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THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE QUARTERLY PARAMETERS

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Asia Pacific: Reassessing China

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Civil-Military Relations & Military Ethics

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Special Commentary: Considering *Why We Lost*

Tami Davis Biddle



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From the Editor

Our Winter issue opens with a Special Commentary, “Considering *Why We Lost*,” by Tami Biddle. As she examines LTG (Ret.) Daniel Bolger’s argument in his sharply critical book, *Why We Lost: A General’s Inside Account of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars*, she also considers what it means to say “we lost,” and how that verdict might have been avoided.

The first forum, the “Asia-Pacific,” features four articles concerning China. David Lai’s “China’s Strategic Moves and Counter-Moves” uses the ancient game *Go* and the theory of great-power transition as analytical frameworks for understanding Sino-American relations in the Asia-Pacific region. Thomas Kane’s “China’s ‘Power Projection’ Capabilities” underscores the fact that Beijing’s interests extend well beyond the Asia-Pacific, and any grand or military strategy protecting the interests of the United States must be truly global in scope. Timothy Thomas’ “China’s Concept of Military Strategy” explores some of the essential differences between Chinese and American strategic thinking. Christopher Johnston’s “China’s Military Merchantilism” argues Beijing’s grand strategy and foreign policy are fragmented and in danger of being driven by commercial interests backed by military force; the aim of US policy and strategy, therefore, ought to be to decouple the link between China’s merchantilism and its military planning.

Our second forum consists of two essays concerning the ongoing crisis in the “Middle East” over how to deal with the radical militant group referring to itself as the Islamic State. BG (Ret.) Huba Wass de Czege offers an insightful commentary on a “Core Strategy” for defeating this group. Paul Rexton Kan discusses the advantages of using a combined “Financial-Military Strategy” to undermine the group’s territorial control and reach.

The third forum returns to the theme of “A War Examined,” and presents opposing views of the 2014 Gaza conflict. In “Israel’s Attrition vs Hamas’ Exhaustion,” Eitan Shamir and Eado Hecht compare Israel’s use of a strategy of attrition to Hamas’ employment of a strategy of exhaustion, and offer an assessment of the relative effectiveness of those strategies. In “Hamas’ Strategic Calculus,” Glenn Robinson argues Hamas enjoyed some short-term successes, and suggests this “calculus” will influence Hamas’ strategies in the future.

Our fourth forum, “Civil-Military Relations & Military Ethics,” offers two essays. The first, “The US Army’s Domestic Strategy 1945-1965” by Thomas Crosbie, analyzes how the US Army of the post-World War II era managed its relations with the American public through a domestic political strategy. In the second essay, “Battlefield Euthanasia: Should Mercy-Killings Be Allowed?” David Perry explores a difficult and yet seldom discussed phenomenon. Mercy-killings have happened in every war and, even with revolutionary advances in medicine, will likely occur in the future. Nevertheless, despite abundant and obvious moral justifications, their legalization remains both unlikely and unwise.~AJE

Considering *Why We Lost*

Tami Davis Biddle

ABSTRACT: In his high profile book, *Why We Lost*, Lieutenant General (Retired) Daniel Bolger argues the US Army stayed too long in the Afghanistan and Iraq theaters, becoming mired in wars it was ill-equipped to fight. This commentary challenges Bolger's thesis, arguing different strategies could have produced better outcomes. The US Army will not, in the future, as in the past, be able to pick the kinds of wars it fights; it must be prepared to fight the wars that the President and Congress call on it to fight.

Daniel Bolger begins his book *Why We Lost*, with a jarring opening sentence: "I am a United States Army General, and I lost the Global War on Terrorism." It is an odd *mea culpa*, one that puts the reader off balance even as he/she is struggling to know what to make of the title. Who is "we," exactly? The US Army, the US military and its Coalition partners, the United States? Does Bolger speak for all of them? Clearly he does not, but this first impression puts one on guard. Is this hubris or humility? The answer, it turns out, is complex.

Bolger, who retired as a lieutenant general, had a long career in a US Army that repeatedly reinvented itself to meet changing global demands. Born in 1957, he graduated from the Citadel, and holds a PhD in History from the University of Chicago. In the latter years of his career he held several key posts including Commanding General, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team, Multinational Security Transition Command, Iraq, and Commanding General 1st Cavalry Division, Iraq, 2009-2010. Between 2011 and 2013 he was in charge of the US-NATO mission training the Afghan army and police. The author of several books including *Dragons at War*, Bolger is at his best when describing fast-moving, intricate events on the battlefield. He pulls readers into the middle of these tactical actions, allowing them to feel the dramatic nature of combat, and the stressful split-second choices it forces upon its participants.

However, *Why We Lost* wades directly into a debate over the purpose and future of the US Army; this debate has been raging for years now, but it is crucially important, not least because it will have a direct impact on the way the Army plans, trains, educates, and equips itself for the future. The debate deserves sustained attention and vigorous intellectual engagement. Bolger makes his own view clear: he believes the United States should have left Afghanistan and Iraq as quickly as possible after the major combat phase ended in each theater. The US Army is designed for rapid, overwhelming strikes; counterinsurgency and nation-building are, in his view, swamps that suck their victims in and consume them. At points in the text Bolger seems willing to concede counterinsurgency and nation-building may work in situations where the state conducting

Tami Davis Biddle is Professor of National Security Policy at the US Army War College. The author of *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare* (Princeton, 2002) and many articles on modern war, she was the Harold K. Johnson Visiting Professor of Military History at the Army's Military History Institute, 2001-2002. Since joining the Faculty of the US Army War College, she has held the George C. Marshall Chair of Military Studies and the Hoyt S. Vandenberg Chair of Aerospace Studies.

them is willing to stay “forever.” But that phrasing is hardly the way one would describe such a strategy if one were seeking to sell it. Principally, Bolger regrets that senior officers did not push the case for leaving earlier; their reluctance to give this option a full endorsement was, he believes, a collective failure on their part.

Bolger states the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq ended up pitting American soldiers against enemies who embraced hit-and-run tactics and opportunism, and who melted into the civilian population. Counterinsurgency environments, in his view, lure good men and women into a moral mire; one should not be surprised, therefore, by instances of battlefield excess and even atrocity. Bolger has no issue with enhanced interrogation techniques, and has little time for counterinsurgency principles that seek to limit civilian casualties; indeed, he sniffs at the “odd Zen-like” principles of Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, and describes General Stanley McChrystal’s tactical directive in Afghanistan as “handwringing on paper.”

For Bolger, protracted wars have other disadvantages, not least of which is they subject the Army to Congressional delegations, the vagaries and shifting sands of domestic and presidential politics, the intrusion of defense analysts, and – worst of all – the prying eyes and selfish intentions of the media. Bolger cannot abide the press, and cannot abide anyone who does not share his view of it. His opinion on all these matters can be summed up in a reference he makes to General David Petraeus, for whom he feels one part grudging admiration, and nine parts loathing: “With his Princeton doctorate, French-speaking wife, sharp wit, and endless desire to network, Petraeus saw the inquiring journalists, visiting academics, and members of Congress not as dirty interloping pests but as kindred souls. ...Like docile carrier pigeons, they conveyed his messages far and wide.” (239)

Senior military leaders who operate in democracies have no choice but to learn to cope with the vagaries and frustrations of domestic and congressional politics. Those living in the 21st century will find no quarter from the press, or the world of social media. This is simply the environment one must operate in, regardless of how one may feel about it. Bolger’s conclusion regarding battlefield excess is troubling. While he is right insofar as counterinsurgency campaigns are intensely stressful, not least because the enemy seeks every chance to blur the line between combatant and non-combatant, the consequences can be mitigated by dedicated training and education, and by careful attention to command climate. The vast majority of those who fought in the “Long War” sought to uphold the principles of *jus in bello*, and succeeded in doing so.

All this takes us to the central problem with Bolger’s argument, which is simply that the “break things and leave” approach is not an option in most circumstances since the situation you leave behind may be no better than – and indeed may be worse than – the one that existed before you arrived. Our recent participation in the Libya campaign might be brought to bear as an example of the risks of such an approach. Plenty of mistakes were made by civilian and military authorities in the Afghanistan war, but these were not inevitable. Getting Afghanistan on a stable footing needed to rest centrally on using coercion to lower the level of corruption in the Karzai government – corruption that preyed upon the Afghan people, and undermined any hint of government

legitimacy. The reasons this did not happen are too complex to be explained here, but Bolger's preferred option would have left a weak and destabilized Afghanistan—probably wracked once again by civil war—in the wake of American departure. And this situation would have further endangered the political stability of an already fragile, nuclear-armed Pakistan.

Bolger does a better job than most explaining why his political masters opted, in 2002-2003, to wage war in Iraq. Once that choice was made, however, the Bush administration had to be prepared to ride the tiger. If you take down a government and leave a power vacuum in a state comprised of people who live in existential fear of one another, things might well get worse before they get better. Leaving Iraq promptly would hardly have guaranteed security for the United States or for anyone else in the region. (And one must consider, as well, the moral obligations of *jus post bellum*.) Yes, civilian and military authorities made some costly mistakes in this theater too – not least of which was mis-interpreting a sectarian identity-war as a Vietnam-style ideological insurgency. But, again, these mistakes were not inevitable. The US Army engaged in some commendable real-time learning, and after the surge of 2007-08, the Obama administration had an opportunity for something approximating a reasonable outcome if it had been willing to press for such. But it would have required sustained pressure on Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to keep him from exploiting sectarian tensions for personal political gain. Anxious to switch off the lights and close the door on an unpopular war, the administration failed to keep that pressure on. The result has been anything but felicitous.

Afghanistan and Iraq are not the places one would choose to fight if one could choose, but military leaders do not get to dictate where and when (or sometimes even how) they will fight. Many believe Army leaders in the 1990s tried to tie civilians' hands by refusing to build a force that could do peacekeeping or stabilization missions efficiently; they ended up doing them anyway when civilians in authority told them to. Taken to its logical conclusions, Bolger's argument would proscribe, or at least severely limit, the Army's preparation for counterinsurgency and nation-building. But what if the President—the highest elected official in the land—orders them to be undertaken anyway? Does the Army owe the nation some degree of readiness to do messy jobs it would rather avoid but might be ordered to do? Is preparedness tantamount to endorsement? Or can senior officers cultivate an ability to play a sophisticated but subordinate role in what Eliot Cohen has called the “unequal dialogue” of civil-military relations by preparing to do whatever they might be ordered to do while clearly presenting the serious costs and perils of doing so?

Military leaders must hope the President and Congress will make sound, informed, and sober choices about war and peace – choices that consider the blunt nature of military force, the unpredictable nature of warfare, and the ever-present risk that a war will last longer and cost far more than anyone would like to imagine. But if US decision-makers feel compelled to fight an adversary or take down a government because it is thought to pose a grave threat to the security of the United States or its allies, then the US Army cannot rule out having to conduct a counterinsurgency campaign after major combat operations, or being pulled

into nation-building. (The United States and its allies were fortunate the Germans did not wage an insurgency after the death of Hitler. Certainly the US Army planned for such a prospect.) These efforts may be difficult and lengthy; they may force us into interaction with weak and corrupt leaders. We will succeed only if we do a better job of understanding the dynamics of the situation, and the ways to address them successfully. This realization will require greater attention, in particular, to the imperative of creating good governance—and to the mechanisms, both coercive and non-coercive, required to bring it about.

If the US Army is responsible for fighting and winning the nation's wars, senior officers must accept the fact that most of the work of "winning" will come well after the major combat phase has drawn to a close. Contingent events will break in unexpected ways and the ground will shift constantly under one's feet. The choices political leaders make will be just as important as the ones military officers make. And, in the end, the extent to which the two sets of choices can be reconciled, coordinated, and harmonized will determine, in all likelihood, the success or failure of the strategy. At every turn, civil-military relations will matter profoundly. And the obligation to get them right will rest with both sides.

China's Strategic Moves and Counter-Moves

David Lai

ABSTRACT: This article employs two analytical frameworks to put the tensions in the Asia-Pacific Region in a new perspective. One is the *Go* game analogy; the other is the US-China Power Transition, Stage II. These offer significant insights into US-China relations and Asia-Pacific affairs, point out pitfalls in the complicated games in this region, and suggest thoughts for a “win-win” solution.

The Asia-Pacific Region has witnessed quite a few disconcerting US-China interactions of late. These acts range from close encounters involving military airplanes and warships in the South China Sea, contentious exchanges of verbal blows in regional forums, to China's heavy-handed approach toward its maritime neighbors, namely, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam, over their disputed territories.¹

Why are so many contentious acts occurring in the Asia-Pacific? Has China become more assertive with its foreign policy? Why do China and the Asian nations turn their territorial disputes into flashpoints? Should Washington challenge Beijing directly on its territorial claims? Is the rebalance producing the intended results? How can we make sense of these baffling moves and counter-moves in the Asia-Pacific Region?

Many recent confrontations in the Asia-Pacific stem from a contentious, distrustful, and ill-advised US-China relationship. By all measures, this relationship is the defining factor in Pacific rim affairs. It conditions the policy calculations of all nations in the region. When this relationship is in trouble, the interactions in the region are doomed to be incongruous.

Two analytical frameworks shed light on these tensions. One is the game of *Go*; and the other, power-transition theory. The former puts current interactions in the Asia-Pacific in a perspective not seen before, but yields significant new insights. The latter explains why the United States and China act the way they do toward each other. A synthesis of the two yields some insights into the future of US-China relations and Asia-Pacific security affairs.

David Lai, Ph.D., is a Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College. His research and teaching cover US-Asian, especially US-China relations, and Chinese strategic thinking and military operational art.

¹ The author thanks Keith Johnson, formerly a staff writer for *Wall Street Journal*, now for *Foreign Policy*, for his stimulating questions on the baffling games in the Asia-Pacific that led to the writing of this article. Craig Whitlock, “Pentagon: China Tried to Block US Military Jet in Dangerous Mid-air Intercept,” *Washington Post*, August 22, 2014. AFP-JJJI, “Beijing's South China Sea Claim ‘Problematic,’ Senior US Official Says,” *Japan Times*, July 8, 2014. Chuck Hagel, US Secretary of Defense, “Speech at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue,” *Singapore*, May 31, 2014, and Wang Guanzhong, Lt General, PLA, and head of the Chinese delegation to the Shangri-La Dialogue, “Speech on Major Power Perspectives on Peace and Security in the Asia-Pacific,” June 1, 2014. Kevin Liptak, “5 Takeaways from Obama's Trip to Asia,” *CNN*, April 29, 2014.

Go, the Overarching Game in Asia-Pacific

As everyone knows, nations play “games” in international affairs. It is common to characterize international interactions in these terms. For instance, the China-Japan conflict over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands can be seen as a game of chicken with the two sides inciting each other to the brink.² China and Vietnam, however, “have been engaged in a strategic game of cat-and-mouse in the disputed area, resulting in Hanoi regularly issuing warnings to Beijing to remove [an oil] rig, only to have Beijing regularly chase away Hanoi’s vessels.”³

On a broader scale, one can view the US strategic rebalance toward the Asia as an American football offensive formation moving downfield, play by play. In another sense, the rebalance resembles a chess move, as in former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski’s terms, trying to prevent the emergence of a Eurasian challenger to US supremacy.⁴

While there are different games at play, the game of *Go* offers a much more compelling account of the interactions in the Asia-Pacific and opens up a new way of thinking about US-China relations and Asia-Pacific security relations.

What is *Go*?

Go is a Chinese invention. It is one of the world’s oldest board games, yet arguably one of the most sophisticated and challenging.⁵ It is played on a 19-by-19 grid. Two players take turns putting stones on the board in an effort to encircle space or territory. The one who secures more territory wins. Like many other games, *Go* is a ritualized substitute for war and human conflict. Like many such conflicts, *Go* is a struggle for territory. Placing stones on the board can be likened to troop engagements and other foreign policy instruments.

Unlike many games, *Go* starts with an empty board. This special design gives rise to three discernable stages of war: preparation, fighting, and conclusion. At the preparation stage, players compete for key strategic positions and posture themselves for gaining spheres of influence. Battles take place in the mid-game stage when, typically, some 200 stones have been placed on the board. In the end stage, players solidify their territorial gains and seal the borders.⁶

2 Harry Kazianis, “China and Japan’s Game of Chicken in the East China Sea,” *The Diplomat*, June 13, 2014.

3 Kate Hodal, “Despite Oil Rig Removal, China and Vietnam Row Still Simmers,” *The Guardian*, July 17, 2014.

4 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

5 *Go* originated in China more than 2,500 years ago. Its Chinese name is *Weiqi* 围棋, literally the encirclement board game. Japanese and Korean envoys brought this game home during the Chinese Tang Dynasty in the 7th century and turned it into their national game respectively. The Japanese call the game *igo* 囲碁 and the Koreans, *baduk*. The West learned about this game mostly from Japan and called the game *Go*, a truncated Japanese *Igo*. Today’s supercomputer can handle a chess grand master; but has no such potential against a *Go* player on the horizon. Benson Lam, “The Mystery of *Go*, the Ancient Game That Computers Still Can’t Win,” <http://Go-to-go.net/2014/05/14/the-mystery-of-go-the-ancient-game-that-computers-still-cant-win/>

6 This writing is about the geo-strategic significance of *Go*. The introduction of *Go* play therefore is limited to the minimum. For learning to play this game, I recommend a visit to the *American Go Association* website, <http://www.usgo.org>.

The Significance of *Go*

As a game of war, *Go* is part of Chinese strategic culture. It takes Chinese philosophical and military thinking as its foundation and puts Chinese strategic thinking and military operational art into play. In many ways, this game is an embodiment of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. Sun Tzu's game of strategic skill—subjugating the enemy without fighting—is also the guiding principle of *Go*. Sun Tzu's prescriptions for getting to this point—first, by frustrating the enemy's strategy, then by derailing its allies, and finally by attacking the enemy's military—are applicable to *Go* as well. Likewise, many of Sun Tzu's observations in the *Art of War* can find their expressions and implementations in the game of *Go*. This game has immense impact on the way the Chinese think about and act in international conflicts, and makes the Chinese way of war different from those of other cultures.

However, the significance of *Go* in geopolitics and military affairs has not been well articulated.⁷ Scott Boorman was the first scholar to discuss the influence of this game on the Chinese way of war with his 1969 ground-breaking work, *The Protracted Game: A Wei-Ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy*.⁸ Boorman, however, did not pursue this topic further in his career, and there was no other significant contribution for the remainder of the 20th century.

Nonetheless, the game caught the attention of Henry Kissinger, former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State.⁹ Kissinger subsequently promoted it in his article, "America's Assignment," in *Newsweek* and suggested US leaders learn the game and its cultural and strategic significance. Kissinger has also used *Go* in discussing US-China relations. For example, in his book, *On China* (2012), Kissinger used *Go* to illustrate China's "realpolitik" tradition, and spoke of his forty years of experience with the Chinese leaders in this light.¹⁰

Go and the Asia-Pacific

Key observations can be made by marking US-China interactions and conflicts in the Asia-Pacific on a *Go* board superimposed with an Asia-Pacific political map, as seen in Figure 1. Interactions are indicated with 32 moves already on the board. Several significant features come readily to mind.

7 There are many books and articles about *Go*, but most of them are about the game itself. Even the work of Ma Xiaochun (马晓春), one of China's top *Go* players, *The Thirty-Six Stratagems Applied to Go*, has no reference to war and politics. My emphasis in this writing, and my other works on *Go*, is about the geopolitical and geostrategic significances of *Go* and its relation to military and security affairs.

8 Scott Boorman, *The Protracted Game: A Wei-ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy* (Oxford University Press, 1969).

9 A renewed effort to introduce this game and its impact on China's strategic thinking and military operational art came in 2004 with the publication of David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept, Shi* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2004). This monograph applies *Go* to the discussion of Chinese strategic thinking and US-China relations. It caught the attention of Dr. Kissinger.

10 Henry Kissinger, "America's Assignment," *Newsweek*, November 8, 2004; Fareed Zakaria GPS for Sunday, January 23, 2011, "Kissinger on President Hu's Visit," with embeddable video; Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012). See also Keith Johnson, "What Kind of Game Is China Playing?" *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 2011.

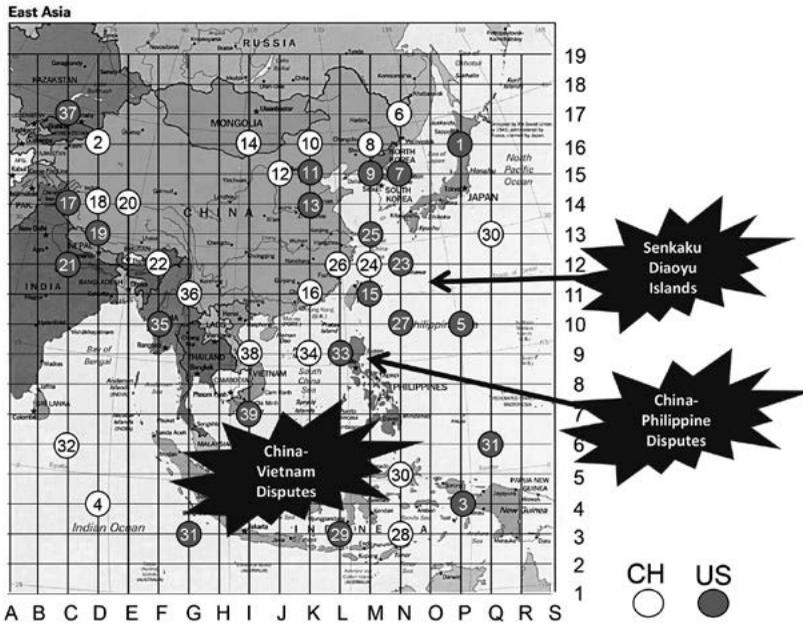


Figure 1. A Go-game Perspective on US-China Interactions

The Overarching Game: US-China Relations

The first observation is the overarching relationship between the United States and China. Putting these two powers in charge is not an arbitrary decision. The United States and China are the two biggest nations in the Asia-Pacific. Their interactions and influence are region-wide and increasingly global. Their relationship affects the future of Asia-Pacific affairs, and the policy calculation of all other nations in this region.

It is tempting to ask whether this game can be a multiplayer one, or whether another great power, say Japan, could replace the United States. The answer to both questions is “no.” First, one must see that in the Asia-Pacific, other big powers such as Japan, Russia, India, or the European Union, can only be intervening variables employed by either China or the United States; none of them has the capacity to direct the game. Second, and with special respect to Japan, it is important to note that Japan is subsumed under the US umbrella (Japan’s efforts to become a full-fledged major power notwithstanding). Japan’s acts can only be part of the US moves on the board. A Japan-China game would be very limited in scope. Japan can compete with China in the Asia-Pacific, but it is no match to China in global affairs.

Moreover, China’s challenge to the United States is systemic. No other nation has the capacity and ambition to influence the United States as China. None has so many entangled conflicts with the United States in the Asia-Pacific either. Furthermore, the US-China game can be easily expanded to cover other regions and eventually the globe.

Note that the game in Figure 1 is now at mid-game stage. The opening moves from 1 to 22 can be seen as initial interactions between the US and China at the early stage of China's rise. Black stones 7, 9, 11, and 13 are US moves on Beijing. White 8, 10, 12, and 14 are China's responses. Black 15 and White 16 are US-China conflict over Taiwan (the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait crisis, for instance).

Black's moves 17, 19, and 21 can be interpreted as the attempt of the George W. Bush administration to play India as a counterbalance against China. Condoleezza Rice's January 2000 article in *Foreign Affairs* clearly alerted Beijing, who quickly took measures to modify its relations with India.¹¹ Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji visited India in 2002. Among many other measures, China promised to increase trade with India from about \$3 billion at the time to \$100 billion in 10 to 15 years (by 2008 China-India trade reached \$50 billion; Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao reassured his Indian counterpart during his visit to New Delhi in 2012 that the \$100 billion goal could be reached by 2015).¹² The Chinese believe that by increasing the economic stake between China and India, the two nations will have less incentive to fight. The stones over China and India reflect those balancing acts. Through the moves of 18, 20 and 22, China has built up a defense, lessening the pressure of US penetration from its west.

Black's move 23 is a turning point. The moves that follow are set up to indicate the interactions since the United States launched the strategic rebalance. The stones around the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, at the Philippine isles, and the South China Sea are recent "battle exchanges." There are also "minor" engagements on the Australian front (as the United States stations 2,500 Marines in Darwin, Australia, China also approaches Australia with economic and diplomatic measures—White 28 and 30 indicate China's moves). Moreover, when President Barrack Obama made his historic visit to Myanmar in November 2012 (Black 35), China responded with its efforts toward Yangon accordingly (White 36).¹³

Battles around China

The second insight regards the battles around China. A special feature of *Go* is that there are always multiple battles in a game. Each battle has its own "life-and-death" situation. Adjacent battlegrounds usually share a common fate and affect each other. Some battle outcomes may be insignificant; others, decisive. They require different levels of attention and commitment. At times, the battlefields may appear to be unconnected; but they are all part of a campaign to pursue the war's aim. From this perspective, the hot spots around China, such as the North Korea issue, the China-Taiwan-US "tug of war," the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands contest, the South China Sea territorial disputes, and many others are best-perceived as battle fronts.

11 Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2000).

12 Embassy of India to China, India-China Trade and Commercial Relations, and Zhao Gancheng (赵干城), "略论中印经贸关系若干问题" ["An Analysis of the Problems in China-India Trade Relations"] 南亚研究 [*South Asia Studies*, Iss. 2, 2012].

13 While the United States actively engages Myanmar, China has also been doing the same. Myanmar's leadership understands that holding a balanced relationship between the two big powers serves Myanmar's interest. This relationship is much better than the previous China-only; but Myanmar could not afford to turn it into a US-only one. A good example of Myanmar's balancing act is its president making official visits to both Washington and Beijing in sequence.

This perception is very significant. First, it reminds China and the United States they are the two players in charge. This is especially important for the United States, because the superpower has at times neglected its indispensable position and let the smaller nations take over the agenda. In so doing, the United States runs the risk of “letting the allied tail wag the American dog.”¹⁴ Second, the pieces, strategic design, and operational engagements (battles) involving the regional nations, are the moves by or related to Washington and Beijing.

Other Pacific Rim nations may find it unfair to define their positions as subordinate. Yet, if any of them were to make an ambitious move, it would likely need the backing of the United States. Looked at another way, the United States commitment to Taiwan has practically prevented a forceful takeover of the island by mainland China for well over 60 years; the US mutual defense treaty with Japan is a crucial factor in deterring China from using outright force on the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands; and the US position on the South China Sea, especially Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s statement of US interests in July 2010, affects the course of actions among the disputants currently and in the years to come.¹⁵

A Game with Great Potential

The third observation is about the potential of the game. The game as shown in Figure 1 has just entered its mid-stage. Many of the moves surrounding the battlegrounds are “water-testing” acts. From the *Go*-game perspective, if a certain battle is a losing one, one should not put more stones around it; but if a battle is promising, one should reinforce the troops and commit more resources to win the battle. These are serious strategic as well as operational considerations.

In addition, one can see that much of the board is still open. Many future interactions can take place in the open areas. For instance, White’s move 30 can be seen as China’s attempt to gain a foothold in the US sphere of influence; it looks like a Chinese probe on the Second Island Chain. Likewise, Black’s move 31 can be seen as a US attempt to test China’s thin presence in the Indian Ocean; White’s move 32, therefore, is Beijing’s effort to reinforce its long-term posturing in this wide-open area.

Finally, this game can be expanded to cover the globe. Indeed, China’s interests today have already reached many, if not all, corners of the world; and US-China competition in other regions of the world are already underway.¹⁶ US-China interaction in other regions will intensify accordingly.

14 Ted Galen Carpenter, “Conflicting Agendas: The US and Its East Asian Allies,” *China-US Focus*, March 20, 2014.

15 Secretary Clinton made three main points in the statement: the US 1) has a national interest in the South China Sea, 2) supports a multilateral approach in the disputes, and 3) urges the disputants to deal with the disputes in accordance with international laws. “Remarks by the Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at the ASEAN Regional Forum, National Convention Center,” Hanoi, Vietnam, July 23, 2010.

16 David E. Brown, *Hidden Dragon, Crouching Lion: How China’s Advance in Africa is Underestimated and Africa’s Potential Underappreciated* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2012) and R. Evan Ellis, *China on the Ground in Latin America: Challenges for the Chinese and Impacts on the Region* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

US-China Power Transition, Stage II

While *Go* puts the Asia-Pacific conflicts in context, an analysis of the fundamental changes in US-China relations can help us see *why* those interactions had taken place. The critical change is that a power transition between the United States and China has entered its second stage, where the two take on new measures toward each other and behave in ways typical to this stage, most pointedly, the US strategic rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific and China's assertive foreign policy activities.

Power Transition

Power transition is about the rise of a previously underdeveloped big nation (nations that are bigger than others in territory, population, and many other key measures), its revolutionary impact on the existing international system, and the inescapable conflict involved in the transition (it may not necessarily be war, but war has been the case throughout history). While a comprehensive introduction to the power transition theory and its application to the US-China case is beyond the scope of this writing, a cautionary note is in order.¹⁷ First, power transition is not just about a change of power balance between two great powers, but more importantly it is about a change of relations between an international system leader and a potential contender for future system leadership. As such, great power transition is about the future of the international order and system.

Second, not all rising nations get into a power transition relationship.¹⁸ Only a rising China presents a qualified challenge to the United States. China is one of the world's oldest civilizations with rich economic, political, cultural, and military traditions. As China becomes more powerful, the Chinese will naturally feel they have better things to offer the world and are entitled to modify the world in their ways. The late Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington puts this aspect about China best:

China's economic development had given much self-confidence and assertiveness to the Chinese, who also believed that wealth, like power, is proof of virtue, a demonstration of moral and cultural superiority; as it became more successful economically, China would not hesitate to emphasize the distinctiveness of its culture and to trumpet the superiority of its values and way of life compared to those of the West and other societies.¹⁹

With the above, and certainly more, it is understandable that since Beijing embarked on its modernization mission and showed signs of rising, there has been a debate about the Chinese threat (to the United States and the US-led international system), the possibility of a power

17 The seminal work on the power transition theory comes from Kenneth A.F. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958). David Lai, *The United States and China Power Transition* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), puts the US-China power transition and its related conflicts in the Asia-Pacific in perspective.

18 See Lai, *United States and China in Power Transition*, for the reasons to rule out other great powers such as Japan, Russia, Germany, India, Brazil, and others, as potential contenders.

19 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 103.

transition between the United State and China, the applicability of the theory to China, and the proper US response to the rising China.²⁰

Stages of Power Transition

While acknowledging the importance of this debate, the evidence shows that the power transition between China and the United States is not only taking place, but has already moved into the second stage. Moreover, this stage will be a protracted one, stretching to 2050.²¹

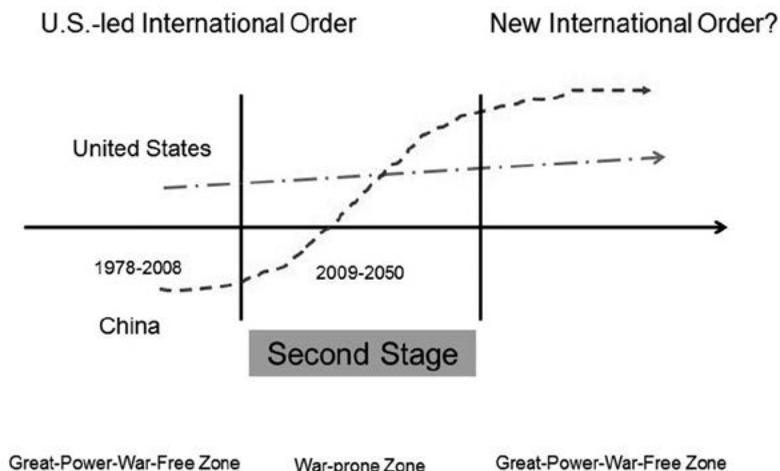


Figure 2. US-China Power Transition, Stage II

The stages of the US-China power transition are shown in Figure 2. The first stage is from 1978 to 2008, two significant milestones in China's rise.

Since the Middle Kingdom fell from grace in the mid-19th century, generations of concerned Chinese have tried to put the “humpty-dumpty” back together again; yet many of them failed. There have also been several false starts for China's modernization efforts along the way. However, the economic reform launched in 1978 was a game changer. China's developments in wealth and power in the ensuing 30 years are also indisputable.

In 2008, China hosted the Summer Olympic Games. Many may recall the extravagant opening and closing ceremonies in Beijing. To the Chinese, those celebrations were more about China's developments over the past 30 years and its arrival on the center stage of world affairs than about the sporting events.

20 The most alarming work on China threat comes from Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997). For comprehensive discussion of the China threat, see Herbert Yee and Ian Storey, ed., *The China Threat: Perceptions, Myths, and Reality* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002); Denny Roy, “The ‘China Threat’ Issue: Major Arguments,” *Asian Survey* 36, No. 8 (1996); and Khalid R. Al-Rodhan, “A Critique of the China Threat Theory: A Systematic Analysis,” *Asian Perspective* 31, Iss. 3 (2007). Over the years, there have been many critiques of the power transition theory. The best is no doubt Steve Chan, *China, the US, and the Power-Transition Theory: A Critique* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

21 China's “Peaceful Development” promise and the US call for China to become a “Responsible Stakeholder” are unprecedented acts in a power transition situation. See David Lai, *The United States and China in Power Transition* for an extensive discussion of the significance of this US-China “handshake” and “goodwill exchange.”

The second stage of the US-China power transition takes 2008 as the point of departure. It is going to span the next three decades and more. Why will this stage be so long? Development takes time; so does power transition. Indeed, it took Germany more than 70 years to catch up with Great Britain, and Japan four decades to become a formidable power in East Asia. The transition of system leadership from Britain to the United States also took more than half a century. Given China's size and complexity, it will take China time to turn itself into a true great power. In fact, Chinese leaders are looking to the year 2050 to complete the second stage of China's modernization mission, as evidenced by Deng Xiaoping's "Three-step Plan." Xi Jinping's "China Dream" has a two-centennial target: the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party in 2021 and the centennial for the People's Republic in 2049. The CCP's Party Platforms have consistently articulated the vision of bringing about China's modernization mission by 2050. China's long-term development plans have also laid out well-specified steps toward this goal.²²

Given a rising China, what are we to expect in the US-China power transition in the coming years? This analysis has focused on the key pattern of interaction between the United States and China, an important issue at this stage of the US-China power transition.

According to power-transition theory, at this stage the system leader may feel more concerned with, and uneasy about, the changing power balance and may be tempted to launch a preemptive strike to derail the rising power.

At the same time, the upstart may become more confident and act more assertively and uncompromisingly. While in the first stage, when the rising power is much weaker than the system leader, it has to tolerate the latter on many issues. Now with added national power, the upstart is no longer willing to take the pressure without a fight. There is also a risk the rising power will challenge the leader to a premature showdown. History is full of stories of this kind. For these reasons, the second stage is also a "war-prone" period for great powers.

Game Changer: US Strategic Rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific

The United States had been concerned with China's rise since the George H. W. Bush administration in the early 1990s. However, burning issues elsewhere kept the United States busy in other parts of the world (Europe security, Middle East conflict, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance) and unable to develop a coherent response to China's monumental challenge until the Obama administration took office in 2009.

The Obama administration's move is the US strategic rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific. By many measures, this is an expected move by the system leader at the second stage of the power transition. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton characterized the US effort as an act moving along six key lines:

- Strengthening bilateral security alliances;
- Deepening working relationships with emerging great powers,

²² See the Chinese Communist Party's reports in the past several party congresses and China's Five-Year Plans.

including China;

- Engaging with regional multilateral institutions; expanding trade and investment;
- Forging a broad-based military presence; and
- Advancing democracy and human rights.²³

Through these moves, the Obama team aimed to regain US leadership in all areas, preserve peace and stability in the Western Pacific, and manage the rise and expansion of China.

