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Infinity Journal

IN THIS EDITION

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A Note From The Editor

I make no apologies if what follows seems harsh or less than conducive to a wider spirit of co-operation with what passes for strategic discussion on the Internet. However, based on recent work, staying silent is not going to help.

Infinity Journal is a peer-reviewed academic journal published in Portable Document Format (PDF) – which can generate a newsstand magazine at the flick of a switch.

Infinity Journal is not:

A.) A website
B.) A "Blog."

The time and workload associated with each issue of IJ is identical to that required for a print edition work. This is the standard we hold ourselves to, or else we would simply be less useful. The benefit of our effort is reflected in who subscribes, not how many subscribe.

Thus, I, as the Editor-in-Chief, have very little time or toleration for those who wish to write 500 ill-considered words of policy opinion, which they want to see online within 24 hours, to create a "buzz". If you want to write for Infinity Journal your work will be peer-reviewed, and it can take up to six to nine months before your article is ready for publication (this includes the peer-review process, amendments and proofreading). This is the Infinity Journal standard.

We are also entirely free of charge to subscribers, and will continue as such for long as we can afford to be. So, reading IJ costs you nothing and we aren't asking for you to write free articles so as we can sell advertising and services.

That standard is unique as concerns any meaningful attempt at strategic discussion and debate today. Firstly, we ruthlessly enforce a set definition of strategy, and secondly, we are just as serious about the peer-review process. I take no pride in revealing that about 60-65 percent of articles submitted to IJ fail to get published. The spread between those that are simply not suited to the journal and/or fail peer-review is about even. I also take no pride in mentioning 'big names' have failed the peer-review process, which has produced substantial negative consequences for us as a publication, and likewise because it is an indictment of our attempt to improve strategic education. We are clearly failing.

Most strategic discussion (not all) on the Internet is of a finger painting standard or simply a policy discussion and opinion dressed up with the word strategy because the author sees some merit in being attached to a "strategic discussion."

Strategy is a practical skill mostly done by soldiers or similar armed entities, be they state, non-state, regular or irregular. Strategic Theory is something that can 'done' by anyone, assuming they are conversant with the canonical works that inform the successful practice. That said, there is much poor strategic theory out there and many advocates of it. This is the condition upon which we exist and seek to address.

OK, Big Nose. So what?

The 'so what' is that IJ may, one day, print one article a year because it is either the only submission or either the only one of a printable standard. In the few words attributed to John Boyd that I might ever agree with, he spoke of "To be or To do." You can be someone that everyone talks about on the Internet because you perpetuate the avalanche junk food standard or discussion, or you can do something useful, which means very, very few will know your name. In doing, remember, Strategy is a content-neutral practical skill with life or death consequences. It's not the entertainment industry. Fame is irrelevant. The choice is yours.

William F. Owen
Editor-in-Chief, Infinity Journal
July 2017

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Looking ahead, Israeli military planners will need to be increasingly attentive to the country's nuclear strategy, including reconsiderations of "deliberate ambiguity," and certain corollary questions of preemption, strategic targeting, and ballistic missile defense. Throughout this indispensable assessment, it will be necessary to shape pertinent specific policy changes according to a previous development of coherent doctrine, and to proceed on the core understanding that Israel's nuclear strategy must always remain oriented toward deterrence, rather than actual war-fighting. In the end, as this essay comprehensively points out, the critical strategic policy task for Israel must always be seen as analytic or intellectual, that is, as a protracted struggle of "mind over mind" with many (sometimes interrelated or "hybrid") adversaries.

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Israel's Nuclear Posture: Intellectual Antecedents and Doctrinal Foundations

Louis René Beres

Purdue University

Louis René Beres (Ph.D., Princeton, 1971) is Emeritus Professor of International Law at Purdue University. He is the author of many scholarly and popular publications dealing with Israeli security and nuclear strategy. His twelfth book, *Surviving Amid Chaos: Israel's Nuclear Strategy*, was published in 2016 by Rowman & Littlefield. In 2003-2004, he was Chair of Project Daniel (Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon).

> *"It remains true that the highest achievements of the art of war are more to be found in the triumph of mind over mind, than in the triumphs of mind over matter."*
>
> *F.E. Adcock, The Greek and Macedonian Art of War[i]*

In the final analysis, and irrespective of any still-ongoing peace processes, Israel must be regarded by its defenders as an always-beleaguered mini-state, one that can compensate for its irremediable lack of strategic depth only by displaying an appropriate strategic equalizer. For now, moreover, this equalizer must remain what had originally been intended and sought by David Ben Gurion, the country's first prime minister. This goal, of course, refers to Israel's nuclear weapons, or, as they are sometimes described metaphorically, "the bomb in the basement".

This does not mean, however, that the Israeli bomb must remain opaque indefinitely. Rather, at some point, at least, Israel's nuclear posture will have to be brought out of the country's "basement," into the clarifying light, not as an authentication of what everyone already knows to be the case, but instead as part of a conspicuously calculated effort to enhance national deterrence.[ii] To most properly accomplish this soon-to-be required movement away from deliberate ambiguity, Israel's military planners will first need to build upon the following two-part understanding: (1) any optimal Israeli nuclear strategy must exhibit many complex and intersecting dimensions; (2) such an Israeli strategy must play a suitably important role vis-à-vis certain future adversaries. These anticipated foes should include not only discrete state or sub-state enemies, but also certain assorted hybrid combinations.

There is more. The long-term utility of Israel's nuclear strategy will need to be considered in certain wholly non-nuclear settings, as well as in more expectedly nuclear ones. Jerusalem will also have to proceed in such matters with a steady and possibly expanding reference to "Cold War II." To be sure, some form of second Cold War is already underway, and this newest landscape of rivalry between Russia and the United States [iii]

In shaping its developing nuclear strategy, any unmodified continuance of deliberate ambiguity by Israel would make little analytic or policy sense.[iv] Of course, President Trump either wittingly, or in an unintended reaction to certain external expectations, could react to any future Israeli nuclear disclosures by more vigorously pressuring the Jewish State to join the 1968 *Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)*. On proliferation matters, however, it must always be remembered that Israel is a distinctly unique case. This *sui generis* status exists, *inter alia*, because Israel could never survive indefinitely without Ben Gurion's essential nuclear equalizer.

Israel's weapons are not intended for actual war fighting,[v] but only for protracted strategic deterrence. In the carefully considered words of the *Project Daniel* final report, *Israel's Strategic Future*: "The primary point of Israel's nuclear forces must always be deterrence *ex ante*, not revenge *ex post*."[vi]

There is a distinctly overriding security reason for urging the removal of Israel's bomb from the "basement." This reason concerns the complex requirements of maintaining a *credible nuclear deterrence posture*.[vii] To present such an essential posture (merely having nuclear weapons does not automatically bestow a credible deterrence posture), Israel's nuclear weapons, among other things, must always appear sufficiently invulnerable to preemptive destruction by would-be adversaries.

These nuclear weapons would also need to be seen as "*penetration capable*" (recognizably able to hit their intended targets) and "*usable*" (able to be taken seriously, that is, as a plausibly proportionate[viii] retaliation for certain enemy

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aggressions). If any of these particular enemy perceptions were absent, Israel's nuclear weapons might then not be taken with sufficient seriousness to serve as a sustainably credible deterrent. This could be the case, moreover, even though the physical existence and destructiveness of such weapons should appear altogether obvious and unassailable.

For Israel's nuclear weapons to protect against massive enemy attacks, some of which could be existential in magnitude, Israel now needs to *refine*, *operationalize*, and possibly *declare* certain elements of its *strategic doctrine* and *associated ordnance*. Such action would be needed to enhance deterrence credibility along the entire spectrum of major security threats, and also to provide Israel with broad conceptual frameworks from which particular decisions and tactics could be fittingly extrapolated as needed.

In principle, the urgent problems associated with expectedly nuclearizing adversaries should never be addressed by Israel on a case-by-case or purely *ad hoc* basis. Rather, Israel should stay prepared to fashion its best available response to all still-conceivable nuclear threats within the much broader and more coherent context of antecedent *strategic theory*. In all fields, including Israel's nuclear strategy, theory is a necessary *net*.

> Only those who cast, therefore, "will catch."[ix]

In this theoretical framework, strategy will need to be developed in a dialectical format. From Plato's era onward, dialectical thinking has required the disciplined asking and answering of certain intersecting questions. It follows that to optimally shape its indispensable strategic doctrine, Israeli planners should promptly address the following core questions:

> *Shall Israel begin to openly identify certain general elements of its nuclear arsenal and nuclear plans? If so, how?*
>
> *Would it be in Israel's best security interest to make certain others aware, at least in general terms, of its nuclear targeting doctrine; its retaliatory and counter-retaliatory capacities; its willingness under particular conditions to preempt; its willingness under particular conditions to undertake nuclear reprisals; and its corollary capacities for ballistic missile defense?[x] If so, to what extent?*

Simple enemy awareness of an Israeli bomb can never automatically imply that Israel maintains a credible nuclear deterrent. If, for example, Israel's nuclear arsenal were vulnerable to enemy first-strikes, it might still not persuade certain enemy states to resist attacking the Jewish State. Similarly, if Israel's political leadership were perceived to be unwilling to resort to nuclear weapons in reprisal for anything but unconventional and expectedly exterminatory strikes, these enemy states might also not be suitably deterred.

If Israel's nuclear weapons were seen as uniformly too large, too destructive, and/or too indiscriminate for any rational use, deterrence could fail. And if Israel's targeting doctrine were seen as too predominantly "counterforce," that is, targeted exclusively or even primarily, on enemy state weapons, together with certain supporting military infrastructures, would-be attackers might not anticipate sufficiently high expected costs. They might, in consequence, not be successfully deterred.

A presumptive counter-force targeting doctrine, however, could also be damaging to Israel, because it could enlarge the apparent probabilities of nuclear war fighting. Always, Israel's nuclear weapons should be oriented toward deterrence, and not to any actual conflict. With this in mind Israeli planners and leaders (in stark contrast to the now-ongoing nuclear military planning being operationalized in Pakistan) have likely opted not to build or deploy tactical/theatre nuclear forces.

If Israel's targeting doctrine were judged to be too predominantly counterforce, enemy states could so fear an Israeli first-strike that they would then consider more seriously striking first themselves. This more-or-less reasonable scenario would represent, in effect, a *preemption of the preemption*, an ironic situation, a *danse macabre* wherein the intended object of "anticipatory self-defense"[xi] (the proper legal term for any permissible preemption) would itself strike "*defensively*."

The dialectical dynamics of such strategic calculations are bewilderingly complex. In this connection, aware of *counter-city/counterforce* options and implications, Israel's leaders should quickly determine the most favorable means and levels of any prospective nuclear disclosure. *How shall enemy states best be apprised of Israel's targeting doctrine, so that these particular adversaries could be deterred from all forms of both first-strike and retaliatory strike action?*

To ensure the long-term survival of Israel, it can never be sufficient that Israel's enemies merely *know* that the Jewish State *has* nuclear weapons. They must also be convinced, always, that these atomic arms are sufficiently secure and operationally usable, and that Israel's designated leadership is determinedly *willing* to launch them in recognizable response to certain first-strike and/or retaliatory aggressions.

To prevent catastrophic war in the Middle East, enemy states should never be allowed to assume that Israel could be massively attacked with impunity.

Always, therefore, Israel's strategic doctrine must aim at strengthening nuclear deterrence. Jerusalem can meet this unassailably key objective only by convincing enemy states that any first-strike attack upon Israel would always be irrational. More precisely, this means successfully communicating to all relevant enemy states that the expected costs of any such strike would always exceed the expected benefits. Of course, substantially different forms of strategic persuasion will need to be used in the case of assorted sub-state or insurgent group adversaries. And within this distinct or separate category of foes, Israeli planners will need to make further careful assessments of expected adversarial rationality.

In all cases, and without any exception, Israel's strategic doctrine must convince prospective attackers that their intended victim has both the *willingness* and the *capacity* to retaliate with nuclear weapons. Where an enemy state considering an attack upon Israel were somehow

unconvinced about either or both of these fundamental components of nuclear deterrence, it could then still choose *rationally* to strike first. This decision would depend, at least in part, upon the particular value it had originally placed upon the expected consequences of any such attack.

Regarding *willingness* to retaliate, even if Israel were, in reality, fully prepared to respond to certain enemy attacks with nuclear reprisals, any residual adversarial failure to actually recognize such preparedness could still provoke an attack upon Israel. Here, misperception and/or errors in information could quickly immobilize Israeli nuclear deterrence. It is also conceivable that Israel would, in fact, simply lack the willingness to retaliate, and that this damaging lack of willingness would be perceived correctly by enemy state decision-makers. In this very worrisome case, Israeli nuclear deterrence would plausibly be immobilized, not because of any confused signals, but rather because of signals that had not been aptly distorted.

Regarding *capacity*, even if Israel were to maintain a substantial arsenal of nuclear weapons, it is essential that enemy states always believe these weapons to be distinctly usable. This means that if a first-strike attack were ever believed capable of sufficiently destroying Israel's atomic arsenal and associated infrastructures, that country's nuclear deterrent could conceivably be immobilized. To best guard against any such perilous eventuality, Jerusalem would be well-advised to continue working closely at improving all viable and affordable submarine nuclear basing options.[xii]

Even if Israel's nuclear weapons were configured such that they could not be destroyed by an enemy first-strike, enemy misperceptions or misjudgments about Israeli vulnerability could still bring about the catastrophic failure of Israeli nuclear deterrence. A further complication here concerns enemy state deployment of anti-tactical ballistic missiles, deployments which could sometime contribute to an affirmative attack decision against Israel, by lowering the attacker's own expected costs.[xiii]

The importance of usable nuclear weapons must also be examined from the standpoint of probable harms. Should Israel's nuclear weapons be perceived by a would-be attacker as uniformly too high-yield, or city-busting weapons, they could also fail to deter. In certain circumstances, successful nuclear deterrence could even vary inversely with perceived destructiveness, at least to a point. This does not mean that Israel should ever incline toward a nuclear war-fighting doctrine (it assuredly should not), but only that it must always be aware of possibly subtle or eccentric decisional correlations between successful nuclear deterrence, and enemy perceptions of nuclear destructiveness.[xiv]

This brings us back to the over-all central importance of Israeli strategic doctrine. To the extent that this doctrine was to identify certain nuanced and graduated forms of reprisal - forms calibrating Israeli retaliations somewhat to particular levels of provocation – any disclosure of such doctrine could enhance Israeli nuclear deterrence. Without such disclosure, Israel's enemies would be kept guessing about the Jewish State's probable responses, a condition of persistent uncertainty that could positively serve Israel's security for a while longer, but, at one time or another, could also fail altogether.

It is time for one final observation, one already familiar to Israeli strategic planners. All nuclear deterrence is contingent upon an assumption of enemy rationality. This means that in calculating deterrence, an enemy must always be assumed to value its continued physical survival more highly than any other preference, or combination of preferences. Where this assumption might be unwarranted,[xv] all deterrence bets could be off, and the would-be deterrer's own survival would likely depend upon certain apt forms of preemption, and/or ballistic missile defense - that is, BMD displaying a near-perfect reliability of intercept.

In the persisting matter of a nuclear Iran, a still-future peril that intersects synergistically with a broad variety of corollary terror threats in the region,[xvi] Israel will soon have to decide whether that country could sometime be animated more by *Jihadist* visions of a Shiite apocalypse,[xvii] than by the more usual strategic considerations of national survival. This portentous prospect, one wherein Iran could effectively emerge as a *suicide-bomber in macrocosm*, is more-or-less "improbable,"[xviii] but it is still not inconceivable.

Credo quia absurdum. "I believe because it is absurd." Israel should never construct its overall strategic doctrine upon such an eccentric mantra, but it also ought not ignore this potentially insightful paradox.

In the end, this means a core responsibility to plan carefully for long-term nuclear deterrence of a rational nuclear Iran, but also to make simultaneous preparations for dealing with an already nuclear Iran that might sometime value certain religious preferences more highly than physical survival. By definition any such residual preparations would have to include viable plans for threatening to obstruct those particular Islamic religious values that Tehran could then value even more highly than any other national preference, or, indeed, any combination of such preferences.

In terms of nuclear deterrence, irrationality is not the same as madness. If properly understood, even an irrational national adversary could be deterred. For Israel, going forward, this means a more precise and obligatory understanding of Iran's expected ordering of religious (Shiite Islamic) preferences. Over time, similar understandings may also need to be fashioned regarding Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or even Turkey.

As for any eleventh-hour Israeli resort to preemption or "anticipatory self-defense,"[xix] it would need to be undertaken sometime before Iran became operationally nuclear.[xx] For the moment, this starkly alternative option to long-term nuclear deterrence remains logically possible, but also manifestly unlikely. In strategic terms, at this plainly late stage, the expected costs to Israel of any defensive first-strike would quite plausibly exceed the expected gains. At the same time, Israel would be hard pressed, especially after the July 14, 2015 Vienna Agreement (*Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*, or JCPOA) to argue convincingly, *ex post*, for the permissibility of such a strike.

Finally, in fashioning its developing nuclear strategy, Israeli planners will need to factor in to their calculations the expanding prospect of a new Cold War, and - together with

this contextual prospect now in mind - the likelihood of certain hybrid wars against various state/sub-state adversaries. In any such mixed-actor conflicts, the deterrent effectiveness of Israel's nuclear strategy and doctrine could plausibly be different from what it would be against exclusively state or sub-state enemies. In those wars directed against an exclusively sub-state or terrorist foe, e.g. Hezbollah, however, it is unlikely that Israel's nuclear strategy could play any meaningfully direct role.[xxi]

There does exist, however, a very infrequently mentioned intersection between sub-state terrorist actions against Israel, and certain nuclear strategy infrastructures. Here, the connection concerns more-or-less plausible risks to Israel's nuclear reactor complex at Dimona. Already, in 2014, this facility came under missile and rocket fire from Hamas. Still earlier, in 1991, Dimona had been attacked by state-enemy Iraq.[xxii]

It follows that although Israel's nuclear strategy is not apt to have any tangibly direct effects upon terrorist adversaries, these adversaries might nonetheless exert assorted and deleterious effects upon Israel's most critical nuclear reactor. In this connection, it is also worth noting, more specifically, that any Palestinian statehood ensuing from protracted Palestinian terrorism could further exacerbate major security threats to Dimona, and that Israel's nuclear strategy might at that point prove both relevant and useful. To the extent that Israel's nuclear strategy serves to enhance U.S. security in the region - and this extent could be very far-reaching indeed - any such prospective success against a new state enemy called Palestine would be welcome not only in Jerusalem, but also in Washington.[xxiii]

What emerges from this comprehensive assessment of Israel's nuclear strategy is a clear and persisting expectation of region-wide complexity amid chaos. This expectation means an utterly core obligation, for Israel, to continuously think of its nuclear strategy as an emergent struggle of mind over mind, rather than mind over matter. To be sure, Israeli strategists will still have to keep up with assorted regional power balances, multiple orders of battle, and changing correlations of forces, but now, looking ahead, Jerusalem will also need to heed bewilderingly complicated forms of theoretical calculation and dialectical thinking.[xxiv]

In the end, Israeli strategic planners must prepare to understand their vital diagnoses of existential threat, and their corresponding remedies, within the ceaselessly bewildering context of a global state of nature. As originally understood by the seventeenth century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes, this condition of nature defines a system of interactions without any "common power;" hence, a configuration of planet-wide lawlessness.[xxv] Moreover, noted Hobbes, already back in the seventeenth century, within this global state of nature, "...the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest."

