests that he utilized a very suitable word to express this concept. He said: "Thus one who is skillful at keeping the enemy on the move maintains deceitful appearance, according to which the enemy will act. He sacrifices something that the enemy may snatch at" (善动敌者, 形之敌必从之, 予之敌必取之). [lxxxii] Therefore, the most suitable Chinese characters for the word "manoeuvre"

should be *dòngdì* (动敌), because the word manoeuvre is a compound word consisting of the characters *dòng* (动 [move, act, get moving (dòng=动)]) and *dí* 敌 [enemy (dí rén=敌人)], thus connoting motion and action to keep the enemy on the move.[lxxxiii]

Elaborating on the factor of maneuver, Beaufre argued that "To some extent this governs the other factors; it is the direct product of the dialectic of conflict, or in other words of the abstract counterplay between the two opponents." Corresponding to other Western strategists, such as Clausewitz and Jomini, who made use of special analogies, Beaufre employed fencing as an analogy and pointed out, "it is clear that there are a number of possible forms of action and reaction." [lxxxiv] Beaufre's fencing analogy seemingly has the identical meaning of Sun Tzu's "*Military tactics are like unto water*" (兵形象水).[lxxxv] The one who is fencing must first analyze and explain the enemy's method of fencing and then attempt to get the upper hand. And the one who is using soldiers must "[He who can] modify his tactics in relation to his opponent and thereby succeed in winning" (因故变化而取胜). [lxxxvi] To elucidate maneuver in progress, Beaufre discussed different types of action with his fencing analogy. He argued that to ensure freedom of action the one who is fencing (taking different types of action) must always retain the initiative.[lxxxvii] This is also exactly what Sun Tzu said: "Thus one who excels at warfare compels men and is not compelled by other men." [lxxxviii]

## Conclusion

This analysis suggests two conclusions. First, it is important to engage deeply with the military writings and concepts of Beaufre. If Chinese strategists value Beaufre and his concepts

of strategy, China analysts should also study Beaufre more extensively because this may significantly enhance their understanding of contemporary Chinese strategic thinking. In other words, we should heed Sun Tzu's advice: "If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt." [lxxxix]

Second, the circumstantial evidence presented in this paper suggests that Beaufre's writings might be one of the major sources for reinterpreting Sun Tzu and helping Chinese analysts get a more modern outlook of how Sun Tzu can be applied to contemporary politics and military challenges in the nuclear age. Just as the Chinese Communist Party has co-opted western capitalism and mixed it with its socialist values and then dubbed it socialism with Chinese characteristics; by the same token, the sources analyzed in this paper indicate that the writings of the French strategist André Beaufre, which promote the idea of total strategy in a nuclear era, may have been employed to renovate China's grand strategy.

Parallelism suggests that in the same manner that Sun Tzu's teachings are consulted for crafting aspects of China's grand strategy and the role of China's military therein, it is likely that Beaufre's total strategy concepts are also being consulted, if not utilized, as part of China's grand strategy. For instance, over the years, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* has been employed for crafting aspects of China's international peaceful development strategy (grand strategy), which is both assertive and cooperative.[xc] Interestingly, André Beaufre's indirect strategy - in which "the availability and the use of force are just as necessary as in direct strategy" and force may be reduced but still plays an important part [xci] - has been identified as an aspect of international strategy, [xcii] and Beaufre describes it as a vehicle to preserve peace. [xciii]

Table 1: Strategy Paradigms of Waging War (1) \*\*

	Sun Tzu	Beaufre
<b>The Importance of Strategy for Winning War</b>	Ignorance or cognizance of the five constant factors governing strategy are the determining factors for victory or defeat.	Every defeat in the final analysis can be traced back to ignorance of strategy.
<b>The Importance of Knowledge and Intelligence</b>	Knowledge is the major prerequisite for victory or defeat.  The confirmation of intelligence (reports) serves as the basis for decision-making in strategic planning.	Ignorance is an error that might get you killed.  Being well-informed and being able to tap intelligence from sophisticated intelligence and research organizations enables decision-makers to arrive at well-thought-through decisions in due time.
<b>The Choice of Strategy</b>	For the choice of method, the decider can select among different strategies; yet among the optional strategies there is a clear hierarchical order of preference in the selection of a method, ranging from best to worst (from a minimum of physical violence directed against the civilian population to a maximum)	Flexible employment of strategy: "There is a special strategy to fit each situation." The selection of method is optional and isn't limited to the military field only, but also includes political, economic, and diplomatic means
<b>The Concept of Strategy</b>	Strategy connotes laying plans and is tantamount to organized thinking, including categorization of phenomena, prioritization of events, and selection of the most effective course of action in order to attain a given objective.	Strategy is not a single defined doctrine, but a method of thought, the object of which is "to codify events, set them in order of priority and then choose the most effective course of action."