The Right Thing to Do, But Not Done Right

There is no doubt that the strategic rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific is the right thing for the United States to do. However, doing the right thing is not the same as doing it right. Indeed, six years into its execution, the rebalance only shows poor grades on the scoreboard. Many of the moves are questionable at best, and counterproductive at worst. First, the rebalancing has suffered from confusion in designation. By many measures, the strategic rebalance is *mainly*, although not *only*, about China. However, the White House has steadfastly denied this designation. This denial stands against the fact that few other nations in Asia have the significance to receive such special attention resulting in a major policy shift. To use the words of Shakespeare, Washington “doth protest too much.”

Second, the rebalancing has at times lost the sense of who is in charge of the game in the Asia-Pacific. With fundamental disagreements on China’s core interests, the United States has understandably encountered many “tough fights” in China. Yet, instead of trying to bridge that gap, the Obama administration has elected to turn more attention to the network of regional allies.

Turning to the allies certainly provides the United States an easy excuse to sidestep the more difficult task of engaging the rising China. Allies and partners are happy to see increased US attention. Yet by so doing, the United States has turned over the control of events in the region to the hands of the regional allies and partners. The superpower is left to act as a firefighter, rushing to the calls from the allies and partners. It is a huge mistake for US foreign policy.

Third, the rebalancing was to incorporate the entirety of the country’s foreign policy instruments. Yet in rhetoric as well as practice, it appeared to be a military act only.

Fourth, the Obama administration’s work on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) has not made much headway. The Trans-Pacific Partnership would have greatly expanded beneficial trade relations between the United States and the Asian nations. However, the effort appeared to be doomed from the beginning: the “incidental” exclusion

²³ US Department of State, “Clinton on America’s Pacific Century: A Time of Partnership,” November 10, 2011.

of China and the failed inclusion of Japan have made this undertaking very difficult.²⁴

Finally, the strategic rebalancing has inadvertently pitted the United States against China in a premature showdown. Indeed, over a series of policy statements, the United States appeared to abandon its neutrality and challenge China directly on the East and South China Seas affairs. The most important one is by all means Secretary Clinton's declaration of US interests in the South China Sea in July 2010. Several US official follow-up moves, such as Secretary Clinton joining the Philippines to call part of the South China Sea the "West Philippine Sea," Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel challenging China to define its "9-dash line" over the South China Sea, and Secretary of State John Kerry calling China's claims "problematic" have only reinforced the perception of this policy shift.²⁵

Game Changer: An Assertive China

While the United States is busy with its strategic rebalancing, China is also making fundamental changes to its foreign policy. The most notable one is China's turn to "assertive diplomacy" (as the Chinese call it "强势外交"). Assertive Chinese President Xi Jinping has come just in time to usher China into its assertive age. As it stands, this change has unmistakably acted as well as an official calling and theoretical underpinning. It is a qualitative change in the conduct of China's foreign policy.²⁶

China's Assertive Acts

With respect to China's assertiveness, two aspects are of particular significance. First, China has become more open with the United States. The prime example is Xi Jinping's "ice-breaking gift" to President Obama at the two presidents' meeting June 2013, namely, the "New Model for Major Countries' Relations." Xi Jinping's proposal has only three simple points: 1) no confrontation, 2) mutual respect for each other's core interests, and 3) striving for win-win outcomes.²⁷ Yet it is the first time China took the initiative to set an agenda in US-China relations. For much of the past, China had been reacting to US initiatives, pressures, and condemnations, and never had the so-called "话语权" ("the power of agenda setting") in the two nations' relations. China is determined to break this US hegemony.

24 For a number of reasons, China has been excluded in the negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Japan's national government wants to be part of the TPP. However, Japanese domestic opposition, especially that of the agriculture sector, holds Japan back. The main concern is the TPP will open up Japan's tightly-protected agriculture market for US farm products. It could be a brutal, if not fatal, blow to the Japanese agriculture economy. President Obama's last minute effort in April 2014 could not secure an agreement from Japan. Charles Riley, "Obama Fails to Secure Breakthrough in Japan Trade Talks," *CNN*, April 24, 2014.

25 Remarks by Secretary Hillary Clinton at the signing of the Partnership for Growth and joint press with Philippine Foreign Secretary Albert Del Rosario, Manila, Philippines, November 16, 2011; Daniel R. Russel, Statement at the Hearing of "America's Future in Asia: From Rebalancing to Managing Sovereignty Disputes" before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific of the Committee on Foreign Relations, House of Representatives, 113 Congress, February 5, 2014; Chuck Hagel, Remarks at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, May 31, 2014.

26 Most analysts of China foreign and security affairs agree China has become more assertive. Harvard University Professor Alastair Iain Johnston is certainly a lone one in arguing otherwise. Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?" *International Security* 37, Iss. 4 (2013).

27 See David Lai "Doubts on China's New Model for Great Power Relations." Strategic Studies Institute, Op-Ed, October 2013 for an analysis of the three points.

The second aspect of Beijing's assertiveness is its turn to a heavy-handed approach toward neighbors with territorial disputes, particularly Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. China's turn to assertive acts against its neighbors has two other driving forces behind it, in addition to being a typical behavior in the second stage of the power transition. The first is that the Chinese strongly believe the United States encourages the disputants to challenge China, and Washington's policy of rebalancing has somehow emboldened them to do so. Beijing, therefore, has decided to get tough with the disputant neighbors and in turn take countermeasures against the US strategic rebalance.²⁸

The other driving force is China's urge to pursue its maritime interests. The official decree for China to address its maritime interests came in the 18th Chinese Communist Party Platform in November 2012:

We should enhance our capacity for exploiting marine resources, develop the marine economy, protect the marine ecological environment, resolutely safeguard China's marine rights and interests, and build China into a maritime power.²⁹

President Xi put another spin on this agenda at the Chinese Communist Party Politburo Group Study dedicated to the discussion of China's maritime interests in July 2013. Also in this meeting, Xi stressed that while China would adhere to the path of peaceful development, it would not barter away its legitimate maritime rights and interests.³⁰

Official Calling and Conceptual Underpinning of China's Assertiveness

Beijing is well aware that China is in a new stage of its development and in need of adjustment in its foreign policy. The defining call for change timely came from Xi Jinping: China should "strive to do more" ("奋发有为").³¹ Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi indicates that Xi's call is a new guiding principle for China's foreign policy in the new era and yearns for the coming of "a great power diplomacy commensurate with China's growing power and with Chinese characteristics."³²

With expanding power and interest, Beijing also feels the need to bear more international responsibilities. China has long maintained a policy of non-interference in other nations' internal affairs and condemned the United States for its excessive conduct in this regard. Chinese analysts are proposing new concepts such as "selective, innovative, and constructive intervention" for the modification of this policy.³³

28 There are numerous Chinese observations in this vein.

29 Hu Jintao, *Report to the 18th Party Congress*, November 8, 2012.

30 Xinhua Net, "Xi Advocates Efforts to Boost China's Maritime Power." July 31, 2013.

31 Chinese President 习近平 (Xi Jinping), "让命运共同体意识在周边国家落地生根" ("Let the Sense of Community of Common Destiny Take Root in Neighboring Countries"). Speech at the Meeting on China's Foreign Policy Toward Its Surrounding Areas, *Xinhua Net*, Beijing, October 25, 2013.

32 Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (王毅), "Searching for a Great Power Foreign Policy with Chinese Characteristics." *Decision (决策)*, Iss. 1 (2014); and "Embarking on the New Mission of China's Foreign Affairs," Keynote Speech at the symposium "New Starting Point, New Thinking, and New Practice—2013: China and the World," *World Affairs*, Iss. 1 (2014). Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪, former Chinese Foreign Minister), "The Trend of China's Diplomacy." *Beijing Review*, October 10, 2013.

33 Wang Yizhou (王逸舟), *Innovative Intervention—the New Direction for China's Diplomacy* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2011); Wang Yizhou, *Innovative Intervention—the Birth of China's Global Role* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2013); Yang Jiemian (杨洁勉), "The Key Areas of Innovation in China's Foreign Policy Thinking." *Southeast and South Asia Studies*, Iss. 3 (2013).

To Go or Not to Go?

It is more likely a *Go* for several reasons. First, China plays *Go* by default; and it has the capacity to lead Asia-Pacific affairs in the *Go* way anyway. Second, the United States has been playing *Go* by accident; it might as well play this game for real. Third, *Go* offers a win-win mindset; it is a good alternative for the US-China relations and the Asia-Pacific affairs.

For China

Chinese President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang are formidable *Go* players. Many Chinese analysts have used the *Go* analogy to characterize Xi's foreign policy conduct. Xi's China Dream rally, his frequent visits to the Chinese military, the diplomacy with Russia and other emerging great powers, the California Sunnylands meetings with President Obama, and many other initiatives, are put as *Go*-like stage-setting moves—"Xi has set a sound strategic stage for him to pursue China's mission in the next ten years."³⁴

However, Xi appeared to have made some mistakes in the early stage of the mid-game battle engagements. By taking on Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam simultaneously, Xi is engaging in a multi-battle situation that goes against China's strategic tradition of divide-and-rule, a key idea in *Go* and Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. In addition, China's assertive moves have pushed Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam to form a united front against China and "into the US arms," a situation China does not want to see.³⁵

A closely-related issue is that China has evidently misread the intent of the rebalance and wrongly blamed the United States for instigating China's disputant neighbors to intensify the fight over the disputed territories in the East and South China Seas.³⁶ This misperception is to a good extent responsible for getting China to become overly assertive toward the United States. It has increased the "trust deficit" between China and the United States.

On a different note, China may want to reexamine its turn to assertiveness. A noted observer of the US-China power transition put forward a different view on the typical behavior in the second stage of power transition. Instead of becoming assertive, this study argues, the

34 马小军 (Ma Xiaojun), "中国外交战略新布局" ("The New Opening Design of China's Diplomacy"), *学习时报* (*Study Times*), December 30, 2013; 阮宗泽 (Ruan Zongze), "赢得下一个十年: 中国塑造多支点外交" ("Winning the Next Ten Years: China Shapes Multi-Pillar Diplomacy"), *国际问题研究* (*International Issue Studies*), July 23, 2013; and 长江网 (Changjiang Net), "中国外交新布局: 底气, 骨气, 大气" ("The New Design in China's Diplomacy: Foundations, Assertions, and Orientations"), April 4, 2014.

35 Lindsay Murdoch, "China's Maritime Push Rattles a Region," *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 16, 2014; Victoria Macchi, "Asian Neighbors Push Back on China's Claims," *VOA*, July 2, 2014; and Howard W. French, "China's Dangerous Game," *The Atlantic*, October 13, 2014.

36 Most, if not all, Chinese analyses of the US strategic rebalance have held one-sidedly negative stands against the undertaking. Chinese officials have also openly blamed it for sending a wrong message to US allies and emboldening some of them to challenge China on territorial issues. The United States, however, has repeatedly informed Beijing that it welcomes the rise of a prosperous China and hopes it will become a responsible stakeholder of the international system. Instigating fights around China is not in the US policy guidebook, because the United States understands those fights can result in unwanted wars. See John R. Deni, *The Future of American Landpower: Does Forward Presence Still Matter? The Case of the Army in the Pacific* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2014) for a good discussion of the well-intended US strategic rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific.

rising power should continue to pursue a policy of prudence, focusing on its own development, keeping a low profile, and avoiding premature assertiveness and showdown with the system leader: if the rising power will eventually overtake the extant system leader, why should it ruin the opportunity by initiating a premature fight?³⁷ China, unfortunately, does not have the “luxury” to follow this advice. It has many unsettled territorial disputes and time is clearly not on China’s side, for Japan, Vietnam, and the other disputants have effective control over the disputed territories for close to four decades; the longer China waits, the less likely the Chinese feel they will be able to “recover them.”³⁸ That said, it is important for China to see how realistic its territorial claims are and to take a hard look at its strategy.

For the United States

China has long held that since it has shown signs of rising, the United States has sought to contain China. Many of the US moves around China, especially the strategic rebalance, have been perceived by the Chinese as attempts to encircle China (by the way, encirclement is a signature feature of *Go*). Since that is the case, the United States might as well play *Go* for real and make some well-intended *Go* moves on China. Moreover, US national leaders have arguably learned much from Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* and should be able to apply Sun Tzu’s tactics to deal with his Chinese descendants.

The US strategic rebalance is likely to continue regardless which party is in charge in Washington. To do it right in what may be called the “US Strategic Rebalance 2.0,” the United States should set the strategic rebalance priority straight—engaging the emerging great powers, especially China (not “including China”), should be at the top of the agenda.³⁹

In addition, the United States should follow the *Go* strategy to put stones inside China as new efforts to engage China. These future moves will take Black’s moves 11 and 13 in Figure 1 as stepping stones. In *Go* terms, those future (United States) moves will reduce the size of White’s (China’s) posturing. In geostrategic terms, those moves will be enhanced by US efforts to shape China’s rise. At this time, China is still open to US engagement and persuasion. Washington should seize the opportunity to engage Beijing before that window of opportunity slips away.

A Win-Win Solution

Whether China and the United States play chess or *Go* in the Asia-Pacific is not a trivial matter. Chess is a force-on-force game that relies heavily on maneuver of pieces with different values and capabilities. Moreover, chess is a zero-sum game in that there is usually only one winner (as shown in Figure 3), though it sometimes ends in a draw. The

37 Steve Chan, *China, the US, and the Power-Transition Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2008). This is perhaps the best critique and analysis of the power transition theory since the theory was put forward by Organski in 1958.

38 China has always held that the disputed territories are “stolen properties” from China by the colonial powers and Japan and China has the right to recover them. Whether China can do so or not is a different issue; Chinese always use the term of “收复” (“recover”) to characterize their position on the disputed territories.

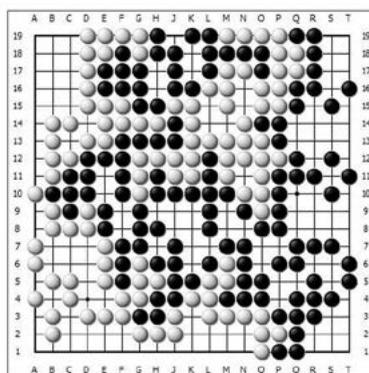
39 Michael J. Green and Nicholas Szechenyi, eds., *Pivot 2.0* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 2015).

implication of this aspect is very problematic in the context of US-China relations. If guided by the mindset of chess, China and the United States would seek a clear victory over the other. The price would be unattainable and unbearable.

Go, however, is a non-zero-sum game. The game ends when both players agree that there is no more profitable or destructive moves possible, or sensible, and with passes by both players. In a game between two compatible players, both gain sizeable territories and the winner usually has only a small advantage at the end. The finished *Go* game shown in Figure 3, for instance, is a typical one: Black has won by only 3 stones.



Zero-sum?
Last one standing



Source: David Lai, *Learning from the Stones* (2004)

Win-win?
Black won by 3 stones

Figure 3. Chess and *Go* End Games

During the *Go* game, the two sides do destroy each other's forces. However, most of the destruction is limited to the battlegrounds; the overall game moves on. One-sided wins and catastrophic losses do happen, but most of these outcomes occur with mismatched players. Between two well-matched players, close games are the rule.

The implication of this aspect is very significant. If the United States and China were to play *Go*, the two nations should bear in mind they need not eliminate each other. China should guard against the temptation to uproot the United States and create a new world order altogether.⁴⁰ For its part, the United States should pay more attention to engagement with China.

The United States and China are the two most powerful and influential nations in the Asia-Pacific Region, and their relationship is a defining factor in the area's affairs. If they can share a vision for the betterment of the region (and the world eventually), all nations will benefit. If, however, the two get into a zero-sum game, all in this region will have to pick sides and suffer.

⁴⁰ There are already Chinese attempts to the shaping of a different world order. David Lai, "Reluctant Accommodations" in *The United States and China in Power Transition*, 86-96.

China's "Power Projection" Capabilities

Thomas M. Kane

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ABSTRACT: This article examines China's ability to influence conflicts beyond its immediate area through both conventional and unorthodox means. Decision-makers and intelligence analysts at all levels should note America's influence within the Pacific region is becoming increasingly linked to its influence in Africa, the Middle East, and other areas of interest to rising East Asian powers. For the United States to maximise its strategic capabilities, it would need to maintain a robust military presence in all these regions.

The United States has compelling reasons to maintain a commanding military presence in the Western Pacific. This has been apparent since US Commodore Lawrence Kearney's timely intervention to secure American trading privileges with China at the close of the first Opium War, 1839-1842. Nevertheless, at a time when the United States is moving an increasing proportion of its military assets to the Far East as part of a so-called "rebalance" to Asia, those with an interest in strategic affairs do well to ask where the fulcrum of the metaphorical scales might be. If America shifts forces to the Far East at the same time as the emerging powers of that region significantly improve their ability to act where the United States is reducing its presence, Washington may find the challenge of engaging those powers more complicated than ever. Although this shift may remain the wisest course of action, military commanders and civilian decisionmakers would be wise to prepare for its complexities.

The emerging Asian power of greatest interest to the United States is undoubtedly the People's Republic of China (PRC). Happily for American leaders, persuasive scholarly and professional literature suggests the PRC's long-range power projection capabilities remain unexceptional. Such literature, however, rests on a relatively narrow understanding of power projection. This article reviews the PRC's ability to act in potentially violent conflicts beyond its borders and argues Beijing is pursuing a strategy which magnifies its influence beyond what its current military assets seem to allow.

US Army Field Manual 100-7 defines power projection as "the ability . . . to apply any combination of economic, diplomatic, informational, or military instruments of national power."¹ This article suggests China will be able to use civilian political activists, private security personnel, co-operative foreign forces and other non-traditional assets to replace "military instruments" in this mosaic.² Clearly, non-traditional assets

1 US Department of the Army, *Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations*, Field Manual 100-7 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, 1995).

2 Some material from this article was previously presented by the author in a paper titled "Beside the Obvious: The Beijing-Seoul Security Relationship Beyond the Korean Peninsula" at the 20th Anniversary of the Geneva-Agreed Framework "New Approaches on the Korean Peninsula: Theories and Strategy," Conference, Plaza Hotel, Seoul, October 10-11, 2014.

Dr. Thomas M. Kane is a senior lecturer at the University of Hull. He has published eight books on strategic matters, most recently *Strategy: Key Thinkers* (2013). Much of his work focuses on the rise of China, and he worked with Prof. Donovan C. Chau to edit the three-volume series *China and International Security: History, Strategy and 21st-Century Policy* (2014).

will only be available at times, in places, and under political circumstances which favor their use. Such assets will seldom be strong enough to defeat conventional armed forces of any size, but the PRC's current "economic" importance and "diplomatic" situation permit them to combat other non-traditional forces, such as criminal gangs, and even to play a symbolic role in disagreements among states. Field Manual 100-7 goes on to note "an effective power-projection capability serves to deter potential adversaries, demonstrates . . . resolve, and carr[y] out military operations anywhere in the world."³ This article suggests China's non-traditional forces will be useful for the first two of these purposes and may – in situations of interest to the PRC – even be valuable for the third.

The first section of this article reviews the argument that the PRC's long-range power projection capabilities are modest and easily quantifiable. A second section questions this argument, drawing on the "empty fortress" concept introduced to Western scholars and policy analysts by Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross in their early study of China's post-cold war security policy. A third section re-examines China's developing power projection capabilities taking a wider range of possibilities suggested by the "empty fortress" and related concepts into account. Finally, a conclusion returns to the issue of American policy, noting that although it may be sensible for the United States to base a greater proportion of its forces in East Asia, Washington's challenges remain global and it must maintain its own global power projection capabilities in order to meet them. US commanders and intelligence analysts at all levels must remain conscious of these points.

China's Power Projection Capabilities

Beijing frequently uses low levels of force in international conflicts and is acquiring hardware which will allow it to intervene on a larger scale. Indeed, those inclined toward an alarmist view of China's economic and military development could find the PRC aggressive. Nevertheless, the PRC's most violent interventions are now decades in the past, and even its newest equipment appears insufficient to sustain long-range military expeditions against resistance from a militarily capable state. For these reasons, scholars and military analysts commonly conclude that Beijing, despite its occasional blustering, will pursue conciliatory policies beyond its immediate vicinity. One analyst predicts China will scale back its involvement in Africa, while others question its ability to uphold its current policies even close to its own coastline as the disputed maritime territories in East Asia.⁴ If the PRC is unable to use so-called hard power in these places, one may assume any aspirations it might have to intervene in more distant regions such as Latin America are equally doomed.

The history of Chinese power projection is colorful. In 1974 and again in 1988, the PRC seized strategically valuable islands from Vietnam. The 1988 incident featured a naval battle in which Chinese

³ US Department of the Army, *Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations*.

⁴ Jonathan Holslag, "China's New Security Strategy for Africa," *Parameters* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 36; Jeffrey W. Hornung and Alexander Vuving, "Beijing's Grand Strategy Failure," *The National Interest*, January 10, 2014.

warships sank three Vietnamese vessels.⁵ More recently, the People's Republic has made a series of incursions into territory it disputes with the Philippines. Meanwhile, PRC forces have enforced Beijing's claims to other regions in the South China Sea by boarding non-Chinese ships and detaining their crews.⁶ Farther north, Chinese warships joust with their Japanese counterparts over the disputed pieces of land known as the Diaoyu Islands in China and the Senkaku Islands in Japan.

Beijing also dispatches forces to more distant conflicts. Since 2008, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has conducted anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Chinese naval officers have expressed an interest in acquiring land bases in the region, and in expanding their operations to the Gulf of Guinea.⁷ Meanwhile, as of early 2014, the PRC deploys ground troops and police in nine African countries.⁸ On the other side of the world, China has provided police for recent peacekeeping operations in Haiti.⁹ After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Chinese emergency personnel were among the first non-Haitian relief workers to arrive on the scene.

Since the 1988 clash, however, China's more provocative expeditions have rarely demonstrated any particularly formidable military capabilities. The Chinese forces responsible for challenging Filipino territorial claims, for instance, have often been fishermen. Their weapons have frequently been buoys used to mark disputed maritime areas as Chinese.¹⁰ The PRC has gone farther in asserting its claim to the islet known as Mischief Reef. Even there, however, China's actions have consisted of little more than covertly building structures on the disputed piece of land. Some of these structures may have had value as fortifications, but even that is unclear.

China and the Philippines challenged each other more directly in the Scarborough Shoal affair of 2012. That incident began when Chinese fishing vessels entered disputed waters, escalated when a Filipino warship attempted to arrest the alleged trespassers, and became a two-sided military confrontation when naval units belonging to the PRC came to the fishermen's defence. The fact that both sides openly deployed military forces is ominous. It is, however, worth noting that the Filipino vessel which initially attempted to apprehend the fishermen was a frigate.¹¹ Beijing challenged it with a pair of patrol boats.

There may have been a variety of reasons PRC commanders entered this confrontation so outgunned. It is possible that they failed

5 Jeff W. Benson, "South China Sea: A History of Armed Conflict," *USNI News*, June 20, 2012, updated February 5, 2013, <http://news.usni.org/2012/06/20/south-china-sea-history-armed-conflict>.

6 National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2013* (Tokyo: Japan Times, 2013), 228.

7 Andrew S. Erickson and Austin M. Strange, "Piracy's Next Frontier: A Role for China in Gulf of Guinea Security?" *The National Interest*, December 10, 2013; and Daniel J. Kostecka, "Places and Bases: The Chinese Navy's Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean," *Naval War College Review*, 64, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 59-78.

8 United Nations, "UN Mission's Summary Detailed by Country, 31 August 2014," http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2014/aug14_3.pdf.

9 Nicholas Thomas, "Interventions with Chinese Characteristics," in *China and International Security: History, Strategy and 21st-Century Policy*, Vol. 3, Donovan C. Chau and Thomas M. Kane, eds (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 290-291.

10 Stanley Meyer, *Incident at Mischief Reef: Implications for the Philippines, China and the United States* (Carlisle Barracks: US Army War College, 1996), 7.

11 National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2013*, 225.

to anticipate such an event, and the patrol boats were the only assets they had available. Nevertheless, the fact they were willing to respond in the way in which they did suggests they had little intention of resolving the dispute violently. Chinese leaders almost certainly intended to remind their Filipino counterparts the odds in a more general war would be somewhat different, but the actual confrontation remained largely symbolic.

The PRC has used military assets more openly in the Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute. This signifies a certain degree of boldness among Chinese policymakers, since Japan would appear to be a more dangerous opponent than the Philippines. Moreover, the bilateral defence treaty between the United States and Japan explicitly binds the United States to protect Japanese-held islands in the contested region from attack.¹² In 2010, Washington underscored its willingness to uphold this commitment by contributing ships, aircraft, and over 10,000 personnel to a joint US-Japan military exercise which simulated the defence of the disputed territory.¹³ Neither Japan's own capabilities, nor its close relationship with the United States, deters the PRC from dispatching warships and military aircraft to assert their presence near the contested zone. Moreover, since the late 1990s, Beijing has mounted such forays with increasing frequency.¹⁴

Again, however, China typically carries out its most provocative actions with vessels and personnel incapable of holding their own in an actual battle. Chinese warships have typically remained in the background during confrontations in the East China Sea. When Japanese authorities have accused the PLAN of going further, the Chinese have often denied it.¹⁵ Just as Chinese fishing vessels have mounted many of the PRC's challenges to Filipino territorial claims, putatively civilian Chinese political activists have often taken the lead in penetrating Japanese-claimed territory.¹⁶ One may reasonably speculate these activists enjoy at least tacit support from Beijing. However, Chinese authorities would be entitled to counter that Japanese and Taiwanese citizens have also sailed into disputed regions of the East China Sea to assert their nations' claims, indicating, at a minimum, this tactic is widespread.

Beijing has demonstrated its power projection capabilities more convincingly in disaster relief efforts, UN-backed peacekeeping missions and operations against pirates. China's anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Africa are particularly significant, since they prove PLAN warships can carry out military tasks for extended periods, thousands of miles from their home ports. Moreover, the PRC supports these patrols using newly-acquired logistical vessels.¹⁷ From an operational point of view, this allows PLAN personnel to develop their skills at using new equipment to carry out more ambitious operations, and from a political

12 Alessio Patalano, "The East China Sea, Maritime Strategy and Sino-Japanese Security Relations," in *China and International Security: History, Strategy and 21st-Century Policy*, Vol. 3, Donovan C. Chau and Thomas M. Kane, eds. (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 127.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 128.

15 "China Media: Japan Radar Lock," *BBC News*, March 19, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-21840243>.

16 "Japan Holds PRC Island Activists," *Taipei Times*, March 27, 2004, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2004/03/27/2003107943/1>.

17 Yves-Heng Lim, *China's Naval Power: An Offensive Realist Approach* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 82..

point of view, it signals Beijing's interest in doing so. Meanwhile, the US Department of Defence reports the PRC is reconfiguring its ground forces to make them easier to transport, and may build a new amphibious vessel within the decade.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the PRC has not acquired enough support ships to sustain sufficiently large naval forces to challenge more dangerous opponents. Since maritime transportation is indispensable for supporting expeditionary forces of any size and sea power is the surest means of protecting transport vessels from hostile action, the fact the PRC has such a limited ability to carry out long-range naval operations seems to constrain its overall power projection capability to a similar degree. The PRC's inability to sustain large naval forces at long range will, among other things, sharply restrict the role of its much-publicized new aircraft carrier. Beijing's People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) continues to acquire new refuelling and transport aircraft, which may allow the PRC to compensate for the logistical deficiencies of its maritime forces to some degree, but the numbers of new transport aircraft are also modest, and the overall point stands.¹⁹

Thus, the self-described Offensive Realist Yves-Heng Lim concludes, for the "foreseeable future, the primary task of the PLA Navy will continue to be defined at the regional level."²⁰ Jonathan Holslag, concludes the PRC will remain dependent on the good will of other powers to protect its overseas interests, and it will moderate its policies accordingly.²¹ Jeffrey W Hornug and Alexander Vuving add the PRC sometimes ignores the reality of its military weakness and goads distant opponents, which merely exposes its claim to great power status as hollow.²²

"Empty Fortress"

Beijing's signals of willingness to use force in external disputes do indeed appear to contain a substantial element of bluff. Scholars Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross would not be surprised. In 1997, they published an influential book suggesting that the rising China would compensate for its various weaknesses by falling back on the culturally hallowed strategy of defending so-called "empty fortresses."²³ Nathan and Ross have reiterated this idea in more recent works, and other authors have taken it up as well.²⁴ The phrase "empty fortress" comes from the classic Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, presumably written during the Ming Dynasty. In this story, the commander of a depleted army feigns brash confidence in order to scare off powerful

18 Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, 2014*, April 24, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_DoD_China_Report.pdf.

19 A former PLA colonel discusses the PRC's military airlift capabilities in Yue Gang, "PLA Must Protect China's Overseas Interests," *China.org*, April 24, 2013, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2013-04/24/content_28642897.htm.

20 Yves-Heng Lim, *China's Naval Power: An Offensive Realist Approach*, 165.

21 Holslag, "China's New Security Strategy for Africa," 36.

22 Hornung and Vuving, "Beijing's Grand Strategy Failure."

23 Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), passim.

24 Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell, *China's Search for Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), passim; Andrew Scobell, Ely Ratner, and Michael Beckley, *China's Strategy Toward South and Central Asia: An Empty Fortress* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2014), passim.

enemies. Those who find the analogy appropriate might note, in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the ruse worked.

As Hornug and Vuving point out, it is risky to bluff in direct confrontations with superior opponents. In more complex situations, one may use pretense with greater hope of success. Today's PRC enjoys an abundance of convenient complications. Not only do Beijing's circumstances provide it with opportunities to get away with overplaying its hand, they allow it to enter many of the conflicts which interest it the most with forces materially capable of following through on their threats.

Chinese leaders must anticipate situations in which they might wish to defy the will of powerful opponents. As previously noted, the PRC routinely challenges its East Asian neighbours. Sino-Indian relations are also tense. The United States has close relations with most of the PRC's rivals in these disputes, and may also oppose aspects of Beijing's policies for reasons of its own. Nevertheless, the PRC and its state opponents have consistently prioritized the cooperative aspects of their relationships over confrontation.

All of them have compelling reasons to continue doing so. Co-operation is normally a happier state of affairs than conflict, and it typically appears to be even when it is not. Moreover, China, America and the other Pacific Rim states rely upon one another economically to a degree which is exceptional even by twenty-first century standards. The costs of a lengthy crisis, let alone a war, could easily become ruinous for all concerned. The fact that the PRC is a nuclear power gives even its most belligerent state opponents an incentive to behave moderately.

Meanwhile, most of the PRC's occasional rivals have demonstrated a corresponding willingness to become its occasional allies. Vietnam's recent policies provide a typical example of such behavior. Vietnam and China contest ownership of potentially oil-rich regions of the South China Sea, and in 2012, Chinese authorities seized two Vietnamese fishing vessels and their crews in the disputed zone.²⁵ Events such as this undoubtedly contributed to the Vietnamese government's decision to forge a closer military relationship with the United States. Nevertheless, even as Hanoi explored the possibility of providing logistical support for American warships, it also welcomed opportunities to carry out joint naval operations with the PLAN.²⁶

Indeed, there are occasions in which the PRC can use its expeditionary capabilities – real and perceived – to strengthen its relations with well-established members of the international community, including the United States. Few would deny Beijing's efforts to provide disaster relief, support UN peacekeeping missions and suppress piracy contribute to the common good. Andrew Erickson of the US Naval War College and Austin Strange of the China Maritime Studies Institute argue that Washington should encourage the PRC to take a greater role in global security affairs in order to promote cooperation between Beijing and other great powers.²⁷ They are unlikely to be the only influential Western thinkers on security matters to take this position.

25 National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review 2013*, 228.

26 *Ibid.*, 229-30.

27 Erickson and Strange, "Piracy's Next Frontier: A Role for China in Gulf of Guinea Security?"

As long as these circumstances prevail, the PRC will be able to take advantage of its sailors' increasing experience with patrolling distant waters, its ground forces' increasing capability to deploy far from China and its air forces' increasing capacity to support long-range operations even while its logistical capabilities remain dangerously incomplete. At this time, the PLAN is unlikely to find itself in a position in which it must defend expeditionary forces' lines of communication from hostile navies. Indeed, even the PRC's bolder actions seldom attract the level of diplomatic opposition a so-called rogue state might receive. To the contrary, when Beijing times its provocations wisely, it can use them to pressure potential opponents into accommodation.

The Scarborough Shoal affair reminds us that Beijing faces diplomatic risks when it takes strong positions in external disputes, but it also reminds us that some of the outcomes of such confrontations may well favor China. While the incident was in progress, Washington supported the Philippines.²⁸ Countries throughout Southeast Asia are actively developing security ties to the United States, and one may reasonably speculate the events of 2012 encouraged them to continue this process with a renewed sense of urgency. Nevertheless, commentators for Japan's National Institute for Defence Studies suggest that the Scarborough Shoal incident also revealed limits to Washington's willingness to confront China.²⁹ Manila subsequently offered a cool response to suggestions that it might permit US armed forces to make greater use of Filipino territory and the same commentators interpret this as an attempt to compensate for the combination of Chinese assertiveness and American vacillation by placating the PRC.³⁰

Nonetheless, even in the forgiving international environment which Beijing currently enjoys, there may be times when it actually wishes to fight. Beijing may, for instance, need to protect its economic interests in war-torn regions. The PRC may wish to protect its supporters in other parts of the world, and to command the kind of influence which states achieve by offering such protection. Once again, the fact the PRC is developing some of the capabilities it needs for long-range operations is relevant, even others remain lacking. Once again, the fact that the PRC is developing a reputation for boldness may enhance the psychological impact of its actions.

Layers of Chinese Capability

Moreover, Beijing cultivates indirect means to apply force in places far from China. Often, other states with greater access to the areas in question may be willing to act on the PRC's behalf. When official forces are inadequate or unavailable, the PRC may supplement them using politically or financially motivated civilian organisations. A 2014 article in *China Daily* describes how Chinese energy companies operating in Iraq defend their assets using "three 'layers'" of security, with Iraqi government security forces offering "wide-ranging protection," police

28 National Institute for Defense Studies, *East Asian Strategic Review* 2013, 227.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 228.

operating under direct corporate control guarding worksites and armed Chinese nationals providing “the innermost cover.”³¹

This arrangement appears reasonable. Other firms based in other countries rely on similar types of protection. The *China Daily* article is significant, however, because it confirms that Chinese corporate managers in a strategically critical industry view assets nominally under the control of other countries’ governments as “layers” of their own security establishment. One may assume they will use similar multinational combinations of state and private forces elsewhere when it suits their purposes, and other PRC-based concerns, including the government, will do the same. The fact China’s largest petroleum companies either are, or recently were, state-owned reinforces the hypothesis that the PRC’s political leadership recognizes the various “layers” of proxy forces as instruments of foreign policy.

The PRC is expanding its access to potential proxies. Scholar Steven Childs illustrates one aspect of Beijing’s quest for overseas supporters with his 2014 network analysis of patterns in Chinese exports of military hardware. Once, Childs notes, Beijing’s arms trading policies focused on generating income to support its own defense industrial base.³² Today, he finds, it seems increasingly interested in selling military hardware to a wider range of states, even when its new trading relationships are not particularly profitable.³³ Childs also finds Beijing’s new customers tend to be located in areas which are rich in natural resources, or which are, for other reasons, politically important to China.³⁴

Childs infers Beijing has restructured its dealings to emphasise the goal of establishing closer ties to strategically valuable partners.³⁵ As Childs notes, a body of academic research confirms arms providers gain influence over their customers’ security policies.³⁶ One might also observe this method of cultivating allies has the potential to increase interoperability between forces from the importing and exporting states. This interoperability facilitates combining various types of organizations from various countries concerned in “layers.” The PRC also actively pursues joint military exercises with states throughout the developing world, and this activity serves similar purposes.³⁷

The deepest layer of forces protecting China’s oil interests in Iraq consists of civilian Chinese security guards. Beijing enjoys expanding access to these assets as well. As recently as 2006, researchers Allison Stanger and Mark Eric Williams note the PRC had virtually no domestic private military companies (PMCs) and would be unlikely to “sanction

31 “Concern Surrounds Chinese security forces in Iraq,” *China Daily*, June 24, 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014-06/24/content_17612002.htm.