Looking ahead, the greater the extent of worldwide nuclear proliferation, the closer our world will come to resemble a true Hobbesian condition of nature. With such an ominous and plausible expectation, Israel's particular nuclear strategy will become not only increasingly relevant to the country's security, but also utterly indispensable.[xxvi] It only remains to be seen whether Israel's responsible military thinkers and planners will actually be up to the extraordinary task.

References

[i] Adcock was speaking expressly about the Greek art of war, but his wisdom here still applies more generally to present day considerations of warfare, especially nuclear war planning.On December 22, 1995, Prime Minister Shimon Peres told the Israeli press that Israel would be willing to "give up the atom" in exchange for "peace." Later, on December 11, 2006, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert publicly offered a very similar exchange. Bt these disclosures were intentionally vague, and cannot now be considered adequate for current purposes of enhancing Israel's nuclear deterrent.Depending upon the precise manner in which Cold War II actually unfolds, Israel's overall security position could become more or less stable. Recalling the primacy of theory in the development of Israel's strategic posture and doctrine, the expansion of Cold War II necessarily implies a world system of steadily expanding bipolarity. For early writings by this author on the world-stability implications of bipolarity versus multipolarity, see: Louis René Beres, "Bipolarity, Multipolarity, and the Reliability of Alliance Commitments," Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 25, No. 4., December 1972, pp. 702-710; Louis René Beres, "Bipolarity, Multipolarity, and the Tragedy of the Commons," Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 4., December 1973; pp. 649-658; and Louis René Beres, "Guerillas, Terrorists, and Polarity: New Structural Models of World Politics," Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 27, No.4., December 1974, pp. 624-636.

[ii] See: Louis René Beres, Looking Ahead: Revising Israel's Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East, Herzliya Conference Policy Paper, Herzliya Conference, March 11-14, 2013 (IDC, Herzliya, Israel). See, also: Louis René Beres, "Changing Direction? Updating Israel's Nuclear Doctrine," INSS, Israel, Strategic Assessment, Vol. 17, No.3., October 2014, pp. 93-106.

[iii] For assessments of the expected consequences of nuclear war fighting, see, by this author: Louis René Beres, Apocalypse: Nuclear Catastrophe in World Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Louis René Beres, Mimicking Sisyphus: America's Countervailing Nuclear Strategy (Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1983); Louis René Beres, Reason and Realpolitik: U.S. Foreign Policy and World Order (Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1984); and Louis René Beres, ed., Security or Armageddon: Israel's Nuclear Strategy (Lexington, Mass., Lexington Books, 1986). Most recently, see: Louis René Beres, Surviving Amid Chaos: Israel's Nuclear Strategy (New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

[iv] See Israel's Strategic Future: Project Daniel, The Project Daniel Group, Louis René Beres, Chair, Ariel Center for Policy Research, ACPR Policy Paper No. 155, May 2004, Israel. See also: Louis René Beres, "Israel's Uncertain Strategic Future," Parameters: Journal of the U.S. Army War College, Vol. XXXVII, No.1, Spring 2007, pp. 37-54; and Louis René Beres, "Facing Iran's Ongoing Nuclearization: A Retrospective on Project Daniel," International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, Vol. 22, Issue 3, June 2009, pp. 491-514. Still, there are identifiable circumstances wherein calculated threats of revenge could effectively bolster Israeli nuclear deterrence. In these circumstances, Israel's core objective would not be vengeance per se following any particular failure of deterrence, but rather deliberate utilization of the "Samson" factor, as a deliberate strategy to enhance nuclear deterrence.

[v] This argument pertains not only to prospectively direct nuclear threats to Israel (e.g., a still-nuclearizing Iran), but also to certain threats of nuclear war elsewhere in the world - that is, to threats that do not pertain specifically to Israel. For a discussion of these circumstances, with specific reference to North Korea and Pakistan, see: Louis René Beres, "On the Eve of New Atoms," The Washington Times, September 28, 2016.

[vi] As used here, "proportionality" does not refer to precise jurisprudential definitions under the law of war, or the law of armed conflict, but rather to the ordinary strategic meanings of more-or-less equivalent destructiveness.

[vii] This metaphor is attributable to the German poet, Novalis, and cited by Karl Popper as epigraph to his The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Harper & Row, 1959).

[viii] Even today, however, Israel may need to think of defense as a residual or somewhat secondary security protection. Recalling Sun-Tzu's ancient The Art of War: "Those who excel at defense, bury themselves away below the lowest depths of Earth. Those who excel at offense move from above the greatest heights of Heaven. Thus, they are able to preserve themselves, and attain a complete victory."

[ix] For in-depth examination of "anticipatory self-defense" with particular reference to Israel, see, by this author: Louis René Beres, Surviving Amid Chaos: Israel's Nuclear Strategy (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 167 pp.

[x] See, on these options: Louis René Beres and Admiral (USN/ret.) Leon "Bud" Edney, "Israel's Nuclear Strategy: A Larger Role for Submarine Basing," The Jerusalem Post, August 17, 2014; and Professor Beres and Admiral Edney, "A Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrent for Israel," Washington Times, September 5, 2014. Admiral Edney served as SACLANT, NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic.

[xi] On pertinent issues of ballistic missile deployments, by Israel, see: Louis René Beres and (MG/IDF/res.) Isaac Ben-Israel, "The Limits of Deterrence," Washington Times, November 21, 2007; Professor Louis René Beres and MG Isaac Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iran," Washington Times, June 10, 2007; and Professor Louis René Beres and MG Isaac Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iranian Nuclear Attack," Washington Times, January 27, 2009.

[xii] Israeli preparations for nuclear war fighting need not be considered as a distinct alternative to nuclear deterrence, but rather as essential or even integral components of nuclear deterrence.

[xiii] In this connection: "Do you know what it means to find yourselves face to face with a madman?" inquires Luigi Pirandello's Henry IV. "Madmen, lucky folk, construct without logic, or rather with a logic that flies like a feather."

[xiv] One such threat could stem from future Iranian or Syrian transfers of certain nuclear technologies to Hezbollah. Already, for several years, Israel has struck preemptively within Syria to prevent certain conventional weapons transfers to the enemy Shiite militia. See, for example: Louis René Beres, "Striking Hezbollah-bound Weapons in Syria: Israel's Actions Under International Law," Harvard National Security Journal, Harvard Law School, August 26, 2013.

[xv] See Andrew Bostom, "Iran's Final Solution for Israel: Persian Shiite anti-Semitism is Deep Rooted and Points to Genocide," National Review Online, February 10, 2012. Important to note, here, is the direct eschatological nexus established between the individual Jew (microcosm), and the Jewish State (macrocosm).

[xvi] This word is enclosed by quotation marks because it is technically impossible to ascertain the true probability of unique events. In pertinent mathematics and statistics, probability judgments must always be based upon the determinable frequency of past events. Still the best treatment of problematic probability estimations in strategic thinking is Anatol Rapoport, Strategy and Conscience (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 323.

[xvii] The right of self-defense, both anticipatory and post-attack, is a "peremptory" or jus cogens norm under international law. See: Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, May 23, 1969; entered into force, January 27, 1980. The customary international law right of anticipatory self-defense has its modern origins in the so-called "Caroline Incident," which concerned the unsuccessful 1837 rebellion in Upper Canada against British rule. Following this landmark incident, the serious "threat" of armed attack has generally been accepted as sufficient cause for appropriate defensive action. Now, further, in the nuclear age, it stands to reason that this anticipatory right should be greater than ever before.

[xviii] The Israeli precedents for any such preemption, of course, would be Operation Opera against the Osiraq (Iraqi) nuclear reactor on June 7, 1981, and, later (and far lesser known) Operation Orchard against Syria on September 6, 2007. In April 2011, the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that he bombed Syrian site in the Deir ez-Zoe region of Syria had indeed been a developing nuclear reactor. Both preemptions were lawful assertions of Israel's core "Begin Doctrine."

[xix] Hybrid warfare, of course, could involve disparate sub-state enemies exclusively. For example, according to Ehud Eilam, "Hamas and Hezbollah remain Israel's greatest hybrid enemies, as they are capable of mounting tactical operations such as lethal ambushes and raids, which characterize guerrilla warfare, and, like conventional armies, also possess firepower in the form of thousands of rockets that can hit the Israeli rear." See his "The Struggle against Hamas/Hezbollah: Israel's Next Hybrid War," Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 10, No.2., July 2016, p.1.

[xx] See Bennett Ramberg, "Should Israel Close Dimona? The Radiological Consequences of a Military Strike on Israel's Plutonium-Production Reactor?" Arms Control Today, May 2008, pp. 6-13.

[xxi] In this regard, Israel's Operation Opera and Operation Orchard likely saved the lives of a great many U.S. and allied soldiers during the multilateral conflicts Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. Both of these life-saving operations, moreover, were also legally permissible and even law-enforcing, although the UN Security Council, in Resolution # 487 on June 19, 1981, wrongly chose to condemn the preemptive attack on Osiraq. Even before the nuclear age, Emmerich de Vattel took a strong position in favor of anticipatory self-defense. The eminent Swiss scholar concludes, in his The Law of Nations (1758): "The safest plan is to prevent evil, where that is possible. A nation has the right to resist the injury another seeks to inflict upon it, and to use force and every other just means of resistance against the aggressor." Vattel, in the fashion of Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius (The Law of War and Peace, 1625) drew upon ancient Hebrew Scripture, and expressly Jewish Law.

[xxii] One pertinent area of such complicated assessment must be hybrid war, especially (1) whether the nuclear and conventional spheres of engagement ought to remain integrated or operationally separate and discrete; and (2) whether such conflict would involve Israel as a recipient of hybrid warfare, or as its recognizable initiator.

[xxiii] This actual condition of anarchy stands in stark contrast to the juri

[xxiv] sprudential assumption of solidarity between all states in the presumably common struggle against aggression and terrorism. Such a peremptory expectation (known formally in international law as a jus cogens assumption), is already mentioned in Justinian, Corpus Juris Civilis (533 C.E.); Hugo Grotius, 2 De Jure Belli Ac Pacis Libri Tres, Ch. 20 (Francis W. Kesey, tr., Clarendon Press, 1925)(1690); Emmerich De Vattel, 1 Le Droit Des Gens, Ch. 19 (1758). Recalling Hobbes discussion of "nature" in Chapter XIII of Leviathan, "war" obtains even when there exists no "actual fighting." War, therefore, need not consist of any ongoing belligerencies, but only "in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary." Here, Hobbes' stipulated definition of war is essentially identical to what we usually mean today by "cold war." Also interesting, and in the same chapter of Leviathan, Hobbes indicates that the global state of nature is in fact the only condition wherein such a state has ever really existed: "But though there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet, in all times, Kings, and Persons of Soveraigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing; and their eyes fixed on one another....which is a posture of War."

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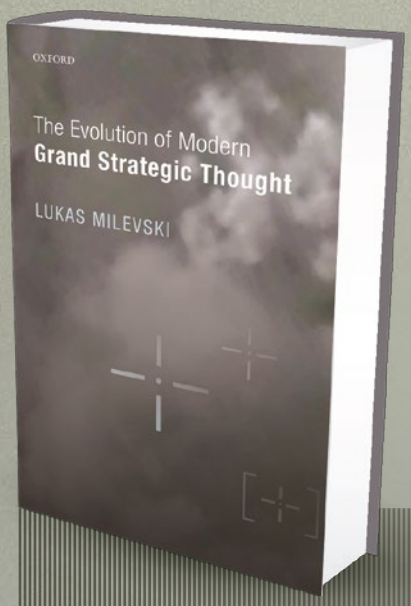

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Why Strategy Is Easy but Difficult (at the Same Time): A Short Study on the Complexities of Escalation

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Dr. Hugh Smith retired in 2004 as Associate Professor in Politics at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. He lectured frequently at staff colleges in fields such as strategic thought, war and ethics, and armed forces and society and made a number of submissions to parliamentary committees on defence matters. Dr Smith is the author of *On Clausewitz: A Study of Military and Political Ideas*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

One of the virtues of strategic theory, when properly understood, is that it can dispel clichés and easy assumptions that often abound in popular debate. One of the more obvious timeworn phrases is the notion of military victory or a military solution. Public commentary will frequently refer to one protagonist or another as seeking a military victory or proclaim that a particular problem can, or cannot, be solved by military means alone.[i]

The practice of strategy is, broadly speaking, the endeavour that seeks to use available means, both tangible and intangible, to achieve desired ends.[ii] To have utility strategy therefore has to be rooted firmly in reality, because as Hew Strachan discerns, it is 'an attempt to make concrete a set of objectives through the application of military force to a particular case'.[iii] Taken together with the observation that war is fundamentally at the service of policy, it makes sense to comprehend the way in which strategies are constructed because it is a *pragmatic* consideration that connects military operations to political outcomes.

From the perspective of strategic theory, then, the notion that there are expressly military solutions to anything is often a misnomer because they are essentially *un-pragmatic*, entailing disproportionate effort to enact.[iv] There have been few occasions where protagonists in war have explicitly sought no other goal than the complete extermination of an opponent through say, genocide, or perhaps forms of ethnic cleansing. If such goals can be construed as the seeking of a permanent military solution in the pursuit of an ideological goal, then they have, mercifully, either ultimately failed in that undertaking, or, on closer inspection, reveal themselves to be instances where a combatant has been focused on destroying an adversary's means of resistance rather than eliminating every last member of a particular group or society through violent means.

As war is the intent to attain the goals of politics, there really only ever are political solutions. That is to say, outcomes that are based, in some form or another, on a mutual agreement about the cessation of hostilities following the ability of one side to assert their primary interests through violence. War is a product of politics. It is begun by politics. It is influenced by politics during its conduct. It is terminated by politics.

The role of the military instrument in war is about one thing, therefore, and – to sound clichéd about it – one thing only: political communication. It is about influencing an opponent to bend or concede to one's will through violence. It is almost never about seeking destruction for its own sake or even about employing overwhelming force to remove every aspect of the enemy's means of resistance, but about applying sufficient force to convince an adversary of the seriousness of one's intent. As John Stone states, in essence, 'any war emerges as an exercise in coercion. The application of force is combined with a conditional intention to stop once a desired set of political objectives is achieved'.[v]

Applying military force is easy: it is the politics that makes it difficult

Military force is merely the principal means in war to exercise coercion: the tool to communicate political resolve. It is the elusive and contingent goals of politics, however, that make an appreciation of what constitutes good strategy difficult and challenging.

In this sense, we can, perhaps, expand one of Carl von Clausewitz's famous aphorisms: that 'Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult'.[vi] We can rephrase his statement to say that understanding the theoretical and technical coercive dynamics at work in strategy is easy, but how strategy becomes efficacious in practice when it embodies the compound values and choices that social

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actors make in the search to attain their goals and interests – namely politics – is always likely to be complex and nuanced.

So, let's start with the easy bit, the hypothetical dynamics. How are coercive intentions in pursuit of political objectives communicated? The answer is straightforward: either through escalation or de-escalation.

In conditions of overt war between two opposed armed belligerents, escalation is simply an exercise in upping the ante: increasing the level of aggression, usually by introducing more resources – troops and weapons – into the battle space. For Clausewitz, war in its theoretical essence, would always possess an irresistible momentum towards escalation. Using the analogy of two wrestlers trying to tussle each other to the ground, he suggested each side would, no matter how small the political stakes involved, inevitably begin the process of exertion that would see the maximum effort to overthrow the other.[vii]

In reality, of course, the level of effort each side can bring to bear in any struggle is constrained by any number of variables, not the least of which is likely to be the relative assessment of the value attached to attaining particular objectives in relation to the amount of effort required to secure them. Plainly, a fight for national survival is likely to engender much more willingness on the part of decision makers and *the people* to escalate than threats deemed to be of lesser scale. Ultimately, escalation is therefore likely to be a conscious – not an involuntary – act intended to send a coercive message that communicates the resolve to continue hostilities until the anticipated goals are secured.

War is like life: complicated

It is, of course, the political content that an act of escalation or de-escalation is meant to convey, which transforms the simple theoretical architecture of war into a complex reality of bargaining through violence. Again, this underlines the point that, no matter their destructive capacity, wars always remain exercises in political communication. 'Even when military action is formally conducted with a view to rendering an enemy defenceless', Stone observes, 'it ceases before that state of affairs is completely achieved'. 'Under these circumstances', he continues, 'the loser capitulates not because he is deprived of all means of resistance, but because the costs associated with further resistance are unlikely to produce any discernible benefits. At this stage, too, the winner stands to gain very little in relation to the costs associated with continuing hostilities'.[viii]

The role of effective strategy in war – as in life generally – therefore presents itself as a careful weighing up of options about the kinds of values and interests that are worth preserving and the proportion of effort deemed necessary to defend or advance them. A range of context-dependent, and sometimes continuously fluid, judgements inevitably governs such considerations. It is this that makes strategy beyond the theoretical mechanics demanding and problematic.

