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# Infinity Journal



## IN THIS EDITION

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# A Short Note from the Publisher

I am not the editor of *Infinity Journal*. That intellectually arduous and exigent responsibility belongs to William 'Wilf' Owen, who, in my humble opinion, has one of the most percipient minds in military thinking. No, I am simply the publisher. Yet, over the years I've been referred to as a 'different type of publisher' mainly due to the hands-on approach I continue to take with every single writer who submits articles to *Infinity Journal*.

I have had the pleasure of both working alongside or simply communicating with some of the great minds – whether veterans or newcomers – to the study of strategy, strategic theory and strategic history. This pleasure to work with great minds has taught me more than I could ever have imagined. But the one aspect that is most notable is about *Infinity Journal* itself – specifically its mission: to assist in educating people on strategy.

As the publisher, I can say with complete honesty that while we have certainly assisted in this field of study, we have not reached our goal, not even close. And as the publisher (and founder of this journal), I have to take full responsibility for that. After all, the buck stops with me.

We receive a multitude of article submissions. However, the vast majority are not accepted for publication since most articles submitted to *Infinity Journal* are not on strategy (or its theory or history), but most often on policy. This is not *the* root of the problem, but it is a serious problem nonetheless.

Just like the editor, myself, or the writers already published in *Infinity Journal* will tell you: strategy is about the use or threat to use violence for political purposes – those political purposes are policy. It is about how one uses or threatens to use violence to reach political purposes that is strategy. It is the bridge between tactics and policy. Only once people accept this simple postulation and write on this truth, will others become aware of what bona fide strategic thinking – and its consequences – is all about.

**Dr. A.E. Stahl**  
Publisher, *Infinity Journal*  
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"Rogue states" are considered a long-standing threat to American foreign policy. The most controversial issue, for the United States, when dealing with these types of states relates to the use of force. The Clinton and Bush Administrations opted for a more comprehensive policy against "rogue states" which included the use of force, either limited or full scale. In this article, we analyze the case of the Obama Administration in order to empirically assess the reasons why the Obama Administration opted for a more peaceful approach. Adopting a qualitative methodological approach, we analyzed all the publicly available documents of the Obama Administration regarding the threat of "rogue states." According to the findings of the analysis the Obama Administration did recognize the potential threat of "rogue states" however, there was no consensus regarding which policies they should use in order to counter the threat.



# So What! The Meaning of Strategy

Colin S. Gray  
United Kingdom

Dr. Colin S. Gray has lived in three countries and has performed official advisory duties in both the UK and the USA. Of recent years he has focused on policy and strategy at both ends of the spectrum of violence, Special Operations and Nuclear ones. His most recent book *Theory of Strategy*, will be published by Oxford University Press, in May 2018 (UK) and July 2018 (US).

Strategy can prove a notably elusive quality to attempt to define and explain. So familiar has the word become that usually it would appear pedantic to bother an audience or readers with more than the word, simple and unadorned, precluding possibly pretentious seeming refinement. *Infinity Journal* has staked a claim as a serious home for thought on topics with some strategic merit. This being so, there may be utility in my probing for the meaning of our subject.

Possibly it is both appropriate and useful for me to remind readers that strategy is par excellence a dynamic, even mobile, concept. It is both an idea adaptable to complement behaviour with meaning that is time constrained, as well as a function as ancient as we humans have been. We are strategic creatures and we are capable of operationalizing our behaviour for very particular purposes. The theory of strategy has many working parts, too many for comfort at least. [i] Just about every reader of this *Journal* has been taught, and may have learnt, that the vital intellectual architecture of strategy is expressed in the relationships among just three interdependent concepts, Ends, Ways, and Means (E, W, M), with an additional value from reigning Assumptions (A). What may not always be as plain to see and understand as it should be is the holistic nature of strategy. Each of the four concepts central to an understanding of strategy are shot through with potential troubles, while the interdependencies among the four magnify the ill effects of particular weakness. Also, poverty in the quality of one component among the conceptual all, will be near certain to have ill consequences for the rest.

## Understanding the Question

A vital key necessary for the understanding of strategy is realization that 'so what' may be succeeded either by an exclamation mark or a question mark. The former indicates some degree of surprise, the latter some measure of doubt. By its nature strategy inherently is an idea linked with doubt and uncertainty. Strategy is always a gamble, though usually we can exercise some control over the scale of the risks we run, and therefore, we hope, over the scale of potential loss should events not develop favourably for our interests. It is sad news for scientists and even social scientists that they are not, indeed cannot be, trained for the purpose of removing, or even reducing seriously the hazards in strategic choice. Plainly it is a challenge to attempt to teach classes on the making of strategy; followed by the execution of strategy, given the handicaps normal to strategy construction and execution.

In order to understand the challenge to understanding that virtually all strategy must present, there can be no evading a fundamental understanding of what it is about. Often, one feels, strategy the noun and its adjectival derivative, strategic, are simply words employed to decorate what otherwise would look, indeed most probably would be, unduly commonplace. Strategy easily leaves the rigours of a military connection, because today it is very largely naked of inherent meaning, instead being deployable in aid of my number of purposes. In the military context from whence it came there is always the spur to performance provided by an adversary. However, given the universality of the logic that governs strategy, and the rich individuality of many states' situation in most respects, the mere familiarity of strategically relevant matters offers scant comfort.

By far the most important question to attempt to answer about a state's strategy is, simply, "What is its purpose?". The purpose can be positive, negative or, as so often is the case, both simultaneously without being too much in direct opposition to each other. It may be impolitic, but it is usually highly pertinent to return to the central matter of purpose when, perhaps if, strategy is revisited in some historical retrospect. After all, it is rather a challenge to understand how well, or poorly, we have done, if we lack as a benchmark knowledge of what it was we attempted to accomplish. As with the basic structure of strategy, EWM, inexorably the great stream of time constantly moves on, taking with it the particular values for the

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working of strategy. So much that is important to the working of strategy is really a moving part of the whole context, that we should be careful not to misplace, let alone forget, the EWM and A formula of 'basics'. A particular glory of these is that they are not vulnerable to invalidation by inconvenient local historical detail. They work as well for Imperial Rome as they do today for Russia or the United States. It can be objected that EWMA is so austere and economical of all detail that it lacks substantive value for strategy. Nothing would be further from the truth. It is precisely because EWMA eschews all attempts at localizing detail, that it is able to preserve the great beauty of simplicity and easy comprehension.

Although many people are affected by strategy, very few actually make it, or even attempt to do so. An important reason why strategy lacks much popular support is because hardly anybody actually does it, explicitly and empirically understood. Seemingly, nearly everyone knows the word, or at least words in the local language that approximate thereto, but who really does it? The answer is only handfuls of people anywhere, though that may not correspond well with nominal job titles and categorization. It is not well understood that in a vital sense strategy is 'done' by a cast of hundreds, perhaps thousands for the superpowers, though at the level of significant choices, far fewer than that. The reason for my doubting who does and does not do strategy pertains to the essential meaning assigned to the concept. Conceptually, this is dangerous terrain in which to venture. The differences among strategy, operations, and tactics, each from the others, can appear strained and in some peril of breaking unless one is very careful. So, what is strategy?

Probably the best way forward towards understanding is by means of the clearest possible identification of what strategy is, and hence strategic is not. The fundamental basis for grasping the meaning of strategy can be approached by understanding it to be composed entirely of tactical and operational level behaviour. This may sound rather ethereal, though not, I hope, vague. Ironically, perhaps, it is the very material physicality of tactics and operations that serves all too often to mislead. To military professionals obliged day after day to cope with geography in the raw and possibly with combat in all its brutal horror, strategy can appear a mystery from another planet. Even the very concept of strategy can prove to require a mental step or two that is beyond the grasp, let alone the grip, of many soldiers, even those with several stars. The most important step to take, if one dares, is full registration of the fact that strategy has no independent physical reality. This means, of course, that any and every discussion of strategy, or of particular forces and vehicles presumed to be in some sense strategic, either are plainly incorrect or are more likely than not to be such. The enduring problem with strategy that hinders understanding, and therefore sensible usage, is that it does not photograph well, indeed it does not photograph at all. We should have no difficulty registering the fact that books on strategy seem bereft of any direct pictures of their subject. It is revealing to ask a class of students what strategy looks like. As an interesting next step, one could ask the class about the possible and even some probable consequences of their endemic elusiveness of strategy. In order to lighten the tone of discussion a little, it may be helpful to offer the thought that strategy is rather like love: you cannot see it, but in the future you would notice its absence, if not tomorrow then the day after. Because strategy

and tactics work in very different currencies, appreciation of one does not necessarily serve for a competent grasp of both. Moreover, very deep immersion in the concerns of one, may actually disable respecting competence in the other. Notwithstanding the many Office descriptions that claim their human occupants are committed to the solving of strategic problems, in point of fact very few people attempt to do strategy. After all, we could ask, perhaps rather cynically, certainly sceptically, how many strategists does a polity really need, or could it afford? While deception is a vital adjunct to intelligence for the high purpose of national security, sheer diversity to fit local preferences and prejudices is not; that is a road to confusion.

It can be a challenge to explain to students of strategy that even the austere minimalist triumph of the E in EWM cannot be taken as authoritative. The theory of strategy rightly commands that military power must be subject to political control. It should follow as a necessary truth that the policy objectives due to be served by armed forces ought to be the product of an orderly political process. We are aware, however, that national security in its military dimension is constructed by a process that is distinctly disorderly. Furthermore, when countries go to war they do not always, or these days even often, conduct war *à l'outrance*. Simple seeming theory presents us just with all-purpose policy EWMs in the traditional formula. In almost every case, however, the politics of policy can produce confused outcome that must serve for the guidance of strategy.

### Complexity and Holism

I have recently completed a book on the theory of strategy which seeks to explain its subject in the light cast by twenty-three principles. Nonetheless, I recognize the merit in the common device of explanation with critically important assistance provided by the Trinitarian approach comprising Ends, Ways and Means, with the important addition of Assumptions. The great simplicity of this trinity-plus renders it of high value as a quick aid to vital thought. What it does is direct both leaders and followers to notably bare essentials. The theory of strategy provides much important detail about the making and working of strategy, but often the official and the general public need will be for information more immediately useful than that. To cite the very old claimed analogy you could simply need to know the time, not how to repair the clock. Happily, the ancient trinity and the detail of general theory are not at all in competition. The full scale of strategy theory and the speedy trinity are entirely complementary. Because a blizzard of detail is probably an unavoidable blight of this computerized age, there is much that can and should be said in praise of conceptual devices that reclaim, indeed highlight in their economy, the most essential ideas and methods, without paying an unacceptably high price in loss of meaningful detail.

We cannot and should not expect our political leaders and senior civil servants to know by heart, if called upon ever, all the Principles in a theory of strategy. However, we can and should expect those people to be intimately familiar with the four categories that collectively are literally essential to the security and prosperity of the country. Of course, the theory of strategy in just four concepts is gloriously economical of

words. Alas, EMW and A is helpful to thought and possible action precisely because of its extreme economy, to zero. Nonetheless, this extreme weakness happens, ironically, to be critical to its real strength. EWM and A, when imbibed and recognized to comprise an entry in a person's category of great (or very important) concepts virtually with moral force, can be a notable force for more effective behaviour. What I am saying here is so obviously correct that one feels that it may read as near banality. The facts of recent strategic history are not encouraging. In my more than 50 years of focus on nominally strategic matters, the United States has waged and lost three wars (Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan). None of these were brief encounters. This temporal fact of repeated longevity meant that there was time, usually ample time, for corrections to be made over political goals, strategic methods, and military means. Almost needless to say, the faulty assumptions that hampered or actually disabled Western (usually) good intentions have been legion. This author has lived in three countries (Britain, the United States, and Canada), and has talked to officials, including elected politicians, and soldiers in each of them. There once was a time when I devoted most of my effort to the study of military nuclear issues of strategy and security, but eventually I became convinced that the ideas of strategy and of nuclear threat and possible use were not usefully compatible or usable by a theorist, this theorist at least. Of course, a strategy of severely limited nuclear use was conceivable, and could even be practicable. The complicating trouble was that I found it impossible to believe either that Russians, very much contrary to the norms of their strategic culture, or that the Russians and the Americans, acting together in a deadly duel, would prove able to wage a limited nuclear war. My interest in nuclear strategy never really recovered from that slowly dawning negative conclusion.

To conclude this part of the article I should mention the fact, perhaps I should say judgment in order to control the peril of hubris, that critically vital thought on the meaning and possible (very limited) use of nuclear weapons has not been written and published since 1966. In my opinion the last book that is truly essential reading on what, ironically, we call nuclear strategy is Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*. Together with Herman Kahn's book, *On Escalation*, which was published in 1965, these seminal works can be seen as signalling the end of the original and creative phase of American theorization about strategy and nuclear weapons. [ii] The effort to make strategic sense of these weapons had lasted, endured perhaps, for a decade from the time of William Kaufmann's work at the RAND Corporation in 1956, [iii] until Kahn made escalation an idea and word all too appropriate in 1965. That was the year when President Lyndon Johnson decided that America could escalate its way to victory in South Vietnam. Unfortunately, events were to show that this was not the case. The United States could not succeed in Vietnam because its official thought and behaviour on EWM and A simply was wrong. Fundamentally, the American policy error in opposing North Vietnam and the Vietcong had to mean that it did not much matter which Ways and Means were attempted, because they were condemned to fail. As if Vietnam from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s had failed to register the point with adequate severity, Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s hammered home yet again just why it is that policy Ends, meaning policy and its politics, have to be granted the Premium position that Clausewitz insisted

must be the case.[iv] If policy and its politics are weak and uncertain, it will matter very little how competent and robust are your military Means. You probably will not prove able to fight your way out of the waging of the wrong war. To be fair to bold policymakers, one must conclude that often it will not be at all obvious ahead of time just how fickle the gods of war can prove themselves to be. However, it can surely be no secret that a decision to wage war, almost any war at any time and in any environment, will be a gamble. Also, war is different from all else in the human historical narrative.

It is possibly ironic that although we know a very great deal about war and warfare from the evidence we glean from and about the past, this immensity of information derived from sources of all levels of reliability do not, indeed cannot, be used for thoroughly reliable prediction. Those of us who study and write about strategy, tend understandably not to advertise widely a very notable aspect of our work. Specifically, the whole purpose of strategy lies in potential evidence that must for ever remain in the future where it has to be inaccessible to us when it ventures very far beyond tomorrow. Strangely, perhaps, this necessary blankness about the future has not usually had an unduly daunting effect upon some of those we would prefer to see discouraged. The major item of meaning important in entirely appropriate scepticism about prediction is that it is necessary to remember that the future by definition has not happened, nor will it ever do so.