32 Steven J. Childs, “Sino-American Global Security Strategy: A Network Perspective,” in *China and International Security: History, Strategy and 21st-Century Policy*, Vol. 3, Donovan C. Chau and Thomas M. Kane, eds. (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 187.

33 *Ibid.*, 201.

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, 187.

36 *Ibid.*

37 The PRC’s Ministry of Defence discusses its policies on multinational training exercises in some depth in its 2013 White Paper. See “Safeguarding World Peace and Regional Stability” in *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, 2013), http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/WhitePapers/2013-04/16/content_4442756.htm.

[their] development.”³⁸ This was, in fact, misleading even at the time. At least one PRC-based firm had allegedly been recruiting veterans of the People’s Armed Police and the Chinese military’s special forces to provide a worldwide bodyguard service since 2004.³⁹ Since then, China’s private security industry has expanded dramatically, in size, visibility, and the range of international operations which it routinely undertakes.⁴⁰ Since Stanger and Williams were correct to suggest this industry could not exist in the PRC without state approval, and equally correct to note Beijing “jealously” guards its military assets, including intangible resources such as “strategies and skill sets,” one may infer the Chinese government expects these private security firms to be useful and is confident it can control them.

Moreover, Beijing will often find growing populations of Chinese people in the places which interest it most. Chinese firms operating abroad tend to take employees with them, even in labor-intensive industries. An estimated 847,000 Chinese nationals worked for PRC-based companies outside China in 2012.⁴¹ The total number of Chinese expatriates is far larger. One report suggests over one million Chinese nationals currently live in Africa alone, up from perhaps 100,000 at the end of the 1990s.⁴² This increase is in addition to the conservatively estimated 35,000,000 *haiwai huaren* (overseas Chinese) living throughout Asia and the Americas, who typically hold citizenship in the states where they reside but maintain varying levels of political and economic involvement with their ancestral country.⁴³

From a diplomatic perspective, this diaspora offers Beijing a mixed blessing. The greater the size of any population, the greater the frequency with which members will fall into various forms of embarrassment, whether innocently, accidentally, or through genuine misdeeds. In situations where public opinion in any of the countries concerned might matter, Beijing may find many people hold the Chinese state and Chinese corporations responsible for such incidents, whatever their cause. Beijing has publically accepted responsibility to protect Chinese citizens living abroad from the assorted risks associated with living in other countries, and this may not always be easy or convenient for China.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the existence of the Chinese diaspora broadens Beijing’s options for influencing external disputes. At a minimum, it provides the PRC’s leadership with a pretext for involving its country in any region where substantial numbers of Chinese people reside. Not

38 Allison Stanger and Mark Eric Williams, “Private Military Corporations: Benefits and Costs of Outsourcing Security,” *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, 2, no. 1, (Fall/Winter 2006): 14-15.

39 Andrew Erickson and Gabe Collins, “Enter China’s Security Firms,” *The Diplomat*, February 21, 2012.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Xan Rice, “China’s Economic Invasion of Africa,” *The Guardian*, February 6, 2011.

43 The figure of 35,000,000 comes from the Chinese embassy in the United States and is based on data from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, see *CASS Report: Number of Overseas Chinese Up to 35 MLN* (Washington, DC: Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America), <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/qwqz/t297510.htm>. Chinese media sources report a figure of 50,000,000, see “Reforms Urged to Attract Overseas Chinese,” *Xinhua*, March 11, 2012, reprinted by *China.org.cn*, http://www.china.org.cn/china/NPC_CPPCC_2012/2012-03/11/content_24865428.htm.

44 “New Situation, New Challenges and New Missions,” in *The Diversified Employment of China’s Armed Forces* (Beijing: Information Office of the State Council, 2013), http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/WhitePapers/2013-04/16/content_4442756.htm.

only may the PRC act to protect Chinese expatriates against imminent danger, former PLA officer Yue Gang suggests Beijing may legitimately use military force to deter such threats before they materialize, presumably through preemptive action.⁴⁵ There may be circumstances in which the PRC can call on at least a fraction of the diaspora for various forms of action. Mao-era radicals repeatedly attempted to mobilise the *haiwai huaren* against the Indonesian regime, and putatively civilian Chinese activists continue to play a central role in the PRC's territorial disputes, which suggests meaningful numbers of Chinese citizens are currently prepared to take risks for what they perceive as patriotic causes, with or without formal state support.⁴⁶ When large numbers of Chinese overseas workers find themselves under threat, one may reasonably speculate PRC security forces will be able to organize them to help provide for their own protection, if only through unarmed vigilance.

Conclusion

In summary, the PRC presents itself as a nation with global interests. Its combination of traditional and non-traditional power projection assets will frequently allow it to act upon those interests. Although this improvisational approach to expeditionary warfare cannot be as reliable as one sustained by robust air and naval forces, it compels the rest of us to take Beijing's position seriously. Thus, China can, and quite possibly will, use its non-traditional assets to persuade, prop up – and pressure – weaker political actors in areas such as Africa, South Asia, Central Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East in much the same way as it has historically influenced the smaller states of East and Southeast Asia. When terrorists, criminals, insurgents, and violent protesters threaten its interests, it will be increasingly capable of resisting them, and also of claiming a role in shaping any international response. Moreover, as the PRC develops its armed forces, one may reasonably expect it to use them to consolidate whatever influence it gains with its current mix of capabilities.

Happily for all concerned, China's interests and those of other powerful nations such as the United States will often be the same. This is one of the reasons the PRC is relatively free to exploit non-traditional approaches to power projection, and it is also a reason American leaders may feel relatively safe in permitting their Chinese counterparts to do so. Nevertheless, Americans in particular should be aware reducing their own presence in areas of interest to Beijing, will increase their reliance on the same indirect and implied means of projecting influence the PRC must depend on. Those who hope to use such methods to affect the outcome of a dispute will often find it necessary to take positions which they may be reluctant to back up.

This possibility in itself is worrisome, since a world in which two powers who occasionally find themselves at odds must both base a measurable proportion of their diplomacy on bluster is not necessarily a safer one. Moreover, America's strategy in East Asia is, to quote US Pacific Command (PACOM) commander Samuel J. Locklear III, one

45 Yue Gang, "PLA Must Protect China's Overseas Interests," *China.org.cn*, April 24, 2013, http://www.china.org.cn/opinion/2013-04/24/content_28642897.htm.

46 Thomas M. Kane, *Chinese Grand Strategy and Maritime Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 123, citing C.Y. Chang, "Overseas Chinese in China's Policy," *China Quarterly*, No. 82 (June 1980): 302.

of “strengthen[ing] alliances and partnerships, maintain[ing] an assured presence in the region, and effectively communicat[ing] our intent and resolve.”⁴⁷ To achieve these objectives, America not only needs to be able to use force when necessary, it needs for others to perceive it has this ability. For those who wish to take their enemies by surprise, the fact indirect means are often subtle can make them particularly useful; but for those who wish to maintain a reputation for strength and reliability, it is more likely to limit their utility.

This article has argued the PRC’s reliance on indirect means has allowed outside observers to underrate China’s capabilities, and those who hope to communicate resolve must strive to avoid being underrated. Consequently, US planners need to remain conscious that America’s prestige in East Asia is likely to be partially dependent on America’s perceived presence in regions where East Asian powers themselves are active, and that for the PRC in particular, this area is expanding. Samir Tata persuasively argued for the US to “counterbalance” Beijing, it must maintain robust capabilities in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.⁴⁸ As the PRC’s interests and activities become increasingly global, one will be able to make a similar case for maintaining US capabilities in Africa, Central Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere. Even when US leaders determine it is in America’s interest to support China – and this may often be the case – they may find it useful to have the means to do so actively.

For senior policymakers, this may seem like a familiar and impossible dilemma. No nation has the resources to be as strong as it might like everywhere it might like. Strategy consists largely of choosing priorities, and admitting that one’s choices can never be ideal. Nevertheless, PACOM commanders do well to co-ordinate their plans with other regional commands. Since the global politics of US-Asian relations are complex, and important events may take place in areas where relatively few American personnel are present, lower-level commanders and civilians representing the US government (whether formally or not) throughout the world should understand they may play a role in achieving America’s policy objectives in the Pacific region. They may be the ones to assess situations in areas where the PRC is becoming involved, and the relationships they have formed with their local counterparts may often be what permits America to respond. Although the overall decision to reallocate a greater proportion of American assets to the Pacific region may well be the wisest one, this article suggests US civilian authorities and military commanders should be aware of the compromises they are making, and should craft their policies at lower levels to engage China as effectively outside East Asia as possible.

47 US Pacific Command Strategy, <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMStrategy.aspx>.

48 Samir Tata, “Recalibrating American Grand Strategy: Softening US Policies Toward Iran In Order to Contain China,” *Parameters* 42, no. 4/43, no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2013): 49.

China's Concept of Military Strategy

Timothy L. Thomas

ABSTRACT: China's concept of military strategy is very different from that of the United States. This article examines the various components of the strategic thought of the People's Liberation Army and how its theory of strategy can be applied in contemporary times. Among other things, the article offers US analysts a template for confronting Chinese strategy.

There is an American joke that perfectly explains what Mao referred to as the "essence" of Chinese military strategy:

Vinnie is in jail. His father writes to tell him he wishes Vinnie were home now to dig up the tomato garden. Vinnie writes back not to do that, since that is where he buried the bodies. The next day the FBI digs up the ground and finds no bodies. A day later Vinnie writes, 'under the circumstances, Dad, that was the best I could do.'

Yet very few Americans would recognize in this joke a connection to Chinese military strategy, since the United States view of strategy is so different. Vinnie made someone (the FBI) do something for the agency (look for the bodies) that they were actually doing for someone else (Vinnie and his dad). To get someone to do something for himself that he thinks is in his own interests, but which is actually in your interests, is the essence of strategy, according to Mao.

The United States Armed Forces, according to *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, defines strategy as "a prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives."¹ This definition is more kinetic than potential (the ideas having been generated) and it envisions employing power as the means to achieve an objective. The definition restricts itself to the use of diplomacy, information, military, and economic means as the employment preference.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China appears to define strategy more broadly and analytically than the US military. The PLA definition has several components as part of its comprehensive nature. While the official definition has changed little over the past twenty years, internal discussions have surfaced about information-age strategy. As a result, Chinese strategy is now a mix of the old and new and, from this author's vantage point, includes the following:

1. Official definitions highlighting Chinese strategy's comprehensive

¹ US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, as amended through January 30, 2011), 350.

Timothy L. Thomas is an analyst at the Foreign Military Studies Office a TRADOC G-2 element at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He retired from the US Army as a Lieutenant Colonel in the summer of 1993. Mr. Thomas received a B.S. from West Point and an M.A. from the University of Southern California. He was a US Army Foreign Area Officer who now specializes in Chinese and Soviet/Russian studies.

- nature and use of analytical judgment (planning and the use of strategic guidelines; remnants from the past play a prominent role)
2. An analytical thought process seemingly more prominently Marxist than before. It examines the strategic environment through the lens of objective reality and applies subjective judgment to manipulate that environment to one's advantage
 3. The use of stratagems integrated with technological innovations. This hybrid combination is paired with specific aspects of an enemy's "intelligence-judgment-decision" process to induce the enemy to make decisions as one would expect
 4. The constant search for a strategic advantage or *shi*, which is also a goal of the Chinese strategic game of *Weiqi* or *Go*. *Shi* is sought everywhere, whether it be with the use of forces, electrons, or some other aspect of the strategic environment
 5. The objective of deceptively making someone do something ostensibly for himself, when he is actually doing it for you.

Each of these items is explained below, along with a few comments from retired PLA officers who specialized in strategy. Together, these various elements of the PLA's strategic template offer analysts a method through which to understand and respond to the Chinese approach to, for example, the cyber environment or the South China Sea. Without the template, analysts are prone to mirror-image Western views of the strategic environment, and thereby develop improper responses to PLA activities.

Over its five thousand year history Chinese leaders have focused on strategic concepts at great length. The 1997 *Chinese Military Encyclopedia*, for example, defines strategy in association with other concepts (strategic cover, strategic concept, strategic target, strategic thought, etc.) some one hundred times.² No other topic has had as many entries, not even the entries for Mao (only four or five) or People's War. The 2001 book, *The Science of Military Strategy*, even divided strategists into four groups: power and stratagem, technology and skill, dispositions and capability, and yin and yang.³ Western analysts do not consider such subgroups. Thus, a multitude of ideas associated with strategic thinking reflect the PLA's historic and focused approach to the topic.

Official PLA definitions of strategy, viewed here chronologically, have varied little over the past twenty years. The first source referenced is the 1991 *PLA Officer's Handbook*. It defines two related concepts, the science of military strategy and military strategy. The former is "the study of the doctrines of the creation and application of rules of stratagems and military strategies in military confrontation."⁴ It studies how to use ingenuity to gain advantages at the smallest costs.⁵ Strategy is "a general reference for stratagems and military strategy" while military strategy "is the concrete manifestation of the effect of the subjective activities

2 *Chinese Military Encyclopedia* (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 1997).

3 Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, eds, *The Science of Military Strategy*, English Edition (Military Science Publishing House, 2005), 5. The Chinese edition was published in 2001.

4 *Chinese People's Liberation Army Officer's Handbook* (China: Qingdao Publishing House, June 1991), 197. Dr. Gary Bjorge of the Combat Studies Institute of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas graciously made his *PLA Handbook* available for use.

5 Ibid.

of people on material strength.”⁶ Subjective guidance, the book notes, plays a decisive role in formulating and implementing strategy.⁷

The 1997 *Chinese Military Encyclopedia’s* definition of strategy is as follows:

The general plans for planning and directing war situations as a whole. That is, based on analysis and assessment of the international situation and the various political, military, economic, scientific, technological, and geographical factors of the two hostile parties, scientifically calculating the occurrence of war and its development, formulating strategic policies, strategic principles, and strategic plans, planning war preparations, and all of the principles and methods followed while directing the implementation of war.⁸

Here the international situation represents objective reality, while the calculating phase would reflect the subjective initiative of the analyst. A proper assessment of the situation and a calculation of a war’s probability (risk assessments?) are made, and plans and principles are integrated to produce an outcome.

One key aspect of modern China’s analytical judgment process is its reliance on Marxist thought. This focus even appears to have superseded some historical legacies, if the authors of the 2007 book, *On Military Strategy*, are correct. They write that, despite the extraordinary richness of China’s ancient strategic legacy, when speaking from a political perspective, the mission and tasks it bears do not represent the interests of the masses of the people. They claim the Communist Party of China has thoroughly altered the political nature of China’s military strategy of several millennia, making it fully representative of the basic interests of all China’s people.⁹ However, as will be noted later, much PLA thought is still invested in Sun Tzu.

Chapter three of *On Military Strategy* is titled, “The Objective Environment of Military Strategy.” It is perhaps the book’s most important section, since it directly explains the elements of strategy. Military strategy is defined as consisting of planning and guidance for the situation of military struggles as a whole, which is similar to official definitions. The strategic environment is defined as:

...the important foundation upon which military strategy is dependent for its formulation, the extrinsic conditions upon which military strategy is dependent for its implementation, and the arena upon which the strategic directors are dependent for displaying their talent in planning and skill in directing.¹⁰

The strategic environment is comprehensive—it includes politics, economics, military affairs, science and technology, geography, etc. and thus represents objective reality.

Authors Fan and Ma state, categorically, “The relationship between the strategic environment and military strategy is a relationship between objective reality and subjective guidance. Properly understanding and

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 198.

8 *Chinese Military Encyclopedia*, Volume 3, 699.

9 Fan Zheng Jiang and Ma Bao An, *On Military Strategy* (Beijing: National Defense University Publishing House, 2007), 43.

10 Ibid., 59.

analyzing the strategic environment is the prerequisite for properly formulating and implementing military strategy.”¹¹ Properly assessing the strategic environment will expose the advantages and disadvantages each side possesses and offer ways for subjective initiatives to implement strategy and create advantages.

Strategic decision-making is accurate when the guidelines it formulates are in line with objective reality, the authors note.¹² The size of combat objectives chosen by decision-makers will determine the length of a war, its scale, and its intensity. Favorable strategic situations must be created.¹³ This is an imperative in wars fought under informatized conditions, in which the tempo of war is accelerating; victory will not come in the later stages of a war, but rather in a war’s opening salvo. Whichever side is able to create a key opening engagement in its favor will win the initiative in the overall strategic situation. Therefore, creating favorable conditions before battle, such as establishing a tactical or strategic advantage, is extremely important.¹⁴

Technology, the authors add, provides new carriers for displaying the true and the false, enabling deception in new forms.¹⁵ Thus, strategy, when tied to modern technology, can elevate traditional strategic tricks to new levels. They also claim system-sabotage will continue to be a key characteristic of modern warfare; C4ISR components will continue to be the main targets of attack; offensive operations will be the main measure through which victory is seized; and capturing and maintaining control will remain an overall focus for combat guidance.¹⁶ Information operations will enable the achievement of strategic objectives “directly met through campaign and even tactical actions in the practice of war.” Thus, the authors appear to be altering the Marxist dictum that “technology determines tactics,” changing it to imply that “technology now can determine strategy.” For example, this could occur through a massive supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) attack that debilitates a nation’s electronic infrastructure.

Recent testimony by Admiral Michael Rogers, the US Director of the National Security Agency, should concern all Americans. The *Wall Street Journal* reported:

Admiral Rogers highlighted several threats emerging that will become significant problems in the coming year. At the top of his list are national-states, including China and ‘one or two others,’ that US officials maintain are infiltrating the networks of industrial-control systems, the electronic brains behind infrastructure like the electrical grid, nuclear power plants, air traffic control and subway systems.¹⁷

China employs stratagems, which are thought processes designed to mislead enemy perceptions, thinking, emotion, and will, to manipulate an adversary to one’s advantage. The PLA relies on the subjective competency of commanders to properly employ stratagems and manipulate

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., 149.

13 Ibid., 251.

14 Ibid., 292-295.

15 Ibid., 290.

16 Ibid., 266, 278, 285.

17 Siobhan Gorman, “NSA Chief Warns of ‘Dramatic’ Cyberattack,” *The Wall Street Journal*, November 21, 2014, A2.

objective reality to its advantage. Interestingly, the PLA studies other nations' "intelligence-judgment-decision" processes and then decides what stratagem could be employed against this process to make the system work to friendly (Chinese) advantage.¹⁸ Stratagem developers try to do everything possible to control an opponent's method of intelligence processing analysis. US analysts should often ponder how the PLA may be interpreting the US intelligence cycle to find areas for exploitation. The overall goal of this Chinese action (put the stratagem developer in sync with a specific nation's intelligence cycle) is to "induce" the enemy to make decisions the Chinese want.

Stratagem development under information conditions most likely will involve complex or multiple stratagems incorporating science and information devices; a separate unit instead of individuals would be needed to do the designing. The variables are so great the unintended consequences of an action would require gaming. The idea of complex stratagems reminds one of the Chinese book, *Unrestricted War*. The book's authors recommended the development of cocktail warfare, which they termed a new concept of weapons (as opposed to "new concept weapons," which are directed energy, lasers, etc.) involving the integrated use of several of the 24 methods of war (deterrence, financial, electronic, networks, etc.) at one time.¹⁹ Similarly, in 2008 Dai Qingmin recommended the same idea of simultaneously paralyzing an opponent's financial, transportation, telecommunications, and power system in order to introduce deterrence.²⁰ Complex stratagem use would do the same, integrating several stratagems to produce an effect. For example, with information technology, a stratagem such as "kill with a borrowed sword" (use of a surrogate) could be combined with "make noise in the east, attack in the west" (fake in one direction with the surrogate, attack somewhere else).

Shi is the goal of strategy's objective and subjective aspects: to create and attain an advantage over an opponent after evaluating a situation and influencing it. *Shi* can be found in chapters one, five, six, and ten of the ancient Chinese military classic, *The Art of War*. Chapter six notes that "the military is without fixed shi and without lasting form," implying flexibility in the attainment of a strategic advantage.

Michael Pillsbury, one of America's foremost authorities on the PLA and author of several comprehensive works on Chinese military thought, has uncovered several PLA materials discussing *shi*. He noted:

- *Shi* assesses your side's potential, the enemy side's potential, weather, and geography to identify the moment in a campaign when an advantage can be gained over an opponent. *Shi* is a certain moment in the campaign when you could take the advantage from the enemy;
- *Shi* is created in five ways, through maneuver, posture, position, psychology, and calculations. The timing and speed of creating *shi* in war

18 Li Qi, "Campaign Stratagem Application under High-Tech Conditions," in Zhang Xing Ye and Zhang Zhan Li, *Campaign Stratagems* (Beijing: National Defense University, 2002).

19 Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Panama City, Panama: Pan American Publishing Company, 2002), 21. This work does not represent official PLA military doctrinal writings, as do the majority of the other sources noted in the text.

20 Dai Qingmin, *New Perspectives on War* (Beijing: PLA Publishing House, 2008), 99.

has changed under conditions of high-tech warfare;

- *Shi* is the moment when it becomes apparent one side can win the war ;
- *Shi* according to the Tang founder used psycho-shi, geo-shi, and shaping-shi;
- *Shi* can be created with stratagems.²¹

A number of other Chinese sources discuss the concept. The Chinese book *Campaign Stratagems* defines *shi* as the combination of the friendly situation, enemy situation, and the environment; the integrated situation that has an impact on the effective performance of military strength; and the sum of all factors impacting the performance of the operational efficiency of both sides.²² The *Chinese Encyclopedia of Philosophical Terms* explains *shi* as “availing oneself of advantage to gain control, a natural interest.”²³ Chapter five (*Shi*) in Chinese General Tao Hanshang’s translation of *The Art of War* translates *shi* as “posture of the army,” which implies that it is seeking advantage. Tao notes that *shi* is “the strategically advantageous posture before a battle that enables it to have a flexible, mobile, and changeable position during a campaign.”²⁴

Thus, the complexity of the term *shi* is apparent from the definitions. Posture of the army, strategic advantage, a strategic configuration of power, the alignment of forces, and availing oneself of advantage to gain control were all used to define *shi*. Whether or not *shi* is the key and defining idea of the *Art of War*, as Roger Ames contends is hard to ascertain; he defines *shi* as strategic advantage. Surely, however, his point is worthy of consideration. Certainly, anyone reading Sun Tzu’s classic will note he often repeated the concept of “attaining an advantage,” especially when determining whether or not to act.

The Chinese strategic game of *Go* is all about attaining a strategic advantage. David Lai has published one of the clearest explanations of the game and its meaning. He notes, in agreement with the points made above, “Both players have tried to develop an advantageous situation that is consistent with Sun Tzu’s third aspect [which is about developing a favorable situation] of *shi*.”²⁵

With regard to the essence of strategy, Mao would approve of Vinnie’s response to his father’s letter. Years earlier, Mao provided a similar analogy when he described three ways to make a cat eat a hot pepper: stuff it down the cat’s throat, disguise the pepper by wrapping it in cheese, or grind the pepper up and spread it on the cat’s back. In the

21 This information was taken from a slide presentation by Michael Pillsbury, sources cited are as follows: He Diqing, *Campaign Course Materials*, (AMS 2001); Yue Lan, “High Tech Warfare and Contemporary Military Philosophy,” *Liberation Army Daily Press*, 2000; Guo Shengwei, *Deng Xiaoping’s Military Stratagems* (Central Party School, 2000); Zhang Wenru, *China’s Strategic Culture* (Beijing University Press, 1997); Li Bingyan, *Stratagem and Transformation*, 2004.

22 Zhang Xing Ye and Zhang Zhan Li, *Campaign Stratagems*.

23 Feng Qi, *Chinese Encyclopedia of Philosophical Terms*, Revised Edition, (Shanghai: Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2001), 1355.

24 Tao Hanshang, *Sun Tzu’s Art of War: The Modern Chinese Interpretation*, trans. by Yuan Shibing (Sterling Innovation, 2007), 44, 124.

25 David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China’s Strategic Concept*, *Shi* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), 9.

latter case, the cat will lick itself, thinking it is doing something for itself when it is actually doing what you want. This is the essence of strategy.²⁶

Interestingly, this same concept is in *The Art of War*, yet scholars rarely refer to it as a key concept. Rather, winning without fighting, knowing the enemy and knowing yourself, and other such key phrases are usually underscored. In chapter six, Sun Tzu notes “how to make the enemy arrive of their own accord—offer them advantage.”²⁷ The enemy thinks it is doing something for itself, but it is actually doing what you want.

Retired PLA officers have made statements about the concept of strategy that are worthy of consideration. In 1994 Lieutenant General Li Jijun, Deputy Commandant of the Academy of Military Sciences at the time, noted that the new strategic situation or “new objective reality” will require new strategic thinking. He defined grand strategy as “the art and science of utilizing and strengthening the comprehensive power of a nation to realize long-term political goals. The philosophical thinking of the art of war is military dialectics, or military philosophy.”²⁸ In a 2002 article in *China Military Science* author Wu Chunqiu described grand strategy’s ties to the objective-subjective process. He noted that objective reality, in regard to strategy, is the state of the nation and the world, even cosmic space. This is the context within which the grand strategy decision-makers operate, the strategic environment. The outcome of a war depends not only on the objective material strength of the belligerents, but also on their subjective ability to employ it. It relates to the art of subjective guidance.²⁹

Li later wrote that those who formulate strategy do so “against the background of a specific social, historical, and cultural environment and tradition...therefore, in war direction, understanding the adversary’s ideological culture and strategic thinking method is as important as finding out the adversary’s military deployment.”³⁰ Friendly forces must continue to obtain knowledge “about the objective situation [that] not only exists prior to the establishment of the military plan but also exists after the establishment of the military plan.”³¹ Li warns against laying too much stress on previous experience, noting that tradition has a dual nature. It is both valuable for its historical wealth and a danger due to its tendency to exert historical inertia.³²

With regard to the art of war, Li writes that the use of stratagems and surprise involves the use of uncertainties that cause the adversary to make mistakes. In modern strategy, “such things as ‘ambiguous strategy,’ ‘association without forming alliances,’ ‘mixing negotiation with fighting,’ and keeping the status of ‘no war and no peace’ all belong to the

26 Li Bingyan, “Applying Military Strategy in the Age of the New Revolution in Military Affairs,” *The Chinese Revolution in Military Affairs*, ed. Shen Weiguang (New China Press, 2004), 2-31.

27 Tao Hanshang, *Sun Tzu’s Art of War: The Modern Chinese Interpretation*, 49.

28 Michael Pillsbury, editor, “Notes on Military Theory and Military Strategy,” by Li Jijun, in *Chinese Views of Future Warfare* (National Defense University Press, 1997), 222-224.

29 Wu Chunqiu, “Dialectics and the Study of Grand Strategy: A Chinese View,” *China Military Science*, No. 3 (2002): 146.

30 Li Jijun, “Military Strategic Thinking and Scientific Decision-making,” *China Military Science*, No. 1 (2006): 28-38.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

use of uncertainties in strategy.”³³ Acting in an irregular way and the use of uncertainties are “a conscious act of using stratagems.”³⁴ Li adds that there is no reason for the PLA to be as transparent as the West. Western nations use transparency as a way to demonstrate strength and impose deterrence. The PLA’s lack of transparency is a means of deterrence, since it becomes ambiguous and unpredictable for potential foes.³⁵

Shen Weiguang, the so-called father of information warfare in China, has noted that, while information and network security is an issue of technology, it is above all else an issue of strategy.³⁶ Some PLA generals, such as retired General Dai Qingmin, note reconnaissance activities have become the prerequisite for winning victory in war.³⁷ Dai, when he was on active duty and head of an important general staff department with responsibility for communications, noted a thorough reconnaissance strategy helps choose opportune moments, places, and measures not only to establish a strategic advantage, but also to “win victory before the first battle.”³⁸

Major General Li Bingyan, an expert in the theory and use of stratagems, compared and contrasted Chinese strategic thought with that of the West; he concluded Easterners have put more emphasis on strategy over the years, while the West has focused more on technology.³⁹ As a result, China must now combine technology with stratagems. He thus appears to support the view that technology now might determine strategy as well as tactics. Li writes that in ancient China strategists were heavily influenced by two publications, the *I Ching (Book of Changes)* and Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*. Regrettably, in Li’s opinion, this reliance led to total emphasis on trickery at the expense of the use of science and technology.⁴⁰ Li writes that the focus on strategy was related to the cultural traditions of the Chinese people. Stratagems are based on the doctrine of changes and change enables the use of strategy.⁴¹ When calculations are made to determine strategy, he added the following method was used:

How dangerous or favorable, broad or narrow, etc. the terrain is, make judgments on the use of terrain; based on those judgments about terrain, determine the holding capacity of the battlefield; based on the holding capacity, estimate the number of troops the two sides could commit. Through these repeated calculations, one can select a strategy.⁴²

Under contemporary conditions it would be interesting to apply this methodology to cyber terrain and calculate how a goal could be achieved when factors are adjusted for modern conditions.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Shen Weiguang, *Deciphering Information Security* (Xinhua Publishing House, July 2003), 26.

37 Dai Qingmin, *Direct Information Warfare* (National Defense University Publishing House, 2002), 96.

38 Ibid., 219-220.

39 Li Bingyan, “Emphasis on Strategy: Demonstrating the Culture of Eastern Military Studies,” *China Military Science*, No. 5 (2002): 80-85.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

In 2002, Zhang Xing Ye and Zhang Zhan Li edited the book, *Campaign Stratagems*. In the chapter titled, “Campaign Strategy and Objective Conditions,” the following is noted:

During the process of strategic formulation, the relationship between objective conditions and strategies, in terms of philosophy, is the relationship between the objective and the subjective. Objective conditions are the first position and strategy is the second position. Correct strategies come out of objective realities and reflect objective practices.⁴³

Colonel Xue Guo’an, Deputy Director of the Department of Strategic Studies at the PLA’s National Defense University, wrote on the topic of traditional strategic thought. First, Xue observed China’s agricultural civilization, where many factors were considered to ensure good crops, fostered macro views when considering strategy.⁴⁴ Second, he claimed experience in war allowed strategic planning to include manipulation and eventually the use of stratagems as the origin of strategic thinking.

Xue believes that at the strategic level Westerners appear to focus on power, whereas the Chinese focus on the use of stratagems. Stratagems must function in accord with the overall situation, be planned in advance to supplement limited power, and enable victory. China’s use of a “soft force” stratagem enables it to hide its intentions and avoid decisive battles; to ensure steady development and to reverse unfavorable situations; and to make friends with neighboring countries. China’s geographical location has created a need for stability and tranquility. Further, a soft force can lure an opponent into exhausting his actual strength, thereby changing the overall situational balance. War becomes a rivalry in stratagems (wisdom) over material resources.⁴⁵

Xue identified three problems with the PLA’s traditional thought. First, it is possible some treasure the classics too much, worshipping sages and imbedding a conservative approach that avoids innovation. Second, some attach great importance to doctrine and pay too little attention to science and technology. Strategists of ancient China almost totally ignored military technological factors. Finally, attaching too much importance to land power has come at the expense of sea power. As a result, China is only now catching up in the area of sea power.

Implications

In conclusion, the most relevant recommendation for US analysts is the imperative to study Chinese military strategy for two reasons: first, through an appreciation of the PLA’s strategic template, to be able to predict and counter their strategies; and second, to learn new ways to understand and apply strategy themselves. Strategy is an ever-evolving concept and should be studied closely for new approaches. Analysts should become familiar with the objective-subjective, stratagem, strategic advantage, and *shi* criteria that can be applied to political, economic, geopolitical, and military fields of study. For example, China’s view of cyber’s objective reality could be understood as knowing there are no rules and regulations to impede intrusive behavior, surrogates hide

43 Zhang Xing Ye and Zhang Zhan Li, *Campaign Stratagems*.

44 Xue Guo’an, “Characteristics of China’s Traditional Strategic Thought,” *China Military Science*, No. 3 (2010): 116-122.

45 Ibid.

sources of reconnaissance, and weak systems worldwide encourage penetrations. There is no reason to stop reconnaissance activities due to such a lucrative objective reality. Subjectively, packets of electrons can be used as stratagems. Open source Chinese links, for example, note that stratagems such as “looting a burning house” (and stealing property while the house is on fire [that is, weak security]) refers to the illegal use of system files.⁴⁶ Many other stratagems work in the same way.

Further, there may well be Chinese institutes in existence now which are studying campaign stratagems to manipulate US financial flows, or to create other disruptive situations, so as to influence the US military’s “intelligence-judgment-decision” paradigm. The United States and its allies must think in terms of the Chinese approach, looking at the strategic environment from the vantage point of disruptive stratagems. It is by understanding differences such as these that analysts will make more reasoned assumptions about Chinese and PLA behavior—and avoid mirror imaging.

There are several additional conclusions US analysts and strategic thinkers can draw from this study of Chinese strategy. First, how to study other nations’ approach’s to and views of strategy remains undervalued. Such analysis allows for an expansion of our comprehension of strategic thought beyond the concepts of prudent ideas or ends, ways, and means. Expanding our limits of strategic thought enables the absorption of a broader method of analysis. Second, clearly China’s ancient strategic thought has applicability even in the digital age. PLA strategy is not outdated and only limited to the thoughts of Sun Tzu and Mao. The use of packets of electrons as stratagems, for example, is a method of thought very seldom considered by US analysts. It combines the old with the new in ways we do not. Active and retired PLA officers continue to adapt and refine their strategic thinking. Third, the close scrutiny of other nations’ strategic theories is vital to unraveling and identifying their long and short term goals. As in cards, chess, *Go*, or other games, one must know what and how one’s rival thinks to develop effective counters. Finally, Chinese strategy is more analytical and holistic, by definition, than its US counterpart. The analysis includes politics, economics, military affairs, science and technology, geography, and other issues, resulting in a prism of thought known as comprehensive national power. The US definition of strategy in *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* is limited to just the four instruments of national power, diplomacy, information, military, and economics. The implication is China does grand strategy, while the US does something far less. Further, the People’s Republic of China has excelled at “how” to do strategy.

Thus, in summary, there are many sound reasons to study the strategic thought of China and other nations. US strategy has worked well through the ages, but as other nations adjust their strategic thought to conform to new input and a different geopolitical context, our strategists need to be aware of these developments and consider adjusting our thinking accordingly.

⁴⁶ Discussion with Mr. Scott Henderson, US expert on Chinese hackers and author of *The Dark Visitor*, a book on Chinese hackers. Mr. Henderson, who speaks Mandarin, accessed an open source Chinese link in 2008 to get this information.

China's Military Mercantilism

Christopher Bowen Johnston

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ABSTRACT: The People's Republic is a great power in search of a grand strategy. China's maritime adventurism reflects the fragmentation of foreign policy, and the coupling of commercial interests with military force. Without effective statecraft, PLA planning could all too easily become national policy. Creative US initiatives would help to salve historical grievances and reconcile China's disruptive ambitions with the world order.

The future of global security will be largely determined by China's response to the established international order. In recent years nationalist rhetoric, revisionist maritime borders and regular confrontation has undermined the party line of a "peaceful rise," and threatens to inveigle US forces. Why does China menace its neighbors at sea, and what should the United States do about it?

Most arguments concerning the role of China in the international system can be reduced to two broad theoretical perspectives. The first view is liberal institutionalist: China might indulge in populist nationalism, but is not historically expansionist. It remains committed to a peaceful rise within the current international framework. The second view is generally realist: China is bent on the aggressive accumulation of wealth, power and natural resources in a quest for regional hegemony - a return to the Middle Kingdom.

This article will advance a third argument: China has identified a path to national greatness without yet comprehending what the destination might look like. In the absence of a comprehensive national strategy or theoretical philosophy, military and mercantilist imperatives are unduly influencing Chinese statecraft at sea. This trend points to the disproportionate weight of state-owned enterprises and the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) in the execution of foreign policy.