Table 1: Strategy Paradigms of Waging War (2) \*\*

	Sun Tzu	Beaufre
<b>The Role of Planning</b>	Good planning avoids mistakes and guarantees the certainty of victory.	Good planning results in a 'risk-proof' strategy and is geared towards the preservation of freedom of action.
<b>The Doctrine for Waging War</b>	There are two major methods for waging war: the <i>direct</i> and the <i>indirect</i> method. The <i>direct method "zhèng"</i> is tantamount to the rational application of force, the <i>indirect method "qí"</i> is equivalent to guile.	Believes in the existence of two major doctrines which he designates (1) the doctrine of the rational application of force and (2) the doctrine of guile. The former is applied when we are stronger than the enemy, the latter <i>must</i> be employed when we are weaker.
<b>Preferred Method of Winning</b>	'Extensive use of deception. Psychological war, non-violent methods. The center of gravity is the enemy's will and alliance system.' [xciv]  'Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.'	The psychological dimension of war is the decisive factor which either makes or breaks your opponent before any physical fighting occurs.  Credibility is attained through a strong military posture which may ideally result in winning without having to engage in a major battle.

Table. \*\*Compiled by Tim Kumpe based on content analysis.

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- [x] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*. 23.
- [xi] *Ibid.*, 30.
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- [xvii] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy* .50.; Beaufre, *Strategy of Action*. 53-54.
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[xxxviii] Whereas the broad argument follows Niu's delineation, the discussion of the parallels is sometimes more detailed and sometimes briefer than the original. This is done for the sake of clarity.

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[xlviii] Beaufre noted: "The point, as we shall see, is that strategy cannot be a single defined doctrine; it is a method of thought, the object of which is to codify events, set them in order of priority and then choose the most effective course of action." (Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 13.)

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[lvi] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 208.

[lvii] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 25; Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 208-209.

[lviii] Sunzi, Ge Zhenxian, Zhou Yihong, and Giles Lionel. 1973. *Sunzi bing fa Zhong Ying wen xiang jie* = The art of war by Sun-tzu, in Chinese and English. Taipei: Zheng zhong shu ju. [Ko Chen-Sien (Ge Zhenxian)[Editor] 葛振先著, and Chou le-Hong (Zhou Yihong) [Painter] 周以鴻圖. 1973. 孫子兵法中英文詳解 = The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English. 1st ed. Taipei 臺北市: Zhengzhong Shuju 正中書局. 61.]

[lix] Ko Chen-Sien (Ge Zhenxian)[Editor] 葛振先著, and Chou le-Hong (Zhou Yihong) [Painter] 周以鴻圖. 1973. 孫子兵法中英文詳解 = The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English. 1st ed. Taipei 臺北市: Zhengzhong Shuju 正中書局. 86.

[lx] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 209.

[lxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 42-43.

[lxii] Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, 75.

[lxiii] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 42.

[lxiv] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 210.

[lxv] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 45-46.

[lxvi] *Ibid.*, 46.

[lxvii] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 211.

[lxviii] For Beaufre, see Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 57. "[...]the art of battle consists in maintaining and strengthening the psychological cohesion of one's own troops while at the same time disrupting that of the enemy's. The psychological factor is therefore all-important." (*Ibid.*); For Sun Tzu, see Malik, J. M. 1999. "The Evolution of Strategic Thought." In *Contemporary Security and Strategy*. Edited by Craig A. Snyder, 27. New York: Routledge.

[lxix] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 57. Beaufre noted: "A decision has therefore sometimes been achieved by military means alone as a result of superior strategy and without a major battle in the strict sense of the term." (*Ibid.*)

[lxx] Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, 42.