The meaning of strategy lies in its consequences and their meaning. This is as easy, indeed certain, to write as it is near impossible to employ sensibly as a source of light. The unfortunate fact is that there is no power supply for light on the future, save only for our ability to read history intelligently. Efforts to enhance reliable predictability are not entirely impressive for the weather that troubles those among us living in northern climes, but even the truly rich array of meteorological variations we find in Britain pale into near insignificance when compared with the far richer range of possible happenings that can have some influence upon our strategic history. The root problem, of course, is that not only do we not know where we are going, but in vital addition we do not know, really know, that is, what mix of events will get us there, or when. The context for all this is somewhat usefully conveyed by the big conception of there being a 'great stream of time'. [v] This extremely high concept tells us that there is significant sense in which history's march does not have an end point for us, we hope! Beyond that rather obvious point, however, it is useful and possibly even necessary for our human temporal vanity to be disciplined by the reminder that the future, we hope, will comprise a very long time. This sobering thought should help reduce some of the scale of ambition that political pretension reveals.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of our strategists not forgetting that their job is all about consequences. Many of them may well behave they need to keep their eyes on the ball of tactics and its master, operations. This is easily understandable. After all, let us worry about the tactical problems of tomorrow when, or if, tomorrow arrives. Somehow, the 'tomorrow' of today, the consideration of which was expediently deferred yesterday, never quite arrives. By their nature, consequences commonly are difficult to anticipate, even when conscious effort to do so is made. Consequences, however, are made by the strategy of today.



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# Intelligence and Strategy: Relationship in Transformation

Shay Shabtai

Colonel (ret.) Shay Shabtai is an expert and practitioner for more than twenty years in Middle East issues, Israel's national security, and intelligence and strategic planning. Col Shabtai is currently a PhD candidate researching the influence of Israel's intelligence community on national security strategy. He lectures at Bar Ilan University and the IDC in Herzliya. He is also a strategist at Konfidas, a cybersecurity consulting firm in Israel.

## Introduction

Since the end of World War II there has been an acceleration of the criticality of intelligence to strategic decision-making due to three transformations: the systemization of the methodology of intelligence work in the 1940s and 1950s; the microchip revolution in the 1970s and 1980s; and the information revolution in the 1990s and early 2000s. Instead of being just a Means it has become one of the Ways: an integral part of strategy itself. To realize its updated function, intelligence must know, understand and then imbue that understanding, influence decision making and transform itself at a higher rate and precision than in the past. However, even now the improvement of intelligence capabilities does not negate uncertainty, only changes its character from lack of information to an information overload, that must be sifted to glean those that are pertinent, an acceleration of the rate and speed of the uncertainty and the rapid changes of the human environment it must digest. So, despite improved Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, there will continue to be uncertainty in decision-making.

## A Tale of Two Quotations

Carl von Clausewitz refers to intelligence in a brief two pages of his book *On War*. The message is sharp: *"In short, most is false, and the effect of fear is to multiply lies and inaccuracies. As a rule, most men would rather believe bad news than good, and rather tend to exaggerate the bad news. The dangers that are reported may soon, like waves, subside; but*

*like waves they keep recurring without apparent reason. The commander must trust his judgment and stand like a rock on which the waves break in vain"*[i].

Two centuries later, the US Army's manual on Counter-Insurgency Operations declares that: *"Intelligence and operations have a dynamic relationship. Even in permissive environments where a great deal is known about the enemy, there is an intelligence aspect to all operations. Intelligence drives operations and successful operations generate additional intelligence"*[ii].

These two quotations show a distinct change in the place of intelligence in operational decisions since World War II.

## The Three Transformations

The systemization of intelligence methodology occurred during World War II. Intelligence efforts have existed for millennia, intelligence organizations have existed for centuries, but World War II precipitated a fundamental transformation in the working methods of intelligence, including:

- The systemization of methods and organizations for collecting intelligence pertinent to political and military decision-making and for covert operations. The creation of the modern CIA and SIS (MI6) are prominent examples of this development.
- The evolution of the intelligence cycle with a clear distinction between the processes of the collection disciplines (HUMINT, SIGINT, VISINT, etc.), the analysis of the information collected, creating an intelligence picture and assessment, dissemination of the intelligence in reports and the defining of intelligence requirements to guide future collection and analysis.
- Technological collection - the collection and analysis of electronic signals and photography began receiving priority in quality and quantity over the collection of information from human sources.

The Cold War accelerated the transformation. The conflict was conducted on two extremes - the upper extreme, conducted primarily by the two super-powers, focused

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on the build-up of their respective nuclear arsenals, the aim of which was to maintain deterrence, and enable a technological advantage with the ability to achieve an operational advantage if nuclear war began. This was based on the intelligence ability to understand the intentions and the capabilities of the rival and provide sufficient warning of an impending attack. On the lower extreme, the rival blocs struggled to add and maintain allies and create hegemony in the Third World - conducting extensive covert operations to influence local regimes or change them and in overt interventions, sometimes large-scale (Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan), in local wars. Intelligence was a key player that level too, providing information to the involved military forces and in leading the covert actions.

The concepts expressing the place of intelligence in policy and strategy in this period were 'early-warning' and 'covert operations'. Early warning was born as part of the development of nuclear doctrines, but Israel was the first to adopt it as a central theme to its conventional warfare doctrine. Israel's security doctrine, designed by its first Prime-Minister, David Ben-Gurion, had to confront an inherent dilemma. On the one hand a coalition of Arab state armies threatening its existence and on the other a demographic and economic inability to maintain a large standing army. The solution, a large reserve army, was only possible if Israel could maintain deterrence to make its mobilization rare; the failing of deterrence had to be detected in advance by a large intelligence organization built specifically to provide an early warning in order to create sufficient time for the reserve army to mobilize and join the standing army at the borders; and after this, a decisive offensive designed to rapidly defeat the threat and recreate deterrence to enable the quick demobilization of the reserve army back to its civilian economic pursuits for as long as possible before the next mobilization.

The microchip revolution in the 1970s and 1980s resulted from miniaturization of microchips while simultaneously multiplying their computing ability according to Moore's Law. Computerization supported the breakthroughs in electro-optics and exploitation of satellites for precise navigation (pioneered by the American GPS). These created a revolution in precise long-range munitions, enabling, for the first time ever, the ability to precisely strike targets with indirect fire. This capability created a new task for intelligence - finding the exact location of each of a multitude targets beyond the horizon. Intelligence became a critical and integral prerequisite for effective and efficient use of the fire capabilities, and thus became a major force in many armies. The ability of intelligence to meet the new demands was itself a result of the new computer-based technologies of space, long-range sensing and accurate location-finding.

New American and Soviet doctrinal concepts, such as the 'fire-strike', the 'intelligence-strike (or fire) complex' and 'deep battle' or its NATO equivalent - the 'follow on forces attack' - were predicated on the intelligence effort providing the information to conduct them. The concepts that express the place of intelligence in the military operations of the time are 'precise intelligence' or 'target intelligence'. 'Precise intelligence' replaced 'early warning' and 'covert operations' as the dominant task of intelligence organizations, though it did not completely eradicate them on the policy and

strategic levels.

The information revolution from the 1990s on provided the general public access to the computer capabilities of creating, analyzing, collecting and dissemination of information. The prominent expression of this revolution was the World Wide Web, the internet, which revolutionized access to information. Until the internet people were dependent on information channels controlled by governments or large wealthy firms such as publishing houses and news organizations. The internet enabled people across the entire world to independently create and transfer information.

In the first era of the internet age, nicknamed Internet 1.0, most of the material was still supplied by companies or organizations specifically established or transformed to do so (eBay and Amazon for commerce in 1995, Wikipedia as the first open-source encyclopedia in 2001). However, in the first decade of the 2000s 'social media' (Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006) signaled the transfer of dominance in information dissemination from the organizations to individuals. Thus began a new era, nicknamed Internet 2.0, in which individuals have become the dominant creators of information in the global network.

Researchers are already pointing at the evolution of Internet era 3.0, in which analytical applications based on artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms, will process the individual's information creation activities or consumption, and direct them automatically to information of interest. The new era expresses a rapid catch-up effort by the larger firms and organizations using the information they have collected on countless individuals in order to reassert control, or at least influence, over their information consumption.

The information revolution has occurred not only in the open internet. Intelligence and military sensors belonging to states are acquiring access to rapidly growing amounts of information on the behavior of their rivals, whether organizations or individuals. This enables a deeper analysis of rival's actions and in some cases to point out anomalies that suggest preparations for aggressive actions such as terror attacks.

The information age poses four challenges to the intelligence organization:

- a. Weakening of the organization's superiority in intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination - this was based on an ability to acquire information before the rivals and to hide information from them, a situation called 'intelligence dominance' or 'information dominance'. This was especially important in non-democratic states where knowledge provided political power. The loss of control over the information flow was the basis for the global wide-spread popular unrest that began in 2011 with the toppling of Arab regimes, then flowed through democracies such as Israel, Greece and Spain, and reached the gates of Wall Street. However, the same weakness also allows organizations such as ISIS to easily foment so-called 'Lone Wolf' terrorist attacks across Europe, making their prevention by the security organizations more difficult.



- b. Information Analysis – Before the information revolution intelligence depended on focused targeting when collecting and analyzing information. Intelligence organizations focused on the intentions of the rival's leadership, and on the rival's capabilities. Today, intelligence collection is inundated with petabytes[iii] of information, nicknamed Big Data, and must sift the portions relevant to its needs (Data Mining) with computer programs and operate programs to analyze that data (Data Analysis).
- c. Intelligence Methodology – the methodical procedures developed during World War II built an intelligence operation model similar to an industrial production line: first, publish an information requirement; second, collect information to match the request; third, analyze and study the information; fourth, conduct a situational assessment; fifth, disseminate to the decision-makers; sixth, adjust the information requirements to suit their decisions and the actual evolution of the situation, and repeat again and again. This production line method is no longer relevant in the information age. A new method has evolved, nicknamed 'Intelligence 2.0', meshing intelligence consumers, collectors and analysts into a network:[iv]
- d. Focusing Intelligence Work – Intelligence continues to focus on the same topics that have always interested it – opponent's intentions and capabilities. However, the information revolution's influence on human behavior compels it to analyze general human phenomena that have increasing influence on strategic decision-making. Clausewitz explained the place of the 'people' in the triad of People-Army-Government, as expressing "primordial violence, hatred and enmity which are to be regarded as a blind natural force".[v] The information age has greatly strengthened the people in the triad, making their intentions and capabilities more important. This requires the intelligence to delve deeper into the Human Factor of the general populace – to understand it better. 'Understanding' in this context requires "the perception and interpretation of a particular situation in order to provide the context, insight and foresight required for effective decision-making".[vi] Despite not all military commanders and analysts agreeing with this new concept of intelligence, its prominence is growing in intelligence collection, political, strategic and even tactical analysis.

### Consequences for the Relationship between Intelligence and Strategy

The three transformations described above have shifted the place of intelligence in strategic planning from the sidelines to the center. This development requires us to scrutinize the fundamental concepts of intelligence work. I will focus on three of them.

The first topic for scrutiny is "Ways is strategy, ends is policy and the means is combat".[vii] The natural and traditional tendency has been to refer to intelligence as a Means, a tool that assists the maneuver and fire elements to exploit their

capabilities optimally. The three transformations raise the question of whether intelligence has not become also one of the Ways. The transforming of information, and by extension – intelligence, to a central tool in political decision-making and a critical element in the implementation of those decisions, makes intelligence an essential consideration in any strategy. Thus, for example, states will not convert confrontational policies into confrontational strategies if they are not sure they have optimal intelligence on their foes.

The second topic, stemming from the first, questions the accepted requirements from intelligence for strategic decision-making. Intelligence today can provide much more to the decision-maker than in the past, however, this requires it to sharpen five characteristics in its work:

- a. Know – it must be quicker and more focused in converting huge amounts of information into relevant intelligence.
- b. Understand – it must understand more and better and use tools that do not exist in the veteran arsenal of intelligence analysis, such as culture research and direct dialogue with rivals in order to bring decision-makers the most relevant intelligence.
- c. Imbue – It must cease the attention of the decision makers, distracted by piles of information and analysis in multiple channels, and imbue their professional nonbiased situational assessment and understandings.
- d. Influence – in a complex and multi-faceted reality, intelligence can no longer make do with providing the intelligence and then trusting the decision makers to use it optimally. It must create tools that assist the decision maker in exploiting that intelligence to influence the situation.
- e. Transform – it must do all the above while understanding that situation is still full of uncertainties and changes rapidly, and if it does not adapt as rapidly as those changes occur, it will lose relevance.

The third topic for scrutiny is whether war is still the domain of uncertainty. Some argue that the three transformations annul uncertainty in war. The ability of intelligence to know everything on the opponent enables it to provide certainty to the decision-makers. This is a problematic concept. War is a human activity, and human behavior is inherently difficult to predict. Therefore, uncertainty remains even if reduced in some aspects.

This uncertainty will manifest in ways different from the past.

It will stem from the over-abundance of information and the need to rapidly sift through it to provide the required pieces in time. Uncertainty will result not, as in Clausewitz's statement above, from a dearth of information and the unreliability of what there is, but from a surplus that overwhelms the analyst.

Uncertainty will arise from the rapidity of events. Information control, sensor technologies and strike technologies accelerate considerably the pace of battlefield actions. This creates the impression that the side that dominates

information and fire capabilities will gain a higher level of certainty, but the inferior side is already finding ways and means to degrade this dominance. He focuses his actions to areas where the information and strike technologies are less capable, such as within population centers. When both sides have similar capabilities the acceleration of actions is mutual, and requires rapid decision-making (minutes or even seconds) to beat the opponent 'to the punch'. Decision-makers again cannot wait for the intelligence to complete its

process – thus returning the uncertainty factor.

Uncertainty will also result from changes in human behavior. The assumption that artificial intelligence will complete analysis of the opponent's behavior better and faster than humans does not take into account that human behavior changes, humans can adapt to situations, creating new responses that the artificial intelligence will not be able to predict in time.

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# How Sanguine Can We Be about Great-Power War?

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In the years following the Cold War, it became increasingly common to hear claims that the days of interstate wars, of wars among nation-states, were ending. Policymakers, political scientists, and defense analysts were happy to go on record claiming as much. The Gulf War of 1990-1991, a largely conventional conflict that pitted a coalition of nation-states against a despotic Iraqi regime, was regarded by many as the last of its kind. Henceforth, whatever wars might occur were anticipated to be within states rather than among them and, therefore, irregular and small, at least by twentieth-century standards. Even these types of conflicts, however, were expected to become less frequent once decolonization ran its course. The very incidence of armed conflicts overall was thought to be declining. So, too, was the number of deaths caused by war. Indeed, almost every trend related to armed conflict was claimed to be inclining downward, leading some scholars to conclude that war of every kind, but especially armed conflict among great powers, was on the wane.

To be sure, this conclusion is an attractive one. Who would not want major wars to disappear? Or to believe nations have learned to settle their differences through diplomatic means rather than force, especially with the world emerging from the bloodiest century it has ever seen? But, just how reliable are the arguments that war is, in fact, fading away?