If we return to the theory of escalation then, once again, we are presented with a parsimonious understanding of how to succeed in gaining one's objectives. Carl von Clausewitz points out that to coerce one's enemy requires that 'you must place him in a situation that is even more unpleasant than the sacrifice you call on him to make. The hardships of that situation must not of course be merely transient – at least not in appearance'.[ix]

It is in the actual attempt to exert coercive pressure on the enemy in the hope that they will receive, understand, and react to the message that they are likely to face the prospect of further unpleasant, and avoidable, sacrifice where things once again become complicated. They are complicated for the prosaic reason that war is, again as with most dilemmas in life, a reactive environment. Thomas Schelling noted in his study of coercive bargaining that 'the ability of one participant to gain his ends is dependent on to an important degree on the choices or decisions that the other participant will make'.[x]

It really isn't just about you

In other words, the enemy has a vote. 'War is not the action of a living force upon a lifeless mass', Clausewitz perceived, 'but always a collision of two living forces'.[xi] Good strategic analysis means that we have to appreciate the reciprocal nature of war and understand not merely that which seems logical, desirable and efficient from one's own point of view but to take into account that the adversary is also a calculating, 'living force', in pursuit of its own values and objectives, acting and reacting to the events around it.

Once more the theoretical premises present themselves as elementally simple: the choices and decisions in war involve one thing only: to escalate or de-escalate. This is how political communication is conducted. The ultimate aim will be, via Schelling's understanding of coercive bargaining, to communicate sufficient resolution of one's willingness to escalate, and thereby sustain the necessary determination to prosecute the war beyond that of the adversary. Once the adversary has accepted that point, the war ends, and the enemy is likely to come to terms.

The complication arises because the capacity to escalate is constricted in any number of ways, not least by the finite level of resources one might have at one's disposal and by the elemental universal force of friction that will forever place physical and logistical impediments in the way of the application of the maximum concentration of effort and resources.[xii]

Above all, it is the politics of any situation – the goals and values that a society strives for and the degree of effort that it will devote to advance them – that will most complicate the process of escalation, because the political actor will, no matter how consciously or unconsciously, be making continual evaluations about the level of commitment to meet desired objectives. That is to say, the aims that any social actor seeks, and the degree of effort it is prepared to exert, will be subject to a means-ends calculus to ensure that war is kept within the realms of rational conduct.

Consequently, a political entity is unlikely – or certainly will be ill advised – to seek an escalation of its activities beyond what it thinks its society is prepared to tolerate in pursuit of

any particular cause.

Communicating through escalation is inherently risky

Beyond Clausewitz's philosophical reflections on the mechanics of escalation in war towards a theoretical extreme, most of the other writings on the subject evolved out of the Cold War, when analysts like Herman Kahn and Thomas Schelling contemplated the possibilities for controlling any potential spiral towards all-out nuclear confrontation between the superpowers.

Cold war theorists postulated that superpower conflict would progress through a series of perceptible boundaries and thresholds: commencing from an initial attack and thereafter intensify via a greater range of targets, geographical settings, and numbers and types of weapons. Kahn notably envisaged an escalation ladder comprising some 44 different steps, proceeding from 'crisis' to 'insensate war'.[xiii]

Kahn's escalation ladder sought to articulate the individual thresholds of conflict that he believed each superpower would tacitly recognize. Each threshold would require a conscious decision to cross, and thus comprise an implicit limitation in war. As war progressed up the escalatory chain, each superpower was assumed to be ever more reluctant to breach yet another threshold lest it prefaced even greater levels of conflict that would result in a spiral towards all-out nuclear confrontation. The fear of this spiral itself, so the thinking went, would form a restraint in the escalation process. In this manner, these steps up the escalation ladder constituted the potential basis for tacit cooperation in order to curb any slide towards catastrophe.[xiv]

Crossing a threshold of understanding – implicit or explicit – is therefore one of the key modes of political communication in war. A threshold itself may be defined as a prominent or salient boundary. Therefore, contravening that boundary is an act that is potentially replete with risk for the simple reason that one has no control over how the other side will react. Will they back down or merely accelerate their own efforts in the face of escalation? Any act of escalation, as Richard Smoke observes, 'is one that crosses a saliency which defines the current limits of a war, and that occurs in a context where the actor cannot know the full consequences of his actions, including how his action and the opponent's potential reaction(s) may interact to generate a situation likely to induce new actions that will cross more saliencies'.[xv]

But uncertainty and risk is also political communication

Yet, as other theorists speculated, the associated risk and uncertainty of escalation can also form an important part of political communication in war. Schelling, for example, postulated that manipulating the risk around these salient boundaries could yield political advantage. A perceived willingness to cross an escalation threshold could potentially signal resolve, demonstrating the readiness to assume risk. Thereby, the fear of upping the scale of conflict, be it broadening the nature of the targets, increasing the scale of destructive power, through more the introduction of more resources or more effective weapons systems, or expanding the geographic scale of conflict through the launching of new fronts, could be employed to communicate intent to the enemy.

Whether an adversary will understand or accept the intended political message delivered by an act of escalation will, however, remain uncertain. The success of strategy in war – that is a campaign of violent action – is therefore likely to be premised on the quality of the combatant's analysis of its opponent. Understanding the enemy: what informs its value system, what motivates it to fight, and what levels of conflict it might be prepared to tolerate thus reveals itself as the simple, but most complex, of matters of strategy because it calls upon a qualitative understanding of the mind of the adversary that can be gained only through close study of the enemy's society of the kind that cannot be reduced to any mechanistic application of destructive power.

Conclusion: the paradox of strategy

Regardless of the relative strength and weakness of any side in war, all belligerents must engage in a continuous effort to calculate the political efficacy of violence. Specifically, a sophisticated strategy calls on the individual belligerent to carefully consider the political effects it wishes to seek through escalation. Above all, this is why strategy is hard, because it rests on the quality of analysis in any given moment, not on any scientific basis. The point further discloses that war is a deeply calculating environment where many actions, certainly those short of massive clashes for survival, should be gauged in terms of when is enough escalation enough, and whether any coercive influence should be converted into political capital through dialogue and compromise.

In reality these are invariably finely balanced decisions that do not lend themselves to standard lessons learned notions beloved by practitioners, policy makers, and, regrettably, academic analysts as well. Because of the difficulties inherent in political judgement, it becomes all too easy for decision makers to fall back on clichés and tactical level understandings as the basis for war planning. This functions as a substitute for strategic thinking and, indeed, is often the harbinger of strategic disappointment, whether it be German thinking before the First World War that led to the belief that tactics rather than politics could deal with the prospect of a two-front war, the US failure to comprehend the willpower of its adversary in the Vietnam war, or the lack of coalition planning to deal with the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

All such failures have their origins in the mistaken belief that strategy is superficially easy. In concept it *is* easy, but rarely in practice. This illustrates perhaps an enduring paradox of strategy, which is that in many ways strategy *is* difficult because it is under theorised, yet it remains under theorised precisely because it is difficult.

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[iii] Hew Strachan, The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013), p. 64.

[iv] Similarly pronouncements about the impossibility of military solutions are also truisms.

[v] John Stone, 'Escalation and the War on Terror, Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 35, No. 5 (2012), p. 639.

[vi] Carl von Clausewitz, On War (ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 119.

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[viii] Stone, 'Escalation and the War on Terror', p. 639.

[ix] Clausewitz, On War, p. 77.

[x] Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 5.

[xi] Clausewitz, On War, p. 77.

[xii] Ibid., pp. 119-121.

[xiii] Herman Kahn, On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2009), p. 194.

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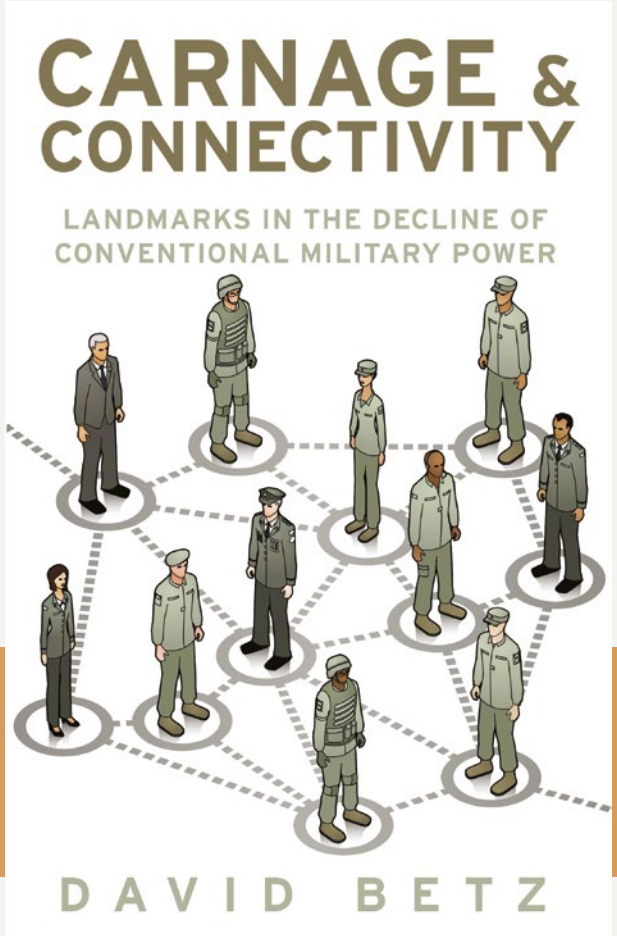

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War's Changing Character and Varying Nature: A Closer Look at Clausewitz's Trinity

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Despite having been developed nearly two centuries ago, Carl von Clausewitz's "wondrous" trinity remains popular among modern defense scholars and military practitioners.[i] Many of them, in fact, regard it as *the* explanatory model of war's nature. They do so primarily because the trinity consists of three basic elements—hostility, chance, and purpose—thought to be common to any type of war. The dynamic interaction of these elements, moreover, is what makes war a nonlinear system and thus irreducible to simple equations or formulas. To be sure, not all scholars view the trinity in this way. Critics such as Martin van Creveld have long argued Clausewitz's paradigm merely reflects the major institutions—people, military, and government—traditionally associated with the state.[ii] For that reason, it fails to account for the types of conflicts that became prevalent after the Cold War, namely, the so-called asymmetric or low intensity conflicts in which violent non-state entities, such as terrorist groups and local militias, figure at least as prominently as the state. Defense scholars and military practitioners, however, successfully rebutted this argument by demonstrating the Prussian's model was less about the institutions as such, and more about the aforementioned fundamental elements or forces.[iii] As a result, the trinity's elasticity was restored and the model endures today as one of Clausewitz's most important contributions to the study of war. Closer analysis, however, suggests these restorative interpretations of the trinity have not gone far enough.

In our efforts to prove the elasticity and universality of hostility, chance, and purpose—or as some prefer, irrational, non-rational, and rational factors—we often discount the importance of the populace, the military, and the government.[iv] At best, we regard them as a secondary trinity, or perhaps war's character, which we then politely set aside to concentrate our full attention on the tendencies, or war's nature. Yet, Clausewitz clearly sought to connect the former to the latter in the opening chapter of *On War*. We would do well, therefore, not only to preserve that relationship, but also to consider why he thought it was important. In fact, when we do so, at least one thing becomes clear—Clausewitz believed changes in war's character can lead to fundamental shifts in its nature, and vice versa.

That is not the understanding today's policy and military practitioners have of war's nature. Contrary to Clausewitz, they consider that nature to be immutable and regard only war's character as changeable. Modern practitioners, of course, are not beholden to Clausewitz's model of war's nature. They are fully entitled to disagree with him on any score they choose. Nonetheless, a great many practitioners refer to Clausewitz's construct as if it accords with their own. A closer look at what he understood by the character and nature of war is, thus, warranted.

War's Changing Character

Clausewitz penned two chapters that provide a glimpse into his thinking with regard to the character of war and the character of battle.[v] By the term character, he seems to have meant the chief characteristics that shaped war and battle in his day. Understanding the character of modern war was important, he explained, because "the impression we have of modern war exerts a great influence on our designs, especially those pertaining to strategy."[vi] As an example, he highlighted Napoleon's willingness to take chances, a tendency that became a salient characteristic of modern war because it upset traditional means and brought about the crushing defeat of several powerful states. Clausewitz also pointed out how the campaigns in Spain demonstrated the merits of waging an insurgency on a large scale. He further

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noted that the Russian campaign of 1812 illustrated the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of conquering large empires, and how running a tally of "battles, capitals, and provinces" gained or lost does not necessarily mean one side is winning or losing the war. In fact, the closer an offensive approached the heart (*Herz*) of a nation, the stronger that nation's resistance was likely to be. Prussia's 1813 campaign, he went on to say, exemplified not only how rapidly one can increase the size of one's fighting forces by means of a militia, but also how militias can acquit themselves just as well defensively, at home, as well as offensively, abroad. Their utility, therefore, was not limited merely to defense. His observation, thus, concerned the merits of militias, or peoples' armies, rather than the specific form of war (attack or defense) that such armies might have to assume.[vii]

With respect to the character of modern battle, Clausewitz described the main stages that unfolded when combat was joined. Understanding this flow of events was important, he argued, because changes in tactics, or how battles are fought, will affect strategy, or how battles are used. He portrayed modern battle as a struggle that took place in two dimensions: physical and psychological. As each party was worn down physically and psychologically through combat, it replaced its battle lines with fresh formations—a process that continued until one side withdrew from the battle, or until darkness forced the fighting to cease. Each party then assessed the physical and psychological damage it had suffered, and tried to determine how much harm it had inflicted on its opponent. These assessments then formed an overall impression of the battle's outcome, which in turn served as the basis for planning the next day's actions. According to Clausewitz, this sequence was roughly the same for all belligerent parties for two basic reasons. First, all parties were generally on par organizationally and in terms of their practice of the art of war (*Kriegskunst*). Second, the "warlike element" (*kriegerische Element*), fanned by great popular interests, had broken free from the mannerism of the past and created patterns of combat that took a more natural course.[viii]

Notably, Clausewitz's discussions underscored the importance of nonmaterial factors in the character of war and of battle; this emphasis served as a corrective to the form-centered, geometric approaches of Adam Heinrich von Bülow and Antoine Jomini, among others.[ix] Examples of such factors include Napoleon's good fortune (*Glück*) and audacity (*Kühnheit*), the attitude or disposition (*Gesinnung*) of a people, the subjective nature of battlefield assessments and the extent to which such impressions, rather than objective realities, informed each party's subsequent actions. Even more important, was Clausewitz's mention of the warlike element, and its liberation within the context of modern war. This element, intangible but certainly real in Clausewitz's eyes, was nonetheless the essential quality that made modern combat different in character from what it had been in the past. The warlike element, however, did not belong to war's character but, as part of the essence of war, shaped it instead.

War's Varying Nature

At least two of Clausewitz's early documents—the *Bekenntnisdenkschrift* (Testimonial or Political Declaration) written in the spring of 1812, and his 1813 essay on the merits of a militia—claim the "nature of war" had changed.[x] The Testimonial of 1812 was written to explain why Clausewitz and several of his fellow officers elected to resign their commissions rather than to serve in the auxiliary corps that Prussia was required to provide for Napoleon's Grande Armée. The 1813 essay, "Essential Considerations in the Organization of a Landsturm and a Militia," appears to have been written to inform the Prussian Landtag of the steps necessary to form a militia.[xi] Both were consensus documents that Clausewitz, perhaps because of his facility with the quill and his junior rank, had been selected to draft. As such, they represent not just his views, but also those of several of his colleagues, some of whom had served with him on the Military Reorganization Commission that King Frederick William III established to reform the Prussian army after its humiliating defeats in 1806 and 1807. Both documents declare the nature of war had transformed such that the defense was now the stronger form of war. More fundamentally, both essays fix the cause of that transformation on the French Revolution, which raised the level of enmity that animated modern war and brought about the increased use of people's armies or militias in the conduct of war.

The Testimonial of 1812 offers additional specifics regarding the change in war's nature. It describes the transformation not only in terms of the trinity's tendencies but also its institutions; it portrays the armed conflicts that occurred before the French Revolution as much less hostile in attitude than those that followed. Before the Revolution, the populace participated in armed conflict only to the extent it was pressed into service. Wars during that period were "petty" in temperament, fought as "two duelists" might settle a personal affront, that is, with "moderation and caution" and constrained by longstanding "conventions." In such conflicts, war's spirit scarcely rose above the "aim of a military *point d'honneur*" and the political objective usually amounted to little more than a "diplomatic whim." In contrast, the wars of the present were more violent and more warlike in nature. The French Revolution (1789) had unleashed warlike passions and the government's ensuing policy of *levée en masse* (1793) had placed the entire citizenry at the disposal of the state.[xii] The ranks of Napoleon's army were thus populated with citizen-soldiers who fought with a new enthusiasm, which in turn revitalized war's essence, liberating it from the artificial constraints that had previously held it in check. Furthermore, Napoleon's newly enthused army enabled him to take greater risks operationally; he could aim to annihilate his opponents' armies rather than merely maneuvering them into embarrassing positions. This army also enabled him to raise the stakes politically; he could pursue policy objectives that came closer to conquest than to mere bargaining. War had transformed from a game of kings into a struggle of nations, a contest of "all against all," wherein king, army, and people acted, and fought, as one.[xiii]

Years later, as Clausewitz drafted several of the later chapters of *On War* and revised others, he still held this view. In fact, in *On War*'s second chapter, "Purpose and Means in War," which he revised between 1828 and 1830, Clausewitz described the nature of war as "composite" (*zusammengesetzte*) and variable (*veränderliche*)."[xiv] If the nature of war is composite and variable, then by definition it cannot be immutable. Other chapters in *On War* convey similar thoughts. For instance, "On

the Magnitude of the Military Purpose and Effort" (VIII/3B), amplifies what Clausewitz wrote in 1812 and 1813.[xv] This chapter is more than a sweeping historical survey of war, and it is more than evidence of Clausewitz's growing sense of historicism, as some interpreters have suggested.[xvi] Instead, it is a purposeful examination of how much more warlike some wars are than others. Put differently, it explores the relationship between military aims and the element of enmity, which he assumed would rise with the participation of the populace in war. Whenever that participation was not substantial, which Clausewitz admitted was generally the case, armed conflict took on a "half-hearted" quality in which even war's atmosphere—consisting of such elements as danger, physical exertion, and friction—thinned to insignificance. In the eighteenth century, especially, he believed armed conflict shifted away from employing the populace and became more the "business of the government." During this period, the forces of "hatred and enmity" did not animate war, but instead were affectations adopted by governments while in the process of parlaying. Nor were the "extremes of energy (*Energie*) and effort (*Anstrengung*)" ever approached—which, as readers will recall, is the third of the three reciprocal relationships (*Wechselwirkungen*) referenced in *On War*'s first chapter. Even the atmospheric quality of "danger" (*Gefahr*), he believed, had largely faded from the battlefield during this period. War's entire "nature" (*Natur*), not just its character, had changed and it did so in a manner contrary to its true nature.[xvii]

Clausewitz certainly judged eighteenth-century wars too harshly; nor did he specify which conflicts he meant. As modern scholarship tells us, many of eighteenth-century wars, the Seven Years' War in particular, were not especially limited in scope or destruction.[xviii] The Seven Years' War, after all, was a global, if not a world war, stretching from North America to eastern Europe and from the West Indies to Bengal. The casualties, financial costs, and physical damage caused by the conflict were ruinous by most accounts. Reliable numbers, as always, are difficult to come by and historical estimates often vary widely. But Frederick the Great's history of the conflict, published in the 1780s and thus available to Clausewitz, reports some 853,000 battle deaths Europe-wide, including 33,000 civilian deaths in Prussia alone (or 6 percent of its population).[xix] Certainly, as these numbers reveal, the element of danger was significant for soldiers and civilians who found themselves within proximity of the fighting. Furthermore, as additional analysis shows, by 1762, virtually every major combatant state had been bankrupted by the costs of the war.[xx]

Nonetheless, Clausewitz's dismissive treatment of eighteenth-century wars reveals the extent to which he saw, or wanted to see, the conflicts of the French Revolution and of Napoleon as qualitatively superior, and why. Most of the societies he examined in chapter 3B, book VIII, of *On War* were not structured to allow, or to require, the populace to participate substantively in war. Such conflicts, he admitted, posed more problems for his theory than the types of wars fought according to the Napoleonic model. The lack of violence meant fewer, if any, battles or engagements. By implication, strategy, as the use of battles for war's purposes, had to give way to something else; perhaps, as he eventually suggested, one's guides would have to be prudence and common sense. The societies of the Roman empire and the Tartars, however, were the exceptions. Their ways of war paralleled that of Napoleonic France; their institutions were harmonized and the warlike element was uninhibited.[xxi] Indeed, when that is the case, he said, wars can attain an "unconditional degree of energy, which we have observed as the natural law of the [warlike] element. This degree is thus possible, and since it is possible, it is necessary."[xxii] Thus, some wars create a synergy that demands a response in kind.