Chinese ambitions are often served by increasing chaos and the erosion of international norms. But this course is unnecessarily dangerous, threatening to isolate potential allies, alienate Taiwan, and even trigger armed conflict with Japan. This course would enmesh the United States and cripple the global economy, potentially unleashing chaos within China.

The Chinese will determine their own destiny, but Washington should encourage Beijing to consolidate, not diminish the existing international system. This article will outline ways in which the United

Christopher Bowen Johnston is a fellow at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. In 2014 he graduated with distinction from the School of Foreign Service, where he studied the international relations and security of East Asia. Christopher is a Major in the Australian Army, with operational experience in Iraq and Afghanistan. An Indonesian linguist, he is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon and the University of Melbourne.

States could work with Australia and Japan towards this end by promoting international law, managing local conflict and reducing regional tensions.

The Liberal Institutional Argument

Liberal institutionalists are confident the existing order can accommodate rising powers without recourse to violence. According to John Ikenberry the contemporary system is open, integrated, and rule-based; with strong political foundations, meaning China is not compelled to overthrow the United States in order to realize national greatness. Moreover, nuclear weapons have made war among great powers unlikely. Today's world order is "hard to overturn and easy to join."¹

China's interest in adhering to international norms is based on three main principles:

1. The open market - China has generated enormous wealth from free trade,
2. The multilateral character of global institutions, which diffuse hegemony and can adapt to reflect evolution in the international order, and
3. The resilience of established rules and norms, which encourage unprecedented co-operation and shared authority.

Zheng Bijian generally endorses each of these points, noting other emerging nations have plundered their way to power by exploiting overseas resources through invasion, colonization, expansion, or even large-scale wars of aggression. He writes (in 2005) that China's emergence has been driven by capital, technology, and resources acquired through peaceful means, in accordance with the policies of Deng Xiaoping.²

This latter point is instructive. Deng shifted China away from Mao's predatory internal fixations towards a measured engagement with the outside world. In 1984 he created fourteen special economic zones to "welcome foreign investment and advanced techniques."³ He also initiated joint development projects with neighboring countries adjoining the South China Sea. Joint exploration was premised on the deferral of territorial dispute. Parties agreed to postpone questions of sovereignty in order to exploit natural resources for mutual benefit.

Yet Deng's co-operative strategy has been overtaken by violence and confrontation. During a limited war in 1988 Chinese gunboats sank a Vietnamese landing vessel in the disputed Spratly Islands, killing 86. In 1992 China passed legislation laying claim to almost the entire South China Sea. Three years later China occupied Mischief Reef, a small atoll less than 200 nautical miles from the Philippines coast. China's incremental aggression led then Filipino President Fidel Ramos to declare the

1 John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1 (January/February 2008): 24.

2 Zheng Bijian "China's Peaceful Rise to Great Power Status," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 5 (September/October 2005): 18-25.

3 Deng Xiaoping addresses the Japanese delegation to the second session of the Council of Sino-Japanese Non-Governmental Persons (June 1984), *Peoples Daily* (English Language), <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/c1220.html>.

Spratly Islands were: “a litmus test of whether China as a Great Power intends to play by international rules, or make its own.”⁴

The South China Sea is now a constellation of competing claims. China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei each covet overlapping shares. Yet through extraordinary land reclamation and construction activity China is literally creating a new reality. Unless countered, it will shortly possess the means to station troops, ships, and aircraft across a range of disputed shoals and islets. In due course this will enable the PLA to declare - and potentially enforce - an Air Defence Identification Zone over the South China Sea.

China is engaged in similar confrontation with Japan. In 2008, China began significantly expanding maritime patrols in the East China Sea, specifically around the contested Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands. Chinese vessels now conduct daily patrols of the area, and have breached Japan’s twelve-nautical mile border around the Senkakus on hundreds of occasions. PLA naval units have also circumnavigated Japan, conducting major military exercises on all sides of the main islands.⁵

Beijing seems no longer satisfied by Deng’s indefinite postponement of disagreement in favor of a peaceful status quo. Maritime tension has escalated to include reprisal in other areas. In 2010, China briefly suspended the export of rare earth resources to Japan, and in 2012 blocked the importation of Filipino bananas.⁶ Both actions have been linked to territorial disputes. Various parties are engaged in cyber-attack, most notably the Chinese. And in 2013, China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone over waters claimed by Japan and South Korea. While the zone was breached in short order by US, Japanese and Korean military aircraft, the message remains clear – China is practicing a new and abrasive statecraft at sea.

Liberal institutionalists cannot easily counter two other conundrums. First, Ikenberry’s concept of the rational transfer of power disregards the incendiary potential of Chinese nationalism. The existing international order is perceived to be a legacy of injustice and exploitation. When Mao announced the formation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, he declared “the Chinese people have stood up” against colonial humiliation. Nationalist antipathy towards Japan and the West is founded on a strong and often legitimate sense of historical grievance.⁷ Beijing seems inclined to use its growing strength to right past wrongs; not reinforce the primacy of international law, maritime boundaries or established norms.

Second, the existing international architecture is ill-disposed to accommodate a sense of civilization rather than statehood. Kissinger writes that several societies have “claimed universal applicability for

4 Ian Storey, “Maritime Security in Southeast Asia,” in *South East Asian Affairs, 2009*, ed. Daljit Singh (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 47.

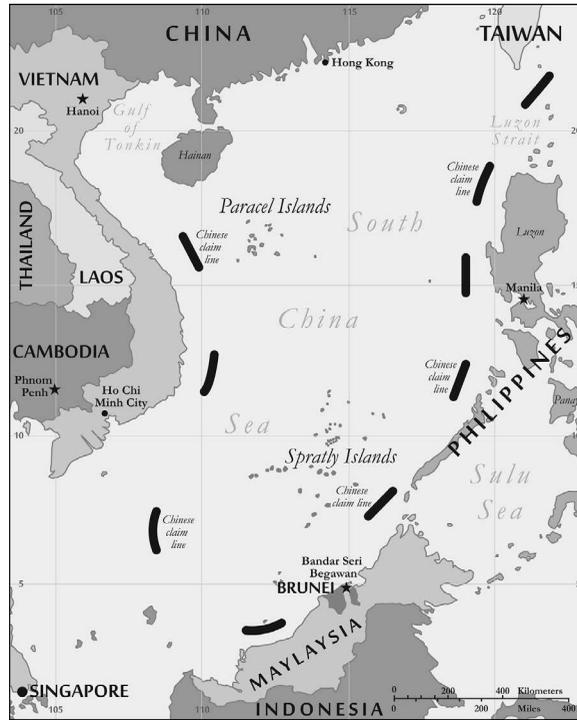
5 Michael J. Green “Safeguarding the Seas: How to Defend Against China’s New Air Defense Zone,” *Foreign Affairs*, Snapshot, December 2, 2013, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140307/michael-j-green/safeguarding-the-seas>.

6 Keith Bradsher, “Amid Tension, China Blocks Vital Exports to Japan,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2010; and Andrew Higgins, “In Philippines, Banana Growers Feel Effect of South China Sea Dispute,” *Washington Post*, June 10, 2012.

7 See also Nicholas Kristof, “The Problem of Memory,” *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 6 (November 1998): 37-49.

their values and institutions. Still, none equals China in persisting – and persuading its neighbors to acquiesce – to such an elevated conception of its world role... [No-one in China] questions the relevance of ancient precedents to China’s contemporary strategic objectives.”⁸ Can China’s renaissance be accommodated within the strictures of the existing international system? Early indications suggest not. As Pye contends: “China is a civilization pretending to be a nation state.”⁹ Either China or the region will need to adjust its expectations accordingly.

The “Nine Dash Line” starkly illustrates China’s perception of its own greatness. In January 2014 the Philippines referred its grievances over China’s vast maritime claims to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). While most expect ITLOS to rule in favor of Manila, it is equally expected Beijing will simply ignore any edict contrary to its interest. The “Nine Dash Line” demonstrates China has more to gain by undermining the legitimacy of some international accords, or perhaps that Beijing may even regard the collapse of the current order as a *fait accompli*.



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Figure 1. China’s “Nine Dash Line” depicts controversial maritime claims.

While such a prospect is disturbing to the United States and the region, realists would claim it to be in Beijing’s strategic interest. North Asia is engaged in an arms race, underscored by the risk of nuclear

8 Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 2-8.

9 Lucian Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 235.

proliferation. East Asian nations are casting about for an alliance network or institutional framework to defend their territorial interests. South East Asian countries are mostly burgeoning in wealth, population, and opportunity; accompanied by unresolved ethnic tension and economic inequality. The relative influence of US military force is diminishing, as the authority of liberal institutions and international norms declines. Slender threads binding nations to the peaceful resolution of conflict are unravelling. All these dynamics favour replacing an old, potentially crumbling order with a new and powerful Asian hegemon. China's size, strength, and economic trajectory all suggest it can fill this role. But China is not there yet.

The Realist Argument

At first glance, aggressive Chinese expansionism combined with a rapid rise in military expenditure seems consistent with classical realism. John Mearsheimer predicts China will seek to dominate Asia the way America dominates the Western hemisphere, dictating the boundaries of acceptable behavior to neighboring countries.¹⁰ According to Green, Beijing is deliberately plotting to “chip away at the regional status quo and assert greater control over the East and South China Seas.”¹¹

Christensen notes East Asia is destabilized by different political systems across states; limited economic interdependence; weak regional multilateral institutions; vast differences in wealth within and across national borders; cultural and ethnic tensions; widespread territorial disputes; and the lack of secure second strike nuclear capabilities. The region is unusually fraught with mistrust, animosity, and strategic uncertainty.¹² Defensive realism seems the natural, pragmatic response to such circumstances.

Chinese military imperatives have been clearly articulated in Colonel Liu Mingfu's 2010 book *The China Dream*.¹³ Liu rejects the concept of a “peaceful rise,” arguing China cannot rely solely on its traditional virtues to secure a new international order. Due to the competitive and amoral nature of great power politics, a strong China in a peaceful world can only be assured if China nurtures sufficient military force to deter or defeat its enemies. China needs a “military rise” in addition to its “economic rise.”

Whether or not China is truly a realist power, Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell point out the United States is often perceived in Beijing as a hegemon in the classically realist sense. Many Chinese strategists believe Washington must contain China to preserve American influence and privilege. US defense posture in Asia is characterized as a “strategic ring of encirclement” under Pacific Command - Beijing assumes that as China rises, the United States must naturally resist.¹⁴

10 John Mearsheimer, “China's Unpeaceful Rise,” *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April 2006): 160.

11 Green, “Safeguarding the Seas.”

12 Thomas Christensen, “Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and US Policy towards East Asia,” *International Security* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2006): 87.

13 Chris Buckley, “Chinese PLA Officer Urges Challenging US Dominance,” *Reuters*, February 28, 2010.

14 Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell, “How China Sees America,” *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 5 (September 2012): 32-47.

China has certainly adopted a calculated mixture of bluff and coercion, repeated over and over to establish more advantageous norms at sea. Through incremental aggression China seeks to advance its territorial claims and revise the regional boiling point upwards. Beijing also eschews multilateral debate of its actions at forums such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the East Asia Summit. Instead, China favors direct, bilateral negotiation where it enjoys a comparative power advantage, and can exclude the United States from discussions. This modus operandi is proving successful in South East Asia: states not directly involved in territorial dispute with China appear unwilling to lend active support to their neighbors, who are largely buckling under direct bilateral pressure from Beijing.¹⁵

Yet, as Robert Zoellick argued in 2005, China needs to understand better how its actions are perceived. Belligerence is exacerbated by a lack of transparency, and contributes to significant risk. Many countries hope China will pursue a “Peaceful Rise,” but none will bet their future on it.¹⁶ The efficacy of the realist argument depends on one critical assessment: that maritime expansionism is not contrary to Chinese interests.

On this point, the realist view is unpersuasive. It is hard to discern Chinese interests being advanced through incremental aggression because it encourages dangerous regional competition, while needlessly stoking hostilities with the United States and Japan, both comparatively stronger powers. Wang Jisi, Dean of Peking University’s School of International Studies argues sustained Chinese growth requires a stable relationship with the United States. Chinese strategists have a pragmatic sense of their relative strength, and it would be “foolhardy for Beijing to challenge directly the international order and the institutions favored by the Western world... such a challenge is unlikely.”¹⁷

According to some, Chinese leaders believe they must accommodate the United States while relentlessly developing their own strength. At the end of this period of continued US domination, China will be in a better position to defend and advance its regional ambitions. According to this more convincing realist interpretation, Chinese interests are not served by unnecessary provocation until its relative strength exceeds that of the United States, or even Japan. That prospect is still many years away.

So then, how to account for the current Chinese statecraft at sea? Whatever their intentions, rapidly growing states often appear threatening to their neighbors, as well as to the established hegemon and its allies.¹⁸ Yet neither a liberal institutionalist nor realist perspective can account for China’s incremental aggression towards its maritime neighbors. Underlying all this tension remains the absence of a clear, articulated national strategy from the People’s Republic. The PLA Navy might chase Filipino fishermen out of Scarborough Shoal, but China lacks the means and perhaps even the desire to enforce the Nine-Dash

15 Carl A. Thayer, “ASEAN’S Code of Conduct in the South China Sea: A Litmus Test for Community-Building?” *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 10, Iss. 34, no. 4 (August 20, 2012).

16 Robert B. Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?” Remarks to the National Committee on US-China Relations, New York City, September 21, 2005.

17 Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, “After Unipolarity: China’s Visions of International Order in an Era of US Decline,” *International Security* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 53.

18 *Ibid.*, 41-72.

Line. The United States and neighboring states are lining up to reject the concept with increasing explicitness.¹⁹ Why does China articulate such counterproductive objectives, particularly when it lacks the legal grounds or military wherewithal to meaningfully pursue them?

Could it be that China has yet to possess any overarching foreign policy at all? According to Rear Admiral McDevitt (US Navy, Retd), perhaps not. “I’m increasingly coming to the view that China’s reputation as a brilliant strategist is misplaced... They’re very tactical [and] focused on whatever is in the inbox... Their reactions in many places seem designed to shoot themselves in the foot.”²⁰

China has yet to figure out how to define its national greatness, and the role of diplomatic strategy has declined, but McDevitt is wrong to suggest the government is completely reflexive. China’s foreign and security policy spheres have fragmented, but two powerful dynamics have emerged with consistent regularity in the South and East China Seas – the commercial voracity of state-owned enterprises, and the relentless pursuit of tactical military objectives. Mercantilist and martial imperatives now substitute for Chinese statecraft at sea.

The Money State

On May 2, 2014 the state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation deployed its deep sea drilling rig HD-981 in disputed waters south of the Paracel Islands, approximately 120 miles off the Vietnamese coast. China deployed eighty ships, including seven military vessels, along with aircraft to support the rig. In response, Hanoi dispatched twenty-nine ships to disrupt the rig’s placement and operations, resulting in collisions and a hostile standoff before the rig was ultimately withdrawn on July 15.²¹ This is a dramatic, but illustrative example of the increasing voracity of state-owned enterprises, with the PLA Navy and Coast Guard in strong support.

In recent years, growth in the domestic economy has slowed, while the global financial crisis threatened potential earnings abroad. During this period state-owned enterprises have become an indispensable component of China’s foreign policy, benefiting from monetary and political support from Beijing. Soaring energy demand has led firms to explore politically unstable areas, particularly in search of oil and gas. State-owned enterprises are encouraged to act aggressively in the acquisition of natural resources.²² This is consistent with China’s eleventh Five Year Plan (2006-2010), which called for the support of “companies in exploring resources overseas... in short supply domestically.”²³

At last year’s Third Plenum the private sector was given prominence, as the Central Committee undertook rebalance of the domestic economy

19 Anne Marie Murphy, “Jakarta Rejects China’s Nine Dash Line,” *Asia Times*, April 3, 2014.

20 Sydney J. Freedberg, “Does China Have a Pacific Strategy, or are They Just Bumbling Along?” *Breaking Defense*, September 24, 2013.

21 Ernest Z. Bower and Gregory B. Poling, “China-Vietnam Tensions High Over Drilling Rig in Disputed Waters,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, May 7, 2014.

22 Jie Yu, “Firms with Chinese Characteristics: The Role of Companies in Chinese Foreign Policy,” *London School of Economics*, June 2012, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR012/yu.pdf>.

23 Eve Cary, “SOEs Declining Role in China’s Foreign Investment,” *The Diplomat*, July 3, 2013, <http://thediplomat.com/2013/07/soes-declining-role-in-chinas-foreign-investment/>

to better reflect market forces. This shift has not yet diminished the role of state-owned enterprises in maritime adventurism, as evidenced by the deployment of HD-981 to the Paracels in May. State-owned enterprises remain the primary instrument for foreign investment in the national interest to secure internal growth, while according to the twelfth Five Year Plan energy remains the highest national priority.²⁴ The Chinese government is also financially dependent on state-owned enterprises, which account for one-sixth of its total revenue.²⁵

A commercial, mercantilist imperative is clearly fuelling incremental aggression at sea. However, this could only occur with the active support of China's national security structure.

The Military State

The degree to which the PLA operates independently from political decision-making is a question that divides both Chinese and Western experts.²⁶ Unlike the United States, China lacks a public document outlining its national military strategy.²⁷ However, leaders' speeches, official documents, and military doctrine enables insight into the manner in which military power is employed as a tool of statecraft. Five clear objectives emerge: regime security, territorial integrity, national unification, maritime security, and regional stability.²⁸

Within the PLA the weight of the Navy has increased along with growing recognition of the importance of maritime security. Fravel notes the PLA Navy is casting itself as the protector of China's economy to increase the navy's budget.²⁹ The Coast Guard is becoming increasingly muscular, recently fielding a class of cutters larger than some PLA Navy frigates.³⁰ Two new Coast Guard vessels are currently under construction in Shanghai, each with a displacement of around 10,000 tons - twice the size of a Luhu guided missile destroyer.³¹

The increasing heft of maritime forces reflects the fragmentation of traditional Chinese diplomacy. China's expanding global role and the complexity of international issues have multiplied policy stakeholders. The powerful Commerce Ministry; state-owned enterprises; the energy

24 Chet Scheltema, Frank Yang, and David Chan, "Chinese Outbound Foreign Direct Investment Faces Rigorous Scrutiny," *China Briefing: Business Intelligence from Dezan Shira & Associates*, December 31, 2012, <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2012/12/31/chinese-outbound-foreign-direct-investment-faces-rigorous-scrutiny-2.html>.

25 Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*, SIPRI Policy Paper 26 (Sweden: SIPRI, September 2010), <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRI26.pdf>.

26 James Mulvenon, "Rogue Warriors? A Puzzled Look at the Chinese ASAT Test," *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 20 (Winter 2007), <http://media.hoover.org/sites/default/files/documents/clm20jm.pdf>.

27 David M. Finkelstein, "China's National Military Strategy: An Overview of the 'Military Strategic Guidelines,'" in *Right-Sizing the People's Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China's Military*, eds. Roy Kamphausen and Andrew Scobell (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 69-140.

28 M. Taylor Fravel, "China's Search for Military Power," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 126-127.

29 M. Taylor Fravel and Alexander Liebman, "Beyond the Moat: The PLAN's Evolving Interests and Potential Influence," in *The Chinese Navy: Expanding Capabilities, Evolving Roles*, eds. Phillip C. Saunders, et al. (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011), 41.

30 Cornelius Weening, "China Launches New 3,000-tonne Coast Guard Cutter," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October, 23, 2014.

31 James Hardy and Cornelius Weening, "China Building 10,000-tonne Coast Guard Cutters," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 15, 2014.

and metals lobbies; the security and ideological arms of the Party, and of course the People's Liberation Army all have vested and competing interests.³² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs must often rely on other agencies for expertise, and contend with them for influence. During state visits or meetings with overseas delegations the Foreign Minister is sometimes fifth or sixth in protocol.³³

The Third Plenum also resulted in the establishment of a National Security Council. This central decision making body has enabled Xi Jinping greater control over the country's vast domestic security apparatus, though his influence over the PLA remains to be seen. Certainly, Xi's concentration of power is yet to manifest in a cohesive national strategy. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences – a leading think tank – was recently directed to lend strategic substance to Xi's lyrical "Chinese Dream." Their report is still pending.³⁴

In the absence of effective statecraft, it is all too easy for outsiders to mistake military planning and capability development for national strategy. Chinese military expansion is more a consequence of double-digit growth in spending, courtesy of the nation's extraordinary economic story. Like any professional military, the PLA is predisposed to evolve in purpose and sophistication. It defines likely objectives and adapts to likely competitors in every realm: land, sea, air, space, cyberspace. Unfortunately, in the absence of statecraft, military objectives can all too easily become national policy.

Like Imperial Japan at the turn of the last century, China has allowed nationalism, military priorities and perceived economic imperatives a disproportionate and ill-considered weight in its regional interaction. This may yet prove effective in the South China Sea, where no single country (except the United States) can meaningfully challenge China. However Beijing's belligerence is particularly dangerous in the East China Sea, where several major powers are engaged in competition.

Danger in North East Asia

North East Asia presents the greatest risk of war as the most combustible conflict can be found here. These include:

- Historical grievances capable of arousing nationalist sentiment on several fronts, which once unleashed are hard to contain,
- Powerful military forces in China, Japan, Russia, North Korea and South Korea capable of fighting a major war,
- Clear precedent or formal alliances that could inveigle the United States in direct support of Japan, South Korea or Taiwan, and
- An unpredictable and vexatious nuclear-armed North Korea.

China cannot achieve its objectives through increasing antagonism in this region. Historical grievances run too deep for Japan to succumb to

³² Jonathan Fenby, "Does China Have a Foreign Policy? Domestic Pressures and China's Strategy," in *China's Geoeconomic Strategy*, ed. Nicholas Kitchen (London: London School of Economics, June 2012), <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/SR012.aspx>.

³³ Jakobson and Knox, *New Foreign Policy Actors in China*.

³⁴ Christopher Johnston, "In Search of a Grand Strategy: China's Meiji Moment," *Lowy Interpreter*, October 18, 2013, <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2013/10/18/China-A-great-power-in-search-of-a-grand-strategy.aspx>.

aggression. Nor should Japan or South Korea feel compelled to concede interests or territory – both possess a sophisticated military, supported by formal alliance with the United States. The potential for miscalculation is highest around the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands. There is significant risk for all parties, but arguably China has the most to lose. It may indulge some domestic nationalist sentiment, but at considerable risk given the potential for armed conflict between near-peers.

A major war in North East Asia would be a battle for prestige, power and freedom of navigation, involving the high-tech destruction of military and economic infrastructure. Tensions could manifest in direct clashes at sea, in the air, space or cyberspace. All parties have a strong, shared interest in averting such a disaster.

Proposed US Policy Initiatives

Resolution of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands Dispute

Armed conflict between the United States and China, however unlikely, represents the most perilous security contingency in the Asia-Pacific region. It is historically unusual that neither party has any territorial design on the other, but would most likely become embroiled over a third country or disputed territory. Rather than remaining resolutely on the sidelines, the United States should actively encourage the resolution of disputes in the East China Sea. There are greater dangers here, and better prospects for diplomacy than Washington might find in the Middle East or elsewhere.

Resolving the status of the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands (or at least diminishing their incendiary potential) should be accorded the highest priority. On China's side there is scope to return to the principle of peaceful joint exploration established by Deng Xiaoping. Japan could do more to assuage China's legitimate historical grievances. And Washington could, in quiet consultation with Tokyo, step back from its recent unequivocal assertion of undisputed Japanese sovereignty. An ideal outcome would see the question of sovereignty either indefinitely deferred, or resolved through the sale or demilitarization of the islands and surrounding waters.

Recasting the Pivot

America's "pivot" to the Asia Pacific presents a range of unfolding consequences, not least that the US military has largely assumed the public face of America in Asia. President Obama's first public announcement of the policy occurred before an assembly of Australian soldiers and US marines in Darwin. The United States has arguably done little since to recast the pivot in diplomatic or economic terms, or emphasize collective benefits for the region, most notably for China. While this is due in part to a lack of political commitment to free trade in Washington, it reinforces Beijing's perception of the pivot as a form of strategic containment. The Obama administration's untimely exit from Iraq and Afghanistan, its ambivalence towards Syria, and haphazard approach to the Arab Spring has diminished US influence in the Middle East. This has not been matched by a perceptible increase of influence in Asia.

The most common ground between key regional players is their interdependency in trade and investment. However, the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, with its vision of a free trade area in the Asia Pacific, appears designed to exclude or compete against China. The terms for its accession have not been made public but are believed to require fundamental changes in China's governmental structure, including state-owned enterprises. In contrast, ASEAN states—along with China, Australia, Japan, India, South Korea and New Zealand—are now working towards the world's largest-ever regional trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Given heightened competition between the two and its potential to result in competing trade blocs, it clearly is in US interests for China to commit to economic cooperation and shared prosperity.³⁵

Beijing might yet be encouraged to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership. However, if the Chinese economy continues to increase in relative terms compared to the United States, its incentive to do so will diminish. Australia has just concluded a free trade agreement with China, having already signed similar agreements with South Korea and Japan. Canberra and Tokyo could potentially help broker a deal between Washington and Beijing to transform the emphasis and incentive of the TPP. This would help to recast the US pivot away from the perception of military containment towards the principle of collective economic advantage.

Encouraging International Law and Civil Society

It is clearly in US interests for China to support, not overturn established international covenants. To be seen as an honest broker the United States should also uphold the primacy of international law. When it comes to averting maritime conflict the most important legal instrument is the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This convention is already observed in practice, if not in principle by the US Navy. Washington has publicly supported the Philippines in its appeal to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The US Senate should proceed with the formal ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to follow its 1994 Agreement on Implementation.

The increasing role of civil society should also be considered. The Asia Foundation was recently instrumental in securing a peace agreement in Bangsamoro.³⁶ It might be more useful to assign capable officers to the International Crisis Group than send them to Staff College. Pacific Command can afford to be more nimble and engaged with the civilian aspects of Asia's evolving regional security architecture.

Strengthening Regional Institutions

The United States also shares a vital interest in the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes in the South China Sea, particularly involving China and the Philippines, a US ally. It would be prudent for the United States, Australia and Japan to invest in all the instruments of regional

35 Henry Kissinger, "The Future of US-Chinese Relations: Conflict Is a Choice, Not a Necessity," *Foreign Affairs* 91, no. 2 (March/April 2012): 44-55.

36 For the background to this crisis, see Steven Rood, "Implementation of Bangsamoro Holds Lessons for Philippines as a Whole," *Asia Foundation*, March 26, 2014, <http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2014/03/26/implementation-of-bangsamoro-holds-lessons-for-philippines-as-a-whole/>

dispute resolution, including peacekeeping forces. Given China's seat on the UNSC, it is unlikely UN troops could ever be deployed in a manner potentially injurious to Chinese interests. The United States, Australia and Japan should consider bolstering ASEAN and the Pacific Forum to more capably facilitate conflict management and peacekeeping.

With the assistance of Australia, Pacific Islanders could be encouraged to join a new "Pacific Regiment," raised, trained and sustained under the auspices of the Pacific Forum. This force could emulate the best aspects of the African Union—a flawed but still immensely valuable peacekeeping force. While requiring economic and logistical support, this model would avoid a controlling United States or Australian interest while significantly bolstering the capability of the forum to enhance regional stability. Canberra's recent rapprochement with Fiji could aid such efforts.

If such an initiative were to occur, a "Pacific Training Centre" could be established in Townsville, perhaps in collaboration with the Australian Civil-Military Centre. Given the strategic interest in the Southwest Pacific region, other countries would likely be willing to help. New Zealand and Japan could be relied on to make a significant contribution. ASEAN would have a strong vested interest in encouraging the capacity of such an organization. China, the United States, Japan and other Asian countries could be invited to rotate an infantry battalion through joint regional exercises, attached to the Regiment as part of a useful confidence-building measure. Only Australia and Pacific Command could facilitate such an initiative, spanning Asia and the Pacific to the mutual benefit of all.

Nuclear and Energy Security

The competition for energy and resources is a major factor underlying territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas. Meanwhile, the Fukushima disaster has compelled the Japanese Government to transform its energy industry from nuclear to fossil fuels, which will increase carbon emissions and energy competition. This tragedy arose in part because of Japan's inability to safely store and process nuclear waste, a vexing incapacity shared by most nations with nuclear power, including China. Loose nuclear materials present an unacceptable risk to the environment and regional security.

As a leading exporter of uranium, including to the Fukushima reactor, Australia should consider assisting in the safe processing and storage of nuclear materials. Australia is blessed with space and geopolitical stability unique in the region, and perhaps the world. With technical assistance from the United States and Japan, Australia could expand its uranium industry to provide a "cradle to grave" service for the safe storage and disposal of nuclear waste. This would diminish the risk of nuclear terrorist attack and further disasters such as Fukushima. Increased use of nuclear power would also mitigate the devastating regional effects of climate change.

There are other ways US technology could help ease tension in the Asia Pacific. In the last three decades China's urban population has risen by more than 500 million, and is forecast to reach one billion by 2030. Chinese internal security will be determined by the stability of its cities.

So will the fate of the global environment. China surpassed America in 2006 as the biggest emitter of carbon dioxide from energy, and is now producing nearly twice America's level.³⁷ China, the United States, and Japan could unite to address this challenge more effectively through shared innovation in energy technology.

Conclusion

No single school of thought can account for increased provocation, but Chinese nationalist military mercantilism is clearly ascendant in the South and East China Sea. This is most injurious to China's strategic interests in North East Asia. If Beijing simply maintained defense spending relative to GDP it would in time become the most formidable power, with commensurate economic clout. This trajectory would ensure the decline of relative Japanese and US strength, bestowing on China unrivalled regional influence. The only event that could derail this trajectory is war, in which China could not currently prevail. Yet, this is the very contingency Beijing risks by courting disaster in the East China Sea.

This speaks to the fragmentation of Chinese foreign policy, which has in turn allowed state-owned enterprises and the PLA disproportionate influence. Beijing is trying to achieve the following, potentially competing objectives:

- To set the conditions for a return to civilizational greatness,
- To erode international norms deemed injurious to China,
- To secure contested terrain of potential military value,
- To protect China's supply of natural resources and economic growth, and
- To indulge popular nationalist sentiment.

The Chinese people will determine China's future. However, there are still tangible steps the United States and its allies can take to diminish the risk of confrontation, while strengthening regional institutions sufficiently to manage and resolve conflicts when they occur. These objectives have assumed new urgency as the Chinese economy begins to plateau, natural resources subside, the environment and population reach breaking point, and Beijing's relative military strength increases.

For the first time in history, Chinese wealth and internal stability largely depends on the global economy, secured by law and covenant, created and sustained by the United States. If the People's Republic can truly reconcile its sense of civilization within the region, and be genuinely encouraged to do so, the Asia Pacific Century might yet transcend the violence and bloodshed which begot the contemporary international order.

37 "Urbanisation: Where China's Future Will Happen," *Economist*, April 19, 2014.

Defeating the Islamic State: Commentary on a Core Strategy

Huba Wass de Czege

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to benefit those among the readership currently engaged in designing the strategies and tactics of the struggle against the Islamic State (IS) group, a movement led by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi that has become the scourge of Iraq and Syria.

In the rational pursuit of vital interests in any human undertaking, the design of concrete actions to pursue them must subordinate to a conceptual strategic design based on a well-researched theory of the specific situation.¹ Any such theory will be based on a combination of hard data and educated guesses about what those data mean. The underlying research must encompass not only the historic sweep of similar cases (history does not repeat, it educates), but it must also examine the peculiarities and differences of the present situation compared to any that came before. Finally, because of the differences between the present case and those of the past, it must adapt, rather than adopt, past practices. What results from such inquiry and contemplation is a rough but useful strategic framework that can be adapted as learning occurs. At the core of such a framework is a theory of the situation at the very heart of the matter and a strategy for resolving it – a core strategy. Other secondary aspects of the situation are accounted for separately in supporting strategies. Having an explicit consensus among allies on a core strategy aligns costly allied operations. Such a core strategy should drive the design of tactics and supporting strategies.²

My own enquiries along this line have led me to the following core strategy for accomplishing the vital and very difficult tasks at the heart of the IS crisis.

The Heart of the Matter

This situation is so complex that it is easy to lose focus. One must find, isolate, and take aim at the heart of the matter. The aspect of the situation making the present status quo intolerable enough to trigger a new American (and allied) intervention is the rule of the Islamic State militant group across great parts of Syria and Iraq, and the threat of this 7th century model of governance spreading if not checked at its origin. (There are already indications of this possibility in North Africa and elsewhere.) As such a regime swells in territory and membership, not

BG Huba Wass de Czege, USA Ret., an independent military theorist, is a veteran of ground combat in Vietnam, and command at all levels through brigade and assistant division command. He founded the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS. As a special strategic policy assistant to the NATO SACREUR and Secretary General, he helped formulate the strategy to end the Cold War.

1 This is a revision of a paper I circulated among planners and interested parties in August 2014 entitled "On 'Ridding the World' of 'The Islamic State.'"

2 To my way of thinking strategies are logical schemes for achieving broad conceptual ends employing conceptual ways and means along several lines of effort. Tactics are the practical schemes for achieving concrete ends employing concrete ways and means.

only Middle Eastern populations will be at risk, but also those of secular industrialized nations across the globe. In other words, the *IS problem is not a Syrian or Iraqi problem, it is an international problem*. And it needs an international perspective to resolve it.

Moreover, IS is, both structurally and in terms of its aims and methods, significantly different than Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda does not need to control territory to exist. It only needs to promote and work toward a foreordained future caliphate. To be what it is, IS *needs* to control territory and to rule a population by strict *Sharia* law, on the 7th century model prescribed by the Prophet Mohammed in Koranic scriptures. It draws immigrants to that territory by offering a place for those who wish to live under such rule, and a regime that rigorously enforces such laws. IS also provides a cause that pursues concrete near-term objectives within the current generation rather than the more distant ones Al Qaeda followers pursue across many generations. And that cause, succinctly expressed, is to defend, sustain, and expand a place and a regime that rules according to the prophet Mohammed's 7th century vision in every respect. Finally, because their ends are foreordained by the Prophet, IS leaders and fighters are emboldened to take great risks. This boldness, and the successes they have achieved, combines to attract action oriented adherents from abroad.

The difficulty for the largely secular-minded international community is that IS does not advocate a "perversion" of Koranic scriptures. It adheres to a strict interpretation of un-ambiguous prophetic passages of the holy book. And, like other believers of the Muslim faith, its members believe the Prophet Mohammed faithfully recorded the true word of Allah. What religious splits exist between IS orthodoxy and most other Sunni Muslim authorities (including Salafists of any stripe) are over methods and timing - gentler methods of the struggle now and a foreordained caliphate later. As a result, it will be difficult to drive a wedge, solely on the grounds of religious principle, between the IS and other Sunni Muslim believers, including moderate ones and many of Assad's other opponents in Syria.³ More effective wedge issues must be developed and used.

Changing an intolerable status quo, such as this, into an acceptable one is ambitious. Therefore the "acceptable aim" should be no more difficult than it needs to be. But it needs to be more than vague rhetoric, as is the general twin aims to "degrade, disrupt and defeat IS," and to "defend the allied homelands from IS inspired terrorist attacks." A useful core strategy needs to be more specific about ends, ways and means. What this amounts to is a core strategy designed around three major lines of effort clearly expressed in three short paragraphs of simple declaratory sentences.