The question is of some immediacy because in recent years the aggressive behavior of several states has triggered

concern that a large-scale, interstate conflict might occur once again. Russia, for instance, annexed Crimea in early 2014, in a move some called the “most consequential” of Vladimir Putin’s seemingly interminable tenure; soon thereafter Putin brought most of the Donbas under his control through the combined use of irregular forces and modern military hardware.[i] NATO has responded by moving its troops into a better deterrence posture, but the situation remains unsettled. In the Pacific region, many Southeast Asian countries have complained about Beijing’s construction of artificial reefs and islets in the South China Sea, and its establishment of military-grade airstrips on several of them.[ii] Even though China lost its bid to lay legal claim to the Spratly Islands, military construction on the reefs in and around the islands has continued.[iii] To these developments, one must add North Korea’s escalating missile tests, which have caused concern for the United States and its allies in the region, as well as China.[iv] Conceivably, any one of these situations could lead to a violent clash that results in further escalation. It would seem prudent, therefore, to prepare for such a war, if for no other reason than to improve the odds of deterring it.

## I. Is War on the Wane?

Yet, if the argument is valid that such wars are fading, then the fear of escalation is itself overblown. Hence, preparing for such wars would be a misuse of precious defense dollars, and would detract from creating the capabilities needed to fight the smallish irregular conflicts that have historically outnumbered major wars in any case. After all, many crises have occurred since the onset of the Cold War—the Berlin blockade, the Korean conflict, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, the series of conflicts in the Middle East, and the clashes between India and Pakistan, and China and Vietnam—and none has escalated to the level of a general war among the great powers. Accordingly, the logic of taking prudent steps to prepare for such a conflict runs up against the contrary logic of fiscal sense, and it loses.

It is important, therefore, to determine just how sound this contrary logic is. Unfortunately, much of the research on the topic of war’s disappearance implicitly equates major wars to the “total” wars of the twentieth century. Consequently, rather than explaining why a great-power war will not occur, the research tells us why a world war will not happen. Obviously, a

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great-power conflict need not approach the global breadth and devastation that characterized the Second World War. It could instead remain limited in aim and scope and play out through proxies.

Furthermore, much of the research on this topic defines war arbitrarily, rather than inductively—which means its conclusions are valid only within the confines of that definition and are not truly generalizable. For instance, an armed conflict is a war if military operations cause 1,000 or more deaths; if a conflict results in 999 deaths or fewer, it is not a war, and thus does not count when one is showing a decline in the incidence of wars. It might be important to know whether wars are really disappearing, or whether they are actually multiplying but causing fewer deaths per occurrence. Databases are growing and improving, but still lack historical breadth and depth. They cannot compare periods for which no data exist, or are incomplete. While some scholars have pointed out the risks of arbitrary definitions and incomplete data, the general practice has not changed.[v]

Even more egregious though, is that most of the research on the waning of major war assumes its occurrence is cyclical or linear, rather than episodic. Thus, downward trend-lines are interpreted as indicative, even predictive. Yet, the shortcomings of this kind of trends-based analysis have been well known to futurologists for decades. Even a superficial survey of history, shows major wars occur perhaps only once or twice per century, and are therefore episodic in nature. Lines and cycles imply something is more or less predictable. Episodic events, by contrast, are not. Their causes may be known but the conditions that bring them about do not submit to regular patterns. Practically every military theorist since Clausewitz has understood this.

## II. Explaining the Absence of Major War

Leaving aside the problems of definition, data, and analysis, the claim that war is disappearing is buoyed by the fact that no all-out or general war has occurred since the Second World War. Multiple theories have been advanced to explain why, and these can be grouped into six general categories. [vi] It is useful to consider each in turn.

*Weapons of Mass Destruction.* The first of these is that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, has deterred major wars by pushing the potential costs of conflict beyond acceptable thresholds. States have recognized the risk, and have worked to keep war limited by explicitly and tacitly agreeing not to use weapons of mass destruction. Many states have signed treaties banning the use of biological and chemical weapons, and have participated in nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament programs.[vii] Yet, most great powers still possess enough weapons of mass destruction to make all-out war just as unthinkable as it was in the 1960s, when only analysts the likes of Herman Kahn dared to ponder it.[viii]

Ironically, the flaw in this theory is that the very element that makes the use of weapons of mass destruction unthinkable also compromises their deterrent value. Just as Western strategists discovered in the 1950s with the US doctrine of "massive retaliation," weapons of mass destruction raise too

many proportionality and first-use issues to make them a credible deterrent in the hands of any liberal democracy. Mao Zedong had it nearly right when in 1946 he declared nuclear weapons to be a "paper tiger." [ix] The tiger, as it turned out, was not actually made of paper, but it was chained.

Peking (now Beijing) and Moscow responded to the nuclear challenge by manufacturing enough weapons of mass destruction to serve as a deterrent to Western "aggression," while putting more emphasis on an alternative strategy to tie down the West by instigating revolutionary wars, or wars of national liberation, throughout the developing world. This approach had the advantage of leveraging the process of decolonization already underway, which also afforded ample grievances for revolutionary movements to leverage. [x] Although fought in the age of limited war, these were often all-out conflicts (excluding weapons of mass destruction) for the counter-revolutionary parties; the governments in Seoul and Saigon, for instance, were fighting for their political lives. Fortunately, these wars were geographically containable for the most part; hence, they did not pose a threat serious enough to warrant escalation to nuclear weapons. It is also possible that, in their efforts to avoid resorting to nuclear weapons, states might find themselves engaged in a prolonged conventional conflict.[xi]

*Democratic Peace Theory.* The second explanation is that the spread of democracy has had a limiting influence on war. Democracies, so democratic peace theory says, do not go to war with one another.[xii] Therefore, the greater the number of democracies, the lower the incidence of war.

Unfortunately, not all democracies are equal. Many governments look the part, but have neither enfranchised their populations fully, nor created institutions that would protect the rights of their citizens. Also, nascent democracies are often fragile. The republics that emerged in Germany, Spain, and Italy after the First World War were weak and unstable, and soon succumbed to fascist movements. It hardly needs mentioning that the transition to democracy, or the reversal of that transition, can lead to civil wars that can spread violence to neighboring areas.

Furthermore, recent research suggests the tide of new democracies reached a high-water mark in 2013, and has been receding ever since. According to a report by the research institute Freedom House, every freedom indicator—expression and belief, rule of law, association and assembly, personal and individual rights, functioning of government, electoral process, pluralism and participation—has declined over the past ten years.[xiii] In addition, of the nine countries that could claim great-power status today—China, France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—three are *not* democracies by any measure.

A great power in the current strategic environment is simply any state with substantial military capabilities and the ability to lead, or decisively influence, an alliance or a coalition of states, non-state entities, or a combination of them. It is worth keeping in mind, moreover, that a party does not have to be a great power to initiate a great-power war. North Korea is not a great power, though it appears to want to be treated as such. Its actual status notwithstanding, it could start an

armed conflict of mammoth proportions that could easily draw several great powers into it. A great-power war, thus, need not be started by a great power. Democratic peace theory, in other words, will more than likely not be the reason a great-power war does not occur.

*Multilateral Institutions.* The third argument is that the growth of multilateral institutions has reduced the number and scale of wars. Multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, and the European Union are said to have helped create “new normative standards, communication channels, and institutional practices” that have redirected the behavior of states along less belligerent lines. They have accomplished this redirection by offering better avenues for dialogue and by establishing cooperative programs that provide opportunities for resolving differences peacefully.[xiv] The deterrent value of military alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, is considered but a small factor in the prevention of war compared to the opportunities such alliances provide for cooperation and integration.

The chief flaw in this explanation parallels the problem with democratic peace theory, namely, inclusion. Not all the great powers participate in the same the multilateral institutions. Russia does not participate in NATO, and perceives it to be a threat, for instance. Defensive alliances, such as NATO, in other words, can either deter aggressive behavior, or provoke it. While all great powers participate in the United Nations, some of them have not taken advantage of its opportunities for cooperation, and instead seek to impede them. Therefore, multilateral institutions do not have the power to modify state behavior enough to prevent war.

*Economic Integration.* The fourth theory is that increasing economic integration has dissuaded governments from using war to settle their grievances. The presumption is that the economic disruption that comes with war would make any political objective more fiscally expensive than it is worth, while also increasing the potential of a global economic crisis. This argument was advanced more than a century ago by the Polish financier Ivan Bloch and the American pacifist Norman Angell.[xv] At the beginning of the twentieth century, as both Bloch and Angell observed, economic integration was the most extensive the world had seen to that point. Surely any state would realize that going to war would risk economic disruption, even collapse, and thus would be irrational.

Nevertheless, Europe chose war in 1914. In fact, rather than dissuading states from going to war, economic interdependence seems only to have made the First World War more painful for all concerned; it also undoubtedly contributed to the severity of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Going to war might not make economic sense over the near or long term, but that does not mean governments will avoid it.

*International Law.* The fifth explanation is that international law and the law of war have restricted the purposes for which states may legally go to war, as well as the manner in which wars may be waged. Some arguments in this category have gone so far as to say the logic of war itself has changed from a Clausewitzian contest of wills to that of

“mutual enterprise.”[xvi] International law and the law of war exist as a corpus of treaties, conventions, and agreements states have established over the centuries not only to limit the barbarity of war, but also to minimize the damage and disorder they themselves might suffer. To be sure, the laws’ provisions are often difficult if not impossible to enforce. But many governments have come to see them as beneficial, and so have entered into Schelling-like “bargains” that frame what states may and may not do in war.

The problem with this theory is that some great powers have found ways to achieve their objectives by exploiting the loopholes in this legalistic framework. The most popular method of late is to use irregular or proxy forces, but to do so in a manner that remains under the threshold of overt war, that is, within the so-called gray zone between peace and war.[xvii] While this phrase is an unfortunate one, this “zone” is in fact where much of today’s great-power competition takes place. The rules of this competition are the same as they have always been, but they are now facilitated by new communications technologies and the global reach of cyberspace. By design, a gray-zone conflict does not seek to escalate to overt war, but that does not mean it could not.

*Anti-war Norms.* The last explanation for why a great-power conflict has not occurred is that the spread of anti-war norms has made it much more difficult, culturally, to go to war. Pacifism has been a cultural force in the West since at least the early nineteenth century, and it underpins some contemporary anti-war norms. Whereas pacifism abjures war under all circumstances, most anti-norms permit the use of war for purposes of self-defense, or to prevent a greater evil befalling humanity. Anti-war sentiments rose sharply in the West during the Vietnam conflict, when activists openly challenged the war’s legitimacy.[xviii] Anti-war norms have ebbed and flowed since then, but they have left a legacy of skepticism with regard to the use of force. If war is still a legitimate instrument of policy, in other words, it is only barely so.

Unfortunately, anti-war norms are not yet universal; different societies see war differently, and may not have a reticence when it comes to taking extreme measures, up to and including the deliberate targeting of noncombatants. While anti-war norms may currently accord with the West’s ever evolving values they also render it vulnerable to a wide array of coercive practices. Ironically, the failure to address these vulnerabilities also threatens the West’s values. Over the long run, conceding to coercive practices may only increase the likelihood of a more violent conflict at a later point, and on terms more favorable to the aggressor.

### III. Implications for the West’s Defense Policies

As shown above, the argument that war is disappearing offers little reason to be sanguine; neither do any of the supporting theories that attempt to explain why a major war has not occurred since 1945. In fact, the claim itself borders on the irresponsible—the product of wishful thinking, or of a rigid ideological perspective, rather than serious scholarship. Yet, it has spread and may be the cause of more than a little complacency. To be sure, some scholars have ignored the literature to consider the conditions under which a great-



power war might occur.[xix] Their efforts have met with mixed results, however. The mainstream view—that such wars will not occur—still prevails, and this opinion has for some time been shared by most Western governments.

Yet, as we have seen, the possibility that a great-power war might occur cannot be ruled out. It seems pertinent, therefore, to ask how well prepared the West is should such a conflict occur. Again, no rational person would want to see a major war unfold, especially with the destructive power of contemporary weapons. All the same, preparation is not only prudent, it is a constitutional responsibility for some militaries. It lies beyond the scope of this article to assess the preparedness of all the West's militaries. Suffice to say that, given the comparative size of its budget, if the US military is not prepared, it is likely the West's other militaries are not well prepared either.

The collective status of the US armed forces is unclear—generals always want more troops and equipment and resources for training. The service that would bear the brunt of a great-power war, in many scenarios, is the US Army, and it has admitted to a number of critical shortfalls that require attention. For instance, consultations with some of the Pentagon's specialists have highlighted several areas of concern. First among these is the US Army's mobilization policies; these have not been updated in almost three decades.[xx] Nor has the US Army recently war-gamed mobilization scenarios for anything but its lowest level of mobilization.[xxi] Hence, it does not yet know the complete range of problems it might have to solve if it were to shift from partial to total mobilization, such as the time and other resources that might be necessary to get its mobilization stations up and running; most are now in a "cold" status. Second, to increase its fighting capacity by a mere factor of two, the US Army would have to make several tradeoffs in training and accept uncomfortable levels of risk in the quality and experience of its new units.[xxii] Third, even tougher decisions would be required in terms of materiel. America's industry is not geared to mass-produce equipment the way it was during the Second World War; new programs would have to be implemented to bring US industry to that point, and these would certainly take time to develop.[xxiii] In addition, while the US Army's branches are always modernizing and improving, their plans were not designed with the demands in tempo and volume in mind that a great-power war would most probably impose.[xxiv]

What's more, several important skills, such as coordinating fire and maneuver at levels of command above brigade, have been lost due to decades of conducting small-scale, decentralized operations.[xxv] The US Army needs to conduct more "deep-fire" training exercises and war games to redevelop those skills.

Moreover, combat operations between Russian-backed separatist forces and Ukrainian troops in the Donbas in 2014-15 revealed the importance electromagnetic warfare (EW) in defeating aerial reconnaissance vehicles such as drones; maintaining an electromagnetic umbrella is critical for unit survival, and the US military will require more long-range EW capabilities. It also needs more indirect fire systems capable of

area coverage, not just launching individual precision strikes. The United States spent a great deal of money developing highly precise weaponry over the last two decades, but mobile high-volume rapid-fire counterbattery systems comparable to Russian weapons will also be required.

Finally, more mid-level maintenance and sustainment organizations are needed; maneuver organizations have become too lean in organic logistical support. The US Army's principle of modularity—of rotating forces tailored specifically for certain types of missions—has created the impression it has more depth in supporting units than it actually does. In the words of two of the US Army's senior generals, "modularity has wrecked the Army's ability to fight a major war." [xxvi] The greater speed, range, and destructive potential of modern aircraft means air defense systems must be increased in number and equipped with enhanced detection and fire capabilities. The ability to conduct mass casualty evacuations has not existed in the US military for decades; it will need to be recreated. In addition, new rules of engagement will have to be developed for dealing with irregular forces operating amongst civilian populations.

## Conclusion

Although this assessment focuses entirely on the US Army, informal discussions with officials in the British, Canadian, French, German, and other ministries of defense suggest most Western militaries are in a similar state. Again, part of the reason for their unpreparedness is the attitude of complacency caused by the belief that major wars among great powers no longer occur. As we have seen, that argument is unreliable—but that does not mean it does not enjoy considerable approval and influence. Another reason, of course, is the constricting influence that two decades of conducting counterinsurgency and stability operations have had on military thinking. These operations have surely been demanding in their own ways, as modern militaries have discovered. At root, however, is the question whether today's militaries can prepare themselves mentally for more than one grammar of war at a time. It is a question that cannot be answered by simply increasing defense budgets. It requires a change in mindset, a cultural adjustment, that consciously cultivates expertise in two timeless yet in some ways disparate categories of war.