Clausewitz's discussion in this chapter is further evidence that his overriding theory was *not* that the defense is the stronger form of war, since the validity of that proposition would be reinforced rather than challenged by half-hearted wars.[xxiii] That is not to say that he did not push the concept of defense further than von Bülow and others, or that he did not refine it substantially; the evidence suggests, in fact, that he did. But the trends in his thinking, as far back as his 1809 letter to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, clearly value spirit over form.[xiv] His core theory is, instead, about *Geist* or nonmaterial factors and how they, with the "warlike element" as the principal one, have shaped modern war; the term *kriegerische Element* runs prominently throughout *On War*, but it has been rendered variously as hatred, enmity, hostility, or the element of pure violence, and its thematic consistency has been largely invisible English-speaking readers as a result.[xxv] In the socio-cultural dimension, the warlike element corresponds to the enmity or warlike passions of the populace and how extensively the populace itself participated directly in war, as in a peoples' or national army, for instance. The greater the element of enmity or hostility, the greater the physical and psychological exertion (*Anstrengung*) the populace should be willing to make in support of the war. In the military dimension, the warlike element concerns the courage and skill of commanders and their troops; high levels of courage and skill suggest the military can execute a high-risk, high-payoff style of *Kriegskunst* (art of war), even while immersed in the debilitating atmosphere of war. In the political dimension, the warlike element corresponds to a desire to conquer rather than to bargain, though obviously some portion of the latter is often required in order to realize the former. In effect, terms like hatred, enmity, hostility, and pure violence essentially flow together and can be seen as interchangeable.

As we know, Clausewitz ultimately concluded war had its own grammar, but not its own logic. As his celebrated first chapter of *On War* argues, war itself has no inherent logic or imperative forcing it to escalate to the extreme. Instead, for most wars the opposite was true; they were characterized by long periods of inactivity. Accordingly, it would be wasteful to adopt extreme measures in such cases. The revised chapter 2 of book I, "Purpose and Means in War," conveys this sense of costs-versus-benefits, or gauging one's effort according to how much one is willing to pay for what one wants. Instead of allowing the law of extremes to dictate war's logic, policy decisions do so; this idea in turn united the two categories of Napoleonic-style wars and half-hearted ones. War's hostile element does not escalate or deescalate of its own accord. Rather, such actions result from *Politik*.[xxvi] Policymakers, by virtue of their broader perspective, have every right to set the aims of war. But those aims must be in accord with the nature of the war at hand—which as the final section of *On War*'s book I, chapter 1, says, we may assess in terms of the dimensions of the trinity.

Even though elsewhere in *On War* Clausewitz plainly admitted armed conflict can assume any number of forms and can serve any number of purposes, he never abandoned his belief that some wars differ qualitatively, or are markedly superior in their warlike essence, over others. We find recurring evidence of his opinion in his metaphorical contrast between a "sharp sword" and an "ornamental rapier," which appears more than once in *On War*.[xxvii] The same can be said for his warning that "The first, the highest and most decisive act of judgment the statesman and commander make is to understand correctly the kind of war they are undertaking and not to take it for, nor wish it to be, something that, by the nature of the circumstances, it cannot be."[xxviii] In other words, while in most cases only war's character varies, every now and then its entire nature changes.[xxix] It is thus vitally important for military theory to understand this qualitative difference. Indeed, it was precisely this difference that Prussia's political and military leaders failed to appreciate in 1806.[xxx]

Fortunately for Prussia, the spirit of its public had changed by the spring and summer of 1813 (though by how much is unclear), and the state was able to field and sustain an army of more than 260,000 troops, including regiments of reserves and Landwehr.[xxxi] By then, Napoleon's debacle in Russia had made it plain that he and his army could be defeated, even routed. Moreover, this time the king supported the reorganization of the army and the general call-up of the public, though many of them went into the regular army rather than the reserves or Landwehr. The result was an institutional realignment that gave the public a more direct role in the fighting. Prussia's reforms did not rise quite to the level of the French model of a nation in arms under the *levée en masse*, but they approximated it well enough to achieve victory in 1813-14 and 1815. Prussia's political, social, and military institutions, in other words, had finally aligned with the changed nature of war.

Implications

In the final analysis, the error committed by van Creveld lies in assuming the trinity is about form rather than spirit; those who claim *On War* is simply an argument that the defense is the stronger form of war err in a similar manner. That idea, in fact, was not original to Clausewitz, as he well knew; von Bülow, for one, had advanced it earlier in his *Spirit of the Modern System of War*. Like *On War* in general, the trinity is about linking spirit and form or, more precisely, giving concrete expression to the former via the latter. Hence, when we separate the trinity's tendencies from its institutions, or war's nature from its character, we commit an error that is precisely the dialectical opposite of van Creveld's. Indeed, in so doing, we run the risk of making Clausewitz's thinking too abstract: we divorce it from the practical concerns and debates of his day, or—to borrow his own words—we neglect to prune the "leaves and flowers" of theory before they grow too far from the soil.[xxxii]

To be sure, the trinity's forces help to explain why constructing a realistic theory of war is difficult.[xxxiii] But when we pair those tendencies with their respective institutions, we see the trinity also represents the potential alignment of warlike attitudes and feelings across the socio-cultural, military, and political dimensions of armed conflict.[xxxiv] These feelings, of course, remain variable rather than fixed. But their correlation with institutions is purposeful rather than coincidental. Moreover, this perspective restores, at least partially, the military and political contexts within which Clausewitz's thinking took place, namely, the debates over how to think about Napoleonic war and how to make the Prussian army more effective in such wars.

"Theory's task," as Clausewitz reminds us, "is to maintain itself floating (*schwebend erhalten*) between [the trinity's] three tendencies as between three centers of attraction."[xxxv] It should not, in other words, allow itself to be drawn too far in the direction of one or the other, that is, toward theories that explain armed conflict primarily in socio-cultural terms, or mainly in military terms, or predominantly in political terms, or in any two of these dimensions. Doing so, will lead to a distorted understanding of the nature of war. It may also cause us to embrace theories about the conduct of war that are simply inappropriate for the nature of the war at hand. Unfortunately, too many modern American theories of war commit this error. The irony of US strategic thinking from the Cold War onward is its embarrassing richness. It is profusely equipped with unidimensional theories—whether these pertain to the socio-cultural, military, or political dimensions of war—that address only war's character.

Clausewitz's effort to bring together nonmaterial and material factors into a realistic theory of war is essentially what distinguishes his work from the narrow and brittle theories of his contemporaries. Enlightenment military thinkers preferred to put their faith in the observable, the verifiable, the quantifiable, and the constant—which is why Clausewitz found most of their theories inadequate for the dynamic, reciprocal, uncertain, and multidimensional activity that is war. His desire to correct their mistakes is why nonmaterial factors are indispensable to his theory. Remove them and *On War* quickly becomes shallow and unremarkable. Detach war's primary institutions from his analysis, on the other hand, and his work swiftly becomes metaphysical and naïve. Obviously, bringing together nonmaterial and material factors is difficult, and the extent to which Clausewitz succeeded in doing so is perhaps debatable. In any case, one thing is clear—representing the trinity as hostility, chance, and purpose does not go nearly far enough.

References

[i] Carl von Clausewitz, Hinterlasseneswerk Vom Kriege, Ed. Werner Hahlweg, 19th Ed., (Frankfurt: Ferdinand, 1980), Book I, Chap. 1, p. 213 [Hereafter, cited as VK I/1, 213]; Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 89 [Hereafter, OW]. Howard and Paret translate "wunderliche" as "paradoxical" in the 1976 edition of their translation of On War and as "remarkable" in the 1991 printing. The literal sense is retained here.

[ii] Martin van Creveld, Transformation of War (New York: Free Press, 1991), 194ff; and "The Transformation of War Revisited," Small Wars and Insurgencies 13, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 3-15. For other rejections of Clausewitz's trinitarian model see John Keegan, History of Warfare (New York: Knopf, 1993), 24, 46; and Mary Kaldor, New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 25-27.

[iii] Christopher Bassford and Edward J. Villacres, "Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity," Parameters (Autumn 1995): 9-19, available on Clausewitz.com. Thomas Waldman, War, Clausewitz, and the Trinity (London: Routledge, 2016); Isabelle Duyvesteyn, Clausewitz and African War: Politics and Strategy in Liberia and Somalia (London: Routledge, 2004); Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Jan Angstrom, eds. Rethinking the Nature of War (London: Frank Cass, 2005) is one of the better explorations of the topic.

[iv] For an example of the first representation, see Hugh Smith, On Clausewitz (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 116; on the second, see Christopher Bassford, Clausewitz in English (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 23. Still another approach is to consider the elements and the institutions as objective and subjective components of war's nature, respectively. Antulio J. Echevarria II, Clausewitz and Contemporary War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[v] "Über den Charakter der heutigen Kriege," VK III/17, 412-13; "Charakter der heutigen Schlacht," VK IV/2, 420-21.

[vi] VK III/17, 412.

[vii] Conspicuous by its absence is any reference to light troops, especially given how important they had become in modern war, a fact Clausewitz and many of his colleagues had recognized. Light troops might only produce a marginal effect in terms of physical harm. But their psychological impact could prove unnerving for a line soldier who might have to endure their harassing fire for prolonged periods.

[viii] VK IV/2, 421. For a discussion of the significance of the warlike element in Clausewitz's thinking, see Anders Palmgren, Visions of Strategy: Following Clausewitz's Train of Thought, Doctoral Dissertation, National Defence University, Helsinki, 2014.

[ix] See Adam Heinrich Dietrich von Bülow, whose Spirit of the New System of War (Geist des neuern Kriegssystems), which first appeared in 1799, argued the spirit of modern war rested on geometric principles and mass. Clausewitz instead saw a living force, enmity or hostility, as the true spirit of modern war, though he also considered material factors such as numerical superiority to be important.

[x] Carl von Clausewitz, "Bekenntnisdenkschrift 1812," in Werner Hahlweg, ed., Carl von Clausewitz: Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe, 2 vols. (Göttigen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960-90), vol. 1, 682-750; and Hans Rothfels, Carl von Clausewitz. Politik und Krieg. Eine ideengeschichtliche Studie (Berlin: Dümmler, 1920); regrettably, Rothfels saw fit to remove key portions of the text. English translations are available as "Testimonial" in Christopher Daase and James Davis, Clausewitz on Small War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 169-216; and "Political Declaration (1812)," in Peter Paret and Daniel Moran trans., Carl von Clausewitz: Historical and Political Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 285-303, but which does not include all sections.

[xi] On the 1813 essay, see "Das Wesentlichste in der Organisation eines Landsturms und einer Militiz. 1813," in Hahlweg, ed., Verstreute kleine Schriften, 177-84. For Clausewitz's other views on peoples' armies and the nation in arms, see Hahlweg, ed., Verstreute kleine Schriften (1980), 799-806; and (1966-90), vol. 2, part 1, 367-72; VK VI/26; and Paret and Moran, Historical and Political Writings, 313-28, 329-34; and Daase and Davis, Small Wars, 217-20, 221-26.

[xii] The levée en masse made every French citizen an instrument of the state for purposes of national defense. Alan Forest, "La patrie en danger: The French Revolution and the First levée en masse," in Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron, eds., The People in Arms: Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8-32.

[xiii] "Bekenntnisdenkschrift," 748-50, or "Testimonial," 215-16.

[xiv] "Zweck und Mittel im Kriege," VK, I/2, 214; OW, 90.

[xv] "Von der Größe des kriegerischen Zweckes und der Anstrengung," VK VIII/3B, 960-974; OW, 585-94.

[xvi] In brief, historicism is the idea that the institutions and activities of any given period must be, indeed can only be, understood on their own terms and according to the prevailing conditions of the time.

[xvii] VK, VIII/3B, 962-64; OW, 586-87.

[xviii] Dennis E. Showalter, The Wars of Frederick the Great (New York: Longman, 1996), 1-14, describes the character of eighteenth-century warfare; see also Hew Strachan, European Armies and the Conduct of War (London: Routledge, 1983).

[xix] Modern research suggests the number of battle deaths may be too high; the figure for civilian deaths does not include people driven from Prussia by the violence and who never returned. Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman, eds., The Seven Years' War: Global Views (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 524-25.

[xx] Danley and Speelman, Seven Years' War, 526-27.

[xxi] VK, VIII/3B, 962; OW, 586.

[xxii] "Űber den Stillstand im kriegerischen Akt," VK III/16, 407; "The Suspension of Action in War," OW, 217. There are also obvious parallels with Machiavelli's concept of virtú.

[xxiii] For the argument that Clausewitz's core theory is the defense is the stronger form of war, see Jon Sumida, Decoding Clausewitz (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011); Scheipers, Most Beautiful of Wars.

[xxiv] Clausewitz to Fichte, 11 Jan. 1809, in Hahlweg, Schriften, 161-62; Paret and Moran, "Letter to Fichte (1809)," in Carl von Clausewitz: Historical and Political Writings (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 282. He originally began to conceive of On War as a parallel to Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws, a reference we have every reason to take literally in terms of form and content.

[xxv] Echevarria, Clausewitz and Contemporary War, employs hostility rather than "warlike element" because the latter term comes close to creating a tautology.

[xxvi] Politik is, as we know, multivalent, meaning a form of intercourse, political conditions such as the French Revolution, and can even refer to individual policies.

[xxvii] See OW, 99.

[xxviii] VK I/1, 212; OW, 88.

[xxix] This meaning accords with section 27, "Resultat für die Theorie," (Consequences for Theory) in On War's opening chapter, in which war is described as not only a true chameleon that changes somewhat in each case, but also as a wondrous trinity made up of three variable elements. VK I/1, 212-13; OW, 89.

[xxx] The German text, "Nachrichten über Preußen in seiner großen Katastrophe," appears in Werner Hahlweg, ed., Carl von Clausewitz: Verstreute kleine Schriften (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1979), 301-490; "Observations on Prussia in Her Great Catastrophe," in Carl von Clausewitz: Historical and Political Writings, trans. and ed. by Peter Paret and Daniel Moran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 30-84, is the best English translation.

[xxxi] C. J. Esdaile, Napoleon's Wars: An International History, 1803-1815 (London: Allen Lane, 2007).

[xxxii] "Vorrede des Verfassers (Author's Preface)," VK, 184; OW, 61.

[xxxiii] As Clausewitz scholars would hasten to add, and rightly so, the terms hostility, chance, purpose (or any variant of them) are but an inadequate shorthand; http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Trinity/TrinityTeachingNote.htm.

[xxxiv] Enmity or hostility, as Clausewitz indicated, applies "more" (mehr) to the populace; chance pertains "more" (mehr) to the military; and purpose falls "more" (mehr) to the government. VK I/1, 213; OW, 89.

[xxxv] VK I/1, 213; OW, 89.

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Swedish military conducting operations in Mazar e Sharif

Mearsheimer's Folly: NATO's Cold War Capability and Credibility

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Government policy is influenced by the analyses of high profile academics as well as by those within government. Professor John J Mearsheimer is a political scientist well-known for his work on conventional and nuclear deterrence, and proposer of the theory of offensive realism.[i] In assessing what is sufficient for national defence and for collective defence Mearsheimer made bold statements about NATO's capability which were clearly wrong, and could have been identified as such at the time. These kinds of bold analyses have been repeated, and defence policy has been influenced by them. The same has been happening since the end of the Cold War, based on the *post hoc* assumption of "victory", as happened after the end of the Cold War in 1991. The influence such analyses can have on defence policy is dangerous in a world becoming less stable and certain by the day.

The objective of this analysis is not to vilify Professor Mearsheimer, but to demonstrate the problems associated with making an analysis without sufficient knowledge of the detail in place, and indeed the potential misuse of such an analysis in creating and continuing policy making.

Mearsheimer's analysis

From the formation of NATO until the end of the Cold War the credibility of NATO's defences was discussed by defence professionals and academics. Most of those analyses failed to address the overall capability based on existing policy, doctrine, force structures and plans.[ii] An example was the analysis given by Mearsheimer on the probability of a Soviet victory in a war in Europe. This provides a useful perspective on the difficulties inherent in assessing the credibility of defence policy from a purely academic standpoint.