[lxxi] Alternative translations of *huizhan* include: 1)join in a battle, 2)launch a mass campaign

- [lxvii] This passage is translated by Lionel Giles in the following manner: "[...] to fight and conquer in all your battles." See, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, Chapter (3) Political Warfare and the key to Victory, 42.
- [lxviii] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 211. To clarify some of the confusion surrounding the usage of the word zhan 战 Niu also explained: "The word which Sun Tzu used for warfare (战争) is 兵 (bing), but the character 兵 also means strategy, national defense, military affairs and other complex meanings." (Ibid.)
- [lxvix] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 60.
- [lxvix] Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, Chapter (6) Weak Points and Strong, 86
- [lxvxi] Ibid., 87-88.
- [lxvxi] Ibid., 88-89.
- [lxvxi] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 211.
- [lxvxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 35-36.
- [lxvxi] Editor in Chief: Liang Shih-chiu, Fu Y.-c. Manuscript Reader, Chu L.-c. Editor, and Jeffrey C. T. C. H. W. Compilers, eds. 1993. *Far East English-Chinese dictionary = 遠東英漢大辭典*. Taipei, Taiwan: The Far East Book Co., Ltd. 1257.
- [lxvxi] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 209.
- [lxvxi] Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, Chapter (5) Use of Energy, 76.
- [lxvxi] Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 209.
- [lxvxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 36. : See also, Niu, Sun Tzu and Beaufre, 209-210.
- [lxvxi] Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, Chapter (6) Weak Points and Strong, 90-91.
- [lxvxi] Ibid., 91.
- [lxvxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, 36-41.
- [lxvxi] Sun Tzu, Chapter (6) Vacuity and Substance. For this, see Sawyer, Ralph D., and Mei-chün Sawyer. 1993. *The Seven military classics of ancient China: [Wu jing qi shu]. History and warfare*. Boulder: Westview Press. 166.; According to Ko, this quote from Sun Tzu reads: "Therefore the clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him." (Ko, *The art of war by Sun-Tzu in Chinese and English*, Chapter (6) Weak Points and Strong, 86.); To make his point Niu quoted Li Weigong's paraphrase of Sun Tzu: " One thousand essays, ten thousand sections do not go beyond compel others, do not be compelled by them (千章万句, 不出乎致人而不致于人而已, 臣当以此教诸将。)" *Questions and Replies Between Tang Taizong and Li Weigong*, Book 2. See, Sawyer, Ralph D., and Mei-chün Sawyer. 1993. *The Seven military classics of ancient China: [Wu jing qi shu]. History and warfare*. Boulder: Westview Press. 337.
- [lxvxi] Sun Tzu. 2002. *The Art of War—Translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 81.
- [lxvxi] Du Bo. 2005. "'Zhanlüe Er Quren Zhi Bing' Yu Weihu Shijie Heping [Breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting and safeguarding world peace]." In *Sunzi bing fa yu zhan lue wen hua [The Art of War by Sun Tzu and Strategic Culture]*. Edited by Yao Youzhi and Yan Qiying, 362–67. Di Liu Jie Sunzibingfa Guoji Yantaohui Lunwen Ji [ Collection of Essays of the 6th International Symposium on Sun Tzu's Art of War]. Beijing: Junshi Kexue Chubans.; Renmin Ribao. 2009. "At the 8th International Sun Tzu's Art of War Conference Guo Qinglin stressed to grasp the essence of Sun Tzu's Art of War to promote the world's peaceful development." March 11.; Yao Jianing. 2014. "China's Military: 9th International Symposium on Sun Tzu's Art of War kicks off." 中国军网 China Military Online, August 26. Accessed August 29, 2014. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2014-08/26/content\\_6112195.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/news-channels/china-military-news/2014-08/26/content_6112195.htm).
- [lxvxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*. 129.
- [lxvxi] Boorman, Howard L., and Scott A. Boorman. 1966. "An Introduction to Strategy by André Beaufre." *Political Science Quarterly* No. 3 (Vol. 81): 509.; Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*. 107-130
- [lxvxi] Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*. 130.
- [lxvxi] Quoted from Handel, Michael I. 1996. *Masters of war: Classical strategic thought*. 2nd ed. London, Portland, OR: Frank Cass. 19.

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