The typical institutional response of pushing the proverbial pendulum away from thinking about counterinsurgencies and stability operations toward concentrating on major wars will not avail in this case. Skill in the former would likely be needed in crucial stages of a great-power conflict in any event, even if such a war were fought for limited aims. The kind of cultural change Western militaries need is one that encourages excellence in limited unconventional conflicts as well as large-scale conventional wars. In this way, the transition from one to the other can be seamless, as indeed it must be in any contemporary war. With the proper outlook and guidance from the West's senior political and military leaders, there might be just enough time to overcome this conceptual dilemma to get the balance right.

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# World of Wallcraft: The Contemporary Resurgence of Fortification Strategies

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Not since pre-Napoleonic days have the precepts of positional warfare, fortification and siegecraft, so dominated the strategic affairs of the world. Field battles amongst major armies have hardly been seen since the Persian Gulf War of 1990/91, and even then they were on the wane; for decades, the preponderance of Western military effort has been absorbed by counterinsurgency and stabilisation operations (howsoever defined).[i] More recently, in the Middle East, and to a lesser extent Ukraine, combat has been typified by the attack and defence of fortified places, or urban areas which can be rapidly fortified (whether deliberately or as a by-product of combat), operations which unfold over weeks and months not hours and days.

Notwithstanding the continuing primacy of 'manoeuvrism' in military education and training in the West and the constant reinforcement of the virtue of speed, the wars that we actually fight have been of the slow moving 'war of streets and houses' sort, thanklessly invertebrate, sluggish if not totally static. Extant theory and doctrine is massively out of sync with a contemporary resurgence of fortification strategies; whereas the engineers and strategists of the early modern period, the last point in which such ideas were dominant, studied, theorised, and wrote widely on the subject, nowadays expertise in siegecraft is essentially the province of wargamers, military history enthusiasts, and a niche of a niche in academic war studies.

This is a problem. For it is not simply in the military sphere in which these trends may be seen. Across every aspect of the global political economy national and sub-national governments, non-governmental organisations, and non-

state actors both licit and illicit, are responding to diverse threats to their core interests in a similar manner—hunkering down, digging in, and walling up.

In his recent book *Strategy: A History*, Lawrence Freedman enjoins us to consider strategy as a kind of drama, specifically a 'soap opera with a continuing cast of characters and plot lines that unfold over a series of episodes.'[ii] If you accept that metaphor then I offer an extension of it: the *leitmotif* of the particular soap opera we are in now and for the foreseeable future, given current and projected investments, is fortification—the persistent strategification of architecture across a wide range of security contexts by essentially all actors.

## Military architecture

In ten thousand years archaeologists may ponder the mystery of the Hesco Empire that exploded from nowhere suddenly in the first years of the third millennium AD to leave its mark seemingly across the globe; everywhere they will look, should they make the mental connection, Hesco labelled bastions, bunkers, and bases will be seen to mark the contours of the great expeditionary campaigns of the War on Terror and the myriad civil, proxy, and brushfire wars that stemmed from it. Essentially a gabion, a basket that filled with earth and rubble creates a stout ballistic barrier, the Hesco bastion is a work of simple genius—flat-packable, stackable, standardised, modular, and cheap; if Lego and Ikea teamed up to make real castles Hesco is the system that they would devise for doing it.[iii] It symbolises contemporary warfare in a way that the Huey helicopter did the Vietnam War.

Many *Infinity* readers will have experience of recent wars, particularly operations in Iraq. They will, therefore, in all likelihood be supremely familiar with the campaign of strategic concreting that underpinned the handful of successful actions in that war. David Petraeus' 2013 article 'How we Won in Iraq' begs the question "Did we, *really*?" but taken at face value the account of the means, including *inter alia* the 'surge' of men and counterinsurgency ideas, plus special forces targeting, Iraqi security force training, and the Sunni 'Awakening', curiously omits the obvious:[iv] walls; successful pacification efforts in Iraq, especially in Baghdad, followed the relentless march of concrete barriers of varying

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sizes collectively known as 'T-walls' (on account of their cross-sectional shape) through neighbourhood after warring neighbourhood.[v]

The standout example of this was the spring 2008 Battle in Sadr City, a large Shiite suburb of Baghdad, a few miles northeast of the centre. Fighters of the Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) militia loyal to Moqtada al Sadr used it as a launch pad for rocket attacks on the central Green Zone—firing their weapons and then blending back into the dense civil population. The object of the operation was to sweep and clear JAM from the neighbourhoods in which they were operating in order to push them back beyond rocket range of the centre, and to keep them out permanently. The means was the T-wall and it worked well—isolating operational areas with walls deprived the insurgent of mobility, concealment, support, and initiative. As a RAND study of the battle concluded: 'Concrete enlisted time on the side of the counterinsurgent', which is a quite remarkable accomplishment.[vi]

Insurgents, however, are making good use of concrete and siegecraft themselves. Over decades of desultory conflict within its own disputed borders as well as in occasional forays beyond them the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have learned that because of their enemies' fortification efforts the armoured D9 bulldozer needs frequently to be in the lead and always to be a part of its combat trains. In South Lebanon in 2006 the IDF contended with Hezbollah forces deployed in a network of bunkers (some as deep as 20 and 30 metres), trenches, and cleverly concealed fighting positions—hilltop villages were effectively castellated.[vii] More recently, in operations against Islamic State Iraqi Army units have taken to bringing a bulldozer on a flatbed truck along major road movements. When forced to halt, instead of simply setting out pickets and heavy weapons in watch of directions of potential attack the bulldozer is used to dig a ditch and berm enclosure, thus providing a good measure of defence against truck and car bombs.[viii]

Meanwhile Hamas which rules the Gaza Strip added offensive tunnelling to the mix, digging dozens of them, often concrete lined, hundreds of metres long and tens of metres deep, into Israel in order to infiltrate fighters and conduct attacks. In turn, the IDF has developed specialist anti-tunnel engineer units for detection and interdiction, as well as added underground warfare training to its already extensive urban warfare syllabus.[ix] Few other armies have, as yet, mimicked fully the lessons adopted by the IDF, or the increasingly experienced Iraqi military, for that matter; but they will—Germany and Russia have made notably large recent investments in sophisticated urban warfare facilities and others are talking about it.

It bears repeating that none of this is strictly new. Students of counterinsurgency who are not wholly bought into the population-centric orthodoxy will recognise and not be surprised at the central role of military architecture in success. Physical barriers and networks of strongpoints have played a greater or lesser degree in pacification campaigns since before recorded history. The Sunni-from-Shiite separating walls of Iraq are no bigger than the still standing 'Peace Walls' of Belfast, Northern Ireland, built by the British to separate Catholic from Protestant neighbourhoods for nearly the same reasons. Roman infantry famously always entrenched on the

march nightly for defence against fast-moving opponents in the lands they dominated, or sought to dominate; meanwhile the Bayeux Tapestry shows the Norman engineers of William the Conqueror assembling at Hastings a wooden motte and bailey castle that had been prefabricated in France. IDF engineers probing the ground with computer-seismographs for enemy tunnels are only a technological generation removed from their military forebears who did the same with stethoscopes or by plunging their heads into barrels of water to listen to magnified ground sounds.[x] What we are seeing rather is a revitalisation of old techniques, and their reapplication with new technology.

### Civil infrastructure hardening

The phenomenon, however, is by no means confined to the military sphere. Across the world today there is a burgeoning industry designing, supplying, and installing fortifications in urban settings. The most prominent instances of this are found in the major cities such as London, Moscow, New York, and Washington DC; but even quite small towns perceive a necessity to harden their civil infrastructure in response primarily to terror threats, the damage of which they seek to mitigate rather than prevent outright.

Take, for example, as a microcosm of a much wider development, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in Britain in which I live. After the Westminster Bridge terror attack in March 2017 temporary surface-mounted anti-vehicle barriers were installed on our main streets, notably near Windsor Castle but generally widely. The trouble is that these anti-terror measures are ugly, so the council has earmarked £1.9 million in order to, in the words of the responsible cabinet member:

...replace this stuff with stuff that does the same job but will be more aesthetic and built into the street scene. At the end of the day it's got to be the very best balance we can get between security versus aesthetics.[xi]

It is ironic that the Changing of the Guard now performed by troops uniformed and marching in a manner not relevant to actual battle since the mid-nineteenth century in and around the grounds of a perfectly preserved mediaeval-concentric-fortress-turned-stately-home is now conducted within a yet newer ring of fortification.

But it is more than that: it is emblematic—fortifications have symbolic significance as expressions of urban and national identity, which is why we sometimes preserve them long after their security function has been superseded; it is pragmatic—for as long as there have been urban authorities they have struggled to balance the needs of defence with their direct and indirect costs, notably the impact of security measures on the revenue generating purpose of civil spaces;[xii] and it is ingenious, in a macabre sort of way.

The peculiar need of contemporary civil fortifications is to provide some defence of the public in various urban spaces against a range of threats including, *inter alia*, IEDs (either in a vehicle or on a person), active shooters (possibly operating in teams), and vehicle ramming attacks, sometimes in combination. It is a challenge to do this at all, which is why



almost all promise limitation of damage from attacks not prevention of attacks *per se*; it is even harder to do it in an aesthetically appealing way, ideally in a way that is invisible. How do you hide a barrier that must withstand the impact of a 7.5 tonne battering ram propelled at fifty miles per hour? How do you provide protection from small arms grazing fire in places that by functional design have to be wide open and are full of people? How do you protect historically valuable or infrastructurally important buildings against blast threats carried on the very roads that serve them?

A typical street scene in a major city now includes multiple layers of physical fortification, in addition to essentially ubiquitous CCTV surveillance. Some of this is obvious: in 2004, as an example, the UK established the National Barrier Asset (NBA)—essentially a modular system of high strength fence, anti-vehicle systems, and access control points; although the total length of the NBA is unknown the stock of it is continually growing and is certainly now tens kilometres; it is deployed widely in the country by a private contractor according to need, as determined by the Home Office, but is ubiquitous in central London, notably around Westminster Palace and other buildings such as the Admiralty Arch which is equipped with heavy steel boom gates where The Mall heading down from Buckingham Palace enters Trafalgar Square.[xiii]

A great deal though is designed to be less obvious, whether robust rising road blockers that are built into the ground to block off in emergency normally open vehicle access points, rising and static bollards that are proof against light vehicle threats without impeding pedestrian movement, or a wide variety of seemingly surface-mounted street furniture—benches, bus shelters, planters, low walls, public art installations, and so on—which are in fact securely fastened into deep steel reinforced concrete foundations.[xiv] Amongst the best-known examples of such dual-purpose structures is the Arsenal sign on the concourse of the Emirates stadium in London—the heavy concrete and steel letters of the sign provides a measure of defence against ramming and vehicle-born IED attacks on an otherwise easily accessible soft target in the form of vast crowds of football fans and concert goers.[xv]

Another increasingly common fortification measure is the provision of ballistic shields in public buildings such as schools, shopping malls, and offices. These include the likes of bulletproof whiteboards mounted on heavy lockable casters, which can be deployed in seconds to barricade a classroom, for instance. Interior walls covered with ballistic surface tiles or bullet resistant sheets the size of standard wallboard are used to create dead spaces, relatively secure escape routes, and/or triage areas in case of an active shooter attack (plus a degree of blast and fragment protection) on office buildings, hotels, and university buildings.[xvi] Armoured glass panels erected in shopping mall food courts, rail stations, airport terminals, and so on, operate similarly but without breaking up sightlines.

It is hardly the first time in which so many elements of public life have been designed to balance the needs of residency and economy with physical security. Today, for example, the castellated domestic architecture of Scotland, comprised of baronial castles, tower houses, and fortified farms, often perched dramatically on crags and cliff sides, typical of the

frequently lawless 12th through 18th centuries, is a romantic tourist fascination; it also should be a reminder of what happens to societal infrastructure in periods of persistent, effectively normalised, insecurity—which is the contemporary condition of urbanity.

### Corporate Armageddon-proofing

Out of the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001 came a number of lessons learned. Perhaps one of the most significant is the story of the survival of the Wall St Treasury bond trading company Cantor Fitzgerald, 658 of whose employees (its whole New York office, representing more than half of the company's total personnel) were killed on that day. And yet on 13 September when the bond markets were reopened Cantor Fitzgerald was ready for business, operating out of its London offices. The long story of the firm's phoenix rise from the ashes involves several factors, including a couple of lucky coincidences—but the short version, in the words of its technology expert Philip Norton:

Several things saved us. First, we were at the forefront of electronic screen-based trading and our database and accounting system was backed up in London. Without that we had no chance.[xvii]

The cold calculus of survival for the corporate lions of the Information Age, notably those in finance and legal services, and any company whose value resides primarily in knowledge, is that 1) no corporate headquarters, not even one next to the heart of the most important city of the globe's only superpower, is beyond physical attack, and 2) if you can reconstitute your vital data then everything else—people and things—can be made good, eventually, and good enough really quite quickly.

Often lost in popular discussion of cybersecurity is the degree of physicality in the exercise. Obviously, the security of digital networks rests upon good programming, well-monitored firewalls, and effective 'computer hygiene' practices. But when it comes down to it the Internet runs on vast computer server farms, complex routers, and thousands upon thousands of miles of cable and uplink stations—all tangibly material, mostly quite delicate. After some highly secure banks and a handful of ultra-vital military headquarters, on a par with nuclear power plants and the like, the most heavily fortified buildings today are those that house the vital organs of the digital economy.

Most of these are in plain sight. To take a local example again, the town in which I live is home to an important telecommunications facility. Originally, it was a BT telephone exchange which employed several hundred staff; now, no humans work there permanently, not even the discrete security staff. The building itself is non-descript in the extreme—there are windows, or rather holes where windows used to be which are now occupied by opaque ballistic barriers, and there is a stoutly reinforced front door, which never opens.

As data centres go, however, it is at best a fortlet, a small and remote outpost next to true leviathans such as the 750,000-square foot 'Terremark Worldwide data fortress' in

downtown Miami, Florida which boasts seven-inch-thick steel and concrete outer walls (no windows), or Chicago's 1.1 million square foot Lakeside Technology Centre located in a converted heavy industrial facility where the famous Sears corporation catalogue and Yellow Book was once printed in colossal numbers before digital killed those particular industries.[xviii]

Even these are significant not so much by size (the largest facility today is over 7 million square feet)[xix] but by their urban locations. More interesting are the specialist facilities which market themselves not on scale but on ultra-security and secrecy, literal data bunkers housed in former military facilities, mines, or limestone caves, serving a growing niche for 'nuke-proof' subterranean fortresses able to survive almost any eventuality, natural or man-made. The UK firm 'The Bunker' advertises that its data centre which is located in an ex-Ministry of Defence nuclear bunker protected by 3-metre thick reinforced concrete walls, solid steel doors, 24-hour CCTV, escorted access, and electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) and Tempest RFI intrusion protection, can withstand 'a near hit from a hydrogen bomb'.[xx]

The true state of the art, though, combines size with very high security while adding two other vital elements to the mix: the passive cooling capacity required to chill tens of thousands of heat-generating computers and a secure independent power supply. The Norwegian Green Mountain data centre near Stavanger is located in two ex-NATO munition storage bunkers built inside a mountain under 100 metres of granite, providing proof against practically any conceivable surface blast, EMP, or solar flare effect. Cooling is provided via an adjacent deep-water fjord exiting on to the cold north Atlantic and power via multiple local hydroelectricity plants. [xxi] If the apocalypse comes the networks of the hugely rich companies such as Google and Amazon that are paying for this infrastructure will survive; whether or not their users will survive is a different question.