In 1982 Mearsheimer wrote a paper entitled, "Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Europe"[iii] which was based on a chapter in his book, "Conventional Deterrence".[iv] In this article, Mearsheimer examined NATO's strategy and capabilities, and the prospects for what he described as a Soviet "blitzkrieg" against NATO. He concluded that, "… the task of quickly overrunning NATO's defences would be a very formidable one."[v]

But Mearsheimer's analysis is flawed in several ways, as I will discuss below. As Professor Williamson Murray wrote, "Any theoretical understanding … must arise out of real acts and occurrences in human conflict; one must not impose on the world the theoretical constructs or concepts arrived at independently of history and experience."[vi] I will use the British 1(BR) Corps as the main example throughout this article to demonstrate the flaws in Mearsheimer's analysis.

Opportunity

Mearsheimer focussed on the idea that war would start only if the attacker – in this case the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact – was assured of success, and would be able to avoid the conflict degenerating into a war of attrition.[vii] He did not anticipate opportunistic "grabs" by the Soviet Union that NATO was poorly prepared to repel. The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) view was summed up by Secretary of State for Defence Sir Francis Pym in 1980 when he warned the Prime Minister, "Short-warning aggression, and the prospect of short-duration war, is far more attractive to the Soviet Union …"[viii] Mearsheimer also ignored the idea that an attritional war favoured the Warsaw Pact.

In the Government War Book, the MoD considered three outline scenarios for a transition to war.[ix] The first was a "Slow Moving Crisis" which was described as allowing, "… the Cabinet/TWC [Transition to War Committee] sufficient time to discuss and authorise individual GWB measures and … requests from Major NATO commanders …" Following this

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was the vaguely termed "Intermediate Timescales" which covered, "A crisis evolving in the intermediate timescale … intended to be dealt with by a combination of MPDs [Major Policy Decisions], individuall [sic] decisions and, where necessary, GDs [Group Decisions]." The last one, the Rapidly Moving Crisis, was described as a, "… rapid transition from peace to war …" It was in a rapidly moving crisis that timescales for decision making were all important. It was sometimes also referred to as a "bolt-from-the-blue" attack.

There was some confusion in both NATO and the MoD about the likelihood of warning of an attack. The NATO assumption was not that the Warsaw Pact would launch a surprise attack, but that there would be a steady deterioration of international relations over a period of more than 20 days, resulting in an outbreak of hostilities.[x] Contrast this with the private comments of the US Secretary of Defense in 1979: "We estimate that the Pact could concentrate ground forces of five "fronts" – 85 to 90 Divisions – for an attack on NATO's Centre Region within about 15 days … the Pact could also assemble over 4,000 tactical aircraft … within three to five days."[xi] A Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) assessment in 1977 anticipated that only two weeks warning would be available to NATO, perhaps even as little as two days, allowing a surprise attack to be launched.[xii] The Warsaw Pact might have a week of preparation before the signs were noticed by Western Intelligence;

> *"… the Alliance may now receive as little as one week's firm warning of the Warsaw Pact achieving full war posture. As short a time as 48 hours warning might be obtained in the less likely even of the Soviet Union choosing to optimize strategic surprise by opening hostilities before achieving a full war posture."[xiii]*

Another concern within NATO was that a misunderstanding might lead to war, or war would be caused by unintentional pressures from one side on the other.[xiv] It is difficult to conclude whether a miscalculation was expected to provoke a "bolt-from-the-blue" attack, or provide the Warsaw Pact with the excuse to initiate a planned attack. Some "opportunism" by the Warsaw Pact might have occurred if political events in NATO suggested it would be successful.[xv]

Hew Strachan, agreeing with John Mearsheimer, wrote in 1984 that, "NATO's existing conventional defences certainly have their defects, but they are not so weak as to invite Soviet attack."[xvi] This position is opposed by a RAND report which identified lack of sustainability and overall weaknesses in the NATO defence. The report stated that a failure to improve NATO's conventional forces would risk providing the Soviet Union with an opportunity for a "… quick strike with a limited objective."[xvii] The report's author, Roger Facer, had been a senior civil servant in the MoD, and was therefore able to know the true situation. NATO had been aware of this particular threat[xviii] but the plans in place did not provide for a conventional response to a quick strike (assumed to be akin to a "bolt-from-the-blue", or Rapidly Moving Crisis). The concern was that the Warsaw Pact could prepare for a full-scale attack in 15 days or less,[xix] with much of the preparation going unnoticed, and NATO's mobilisation delayed by political caution and Soviet distraction techniques.[xx]

Research undertaken by this author has shown that, even from a standing start, and in a war that might become attritional, the Warsaw Pact would win the conventional battle simply by being able to remain in the fight.[xxi] Although both Warsaw Pact "opportunism" [xxii] or "salami-slicing", featured in NATO planning, [xxiii] the broad threat, as assessed by NATO and the British Government, was of an attack by the Warsaw Pact on NATO with not less than 48 hours' warning: directly across the Inner German Border by large armoured conventional thrusts, including at least two tank armies in the 1(BR) Corps sector:[xxiv] air attacks on all NATO members; and denial by the Soviet Navy of NATO maritime freedoms.[xxv] The Chiefs of Staff Committee acknowledged in 1980 that the improving Warsaw Pact navy and air forces were particularly, "… better equipped and more adventurous now than they have ever been; their capability representing a formidable instrument for the exploitation of air power."[xxvi] The scale of the changes in equipment levels was illustrated by the intelligence evaluation of Warsaw Pact aircraft production, which every six months was supposed to exceed the entire front line strength of the RAF.[xxvii] Improvements in tank development - for example the deployment of the T64 and T80[xxviii] – and anti-aircraft defence – the new range of surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) – meant that the forces deployed in Eastern Europe were not only quantitatively superior to NATO, but approaching qualitative parity as well.[xxix]

Capability

Mearsheimer is vague on "capability." Are capability and credibility the same thing? There is a difference between credible deterrence and credible defence. One might deter, but not be capable of fighting a real war. This was certainly the situation with NATO's conventional defence from the adoption of Flexible Response in 1967. Deterrence requires the appearance of credibility,[xxx] whereas defence must consist of workable strategy, doctrine and tactics: credible defence must be sustainable through sufficient forces, equipment and supplies to stop the enemy achieving its objective. Lieutenant Colonel Professor Asa Clark characterised this as the difference between minimum deterrence and warfighting deterrence.[xxxi] The assessment of the levels required for credibility are different depending on whether one is considering deterrence (minimum deterrence) alone or deterrence *and* defence (warfighting deterrence). Conventional defence will inevitably require larger forces than minimum deterrence. Although never explicitly stated, NATO adopted a minimum conventional deterrence posture.

How does one measure capability in military terms? Analysis of conventional capability has usually been a simple exercise in accounting, comparing the numbers of personnel, ships, aeroplanes and tanks and drawing conclusions. Usually done on a "NATO versus Warsaw Pact" basis rather than nationally, the comparison gives no indication of the capabilities of the supporting infrastructure to prosecute any hypothetical war[xxxii]. Professor Stephen Biddle offers an alternative which is an interesting mathematical analysis of what he terms "modern-system war" which diverges from the normal bean-counting exercise.[xxxiii] There is no measurement for military capability other than the employment of that organisation in war. Only then will its true capability be seen. Furthermore, this

misunderstanding of military capability seriously undermines Mearsheimer's view of Realism and military capability as a measurement of a state's power in international relations.

It is clear that by using Mearsheimer's simplistic analysis of capability the Argentinians should have beaten the British forces in Falklands. Equally, as Iraq had shown itself a capable enemy against Iran, the Iraqi defences in the First Gulf War of 1991 should have been much tougher to crack by the coalition. Capability measurement was significantly off the mark.[xxxiv]

Mobilisation

Mearsheimer dismissed the idea that the Warsaw Pact forces were capable of a standing start attack. The relative speeds of mobilisation by either side were cause for concern by Western planners, and this concern was recognised in their planning.[xxxv] Many of the scenarios for simulation were referred to by the respective mobilisation times for the Warsaw Pact and NATO forces. The initial mobilisation day was referred to as M-day, and the first day of combat as D-day. There were several scenarios and settings which are used throughout the Government and NATO documentation, referred to in the style 5/3 or 31/24. The first number refers to the number of days the Warsaw Pact would have to mobilise and prepare, and the second number refers to how much time NATO would have. There was a delay between the Warsaw Pact mobilising and NATO confirming mobilisation had occurred. The Government War Book states, "For planning purposes, it is assumed the most likely period of warning of hostilities would be 1-2 weeks …"[xxxvi] but plans used by both the Government generally, and MoD in particular, used a longer period of warning thus enabling full mobilisation.[xxxvii]

Rather than selecting the option of a delayed mobilisation of NATO, Mearsheimer chooses a similar type of scenario that most NATO exercises are predicated on: the Warsaw Pact mobilisation is followed by NATO with little or no delay. This conveniently allows full mobilisation of all available forces. This is recognisably similar to the WINTEX[xxxviii] timescales and the 31/24 scenario where the Warsaw Pact mobilise for 31 days an NATO for 24.[xxxix] This particular scenario provides NATO with the greatest opportunity for full mobilisation, and, more importantly, full deployment.[xl] The drawback with this scenario is its failure to recognise the capability of the Soviets successfully to employ distraction methods to keep the Western countries guessing their intentions right up to the point of invasion.[xli] Mearsheimer states, "…there is little doubt that NATO would detect a full-scale Pact mobilization almost immediately."[xlii] However, little or no warning came from the Western Intelligence Agencies before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, who concluded before the invasion that, "We have not seen indications that the Soviets are at the moment preparing ground forces for large-scale military intervention …"[xliii] Additionally, a US Presidential Inquiry in to the war scare in 1983 showed that clear Warsaw Pact military preparations had been missed: "The Soviet air force standdown had been in effect for nearly a week before fully armed MIG-23 aircraft were noted on air defense alert in East Germany."[xliv] Western intelligence seemed to have a problem identifying Soviet and Warsaw Pact mobilisations and preparations for war, and it is certainly possible that extensive mobilisation by the Warsaw Pact was feasible without NATO becoming aware enough to ask for the political decision to mobilise.

He also assumes, wrongly as the facts show, that NATO mobilisation would occur smoothly and quickly. Sufficient warning was crucial to enable timely mobilisation of the Armed Forces. According to the Chiefs of Staff in 1978, mobilisation of the reserves would take, "… between 15-20 days …"[xlv] but this relied on several days' warning time prior to mobilisation. In contrast to this upbeat appraisal, the units required to react most speedily give a different timescale. The Commandos were supposed to be available to respond rapidly to a sudden crisis. The Government War Book recognised that, "With no warning time or prior implementation of Transition to War Measures it is clear that it would take up to a fortnight to bring Commando Forces to a full war footing."[xlvi] NATO responses to aggression would be slow initially, allowing for mobilisation to take effect.

Herein lie the main problems: firstly, knowledge of how quickly troops can or cannot be deployed was essential to be able to develop plans: secondly, without stores and ammunition they could not fight; without logistic support they would not have ammunition. When so much of the planning involved the use of non-regular troops, timing and warning were crucial. According to the Government War Book, the plans to provide logistic support to British forces in continental Europe would take nearly four weeks, "… dependent on mobilisation and requisitioning powers …"[xlvii]

The timescales for mobilisation and deployment had not changed from those of the late 1970s, but the exercises to test them became more media focussed than before. For Exercise Lionheart in 1984 the 8,500 men of 1st Infantry Brigade, a regular formation, embarked at Marchwood military port, near Southampton, and arrived 36 hours later at Esbjerg, Jutland.[xlviii] An exercise such as this was good publicity, showing the troops streaming onto and off RORO ferries at ports in England and Denmark.[xlix] No mention was made of either the lack of enemy interdiction, or the reliance on civilian equipment, especially dock facilities. This coverage also conveniently avoided mentioning the missing logistical troops, all reservists.

Transport for the mobilisation of some units might have proved troublesome, depending on the timing. According to Colonel Hellberg, in 1982, when the Commando Brigade was mobilised for the Falklands, "… British Rail were unable to reposition their rolling stock in time to meet any of the deadlines …" because a weekend was approaching.[l] The Brigade had to rely instead on hastily arranged road transport to move its supplies. In a full mobilisation, the movement of ammunition by road and rail would be made easier by a relaxation of the laws preventing explosives being transported, but there would have been a hugely increased demand for that rolling stock.[li] Protection of that rolling stock, and the transport infrastructure generally, would pose many problems if war were to break out.

Operations and Deployments

Basic assumptions made by Mearsheimer regarding force

deployment, doctrine and tactics were flawed. NATO cannot deploy its "… 30 brigades along the front in the traditional 'two brigades up, one back' configuration."[lii] In the Belgian sector, there were two small divisions deployed, and the same in the Dutch sector. The Dutch were reluctant to deploy troops forward in peacetime for financial reasons, so unless there was enough warning the mobilisation and deployment of these brigades remained in question.[liii]

Mearsheimer's diagram representing the "Initial Distribution of NATO Divisions" shows the sectors as having all their divisions "up" in the forward defence line, and all equally capable.[liv] Using the British sector as an example it is shown with four divisions in the battle-line. In reality, at least one of 1 (BR) Corps' divisions is allocated to rear-area defence, some 100km behind the front line and predominantly filled by reservists (2nd Infantry Division).[lv] This division was not equipped with the same level of anti-tank capability or protection available to the Armoured Divisions. The 3rd Armoured Division is held in reserve to counter-attack any penetration of the main line, in accordance with the doctrine of the "Counterstroke". The Counterstroke, "… is a counter attack with the specific aim of destroying enemy forces which are on the move …"[lvi] , an approach which relied upon mobile forces identifying and attacking weaknesses in the enemy advance, at short notice and using reserves specifically kept for this purpose. It relied upon mobility in a fluid battle, highly trained troops, good communications between the units involved, and flexible command. General Bagnall's development of the British Army doctrine in the 1970s and 1980s promoted this use of mobile defence and manoeuvre rather than the previous static, attritional defence.[lvii] General Sir Nigel Bagnall was commander 1st British Corps in Germany, and then of NATO Northern Army Group, and proposed the doctrine of the "Counterstroke" to thwart the mobile Soviet attacks. According to the DOAE, there would be, "… a greater emphasis on offensive action …"[lviii] This "Counterstroke" doctrine was further refined by General Farndale who succeeded Bagnall as GOC Northern Army Group (NORTHAG).

This then leaves two divisions "up", less their forward battle groups and reconnaissance units, defending the 65km front in the British sector. These are the 1st and 4th Armoured Divisions which were intended to fight the initial high intensity battles against the Warsaw Pact forces. These consisted of four brigades (sometimes three, depending on which White Paper was the latest).

Furthermore, many units permanently stationed in BAOR were kept under strength, and the cadre companies and units were to be brought up to strength during a crisis by the mobilisation of regular reservists using the Individual Reinforcement Plan. These personnel were for the reinforcement of units categorised as "A1", the highest state of preparedness. As such, the reinforcements were expected to be with their units no later than 48 hours after being called up.[lix] The Individual Reinforcement Plan intended that those 'A1' categorised units would receive their reinforcements within 48 hours of mobilisation. As part of this process, newly released reservists, presumably more experienced with current training, would be prioritised for allocation to Germany.[lx]

From the analysis of the wargames, and the timescales involved in mobilising and transporting the reinforcements to the continent, it was possible that the Armed Forces would face a similar problem to that of the BEF in 1940 during the retreat to Dunkirk:[lxi] had a breakthrough of the front line been created, the rear area troops would have been ill equipped to stop it.[lxii] In BAOR, some non-front-line units were equipped with Saxon armoured personnel carriers (the armour of which was supposed to be proof against only small calibre weapons), and yet others only had lorries. Rear-area troops, such as the 2nd Infantry Division, were poorly equipped to fight a mechanised, fast moving enemy, having reduced numbers of anti-armour and other heavy weapons, as well as limited mobility.

Sustainability

Mearsheimer stated that NATO had, "… the wherewithal to deny the Soviets a quick victory and then to turn the conflict into a lengthy war of attrition …"[lxiii] In fact, the sustainability of NATO's conventional defences, certainly in Northern Army Group (NORTHAG), was inconsistent with his viewpoint. Critical to the sustainability of the defence of NATO were levels of war reserves, and their maintenance and availability. The situation at that time was summed up in a memorandum to the Minister of State for Defence:

> *"Among the most serious shortfalls are Army air defence and anti-tank missiles (Blowpipe, Rapier, Swingfire, Milan, Tow) and [RAF] air-to-air missiles (Sidewinder, Sparrow, MRAAM). [Based on the latest plans] stocks of Blowpipe by 1980 will be sufficient for less than 5 days at intensive rates and stocks of Rapier, only 2 days. [Similarly] 5 days' stocks of Milan will not be accumulated until 1987/88 and of Swingfire until 1984/85. Heavy ammunition is also in short supply, for example Chieftain APDS (3 days' stocks by 1980) [Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot], 155mm shells for FM70 [Artillery piece] (2½ days' in 1980) and 51mm Mortar ammunition (3½ days by 1980)."[lxiv]*

The Chiefs of Staff advised the Government in 1981 that, "… BAOR did not have the capability to sustain conventional warfare in the Central Region for more than four days …"[lxv] The indications were that vital stock such as anti-tank missiles and tank rounds would be used up within three days.