The first line of operation is to win the struggle over the legitimacy to govern, make laws, and enforce them between IS and the alternative indigenous regime that will follow. Legitimacy is granted from below not imposed from above. Winning along this line of effort requires creating stable, functioning, and extremist resistant indigenous communities

³ I would like to acknowledge the comments of Dr. Alice Butler-Smith of the School of Advanced Military Studies on the August 2014 draft. Also see Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic* (March 2015). Also see Audrey Kurth Cronin, "ISIS Is Not a Terrorist Group," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 2 (March/April 2015): 87-98.

under a political regime they consider legitimate. An effective interim replacement regime must be operational immediately in the aftermath of town-by-town and village-by-village fighting. (How these communities will fit into a stable Syria or Iraq, is a secondary concern at this point.) At present, the core strategic end of US policy is to recover Iraqi towns and villages to Iraqi sovereign control, and to support the more secular, or less extreme, opposition to Assad's regime in the Syrian civil war toward both an overthrow of the Assad regime, and a defeat of the Islamic state movement. The problem is these complex ends may make impossible the less ambitious one of first *creating stable, functioning, and extremist resistant indigenous communities under a local political regime they consider legitimate.*

The second is to *defend the occupied populations in Syria and Iraq from the "armed propaganda" of the violent IS militants during the fighting for each community and afterwards.* A fearful and exposed population is lost to whomever attempts to govern next. Winning along this line of effort requires a very disciplined interim political and security regime to provide immediate security. It must be capable immediately of discovering and arresting covert indigenous IS cells. And it must immediately begin to recruit and train a competent and trustworthy indigenous self-defense force.

The third is the offensive effort *to defeat the militant group and its agencies town-by-town and village-by-village.* Winning along this line of effort would require a focused and discriminating force to do three things: destroy the IS "terrorist army" and its weapons; prevent the escape of its members to organize anew elsewhere; and retain the moral high ground and legitimacy in the process.

The power of this trinity derives from synergy among the three major lines of effort, but a weakness in one cannot be compensated by the strength of another. The power to transform intentions into desired outcomes along each of these lines of effort depends on finding and applying an effective causal logic unique to this situation, which is the subject of the following paragraphs.

Winning the Legitimacy to Govern

Winning the legitimacy to govern territory occupied by IS requires separating IS from the support of the people in that territory and transferring their support to an alternative they can accept. IS relies on the people for protection, intelligence, supplies, funds, and recruits. This support is partly coerced through conquest by military power. It will be difficult to have the people of the occupied region see IS and its fighters as violent outlaws ruling illegally, as is the secular view, when what they do can be justified by some using scripture. An additional difficulty is their support is also derived from indigenous and immigrant believers in the IS orthodoxy and cause.

There are some obvious mistakes to avoid. In Afghanistan and Iraq we saw how quickly the relief of liberation from one oppressive regime can turn into dissatisfaction with the regime of a foreign liberator. Differences in nationality are not all that makes a foreigner. Iraqis and Syrians of a different religion and ethnicity will be judged "foreign" in the communities they liberate.

IS derives moral authority when it is regarded the warriors of a legitimate Muslim Caliphate. This authority must be undermined as much as possible by word and deed. The conduct of allied fighters is regulated by international law, that of IS fighters is regulated by 7th century Koranic scriptures. When IS fighters bear arms and use them, in secular eyes they become common criminals, not “war criminals.” The legal secular logic of modern states is this: when IS fighters are captured, they are arrested, tried by legitimate authorities, and punished for their crimes according to the laws of the country where they committed them. Legitimate international authorities, and the people who have been oppressed by IS, must together judge the prisons and courts legitimate.

An effective interim replacement regime must be organized town-by-town and village-by-village before the fighting begins. It must be operational immediately in the aftermath. There is no such thing as “ungoverned space” except when it is unpopulated. Some form of governance takes shape organically, and violent groups like IS will either impose their form of order, or influence the existing one to their advantage. There is no useful objective standard for governance, only a relative one. The governance of the replacement regime and its agencies must be better in the eyes of the people than the alternative. People will favor indigenous governors over foreign ones. This is why foreigners have such difficulty with winning the struggle for the legitimacy to govern. To the extent IS is seen as foreign, and the replacement regime as indigenous, the better the result.

If a force comprised of allied “foreigners” is necessary to remove IS fighters from occupied communities and neighborhoods, the allied fighting force must shortly move on to the next fight and an interim indigenous political and security regime must take its place to organize, resource, and develop a functioning community under an acceptable and permanent indigenous governance. It would be unrealistic to expect Sunni communities in, Anbar province, for instance, to accept as “indigenous” a Shia militia from anywhere else in Iraq. Likewise the successful relief of Kobani in Syria can be credited as much, or more, to the ethnic affinity of the Kurdish fighters on the ground to the citizens of the town than to the increased allied air support these fighters received.

It will be necessary to place a layer of autonomy between these communities and centralized nationalistic governance. And when they are incorporated into national political structures, they must have a voice in the government.

Defending the Population from “Armed Propaganda”

The second struggle of this trinity—defending the population from the “armed propaganda” of violent IS extremists—is crucial to being able to govern legitimately.

And, liberated communities need *immediate* protection from stay-behind IS elements and re-infiltration of IS fighters and agents. And undisciplined occupying strangers of the allied side must not be allowed to impose a tyranny of their own.

Violent movements like IS extort intelligence, recruits, support, and compliance through fear, threat and cruelty example – for example

the numerous public beheadings that have been reported under IS rule. Without these enablers, violent movements wither.

Once security and governing elements of IS are driven out of the communities they occupy, they will attempt to leave covert cells behind, or re-infiltrate them later. The proverbial “three men and one knife” in an otherwise unarmed community can control the people. The antidote is around-the-clock security, which is costly in manpower and difficult to emplace from the outside and is best done from inside out and bottom up, with motivated and trusted self-defense forces. It must be the primary task of the interim political and security regime to provide immediate security to discover and arrest covert indigenous IS cells, and to recruit and train a competent and trustworthy indigenous self-defense force.

It is possible to avoid the mistakes of the “Sunni Awakening” and “Son’s of Iraq” model of several years ago and still take advantage of old-fashioned social and political structures to build local security forces without creating a “Sunni Army.” First, it is necessary to incorporate this idea into the original strategy. I envision the local indigenous regimes that finally replace IS in the occupied territories to emerge from the bottom up, as communities are “liberated.” If so, then this local security force is automatically subordinated to whatever indigenous governmental structures evolve from the bottom-up. Community by community liberation plans not only address removing ISIS control but also plan for an interim political regime and a disciplined interim security force that rapidly is phased out as a permanent local force under local civilian control replaces it.

Because this line of effort is also the most expensive in terms of trained and armed manpower there is really no other alternative. Some studies based on rare historical successes have judged the price to be no less than 20 security personnel per 1,000 citizens.⁴ Whatever the specific number, removing IS without immediately securing the aftermath is a wasted effort because the “cancer” will return.

Fighting and Defeating IS

Keeping people safe and getting them on the side of peace under a legitimate local government is not enough. The movement led by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi will not be defeated if the IS “terrorist army” is not confronted with a two armed approach capable of enforcing its destruction in place and preventing its escape to organize anew elsewhere. And for the outcome to be victory, these operations must be focused and discriminating, so that the lives and property of the people IS has enslaved and impoverished are preserved. Retaining the moral high ground and legitimacy in the process is crucial to success.

Accomplishing these tasks will depend on getting to know the enemy very well, having good intelligence at the beginning and building an ever greater capacity as operations progress, and being more creative and strategically savvy than the enemy. It will depend on skilled surgery to excise the militant group and its agents town-by-town and

⁴ James T. Quinlivan, “Force Requirements in Stability Operations,” *Parameters* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1995-96): 59-69. Also see Huba Wass de Czege, “On Policing The Frontiers of Freedom,” *Army* 56, no. 7 (July 2006): 14-22.

village-by-village. And destroying the IS “terrorist Army” in place, and preventing the escape of its members.

Pursuing offensive war against any determined enemy ought to proceed along two complementary lines. The first combines powerful measures aimed at influencing the decisions of the enemy’s uppermost leadership, and softening the will of followers and supporters. A second combination of strong measures and maneuver makes the decisions of IS leaders irrelevant by negating their power to resist conditions that we might wish to impose on them regardless of how their will is affected. The power in this approach is how these two “arms” combine, rather than what they achieve separately.

The first arm operates on the ancient logic of offensive war — the destructive military instrument, combined with all other means of applying psychological pressure, operates on the state of mind of leaders, followers, and supporters, causing them to give up fighting and accept the will of their enemy. This logic applies mostly to winning battles and firefights. It is a very insufficient logic for winning wars. In fact, it may prolong warfare when the occupied populations are exposed to heavy casualties in the process and the survivors become enraged and join the defense of IS territories.⁵

When it is necessary to change an intolerable status quo, it is not sufficient to rely on military operations that merely generate losses among enemy leaders and followers. IS will use brutal tactics and, like Hamas in Gaza, will shield itself among innocent civilians. It will starve the population to remain well fed. IS will fight fanatically. It is actually necessary to take away the IS leadership’s options other than capitulation, one by one. This option-eliminating and constricting arm includes systematic encirclement of separate communities to reduce them piecemeal, simultaneous attacks from multiple directions to divide IS fighting efforts, closing borders to escaping or reinforcing IS fighters and leaders, relentless pursuit into sanctuaries to eliminate safe havens, and constricting, and then stopping, all forms of organized motorized movement, and all means of organizational support to include: taxation, extortion, conversion of local oil supplies into funds, the flow of arms and ammunition, strategic and tactical information, food for its fighters, and, most of all, the flow of immigrants and recruits.

These enforcement challenges can be overcome only when the other two elements of the trinity—defending the population from armed propaganda and winning the population to the side of peace under better governance—function well.

Conclusion

This core strategy may not be self-evident to all, but it can serve to inspire better ones based on newer knowledge and better research. This “trinitarian” core strategy is fruitful. I have raised matters important to get “right enough” and important to achieve consensus with allies, the sooner the better. It is less important how good the initial core strategy

5 Huba Wass de Czege, “Military Power, the Core Tasks of a Prudent Strategy, and the Army We Need,” *Strategic Studies Institute*, August 6, 2014, <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Military-Power-Core-Tasks-of-Prudent-Strategy/2014/08/06>.

is than to treat it as a work in progress, adapting as learning takes place. Once adopted it is more important to engage all parties in trying to prove it inadequate than to prove it correct. And, whatever emerges as a core strategy, there will be great temptations to compromise its principles in execution. For success, this very difficult undertaking will require allied unity and disciplined execution. Otherwise, this intervention will not achieve a worthy end. And, the fighting will continue until intervening powers tire of it.

Defeating the Islamic State: A Financial-Military Strategy

Paul Rexton Kan

ABSTRACT: Through oil smuggling, kidnapping, human trafficking and extortion, ISIL is one the best funded militant groups the United States has confronted. Avoiding a protracted conflict with ISIS requires a more integrated financial and military strategy to undermine the group's territorial control and reach.

Overshadowed by the debate over whether the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) constitutes a state, Islamic or otherwise, and the discussion of the strategy to “degrade and destroy” is the pivotal role criminality plays in its rise to power. ISIL includes criminals in its ranks and participates in a range of criminal activities to maintain and expand its territory. ISIL's ranks are swollen with criminals released by Syrian President Bashar Assad; its membership includes Sunni ex-convicts freed from prisons when ISIL captured Iraqi towns and cities.¹ In addition, ISIL participates in a number of criminal activities to generate illicit profit. Rather than relying solely on support from wealthy donors in Gulf countries, ISIL generates the bulk of its money from criminal activities such as extortion, robbery, kidnapping, trafficking and smuggling.² According to one report, it netted \$8 million in extortion rackets even prior to the group's capture of Mosul.³ Meanwhile, the group generated between \$1 million to \$2 million per day in profit from the oil fields it captured.⁴ With the massing of such wealth, the US Treasury Department believes, but for “the important exception of some state-sponsored terrorist organizations, ISIL is probably the best-funded terrorist organization we have confronted.”⁵

By relying on criminal enterprises, ISIL has made itself into a highly adaptable and resilient organization not easily swept from the battlefield. By perpetrating criminal acts, ISIL easily earns money for weapons, training, and recruitment and does not depend on significant sponsorship by an external state. It is not reliant on moving illicit money across international borders through established financial institutions, thus insulating itself from many traditional financial countermeasures such as economic sanctions, asset seizures, and clamping down on

Paul Kan is Professor of National Security Studies at the US Army War College. He is the author of the books, *Drugs and Contemporary Warfare* and *Cartels at War: Understanding Mexico's Drug-Fueled Violence and the Challenge to US National Security*. He is also the author of numerous articles on the intersection of drug trafficking, crime and modern forms of armed conflict including. His forthcoming book is *Drug Trafficking and International Security*.

1 David Blair, “How Assad Helped the Rise of his ‘Foe’ ISIL,” *The Telegraph*, August 22, 2014, and Luke Harding, “ISIS Accused of Ethnic Cleansing as Story of Shia Prison Massacre Emerges,” *The Guardian*, August 25, 2014.

2 Yochi Dreazen, “ISIS Uses Mafia Tactics to Fund its Own Operations without Help from Persian Gulf Donors,” *Foreign Policy*, June 16, 2014.

3 Ibid.

4 David Sanger and Julie Hirschfield Davis, “Struggling to Starve ISIS of Oil Revenue, US Seeks Assistance from Turkey,” *New York Times*, September 13, 2014.

5 David Cohen, “Attacking ISIL's Financial Foundation: Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen at The Carnegie Endowment For International Peace,” October 23, 2014, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2672.aspx>

sympathetic charities. Such insulation means ISIL can use illicit schemes to fund its current operations and potentially extend its fight into other regions.⁶ Due to the significant role that crime plays in ISIL's power, the United States requires a more integrated financial and military strategy to undermine the group's territorial control and reach.

ISIL and Crime Management

Like other insurgent and terrorist organizations, ISIL has had to determine its relationship to crime in the territory it controls. Crime management is essential to remain both a viable fighting force and a plausible alternative authority structure. Other insurgent groups such as the FARC, Sendero Luminoso, the Taliban and the United Wa State Army that have gained territory have managed their relationship with crime through a mixture of confrontation, cooptation and cooperation. ISIL is proving no different.

In its expansion, ISIL has followed a number of steps to confront criminality in the territory it has acquired. First, it removed the local police force and judiciary by killing some of them while forcing any remaining Sunni to swear obedience to the group. Second, ISIL announced the harshest form of sharia law is the enshrined code of conduct. After the completion of these steps, ISIL's final move has been to demonstrate its authority by having the newly vetted police and courts mete out lashings, amputations and executions depending on the severity of the crime.⁷

Other militant groups like the IRA and the FLN have sought to confront crime by assassinating police and establishing underground legal codes in areas where they operated, while other groups like the FARC and the Taliban have sought to impose new institutional frameworks for law enforcement and judiciary directly. Militant gangs have nonetheless coopted the illicit enterprises of organized crime groups. Ironically, while these groups have taken on the responsibilities of law and order, they also commit many of the same crimes perpetrated by those they once labeled corrupt. ISIL has conformed to this pattern. This became initially noticeable in the areas of Syria seized by ISIL. The Syrian government had been routinely involved in the illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, consumer goods and people. As the country's civil war raged, "the government ceded dominance over the illicit sector to insurgent organizations and smuggling groups."⁸ In both Syria and Iraq, ISIL has also taken over organized crime schemes—like extortion and kidnap for ransom—from the former corrupt authorities or criminal figures who used to work in the area. In many cases, "its cash-raising activities resemble those of a mafia-like organization."⁹ For example, ISIL demands that business owners pay protection money to the group.

6 Dreazen, "ISIS Uses Mafia Tactics."

7 Mariam Karouny, "Life Under ISIS: For Residents of Raqqa, is This Really a Caliphate Worse than Death?" *The Independent*, September 5, 2014; Chelsea Carter, Mohammed Tawfeeq, and Hamdi Atkhshali, "In Iraq, Militants Press on Toward Baghdad," *CNN*, June 23, 2014.

8 Matt Herbert, "Partisan, Profiteers and Criminals: Syria's Illicit Economy," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 38, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 70.

9 Ken Dilanian, "Islamic State Group's War Chest Grows Daily," *Associated Press*, September 15, 2014.

If they refuse, their businesses are subject to damage or the owners are beaten, kidnapped, and held until their families can pay the ransom.¹⁰

In addition to confronting or co-opting the activities of organized crime groups, other militant organizations, including the FARC, Sendero Luminoso, the Taliban, the United Wa State Army and the IRA, all cooperated with organized criminal syndicates mostly through transactional activities involving access to territory.¹¹ The most common form of transaction is “taxation” of shipments of goods that must transit through militant controlled areas. To help keep its coffers filled, ISIL uses its territory near Turkey, Lebanon, and Iraq in similar ways. ISIL has insinuated itself into the region’s long-established smuggling networks that have existed since the French and British division of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, and which gained additional strength during the period when oil sanctions were levied against Saddam Hussein and during the chaos in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq War.¹² Through these illicit channels, ISIL engages in transactional schemes; it permits some illegal groups to continue their activities, but demands “taxes” or “religious alms” from smugglers at checkpoints in and out of the territory they control. Beyond taxation, ISIL works with border area criminal syndicates proficient in the smuggling of weapons, oil and people. The Turkish border region is an area where oil has been smuggled out of ISIL territory and weapons and foreign fighters have been smuggled in.¹³ The possibility also exists that ISIL may have taken over drug production and smuggling as it now controls areas of Syria where narcotics manufacturing and distribution has occurred.¹⁴

Bandit Rationality and the Villain’s Dilemma

Confrontation, co-optation and cooperation as crime management approaches have benefits for any insurgent group. However, cooptation and cooperation have tenuous implications for insurgent groups as well. ISIL may be confronting these vulnerabilities as it consolidates and expands its reach.

If an insurgent group begins to rely on criminal enterprises, a type of “bandit rationality” takes over members of the group.¹⁵ Relying on illicit trafficking for funding makes groups acutely vulnerable to the possibility that individuals become more attracted (and more attractive) to an insurgent group without having to demonstrate a commitment to the ideological goals of the movement. They become valuable because they show an ability to generate illicit profit to keep the group viable. Other

10 Raheem Salman and Yara Bayoumy, “Oil, Extortion and Crime: Where ISIS Gets its Money,” *MSNBC*, September 11, 2014.

11 Paul Rexton Kan, *Drugs and Contemporary Warfare* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2009), 29-36

12 Cyrus Schayegh, “The Many Worlds Of Abud Yasin; Or, What Narcotics Trafficking In The Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us About Territorialization,” *American Historical Review* 116, no. 2 (April 2011): 276, 283; Eckart Woertz, “How Long Will ISIS last Economically,” *Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Notes Internacionales*, Numero 9 (October 2014); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Addressing Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Iraq: Report of the UNODC Fact Finding Mission,” August 25, 2003, 12.

13 Daniel Dombey, “Turkey’s Clampdown on ISIS Bearing Fruit,” *The Financial Times*, September 3, 2014.

14 Colin Freeman, “Syria’s Civil War being Fought by Fighters High on Drugs,” *The Independent*, January 12, 2014.

15 Mancur Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy and Development,” *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): 568.

insurgent groups like the FARC and Sendero Luminoso, that began to depend on drug crops for funding, group cohesion and recruitment suffered as political commitment became diluted.¹⁶

Bandit rationality, in turn, leads to a “villain’s paradox” in which a “criminal needs partners who are also criminals, but these are typically untrustworthy people to deal with.”¹⁷ In short, criminals must trust people who are inherently untrustworthy and who must trust them in return. In the case of an insurgent group too wedded to criminal enterprises, the leadership of the group is unsure whether its members are committed to the political cause or to the promise of profit while the members are unsure whether leadership is using them to advance the cause or for the leadership’s personal enrichment. Comrades who share a cause can quickly become clients whose demands need to be met.

When bandit rationality stimulates a villain’s paradox, intragroup struggles can occur. Portions of ISIL may already be experiencing this phenomenon. According to reports, one ISIL battalion in Syria led by Saddam al-Jamal whose men seem more interested in the loot he can provide than the political cause of the group. This has forced him to cooperate with more criminal groups. As a commander in the Kurdish Protection Unit described Jamal’s battalion,

The jihadists are not as strong as you think and they have a lot of problems, especially with their funding and they are trying to get any means of supply. There are some severe divisions at the top and there are a lot of disagreements caused by these new groups in their midst.¹⁸

In other instances, ISIL has even gone so far as to execute members who were found guilty of committing crimes that benefitted themselves.¹⁹

Criminality and the Protraction of Conflicts

At first glance, bandit rationality and the villain’s dilemma appear to be advantages for those who seek to defeat ISIL. Internal disarray over its goals and internal disputes over its criminal spoils appear to be vulnerabilities those opposed to ISIL could exploit to bring the conflict with the group to an end. However, conflicts where insurgent groups have entwined their political goals with criminal schemes have been notoriously protracted.²⁰ As Paul Collier notes, “to get started, a rebellion needs a grievance, whereas to be sustained, it needs greed.”²¹

16 For an excellent discussion of bandit rationality in the FARC and Sendero Luminoso, see Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also Chris Dishman, “Terrorism, Crime and Transformation,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001).

17 Diego Gambetta, *Codes of the Underworld* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 30.

18 Jamie Dettmer, “Syrian Jihadists Linked to Organized Crime,” *The Daily Beast*, December 9, 2013.

19 “ISIL Crucifies its own ‘Corrupt’ Fighter,” *Times of Israel*, June 28, 2014; “ISIS Militants Behead Their Own Fighters for Spying and Embezzlement in Syria,” *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights*, October 16, 2014.

20 Svante Cornell and Michael Jonsson, “The Nexus of Crime and Conflict” in Svante Cornell and Michael Jonsson, eds., *Political Economy of Conflict in Eurasia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2014), 12-13; James Fearon, “Why do Some Civil Wars Last so Much Longer than Others?” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (May 2004); and Michael Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil Wars,” *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (Winter 2004).

21 Paul Collier, “Rebellion as Quasi-Criminal Activity,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44, no. 6 (December 2000): 852.

The conflict with ISIL shows similar early signs of other long-running criminalized conflicts.

Insurgent groups in Colombia, Peru, Afghanistan, Turkey and Myanmar continue their campaigns despite attempts to exploit the vulnerabilities presented by bandit rationality and the villain's dilemma. These insurgent groups are known as much for their criminal enterprises as they are for their ideological goals. Within these conflicts, the political and criminal goals of the militant groups became convoluted. Many militant groups "have not only lost some of their more comprehensible ideals, but increasingly turned to smuggling and other criminal activities."²² Sendero Luminoso's commitment to a Maoist vision of political life in Peru became murky in the 1990s due to its active and committed participation in coca cultivation; members routinely deserted when drug supplies were low and would "re-enlist" when cocaine profits once again became available.²³ The Afghan insurgent group, Hezb-Islami Gulbuddin, became a "full-fledged smuggling organization."²⁴ Such groups became "full-service organizations" that were adept at political violence and criminal activity.²⁵

In other conflicts where militant groups have been deeply involved in illicit activities, war became political power rather than an extension of political power. War and violence turned into a normal state of affairs whose benefits were not easily negotiated away. Over time, a growing number of stakeholders emerged who became dependent on the criminal economy generated by the ongoing conflict. Smuggling activities, for example, have benefits for vehicle drivers, security firms, merchants of equipment, and suppliers of scarce items. Law enforcement agencies and politicians of neighboring states have been known to benefit from their roles as conduits for the drug trade across their borders. Some neighboring governments have relied on the trade to meet other national security interests. For example, Pakistani intelligence agencies and their allies have routinely used drug smugglers to assist in arms shipment to numerous warring groups throughout the region.²⁶ As a result, formal and informal pressures build against ending the violent struggle.²⁷

The conflict with ISIL may become similarly resistant to resolution because of its reliance on criminal enterprises. Criminal middlemen in Turkey and Kurdish soldiers in Iraq have assisted ISIL's oil smuggling and sales.²⁸ Other beneficiaries of ISIL's oil smuggling have been truck

22 Kimberley Thachuk, "Transnational Threats: Falling Through the Cracks?" *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement* 10, no. 1 (2001): 51.

23 Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 155–159.

24 Gretchen Peters, "Taliban Drug Trade: Echoes of Colombia," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 21, 2006, 4.

25 Vera Eccarius-Kelly, "Surreptitious Lifelines: A Structural Analysis of the FARC and the PKK," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 24, no. 2 (2012): 240.

26 Tara Kartha, "Controlling the Black and Gray Markets in Small Arms in South Asia," in *Light Weapons and Civil Conflict*, eds. Jeffrey Boutwell and Michael T. Klare (Latham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 53.

27 David Malone and Jake Sherman, "Economic Factors in Civil Wars" in Chester Crocker, Fen Olster Hampson and Pamela Aal, eds., *Leashing the Dogs of War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 639; Mats Berdal and David Keen, "Violence and Economic Agendas in Civil Wars," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 26, no. 3 (December 1997): 798.

28 Sam Jones, "ISIS Sells Smuggled Oil to Turkey and Iraqi Kurds, Says US Treasury," *Financial Times*, October 23, 2014.

drivers, transport companies, refiners, oil traders, and bankers.²⁹ By insinuating itself into the established regional smuggling networks, ISIL has expanded the number of cross border stakeholders who gain from the group's continuing criminal activities.

Adding to the potential for the protraction of the conflict with ISIL is the group's control of swaths of territory across two states. This greatly enhances its ability to pursue more criminal enterprises, unlike militant groups in other conflicts that became protracted. Rather than merely having sanctuaries or safe havens in a state across the border from the conflict, ISIL has effectively eliminated a large portion of the border between Syria and Iraq. The ability to freely traverse through two states gives the group greater flexibility not only for its military operations but for its criminal activities as well. For example, ISIL abducted a number of women and girls in Iraq, selling them as brides and sex slaves in Syria.³⁰ It may continue this pattern of gaining illicit goods from its territory in one state to supply a market in its territory in the other state. It may also use the territory in one state for more extensive criminal enterprises while putting those proceeds to work in strengthening its institutions of governance in the territory of the other state. As a result, ISIL may over time develop into a "full-service organization" in its own right. Like other groups, ISIL can cloak its criminal activities with its ideology to maintain legitimacy and to continue to derive illicit profit. The ability to control territory in two states in combination with its connections with cross border illicit networks expands the number of stakeholders who benefit from ISIL's continued criminal activity, thereby contributing to the potential for the protraction of the conflict.

Towards an Integrated Strategy

Trying to frustrate ISIL's criminal activities will add little to the current strategic goal to degrade and destroy the group via airstrikes and support of proxies on the ground. As previously mentioned, the ability of other militant groups to finance themselves with illicit activities and little reliance on outside sponsorship or the international financial system makes them more insulated from counterthreat finance attempts. A senior Obama administration official conceded, "there are obvious difficulties. These sales are not through established channels."³¹ Conversely, airstrikes and proxy forces can do little to reduce ISIL's criminal activities. An air force is not a police force any more than a militia is a constabulary. ISIL territory currently encompasses a population of 8 million people across two states, providing a deep reservoir of opportunities for criminal exploitation. There are some clear limits to what the United States and coalition can achieve without seizing and holding ISIL territory.

Publicizing ISIL's criminal activities as part of a "naming and shaming" campaign would not do much to turn members away from the

29 Cohen, "Attacking ISIL's Financial Foundation."

30 Barbara Starr, Joshua Berlinger and Raja Razek, "US Military Carries Out Airstrike and Aid Drops to Iraqi Town Surrounded by ISIS," *CNN*, August 30, 2014, and Chris Pleasance, "Hundreds of Yazidi Women Held in Islamic State Prison Where They are Held as Sex Slaves or Sold Off as Jihadi Brides for as Little as \$25," *DailyMail*, August 28, 2014.

31 Steven Mufson, "Islamic State Fighters Drawing on Oil Assets for Funding and Fuel," *The Washington Post*, September 15, 2014.

group or dissuade sympathizers from joining its ranks. Such information can be dismissed as enemy propaganda. Moreover, ISIL members, like members in other militant groups, can rationalize their criminal activities as “the ends justify the means.” Activities like smuggling and human trafficking earn money for the cause and serve to undermine governmental authority in both Syria and Iraq.

Attempting to limit oil smuggling may hold promise; Turkey has stepped up its border enforcement to take on smugglers. The Kurdistan Regional Government has also begun to track commercial flows into its territory more strictly. The coalition has attacked oil production facilities in Syria under ISIL control. These combined actions have appeared to reduce some of ISIL’s profits.³² The coalition will also need to deal with oil production facilities in Iraq to reduce ISIL’s oil smuggling revenues. The United States and coalition should make recapturing them by Iraqi forces a top priority. To tackle the broader network of regional smuggling, the Treasury Department has threatened to levy sanctions against any individuals involved in trafficking ISIL’s Iraqi or Syrian obtained oil.³³ These are valuable efforts, and more can be done to give them additional strength. For instance, because ISIL is largely earning money locally and dealing predominantly in cash, the United States and the coalition should focus on ways to interdict bulk cash transportation, storage and transfer. One way to tackle the transfer of illicit money is for supportive governments to train Iraqi bank officials in the latest financial tracking techniques, as many banks remain operational in and near ISIL-held territory.

In recent months, air strikes against ISIL-controlled oil refineries in Syria have had little impact alone. According to an extensive investigation by the *Financial Times*, local Syrians have reported ISIL made the bulk of its oil money from smuggling crude, rather than refined oil, to Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian middlemen who then refine it locally where coalition airstrikes are not authorized.³⁴ However, while air strikes by themselves may have had limited success, they have worked in conjunction with the dramatic drop in global oil prices to reduce ISIL’s revenue stream. One report by the Atlantic Council states the combined effect has reduced the group’s oil revenue by approximately seventy to eighty percent.³⁵ Moreover, in order to appease those living in its territory as winter approached, ISIL has had to provide refined oil at a significantly low price to people in its territory for heating and power.³⁶ This, too, has diminished the group’s coffers.

Nonetheless, military operations, such as air strikes, that destroy oil facilities and other assets that support oil smuggling must be viewed cautiously. Certain military operations can actually aid the criminality of the group; the US and its partners, given the constraints of the current strategy, should avoid conducting operations that can increase criminal opportunities for ISIL. The air campaign against Iraq in 2003 offers a

32 Matthew Phillips, “ISIL Loses its Oil Business,” *Businessweek*, October 14, 2014.

33 Cohen, “Attacking ISIL’s Financial Foundation.”

34 Erika Solomon, “The ISIS Economy: Meet the New Boss,” *The Financial Times*, January 5, 2015.

35 Mona Alami, “ISIS’s Governance Crisis (Part I): Economic Governance,” *The Atlantic Council*, December 19, 2014.

36 *Ibid.*

cautionary tale. The damage to the Iraq's power grid permitted criminal groups to pull down power lines, strip them of copper and sell the highly sought metal to eager buyers in the region.³⁷ Therefore, countries involved in the current air campaign against ISIL must be careful that they do not damage key infrastructure, which may spur additional black market opportunities that ISIL can use to raise more money, further enmeshing crime in the fabric of the territory under ISIL control. For example, attacking oil facilities may stimulate a black market in material needed to repair oil operations.

A more integrated strategy that links both Treasury activities with military operations may prove beneficial in limiting ISIL's power. One example of an integrated strategy of military operations and financial pressures used in a protracted conflict that bore fruit was Colombia's Democratic Security and Defense Policy. Beginning in 2002, the Colombian government implemented a coordinated approach to tackle the various militant groups, including the FARC, that were challenging the Colombian state by expanding the presence of the state to deny sanctuary to militant groups; protect the population once under the control of militant groups and to directly target the illegal drug trade which financed the militant groups and contributed to the growth of corruption and crime.³⁸ The broad outline of the Colombia's strategy has been:

The government gradually restores state presence and the authority of state institutions, starting in strategically important areas. Once the Armed Forces and the National Police have re-established control over an area, Army and Police units maintain security and protect the civilian population. This enables state organizations and criminal investigation authorities to work in the area.³⁹

The strategy has led to the demobilization of a number of militant groups, peace talks with the FARC, and a concomitant reduction in criminal acts and drug crop cultivation.⁴⁰

A glaring issue is who would implement such an approach in the absence of US or coalition willingness to provide a ground presence of their own. Iraq has weak state institutions and the moderate Syrian rebel groups' ability not only to regain territory from ISIL, but to topple Asaad and take control of the institutions of power is a long-term proposition. The United States and those supporting moderate Syrian rebel groups will have to vet their membership and demand pledges from them to forgo criminal activities. Given the urgency by many countries to cobble together a response to ISIL's actions and the seductive opportunities for illicit profit, vetting rebel groups has proven to be a tall order.

Even with the constraints of current US policy, portions of Colombia's approach can be used to design a more integrated strategy

37 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Addressing Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Iraq: Report of the UNODC Fact Finding Mission," August 25 2003, 7.

38 Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Defence (Colombia), "Democratic Security and Defense Policy," (2003), 31, <http://usregsec.sdsu.edu/docs/Colombia2003.pdf>

39 Jose Perdomo, *Colombia's Democratic Security and Defense Policy in the Demobilization of the Paramilitaries* (Carlisle Barracks: United States Army War College, 2007), 9.

40 June Beittel, "Peace Talks in Colombia," Congressional Research Service, April 3, 2014, 11-12; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Colombia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2013," (June 2014), 16; and Thomas Marks, "A Model Counterinsurgency: Uribe's Colombia (2002-2006) vs FARC," *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (March-April 2007): 50-51.

that weakens ISIL's criminal foundations. For example, Treasury agents and military planners should be embedded with one another to prevent operations that will bolster criminal opportunities for ISIL while searching for ways to drain the group's funds. The establishment of intelligence "fusion centers" between the Department of Defense and the Department of Treasury may also aid in integrating operations. The US Treasury believes finding ways to increase the financial pressure on the group will make it more costly for ISIL to expand its operations and maintain its current territorial gains.⁴¹ Substantial damage to ISIL's finances has been due to the group's own missteps in trying to run an economy; it mishandled the rampant inflation of basic goods like food, cooking oil and kerosene caused in part by its widespread extortion of businesses.

Recommendations

To take advantage of ISIL's mistakes, military operations against the group must be robust enough to create additional expenditures and financial complications for the group. Replacing equipment, enlisting recruits and maintaining a local economy are all expensive propositions for ISIL. The group is also working on minting its own currency which will also very likely lead to larger financial headaches for ISIL. Because the currency will be valued on the worth of gold, silver, and copper used to make the coinage, experts forecast the shortage of these metals will lead the group to print paper money and thus create even more inflationary pressures.⁴²

Therefore, more efforts should be aimed at disrupting the supply of gold, silver and copper to expedite the group's monetary failure. Additionally, military operations should target the group's financial personnel as well as its military personnel along with stores of hard currency in ways that would disrupt its finances. Other operations should be aimed at providing further intelligence on the inner workings of the group's criminal enterprises.⁴³ The more ISIL has to contort itself to provide law and order for political legitimacy while coopting and cooperating with criminality for economic gains, the greater the stress placed on the group. However, if this approach is adopted, much like Colombia's Democratic Security and Defense Policy, success will take time.

Recognizing the difficulty in substantially reducing ISIL's criminality in the short term does not absolve the United States and its partners from developing a more integrated strategy linking military operations and financial actions. The current strategy may work to create an economic implosion in ISIL controlled territory, but it is unclear what US partners will do in the aftermath, and whether that will lead to ISIL's surrendering of territory. In many ways, the current strategy is a paradox: the financial strategy is to help break ISIL's grip on territory, but a stronger financial strategy will require the United States and its partners to access that territory. Without an integrated strategy and

41 Cohen, "Attacking ISIL's Financial Foundation."

42 Jesse Solomon, "The ISIS Currency is Doomed," *CNN*, November 14, 2014.

43 Patrick Johnston and Ben Bahney, "Hitting ISIS Where it Hurts: Disrupt ISIS's Cash Flow in Iraq," *RAND*, August 13, 2014, <http://www.rand.org/blog/2014/08/hitting-isis-where-it-hurts-disrupt-isis-cash-flow.html>.

willing partners on the ground to enable its implementation, the United States and the coalition could find themselves bogged down in another protracted conflict.

Gaza 2014: Israel's Attrition vs Hamas' Exhaustion

Eitan Shamir and Eado Hecht

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ABSTRACT: While Hamas adopted a strategy of psychological exhaustion of Israel's civilians, Israel employed physical attrition of Hamas' military capabilities. This article examines how these strategies interacted with each other, assesses the strategic gains and losses on each side, and suggests some lessons relevant for American strategists.