The idea that the way in which any given society generates wealth determines the way in which it makes war has been a staple of strategic studies for decades. It is interesting that more or less as soon as humanity invented agriculture it also invented the stockade village—the original stronghold, a palisaded place, ideally on a small rise, into which livestock, seed, and essential tools could be withdrawn and protected while the pastoralist community waited out the ravaging of passing nomads. The tools today are different, as is the scale of their use, but fundamentally what Google, Amazon, Microsoft, and the like are doing to secure their means of production is strategically perfectly recognisably similar.

## Conclusion

The reasons for the ongoing burgeoning fortification zeitgeist are plausibly many. As has been off-remarked, war is increasingly 'asymmetrical' pitching conventionally organised, superbly equipped, and exquisitely expensive armies against ragtag irregulars fired up on religious passion. Under such conditions, against an enemy of relatively low capability with very limited weapons, a static Hesco-centric mode of warfare makes a good deal of sense, whereas against a peer opponent with the ability to deal punishment at the same level as a modern army is capable it would be tantamount to suicide. On a grander level, it may be supposed that the aging of Western society, its relative economic stagnation compared to a more ambitious and striving Asia, while the Islamic world seemingly spirals into a schismatic refugee-wave-generating civil war, brings with it a mood of caution, or weariness, a desire to cover up, to protect one's gains, and to retrench—perhaps particularly in the wake of costly embarrassing adventurous failures such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

On an individual level, readers will recognise the urges driving the hardening of civilian infrastructure. When 600 people can get shot to pieces, with 58 killed, at a country music festival in the middle of Las Vegas, of all places (and for that not to be extraordinary), the saleability of such things as bulletproof drywall, benches, and so on, is perfectly explicable. As for the actions of corporate giants, one assumes that the ineluctable power of the actuarial tables of the insurance industry are at work. There is a statistically possible likelihood that the City of London could be nuked, irradiated, diseased—or just persistently shot up and bombed; it may be a very small chance, a fraction of one per cent, but a fraction of one per cent of the value that moves through the place is enough to pay for a lot of fortification. The same could be said of potentially dozens of cities—all of them nodes on the giant web of globalisation.

The reasons for epochal changes are difficult to discern with the advantage of some centuries of distance, and seemingly always subject to debate and revision by historians; without distance, they are even harder still. What is not so debatable is that we are in a period where fortification strategies are increasingly dominant, because the evidence of the change is empirically obvious, should we bother to look. In my view, epochal is the correct word to define the strategic moment. For 200 years, since Napoleon strode like Mars incarnate across Europe mobility—movement, fluidity—has been the primary frame of reference for generals and statesmen, military educators, and students of strategy. Now it should not be.

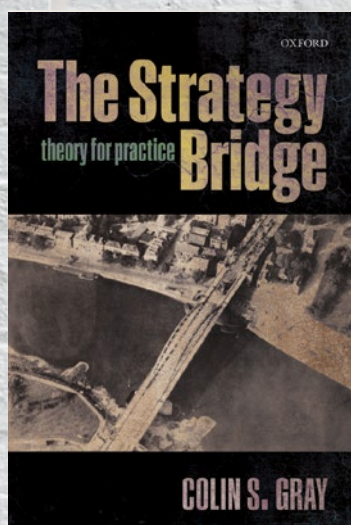


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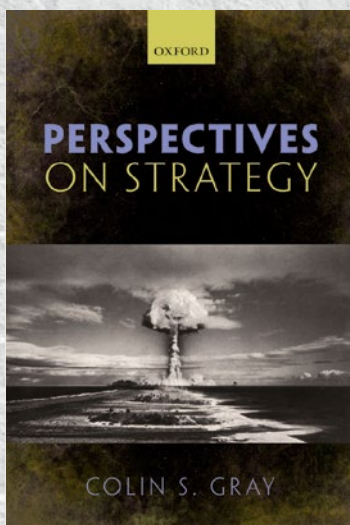


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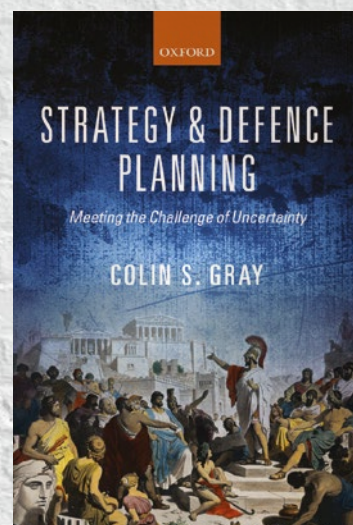


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# Looking Beyond System: Exploring the "Trump Factor" in Israel's Strategic Choices

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Louis René Beres was educated at Princeton (Ph.D., 1971), and is the author of many books and articles on strategy. In 2003, he was Chair of Project Daniel (Israel's nuclear strategy) for PM Ariel Sharon. Professor Beres' twelfth and latest book is *Surviving Amid Chaos: Israel's Nuclear Strategy* (2nd edition, 2018). He is a previous contributor to *Infinity Journal*.

*"The existence of 'system' in the world is at once obvious to every observer of nature, no matter whom...."*

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,  
The Phenomenon of Man*

In the final analysis, Israel's national security - in the fashion of every state in world politics - will have certain core systemic determinants. Although, by definition, these broadly contextual variables will have little or nothing to do with any specific foreign leadership personalities, the prospective policy impact of Donald J. Trump, the American president, represents a manifestly plausible exception. More precisely, and also perhaps, very suddenly, the idiosyncratic "Trump factor" could prove to be of very substantial importance to this beleaguered U.S. ally in the Middle East.

More than likely, and for a distinct variety of ascertainable reasons, this particular American decision-maker would prove to be a detriment to Israel, a net-negative to the tiny country, even starkly or irremediably injurious.

Let us start at the beginning. Israel's strategic posture remains closely intertwined with U.S. foreign policy.[i] This is hardly a newsworthy observation. Yet, today, in the increasingly incoherent Trump Era,[ii] such traditional linkages are potentially more perilous than before.

It can reasonably be expected that President Donald Trump's conspicuously belligerent approach to international relations (a textbook example of the fallacy logicians would

call *argumentum ad bacculum*) could destabilize certain vital regional alignments. This destabilization could occur, moreover, in concert with other major US policy missteps, and without offering any foreseeable security benefits. It follows that Israel will need to adjust its expectations accordingly.

In the Jewish State, where several essential security questions display authentically existential correlates, the Trump orientation to threat-system dynamics will need to be countered, at least in part, by a selectively broadened commitment to national self-reliance.[iii] Above all else, this means more expressly focused attention on Israel's *nuclear* strategy, especially the continuance or modification of "deliberate nuclear ambiguity." [iv] By definition, of course, because there exists no codified or easily verifiable Israeli nuclear strategy, little if any such Trump-generated re-posturing will be generally recognizable or even visible.

Significantly, whether visible or not, various dynamic policy intersections could be expected.[v] Some presumptively required changes in Israel's nuclear strategy will then "feedback" into U.S. strategic policy, thereby engendering certain further alterations of Israeli policy, and so on. This means, *prima facie*, a more or less robust expansion of particular interpenetrations and interactions between U.S. and Israeli strategic postures, one that could prove not merely additive, but genuinely "synergistic."

With such an expansion, both Washington and Jerusalem could quickly begin to expect certain "force multiplying" Israeli nuclear policy changes, ones wherein the "whole" of the country's proposed alterations exceeds the simple sum of its component "parts." [vi]

For Jerusalem, many subsidiary questions will also need to be answered. How, exactly, should Israel's traditional stance on nuclear ambiguity be adapted to plausible expectations of Trump-policy bellicosity? For Israel, it can never just be about convincing adversaries that Israel is a bona fide nuclear power. Rather, it is necessary, *inter alia*, that these states further believe that Israel holds distinctly *usable* nuclear weapons, and that Jerusalem/Tel-Aviv would be ascertainably *willing* to employ these weapons in certain clear and operationally situation-based circumstances.

On Israel's "bomb in the basement" posture, the Trump Era will

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mandate identifiable changes. More precisely, certain soon-to-be-generated Trump instabilities in the Middle East will create enhanced reasons to doubt that Israel could benefit from any determined continuance of deliberate nuclear ambiguity. It would seem, moreover, from certain apparent developments within Israel's own defense and intelligence communities, that the country's senior leadership already understands such informed skepticism.

How should this leadership proceed?

It will be a complex or "mind over mind" task. Over time, Israel will be imperiled by certain existential threats that justify its nuclear weapons status, and that will call for a correspondingly purposeful strategic doctrine. Even now, this basic justification exists beyond any reasonable doubt. Without such advanced weapons and doctrine, after all, Israel could not survive indefinitely, especially if certain neighboring regimes should sometime become more adversarial, more *Jihadist*, and/or less risk-averse.

Going forward, Israeli nuclear weapons and nuclear doctrine could prove more and more vital to both predictable and unpredictable scenarios requiring preemptive military action or suitable retaliation.

For Israel, merely possessing its nuclear weapons, even when recognized by enemy states, cannot automatically ensure successful nuclear deterrence. Although counter-intuitive, an appropriately selective and nuanced end to *deliberate ambiguity* could improve the credibility of Israel's critical nuclear deterrent. With this point in mind, the potential of assorted enemy attacks in the future could be gainfully reduced. This reduction would concern selective Israeli disclosure of certain nuclear weapons response capabilities. [vii]

Carefully limited, yet still more explicit, it would center on distinctly major and inter-penetrating issues of Israeli *nuclear capability* and *decisional willingness*. Much of Israel's underlying survival problem rests upon a limiting geography. It rests upon the literal absence of protective "mass."

Somehow, Israel must cost-effectively compensate for its irremediable lack of mass. Most important, in this regard, will be any ongoing and future reliance upon nuclear sea-basing (submarines). [viii] Naturally, this sort of reliance could make sense only if all relevant adversaries were simultaneously presumed to be *rational*.

Another key component of Israel's multi-layered security posture lies in its ballistic missile defenses. [ix] Yet, even the well-regarded and successfully-tested *Arrow*, now augmented by newer, shorter-range and systematically-integrated operations of related active defenses, [x] could never achieve a sufficiently high *probability of intercept* to adequately protect Israeli civilians. As no system of missile defense can ever be entirely "leak proof," and as even a single incoming nuclear missile that managed to penetrate *Arrow* or its corollary defenses could conceivably kill tens or perhaps hundreds of thousands of Israelis, Jerusalem should never seek ultimate existential security in active defense.

Still, potentially at least, this fearsome geographic debility

could prove less daunting if Israel's continuing reliance on *deliberate ambiguity* were suitably altered. Always, Jerusalem must adapt. Any traditional Israeli stance of undeclared nuclear capacity is unlikely to work indefinitely, all the more so in an inherently unpredictable "Trump Era."

For now, at least, leaving aside a Jihadist takeover of nuclear Pakistan, the most obviously unacceptable "leakage" threat would come from a nuclear Iran. To be effectively deterred, a newly-nuclear Iran (an outcome not likely to be meaningfully stalled by any plausible forms of Trump-Era interference) would need convincing assurance that Israel's atomic weapons were both *invulnerable* and *penetration-capable*. Without such assurance, a moment could conceivably arise wherein Tehran would accept the cost-effectiveness of a calculated first-strike.

Any Iranian judgments about Israel's capability and willingness to retaliate with nuclear weapons would depend largely upon some prior Iranian knowledge of these weapons, including their degree of protection from surprise attack, and their presumed capacity to effectively "punch-through" all deployed Iranian active and (selected) passive defenses. Of course, it is entirely possible that any heightening of conflict between Israel and Iran resulting from a U.S. first-strike against designated Iranian assets would not quickly escalate to a nuclear dimension. Almost certainly, however, Iran would respond to any such American strikes with damaging ballistic missile attacks on Israel, and would simultaneously activate multiple and massive Hezbollah rocket strikes from Syria or Lebanon.

Reciprocally, Israel could fully activate its comprehensive air defenses, and retaliate - with or without further U.S. support - using long-range air (fighter jet and drone) strikes and/or surface to surface missile strikes. Most likely, in such expectedly opaque circumstances, the IDF would also insert special forces to conduct assorted "high-value" raids. To be sure, if U.S. air forces were to remain engaged against Iran, their vastly superior firepower could leave Iran's military capabilities decimated over a relatively short time frame.

But what if President Trump should decide not to remain so engaged?

Any rational preemptive first strike on Iran would have to be based upon a determined readiness to follow through and fully destroy Iranian offensive capabilities. Correspondingly, this readiness could also involve a tangible capacity and willingness to "decapitate" the Iranian senior leadership. If the U.S. were committed to following through in Iran, Israel would then still have to focus on a massive air campaign, accompanied by a rapid ground offensive against Hezbollah.

But what if President Trump should decide not to follow through?

There is more. For now, it is obvious that Israel has already undertaken some very impressive and original steps to dominate adversarial escalations in any pertinent cyber-defense and cyber-war, but even the most remarkable efforts in this direction might still not be sufficient to stop Iran altogether. For whatever reason, the sanctions leveled at Tehran over the years have had a distinctly measurable

economic impact, but they also had no determinable effect in halting Iranian nuclearization, or stopping any associated enhancements of intercontinental ballistic missile testing.[xi]

Related scenarios warrant attention in Jerusalem. A nuclear Iran could decide to share certain nuclear components and materials with Hezbollah, or perhaps with another kindred terrorist group. To prevent this, Jerusalem would need to convince Iran that Israel possesses a *range* of distinctly *usable* nuclear options.

In these circumstances, Israeli *nuclear ambiguity* could be purposefully loosened by releasing very general information regarding the availability and survivability of (appropriately) low-yield weapons.[xii]

Regarding terror-group adversaries, Israel will need to consider the likelihood and corrosive prospects of "hybrid-wars" against various alignments of sub-state enemies,[xiii] and also of state and sub-state foes. In any such mixed-actor conflicts, the deterrent effectiveness of Israel's overall nuclear strategy and doctrine would plausibly be different from what it would be against exclusively sub-state or terrorist opponents. Moreover, a special question for Jerusalem in any such calculations would have to concern the role of nuclear strategy and doctrine against sub-state adversaries,[xiv] and the particular extent to which nuclear and conventional spheres of engagement ought to remain integrated or become more operationally distinct.