Because of this lack of reserve stocks, in the event of a drawn-out war in which nuclear weapons were not used, NATO could suffer defeat through attrition alone. The war reserves of ammunition, if not fuel, equipment, vehicles and personnel, would be used up within the first few days of a war. The concept of a longer war was discussed in NATO, but not given significant weight.[lxvi] This lack of sustainability reached through all the Armed Services, and was threatened by additional cuts to the stocks. The Vice Chairman of the Defence Staff wrote in 1981;

> *"… BAOR does not have the capability to sustain conventional warfare for more than 4 days without resort to nuclear weapons. I am … dismayed to see that … rather than enhancing our logistic posture the Army are proposing a reduction in B vehicles and spares, in order to reach baseline targets. An even more serious prospect is that in order to reach second-line targets*

both the RN and Army would have to make swingeing cuts in stock levels of key items including Sidewinder missiles, the new tank gun round and rockets for the new multiple launch rocket system. I cannot believe this is right."[lxvii]

Any idea of a sustainable deterrent force in Europe was undermined by these significant deficiencies in ammunition stocks, logistical handling, resupply and reinforcement. The Chiefs of the Defence Staff wrote to the Secretary of State for Defence in the following terms:

"Present (and past) policies have thus dangerously lowered the nuclear threshold and represent (of necessity) a return to the 'trip-wire philosophy' of the early 1960s at a time when we no longer have strategic nuclear supremacy and possibly not even parity."[lxviii]

The Sterling value of the shortfall of war reserves for the UK was not insignificant. The Armed Forces showed nearly a £1000m deficit (in 1979 prices) in stockpile requirements in 1980[lxix] and following the defence review of 1981, if the finances were to be provided as planned, the three services would take up to a decade to rectify the shortfall.[lxx] The projected cost alone of providing additional SWINGFIRE[lxxi] war reserves was £201M (1978 value).

In 1981, General Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) wrote that,

"… Alliance capabilities today are clearly inadequate to meet the growing Warsaw Pact conventional threat. Instead of possessing the variety of capabilities which would truly translate into flexibility in response, NATO is left in a posture that in reality can only support a strategy more accurately labeled [sic] a 'delayed tripwire.' The amount of delay following a conventional Warsaw Pact attack before the tripwire would be activated and NATO would face resorting to the nuclear option would depend on such variables as length of warning time and the timeliness and appropriateness of decisions taken by political authorities."[lxxii]

Intelligence and analysis from NATO suggested the Warsaw Pact forces were configured for a war of at least several weeks.[lxxiii] The Warsaw Pact had forward based war stocks providing two weeks' offensive support as well as ammunition and fuel stocks to fight a high intensity war for about two months.[lxxiv]

Warsaw Pact Tactics

The idea that the Warsaw Pact would use "steamroller" tactics was criticised by Mearsheimer,[lxxv] despite this being the approach anticipated by BAOR and NATO generally.[lxxvi] This is predicated on Mearsheimer's incorrect understanding of Blitzkrieg, and Soviet and Warsaw Pact implementation of their method of attack. Mearhseimer states in the footnote of page 12 that there has been no, "… systematic study of this military strategy."[lxxvii] Dr Ned Wilmott described Blitzkrieg as, "… a broad frontal attack in order that the enemy front should be gripped, thereby ensuring that contact could not be broken … With the enemy's attention held, the main blow(s) would fall on a relatively narrow frontage by concentrated armour and motorized forces."[lxxviii] A NATO report from 1984 states that the Warsaw Pact forces are, "… organised and equipped to take the offensive right from the beginning of a conflict."[lxxix]

Mearsheimer states that the Soviets did not have, "… a neatly packaged doctrine for fighting a conventional war."[lxxx] But that is precisely what had been developed from the success of "deep battle" in World War Two. Soviet doctrine had always espoused speed and mass, and the latest iteration of this was the Operational Manoeuvre Group (OMG).[lxxxi] Intended to break into the rear areas of NATOs defences, this was of deep concern to NATO commanders. The US Army Field Manual on Soviet Operations and Tactics proposed the purpose of a Soviet attack was, "… to carry the battle swiftly and violently into the enemy rear."[lxxxii] This effect would be amplified if NATO units fought following the policy of "Forward Defence".[lxxxiii] The direct threat to the forces in Europe was summed up in the Battle Notes for 1(BR) Corps: "Soviet military doctrine requires that offensive operations are mounted by a superiority of tanks, infantry and artillery … The primary aim of such operations will be the destruction of NATO's defensive capability …"[lxxxiv] The doctrine relied on an attack making a quick breakthrough of the "crust" of NATO's "Forward Defence". The Soviet frontage for a division in attack formation, "… is normally 15 to 25 kilometres wide. This width could vary considerably with the situation."[lxxxv] Mearsheimer repeats the idea that Soviet forces would not be able to concentrate to achieve a marked local numerical superiority, but that they would be echeloned. Here he misunderstands the idea of echeloning in the attack. The forces do not pile up one behind the other, but are fed through regularly, so that the defenders have no let up to reorganise or redeploy.[lxxxvi] In the US Field Manual FM100-2-1, an instance is cited of a World War Two Soviet *Corps* attacking across a front only seven kilometres wide achieving a 17-to-1 superiority in tanks[lxxxvii] which effectively invalidates Mearsheimer's "Force-to-Space Ratio" argument.[lxxxviii] Furthermore, the US 1st Infantry Division breached the Iraqi defences in 1991 on a front of only 6 kilometres.[lxxxix] In contrast, in the main battle area of BAOR the British divisions which were "up" were expected to defend a frontage of 30-35 kilometres each. It would certainly have been feasible, had the Warsaw Pact forces wished to break through the British Corps front, to have achieve a greater than 3:1 superiority *at the point of attack*, normally assumed to be the minimum for success.

Furthermore, Mearsheimer's dismissal of armour heavy formations being detrimental to the Soviet ability to fight a mobile war is in direct contradiction to a CIA report on the uses of the Operational Manoeuvre Group. He comments that, "…Soviet divisions have become extremely heavy units … Past a certain point … there is an inverse relationship between the mass and velocity of an attacking force. As the size of the attacking force increases, the logistical problems as well as the command and control problems increase proportionately."[xc] The CIA report describes a Front OMG as, " … an armor-heavy [sic] formation varying in size from corps (two-divisions) to army (three or four divisions)."[xci] It would also be capable of, " … a wider range of tasks, and designed to operate farther from friendly forces."[xcii] The Soviet doctrine placed emphasis on flexibility and less dependence on a long logistical tail for the OMGs.

Mearsheimer continues to confuse blitzkrieg and the Soviet way of war in World War Two, claiming that the Soviet forces, "… instead of relying on deep strategic penetrations … Soviet strategy called for wearing the German Army down by slowly pushing it back along a broad front."[xciii] The Red Army performed multiple penetration and encircling operations during the last years of the war, piercing the overstretched Axis defences and penetrating in depth. During the Cold War the Warsaw Pact planned to achieve local superiority to break through the NATO line in several places. This led Mearsheimer to another misunderstanding: that multipronged advances by the Warsaw Pact would be beneficial to NATO. Mearsheimer writes, "… it will, at best, end up pushing NATO back across a broad front …"[xciv] but he does not take into account the "holding" battles or "grip" described by Wilmott above, along the whole front which would not allow the NATO forces to disengage and retire in order. Probably the most concerning point made by Mearsheimer is the idea that some parts of the front would not need defending in any strength because of the, "… obstacles along the NORTHAG front …"[xcv] such as rivers, forests and cities. This is remarkable reminiscent of the complacent thinking of 1940 and 1944 regarding the Ardennes.

Successful attacks – those made by the Warsaw Pact which break into and through the NATO line – would be reinforced from the subsequent echelons and OMGs, and there would not be a "broad front" retreat by NATO. A Warsaw Pact attack would aim to punch holes through the NATO front, allowing Operational Manoeuvre Groups (OMG) to attack the rear areas and encircle NATO forces.[xcvi] According to Professor Michael McGwire,

> *"the strategy of defeating NATO by conventional means … entailed the creation of 'operational maneuver [sic] groups' that would paralyze NATO's command and communication system by seizing its neuralgic points before its political leaders could make up their minds about resorting to nuclear weapons."[xcvii]*

This also had the effect of tightly intermingling the opposing forces so that tactical nuclear weapons could not be used for fear of hitting one's own troops.

General Bagnall experienced the effects of Warsaw Pact doctrine during a wargame with a Soviet trained Afghan officer, Colonel Wardak, in 1983. Wardak had escaped from Afghanistan after the Soviet invasion in 1979. General Bagnall invited him to a wargame at 1(BR) Corps HQ where Wardak employed the training he had received at the Voroshilov General Staff Academy.[xcviii] By using an attack on the British sector, he fixed the British forces with frontal attacks and forced them to commit their reserves. On doing so, his Warsaw Pact forces broke through the Dutch and Belgian Corps on the flanks and surrounded 1(BR) and 1(GE) Corps.[xcix]Warsaw Pact victory was total.

Mearsheimer indicates that the Warsaw Pact overall had a 2.5:1 superiority in tanks and 2:1 in infantry.[c] He takes a very optimistic view of the ability of NATO to prepare for and repel an attack, but he takes a conversely pessimistic view of the Warsaw Pact's ability to prepare and launch that attack.[ci] Mearsheimer does not present any nuances of the competing strategies, doctrine and tactics which might reveal a different outcome to his conclusion. He omits entirely the airborne capability and Operational Manoeuvre Group concept, both of which were important to Soviet and Warsaw Pact doctrine. These omissions undermine the validity of the argument he puts forward. The use of simple "bean-counts" to compare forces gives little meaning to the analysis. By invoking the concept of Blitzkrieg, Mearsheimer undermines his own conclusion. A brief comparison with "Fall Gelb"[cii] is instructive. In 1940, the Allies considered their position strong, with greater forces and more capable weapons.[ciii] A simple evaluation of forces sizes was inadequate to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two sides. Britain and France could field 3,383 tanks, while Germany only 2,445, with a balance of infantry divisions.[civ] Following Mearsheimer's approach to force comparisons, in 1940 the Allies should have easily held off the German attack. History shows that this did not happen, and the cause was not numbers, but a difference in the thinking and tactics employed.[cv] The planning and doctrine proved the difference between successful attack and defence.

The problems associated with fighting through cities are mentioned, but it was Soviet doctrine to "hug" cities, rather than become involved in street-fighting. The idea was that by hugging the city (meaning infiltration of the outer suburbs but no serious attempt to occupy the entire city) NATO could not deploy nuclear weapons, and the defenders of the city would be effectively cut off from the battle by minimal forces.

Conclusion

The credibility of NATO's conventional defence relied upon sufficient weapons, with adequate supplies of ammunition and enough well trained personnel to use them. Despite Bagnall's improvements in tactics and operations, as well as developments of more accurate and sophisticated "smart" weaponry, if those weapons ran out of ammunition before the enemy's did, or the trained soldiers, sailors and aircrew were not available to use them, then they were effectively useless. General Thompson wrote, "The consequences of dependence upon defective stockpiles do not bear thinking about, for it could spell nothing short of disaster."[cvi] The proliferation of ATGWs towards the end of the 1980s went some way to making up the numerical inferiority of NATO against the Warsaw Pact. There was still the problem that a large number of anti-tank weapons would have been deployed in the reinforcement phase, which would have meant a degradation of the army's ability to stop and hold a "bolt-from-the-blue" attack. The "holding force" had both insufficient numbers and low reserve stocks to fight any attack.

Mearsheimer's analysis seems to be based partly on the idea that belief and fact are the same thing, and partly on an ignorance of the true state of affairs – taken in by the western propaganda. The sufficiency of arms and men was not the real problem, but the "come as you are" approach extended to a severely limited supply of ammunition which meant attrition would only work one way.

NATO strategic documents make clear the need for sufficient war reserves to maintain credibility,[cvii] but continual "cheese-paring" was a constant problem within the MoD.

[cviii] Once spending had been set, new cost cutting measures would leave the Service Chiefs with little or no room for manoeuvre, the contracts for major systems and spending already having been signed. The only place for cuts would therefore be in training, fuel and spares. The inadequacy of the stocks and supplies for warfighting, as well as the over-dependence on reservists, were displayed in both the Falklands and the First Gulf War. It was questionable if the Armed Forces were as capable as many wanted to believe.

The effects of the "victory" in the Cold War can be seen in changes to the defence policies of the NATO countries after 1991. The theory was that minimum deterrence had worked, and the notion, amongst others, that it did not matter what reserves of ammunition were available, and that reliance on reservists to fulfil front-line duties, were acceptable. Professor Colin S. Gray warned against relying on theory, despite its apparent clarity. "Historical accuracy is far more important than clarity that misleads. The cost is too great in providing a distorting mischaracterization of strategy by theory that is neat at the price of inaccuracy." [cix]

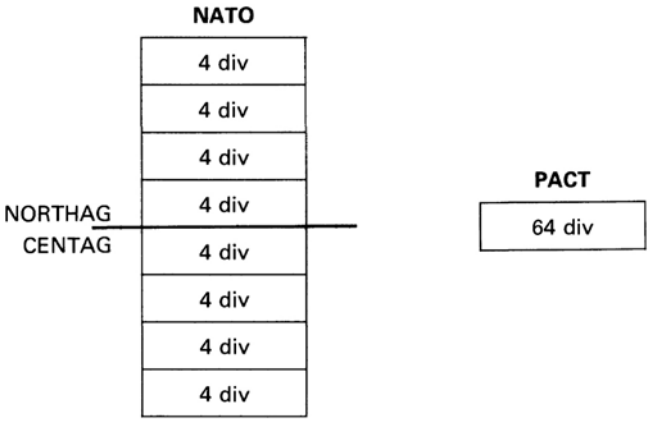

Figure 1 - Mearsheimer's distribution of divisions on the Central Front

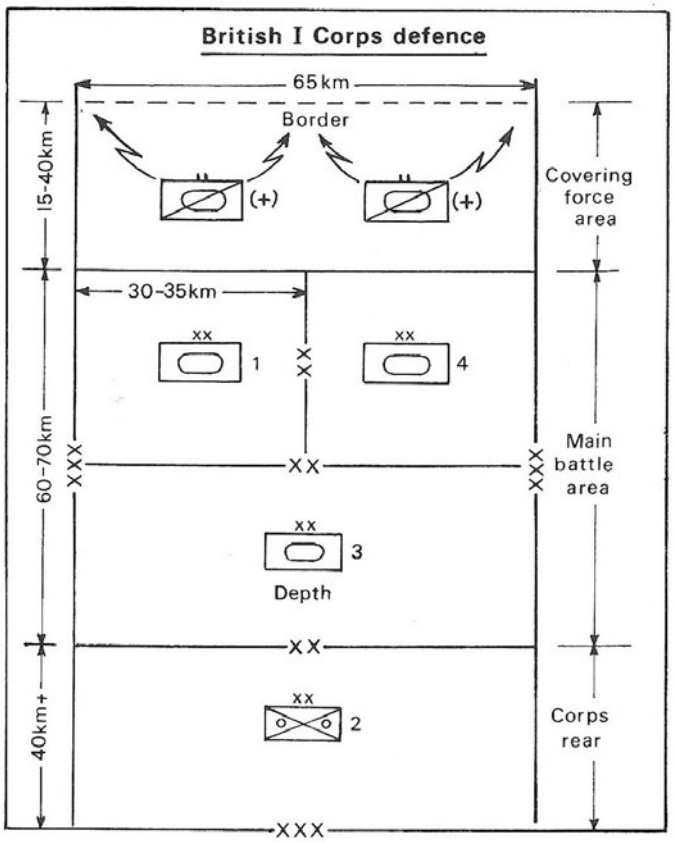

Figure 2 – Actual British Corps defence area, Isby, and Kamps, Armies of NATO's Central Front, p269

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[xx] Peter Hennessy, The Secret State (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 42. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Macmillan had authorised the Vulcan and Victor nuclear strike force to Alert Condition Three (fifteen minutes' readiness, armed and fuelled) but was reluctant to disperse them to their war locations for fear of provoking Khrushchev.

[xxi] Kenton White, 'British Defence Planning and Britain's NATO Commitment, 1979 – 1985' (PhD Thesis, University of Reading, 2016).

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[xxiii] 'A Report by the Military Committee to the Defence Planning Committee on Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area', 16 January 1968, para. 10, MC 14/3, NATO.

[xxiv] 'The Counterstroke Future Battlefield Study', DOAE Note 663/202 (DOAE, 31 August 1983), DEFE 48/1077, TNA.

[xxv] Annex to MO 15/3, 'The Growth of Soviet Military Power', 16th January 1978, 'JIC Assessment of Soviet Threat', PREM 16/2259, TNA.

[xxvi] COS 1146/434B, Attachment, Memorandum to the Chiefs of the Defence Staff from J Duxbury, 15th May 1980, 'NATO Planning and Strategy', 9, DEFE 70/722, TNA.

[xxvii] MO 15/3, Annex, Chiefs of Staff report, The Growth of Soviet Military Power, 23rd March 1977, 'JIC Assessment of Soviet Threat', para. 4, PREM 16/2259, TNA.

[xxviii] A development of the T-64, it was thought to be qualitatively very similar to the Chieftain and Abrams M1, Christopher F. Foss, Jane's Main Battle Tanks (London: Jane's Publishing, 1983), 78–79.

[xxix] Foss, Jane's Main Battle Tanks, 78.

[xxx] See the section on 'Rationality and Reason', Colin S. Gray, Strategy and Defence Planning: Meeting the Challenge of Uncertainty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 52–57; See also Herman Kahn, Thinking About the Unthinkable in the 1980s (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 37–38. Although Herman Kahn is writing about nuclear weapons, the intent and ability to use force is important in all aspects of deterrence.

[xxxi] Asa A. Clark, 'Deterrence versus War Fighting', in Conventional Deterrence (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1984), 13–26.

[xxxii] Chalmers and Unterseher, 'Is There a Tank Gap?: Comparing NATO and Warsaw Pact Tank Fleets', International Security; Lawrence Freedman, 'British Foreign Policy to 1985. II: Britain's Contribution to NATO', International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 54, no. 1 (1978): 30–47; Hugh Faringdon, Confrontation: The Strategic Geography of NATO and the Warsaw Pact (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul PLC, 1986); Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', International Security.

[xxxiii] Stephen D. Biddle, Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[xxxiv] Biddle, Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle, chap. 7.

[xxxv] MO 15/3, The growth of Soviet military power, 23rd March 1977, 'JIC Assessment of Soviet Threat', para. 23, PREM 16/2259, TNA.

[xxxvi] 'Cabinet Office War Book, Volume 2', 1980, 1, CAB 175/31, TNA.

[xxxvii] Exercises used a build up over several months, with four weeks between NATO putting the armed forces on alert and the outbreak of war. 'WINTEX-CIMEX 83 Committees', 1983, CAB 130/1249, TNA; 'Exercise Square Leg; Armed Forces Command and Control for Home Defence', 1981, HO 322/950 - 951, TNA.

[xxxviii] WINTEX-CIMEX was a Command Post Exercise (CPX) intended to simulate NATO's response to a worsening international crisis. The title comprises 'Winter Exercise – Civil/Military Exercise' and were performed biennially. It did not involve the deployment of troops.