Operation "Protective Edge" is the Israel Defense Forces' name for its latest military operation against Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza during the months of July–August 2014. This article analyzes the competing strategies of Israel and Hamas in this specific bout of fighting and assesses how effective they were in achieving their political ends. By strategy we mean how each side attempted to optimize its physical and psychological use of violence in achieving its political goals. Strategy is the art of deciding what violent acts would best assist in bringing about one's political goal, and then executing them. In some cases, the actions chosen might be synonymous with the political goals (for example, when the political goal is conquest of territory) but often they are only a means of hurting the rival sufficiently so he agrees to acquiesce to the political demand.

Israel's military strikes on Gaza and Hamas were much more destructive in terms of loss of life and property than those of Hamas on Israel. However the efficacy of military action is measured not by how much carnage and destruction it wreaks on the enemy, but by the achievement of political goals and the cost in terms of resources expended and destruction suffered in return.

The similarity in military actions notwithstanding, the specific political context of Operation "Protective Edge" was very different from "Cast Lead" 2008 and "Defensive Pillar" 2012. By 2014, Hamas had suffered a severe financial crisis that threatened its ability to rule Gaza. As a result, we believe Hamas used force to cause the main actors – Israel, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority and others – to release their strangle-hold on Hamas' revenues. This desperation drove Hamas to endure a much higher level of physical damage before agreeing to a ceasefire. Israel failed to read this situation correctly, which led to surprise over Hamas' determination to fight.

In the first section, we analyze the wider context and the rivals' political goals on the eve of hostilities. In the second section, we describe how each developed its strategy to match its political goals and how the two strategies interacted with each other and were modified according to developments on the ground. In the final section, we assess the gains and losses of each side and discuss potential lessons for America and its allies.

The Wider Context: Political Goals Prior to Operations

Hamas' Political Goal: Staying in Power

The recent bout of fighting between Israel and Gaza is just the latest escalation against the backdrop of almost constant fighting between Jews and Arabs since 1920. Although Operation Protective Edge has an official start-date, 8 July 2014, and an official end-date, 26 August 2014, it would be inaccurate to portray it as isolated conflict. In fact, even with regard to the short-term processes that led to the Israeli decision to initiate another operation the aforementioned start and end dates are mere formalities. The fighting did not begin then, and is unlikely to end for any appreciable period of time. Israel's decision to initiate Operation Protective Edge was a response to Hamas' escalation of rocket and mortar fire – an escalation that began gradually from 13 June.

Hamas' ultimate goal, as declared in its charter, is to destroy the state of Israel and establish a Palestinian Arab state based on the Shariya – the laws of Islam.¹ However, Hamas leaders are fully aware attaining this goal is not feasible for now, and they must first achieve domination of the Palestinian nation as a whole. Therefore, the medium-term political goal of Hamas is defeating rival Palestinian factions – especially the only one roughly equal to it in political and military strength, the secular Fatah.

After winning a majority in the January 2006 elections and becoming the official government of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas seemed closer to this goal. However, over the following year the Fatah party, led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, attempted to undermine the Hamas government. The political rivalry deteriorated repeatedly into violence and, finally, into a brief civil war in 2007. Hamas' largest constituency and source of strength lay in Gaza, whereas Fatah's (helped by Israel) was in Judea and Samaria. The Palestinian Authority split into two separate entities with only a tenuous bureaucratic link between them.

Hamas' Budgetary Crises

Officially, the border between Gaza and Egypt has been closed since the Hamas takeover of Gaza. Unofficially, it is open to any and all types of goods, both civilian and military. To maintain the charade of a closed border, goods were transferred into Gaza via numerous tunnels dug between the Egyptian and Gazan sides of Rafiah. While officially frowning on this import of goods, both Israel and Egypt did little to prevent it, seeing it as a way to keep the Gaza economy afloat. What

1 For a copy of the Hamas Charter in English see: <http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/www.thejerusalemfund.org/carryover/documents/charter.html?chocaid=397>

worried the Israelis was not the import of civilian goods, most of which could in any case be imported through Israel itself, but the import of weapons and dual-use materials that could be used for military purposes. Trade with and through Egypt reached its peak with the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood regime in Egypt.

The retaking of power in Egypt by the military regime of Abdel Fatah al-Sisi was disastrous for Hamas. The new regime saw Hamas as an ally of the hated Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamist groups attacking Egyptian troops in Sinai. In summer 2013, Sisi retaliated by strangling Hamas' financial windpipe; within months the Egyptian army located and shut down hundreds of smuggling-tunnels, and by June 2014 more than 1,500 of the estimated 1,800 tunnels had been shut down – approximately halving Hamas' annual revenues.² Iran's donations to Hamas had already been cut drastically after Hamas supported the Syrian Sunni rebels fighting against the Iranian-supported Assad regime.³

Hamas' immediate political goals were: removing all Israeli and Egyptian control over imports into Gaza by building an international seaport, an international airport, and allowing free travel through the land crossings between Gaza and Egypt and Gaza and Israel.⁴ Assessing whether Hamas won or lost this war depends on whether it can achieve some of these goals.

Israel's Political Objectives - Containment and Quiet

Israel's political goal vis-à-vis Gaza can be summed up in one word – containment, that is a quiet border, or at least a reduction in the intensity of Palestinian attacks from Gaza to a level regarded as no more than an irritation.

Political anarchy in Gaza would prevent achievement of these goals; only a strong central government can impose its authority on rogue elements within its own ranks or smaller groups, such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Resistance Committees, to prevent them from provoking Israel. Since 2007, the Israelis have not seen any Palestinian group, Fatah included, capable of replacing Hamas as this central authority. Therefore, destroying Hamas is considered counter-productive. Better to “educate” Hamas that attacks on Israel damage its higher priority interests. Thus the goal is to punish it enough to hurt it, but not enough so that it loses control. Israel's use of force is not designed to throw Hamas out of power, only to deter it from launching further attacks on Israel.

However, there are constraints on Israel's use of force: (a) its sensitivity to Israeli casualties, (b) domestic cultural aversion to causing civilian casualties, (c) diplomatic and economic dependence on the United States, (d) diplomatic and economic ties with Europe, and (e) danger of a local escalation in Gaza spilling over to other borders. Together, these

2 Eric Trager, *Sisi's Egypt and the Gaza Conflict*, Policy Analysis (Washington, DC: Washington Institute, July 14, 2014); “Egypt Army Destroys 13 More Gaza Tunnels,” *Ynet News*, July 27, 2014.

3 Hillel Frisch, *The Flimsy Palestinian “Unity” Government*, BESA Center Perspectives Paper, no. 251 (Israel: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, June 26, 2014).

4 Ron Tira, “Operation Protective Edge: Ends, Ways and Means and the Distinct Context,” *Infinity Journal* (September 2014), 3.

constraints limit the range of military actions Israel can use in support of its policy.

A Clash of Strategies – Israel’s Attrition versus Hamas’ Exhaustion

On 12 June 2014 a team of Hamas terrorists murdered three Jewish teenagers. Israel responded by arresting and interrogating hundreds of suspects – most affiliated with Hamas.⁵ Initially, Hamas denied involvement, but later admitted the killers were indeed members of the organization, but that its leaders had no foreknowledge of the crime.⁶ However, the Hamas leadership immediately sanctioned an increase in the rate of rockets and mortars fired from Gaza into Israel. The previous “dribble” of a few rockets and mortars fired every few days became a daily occurrence and gradually escalated from one to three rockets per day to a few dozen per day.⁷

This escalation was portrayed as an act of solidarity with the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria who were being “attacked” by Israeli forces searching for the teenagers. Israel’s initial response was minimal – a few air strikes each day attempting to hit the launcher teams. Israelis hoped once the bodies of the Israeli teenagers were found and the search called off, the fighting around Gaza would wane too.

On 7 July the dribble of rockets and mortar bombs became a flood: 134 were fired into southern Israel.⁸ That night Israel’s government ordered a change in strategy. Instead of hunting active launchers and launch-teams, the air force was ordered to attack the military-terrorist infrastructure in Gaza: all known launchers, storage sites, command posts and individual commanders. The rate of air strikes jumped from a few per day to 150 to 200.⁹

There was one important difference between the initial strikes of Operation Protective Edge and those of Operations Cast Lead and Defensive Pillar – the latter two had surprised the Palestinians.¹⁰ Surprise enabled the IDF to kill and destroy a significant number of personnel and equipment before the Palestinians employed them – shortening their endurance. This time, the Palestinians had the initiative, and the initial strikes by the IDF were less successful.

5 “News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (June 18-24, 2014),” *Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, June 24, 2014, www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20661.

6 Jethro Mullen and Talal Abu Rahma, “Hamas Admits its Men Abducted Israeli Teens, says its Leaders didn’t Know,” *CNN*, August 23, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/08/22/world/meast/mideast-crisis/index.html>.

7 December 2012 (one month after the end of Operation Defensive Pillar) to 12 June 2014 the Palestinians fired 208 rockets and mortar bombs from Gaza into Israel. From 13 June to 6 July they fired another 232, see: “Terror Data and Trends,” *Israeli Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/En/TerrorData/Reports/Pages/default.aspx>; “Monthly Summary-June 2014,” *Israeli Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/Monthly%20summary%20-%20June%202014.pdf>; “Monthly Summary-July 2014,” *Israeli Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/Monthly%20summary%20-%20July%202014%20docx.pdf>.

8 *Ibid.*

9 IDF Spokesperson Unit, News Updates, 3-9 July, 2014, <http://www.idf.il>.

10 Efraim Inbar and Eitan Shamir, “Mowing the Grass: Israel’s Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 85.

On the following days, the rate of Palestinian fire varied from a low of 115 rockets and mortars to a high of 177 per day.¹¹ The variance seems to be only slightly connected to the intensity of Israeli air strikes and had more to do with internal Palestinian logistical issues. To increase pressure on Hamas leaders and commanders, the IDF began to destroy their homes; the families were first warned to leave the houses. Unable to conduct a decisive knock-out blow, not wishing to cause significant collateral damage and protected by the Iron Dome, Israel adopted a strategy of gradual attrition of Hamas military infrastructure.

Israel expected a replay of Operation Defensive Shield (2012), meaning, an exchange of stand-off fire, in which Israeli casualties would be minimal, and Palestinian casualties would be considerably higher, with the Palestinians deciding they had made their point and calling a halt to hostilities. As a palliative, Israel would offer some concessions.

However, the Palestinian political goal and its commensurate strategy were not what Israel expected. Because of its dire financial situation, Hamas leaders decided to gamble on instigating a full-scale war in the hope of causing a major international crisis. Knowing the limitations of their artillery weapons versus Israeli defenses they prepared two complementary strategies:

First: Match Israel's strategy of attrition with one of psychological exhaustion:

Rockets might not cause many Israeli casualties. However, since they could reach 60 percent of Israel's population, they could disrupt Israel's welfare and economy for some time. Even if no civilians were killed, repeated disruption might damage Israeli morale and exert pressure on its government.

Furthermore, Hamas planned to bypass the Iron Dome and border defenses by using tunnels and amphibious raids on Israeli settlements near Gaza. A few successful infiltration attacks inside these settlements might cause significant psychological shock to the Israelis.

Second: Igniting an international diplomatic offensive against Israel by deliberately increasing the collateral damage caused to Palestinian civilians:

The Palestinians have been using human shields, hospitals, schools, UN facilities, mosques, hotels and private homes to hide and protect personnel and equipment since the late 1960s. Hamas reached new levels with the permanent embedding of bombs into the walls of many of these buildings, deliberately firing from them or adjacent locations at Israeli civilians and troops in order to provoke retaliatory fire that would harm Palestinian civilians, UN personnel or foreign journalists. In fact, from Hamas' political viewpoint, the more Palestinian civilians killed and wounded the better, as this would be more likely to cause international intervention against Israel.¹² However, this strategy has a culmination point since too many casualties break morale.

11 "Monthly Summary-July 2014," *Israeli Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollectionDocuments/Monthly%20summary%20-%20July%202014%20docx.pdf>.

12 See captured Hamas doctrinal manual: Bob Frederick, "Hamas' Disturbing 'Human Shields' Manual," *New York Post*, August 5, 2014, <http://nypost.com/2014/08/05/hamas-manual-details-civilian-death-plan-israel/>.

The Impact of Violence on Israel's and Hamas' Political Will:

The disruption and casualties caused by rockets fired into Israel seems not to have shaken Israel's population. In central Israel, people took cover when necessary and then resumed everyday activities. The only significant success was fleeting – a two-day halt of foreign international flights into Israel when one rocket landed a few kilometers from Ben-Gurion International Airport. In southern Israel, where the intensity was greater, the economy suffered more, and there were more casualties; but general support for the government never wavered.

The two amphibious raids conducted in the first days of the war also left no lasting impressions. Both were detected as they reached the shore and all infiltrators killed. Conversely, the first infiltration attack through the offensive-tunnels to the outskirts of an Israeli border village on 17 July caused extreme consternation, despite the fact there were no Israeli casualties.¹³ The very idea of such attacks terrified the majority of Israeli civilians living there in a way that thousands of rockets and mortars fired over the past decade had not, even before the introduction of the Iron Dome anti-rocket defense system. It should be stressed the existence of the offensive-tunnels was not a surprise to the Israeli government, the IDF or even the civilians.¹⁴

Ground fighting was much fiercer than in Operation Cast Lead when Israeli troops entered Gaza, and Hamas ground troops fled. This time Hamas fought to defend the tunnel system. Israeli forces searching for the tunnels inside Gaza suffered approximately 700 casualties (45 of them fatal). Casualties among Palestinian fighters facing them were significantly higher.¹⁵ While the Israelis searched for tunnels, Hamas conducted more raids via yet undiscovered tunnels. Most of the raiders were killed, but the IDF suffered 11 killed and at least a dozen wounded in these actions. The ground battle did not stop the exchanges of Palestinian artillery versus Israeli aerial fire, but did reduce them considerably: the daily rate of Palestinian fire dropped to less than half the average before the offensive.¹⁶

On 4 August, after destroying 32 offensive-tunnels, the IDF withdrew and resumed its previous strategy of stand-off air strikes. The Israeli government considered, but rejected a full scale invasion of Gaza due to the expected number of Israeli and Palestinian casualties, and the lack of a clear exit strategy.¹⁷ Aware of this decision, Hamas acted

13 There are three separate tunnel systems in Gaza: the smuggling-tunnels under the border with Egypt; the defensive storage, tactical, communication and command-tunnels scattered throughout the district and, finally, the offensive-tunnels which were dug under the border with Israel. Yochai Ofer, "Tzahal Sikel Pigua Khadira Gadol Derech Minheret Terror," (Hebrew), *NRG*, July 17, 2014, <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/597/355.html>.

14 "2013 Annual Summary," *Israel Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Reports/Pages/2013AnnualSummary.aspx>; "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (June 18–24)," *Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, June 24, 2014, <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20661>. On the challenge of the offensive tunnels see: Eado Hecht, "Gaza: How Hamas Tunnel Network Grew," *BBC*, July 22, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28430298>.

15 IDF ground troops reported hundreds of Palestinian fighters killed and almost 200 captured. See: <http://ilv100.walla.co.il/?w=/22/2769412>; <http://rotter.net/cgi-bin/go-news.pl?file=27422.html>; <http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/2689/2770804>.

16 "Monthly Summary-July 2014," *Israel Security Agency*, <http://www.shabak.gov.il/SiteCollection/Documents/Monthly%20summary%20-%20July%202014%20docx.pdf>.

17 Barak Ravid, "Netanyahu Tried to Scare off Ministers to Get Gaza Occupation off the Table," *HaAretz*, August 6, 2014, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.609152>.

with impunity. Finally, on 26 August, Hamas agreed to a month-long ceasefire with no preconditions. In return, Israel, as a concession, agreed to increase the fishing-zone.¹⁸

Analysis and Conclusions

Relative to previous rounds of escalated fighting between Israel and Hamas, this bout was much more costly to both sides. Casualties and damage were significantly higher.

Palestinian casualties are a major issue in the propaganda contest between the rivals, and so all numbers should be regarded critically. The Hamas government claims approximately 2,200 people were killed and 11,000 wounded in Gaza, and more than 75 percent of the dead were civilians. Israel claims approximately half the dead were combatants and many civilian deaths were caused by deliberate Hamas use of civilians as human shields.¹⁹ Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians fled from their homes. Thousands of buildings were damaged and will take years to rebuild. Hamas' rocket arsenal was drastically depleted (about a fifth is estimated to be left), its offensive tunnels and some of its defensive tunnels destroyed. If published Israeli data is correct, at least 15 percent of Hamas military personnel were killed or wounded, including a number of high-ranking individuals. Also, Hamas' plans to raid Israeli villages were foiled.

On the Israeli side, 14 civilians and 67 soldiers were killed, and approximately 400 civilians and 705 soldiers were wounded. Several buildings were destroyed and a few hundred damaged, but most only superficially.

On the face of it, since Israel's only political goal was a ceasefire, it seems Israel was successful. The past seven months on the Gaza border have been the quietest in decades. The reasons Hamas agreed to, and so-far maintains, the long-term ceasefire are not known – there are, however, indications the Israeli strategy of attrition was working, whereas the Hamas strategy of exhaustion seemed to be failing. Also, there are indications of mounting anger and desperation within the Gaza population at casualties and the destruction of its property. During the fighting, Hamas reportedly executed political opponents under the pretext they were Israeli spies.²⁰ The expected international pressure on Israel did not occur and even some of the Arab regimes, not only Egypt, seemed to support Israel over Hamas. Finally, despite casualties and disruption of life, the Israeli public did not exhibit signs of pressuring its government to concede. The Israeli government apparently fended off calls by some for more extensive ground operations.

Israel again lost the media and the propaganda struggle – despite criticism of Hamas' use of human shields, Israel's actions are facing a propaganda and lawfare (hostile UN inquiry) backlash over the number of Palestinian civilians hurt and the damage to Gaza's civilian

18 To prevent smuggling of weapons into Gaza by sea, Gazan fishermen are required to fish only in a specific zone.

19 Richard Behar, "The Media Intifada: Bad Math, Ugly Truths about New York Times in Israel-Hamas War," *Forbes*, August 21, 2014.

20 "Hamas Executes 30 Suspected Collaborators: Report," *I24 News*, July 29 2014, <http://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/middle-east/38508-140728-hamas-executes-30-suspected-collaborators-report>.

infrastructure. Hamas' resistance on the ground surprised the Israelis; casualties were higher than expected. Hamas was able to maintain fire throughout the operation, reaching Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and beyond, and temporarily halt international air traffic to Israel. Major rifts were exposed between the US administration and Israel on many issues. Israel's economy was visibly, though not significantly, hurt.

The current view in Jerusalem is toppling Hamas will only lead to anarchy or require Israel to govern Gaza – both undesirable outcomes. Therefore, maintaining a contained and weakened Hamas is Israel's least bad policy choice but then – how does it deter a resumption of harassment of Israeli border villages from Gaza?

This complex reality, coupled with the results of the fighting, may gain the Palestinians certain achievements presently unforeseeable. In Israel itself, parts of the population – especially those living near Gaza – voice fears of renewed fighting and question Israeli government assurances they can return to their daily lives.

To this point we have discussed only the leading protagonists, Israel and Hamas. However, the principal actor, whose actions, shutting the smuggling tunnels, precipitated this war, was Egypt. As the war progressed Egypt continued to discover and destroy dozens of tunnels. Egypt undoubtedly gained the most from this war – Hamas is weakened and beholden to it, American and European attempts to intervene diplomatically were rebuffed as were attempts by the White House to involve Turkey and Qatar (both Egypt's regional rivals) in the negotiations. It was Egypt's refusal to make any concessions to Hamas that gradually enabled Israel to force Hamas to accept a ceasefire for no tangible return. Egypt holds the keys to the political situation and most of Hamas' demands were actually directed at Egypt.

The political results of this operation are not clear-cut. Thus, the term victory in the sense of a clear win-lose situation is irrelevant in this case. It is possible both sides gained something each can call a victory. Whatever the perceptions as to who gained more, the principal Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been resolved, and it is fairly certain some level of violence will continue.

Potential Lessons for America and its Allies

As shown by the evolution of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Islamic extremism cannot be overcome in the traditional sense of eradicating the enemy, or getting him to renounce his stated political goals. Thus, despite the many differences between the political and strategic contexts of America's war and that of Israel, both face similar situations. They must develop strategies for conducting protracted – theoretically unwinnable – wars.

Some defense experts have nicknamed Israel's strategy "Mowing the Grass." The analogy is clear. Operation Protective Edge should not be regarded as an independent event, it is part of a long-term strategy, a strategy that alternates continuous routine low intensity activities with occasional escalations, each in response to an escalation of hostile activity in order to cut the "grass" back to an acceptable height. Each operation has a short-term, a medium-term, and a long-term objective. The short-term objective is to achieve a de-escalation of hostile attacks;

the medium-term objective is to degrade the enemy's capabilities so as to deter him from renewing hostilities for as long as possible; the long-term objective is to achieve a cumulative deterrence that will, at an undetermined future date, gradually lead to a cessation of attacks.²¹ The exact details may be different, but the general concept can be adapted to the needs of the United States.

To succeed, a "grass-mowing" operation must inflict a certain level of pain on the enemy. Israel's experience has been that the destruction of material assets is not particularly painful to its enemies. Material is easy to replace. What hurts these organizations is the killing of personnel, the higher the rank the better.²² Most of these organizations have a limited number of trained personnel – they take longer to replace. Furthermore, although the ideology of these organizations eulogizes suicide-attacks, the leaders are usually less suicidal than the lower-ranks. A threat directed specifically at senior personnel often causes a reduction in activity. So searching for, and attacking, the senior commanders of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), for example, is more effective than killing a greater number of lower ranks. Still, the number of combatants killed, wounded or captured as a percentage of the total available, is an important tool for deterrence; the faster the casualties accrue, the more effective the tool.

However, as shown in Operation Protective Edge, the level of damage the organization is willing to endure at any specific time depends on a wide variety of factors. What was unbearable for Hamas in Operation Defensive Shield was bearable in Protective Edge, because the political context had changed. Understanding the specific context is crucial for planners. What worked in Iraq in 2007 might not be relevant in 2014.

Over the past three decades, Israeli strategists have attempted to reduce to a minimum the involvement of ground troops in major operations – the main incentive being the reduction of Israeli casualties. In some cases the use of air power has proven sufficient, in others not. There are tactical reasons why this is so: certain targets are not vulnerable to air strikes; when the only threat is aerial the enemy adapts his actions accordingly. However, it seems the most important reason is strategic: air strikes, especially when civilian casualties must be avoided, take longer to achieve the level of damage required to compel the enemy to request a cease fire. The necessary level of damage itself varies with the political context of each escalation. Moreover, the enemy adapts and consistently seeks ways to neutralize Western technological advantages. Thus, destroying the offensive tunnel system required a ground operation. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continue to study the tactical

21 On the Israeli concept of "Cumulative Deterrence" see: Doron Almog, "Cumulative Deterrence and the War on Terrorism," *Parameters* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2004-05); Thomas Rid, "Deterrence Beyond the State: The Israeli Experience," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 1 (April 2012).

22 For a discussion of the effectiveness of targeted killings, see Steven R. David, *Fatal Choices: Israel's Policy of Targeted Killing*, BESA Mideast Security and Policy Studies, no. 51 (Israel: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, July 2002); This was also shown in Afghanistan and Iraq: Javier Jordan, "The Effectiveness of the Drone Campaign Against Al-Qaida Central: A Case Study," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014).

lessons of the conflict, many of which are relevant to US forces.²³ One lesson, in particular, emerged clearly during the campaign – the need for heavily protected armored personnel carriers and tanks in order to increase survivability and reduce casualties.²⁴

In sum, the United States finds itself fighting in similar wars under a growing set of domestic and international constraints. As a great power, it is less vulnerable than Israel to sanctions, propaganda and lawfare; but it must still take these into account. Accordingly, Israel's strategic concept, however limited, might suit America's current policy and strategic objectives in regard to its fight with various jihadist, non-state organizations.

Eitan Shamir

Dr. Eitan Shamir is a faculty member at the Political Science Department, Bar Ilan University and a Research Fellow with the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA Center). Prior to his academic position he held a position at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, Prime Minister Office. Before joining the Ministry he served as a senior fellow at the Dado Center for Interdisciplinary Military Studies (CIMS) at the IDF General Headquarters.

Eado Hecht

Dr. Eado Hecht is an independent analyst focusing on military doctrines and their implementation. He is currently a Research Fellow at the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, teaches at various academic institutions and an assistant editor at *The Journal of Military Operations*.

23 Brigadier General Tamir Hayman, Head of IDF Training and Doctrine at GHQ, "The Learning Process Amongst the General Staff" (lecture presented at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA Center) conference, "Operation Protective Edge: Military and Political Lessons," Ramat Gan, Israel, September 29, 2014.

24 Yossi Yehoshua, "Ya'alon approves addition of 200 advanced APCs for the IDF," *YNET News*, September 22, 2014, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4573814,00.html>

Gaza 2014: Hamas' Strategic Calculus

Glenn E. Robinson

ABSTRACT: This article analyzes Hamas' strategic and political calculations during the 2014 conflict with Israel in Gaza. I argue Hamas did not plan the conflict, which came mostly in response to Israel's crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank (Operation Brothers Keeper). However, Hamas sought to use the conflict to reverse its increasingly weak strategic position, and had some success in doing so. However, given Gaza's continued physical and regional isolation, Hamas' enhanced position coming out of the conflict is not likely to be long-lived.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the strategic calculations Hamas made during the Summer 2014 conflict with Israel.¹ While Hamas is categorized by both the US Government and the European Union as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), its leaders have a long history of making rational calculations (and sometimes miscalculations) seeking to maximize advantages to Hamas as an organization and social movement.² Even groups that engage in terrorism are typically rational actors seeking to advance their causes. By now, we have an extensive body of work analyzing Hamas' rise, history, politics and decision-making.³ Using a rational actor model, my central argument is that Hamas sought to use the 2014 conflict to reverse its overall weak position within Palestinian society and did, in fact, succeed in making significant – but likely short lived – political gains.

More broadly, my argument is as follows. By the Spring of 2014, Hamas' position as the pre-eminent Palestinian power inside the Gaza Strip had weakened substantially. Years of isolation and regional changes brought on by the "Arab Spring" worked against the interests of

1 Author's Note: my thanks to Omar Shaban and the anonymous reviewers of *Parameters* for their helpful comments. This is based in part on several weeks of fieldwork in the West Bank in September-October 2014 on a parallel project on Palestinian governance. The reviewers and my Palestinian interlocutors are not responsible for any of my conclusions or mistakes.

2 An EU court removed Hamas from the EU list of terror organizations, largely on a technicality. It is widely assumed that Hamas will be put back on the list during 2015. For an argument on social movements and how Hamas is best seen in this analytical framework, see Glenn E. Robinson, "Hamas as Social Movement," in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

3 The first generation of scholarship on Hamas includes: Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Hisham H. Ahmad, *Hamas: From Religious Salvation to Political Transformation: The Rise of Hamas in Palestinian Society* (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1994); Glenn E. Robinson, "Hamas and the Islamist Mobilization," in *Building a Palestinian State: The Incomplete Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); and Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000). A second generation of scholarship on Hamas includes Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Beverly Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: the Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010); and Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: A Beginner's Guide*, 2nd Ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2010).

Glenn E. Robinson is an associate professor of defense analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and is also affiliated with the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. He has published widely on Arab politics and security issues, and especially on Palestinian politics.

Hamas. Israel's embargo of the Gaza Strip, in place since 2007, further immiserated an already impoverished population. Gaza's isolation only intensified as regional changes lost important external support for Hamas from Egypt, Syria, and Iran. Indeed, the Fatah-Hamas agreement in April 2014 signaled Hamas was no longer willing and able to rule Gaza alone, and essentially had to yield to Palestinian Authority (PA) demands.

Hamas did not plan to engage Israel militarily in Gaza in 2014. The series of events between the April agreement with Fatah and the start of the shooting were not planned by Hamas leadership. However, that leadership sought to take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian Authority and Fatah, and even more broadly in the region. Hamas was able to alter the strategic status quo in its favor as a result of the conflict, but its successes will most likely not be permanent.

After providing some background, this article examines Hamas' strategic position with regard to the Palestinian Authority, Israel, and the region, and why Hamas calculated the conflict with Israel would advance its interests with each of those parties.

Hamas' Rule in Gaza, 2006-2014

In a surprise outcome for the Bush administration, which had pushed the Palestinian Authority hard to hold new elections, Hamas won a plurality (44%) of the national parliamentary vote in 2006. Given the odd "hybrid" system the PA adopted for elections, Hamas was able to parlay its plurality into a supermajority of seats in parliament. Almost immediately, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the United States, and the European Union adopted a rejectionist posture toward any Hamas participation in Palestinian governance, with Israel arresting many Hamas officials and members of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC, or parliament). The United States, led by Elliot Abrams, and Fatah (the PLO's largest faction, and the party of most of the PA leadership), led by Muhammad Dahlan, began to organize a PA-led coup against Hamas, which ended disastrously in 2007 when Hamas drove Fatah from the Gaza Strip after a brief but bloody battle.⁴ Hamas has ruled over Gaza ever since.

Hamas' rule in Gaza has had mixed results. Certainly, the obstacles Gaza has faced since 2007 have been daunting. Israel's continuous embargo against Gaza, including the closure of Gaza's coastline to imports, has meant that only minimal amounts of food and material have entered Gaza via Israeli land crossings. Israel's policy, in the infamous words of longtime Israeli official Dov Weisglass, was "to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger" as long as Hamas ruled the strip.⁵ A Turkish group's widely publicized attempt to

4 Both Hamas and Fatah accuse the other of planning a "coup." However, it is clear that Fatah, urged by the United States and others, sought to reverse the electoral results of the 2006 election by driving Hamas from power. For details of how this plan evolved, disasterously, see: David Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell," *Vanity Fair*, April 2008, <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804>.

5 Summary of the Weisglass episode available at: Jonathan Cook, "Israel's Starvation Diet for Gaza," Opinion/Editorial, *Electronic Intifada*, October 24, 2012, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/israels-starvation-diet-gaza/11810>.

challenge the embargo against Gaza in 2010 prompted Israeli commandoes to commandeer the ships in the Mediterranean and divert them to Israel. The Mavi Marmara affair resulted in the deaths of eight Turkish citizens and one American, and represented the nadir of Israel's once-friendly relations with Turkey.

Israel's embargo against Gaza, which began after Hamas' electoral victory, has been largely matched by Egypt on its short border with Gaza near Rafah. Neither Hosni Mubarak's nor Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi's regimes supported Hamas, seeing it as an extension of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and both mostly kept the border closed as a result. Egypt, unlike Israel, did turn a blind eye toward a flourishing "tunnel economy" through which many basic supplies flowed into Gaza from Egyptian territory. Only during the yearlong rule of Muhammad Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo did the Egypt-Gaza border witness the relatively unhindered flow of goods across it.

While the embargo of Gaza has been a major and constant source of impoverishment for Palestinians there, the periodic open warfare with Israel wreaked significant physical destruction and loss of life in the Gaza Strip. Although each of the three conflicts – in 2008-2009, 2012, and 2014 – had specific precipitating events, in each case the broader strategic rationale was the same as the ongoing embargo: to keep Hamas weak and, it was hoped, to prompt impoverished and angry Palestinians to blame Hamas and remove it from power. Public opinion polling suggests Israel's strategy has not paid dividends, as Palestinians invariably blamed Israel for their predicament. That said, just as Hamas came to power with a plurality of the vote (not a majority) opinion polling confirms Hamas has not been able to garner majority support in Gaza (no one faction has been able to garner majority support).⁶ For example, in a poll released in January 2015, only 10 percent of Palestinians had a favorable view of conditions in Gaza, but the Hamas leader in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, outpolled PA President Mahmoud Abbas amongst Gazans, 54 percent to 44 percent. In the same poll, Gazans supported Hamas over Fatah 42 percent to 34 percent, and 58 percent of Gazans say that Hamas won the 2014 conflict with Israel.⁷

While Israel's goal of destroying Hamas through embargo and military conflict has not succeeded, Israel has been able to weaken Hamas' limited military capabilities through these periodic conflicts by killings hundreds of armed militants and destroying or rendering useless many of the thousands of rockets Hamas accumulates. This occasional "mowing the grass," as these conflicts with Gaza have come to be known in Israel, will likely continue in the future provided no significant changes occur.⁸

Hamas' rule inside Gaza has likewise had mixed success. By no means has Hamas been a force for democracy; it has not allowed any national or municipal elections since coming to power. The Palestinian Authority in the West Bank has been little better, but did carry out municipal elections in 2012. Hamas has not protected free speech or

6 The best source of public opinion polling in the West Bank and Gaza is done by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, <http://www.pcpsr.org>

7 "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No 54," *Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research*, January 15, 2015, <http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/600>.

8 Daniel Byman, "Mowing the Grass and Taking Out the Trash," *Foreign Policy*, August 25, 2014, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/25/mowing-the-grass-and-taking-out-the-trash>.

the right to assemble, nor advocated women's empowerment and human rights. Deepening democracy, per se, has simply not been an ideological or policy goal of Hamas in Gaza. On the other hand, once in power in 2007, Hamas improved the security situation in Gaza, which had been chaotic and violent in the previous years. Clan violence in particular was reined in by Hamas through a combination of force and shrewd politics.⁹ Yezid Sayigh, a smart observer of Palestinian politics, argues Hamas' governmental and administrative track records in Gaza were reasonably positive when compared to the PA's track record in the West Bank.¹⁰ Nathan Brown reached similar conclusions.¹¹ Thus, both public opinion polling and scholarly analysis suggest Hamas' rule in Gaza presents a more complex picture than perhaps most Americans think. By far the biggest problem in Gaza – the ongoing turmoil with Israel – was largely blamed on Israel, not on Hamas.

Hamas Back-Peddles, April 2014

While Hamas' own track record of rule in Gaza was mixed, the regional dynamics in the Middle East several years prior to the 2014 conflict worked strongly against Hamas' interest. Indeed, its position had weakened so much that in April 2014, Hamas signed an agreement with Fatah in which it agreed to give up direct rule of Gaza in favor of a technocratic government under the presidency of Mahmoud Abbas. This move was rightly viewed as a major political setback for Hamas.¹²

How did this happen? Four regional trends worked to undermine Hamas' political position by the spring of 2014. First, and most important, was the Muslim Brotherhood's fall from power in Egypt in July 2013. In 2011, Hamas had been buoyed by the removal from power of Hosni Mubarak, a ruler long suspicious of Hamas and the larger Muslim Brotherhood movement. There was an immediate easing of border controls at Rafah as a result. Prospects brightened even further in June of 2012 when Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood won the runoff election for president. For 13 months, Hamas had a strong supporter and friend in power in Cairo, even if much of the Egyptian military and security apparatus were not particularly sympathetic. Border restrictions at Rafah eased substantially, leading to significant, if short term, improvements in the quality of life in Gaza. General Sisi's coup in July 2013, following weeks of huge anti-Morsi protests, brought to power in Cairo a regime that was militantly anti-Muslim Brotherhood and anti-Hamas. Rafah's border was immediately sealed, with even the tunnel economy reduced to only a trickle of what it had been.

A second regional loss for Hamas came with Syria's civil war. The regime in Damascus had been Hamas's most important Arab ally for

9 Report on reining in clan violence in Gaza by Hamas: International Crisis Group, *Inside Gaza: The Challenge of Clans and Families*, Middle East Report No. 71 (Washington, DC: International Crisis Group, December 20, 2007), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/071-inside-gaza-the-challenge-of-clans-and-families.aspx>

10 Yezid Sayigh, *Hamas Rule in Gaza: Three Years On*, Middle East Brief No. 41 (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, March 2010), <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB41.pdf>.

11 Nathan J. Brown, "Gaza Five Years On: Hamas Settles In," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 11, 2012, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/06/11/gaza-five-years-on-hamas-settles-in>.