In the even larger planning picture, Israeli strategists will need to conceptualize Israel as both a recipient of hybrid warfare attacks, and as its more-or-less recognizable initiator. For both cases, any Trump-Era reluctance to stay-focused on Israeli security needs could prove significant.

Whatever its preferred policy changes of strategic direction, details will count. Israel should now be calculating (vis-à-vis a still prospectively nuclear Iran) the exact extent of subtlety with which it should consider communicating key portions of its nuclear positions. Naturally, Israel should never reveal any very specific information about its nuclear strategy, hardening, or yield-related capabilities. This is an observation hardly worth mentioning, but for the fact that oftentimes, in actual strategic practice, the obvious is misunderstood.

There is more. Any Israeli move from ambiguity to disclosure would not likely help in the case of an irrational nuclear enemy. It is possible that certain elements of Iranian leadership could sometime subscribe to certain end-times visions of a *Shiite* apocalypse.[xv] By definition, at least, such an enemy would not value its own continued national survival more highly than every other preference, or combination of preferences.

Were its leaders ever to be or become non-rational,[xvi] Iran could effectively resemble - at least in principle - a nuclear suicide-bomber in macrocosm. Such a uniquely destabilizing specter is certainly unlikely,[xvii] but it is not inconceivable. A similarly serious prospect exists in already-nuclear and distinctly coup-vulnerable Pakistan.

What sorts of collaborative protections might be offered to Israel by Donald Trump? Despite the continuous bluster and bravado of the American president, it is obvious that

he could become entirely unpredictable or erratic in such circumstances, and actually leave Israel to entirely fend for itself.

To protect itself against military strikes launched by *irrational* enemies, particularly those attacks that could carry existential costs, Israel will need to reconsider virtually every aspect and function of its nuclear arsenal and doctrine.

Removing the bomb from Israel's basement could enhance Israel's strategic deterrence to the extent that it would heighten enemy perceptions of the severe and likely risks involved. This would also bring to mind the so-called *Samson Option*, which could better "allow" various enemy decision-makers to note and underscore that Israel is prepared to do whatever is needed to survive.

Irrespective of its preferred level of ambiguity, Israel's nuclear strategy must always remain correctly oriented toward *deterrence*, not nuclear war-fighting.[xviii] The *Samson Option* refers to a policy that would be based in part upon a more-or-less implicit threat of *massive nuclear retaliation* for certain specific enemy aggressions. Israel's small size means that *any* nuclear attack would threaten Israel's very existence, and could therefore not be tolerated.

A *Samson Option* would make sense only in "last-resort," or "near last-resort" circumstances. If the *Samson Option* is to be part of a credible deterrent, an end to Israel's deliberate ambiguity is essential. The really tough part of this transformational process will be determining the proper timing for such action *vis-à-vis* Israel's security requirements, and also pertinent expectations of the international community

The *Samson Option* should never be confused with Israel's overriding security objective: that is, to seek stable deterrence at the lowest possible levels of military conflict. Today, after a genuine technical "revolution" in the Israel Air Force, it is arguable that the critical nuclear threshold between prospective adversaries is becoming higher and therefore safer. Although it has yet to be tested on the battlefield, the IAF now has the capacity to strike many thousands of targets over 24 hour periods - every 24 hours - with specially-guided air-to-surface bombs.[xix]

This could be a "game changing" revolution, especially if considered together with IDF stand-off-strike capabilities, and increasingly detailed intelligence. Regarding our present concerns, it could prove especially gainful in the Trump-era.

In our often counter-intuitive strategic world, it can sometimes be rational to pretend irrationality. The precise nuclear deterrence benefits of *pretended irrationality* would depend, at least in part, upon an enemy state's awareness of Israel's intention to apply counter-value targeting when responding to a nuclear attack. But, once again, Israeli decision-makers would need to be wary of releasing too-great a level of specific information.

Also worrisome, of course, is that the hesitant American president could sometime be perceived as profoundly and genuinely irrational, an enemy perception that could then occasion various reciprocal forms of "anticipatory



preemption" by Iran. It is also at least logically possible that this president would in fact *be irrational*, a bewildering prospect that would carry the very highest possible threat outcomes.[xx] Any such "preemption of the preemptor" would have been spawned by the latter's too great "success" in pretending irrationality.[xxi]

In the final analysis, there are specific and valuable critical security benefits that would likely accrue to Israel as the result of a purposefully selective and incremental end to its policy of *deliberate nuclear ambiguity*. The right time to begin such an "end" may not yet have arrived. But at the precise moment that Iran would verifiably cross the nuclear threshold - a moment not likely to be delayed by any *ad hoc* Trump-Era attempts at dissuasion - Israel should already have configured its optimal allocation of nuclear assets, and the extent to which this particular allocation should now be disclosed.

Such preparation could importantly enhance the credibility of its indispensable nuclear deterrence posture, especially in the intrinsically destabilizing shadow of America's current president.

When it is time for Israel to selectively ease its nuclear ambiguity, a *fully-recognizable* second-strike nuclear force should be revealed. Any such robust strategic force - hardened, multiplied, and dispersed - would necessarily be fashioned to inflict a decisive retaliatory blow against major enemy cities. Iran, it follows, so long as it is led by rational decision-makers, should be made to understand that the actual costs of any planned aggressions against Israel would always exceed any conceivable gains.

This would not be the time for Israel to proceed in any such matters *sotto voce*.

To protect itself against potentially *irrational* nuclear adversaries,[xxii] Israel has no logical alternative to developing a properly pragmatic *conventional* preemption option. Operationally, especially at this already very late date, there could be no reasonable assurances of any success against multiple hardened and dispersed targets. Regarding deterrence, it is also noteworthy here that "irrational" is not the same as "crazy," or "mad."

To wit, even an irrational Iranian leadership could still have certain distinct preference orderings that are both consistent and transitive.

Even an irrational leadership could be subject to threats of deterrence that credibly threaten certain deeply held religious as well as public values. The difficulty for Israel will be to ascertain the precise nature of these core enemy values. Should it ever be determined that an Iranian or other enemy nuclear leadership were genuinely "crazy" or "mad," that is, without any decipherable or predictable ordering of valued preferences, more-usual deterrence bets would then have to give way to residual forms of preemption.

In such complex circumstances, what could Israel expect from US President Donald Trump?

In principle, at least, an Israeli nuclear preemption remains

conceivable. Nonetheless, it could realistically be considered only if: (1) Israel's pertinent enemy or enemies had already acquired nuclear or other unconventional weapons presumed capable of destroying the Jewish State; (2) this enemy state or states had made explicit that fully genocidal intentions paralleled their capabilities; (3) this state or states was/were reliably believed ready to commence a final countdown-to-launch; and (4) Israel believed that residual non-nuclear preemptions could not possibly achieve the particular levels of damage-imitation still needed to ensure its most basic national survival.

Naturally, all such vital determinations and calculations are strategic, not jurisprudential. From the discrete standpoint of international law, however, especially in view of Iran's expressly genocidal threats against Israel,[xxiii] a non-nuclear preemption option could represent a permissible expression of *anticipatory self-defense*. [xxiv] Still, this purely *legal* judgment should be kept entirely separate from any parallel or coincident assessments of *operational* success.

For now, at least, these assessments point overwhelmingly toward the avoidance of any conceivably remaining preemption option.

In the ancient world, Greek and Macedonian soldiers were constantly reminded that war is a matter of "mind over mind," not merely of "mind over matter." [xxv] Today, going forward, Israel must also be reminded that preparing for survival in the increasingly anarchic [xxvi] global "state of nature" [xxvii] is a preeminently *intellectual* task. [xxviii] A likely but regrettable corollary of this worthy dictum is that U.S. foreign policy in the Trump Era will be increasingly devoid of any serious or well-founded intellectual content.

Taken together, this means, *inter alia*, a more-or-less historically unique imperative for Israel to fashion its strategic nuclear policies apart from any traditional pledges of reliable American support. [xxix]

When the ancient Athenian leader, Pericles, delivered his first Funeral Speech, at the start of the Peloponnesian War, he wisely cautioned: "What I fear more than the strategies of our enemies is our own mistakes." [xxx] Looking ahead, in Jerusalem, this warning suggests, urgently, not to place any undue confidence in the U.S. administration of President Donald Trump. Although it is expected that this markedly unprepared president will discourage any emergence of "Cold War II," the particular reasons behind this seemingly benign attitude (now under special investigation in the United States) are profoundly worrisome. In Jerusalem, more specifically, this could sometime even mean a historically unique and utterly portentous collaboration between cooperating superpowers against designated vital Israeli security interests.

In other words, if recent past is prologue, US President Donald Trump could sometime prefer to align himself with Moscow against Jerusalem, rather than honor long-standing and often codified American security commitments to Israel.

Should this once-incomprehensible scenario ever be actualized, the already-corrosive "Trump Factor" for Israel's long-term and immediate security will have become more-

or-less intolerable. It is assuredly not from Donald Trump, therefore, that Jerusalem should ever come to expect the gainfully stabilizing "wise counsel" prescribed at *Proverbs*. Rather, such indispensable guidance must stem from the intellectual obligation to continuously assess the region's overall "correlation of forces," a challenging imperative that includes (1) meticulous and comparative examinations of enemy leader rationality; and (2) derivatively needed distinctions that obtain between deliberate and inadvertent war. Moreover, an inadvertent war, whether conventional or nuclear (or both), would need to be further subdivided according to *war by accident* or *war by miscalculation*.

Without proper attention to this core imperative, Israel is apt to insufficiently systematize its national defense planning, a strategic dereliction that could sometime occasion distinctly existential costs.

Two further recommendations for maximizing national strength and security arise. First, IDF assessments must continuously consider the changing organization of enemy state units, their training standards, morale, reconnaissance capabilities, battle experience, adaptability to the next battlefield, and cumulative capacities for cyber-war. Although these assessments are not difficult to make on an individual or piecemeal basis, Israeli planners will soon need to more regularly conceptualize them together, in their entirety. Moreover, such an integrative re-conceptualization will have to factor in certain changing expectations of US presidential support.

Second, IDF assessments must consider with very great care the capabilities and intentions of Israel's sub-state adversaries - that is, the entire configuration of anti-Israel terror groups. These groups must be considered "synergistically," in their most holistic expressions, and specifically, as they interrelate with one another vis-à-vis Israel. These terror groups will also need to be examined in terms of their interactive relationships with certain states, an examination involving an IDF search for dominant synergies between hybrid (state and non-state) enemies.

In all such examinations, Jerusalem will have to be sure that all of its sub-state and hybrid adversaries are also seen as enemies by US President Donald Trump. It is at least conceivable, here, that Israel's particular hierarchy of pertinent adversaries is not the same as President Trump's. As an example, it is realistically possible that Mr. Trump would be willing to strengthen Hezbollah in an effort to prioritize continued US destruction of ISIS. Such willingness, moreover, could be driven more by certain presumed expectations of good domestic public relations (and bad geopolitics) than of any sensible strategic policy.

Looking ahead, Jerusalem's most conspicuous existential challenge will likely come from the prospect of "Iran as the next North Korea." To best deal with this challenge, little if anything will be gained from following US President Donald Trump's unsystematic and generally incoherent orientation to Pyongyang. Instead, necessary "wise counsel" for Israel would be better sought in Sun-Tzu's timeless advice about usable military power: "Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting," wisely commented the ancient Chinese strategist in *The Art of War*, "is the true pinnacle of excellence."

Even apart from the prospect of an Iran that follows in the nuclear footsteps of a North Korea, the latter's policies could have overwhelmingly serious effects upon Israel. These policies, which are apt to be more-or-less strongly influenced by military measures against Pyongyang imposed by US President Donald Trump, would depend in part upon the rationality or irrationality of the North Korean and American leaders, the yields and ranges of the respective weapons actually fired (including nuclear weapons), and the prompt aggregate calculation of civilian and military damage experienced in all the affected areas.

North Korea has already participated directly in the Middle East in ways markedly injurious to Israel. One prominent example is the *Al Kibar* plutonium-producing heavy water reactor built by Pyongyang in Syria, and subsequently destroyed by Israel's *Operation Orchard* in September 2007.[xxxi] More recently, in another conspicuous effort to help Damascus, Kim Jung Un has been sending assorted advanced weapons to Syria and Lebanon. Ultimately, of course, such intended assistance to certain Sunni Arab enemies of Israel could also likely support interests of Shiite non-Arab Iran.

Should nuclear weapons ever be introduced into conflict between Israel and Iran, a nuclear war, at one level or another, would ensue, this conclusion holds so long as (a) Iranian first strikes would not destroy Israel's second-strike nuclear capability; (b) Iranian retaliations for an Israeli conventional preemption would not destroy Israel's nuclear counter-retaliatory capability; (c) Israeli preemptive strikes involving nuclear weapons would not destroy enemy state second-strike capabilities; and (d) Israeli retaliations for Iranian conventional first strikes would not destroy Iran's nuclear counter-retaliatory capacity.

This means that in order to fulfill its most basic national security obligations, Israel must immediately take appropriate steps to ensure the likelihood of (a) and (b), and the reciprocal unlikelihood of (c) and (d).

This should bring Israeli planners back to considerations of preemption or anticipatory self-defense. This customary right of international jurisprudence had been widely and authoritatively supported before the nuclear age - when the imperatives of preemption were arguably less compelling. Emmerich de Vattel, the classical Swiss scholar, concludes in *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."

Interestingly, Vattel, similar to Hugo Grotius in *The Law of War and Peace* (1625) drew upon ancient Hebrew Scripture and derivative Jewish Law. The *Torah* contains a provision exonerating from guilt a potential victim of robbery with possible violence if, in capable self-defense, he struck down and, if necessary, even killed the attacker before he committed any crime (Exodus, 22:1). Additionally, we may learn from Maimonides, "If a man comes to slay you, forestall by slaying him." (Rashi, Sanhedrin, 72a).

Although highly unlikely, an Israeli nuclear preemption against Iran is still possible. Such a self-defense strike could

be expected only if: (1) Iran had already acquired nuclear and/or other unconventional weapons presumed capable of destroying the Jewish State; (2) Iran had been explicit that fully genocidal intentions paralleled capabilities; (3) Iran was believed ready to begin a final countdown-to-launch; and (4) Israel believed that non-nuclear preemptions could not possibly achieve the particular levels of needed damage-limitation.

For the foreseeable future, these notably ominous expectations are implausible. This means that Israel must do everything possible to minimize any eventuality where such an extraordinary preemption could conceivably make sense, and to blunt any sub-nuclear Iranian aggressions in the region. This could include further Israeli bombardments of certain Syrian military facilities linked to Bashar al-Assad's chemical weapons program.

In essence, as the Damascus regime and Hezbollah are surrogates of Tehran, allowing further Syrian chemical weapons development would effectively be enlarging Iranian influence over Israel. Moreover, Israel's security obligations here stem from the *de facto* abandonment by Washington of its own coincident obligations. Needless to say, at least in a *de jure* sense, Moscow has been equally delinquent as a "Great Power" guarantor of regional well-being and security.