[xxxix] For example, see E W Lawrence, P M Sutcliffe, and Squadron Leader R Miller, 'Maritime Operational Scenarios for Use in DOAE Studies' (DOAE, December 1977), DEFE 48/980, TNA; 'Crusader 80, Part A', n.d., FCO 46/2446, TNA; 'NATO Exercise LIONHEART 84', n.d., FCO 46/3059, TNA; 'WINTEX-CIMEX 83 Committees', CAB 130/1249, TNA.

[xl] The clear drawbacks of basing policy creation on the 'best-case' scenario are discussed in Kenton White, 'Britain's Defence Fallacy and NATO', British Army Review, no. 167 (Summer 2016): 38–49.

[xli] MISC 93(83) 1, WINTEX-CIMEX 83 Pre-exercise information, Annex A, JIC assessment, 'WINTEX-CIMEX 83 Committees', para. 4, CAB 130/1249, TNA.

[xlii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 39, International Security.

[xliii] National Intelligence Officer, 'Soviet Options in Afghanistan', Interagency Intelligence Memorandum (Director of Central Intelligence, 28 September 1979), 1.

[xliv] 'The Soviet "War Scare"' (President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, 15 February 1990), 8, George H W Bush Presidential Library.

[xlv] MO 15/3, Annex A, 16th January 1978, 'Defence against the Soviet Threat to the United Kingdom', n.d., 2, PREM 16/1563, TNA.

[xlvi] TO.2119/431/80, Annex A, 'Ministry of Defence (MOD) War Book', n.d., 8, DEFE 24/1418, TNA.

[xlvii] Measure 3.39, 'Government War Book, Volume 1' (Cabinet Office, 1985), CAB 175/53, TNA.

[xlviii] David C. Isby and Charles Kamps Jr, Armies of NATO's Central Front (London: Jane's, 1985), 305.

[xlix] Exercise Lionheart Days 1 - 10, VHS, Exercise Lionheart 84 (Ministry of Defence, 1984); Drew Middleton, 'British Start War Games on the Continent', The New York Times, 18 September 1984, US edition.

[l] Colonel IJ Hellberg, 'An Experience with the Commando Logistic Regiment Royal Marines', in The Falklands Conflict Twenty Years on: Lessons for the Future, Sandhurst Conference Series (Abingdon: Frank Cass, 2005), 110.

[li] To Authorise the Easing of Restrictions for the Conveyance of Military Explosives Through United Kingdom Ports, Measure 3.43, 'Government War Book, Volume 1', CAB 175/53, TNA.

[lii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 27, International Security.

[liii] 'NATO Short Term Initiatives' (MOD, 1978), DEFE 11/811, TNA, D/DS6/7/107/1, Briefing notes for Secretary of State for Defence, Visit to the UK by Netherlands Defence Minister, 26th January 1978.

[liv] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', fig. 2, International Security.

[lv] Isby and Kamps Jr, Armies of NATO's Central Front, 269.

[lvi] Annex C to Section 2, 'BATUS Training Report, 1981' (MoD, 1981), 2C–1, MoD.

[lvii] Colin McInnes, Hot War, Cold War: The British Army's Way in Warfare, 1945-95 (London ; Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1996), 60–68; See also Wyn Rees, 'Preserving the Security of Europe', in Britain and Defence, 1945 - 2000. A Policy Re-Evaluation (Pearsons Education Limited, 2001), 60.

[lviii] 'The Counterstroke Future Battlefield Study', para. 2, DOAE Note 663/202, DEFE 48/1077, TNA.

[lix] DP 14/81, Annex A, Appendix 5, Serial 3A4(2) EL49, NATO Force Goals 1981-1986 and Long Term Defence Programme, 6th October 1981, 'NATO Long Term Defence Planning', 1981, FCO 46/2586, TNA.

[lx] DP 14/81, Appendix 5 to Annex A, NATO Force Goals 1981 - 1986 and Long Term Defence Programme, 6th October 1981, 'NATO Long Term Defence Planning', 5, FCO 46/2586, TNA.

[lxi] Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man (London: Viking, 2006), 377–465.

[lxii] Sebag-Montefiore, Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man, 132–33. Like the 2nd Infantry Division in BAOR, the rear-area troops during the fighting in Belgium and Northern France in 1940 were not equipped to the same levels as the 'fighting battalions'. They lacked artillery and anti-tank and anti-aircraft capability.

[lxiii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 4, International Security.

[lxiv] D/MIN/JG/7/11, Annex A, Memorandum to the Minister of State for Defence from the Private Secretary, 21st December 1977, Ministry of Defence, 'War Reserve Stocks', n.d., DEFE 13/1059, TNA.

[lxv] VCDS(P&L) 203, Draft of Memorandum to the Secretary of State for Defence from VCDS(P&L), 1981, Holding of War Reserves, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', n.d., para. 4, DEFE 25/432, TNA.

[lxvi] DEF 062/24. Ministerial Guidance, 9th March 1979, 'NATO Ministerial Guidance', n.d., 2, FCO 46/1990, TNA.

[lxvii] VCDS(P&L) 203, Memorandum on the State of Logistics, from VCDS(P&L) to COS, 20th March 1981, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', para. 3, DEFE 25/432, TNA.

[lxviii] The State of Logistics, Memo from CDS (draft) to the Secretary of State for Defence, April 1981, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', DEFE 25/432, TNA.

[lxix] RN £308m, Army £392m, RAF £233m, in briefing draft from ACDS(P&L) to VCDS(P&L), 27th October 1981, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', 1, DEFE 25/432, TNA.

[lxx] PAO 5/81, Expansion of Defence Industrial Capacity in a Time of Tension, Note by the ACDS(P&L), 2nd February 1981, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', para. 1, DEFE 25/432, TNA; Speaking note, War Reserves and Stock Levels, ACDS(P&L), 27th October 1981, 'NATO Logistics Policy General UK Logistics Assumptions', 1, DEFE 25/432, TNA.

[lxxi] SWINGFIRE was the name for the wire guided anti-tank missile system developed in Britain during the 1960s.

[lxxii] Bernard W. Rogers, 'The Atlantic Alliance: Prescriptions for a Difficult Decade', Foreign Affairs 60, no. 5 (1982): 1152.

[lxxiii] Julian Thompson, The Lifeblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict (London: Brassey's, 1991), chap. 9.

[lxxiv] Ministry of Defence, 'Statement on the Defence Estimates 1989', Cmnd 675 (London: HMSO, 1989), 45.

[lxxv] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 34, International Security.

[lxxvi] The expected WTO invasion is described as an 'echeloned pile driver'. Attachment, Memorandum from R Burns to Mr Figgis, 21st December 1978, 'British Army of the Rhine', 1978, para. 16, FCO 46/1735, TNA.

[lxxvii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 12, International Security.

[lxxviii] Ned Wilmott, Strategy & Tactics of Land Warfare (Secaucus, N.J.: Chartwell Books, 1979), 29.

[lxxix] NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Force Comparisons (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1984), para. 8.

[lxxx] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 12, International Security.

[lxxxi] AndreŰAfanasŰevich Kokoshin, Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917-91, CSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1998), 177–80.

[lxxxii] US Department of the Army, 'The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics', Field Manual (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 16 July 1984), 2–10, FM 100-2-1.

[lxxxiii] Colin McInnes, NATO's Changing Strategic Agenda: The Conventional Defence of Central Europe (London ; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 97.

[lxxxiv] '1(BR) Corps Battle Notes' (BAOR HQ, 1981), 2-4–1.

[lxxxv] US Department of the Army, 'The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics', 5–18, Field Manual, FM 100-2-1.

[lxxxvi] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 29, International Security.

[lxxxvii] US Department of the Army, 'The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics', 2–7, Field Manual, FM 100-2-1.

[lxxxviii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 26–28, International Security.

[lxxxix] Biddle, Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle, 139.

[xc] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 30, International Security.

[xci] CIA, 'The Soviet Operational Maneuver Group', Intelligence Assessment (Directorate of Intelligence, Office of Soviet Analysis, February 1983), 1.

[xcii] CIA, 'The Soviet Operational Maneuver Group', Intelligence Assessment, 1.

[xciii] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 13, International Security.

[xciv] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 19, International Security.

[xcv] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 27, International Security.

[xcvi] William Baxter, Soviet Airland Battle Tactics (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), chap. 4; Gordon S. Barrass, The Great Cold War: A Journey Through the Hall of Mirrors (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009), 270; Richard Holmes, Nuclear Warriors: Soldiers, Combat, and Glasnost (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991), 129.

[xcvii] Quoted in Vojtech Mastny, Sven Holtsmark, and Andreas Wenger, eds., War Plans and Alliances in the Cold War: Threat Perceptions in the East and West, CSS Studies in Security and International Relations (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), 29.

[xcviii] See 'Conduct of the Offensive Operation without the use of Nuclear Weapons' in Graham Hall Turbiville, jr, ed., The Voroshilov Lectures: Materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press Publications, 1990), 107.

[xcix] Barrass, The Great Cold War: A Journey Through the Hall of Mirrors, 270.

[c] Mearsheimer, 'Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe', 8, International Security.

[ci] For a contrasting view, see 'Offensiveness, Defensiveness, and War Aims' in Beatrice Heuser, 'Warsaw Pact Military Doctrines in the 1970s and 1980s: Findings in the East German Archives', Comparative Strategy 12 (1993): 447.

[cii] 'Case Yellow', the code name for the German invasion of the Low Countries and France in 1940.

[ciii] A. J. P. Taylor, The Second World War (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 51–62.

[civ] Gordon Corrigan, Blood, Sweat and Arrogance: And the Myths of Churchill's War (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006), 211.

[cv] For a more detailed analysis of the reasons for the defeat of the Allies in 1940, see Corrigan, Blood, Sweat and Arrogance: And the Myths of Churchill's War; Sebag-Montefiore, Dunkirk: Fight to the Last Man; Taylor, The Second World War.

[cvi] Major General Julian Thompson, Lifeblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict (London: Brassey's, 1994), 335.

[cvii] 'Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area', 8 December 1969, para. 18, MC 48/3, NATO.

[cviii] John Nott, Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Recollections of an Errant Politician (London: Politico's, 2002), chap. 8.

[cix] Colin S. Gray, Strategy and Politics (London: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 14.

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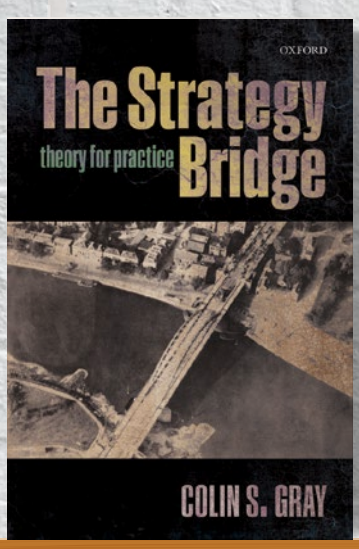

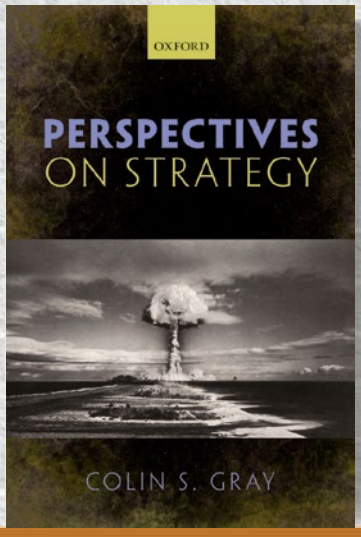

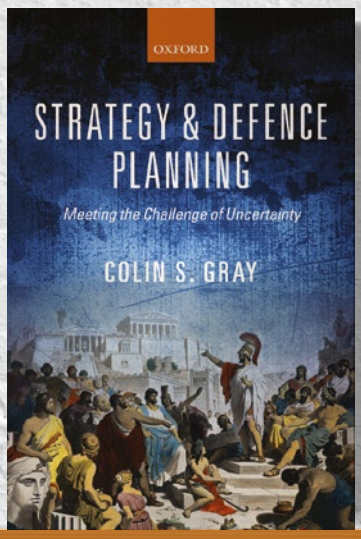

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Can Grand Strategy be Mastered?

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"Above all, strategic theory is a theory for action", wrote Bernard Brodie. After all, "[w]hat could strategic theory possibly be for if it were not meant to be transferable to the world of action?"[i] This same query may easily be posed of grand strategy, on which much has been written, often without significant effect. The conceptual terrain owned by grand strategy has expanded over the course of the evolution of the idea since the early 19th century. What was once a strictly military concept now often involves the myriad non-military instruments of national power or places grand strategy in a privileged position above policy itself.[ii] Lawrence Freedman has suggested that it is not worth worrying about this conceptual expansion, but his reassurance, although welcome, is not necessarily heartening.[iii]

This article seeks to consider one vital question. Is grand strategic theory as it stands today transferable to the world of action, or have grand strategists, broadly understood as those who write about grand strategy, defined themselves out of a position with actual practical relevance?

Two Characteristics

Modern scholars who employ the concept of grand strategy most often latch it onto one or two primary characteristics. The first is that grand strategy necessarily encompasses non-military as well as military instruments. The second characteristic is that the role of grand strategy is to guide policy and policy-making, sometimes over the course of decades or centuries, rather than to be its subordinate, as strategy itself is classically understood.

The first characteristic evolved as a result of the development of naval and maritime strategy, particularly through the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Stafford Corbett. As Mahan argued, "[t]he diplomatist, as a rule, only affixes the seal of treaty to the work done by the successful soldier. It is not so with a large proportion of strategic points upon the sea."[iv] This opened the door for the use of other, non-military instruments. The influence of maritime strategy broadened grand strategy—a pre-existing term—from being purely a military concept to one with far-reaching responsibilities and the addition of non-military instruments. Successive strategic thinkers such as JFC Fuller, Basil Liddell Hart, Edward Mead Earle, Edward Luttwak, and Colin Gray, among others, have all emphasized this characteristic.

The second characteristic of guiding policy emerged and gained traction as the Cold War drew to a close. A subsidiary element of this characteristic, only sometimes explicitly mentioned, is the extended timeline over which grand strategy is meant to be practiced. Paul Kennedy provided the first popular definition which embraced both primary and secondary aspects: "a true grand strategy was now concerned with peace as much as (perhaps even more than) with war. It was about the evolution and integration of policies that should operate for decades, or even centuries."[v] Over the course of the 1990s, this approach to conceptualizing grand strategy crystallized into a number of types of grand strategy, of ways by which the United States in particular could and should interact with the rest of the world: neo-isolationism, primacy, selective engagement, and cooperative security.[vi] The primary focus of these various schools of grand strategic preference revolves around the question of how, how often, and for what reasons the United States should employ military force. In subsequent decades, neo-isolationism would be replaced by retrenchment, and off-shore balancing would also emerge as an option. Most often when grand strategy is employed without definition, this characteristic of placing grand strategy conceptually above policy is the assumed meaning.

These two are very divergent characteristics. The former maintains strategy's subordination to policy, merely expanding the instrumental purview of the concept through the appellation of "grand". The latter conceptualization of grand strategy promotes the subordinate to the level of the overall director. The very nature of the grand strategist's task changes with this promotion. To return to the fundamental

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question, one must inquire into the transferability of either characterization of grand strategy into the realm of practice.

Grand Strategy and the World of Action

These two broad interpretations of grand strategy are not uniformly transferable to the world of action. One is, in principle, more transferable than the other. Transferability is not to be measured in terms of prescriptive value, the rather Jominian beliefs of modern political science notwithstanding.[vii] Rather, following Clausewitz, "[t]heory exists so that one need not start afresh each time sorting out the material and plowing through it, but will find it ready to hand and in good order. It is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not to accompany him to the battlefield".[viii]

The first conceptualization of grand strategy, broadening the concept to include all instruments of national power and not simply the military, may arguably be quite useful. Policy-makers and strategists all should understand how military power fits in with non-military power, and vice versa, to achieve desired effects. They must understand the assumptions which implicitly underpin each form of power and how they integrate and contradict among themselves. As Lawrence Freedman argued in 1992, "[t]he view that strategy is bound up with the role of force in international life must be qualified, because if force is but one form of power then strategy must address the relationship between this form and others, including authority."[ix]

The use of non-military power against an adversary in war is clearly not simple diplomacy, but also is not encompassed within classical definitions of strategy. Grand strategy may or may not be an appropriate term for it; in recent decades the British have labeled it the comprehensive approach. Yet, given how many authors have paid lip service to the variety of forms of power inherent in this interpretation of grand strategy, the amount of attention actually dedicated to the non-military forms of power has been startlingly low. As Everett Carl Dolman suggested in a somewhat blasé manner, "[a] worthy grand strategist will consider all pertinent means individually and in concert to achieve the continuing health and advantage of the state."[x] Yet one may reasonably ask, 'but how?' To make connections among categories and among distinct fields and disciplines is one of the primary purposes of theory, yet this has simply not been done in the grand strategic literature even when this task is implicit and inherent in the definition of the concept itself.[xi] Furthermore, without the achievement of this difficult scholarly work, grand strategic theory which adheres to this form of the concept will never fulfill Clausewitz's appreciation of theory.

The failure of this type of grand strategic theory is perhaps unsurprising. The task is huge and difficult. To connect foreign disciplines together is not an easy achievement. Yet actually to integrate the knowledge and wisdom of a plethora of various competencies and disciplines into a single concept, the ultimate ambition of this interpretation of grand strategy, is a colossal challenge. Nevertheless, the goal remains within the realm of instrumental logic not far removed from that of strategy itself. In the context of war, questions of adversariality, of currency conversion from a particular means to an unlike political end, and so forth, would remain as relevant for non-military instruments as for military force. These alternate instruments do, however, still bring with them unique assumptions of their own, which condition their individual utility in war's climate of danger and uncertainty.

In principle, grand strategy, conceived along the lines of incorporating multiple instruments beyond the military, can indeed be mastered. However, there is no theory yet which may guide those who desire to master grand strategy in this manner. Practice in the world of action may, of course, still take place without theory—or at least academic theory. Yet without proper guidance, chaos among the various military and non-military instruments is inevitable. They will not work properly together; they may even achieve contradictory effects; and so forth. The comprehensive approach, as practiced in Afghanistan and Iraq, has not been particularly successful.