12 Tom Phillips, "Will the Fatah/Hamas Deal Pay Off for Abbas?" *Chatham House*, April 28, 2014, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/media/comment/view/199204>.

years. Damascus hosted Hamas' regional headquarters, and the Asad regime provided political protection to Hamas as part of the larger "rejectionist front" opposed to Israeli and American designs on the region. Neither the "Alawi" (i.e., Shi'a) nor secular nature of the Asad regime represented a stumbling block for the Sunni Islamists of Hamas. With the onset of the civil war in Syria, the Asad regime began to kill large numbers of Sunni Islamists who shared Hamas' political philosophy. Pressure grew on Hamas to renounce the Asad regime and pronounce solidarity with the Sunni protestors seeking the overthrow of the Alawi regime in Damascus. In 2012, Khalid Mash'al, Hamas' top leader in Damascus, quietly left Syria and moved to Qatar, thereby signaling Hamas' break with the Asad regime. This split between Hamas and the Asad regime proved highly contentious internally, as it meant Hamas had lost a major regional supporter without gaining an equivalent replacement ally.

Hamas' split with Damascus also spoiled its relations with Iran, which viewed support for Damascus as a litmus test. Although Hamas was never as important to Tehran as Hizbullah, relations between the two had been relatively warm prior to 2012. But after Hamas broke with Damascus, Iran started to view Hamas as an unreliable ally. Ties between Tehran and Hamas cooled considerably thereafter. Furthermore, the stiff sanctions regime in place against Tehran by the United States and other allied international actors meant Iran was simply less able to provide support to Hamas than it had been before.

A fourth regional development resulted from Riyadh's growing influence over Qatari foreign policy. Doha had stood up as a regional supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood – in Cairo, Syria, and Gaza – much to the chagrin of Saudi Arabia, which preferred Sunni monarchs, Salafists, and moderate nationalists. Relations between Doha and Riyadh were frosty during much of the Arab Spring, given the competing actors each supported. Qatari government support of Al Jazeera television – whose Arabic service was widely seen as taking a pro-Muslim Brotherhood slant – only fed the tension between Doha and Riyadh. Events in Egypt and Syria during 2013 and early 2014 tended to break in Riyadh's direction, with Doha making the required adjustments. One of those tweaks was to moderate its support of Hamas, compelling Hamas to be more flexible politically. Thus, one by one, Hamas lost the support of all of its regional allies: in Cairo after the fall of Morsi; in Damascus after the split with Asad over the civil war; in Tehran because of the split with the Asad regime; and, to a lesser degree, in Doha due to pressure from Saudi Arabia.

As a result of these regional developments, Hamas' growing weakness led it to accept terms with Fatah it had previously rejected. The April 2014 agreement compelled Hamas to give up direct control of government in Gaza in lieu of a technocratic government under the control of PA president Mahmoud Abbas. Now the PA, not Hamas, was supposed take ownership of the enormous problems in Gaza, relieving Hamas of those responsibilities.

Hamas' War Calculations

The rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah greatly troubled the Netanyahu government in Israel, which went on a diplomatic offensive to undermine their relationship. While Netanyahu's rhetoric was reliably overwrought, the Israeli Right's primary concern was the prospect of actual Palestinian unity and the subsequent inevitable pressure on Israel over the West Bank.¹³ In other words, if the agreement proved workable and led to political unity among Palestinians, it would put significant pressure on Netanyahu to get serious about negotiating a two-state solution, which was something the Likud party and others in the Revisionist camp rejected. Netanyahu responded, by trying to poison the well of Fatah-Hamas reconciliation. Denouncing the April accord, Netanyahu's government immediately announced a new round of sanctions against the PA, as well as 1500 new settlement units in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.¹⁴

On June 12, 2014, as relations deteriorated, a Hamas cell in Hebron, apparently acting on its own, kidnapped and murdered an Israeli soldier and his two companions who were hitchhiking in the West Bank. Although Israeli officials had strong evidence within hours of the kidnapping that the three Israelis were already dead, they launched Operation Brother's Keeper, ostensibly to find the missing teenagers. In reality, the operation was designed to weaken Hamas in the West Bank through the arrest of hundreds of its leaders and the destruction of Hamas infrastructure. Such action predictably put significant strain on the new Fatah-Hamas reconciliation accord. Israel announced on July 1, 2014 that the bodies of the dead Israelis had been recovered the day before. In revenge, a random Palestinian teenager was kidnapped and burned alive by Israeli vigilantes, as the cycle of violence intensified.¹⁵

The Israeli crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank presented the Gaza leadership with a conundrum, but also an opportunity. If it failed to respond to Israel's provocations, the Hamas leadership would be viewed as weak, unable to defend its organizational and larger Palestinian national interests. On the other hand, if Hamas in Gaza did respond militarily, Israel would be handed a *casus belli* to repeat its earlier attacks in Gaza, which could threaten Hamas' control there. Put another way, depending on one's view of Hamas, its leaders either fell into a trap set by Netanyahu, or took advantage of an opportunity to break out of their political isolation. The trap argument holds that Netanyahu left Hamas little choice but to respond militarily, which would inevitably fragment Hamas' reconciliation agreement with Fatah, and perhaps even lead to regime change in Gaza if events broke right. Netanyahu set the trap, and Hamas walked into it. Conversely, the opportunity argument holds that, wittingly or unwittingly, Netanyahu provided Hamas with an opportunity to reverse its slide from power given the regional events, and to re-establish its credibility as the leading force for resisting

13 For example, comparing the agreement to the start of a new Holocaust: "Netanyahu: Hamas Is Trying to Start Another Holocaust," *ynetNews*, April 27, 2014, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4513668,00.html>.

14 Isabel Kershner and Jodi Rudoren, "Israel Expands Settlements to Rebuke Palestinians," *New York Times*, June 5, 2014.

15 Jonathan Freedland, "Liberal Zionism After Gaza," *The New York Review of Books*, July 26, 2014, <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/jul/26/liberal-zionism-after-gaza/?insrc=rel>.

Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. While Netanyahu's public rhetoric focused on weakening Hamas, in actuality, he strengthened it. The weight of evidence suggests the later argument has more explanatory power. Hamas calculated it could improve its strategic position as a result of the 2014 conflict with Israel. In any case, Hamas did indeed retaliate with rocket fire into Israel; and Israel responded with both air attacks and, ultimately, a ground invasion of Gaza.

This third round of "mowing the grass" in Gaza was by far the most deadly and destructive. About 2,200 Gazans were killed, over 60 percent of whom were civilians, and whole swaths of the strip were destroyed.¹⁶ About 15 percent of Gaza's population was internally displaced. The Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR) calculated that nearly \$8 billion would be needed to rebuild Gaza.¹⁷ While a relatively small number of Israelis were killed (72, almost all soldiers) much of the country was subjected to thousands of rockets, necessitating regular visits to local bomb shelters. Although most of Hamas' rockets were crude and inaccurate, and only a handful got past the Iron Dome anti-rocket system, they were effective in creating some psychological fear in Israeli society.

Strategic Calculations *vis-à-vis* the PA and the PLO

While Hamas's record of government in Gaza since 2007 was decidedly mixed, so was that of the Palestinian Authority. Public opinion polling suggests that Palestinians did not think very highly of either government. Still, Hamas was, on balance, losing ground to the PA in terms of power and influence. Israel's policy of isolating Gaza through embargo may have constituted collective punishment against a civilian population, but it was also reasonably effective in preventing Hamas from reversing the deepening impoverishment of Gaza, where unemployment was at an all-time high and nourishment at an all-time low. Although the PA lacked the ability to change Israel's policy toward Gaza, it is fair to say that the PA leadership was quietly on board with Israel's isolation of Hamas. PA employees in Gaza continued to get paid by Ramallah, even if most had long since been fired by Hamas (many for failing to show up for work at the PA's insistence) and replaced by Hamas loyalists.¹⁸

As noted above, regional dynamics during the Arab Spring had worked against the interests of Hamas, as it lost its regional patrons. Furthermore, while western countries put no significant pressure on Israel to ease its stranglehold on Gaza, they continued to subsidize PA rule in the West Bank. For example, the United States typically underwrote the PA to the tune of \$400 - \$500 million per year.¹⁹ The financial disparities between Hamas and the PA continued to grow.

16 Associated Press, "Report Finds High Civilian Death Toll During Gaza War," *Haaretz*, February 13, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.642397>.

17 State of Palestine, *Gaza Strip: A Reconstruction & Development Plan* (Palestine: Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, PECDAR, September 2014), <http://www.pecdar.ps/new/userfiles/file/PECDAR-Gaza-English-spr.pdf>.

18 For an overview of the situation of PA employees in Gaza, see Ahmad Melhem, "Gaza Civil Servants' Salaries Remain Unpaid," *Al-Monitor*, October 8, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/10/gaza-employee-salaries-government-deficit.html#>

19 Julian Pecquet, "Palestine Seeks Greater US 'Balance,'" *Al-Monitor*, August 10, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/lobbying/palestine>.

The April 2014 reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah was a sign of weakness for Hamas. Hamas effectively put its rule in Gaza on the line by promising to abide by a new government under the presidency of Mahmoud Abbas, and it agreed to new elections, which could legally terminate its authority in Gaza. Even before the shooting war began during the summer, there was plenty of skepticism that Hamas would actually follow through and step away from power, but its overall weakness and the impact of public opinion (which is an important factor in Palestinian politics) both suggest that Hamas was serious in its commitment. Perhaps most of all, the April agreement allowed Hamas to disown responsibility for the deteriorating conditions in Gaza, and place that responsibility squarely on the PA's shoulders.

The summer conflict with Israel, however, enabled Hamas to recalibrate its balance of power with the Palestinian Authority to its advantage. Hamas could once again position itself as the only serious fighting force confronting Israel, and favorably compare its posture of resistance to the PA's posture of accommodation and defeatism. Hamas could revitalize support among Palestinians not just in Gaza but also in the West Bank (and beyond), strongly at first with the "rally around the flag" effect of the summer war, but hopefully (from Hamas' perspective), in the longer term by further discrediting the PA's and PLO's strategy of negotiating with Israel. According to Hamas' narrative, its armed resistance forced Israel out of Gaza in 2005, just as Hizbullah's armed resistance forced Israel out of Lebanon in 2000 after nearly two decades of occupation. The PLO, by contrast, opted for fruitless negotiations that not only never produced a Palestinian state as promised, but also saw the tripling of the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank, while negotiations dragged on to no avail. Hamas had all along made a "trap argument" for the Oslo peace negotiations: Israel set a trap for pointless negotiations that would never lead to independence, which Yasir Arafat walked into. The 2014 Gaza conflict served to sharpen the contrast between Hamas fighting Israel (*muqawama*) and the PLO talking fruitlessly (*musawama*).

To borrow from Henry Kissinger in his analysis of the Vietnam war, Hamas won the 2014 conflict by not losing, and Israel lost it by not winning.²⁰ The Palestinian Authority, as something of an ally of Israel in its posture toward Hamas, also came out badly. As long as Israel did not succeed in overthrowing Hamas or decimating its leadership, Hamas could (and did) plausibly claim victory. Hamas' ability to stay in power, to keep its leadership intact, to bloody Israel, and even to garner broad international support for its call to ease Israel's embargo of Gaza, all enhanced Hamas' power and prestige vis-à-vis the PA.

Indeed, the Palestinian Authority's push at the end of 2014 to get UN Security Council recognition of the State of Palestine, and its joining the International Criminal Court in early 2015 were, in part, attempts by the PA to regain the political initiative within Palestinian society from Hamas. Negotiations with Israel had clearly failed to deliver independence for Palestinians, or even to end or significantly ease Israel's occupation, and the PA needed to demonstrate it was still relevant, and its political strategy could still yield results for the Palestinians. Hamas' "victory" in the summer conflict with Israel compelled the Palestinian

20 Henry Kissinger, "The Vietnam Negotiations," *Foreign Affairs* 48, no. 2 (January 1969): 214.

Authority to take political steps that were not well thought out. For example, the PA had not even taken the requisite steps to insure it would gain at least nine votes at the Security Council, the minimum number required to pass the recognition resolution and thus compel the Americans to veto the measure. Even Arab ally Jordan let it be known that the Palestinian Authority had poorly handled the whole affair.²¹

In sum, Hamas calculated it could recalibrate the internal Palestinian balance of power as a result of the 2014 conflict, and it appears to have calculated correctly, at least for a period of time. It has compelled the PA to respond politically to regain its edge, but six months after the shooting stopped, the PA's efforts have not yet born fruit.

Strategic Calculations *vis-à-vis* Israel

During the 2014 conflict, Hamas had two sets of goals with regard to Israel. First, as noted above, it needed to win by not losing – to survive in power. Second, Hamas sought to focus international pressure on Israel to lift the embargo on Gaza, which would, in turn, greatly strengthen its domestic political position. Hamas succeeded on its first calculation, but has mostly failed on the second.

Given the periodic Israeli assaults on Gaza, Hamas was well prepared to absorb the 2014 attack and to survive. It did so primarily through three tactics. First, and most important, Hamas needed to ensure regime decapitation did not occur, and its leadership would emerge intact after hostilities subsided. In this regard, Hamas succeeded in keeping its political leadership completely intact throughout the conflict. Hamas' leaders reportedly spent most of the conflict in deep bunkers, including ones Israel had initially built thirty years earlier under the Shifa hospital in Gaza. Top Hamas leader Khaled Mesh'al sat out the war at his home in Qatar. Hamas' military leadership did suffer some losses, including, that of the shadowy leader of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Muhammad Deif, after Israel dropped a bunker-busting bomb on his home toward the end of the conflict. Deif's wife and children were killed in the bombing, and it seems Deif was also killed; however, Hamas continues to deny this, and Deif's death has never been confirmed. Three other top military commanders – Muhammad Abu Shammala, Ra'id al-Attar, and Muhammad Barhum – were also killed late in the conflict.²²

Second, Hamas sought to continue firing rockets at Israel throughout the conflict in order to win a psychological victory. In this regard, Hamas succeeded. Despite heavy attempts to silence the rocket fire, Israel was never able to destroy Hamas' well-supplied, dispersed, and often mobile stocks. Hamas used or destroyed about 75 percent of an estimated 10,000 rockets with which it began the conflict.²³ Hamas was able to fire its rockets until the cease-fire came into effect on August 26. Indeed, in the last five days of the conflict, more than 700 rockets and

21 Jack Khoury, "Report: Amman Angered by Palestinians' UN Bid," *Haaretz*, January 5, 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/.premium-1.635408>.

22 Joshua Mitnick and Asa Fitch, "Three Senior Hamas Military Leaders Killed in Israeli Airstrike in Gaza," *Wall Street Journal*, August 21, 2014.

23 Khaled Abu Toameh and Herb Keinon, "Gaza Cease-Fire Between Israel, Hamas Goes Into Effect," *The Jerusalem Post*, August 26, 2014, <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Palestinian-sources-Gaza-cease-fire-to-be-announced-on-Tuesday-evening-372386>.

mortar shells were fired into Israel, killing three.²⁴ From a military perspective, Hamas' crude rocketry posed no significant threat. However, from a civilian psychological perspective, Hamas' rockets proved relatively effective, and sent a message that its improving capabilities put much of Israel's population under threat.

Third, Hamas' system of tunnels included some that went under Israel's border and not detected by Israel. Periodically during the conflict, Hamas was able to send some militants into Israel itself. As with the rockets, the military impact of these raids was far less significant than the psychological impact of being able to send commando teams to strike targets inside Israel.

Thus, in the classic logic of guerilla warfare, Hamas won the war simply by surviving and showing it could inflict damage on Israel, even while absorbing significantly more damage inside Gaza. Israel, by not defeating Hamas outright, cast doubt on the ability of the IDF to win a conflict that is, after all, primarily political in nature. The 2014 Gaza conflict was in many ways a repeat of Israel's 2006 conflict with Hizbullah. In both cases, Israel was the far stronger military force, but in both cases, the target of its wrath survived and was able to hit inside Israel. Hizbullah's political stature inside Lebanon and the region soared as a result of the 2006 conflict, at least temporarily.²⁵ Hamas appears to be enjoying a similar political bump, although likely not quite as much due to the regional dynamics discussed above. Israel's primary post-war demand, for the complete demilitarization of the Gaza Strip, was successfully rejected outright by Hamas.

Hamas' second broad strategic goal in the conflict was to focus international attention on Israel's embargo, with an eye toward having it lifted. In this regard, Hamas has enjoyed less success. Similar to the *Mavi Marmara* episode, the 2014 conflict did focus a great deal of attention on the suffering in Gaza caused by the embargo and, indeed, Israel did ease the embargo a little (as it had following *Mavi Marmara*). Still, the efforts to rebuild Gaza, which would necessarily include a significant lifting of the embargo, have amounted to little more than empty promises months after the 2014 conflict. Gaza remains isolated and under economic siege by Israel (and to a lesser degree, Egypt).

In sum, Hamas succeeded in realizing most of its short-term goals *vis-à-vis* Israel: it survived the war with its leadership and power largely intact in Gaza, and it was able to inflict damage on Israel right up to the cease-fire. As a practical matter, Hamas largely replaced the PA as the most important part of the Palestinian leadership with whom Israel needed to negotiate various issues, demonstrating to all Palestinians that armed struggle against Israel gets more results and attention than the PA's political posture.²⁶ Still, these strategic victories may well turn out to be short-lived, given the continuation of the embargo against Gaza and the huge rebuilding efforts Gaza now requires which still have not gotten underway.

24 "Live Updates: Operation Protective Edge," *Haaretz*, August 21-26, 2014.

25 Augustus Richard Norton, *Hizbullah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton: University Press, 2014).

26 Shlomi Eldar, "Fatah Official: Israel, Hamas in Direct Talks," *Al-Monitor*, December 9, 2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/12/israel-hamas-security-cooperation-direct-talks-abbas-fatah.html>.

Strategic Calculations *vis-à-vis* Egypt and the Arab World

Hamas was least successful in using the 2014 conflict to ameliorate its sharp regional losses due to the Arab Spring. Hamas had hoped to use the war to ease its regional isolation, given the broad sympathy generated for Gaza due to the level of destruction. Al Jazeera's Arabic service had easily the best coverage of the war from inside the Gaza Strip and, for most of the conflict, was the only major television news service covering it on the Palestinian side. Since many Arabs rely on Al Jazeera as their primary source of regional news, the fifty-day conflict in Gaza got enormous play throughout the Arab world.

Still, popular sentiment could not reverse the major strategic losses Hamas had suffered during the Arab Spring. Egypt under its new military strongman, General-*cum*-President Sisi, did not alter its hard line against Hamas in Gaza, and kept its border at Rafah sealed. The loss of Syria could not be reversed, nor could the loss of Iran, particularly under its new president Rouhani, who was more interested in concluding a P5+1 nuclear deal with the West than helping Hamas (though talks were held in late 2014 to explore reconciliation). Even Qatar was generally compelled to toe the Saudi line in the aftermath of the 2014 conflict with regard to Egypt, Syria, and Gaza, meaning a more balanced approach to the Palestinian Authority and Hamas.

Thus, at the regional level, Hamas failed to improve its strategic position during the 2014 conflict, and remained a marginalized force.

Conclusions & Implications

The 2014 Gaza conflict brought extensive destruction to the Palestinian inhabitants of that benighted strip of land, but the two principal combatants partly realized their strategic goals. The Netanyahu government largely succeeded in preventing Palestinian unity, which had loomed as a genuine possibility following the April 2014 agreement between Fatah and Hamas. The re-fracturing of the Palestinian body politic, along with the rockets fired into Israel from Gaza, once again relieved international pressure on Israel to negotiate a withdrawal from the West Bank and to end its occupation there. The Gaza conflict bought Mr. Netanyahu time to deepen Israel's grip on the West Bank through further settlement activity, which intensified after the conflict in Gaza.

Hamas also realized many of its goals through the Gaza conflict. Most important, it emerged from the conflict stronger politically *vis-à-vis* the Palestinian Authority than it was in April 2014. Once again, Hamas was at least the political equal of the PA, and its political narrative again made armed resistance appear to be the superior choice to feckless PA negotiations with Israel. By contrast, the PA looked like an impotent observer of the Gaza conflict, while Hamas exacted a pound of Israeli flesh. Hamas also largely met its strategic goals with regard to Israel, realizing the old guerilla maxim of winning by not losing. Only regionally did Hamas' weak political position remain largely unchanged as a result of the 2014 conflict. But Hamas' gains may not prove to be long-lived as its regional isolation and economic hardships did not improve after the conflict. 2015 has started out hard for Hamas, with reports

of its inability to pay some police and security forces, and a growing number of union strikes.²⁷

The Gaza conflict also presents several lessons for US defense policy. First, as US officials have long recognized, the perpetuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict undermines American national interests in the region, as, for example, General David Petraeus testified to the US Senate in 2010.²⁸ The 2014 Gaza conflict – widely seen in the Middle East as a one-sided slaughter by Israel of hapless Palestinians – only further exacerbated anti-American sentiment in the region, given the US’ “special relationship” with Israel.²⁹ Public-opinion surveys in the Middle East by major Western polling organizations such as Gallup, Pew, and Zogby, regularly find very low levels of support for US policies toward the region, and especially with regard to the Israel-Palestine conflict.³⁰ In addition to exacerbating anti-American sentiment in the Middle East, the 2014 Gaza conflict likely pushed any political resolution even further into the future. All of this lends credence to the argument advanced by John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt and others that Israel has become a strategic liability to the United States.³¹ Thinking through the ramifications of how this conflict negatively impacts US national interests and mitigating the worst expressions of it must take high priority within the Pentagon.

A second implication concerns the always-evolving technological arms race between Israel and Hamas. Israel, of course, has one of the strongest and most technologically-sophisticated militaries in the world, and Hamas has no actual military. Rather, the conflict moves along the logic of asymmetric warfare. Following the example of Hizbullah in Lebanon in the 2006 war, Hamas stockpiled thousands of crude rockets. However, the advances in the American-made Iron Dome system in the last two years, rendered almost useless Hamas rocketry in 2014. Hamas and other militant opponents of Israel will now need to rethink rocketry as an asymmetrical advantage to their side, or otherwise defeat the Iron Dome system. In the absence of such an advance, other tactics will likely be stressed. The success of Iron Dome has enormous implications for US defense policy everywhere in the world.

While Hamas is clearly the weaker party and will likely further decline politically inside the Palestinian community in 2015 (as it had leading up to the April 2014 agreement), it is too socially rooted to be

27 Adnan Abu Amer, “Hamas’s Choices,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 7, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=57649&solr_hilite; and William Booth, “War Punishes Gaza,” *Washington Post*, February 13, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2015/02/13/gaza-misery>.

28 “US General: Israel-Palestinian Conflict Fosters Anti-US Sentiment,” *Haaretz*, March 17, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/u-s-general-israel-palestinian-conflict-fosters-anti-u-s-sentiment-1.264910>

29 Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch accused Israel of war crimes in the 2014 conflict, a sentiment widely echoed in the Arabic press. For one example linking US protection of Israel to shielding war crimes, see Musa al-Gharbi, “Israel, Not Hamas, Orchestrated the Latest Conflict in Gaza: Washington’s Ironclad Support for Israel Provides Effective Shield for War Crimes,” *Al Jazeera America*, July 22, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/7/israel-hamas-palestiniansconflictunitedstatesinternationalallaw.html>

30 See the most recent (November 2014) Middle East survey by Zogby: “Today’s Middle East: Pressures and Challenges,” *Arab American Institute*, <http://www.aaiusa.org/pages/todays-middle-east-pressures-and-challenges>

31 John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

defeated militarily. This has been a consistent myopia among some in both Israel and Washington, that large Islamist social movements like Hizbullah and Hamas can be militarily defeated by Israel. Despite decades of power in occupation of parts of Lebanon and the West Bank, Israel was not able to crush such groups. Indeed, just the opposite: they grew in power under Israeli occupation. Thus, a third lesson from this conflict for US defense leaders is thinking through best practices in dealing with Islamist groups like Hamas that go beyond Israel's failed policy of dealing with Hamas strictly as a terrorist organization. Without question, Hamas has engaged in frequent acts of terrorism, but it is also a politically powerful movement within Palestinian society. A more deft and nuanced approach is called for.

It should go without saying that the biggest strategic losers of the 2014 conflict were the PA and PLO, whose project of a negotiated peace with Israel looks even further removed from reality. The biggest losers of all, of course, are the people of Gaza, whose miserable lives are even worse today than they were a year ago.

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS & MILITARY ETHICS

The US Army's Domestic Strategy 1945-1965

Thomas Crosbie

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ABSTRACT: Post-war drawdowns often include a re-negotiation of the terms of civil-military relations. After World War II the US Army's command culture was marked by Army Utopianism, an expansive vision of the Army's place in American society. This article sketches the history of Army Utopianism, noting its contribution to failing strategies in Vietnam, and argues for greater attention to the link between operational concerns and the Army's domestic political strategy.

"To use—and restrain—its immense social, economic, and political influence wisely and effectively, the Army must obviously hold itself in close rapport with the people." - Russell F. Weigley.¹

The United States Army can boast a distinguished record of innovation during times of war, when rapid technological advances have been matched by innovations in organizational structure, principles of command, and logistics. But military organizational innovation does not end with the ceasefire. In the tense drawdown periods after war, Army leaders are tasked with preserving lessons of past wars while preparing for new challenges with shrinking budgets and fewer personnel. The drawdown period is thus a *de facto* re-negotiation of the terms of civil-military relations, and accordingly it is a time when domestic political strategy is especially important.² Since we find ourselves yet again in such a moment of re-negotiation, we would do well to consider how earlier attempts to guide the Army's post-war relations with state and society shaped the organization's readiness when war finally came again.

In these moments of re-negotiation, Army leaders may be inclined to agree with Russell F. Weigley that "the Army must obviously hold itself in close rapport with the people." What is not at all obvious is what Army leaders should do to bring this about. While domestic political strategy, the capacity to bring about such changes, is limited by law and custom, there is a growing sense that the reality of domestic statecraft should

1 Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, Enlarged Edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 556.

2 The term "domestic political strategy," coined here, encompasses efforts to shape the domestic political environment. The concept is borrowed in part from Eliot A. Cohen, "Are U.S. Forces Overstretched? Civil-Military Relations," *Orbis* 41, no. 2 (1997): 177-186; and from Risa Brooks, "Militaries and Political Activity in Democracies," in Suzanne C. Nielsen and Don M. Snider, eds., *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009). Domestic political strategy is not a pejorative term; much of this work is mandated by civilian authorities as a means of maintaining oversight. The congressional liaisoning done by Legislative Affairs Officers is partly to keep members of Congress informed. Stephen K. Scroggs, *Army Relations with Congress: Thick Armor, Slow Horse* (Westport CT: Praeger, 2000).

Thomas Crosbie is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at Yale University. His research focuses on civil-military relations, focusing on the degree to which media concerns have contributed to the shaping of military doctrine and practice.

be acknowledged openly in the current post-war defense conversation.³ For example, Charles D. Allen writes of the need for “senior leaders who are strategic assets capable of ensuring relevance of the Army to the nation,” a turn of phrase echoed in William G. Braun’s recent call for a “relevancy narrative” to secure the Army’s fortunes despite the public’s tendency to under-appreciate its peace-time military.⁴

As with any strategy, the Army’s domestic political strategy bears the imprint of underlying attitudes and assumed meanings that form the organization’s unique culture. Hints of how this is manifested in the current drawdown negotiation have been noted by Braun and Allen to “revert to a rhetoric dominated by the force sizing and prioritization mantra to ‘fight and win the Nation’s wars,’ with all other uses of the military being ‘lesser-included’ capabilities.”⁵ These are not simple calculations, as there are particular challenges associated with changing the minds of top commanders on fundamental questions of this sort.⁶ However, the deeper risk is that, faced with navigating this vast institution through changing operational and political waters, Army leaders will fall back on bad mental habits and lead the Army to fall ever further out of step with the state and the American public.

What follows is a description of a “cultural structure,” or set of institutionalized patterns, that arose during the post-World War II drawdown and had negative consequences for the institution, contributing to an over-long investment in the failing strategies employed in Vietnam.⁷ This was “Army Utopianism,” a vision of the Army as a central structure of governance, one that was expected to connect a large proportion of citizens to the state and to the world. This cultural structure is ultimately a manifestation of a deeper well of civic republican thought in the American political tradition, reflecting in part what Samuel P. Huntington would later praise as the “military ideal.”⁸ However, Army Utopianism can and should be analytically separated from those concepts in order to pinpoint one specific way Army leaders tended to envision civil-military relations at a transitional moment. The existence of this set of assumptions led leaders to make poor decisions that ultimately contributed to the profound alienation of millions of Americans from the Army.

The first part of this article, will sketch the emergence of this cultural structure as it was expressed in internal Army documents. Army

3 The legal context is reviewed by Allen W. Palmer and Edward L. Carter, “The Smith-Mundt Act’s Ban on Domestic Propaganda: An Analysis of the Cold War Statute Limiting Access to Public Diplomacy,” *Communication Law and Policy* 11, no. 1 (2006): 1-34.

4 Charles D. Allen, “Assessing the Army Profession,” *Parameters* 41 (Autumn 2011): 73; William G. Braun, III, “Op-Ed: Between Conflicts: An Army Roles that Sticks,” Strategic Studies Institute, January 17 2014, www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/index.cfm/articles/Between-Conflicts-An-Army-Role-That-Sticks/2014/01/17.

5 William G. Braun III and Charles D. Allen, “Shaping a 21st-Century Defense Strategy: Reconciling Military Roles,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 73, no. 2 (2014): 54.

6 Stephen J. Gerras and Leonard Wong, *Changing Minds in the Army: Why It Is So Difficult and What To Do About It* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College Press, 2013).

7 John R. Hall, “Cultural Meanings and Cultural Structures in Historical Explanation,” *History and Theory* 39, no. 3 (2000): 331-347.

8 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1957). For a discussion of civic republicanism in American civil-military relations, see Gary Schaub, Jr. and Adam Lowther, “Who Serves? The American All-Volunteer Force,” in Stephen J. Cimbala (ed.), *Civil-Military Relations in Perspective: Strategy, Structure and Policy* (London: Ashgate, 2012).

Utopianism emerged as a consequence of the massive mobilization of the country during World War II and was cultivated by some Army leaders over the next three decades. The second part of the paper notes the strategic significance of the cultural structure. Initially, it reflected a major division in the newly-formed Department of Defense over the role of conventional ground forces, and specifically President Dwight D. Eisenhower's New Look policies. Subsequently, when President John F. Kennedy pivoted from New Look to an emphasis on irregular warfare in the early days of American involvement in Vietnam, the Army was again challenged to justify its special monopoly on conventional ground forces. Together, these pressures led Army leaders to favor a form of involvement in Vietnam that would prove politically disastrous.

As domestic US political will flagged following the Tet Offensive of 1968, this structure was gradually rejected by Army leaders as an impossible dream. New visions, giving rise to new political strategies, emerged in its wake. By turning our attention to this fleeting cultural structure, we can sensitize ourselves to one way the Army's leaders failed in the past to keep in close rapport with the public. This example should serve as a reminder as a new generation of leaders attempt to navigate the politics of drawdown and the desire for a peace dividend while also undergoing the costly "Pacific pivot."⁹ Then as now, the temptation to strengthen civil-military relations by expanding the Army's presence in American public life may well lead to the opposite outcome. While changing culture at any level can be difficult, this expansive, optimistic element of the Army's command culture should be recognized as posing a real danger to its future relations with the public.

Utopianism as US Army Culture

Perhaps no figure was more influential in shaping the US Army's command culture during the mid-twentieth century than George C. Marshall. Described as "the principal military architect of the Western democracies' ultimate victories over the Axis powers," Marshall was also considered by some "the most powerful figure in the government after the president himself."¹⁰ As such, he was responsible for setting the tone of the Army's domestic political strategy, influencing the development of Army utopianism.

A sense of Marshall's preferred command style can be gleaned from a commencement address at Trinity College on June 15, 1941:

This Army of ours already possesses a morale based on what we allude to as the noblest aspirations of mankind—on the spiritual forces which rule the world and will continue to do so. Let me call it the morale of omnipotence. With your endorsement and support this omnipotent morale will be sustained as long as the things of the spirit are stronger than the things of earth.¹¹

9 This has been described by Joseph S. Nye as "the great power shift of the 21st century." Joseph S. Nye, "Obama's Pacific Pivot," *The Korea Herald*, December 8, 2011. See also David A. Beitelman, "America's Pacific Pivot," *International Journal* 67, no. 4 (2012): 1073-1094.

10 Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 421; Ed Cray, *General of the Army: George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1990), 402.

11 Marshall, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall, Volume 2: "We Cannot Delay," July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941*, ed. Larry I. Bland (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1986), 538.

Things of the earth eclipsed things of the spirit more quickly than Marshall would have hoped: while public support remained at “unprecedented levels” throughout the war, this quickly dried up after V-J Day.¹² At the same time public support was declining, demobilization and drawdown were shrinking the armed services, if not quite back to pre-war levels. Yet Marshall recognized the threat of Soviet power and believed the public needed to maintain its close attachment to the military in order to provide the groundwork for another mass mobilization. In a peculiar historical echo, just as the Army pivoted from the Pacific to the Eurasian landmass in the mid-1940s while struggling to maintain its funding and capacities, so today it pivots from Eurasia back to the Pacific, once again facing a public weary of war and a Congress eager for a reduced defense budget.

If the problem in 1946 was maintaining public support with less money, without a war to justify that support, and with only a nebulous threat from Russia in its place, the solution to Marshall’s mind was Universal Military Training (UMT).¹³ Described as “the most revolutionary proposals ever made to the American Congress,” Universal Military Training would encompass peacetime conscription, military training for young people, a reserve of alumni trainees and refresher training for six years.¹⁴

The eminently practical Marshall had little taste for militarism in the sense described by Alfred Vagts, the “vast array of customs, interests, prestige, actions and thought associated with armies and wars yet transcending true military purposes.”¹⁵ Universal Military Training represented instead a form of militarization, as sociologist August B. Hollingshead described military socialization in his article in an influential 1946 special issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*.¹⁶ Whereas militarism is generally used to refer to the celebration of the pomp and circumstance of those elements setting military life apart from the norm, militarization refers here to the attempt to integrate a fundamental concern with military affairs into either the individual (as soldiers are militarized through basic training) or into the general public. This preference for broad militarization was a manifestation of Army utopianism, a set of assumptions about the nature of civil-military relations that places the Army at the very center of social life. Army leaders believed a high degree of militarization was both possible and attainable at relatively little threat to the organization itself, since the public and the media were expected to react favorably to attempts to militarize.

While Universal Military Training was an important effort by Army leaders to militarize American society, it was not the only one. Significantly, Army leaders of this period attempted to militarize American society partly through the work of public affairs. Surveying

12 Adam J. Berinsky, *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 209.

13 John Sager, “Universal Military Training and the Struggle to Define American Identity During the Cold War,” *Federal History*, 5 (2013): 57-74.

14 Charles H. Lyttle, “Review of Universal Military Training and National Security, ed. Paul Russell Anderson,” *Social Service Review* 20, no. 1 (1946): 111-112.

15 Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Military and Civilian*, Revised Edition (New York: The Free Press, 1959), 13.