Traditionally, it should be recalled, Great Powers have always been accorded disproportionate responsibility for world peace and security in the anarchic State of Nations. Jurisprudentially, this "State" is sometimes referred to as "Westphalian," after the 1648 peace settlement that ended the Thirty Year's War.

Accordingly, Amos Yadlin, a former Israeli Chief of Military Intelligence, said that the early September 2017 raid against the Syrian Scientific Research Centre was intended to send three messages: "That Israel won't allow for empowerment and production of strategic arms. Israel intends to enforce its red lines despite the fact that the great powers are ignoring them. And that the presence of Russian air defense does not prevent airstrikes attributed to Israel."

General Yadlin's three messages represent more-or-less unambiguous (though possibly unintended) indictments of US President Donald Trump's foreign policy toward Israel. Although message number 2 is the most straightforward in this regard, message number 3 is also an indirect acknowledgment of diminishing American power and influence in the region. A determined self-reliance has always been absolutely integral to Israel's national security posture, but this determination has now become more self-evident and overriding than ever before. It follows, *inter alia*, that Jerusalem must do whatever is needed to preserve its remaining "strategic depth," and to maintain its credible deterrence in both conventional and nuclear forms.

From time to time, it may also mean that Israel should not only continuously strengthen its variously intersecting missile defenses, but also prepare with exceptional creativity and

imagination for all possible future wars that might have to be fought with less support from the United States. Here, it could be helpful to recall that President Trump's security commitments to the Jewish State are not deeply felt, and that any corresponding diminution of support from the US Congress could then provide "cover" for selected American policies of critical "disengagement" from Israel. To the extent that any such recollection would represent an instance of national *daring*, Jerusalem's relevant decision-makers might also remember the germane insight of Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*: "There are times when the utmost daring is the height of wisdom."

In the end, although Israel ought never to de-emphasize the immutable importance of "system" upon all regional and world politics, its leaders must also bear in mind the occasional but still-consequential importance of certain "idiosyncratic" factors. Moving forward, this cautionary note points toward a special and continuing obligation regarding the Trump presidency in the United States. It is a responsibility to fashion all of Israel's national security policies and postures with an awareness of very serious and plausibly irremediable dangers from Washington. Even if President Donald Trump should somehow "mean well" toward Israel, his notable lack of analytic preparation for the presidency portends multiple and intersecting policy judgments[xxxii] without any adequate intellectual foundations.[xxxiii]

Heraclitus tells us: "Men who love wisdom must enquire into very many things." [xxxiv] Before US President Donald Trump can purport to meaningfully understand the pertinent complexities of world politics - an understanding that would not lead allies such as Israel away from enhanced national security - his relevant advisors will need to be vitalized by a more genuine knowledge of strategy. Israel could not possibly be well-served by a policy founded upon the inherently desolate clairvoyance of "common sense" analogies or popular clichés.

Long before the Nuclear Age, capable scholars reasoned coherently about the chaos and uncontrollability of war. While Carl von Clausewitz's notions of "friction" and "fog of war" come most quickly to mind (See *On War*), Isaiah Berlin has written usefully about Tolstoy, Schopenhauer, and de Maistre.[xxxv] In all such writings, one overarching message is clear: The largely unpredictable vagaries of human conduct can quickly lay waste to the most optimistic military planning. Recognizing US President Trump's conspicuous enchantment with simplistic metaphors and easily falsifiable assumptions,[xxxvi] Jerusalem must now be careful to fashion its presumptive nuclear strategy without any undue reliance upon the United States.

This cautionary imperative is especially compelling because all world politics is inevitably a system. Certain basic strategic mistakes by an American president could quickly and significantly resonate throughout the Middle East. If foolishly trusted in Jerusalem, therefore, President Donald Trump's crude conceptualization of *Realpolitik* would not only lay bare its own insubstantiality, it could also drag the Jewish State down toward the very nadir of national strategic failure.



## References

- [i] See Professor Louis René Beres and General (USA/ret.) Barry R. McCaffrey, *Israel's Nuclear Strategy and America's National Security*, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel, December 2016.
- [ii] One clear example of such marked incoherence is President Trump's joint declaration with Saudi Arabia against Qatar (alleging the latter "supports terrorism") and the simultaneous sale of billions of dollars worth of advanced weapons to both Riyadh and Doha. Another is his August 2017 coupling of an American threat for "fire and fury" against North Korea with the uncompromising position that "the time for talking is over." In so utterly removing diplomacy from America's remaining options vis-à-vis Kim Jung Un, he leaves North Korea to deconstruct a vague military threat that makes no decipherable operational sense.
- [iii] This plainly Realpolitik orientation was clarified by Mr. Trump's National Security Adviser, H.R. McMaster, in a Wall Street Journal Op Ed piece, published on June 3, 2017. According to McMaster, "President Trump has a clear-eyed outlook that the world is not a 'global community,' but an arena where nations, nongovernmental actors and businesses engage and compete for advantage." In an additional emphatic coda, the senior official stipulated proudly: "Rather than deny this elemental nature of international affairs, we embrace it." For the reader who might have some interest in the political philosophy origins of such "realistic" thinking, see Thrasymachus in Bk. 1, Sec. 338 of Plato, *The Republic*: "Right is the interest of the stronger."
- [iv] Earlier, by this author, see: Louis René Beres, "Changing Direction? Updating Israel's Nuclear Doctrine," INSS, Israel, Strategic Assessment, Vol. 17, No.3., October 2014, pp. 93-106. See also: Louis René Beres, *Looking Ahead: Revising Israel's Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East*, Herzliya Conference Policy Paper, Herzliya Conference, March 11-14, 2013 (Herzliya, Israel); Louis René Beres and Leon "Bud" Edney, Admiral (USN/ret.) "Facing a Nuclear Iran, Israel Must Rethink its Nuclear Ambiguity," U.S. News & World Report, February 11, 2013; 3pp; and Professor Louis René Beres and Admiral Leon "Bud" Edney, "Reconsidering Israel's Nuclear Posture," *The Jerusalem Post*, October 14, 2013. Admiral Edney served as NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic (SACLANT).
- [v] In principle, at least, such intersections need not always be confined to the Middle East. For example, any major conflict in Asia involving the US and North Korea - especially if nuclear weapons are used - could have assorted and significant derivative implications for Israel's own nuclear posture. See, by this author: Louis René Beres, "Between Pyongyang, Washington and Jerusalem: Intersecting Nuclear Nightmares," *Israel Defense*, August 13, 2017.
- [vi] The concept of "synergy" here would concern not only various intersections of national security policy, but also of possible attack outcomes. In this connection, regarding the expected consequences of specifically nuclear attacks, by this author, see: Louis René Beres, *Apocalypse: Nuclear Catastrophe in World Politics* (Chicago: The 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, *Security or Armageddon: Israel's Nuclear Strategy* (Lexington, Mass: Lexington Books, 1986). See also, more recently: Ami Rojkes Dombé, "What Happens When a Nuclear Bomb Hits a Wall?" *Israel Defense*, September 10, 2016.
- [vii] On best identifying prospective nuclear disclosure options, see: Louis René Beres, "Israel's Strategic Doctrine: Updating Intelligence Community Responsibilities," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 28, No.1., Spring 2015, pp. 89-104.
- [viii] On this most ambiguous element of Israeli nuclear deterrence, see: Professor 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.
- [ix] See, on prospective shortcomings of Israeli BMD: Louis René Beres and (Major-General/IDF/ret.) Isaac Ben-Israel, "The Limits of Deterrence," *Washington Times*, November 21, 2007; Professor Louis René Beres and M-G Isaac Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iran," *Washington Times*, June 10, 2007; and Professor Louis René Beres and M-G Isaac Ben-Israel, "Deterring Iranian Nuclear Attack," *Washington Times*, January 27, 2009.
- [x] Early in 2017, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) declared initial operational capability for the Arrow-3 interception system, the latest upper-tier layer of the country's multi-tiered missile defense network. Arrow-3, part of the joint US-Israel Arrow Weapons System (AWS) joined Arrow-2, David's Sling and Iron Dome to safeguard Israel against a full spectrum of ballistic missile and rocket threats. For the moment, at least, Israel has been assured \$5 billion in missile defense funding from the United States from fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2028. Israel's advanced status in matters of ballistic missile defense is augmented by a Battle Management Center (made by Elbit) and a radar detection array (made by IAI/ELTA).
- [xi] According to Brig. Gen. Tal Kelman, IAF Chief of Staff: "The region (Middle East) is in a raging storm. Everything is changing. There are some developments in recent months that we would not necessarily have predicted." See Yaakov Lappin: "IAF Very Disturbed by Significant Rise in Ballistic Threat," *The Jerusalem Post*, April 3, 2016.
- [xii] A generally under-appreciated irony of all nuclear deterrence is that the credibility of any particular threat is sometimes apt to vary inversely with expected weapon destructiveness.
- [xiii] These sub-state enemies could conceivably be very disparate, a quality that would then need to be factored in as an "intervening variable" in any pertinent IDF assessments of hybrid warfare. For example, see informative analyses by Ehud Eilam concerning Hamas and Hezbollah, in his valuable "The Struggle against Hamas/Hezbollah: Israel's Next Hybrid War," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 10, No.2., July 2016, p. 1.
- [xiv] Although seemingly discrete and unrelated, there are actual historical intersections of sub-state terrorist actions against Israel, and certain "corollary" nuclear infrastructures. For one example, this plausible intersection concerns risks to Israel's nuclear reactor complex at Dimona. Already, in 2014, this facility came under missile and rocket fire from Hamas. Even earlier, in 1991, Dimona was attacked by a state enemy, Iraq. See, on these issues: 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.
- [xv] "I believe," warns Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West*, "is the one great word against metaphysical fear."
- [xvi] Helpful here is the special insight of philosopher Karl Jaspers, in his classic *Reason and Existence* (1935): "The rational is not thinkable without its other, the non-rational, and it never appears in reality without it."
- [xvii] It must be remembered, however, that no true statement of probability can ever be offered in the absence of pertinent past events. A true statement would have to be based upon the determinable frequency of relevant past events. By definition, in this case, such a requirement is literally impossible to satisfy. Still the best treatment of problematic probability estimations in strategic thinking is Anatol Rapoport, *Strategy and Conscience* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 323 pp.
- [xviii] This cautionary point was a major conclusion of The Final Report of Project Daniel: Israel's Strategic Future, ACPR Policy Paper No. 155, ACPR, Israel, May 2004, 64pp. See also: 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; and 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.
- [xix] Aryeh Savir, Tazpit, "IAF to increase operational capabilities by 400%," *Ynet News*, 31 March 2014, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4525786,00.html>
- [xx] On this point, see August 23, 2016 article by Professor Louis René Beres in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, <http://thebulletin.org/what-if-you-don%E2%80%99t-trust-judgment-president-whose-finger-over-nuclear-button9794> See also, Professor Beres in *US News & World Report*: <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-05-11/possible-trump-presidency-showcases-fatal-flaw-in-nuclear-command-safeguard>
- [xxi] Many years ago, then Israeli Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, urged: "Israel must be seen as a mad dog, too dangerous to bother." The reasonableness of that advice, however, does not automatically "carry over" to any current endorsement of an American president (and presumptive Israeli ally) feigning decisional



irrationality.

[xxii] On deterring a potentially irrational nuclear adversary, most notably Iran, see: Louis René Beres and General John T. Chain, "Could Israel Safely Deter a Nuclear Iran?" *The Atlantic*, August 2012; and Professor Louis René Beres and General John T. Chain, "Israel and Iran at the Eleventh Hour," Oxford University Press (OUP Blog), February 23, 2012. General Chain (USAF/ret.) served as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Strategic Air Command (CINCSAC).

[xxiii] War and genocide need not be mutually exclusive. War may represent the means by which a particular genocide is undertaken. According to Articles II and III of the Genocide Convention, which entered into force on January 12, 1951, genocide includes any of several listed acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such." See: Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, done at New York, December 9, 1948. Entered into force, Jan 12, 1951, 78 UNTS 277.

[xxiv] For early scholarly assessments of anticipatory self-defense, with special reference to Israel, by this author, see: Louis René Beres, "Preserving the Third Temple: Israel's Right of Anticipatory Self-Defense Under International Law," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 26, No.1., April 1993, pp. 111-148; Louis René Beres, "After the Gulf War: Israel, Preemption, and Anticipatory Self-Defense," *Houston Journal of International Law*, Vol. 13, No.2., Spring 1991, pp. 259-280; and Louis René Beres, "Striking 'First': Israel's Post Gulf War Options Under International Law," *Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Journal*, Vol. 14, November 1991, pp. 1-24.

[xxv] See, on this vital distinction: F.E. Adcock, *The Greek and Macedonian Art of War* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), especially Chapter IV.

[xxvi] This actual condition of global anarchy or "nature" exists in stark contrast to the legal presumption of solidarity between all states. This "peremptory" presumption is already mentioned in Justinian, *Corpus Juris Civilis* (533 CE); Hugo Grotius, *De Jure Belli Ac Pacis Libri Tres* (1625); and Emmerich de Vattel, *Le Droit des Gens* (1758).

[xxvii] The historic origins of this global anarchy lay in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War - the last of the great religious wars sparked by the Reformation. The "state of nature" reference has its origins in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), first published just three years after the Peace of Westphalia. At Chapter XIII, Hobbes famously references the state of nature as an anarchic condition in which there prevails "a continuall feare; and danger of violent death...."

[xxviii] Rabbi Eleazar quoted Rabbi Hanina, who said: "Scholars build the structure of peace in the world." See: Babylonian Talmud, Order Zera'im, Tractate Berakoth, IX.

[xxix] To best satisfy this critical imperative, Israeli strategists must always be guided by dialectical sorts of analysis. In the middle dialogues of Plato, dialectic first emerged as the preferred form of scientific investigation. Plato defines the dialectician as the one who knows how to ask and then answer vital questions. In preparing to secure their country during the expectedly erratic Trump Era, Israeli planners will need to recognize this core expectation before proceeding to the more usual compilations of facts, figures, orders of battle, and regional balances of power.

[xxx] See H.G. Edinger, *Thucydides, The Speeches of Pericles* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishers, 1979), p. 17.

[xxxi] See, by Louis René Beres: <https://www.usnews.com/opinion/world-report/articles/2017-09-06/10-years-later-israels-operation-orchard-offers-lessons-on-north-korea>

[xxxii] For a refined deductive theory that deals in general terms with leadership risk-tasking and the consequent probabilities of war, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The War Trap* (New Haven Ct: Yale University Press, 1981).

[xxxiii] Although Mr. Trump's advisors have sought to anchor the president's purported "realism" in H.R. McMaster's idea of classical Realpolitik (see June 3, 2017 Op Ed in *Wall Street Journal* by General McMaster), the effort lacks any true intellectual understanding. Niccolo Machiavelli joined Aristotle's earlier plan for a more scientific study of politics with certain assumptions about power-politics (see *The Prince*, especially Chapter XV), but his proposed fusion revealed another basic and altogether integral insight. It is that there exists a core difference between violence and power, and that ostentatiously accelerating belligerent preparations and verbal threats are not per se purposeful. For a more generic assessment of such conceptual issues, see, by this author: Louis René Beres, *Reason and Realpolitik: US Foreign Policy and World Order* (Lexington, Mass: D C Heath and Com., 1984), 143pp. (This early book includes an Introduction by Elie Wiesel.) On essential differences between violence and power, see also: Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World), 1970, p.3.