The second conceptualization of grand strategy, as being placed above policy in a hierarchy of ideas and duties, along with the subsidiary characteristic of enduring over lengthy periods of time, is less transferable to the world of action. Each aspect of this second understanding of grand strategy contributes individually to limiting the transferability of the concept.

First, placing grand strategy above policy disconnects it from even the loosest understanding of strategy. If one defines strategy as matching ends, ways, and means in the most generic sense, even without specific regard for classical definitions of strategy, this type of grand strategy is not strategic. Rather, grand strategy becomes self-referential, conflating ends and ways. The grand strategies which were conceived after the Cold War, which were to act as a framework and a guide for American foreign policy, reflect this self-referential character. Neo-isolationists wished for America to withdraw from the world, because they did not wish to expend American power engaging with, and seeking to solve, global problems. Primacists wished for the United States to act across the globe, as this was the purpose of American power.

Grand strategy became conceptualized "as a dominant 'big idea' instead of the steps that translate high concept into action", a role which had belonged to policy in classical strategy.[xii] However, there are crucial differences. Policy can only ever be contingent upon an inevitably messy and continuously on-going political process, whereas grand strategy is seen to be above that process, to discipline and guide it. "The natural inclination is to view strategy as supporting policy, rather than the reverse…But strategy is more than this: it is the grand design, the overall mosaic into which the pieces of specific policy fit. It provides the key ingredients of clarity, coherence and consistency over time."[xiii] Or, as another observer suggested, "it should be clear to the reader that 'grand strategy' and 'foreign policy' are not synonymous. Grand strategy, the conceptual framework, is necessarily broader than foreign policy, the political actions of the state in international relations."[xiv]

At this high level, having broken out of the political process, grand strategy is simply political guidance which is not open to discussion—it is ideology. One may be a good ideologue,

but that does not usually translate into good policy or good strategy. As one historian has written,

> [t]o my mind, one of the main problems with the idea of grand strategy is that it places a premium on a certain kind of intellectualizing. It is never enough just to call for a particular course of action; one has to justify the strategy by rooting it in a certain theory about what is at the bottom of international politics, or at least what is at the heart of the situation one is trying to deal with. Since the strategy needs to be simple and all-encompassing, there is a tendency for the theory to be framed in rather grandiose terms—that is, for the theory to overdefine or to misdefine the problem, and in any case to misdirect attention away from the real issues that policy should focus on.[xv]

Simply put, in dissecting this idea of grand strategy one finds that there is nothing to master.

The other characteristic of this conceptualization of grand strategy, its undefined or sometimes decades- or centuries-long duration, also impedes mastery of this type of grand strategy. It is not realistic to expect a grand strategy conceived in any particular year to be still relevant a century later, or possibly even a decade or two later. Change is endemic in international affairs for any number of reasons and in any number of forms, most of them significant for the success and sustainability of any particular grand strategy. As Lawrence Freedman noted regarding the military history of past decades, "[t]he military history of the 2000s was nothing like that of the 1990s, which in turn was quite different from the 1980s. Why should we expect to be able to predict the 2010s? Indeed, this decade has already begun with a reluctant intervention in Libya."[xvi] This is true of the entire twentieth century. There is little reason to believe that it will not also be true of the future. Such incessant change can only have significant effects for any long-term grand strategy, and to disregard its inevitability by fixating on crafting an enduring grand strategy is imprudent statecraft.

Some may disagree with the idea that a long-term grand strategy acting as a framework for foreign policy is implausible to conceive, and would undoubtedly raise George Kennan and the containment of the Soviet Union as their counterpoint. Kennan managed, after all, to conceive of what is usually labeled a grand strategy which endured myriad changes in domestic and international politics for over forty years. Yet what Kennan offered was not a framework into which foreign policy could nestle, but rather a way of defeating the Soviet Union. The idea which guided Western foreign policy-making throughout the Cold War was not containment, but the recognition that the Soviet Union could not be allowed to prevail. Kennan, through his knowledge of Russian history and the Soviet regime, was able accurately to pinpoint containment as the way in which this could be achieved, simply because he perceived the Soviet Union to be weak. The Soviet Union was a problem which would fix itself through self-inflicted dilapidation to ultimate collapse, given enough time.[xvii]

The goal—defeating the Soviet Union—was widely accepted in the United States. The fundamental way—containment—was also widely accepted, although militarized beyond Kennan's intentions after NSC-68. The constraints of the other factors, such as the prevalence of nuclear weapons and the corresponding desire never to use them, derailed every option other than containment. Rollback was never a serious option until the Soviet Union itself gave up its power. Grand strategists who seek a new framework for US foreign policy and point to containment as an example of the success of this concept of grand strategy have fundamentally misunderstood containment. It was never a framework in the manner which they believe. It was just one identified way of achieving the desired goal, which happened to be consistently employed over forty years due in part to the confluence of external factors.

What these grand strategists have mistaken as authority over policy was actually a normal mutual feedback loop between the desired political end and the chosen ways to achieve that end within an ever evolving geopolitical context. What these grand strategists have mistaken as a four decade-long grand strategy was simply a constancy of purpose within an international environment which constrained the action realistically suitable for achieving that purpose to a single option. Thus when the post-Cold War grand strategy debate picked up steam, the participants all submitted idiosyncratic ways of engaging with the world without regard for any specific policy ends. This turned a mere way into a framework for all foreign policy because there was no end to limit that specific way of international engagement—in breadth, in duration, or in orientation. Containment *ended* when the Soviet Union collapsed because the end, i.e. the goal, had been achieved. In the new generation of grand strategies being proffered there is no end date because there is no end goal. The new grand strategies have no end state but exist purely for their own sake. Such a concept of grand strategy cannot be mastered because there are no criteria by which such a grand strategy could be understood to be conclusively successful.

Conclusion

One must admit, to adapt anthropologist Leslie A. White's observation about culture, that "[g]rand strategy is not basically anything. Grand strategy is a word concept. It is man-made and may be used arbitrarily to designate anything, we may define the concept as we please."[xviii] The same is, of course, true of strategy itself as well. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' definitions of strategy. Nevertheless, although such concepts can never be wrong per se, they can still be more or less useful.

Therefore, the question should be asked: can grand strategy be mastered? Can theories of grand strategy as they exist today be transferred into the world of action? Answering such questions depends on how grand strategy is understood. Today, two main interpretations of grand strategy exist. First, that grand strategy incorporates more than the military instrument alone. Second, that grand strategy sits above and directs policy, often for decades if not potentially for centuries.

The first interpretation of grand strategy, despite its breadth, remains locked within the generic strategic logic of matching ends, ways, and means. By virtue of this feature alone, it is a concept which allows for mastery in the realm of action. However, due to the sheer breadth of the concept, the

difficult work of integrating the various relevant disciplines together has yet to be achieved. Grand strategic theory has thus far failed Clausewitz's requirement that it act as a guide for self-education so that each student not have to start from scratch. There is potential in this interpretation of grand strategy, regardless of whether this label or another is most suitable.

The second interpretation of grand strategy surpasses the fetters of even the most generic strategic logic to become ideology itself, a guiding idea for interacting with the rest of the world for its own sake, to last as long as it can within the marketplace of ideas. Such a concept of grand strategy not only cannot be mastered, but generally results in empty words which create much heat but little light.

Not all interpretations of grand strategy are practically useful. In the evolution of modern grand strategic thought, grand strategic concepts have become less and less practical over the years, and grand strategists have been defining themselves out of jobs with real practical relevance. Grand strategy has become a morass, and only with clear thinking and sharp eyesight may the safe and practicable way through be discovered.

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Modern Errors in Discussions on Strategy

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This article will be predicated around the meaning of the word "Strategy." "Strategy is the use of engagements for the objects of the war." This is how Clausewitz defined it. To quote Colin Gray, "Strategy is the bridge that relates military power to political purpose". In other words, strategy is the bridge that relates the outcome of engagements to the political objects of the war.

Military power is the use of force or the threat of force. More specifically, it is the use of violence, and/or the threat of violence. There is no such thing as a non-violent strategy and you cannot usefully reference a concept such as "the strategy bridge" unless you understand that strategy is about violence and it can only be executed as tactics.

Strategy is about Violence

Today it is common to suggest that strategy is more than the use of force. It is not. The use of force is what differentiates diplomacy from strategy. Diplomacy (which is politics) and strategy may work hand in hand, but violence is unique in terms of how it generates both results and cost. Only violence costs blood. No method can claim non-violent credentials if underpinned by the use of force, thus the Russian annexation of the Crimea, while non-violent for the most part, was underpinned by very high levels of threat. The "little green men" carried guns.

As strategy can only be done as tactics, then at the application level strategy is performed in a theatre as a campaign. This has never not been the case. Geography matters. Like tactics, strategy is about doing things in the physical world. It is not abstract, so strategy is applied by a level of command using physical resources usually allocated as part of a policy decision. For example, General George Marshall, the 15th Chief of Staff of the US Army did not do strategy. Building the US Armed forces for WW2 was not strategy. It was very clearly policy. It was an entirely political and economic process. Nor was strategy allocating those forces between theatres. That was again a political decision, for example beating Germany first. Eisenhower and Montgomery were the actual strategic commanders because they commanded tactical forces.

The campaign even applies at the non-state level as a Narco-gang in Mexico, seeking to assert their authority in say Laredo, will kill people in Laredo (or those having any actual connection to it) and not anywhere else. The same is true for insurgents in Iraq, Afghanistan or anywhere else, be that at the level of village, town, district, province or nation.

More importantly the use of violence for the objects of the war can only be applied against the armed objector to your policy.[i] A little quoted or even read passage of Clausewitz makes clear that,

> *"T[o] impose our will on the enemy is it's [the war's] object. To secure the **object** we must render the enemy powerless; and that in theory, is the true aim of **warfare**. That aim takes the place of the **object**, discarding it as something not actually part of **war** itself."*

Clausewitz's subtlety and precision does not often make for clear writing, but the simple fact is that the purpose of any armed force is to render the enemy "powerless." That may be to destroy, defeat, deter, exhaust, or render impotent, but unless the armed force is focused on the enemy, it is making itself irrelevant to the only competition that matters, but herein lies a major trap for modern theorists. Simplistic understandings of warfare (as distinct from war) suggest that it is a competition of armed forces. Again, to quote Colin Gray, "there is more to war than warfare." While many modern military theorists, such as John Boyd, have struggled to explain how you can have air superiority and win every battle, yet still lose the war, Clausewitz would merely have shrugged. The simple reason for this is that only some policies accept the use of violence. That is to say, only policies that are by their

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nature likely to succeed if the armed objector of that policy is defeated should be those where armed force is used. So, for example, would Iraq and Afghanistan become stable pro-western democracies if the insurgents were defeated and, just as importantly, are you prepared to pay the blood, time and dollar cost of defeating them? The price of saving South Vietnam was too high for the US, so it simply gave up and removed its forces.

Thus, modern theory that attempts to frame the key to winning wars as being rooted in "warfare", as in skillful execution, good technology and tactical brilliance is grossly simplistic, misinformed and almost always predicated on a number of abstract concepts not present in reality. For example, the tactical and strategic operations for an existential war are very different from those of a war fought for limited policy objectives. Due to the fact cost is rarely an issue if existence is at stake, the object of warfare is always to render the enemy powerless and do so for cost. That cost is set by the nature of the policy. Thus, tactics dictated that the British should defeat any Russian invasion of India in the 19th Century on the line of the Indus River, whereas policy called for it to be halted in Northern Afghanistan requiring a 1,200km line of supply. Unless the Army in India could pull that off, it was little good to the Government of the day. If you cannot defend the terrain that matters, then you cannot attain the required object.

The same is true of Israel's defence of the Golan Heights, where the supposed concepts of mobile defence were simply not adequate to serve the policy demand of holding the terrain. If such operations are not deliverable via military means then a policy predicated upon them is untenable. Politics tells you how to fight far more than abstract military theory. To be of any use, such theory must serve the political objective.

Policy not Strategy

As previously explained, strategy is about violence. That violence should always be directed against an armed enemy who is the objector to policy. It is extremely important to understand that the policy may be quite limited even though it requires violence. Thus, an airpower campaign to prevent Libyan forces massacring the civilian population of Benghazi was a coherent use of force to meet that very limited political objective; that being, "no massacre." The problems occur once that policy becomes more grandiose and ambitious.

There is a massive difference between using military force to prevent a massacre and using military force to remove all and any armed objectors in order to make Libya a stable pro-western democracy. In the first case the policy is achievable for cost. In the second, the cost would have been very high indeed. Critically the job of strategy is merely to remove the armed objector. Non-violent politics and diplomacy are required to make Libya a stable pro-western democracy.

What needs to be understood is that "strategy" is not, and never has been required to provide a coherent political end state. Policy must and should do that. Strategy just enables it to the degree of removing the armed objector. Nothing more.

Thus, to be considered "comprehensive," a strategy has only to fulfill three basic tests. Firstly, it has to be focused on the enemy, extracting a cost from him in time and/or blood thus either destroying his means or his will or both.

Secondly, it can only be done as tactics, so it has to be possible with military means in the real world. Thirdly, it must do so for costs set by the policy, in that the cost in blood, time and money should not be excessive. Should the strategy fail any one of those tests, in part or in whole, political success will move further away.

As previously stated policy has primacy over everything else. If tactics are unintentionally killing too many civilians, as opposed to the enemy, then while tactics may be at fault, the actual problem lies with the policy. The Geneva Conventions hold military necessity, within the context of distinction and proportionality, to allow for proportionate means to focus on the defeat of the enemy as in the armed objector. Clearly if the objector is not armed, then there is a policy issue (which Gandhi leveraged with his policy of non-violence) not a military one, but more to the point should the enemy place 100 civilians on the roof of their HQ, then the crime being committed is being committed by them, not those striking the HQ. The critical point to be understood is that done correctly, policy, not tactical command, makes the decision to strike. Tactics has no view on the civilians, if the Rules of Engagement (ROE) allow for it, but the primary purpose of ROE is to align tactics with policy. Who you can kill/detain/search, where, when and why are ROE, and serve the ends of policy. They are political, not legal, because adherence to international law is, itself a political choice, as Russia and Iran's activity in Syria amply demonstrate. Ethics is merely politics. Iran and Russia believe they are acting entirely ethically. The reasoning for that resides in political argument.

Equally important to understand is bad ROE, being that which restricts force into irrelevance and actually renders your own forces "powerless", not the enemy, because they cannot inflict harm upon the enemy! Very clearly, the lines between tactics and policy can become blurred but this observation is actually obvious and banal because the field of endeavour that considers this is called "Strategy!"

As to the possibility of the fault lying with tactics, you cannot restrict force into irrelevance. If the policy does not allow you to kill the enemy, then the policy is, yet again, at fault.

Information Strategy

Given that strategy is about violence, there is clearly no such thing as information strategy. Information, as in the recounting or recording of events, only has political implications as concerns policy. Are the insurgents really executing civilians in the streets? Did a drone strike really kill everyone at a wedding? If nothing about an event is recorded or recounted then it will have no political, thus no relevant, impact. Conversely, events that never happened can be recounted or invented and have substantial impact on the policy/political level, be that babies thrown from incubators, or mortar shells hitting markets. The veracity of any claim will always have to be placed in the context of the policies at stake. Legitimate strikes that kill civilians may be required. That level of requirement is a political choice. Tactics will have to

match the means with that requirement.

It is fairly obvious that social media or citizen journalists can never have any real tactical impact. Tweeting the location of an artillery battery may obviously have consequences, as would revealing any information of military importance on any media, but someone tweeting from a tribal war in Africa will be largely ignored, compared to a 7-year-old girl tweeting from Aleppo about to be overrun by Government forces, as the focus of political attention is on Aleppo. Social media really only impacts the "something must be done" sentiment that drives policy, but has almost no direct impact on things getting done. Millions on social media can be horrified and military operations continue regardless of that horror.

Conflicts, which are of little interest to western policy, have little presence on western media, social or otherwise. Fairly obviously, the supposed strategic impact of media is its potential to alter the policy. Yet the object of war remains rendering the enemy powerless, regardless of that fact. Social media, or media in any form, can do very little to render the enemy powerless, bar altering the nature of the policy at stake. That may be decisive but it will be so, only because policy has primacy.

Talking Strategy

So where does this leave a discussion of strategy? It may be more important to understand what is not strategy. Arguing about the number of F-35s is a purely political question, because there is no enemy, nor theatre, nor policy bearing on the discussion. Likewise, the number of US or UK aircraft carriers is purely a policy and economic discussion. It only ceases to be so when there is a specified enemy and that enemy has to be rendered powerless for cost, in regards to a policy, and in a time and place relevant to the policy.

Also, not "strategic" is the idea that "ISIS has to be defeated." In the US and UK, that is a purely political assertion born of party political ideas. How to defeat ISIS at cost, cognizant of a stated policy that allows for such a cost, is truly strategic, and requires a considerable level of military applications knowledge, but is relatively simple and easy to achieve. So, conversations of the type such as "We need to defeat ISIS" are political and more to the point, party political opinion, not based on strategic understanding.

As has been shown, good strategy requires good policy. A good policy will be one made real by someone rendering the enemy objector to the policy powerless for cost. It really is that iron bar simple. To quote Lord Wavell attempting to educate the journalist and amateur military critic Liddell-Hart,

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

So, unless "actualities" (enemy, terrain, weather etc.) are present then you are doing neither strategy nor tactics. Clausewitz never gave much advice about the raising of armies or their size and shape because he knew such things flowed from policy, not an imagined ideal of what an army (or navy) was supposed to look like, unless there is a policy to serve, such as protecting South Korea, or West Germany in the Cold War. Very obviously, the vast majority of professional study needs to be directed at the actualities of war and warfare. To this end, the little-known field of strategic history is head and shoulders above the essentially romantic military history popular today.

Conclusion

Much strategic discussion is irrelevant, abstract and nonsensical because it does not adhere to the coherent and logical definition that Clausewitz provided. More precisely it is difficult to conduct a meaningful strategic discussion with someone not well versed in Clausewitz, simply because there exists few, if any, such coherent bodies of strategic theory.

As has been shown, a failure to adhere to the largely simple constructs Clausewitz provided leads to a nonsensical understanding of the problems and thus confounds any attempt at solutions.

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[i] Using violence against civilians for coercion is coercion. It is neither strategy nor war.

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