[xxxiv] Fragment No. 49.

[xxxv] See Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957).

[xxxvi] We should be reminded here of Ludwig Wittgenstein's important insight from *On Certainty*: "Remember that one is sometimes convinced of the correctness of a view by its simplicity or symmetry...."



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# The Threat of “Rogue States” and the Use of Force: The case of the Obama Administration

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## Introduction

Ever since the threat of “rogue states” emerged, following the end of the Cold War, they quickly became a major concern for the international community. Decision-makers have spent an inordinate amount of time trying to come up with answers on how to properly deal with this new type of threat. Countries such as Iran and North Korea are considered a threat due to their aspirations to acquire WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction), their continuous support for terrorism, their defiance towards international norms and regulations, and the fact that their aggressive behavior threatens the stability of their respective regions. Consecutive U.S administrations and its allies have applied a wide range of policies such as sanctions, diplomacy and military force in an effort to “modify” the behavior of “rogue states” and reintegrate them in the international community.

The most pressing concern of American decision-makers regarding the threat of “rogue states” was always whether the use of force could reduce the threat they posed for the international community. The nature of the threat, as well as the risk of military intervention escalating into a full-scale war in sensitive regions such as the Middle East and South East Asia further complicated the decision-making process. Despite the numerous occasions where the behavior of “rogue states” threatened vital American interests or even the stability of the international system, American presidents were usually reluctant to apply military force. Even when the

United States decided to intervene militarily, as in the case of Iraq, the behavior of the Bush administration was far from cohesive. This inconsistency has been a major characteristic of American Foreign Policy towards “rogue states.” For example, both the Clinton and Bush administrations chose to militarily intervene in Iraq while opting for a more diplomatic approach towards North Korea and Iran. Similarly, the Obama administration chose to diplomatically engage with Iran while on the other hand imposed a policy of “strategic patience” with North Korea, which included the gradual escalation of sanctions in an effort to force North Korea to negotiate.[i] Thus, it becomes evident that apart from the case of Iraq, consecutive U.S administrations were reluctant to employ force in order to counter the threat of “rogue states.”

The goal of this article is to address the puzzle of the variation in the United States foreign policy towards “rogue states.” There are many ways to analyze the decision of a country to apply force. We chose to focus, primarily, on the perception of American decision-makers, during the Obama administration, regarding the threat of “rogue states.” The goal of this article is to empirically assess the perception of the Obama administration regarding the threat of “rogue states” in an effort to understand the reasons behind their decision to avoid using military force.

In order to assess empirically the perception of the Obama administration regarding the threat of “rogue states” we constructed a database of all uses of the term based on documents collected using the search engines of the CIA, Department of State, Department of Defense, and the White House. We then conducted a search of all the documents which contained the terms “rogue” and “outlier.” The search yielded 629 documents (46 from the CIA, 262 from the Department of State, 215 from the Department of Defense and 106 from the White House) regarding the term “rogue” and 121 documents (4 from the CIA, 31 from the Department of State, 22 from the Department of Defense, and 64 from the White House) regarding the term “outlier”, covering the period from January 20, 2009 till January 20, 2017. Thus, the collection includes all the publicly available documents of the major foreign policy agencies of the executive branch of the Obama administration, which mention the term “rogue” and “outlier.” Due to the nature of the search the majority of the documents are transcripts of speeches or press conferences by President Obama, Vice-President Joe Biden, Secretaries of

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State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, Secretaries of Defense Robert Gates, Leon Panetta, Chuck Hagel, and Ashton Carter, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn, the Director of the CIA, the Joint Chief Staff and other officials. Originally, this methodological approach was used by Paul Hoyt on his article regarding the image of "The Rogue States" in American Foreign Policy in 2000.[ii] Building on his work we applied this methodological approach in the case of the Obama administration.

### The threat of Use of Force and "Rogue States."

Many academics and analysts have attempted to provide answers regarding the reluctance of the United States to employ force against "rogue states." The most frequently cited reason relates to the fact that the potential use of force against "rogue states" would escalate into a full scale war in their respective regions with catastrophic results.[iii] This view can potentially explain the decision of the Clinton administration not to intervene militarily during the crisis with North Korea in 1993, where the reclusive state threatened to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. According to Michael Mazarr, the Clinton administration briefly considered the possibility of military intervention, the potential escalation of the attack into a full scale war between North and South Korea and the uncertain results on the North Korean nuclear program discouraged its decision.[iv] A similar view asserts that due to their marginalized position in the international system "rogue states" are in constant fear for their survival. Hence, they are always looking ways to improve their conventional or unconventional military capabilities. This increases the potential risk of an attack.

Perhaps the most prominent issue regarding the use of force against "rogue states" relates to the inconsistency of the United States strategy against "rogue states." For example, in 1994 in his famous article in Foreign Affairs, the former United States Secretary of State Anthony Lake outlined this new type of threat. He argued that "the United States, as the sole superpower has a unique responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralize, contain and through selective pressure eventually transform backlash states into constructive members of the international community." [v] However, in his statement the former Secretary of State did not specify whether the means of containing "rogue states" also included the use of force. Even the National Security Strategy of the Clinton administration, though it did recognize the threatening behavior of "rogue states" it did not specify whether the United States would employ force. During the Bush administration, the threat of "rogue states" gained renewed momentum following the State of the Union Address of President Bush in 2002. In his speech the President characterized Iraq, Iran and North Korea as members of an "axis of evil" which threatened vital American interests. During the Bush administration the United States strategy changed with the introduction of the doctrine of "preemption." According to this doctrine the United States would wage war against a potential threat even before the actual threat materialized, as we witnessed in the case of Iraq. However, the Bush administration decided to wage war only against Iraq. According to Daniel Lieberfeld, the reluctance of the Bush administration to intervene in Iran or North Korea as opposed to Iraq, related to the fact that their "advanced weaponry made them much more

difficult targets for invasion." [vi] However, not all academics and analysts share the same view that the potential use of force against "rogue states" would have negative effects. In 2012, Matthew Kroenig, argued that though complicated a potential attack against Iran's nuclear facilities would benefit the United States in the long run. [vii]

The variation in the behavior of the United States regarding the threat of "rogue states" further complicates its decision to use force. This is the primary reason why in this article we focus the analysis in the perception of threat as opposed to the objective threat of "rogue states." Unless we can understand how the United States perceives the threat of "rogue states" we won't be able to understand and analyze its foreign policy decisions and particularly the decision to use force.

### Obama Administration's Perception of "Rogue States"

Initially, we determined the salience of the threat of "rogue states" of the Obama administration. In order to examine this question we analyzed the database of documents both qualitatively and quantitatively. First, we looked for statements which outlined the views of the administration regarding the threat of "rogue states." Secondly, we analyzed quantitatively the number of mentions over time in order to identify any trends in usage. Regarding the perception of the Obama administration, we coded documents with regard to whom utilized these concepts. We devised a table with the list of speakers and the number of documents, which contained the term "rogue". Table 1 shows the results of the analysis.

Speaker	No of Mentions (N=126)	As % of Total
Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn	21	16.67
Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates	19	15.08
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton	18	14.29
Director of CIA Leon Panetta	9	7.14
Press Secretary Jay Carney	6	4.76
President Barack Obama	4	3.17
Secretary of State John Kerry	4	3.17
Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel	3	2.38
Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken	2	1.59
Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff's Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey	1	0.79
CIA General Counsel Stephen W. Preston	1	0.79
Deputy Director of CIA David Cohen	1	0.79
Director of the Office of Management and Budget Shaun Donovan	1	0.79
National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications	1	0.79
Press Secretary Josh Earnest	1	0.79
Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter	1	0.79
Secretary of Treasury Jacob J. Lew	1	0.79
Vice President Joe Biden	1	0.79
Other Official (22 in total)	22	17.46

Table 1: Frequency of Use of Term "Rogue" by Speaker

The results of the analysis are surprisingly spread. The combined statements of the top executives of American Foreign Policy amount to only 39.67%. This means that top executives of the Obama administration were largely unwilling to discuss the issue of the threat of "rogue states."



By qualitatively analyzing the documents of the database we uncovered several issues pertaining to the perception of the Obama administration concerning "rogue states." The majority of the statements from American decision makers recognized the threat of "rogue states" not only for the United States but also for the international community. However, surprisingly they were more cautious in designating a particular state as "rogue." This was primarily evident in the statements of President Obama who never once mentioned a specific state while mentioning the concept of "rogue state." Though in his statements he did focus on the potential threat of these countries for the interests of the United States he never made any specific remarks about which countries he perceived as "rogue." This could be the result of his personal characteristics as president or his intention to avoid marginalizing certain states, which could potentially damage his efforts for reconciliation as evidenced by his diplomatic initiative to resolve the issue of the nuclear program of Iran. However, it does pose a very interesting question regarding the way that the Obama administration defined "rogue" and "outlier" countries.

### Defining "Rogue States"

#### Countries Associated with the term "rogue."

In order to determine the countries which the Obama administration associated with the term "rogue states", we performed a frequency count on the database aggregating the number of times members of the Obama administration associated the term "rogue" with a specific country. The results are presented in table 2. Surprisingly, the results of the frequency count show that in 62.70% of the mentions the term "rogue" was used to characterize the threatening behavior of a country but was not associated with any specific country. Regarding the use of the term "rogue" to characterize a specific country North Korea comes second with 19.84%, Iran is in the third place with 15.08%, in the fourth place Syria with 2.38%, and lastly Russia with 0.79%. The only mention of Russia as a "rogue state" comes from Peter Harrell the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counter Threat Finance and Sanction, during the BAFT 24th Annual Conference on International Trade on November 13, 2014.[viii]

	No of Mentions (N=126)	As % of Total
"Rogue States"	79	62.70
North Korea	25	19.84
Iran	19	15.08
Syria	3	2.38
Russia	1	0.79
North Korea	25	19.84

Table 2: "Rogue States" (as Mentioned by American Policy-makers).

The results of the analysis indicate a number of things. Firstly, the fact that the term "rogue" was most frequently used without being associated with a specific country can mean one of two things. Either the term "rogue states" has evolved, in the perception of the Obama administration, as a unique type of threat irrespective of specific countries or the Obama

administration was reluctant to designate a country as "rogue" for fear that it would alienate the country and would jeopardize its efforts for rapprochement. The case of Iran can be considered as an example of the latter. Secondly, the continued characterization of North Korea as a "rogue state" and the absence of Sudan, despite the fact that the former is not included in the terrorist sponsor list and the latter is, questions the reasons behind the existence of the list and its usefulness for American Foreign Policy. In order to determine the reasons behind the inconsistency, we analyzed which policies the Obama administration associated with "rogue states."

#### Policies Associated with "Rogue States."

What type of policies are associated with "rogue states"? As we saw from the results analysis above, North Korea and Iran are considered both as "rogue". However, what does it mean to be considered a "rogue country" in the perception of the Obama administration? In order to determine this, we looked at statements from American policy-makers to assess what types of policies they associated with this category of countries even when they are not specifically mentioned. Hence, we coded all the documents in the database for specific actions of policies relating to "rogue" behavior. In total, we coded 89 distinct policy actions regarding "rogue behavior." We then clustered the results into five broad categories: aspirations to acquire or develop Weapons of Mass Destruction and missile capability, the threat of cyber-attacks, defiance of international norms and regulations, international terrorism and the threat they pose in their respective regions and globally. Table 3 shows the results of the analysis.

Policies	No of Mentions (N=89)	As % of Total
WMD Capability Aspirations to acquire, develop, and/or utilize weapons of mass destruction and missile technology.	68	76.4
Cyber Threat The potential threat of cyber- attacks against critical infrastructures or information networks.	10	11.2
Challenge International Norms Defiance of nuclear proliferation norms; adherence to UN/international sanctions; human rights violations; trafficking of narcotics and conventional arms.	5	5.6
Terrorism Active support and/or terrorism sponsor.	4	4.5
Pose Threat The political or military threat to regional and/or global stability.	2	2.2

Table 3: Policies Associated With "Rogue States"

In total 89 statements were coded from high-ranking American officials regarding certain policies associated with "rogue behavior." Regarding "rogue states", their aspirations to acquire weapons capabilities and missile technology comes in first place with 76.4%. This is no surprise considering the fact that North Korea continued its illicit proliferation activities and the Obama administration devoted serious



efforts in reaching a deal regarding the nuclear program of Iran. Surprisingly, in second place came the potential threat of cyber-attacks with 11.2%. This shows that the Obama administration recognized the potential threat of the use of the cyberspace. Thirdly, the reluctance of "rogue states" to adhere to the rules and regulations of the international community, especially regarding the non-proliferation regime. Another surprising result relates to the fact that terrorism came in fourth place behind the potential threat of cyber-attacks and challenging international norms. The last policy which American foreign policymakers associated with "rogue states" is the threat they pose to their respective regions and globally. Having identified the perception of the Obama administration regarding the countries which were considered as "rogue" and the types of policies associated with them we then proceed to analyze the policies they were considering in order to counter this type of threat.

### Conclusion: "Rogue States" and the threat of use of force.

So why is it that the Obama administration was reluctant to apply military force in order to counter the threat of "rogue states"? The findings of the analysis suggest that the perception of the Obama administration regarding the threat of "rogue states" lacked cohesion. The empirical results showed that the top American foreign policy executives were rather unwilling to discuss the threat of "rogue states." Though the discussion did reach the top echelons of the Presidency they were very cautious in their statements. They always outlined the potential threat but they were

always very cautious to avoid "branding" a particular state as "rogue." As we mentioned before, this could be a result of the overall efforts of the administration for reconciliation, particularly in the case of Iran. The apparent unwillingness of the administration to discuss issues pertaining to the threat of "rogue states" made us wonder about the way they defined "rogue states." As the analysis showed, in more than 60% of the statements members of the Obama administration avoided designating a particular state as "rogue." However, these findings raised more questions than they answered. Hence, we continued the analysis on a deeper level in order to establish what types of policies did the Obama administration associate with "rogue states." The results were even more surprising. The issue of nuclear proliferation remained at the very top of the statements from members of the Obama administration. This partially explains their major efforts to strike a deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program. However, it does not answer why they applied the policy of "strategic patience" towards North Korea. Secondly, the fact that the threat of cyber-attacks replaced the threat of terrorism in the perception of the Obama administration is also an important finding. It shows that the Obama administration recognized the potential that cyber-attacks have in this heavily globalized international system. Also, the replacement of terrorism as the number two threat of "rogue states" signals a departure from the long-standing narrative regarding the threat of "rogue states". The analysis does not make any grand claims regarding the reluctance of the Obama administration to employ force. It merely suggests that the Obama administration did recognize the threat but there was no consensus amongst American decision-makers.

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