16 August B. Hollingshead, “Adjustment to Military Life,” *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 5 (1946): 439-447.

the developments in Army public affairs in the early Cold War period, there is a rich sense of how Army utopianism was integrated into the Army's basic messaging with the public. Messaging in general and public affairs in particular were accordingly championed by several top Army leaders in this period, reversing the trend set during World War I, when the Creel Committee (the first major US military effort to shape public opinion) was disbanded and its organizational developments lost.¹⁷

Shortly after the war, two reports were submitted to the Army's top leadership underscoring the centrality of messaging activities to military success; these helped trigger the relative rise of public affairs. The Page Report of 1945, recognizing the low prestige of the field, called for a high-ranking officer to lead the new Army public affairs department replacing the World War II-era Bureau of Public Relations. The Army obliged by naming J. Lawton Collins the first Director of Information. Collins was a rising star and would become the chief of staff four years later. His appointment was a clear vote of confidence. Working alongside Collins and his office was the Public Relations Division, headed by Maj. Gen. Floyd L. Parks, another experienced and respected officer.¹⁸

Under Collins and Parks, the new departments commissioned the Lockhart Report (1946), which advocated the centrality of the Bureau of Public Relations to the Army and the importance of aligning public relations activities with Army goals, "so as to gain maximum public benefit".¹⁹ What precisely this meant was spelled out to the corps of information officers by Parks in an issue of *Army Information Digest*, in August of 1946. Parks noted, "every action dealing with the media of public relations, should be calculated to advance the purpose of the Army as a whole toward the larger objective."²⁰ He followed with a four-paragraph "Creed of Army Public Relations," which stressed the transparency of Army information and its "public utility function". A tension within Parks' article is evident today: how could one expect information officers to conceive of their role as both active instrument of Army command and as passive public utility? At any rate, few would have mistaken Parks's own clear preference of the former over the latter. These early documents suggest strongly the belief that if the Army is to exist within the broader society, it must pursue its objectives partly by shaping that society.

An indication of what such a process might require can be found in an obscure report by two junior officers, Sidle and Notestein, working at the Presidio in San Francisco for the Sixth Army.²¹ Sidle and Notestein presented the report to Maj. Gen. Milton B. Halsky (who signed it) for distribution among Professors of Military Science and Tactics, Senior and Junior Division Reserve Officer Training Corps (Sixth Army

17 Kennon H. Nakamura and Matthew C. Weed, *U.S. Public Diplomacy: Background and Current Issues*, CRS Report R40989 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, December 18, 2009), 14.

18 Both departments would move through a quick succession of name changes, but would eventually be known as Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (Collins's job), and Army Chief of Public Affairs (Parks's job).

19 Sidney Alvin Knutson, *History of the Public Relations Program in the United States Army* (M.Sc. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1953), 322.

20 Major General Floyd L. Parks, "A Creed for Army Public Relations," *Army Information Digest* (August 1946): 3-7.

21 Their ranks are not listed, and nor is Notestein's first name. Sidle was Winant Sidle, who would go on to a distinguished career in Army public affairs and retire at the rank of Major General.

Area). These were, in other words, professors at colleges with an ROTC program who ran summer camps in the San Francisco area. The nine page report spelled out eleven points of advice for tailoring a sequence of news releases to promote each camp. The instructors were encouraged to prepare biographical cards for each cadet; write a release for the cadet's home town newspapers and school publications; take an effective headshot of each cadet; and tailor a final release to the same publications once the camp finished. More general suggestions included building relations with media in the vicinity of the camp by encouraging press tours and open houses. The authors of the report noted the stories should be based around each camper's expectation of being offered a commission, which was viewed as something worth boasting. All of this media work was intended to promote ROTC training programs as valuable to national security, and so "gag" or humorous stories were strongly discouraged.²²

It is difficult to imagine an era of journalism where ROTC training might conceivably give rise to dozens, if not hundreds, of stories spread across local media outlets, summer after summer. The plan, however, was clearly given serious consideration, as a note on the archival copy indicates: "CINFO [Chief of Information, Parks's successor] is sending out to all CONUS [Contiguous United States] Armies."²³ The Sidle-Notestein report reflects a spirit of immense enthusiasm and confidence in the capabilities of the Army in actively engaging with press in an overt quest to shape public opinion. This optimistic assessment, their version of Army utopianism, suggests a near-perfect synthesis of military and public interest and a press compliant enough to allow the Army to use it as a mere conduit. Of course, it is unclear how journalists would have reacted to this attempt at shaping their work; it is possible that they would have refused to take the bait. There is also no cause to view this as a sinister or even disingenuous scheme. Rather, it may well simply reflect the great optimism of the report's authors as well as of the Chief of Information.

In retrospect, this optimism may seem out of step with the immediate post-war period, when both militarism (in Vagts's sense) and government propaganda had finally lost their luster. Elmer Davis's Office of War Information and the Office of Censorship both closed in 1945, with significant Congressional pressure acting on the former. The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 outlawed domestic propaganda, a major blow to Office of War Information's successor, the new United States Information Agency (USIA). However, what might today look like moral stances taken against the corruption of the democratic process were at the time more like partisan squabbles, the concern being domestic propaganda would be used by one party against the other. Similarly, many Army leaders still believed George Marshall's vision of Universal Military Training may yet come to pass. So while militarism may have been out of season, it was being replaced by a more sophisticated form of militarization. This transition in turn was predicated on a rather

²² It is of course not clear whether this attempt to shape news coverage would have had any effect on editors and reporters.

²³ Suggested Public Informational Activities for PMS&Ts, Sixth Army Area, 3 April 1951; Winant Sidle Papers, 1950-1999, Box 2, Folder 4, Miscellaneous Correspondence re. PA; United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

optimistic assessment of the press's willingness to serve as a conduit for military messaging and of the public's appetite for being militarized.

In this context, the Sidle-Notestein report draws from a similar well as other utopian articulations of public information policy.²⁴ On June 4, 1954, for example, Collins's successor as Chief of Staff, General Matthew B. Ridgway, echoed the Page Report of 1945 and reaffirmed the spirit of Parks's Creed in a letter to all major commanders in the Army, which essentially observed the importance of public affairs for Army life. However, he also focused his comments on an issue at the heart of the Sidle-Notestein report, namely the equal importance of troop morale and local media relations to national media management efforts. According to Ridgway, "Only by doing all these things thoroughly shall we be able to gain and retain the confidence and support of the American people."²⁵ This was not an idle concern on Ridgway's part. A few months earlier, on February 8, 1954, he had "disturbed" the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with critical words to the House Subcommittee on the Armed Services, and particularly his concern the Army would lose too much manpower with the New Look cuts.²⁶ Speaking before Congress was one way to pressure Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson and President Eisenhower; messaging to the public was another.

By 1956 there had been several important votes of confidence in Army public affairs, and a new understanding was emerging concerning just how extensive Army efforts in this regard could be. Most significantly, perhaps, was in their successive turns as the nation's top soldier, Collins and Ridgway both signaled the importance of the field. At this crucial period of post-war Army reorganization, top leadership support would have been instrumental in allowing the two Army public affairs offices (now called the Office of Public Information and the Office of the Chief of Information and Education) to continue their evolution. To this end, under the incoming chief of staff, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, three Office of the Chief of Information and Education officers undertook a vast analysis of all Army public affairs functions in order to develop a systematic approach for the Army's political strategy. The internal goal of the report was to coordinate what had thus far been four discrete fields of public affairs work: public information (engaging with national media), troop information (informing, entertaining and indoctrinating soldiers), troop education (courses and training for troops) and community relations (engaging with regional media and local governance). The plan, reviewed by the now-retired Parks, was innocuously titled "An Army Public Relations Plan," but in fact was a 250-page, 50-point

24 Although the terms are at times confusing, "public information" and "public affairs" must be distinguished from one another. Public affairs is the broader category, including not only public information (liaising with the press) but also community relations (liaising with local civilians) and command information (liaising with the troops).

25 "An Army Public Relations Plan," March 7 1956, 216; Chief of Information, Programs Branch, Correspondence, Information Officers' Conference (1959-60), Box 5; Army Staff – Record Group 319; National Archives, College Park, MD.

26 Saki Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look National Security Policy, 1953-61* (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 57.

discussion of how to transform Army public affairs into “aggressive public relations.”²⁷

The tenor of this plan can be gauged in an introductory section which describes the Army’s audiences. Three are identified: the general public, troops, and Congress. But in the discussion that follows, these three are revealed to be in turn composed of multiple, distinct groups that require separate relations strategies. Thirty groups in all are singled out as requiring special care, including the press, viewed as both audience and conduit; youth organizations; local chapters of national organizations; female members of Congress; veterans of other services; and many more. Notably, foreign publics, whether those of allies or enemies, were ignored entirely: the goal of Army public relations was to shape domestic and internal audiences.²⁸

The spirit of the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948, which prohibited domestic propaganda, would have been sorely tested by this plan. It included extensive discussion of slogans, marketing gimmicks (e.g. work with Zippo, Hallmark, Revlon and toy manufacturers), major public events and other obvious efforts to persuade the American public of the Army’s merits. The plan was also pointedly oriented to the internal public of troops (with multiple subdivisions, of course), but there was an important conceptual development. The plan reversed traditional notions of troop information as concerned primarily with maintaining morale. Instead, troops are viewed much as the press is: both are audiences that need to be persuaded of the Army’s message but also conduits through which that message can be spread. In other words, troop information and education were intended to help encourage soldiers to spread positive messages about the Army to their civilian friends and family members, in effect to proselytize for the Army.

In an era of mass conscription, when Universal Military Training was still an Army goal, the utopian spirit of this expansive report is a reflection of a buoyant institution. However, there is no record of the fate of the report, which reflects the more mundane reality of Army fortunes. Post-war drawdown was sapping resources. Overt propagandizing was also coming under attack once again. On May 15, 1957, United States Information Agency (USIA) Chief Arthur V. Larson came under intense questioning by Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson. The USIA’s budget was reduced by \$20 million, a major blow to the USIA, partly on the grounds that Larson, in Johnson’s estimation, had “stepped over the line” and begun using the USIA to support Republican Party interests.²⁹ For the Army’s part, the Office of the Chief of Information and Education’s budget had been steadily declining even as the rhetoric of its value to the Army was heating up. In fiscal year 1952, its budget was \$3,225,482, but in the year of the plan, the budget was only \$832,000—authors refer to this number as “totally inadequate, completely unrealistic, artificial.”³⁰ Even if the plan was not ultimately passed, it remains a significant attempt to reas-

27 A fourth element, troop education (job training for soldiers), was at that time housed in Office of the Chief of Information and Education, but was soon removed and did not feature in the 1956 plan.

28 “Army Public Relations Plan,” 7.

29 Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, TX, “State, Justice and Judiciary Appropriations, 1958,” *Congressional Record* 103 (May 15, 1957): 6968.

30 Army Public Relations Plan, 66.

sert the importance of the field to the Army, and in turn the centrality of the Army to the nation.

Justifying Conventional Force in a Nuclear Age

It is not surprising that Army leaders felt their institution, which had performed so admirably in the war, would remain a highly visible and familiar component of the state. But this line of reasoning intersected disastrously with the grand strategic vision of civilian authorities, especially the incoming president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and his New Look policies. Eisenhower's preference for a slimmer Army supplementing the deterrence of nuclear weapons had the effect of challenging the Army's monopoly on conventional force, which was going out of style, and the Army—with its hopes of vast social influence—was faced with justifying its continued relevance.

At this time, military strategy was still coming to terms with the new place of civilians in war. Some strands of nuclear deterrence strategy posited large civilian populations as the inevitable target of Soviet aggression. That conceptual shift corresponded to a reimagining of conventional Army strength as a vestigial organ of state power, most powerfully exemplified by Eisenhower's New Look. Army leaders attempted to reassert the importance of the full spectrum of Army resources, justifying both conventional and irregular units as important front-line elements in the Cold War, which was in contrast to the New Look's preference for long-range missiles with nuclear warheads. These justifications hinged on making the case that limited wars could still be fought without tipping over into full-out nuclear war.

Army utopianism as a political strategy would eventually crash against the realities of American involvement in Vietnam, but at first the region must have looked like a tempting showcase for the continuing relevance of the service's unique capabilities in ground warfare. American involvement in the region consolidated in November 1955, with the creation of Military Assistance Advisory Group, Vietnam (commonly referred to as MAAG). This was part of a broader Cold War configuration of such groups. MAAG (Vietnam version) replaced the Indochina advisory group, and worked alongside similar groups in Cambodia and Laos. These groups were headed by military officers but were ultimately part of country teams that were headed by ambassadors, although a separate chain of command put the advisory groups under the commander in chief of American military forces in the Pacific. More simply put, during the MAAG era, the American presence in Vietnam was led by diplomats who worked closely with military leaders.

The MAAG era was characterized by extensive, if not entirely successful, efforts to modernize and train the South Vietnamese military services. The effort was undermined by Ngo Dinh Diem, head of the South Vietnamese state, who carefully ensured top Vietnamese officers were never so competent as to challenge his rule. This was supplemented by CIA operations.³¹ By 1961, Diem's military capacity was deemed insufficient for repelling anticipated forays from the North. Something would have to be done. At first, the Kennedy administration

31 Thomas L. Ahern, Jr., *Vietnam Declassified: The CIA and Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2010).

stood by a counterinsurgency plan that would involve MAAG shifting emphasis toward a pacification logic, which involved both coercion and nation-building tasks. The concept was approved but it was understood that it would be implemented by South Vietnamese soldiers, supervised by American soldiers, and aided by both the Army's Special Forces (the Green Berets) and CIA personnel.³² A further complication, the Army had only vague notions of what countering insurgent or guerilla forces might actually entail, and according to Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, then Chief of Staff, the training actually conducted at MACV was, as late as March, 1960, fundamentally conventional.³³

Lemnitzer had replaced Gen. Maxwell Taylor, who had been Chief of Staff when the utopian public relations plan was written. Taylor occupied an unusual role. After his retirement as chief of staff, he had campaigned publicly against President Dwight D. Eisenhower's New Look, particularly its orientation to massive retaliation as the key geopolitical pivot in a nuclear age. In 1959, he published a book advocating an alternative doctrine of "flexible response."³⁴ Taylor reflected a conventional force sensibility in his resistance to the New Look doctrine, which he argued was premised on the "Great Fallacy" that the threat of nuclear weapons would prevent war. In Taylor's words, "while our massive retaliatory strategy may have prevented the Great War—a World War III—it has not maintained the Little Peace."³⁵

Eisenhower's plan relied on nuclear deterrence and market tools to realize American interests abroad, and Eisenhower himself was happy to get his country out of the business of war fighting. In the words of one historian, to Eisenhower's mind, "war was no longer an acceptable means to achieve political objectives. The military's foremost and, perhaps, only mission was to deter it."³⁶ An added benefit was that once modernized, the Department of Defense could begin accruing savings by cutting "frills" and make do with a "leaner and tougher" budget in Eisenhower's words.³⁷ It all hinged on one big question: would nuclear weapons prevent limited wars from being fought due to the risk of triggering what was then termed "general war," a third, nuclear world war? In contrast to Air Force and some Navy leaders, Army leaders rejected this notion and anticipated instead a broad space for what was in essence conventional warfare brinkmanship.³⁸

The Army's perspective can be gleaned in speeches by top soldiers during this period. On April 6, 1960, Lemnitzer spoke of Soviet expectations of a long nuclear war, one that might start with the exchange of devastating nuclear attacks on civilian populations but would still

32 David Hunt, "Dirty Wars: Counterinsurgency in Vietnam and Today," *Politics and Society* 38, no. 1 (2010): 35-66.

33 David M. Toczek, *The Battle of Ap Bac, Vietnam: They Did Everything But Learn* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 33.

34 Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper, 2007); see also Donald Alan Carter, "Eisenhower versus the Generals," *Journal of Military History* 72, no. 4 (2007): 1169-1199.

35 Taylor, *Uncertain Trumpet*, 6.

36 Carter, "Eisenhower versus the Generals," 1175.

37 As it turned out, this was not a cheaper option, since the arms race quickly drove the cost of strategic deterrence to unexpected heights. See Dockrill, *Eisenhower's New-Look*, 259, 262, 271.

38 Carter, "Eisenhower versus the Generals," 1181.

require conventional forces fighting on land to decide the issue.³⁹ This nightmarish vision was expanded in another talk in August, where Lemnitzer connected the long nuclear war scenario to the resulting decrease in the efficacy of deterrence. Nuclear war was not considered by American enemies as a decisive event, and so nuclear power was not decisive. Indeed, Lemnitzer informed his audience that Soviet forces might launch a nuclear attack on American soil simply to gain territory somewhere else. Accordingly, there should be no question of restraint when it came to conventional involvement in seemingly remote theaters; rather, a blend of US forces was needed that could go into any given area and “exterminate the rats without destroying the neighborhood.”⁴⁰

Lemnitzer was echoed by his successor, Gen. George H. Decker, who spoke before an audience in New York on March 25, 1961 on the subject of “The Army Today.” His comments supported Kennedy’s preferred orientation to counterinsurgency, while hedging for the importance of maintaining conventional force. He noted, strategy in this complex time “must be a flexible, pragmatic combination of all these [maritime, aerospace and landmass power], considered in context with political, economic, and other non-military factors.”⁴¹

The struggle to preserve Army conventional force would continue throughout the period. Three weeks after Decker’s speech, Lemnitzer, now the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, responded to a request from Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara to provide joint doctrine that would minimize conventional force in a nuclear war, emphasizing instead diplomatic solutions through the use of less force and scheduled breaks in fighting. Lemnitzer’s response was in effect to reject McNamara’s order, noting,

we do not have adequate defenses, nor are our nuclear retaliatory forces sufficiently invulnerable, to permit us to risk withholding a substantial part of our effort, once a major thermonuclear attack has been initiated... such a doctrine, or to declare such an intent, would be premature and could gravely weaken our deterrent posture.⁴²

Decker and Lemnitzer were risking their positions when they pushed back against McNamara, who had President Kennedy’s support, but they did so because they believed the Army’s monopoly on conventional ground forces retained its central place in legitimating American foreign policy, even in the nuclear age.

During the presidential campaign, Kennedy had championed Maxwell Taylor’s doctrine in particular and called him out of retirement to investigate the Bay of Pigs incident. Accordingly, Taylor, along with Walter W. Rostow, was sent by Kennedy to review the situation in Vietnam. In November 1961, Taylor and Rostow offered the

39 Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Address to the National Association of State and Territorial Civil Defense Directors, 6 April 1960, Box 1, Folder 1, Lyman L. Lemnitzer Papers, 1960-1990, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

40 Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Address to Association of the United States Army, 9 August 1960, Box 1, Folder 1, Lyman L. Lemnitzer Papers, 1960-1990, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

41 Gen. George H. Decker, The Army Today – Address to the Calvin Bullock Forum, 23 March 1961, Box 6, Folder 2, George H. Decker Papers, 1959-1962, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

42 Fred M. Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), 273.

fateful call for a “massive joint effort” to guarantee South Vietnamese freedom. Against the backdrop of Lemnitzer’s and Decker’s thoughts on aggressive postures, and Taylor’s own notions of flexible response, this decision was bred of confidence in the ability of the US Army to secure large-scale geopolitical ends. At any rate, the proposal included 8,000 American ground troops.⁴³ Kennedy balked at the troop request, but approved a scaled-down version of the plan which still signified such a significant increase in the American role that a new headquarters would be needed.⁴⁴ With this force, the Army’s top leaders began the difficult task of learning counterinsurgency while also establishing a conventional force presence. Twelve years later, the Army would finally withdraw from the region, its relations with the public in a state of crisis.

Conclusion

Since World War II, the place of the Army in American politics has undergone a dramatic transformation. At first, top Army leaders anticipated they would retain a central role in public life and looked to journalists, then working under voluntary conditions of access and recently freed from censorship, to help the Army tell its story. Most importantly for many top Army officers (including a series of chiefs of staff), the Army had to justify its continuing monopoly on conventional ground forces. This had been directly challenged by other services and governmental branches, but was also indirectly challenged by a new emphasis on strategic deterrence (led by diplomats and backed by nuclear weapons). Accordingly, at the beginning of American involvement in Vietnam, the Army focused on conventional force displays and anticipated that press coverage would rally support behind the organization.

As the Army became increasingly entangled in Vietnam, the impulse to justify conventional force became more pronounced, and counterinsurgency fell by the wayside. In Gen. William Westmoreland, the American forces found a leader dedicated to persistently optimistic messaging and to conventional force. While Army utopianism certainly cannot explain every element of the thinking of the top Army commanders of this period, it provides a pathway to understanding the domestic political attitudes informing military strategic preferences. If the Army was to be a major component of American society, then it had to prove the enduring value of its core competency, conventional ground war. Both the reliance on conventional force and the utopian vision of the Army would decline as the American body count drew increasing public ire. Eventually, Vietnamization (shedding the Army’s command responsibility), matched with strategic bombing (which supplanted conventional force), would allow the Army to withdraw from what would become an extremely damaging conflict politically.

Today, the Army’s leaders are faced with two challenges: first, to preserve the lessons gained from the Global War on Terror despite the pressure to cut costs and offer a peace dividend; and second, to reorient the Army’s posture to a new theater in the “pivot to the Pacific.” This dilemma is not so different than the situation facing top commanders

43 Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962-1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2006), 20.

44 *Ibid.*, 43.

following the end of World War II, when a far more dramatic drawdown was paired with a pivot to the Eurasian landmass. In this case, looking closely at the past can provide direct lessons for the present.

In both time periods, the link between the political and operational realities is provided in part through domestic political strategy. In the words of Russell F. Weigley, one of the foremost historians of the Army, “To use—and restrain—its immense social, economic, and political influence wisely and effectively, the Army must obviously hold itself in close rapport with the people.”⁴⁵ Some Army leaders in the post-World War II period quite reasonably pursued a strategy of close rapport defined here as Army utopianism, which today can be seen as a gross miscalculation of the direction of the broader American political culture. This revealed the relationship Weigley sketches between “influence” and “rapport” is not straightforward, and simply amplifying the Army’s presence in American public life can have the opposite of the intended effect.

Lessons/Insights

Accordingly, the first lesson of this historical case study is simply to guard against the optimistic and expansive vision of the Army’s role of which Army utopianism is just the most extreme expression.

Another lesson is operational strategy. It is (and has long been) “sold” to the public, and this should be acknowledged as both a fact of life and as an operational concern of the first order. All the armed services are required to liaise with state and society across multiple platforms, and will inevitably pursue more beneficial outcomes to some degree when doing so, and this is especially the case when addressing the core competencies of the given service. By the same token, the political calculus can interfere disastrously with operational planning. The Army’s domestic political strategy is not an epiphenomenon, but rather an intrinsic component of operations and one demanding serious attention and study.⁴⁶

A third lesson, related to the second, can be drawn specifically for practitioners of information operations and strategic communication. In these fields, there have been long-standing failures to create comprehensive and wide-ranging strategic plans, attributed in part to competition between the agencies charged with these tasks.⁴⁷ The case of Army utopianism reminds that such failures have long dogged the services and may have deep cultural roots. In other words, these may be even less tractable problems than is currently thought. On one hand, recognizing the historical and cultural horizon of messaging problems is a first step in resolving them. On the other hand, and as Steven Tatham has pointed out in the cases of China and Russia, competitor states have already found workable solutions to these problems, and so there is real value in investing the Army’s limited resources in this field.⁴⁸ Concretely, to

⁴⁵ Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 556.

⁴⁶ A similar point is made by Braun and Allen, “Shaping a 21st-Century Defense Strategy: Reconciling Military Roles.”

⁴⁷ Hans F. Palaoro, “Information Strategy: The Missing Link,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2010): 83-85.

⁴⁸ Steve Tatham, *US Government Information Operations and Strategic Communications: A Discredited Tool or User Failure? Implications for Future Conflict* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, Strategic Studies Institute, 2013), 46-57.

better conduct information and messaging activities, the Army should extensively research the blinding effects of its own cultural traditions, recognizing both the contingency and the stickiness of organizational culture.

These lessons can be implemented. It is certainly possible for the Army to guard against a tendency toward exaggerating its role in American social life (lesson 1). Likewise, it is possible to nurture a leadership cadre attentive to its domestic political standing and how it intersects with operational capacities (lesson 2) and how these in turn inform its foreign and domestic messaging (lesson 3).

And so, while the case study is intended to make clear how much the Army's culture has shaped its operational strategy, the ulterior motive is to enable the opposite outcome, the strategic shaping of Army culture itself. To this end, a fourth and final lesson can be drawn concerning the Army's characteristic commitment to conventional force. As in the Cold War, so today the Army navigates between Scylla and Charybdis, on one hand doubling down on its core competencies and potentially blinding itself to much-needed reform, and on the other hand leaping without looking at promising solutions while eroding its identity in the meantime. Between these twin dangers lies the narrow field open to the Army, a field requiring multiple competencies and a close, dialogic rapport with its increasingly global public.

Battlefield Euthanasia: Should Mercy-Killings Be Allowed?

David L. Perry

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ABSTRACT: The survival rate of American military personnel seriously wounded in combat has risen dramatically in recent decades. But situations still arise when wounded soldiers cannot be saved, nor their suffering sufficiently palliated, creating difficult ethical dilemmas for their fellow troops. The Geneva Conventions and most codes of medical ethics prohibit direct and intentional killing of wounded, and changing our relevant treaty obligations would have serious strategic consequences. Battlefield euthanasia can be morally justified, but the military profession should not argue for its legality.

I have never experienced war directly. But in teaching and writing about the subject for over 15 years, I have tried to imagine vividly what such an experience must be like for combatants and civilians caught up in its destruction. Surely one of the most horrifying aspects of war occurs when soldiers are seriously wounded in combat, grievously suffering, and facing little or no prospect of medical cure or pain relief as their lives ebb away.¹ Military historian John Keegan estimates that one third of the 21,000 British soldiers killed in the battle of the Somme in early July 1916 died of wounds that would not have been fatal had the men been evacuated quickly, but the appalling number of casualties overwhelmed the resources and best efforts of military medical personnel.²

To be sure, the care available to American and other allied soldiers now is dramatically better than in previous decades, let alone previous centuries. The survival rates of our wounded soldiers rose dramatically between the two world wars, even more during the Korea and Vietnam conflicts with the advent of speedy evacuations by helicopter, and still more during our recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: in 2005 nearly 20 percent of wounded US soldiers died from their injuries, but in 2010, fewer than 8 percent died.³

However, situations still arise occasionally today—and could occur as well in some future wars—in which the wonders of modern military

Dr. David L. Perry is Professor of Applied Ethics and Director of the Vann Center for Ethics at Davidson College in North Carolina. From 2003 to 2009 he was Professor of Ethics at the US Army War College. He is the author of *Partly Cloudy: Ethics in War, Espionage, Covert Action, and Interrogation* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), and several articles in *Journal of Military Ethics, Military Review* etc. He earned a B.A. in Religion at Pacific Lutheran University and a Ph.D. in Ethics at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

1 A previous version of this essay was presented in 2011 at the annual meeting of the International Society of Military Ethics, and at a subsequent colloquium jointly hosted by Richard Schoonhoven of the US Military Academy and Daniel Callahan of the Hastings Center, to whom I am most grateful. I use the terms “soldiers” and “troops” here to refer comprehensively to all uniformed military personnel, officer and enlisted, in every service branch. In the US context, this includes the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The term “combatants” here will encompass not only uniformed military but also illegal fighters such as insurgents and terrorists.

2 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 274.

3 C. Chivers, “In Wider War in Afghanistan, Survival Rate of Wounded Rises,” *New York Times*, January 7, 2011, A1.

medicine are unable to reach all seriously wounded combatants in time to save them or sufficiently palliate their suffering. Such situations engender difficult ethical dilemmas for other soldiers witnessing their miserable condition.

The law in these cases is clear: simply stated, no soldiers today (including military medical personnel) are legally authorized to intentionally kill gravely wounded comrades, nor wounded enemies who no longer pose an immediate threat to them. The Geneva Conventions strictly prohibit killing enemy combatants who are rendered *hors de combat* by their wounds: for example, the first Geneva Convention of 1949 stipulates:

Members of the armed forces ... who are wounded or sick, shall be respected and protected in all circumstances. They shall be treated humanely and cared for by the Party to the conflict in whose power they may be. ... Any attempts upon their lives, or violence to their persons, shall be strictly prohibited. ...; they shall not willfully be left without medical assistance and care, nor shall conditions exposing them to contagion or infection be created. Only urgent medical reasons will authorize priority in the order of treatment to be administered. ... The Party to the conflict which is compelled to abandon wounded or sick to the enemy shall, as far as military considerations permit, leave with them a part of its medical personnel and material to assist in their care.⁴

(Note these passages assume that humane treatment precludes intentional killing as in active euthanasia, a position challenged below.)

Signatories to the Geneva Conventions (such as the United States) are bound to enforce them in their own military laws and regulations. As an example of their application, the rules of engagement card issued to every member of Coalition Forces Land Component Command in Iraq stated, “Do not engage [fire at] anyone who has surrendered or is out of battle due to sickness or wounds.”⁵ Soldiers who violate such rules by killing wounded enemy combatants can be prosecuted for murder or other forms of homicide.⁶

Moreover, professional codes of ethics have traditionally prohibited physicians (military and civilian) from directly and intentionally killing patients under any circumstances. Although some physicians have challenged that strict rule, advocating active euthanasia under certain carefully specified conditions, the prohibition remains to this day in the codes of ethics of the British and American medical associations.⁷ Furthermore, while physician-assisted suicide is legal in Oregon, Washington, Montana, New Mexico, and Vermont, active euthanasia is

⁴ *Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field*, ch. 2, art. 12 (Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross, August 12, 1949).

⁵ CFLCC (Coalition Forces Land Component Command), “Rules of Engagement for U.S. Military Forces in Iraq,” January 31, 2003, reprinted in Human Rights Watch, *Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003).

⁶ See also article 71 of the Lieber Code, which influenced several subsequent Hague and Geneva conventions: “Whoever intentionally inflicts additional wounds on an enemy already wholly disabled, or kills such an enemy, or who orders or encourages soldiers to do so, shall suffer death, if duly convicted, whether he belongs to the Army of the United States, or is an enemy captured after having committed his misdeed.” Francis Lieber, *General Orders no. 100*, promulgated by President Abraham Lincoln, April 24, 1863.

⁷ “End-of-Life Decisions: Views of the BMA” (London: British Medical Association, 2009); American Medical Association, “Euthanasia,” *Code of Medical Ethics*, Opinion 2.21 (Chicago: American Medical Association, 2009).

illegal in every US state, and in most other nations (apart from Holland, Belgium, and a few others).

However, this essay will consider certain conditions under which it may be morally justifiable for military medical personnel or other soldiers to kill gravely wounded combatants, either their enemies or their own comrades; in other words, explore whether military mercy-killing is sometimes morally permissible. (In theory, mercy-killing by soldiers might encompass gravely wounded civilians as well, but I'll largely ignore those instances here.) I will also weigh the potential consequences of changing relevant military laws and regulations, which may indicate that the current prohibition of battlefield euthanasia should not be qualified after all.

The analysis will proceed as follows: first, discussion on the ethics of killing in general and euthanasia in particular, and why the intentional killing of innocent persons is *prima facie* immoral, but not always or absolutely immoral; second, summarize several illustrative cases of battlefield euthanasia; third, I'll examine contending arguments in the recent scholarly literature regarding such cases; and finally, offer concluding reflections on the ethics and law of mercy-killing in war.

If the strategic relevance of this essay isn't clear yet, note that if strategic leaders were contemplating whether to legalize battlefield euthanasia, doing so would involve much more than simply rewriting our relevant military manuals. Before that could occur, formal changes in our commitments to the Geneva Conventions would have to be made, which would not only require presidential approval, but also two-thirds of the Senate. (As formal treaties signed by a president and ratified by the Senate, the Geneva Conventions have the same status under the US Constitution [Art. II, section 2] as does any other federal law.)

The Ethics of Killing and Euthanasia

Since battlefield euthanasia is a form of killing, it is morally suspect, and the burden of proof falls on those who would allow it. Now, it is not always wrong to kill persons intentionally. For example, in defense of oneself and other innocent people, it may be ethical (i.e. morally right or justified) to use deadly force if necessary to stop a murderous attacker. But it's usually wrong to kill people; most persons in most cases have a *prima facie* right not to be killed.⁸ Why is that the case?

A usefully straightforward answer to that question has been expressed in only slightly different ways by philosophers Jonathan Glover, Thomas Nagel, James Rachels, Don Marquis, Dan Brock and Jeff McMahan: killing persons is *prima facie* immoral because it deprives

8 Jonathan Glover, *Causing Death and Saving Lives* (London: Penguin, 1977); Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1-10; James Rachels, *The End of Life: Euthanasia and Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral," *Journal of Philosophy* 86, no. 4 (1989): 183-202; Dan Brock, *Life and Death: Philosophical Essays in Biomedical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Jeff McMahan, *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). In David Perry, *Partly Cloudy: Ethics in War, Espionage, Covert Action, and Interrogation* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), Ch. 1, I explain the distinction between *prima facie* and absolute moral principles, drawing from W. D. Ross's moral theory.

them of everything that they currently value and all that they could value in the future.⁹ As explained by Marquis:

What primarily makes killing wrong is neither its effect on the murderer nor its effect on the victim's friends and relatives, but its effect on the victim.... The loss of one's life deprives one of all the experiences, activities, projects, and enjoyments that would otherwise have constituted one's future.... When I am killed, I am deprived both of what I now value which would have been part of my future personal life, but also what I would come to value.¹⁰

Or, in the plain-spoken words of Clint Eastwood's character William Munny in the film *Unforgiven*, "It's a hell of a thing, killin' a man. Take away all he's got, and all he's ever gonna have."¹¹ When we grieve for our loved ones killed in war, we not only feel the loss of their companionship, we regret the fact that, were it not for the war, they might have lived long, rich lives. Death in battle deprived them of future lives as much worth living as our own.

But again, the right of persons not to be killed is not absolute: it can be qualified in at least three ways: first, the right of soldiers not to be killed is qualified in wartime, unless and until they have surrendered or are incapacitated by wounds or sickness; second, a right not to be killed can be *forfeited*, by murderous attackers or terrorist bomb-makers, for instance; and third, a right not to be killed can be *waived*, as in cases where competent patients request assisted suicide or active euthanasia.¹² As Marquis argued, "Persons who are severely and incurably ill, who face a future of pain and despair, and who wish to die will not have suffered a loss if they are killed."¹³ Dan Brock similarly contended that "the right not to be killed, like other rights, should be *waivable* when the person makes a competent decision that continued life is no longer wanted or a good, but is instead worse than no further life at all."¹⁴

Normally it is wrong directly and intentionally to kill *innocent* persons, "innocent" meaning either "not guilty" of a capital crime, or "not a threat" in war, such as civilian noncombatants and wounded combatants.¹⁵ But in euthanasia scenarios, including battlefield ones, the fact that a person is innocent in either sense is morally *irrelevant*.

Although active euthanasia is illegal in most countries, I'm persuaded that it can be morally justified in some instances, chiefly: 1) where a person's illness or injury is terminal, meaning that all life-sustaining treatments are qualitatively futile, *or* 2) where the severely sick or wounded victim could theoretically be saved, but the needed

9 If there is an afterlife that is objectively valuable for us, then death would not deprive us of that good. But I and the philosophers I have noted here are focusing exclusively on value in this world and this life.

10 Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral," 189-190.

11 *Unforgiven*, directed by Clint Eastwood, 1992.

12 The moral status of combatants in wartime is puzzling, and difficult to describe precisely. Strictly speaking they have not forfeited their right not to be killed, yet it is not unjust in war for their enemies to kill them. As Michael Walzer noted, soldiers on both sides of a war have "an equal right to kill." Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 41.

13 Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral," 191.

14 Brock, *Life and Death*, 213, emphasis added.

15 Michael Walzer's points about noncombatant immunity are important: "We are all immune to start with; our right not to be attacked is a feature of normal human relationships. That right is lost by those who bear arms 'effectively' because they pose a danger to other people. It is retained by those who don't bear arms at all" Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 145.

medical resources are unavailable or extremely scarce (as in conditions of battlefield triage); and 3) to prevent or end the victim's unbearable, unrelenting suffering, when sedation is unavailable, or if sedating them to a state of unconsciousness short of death would be pointless, no better than death itself for them.

Even under those conditions, one must obviously not euthanize people *against* their stated wishes! If they still value their lives, then they have not waived their right not to be killed, no matter what they may have indicated previously. Ideally, active euthanasia should only be done with the informed consent of patients, or, if they are no longer competent to reason, in light of their previously expressed wishes. Military personnel sometimes refer to "the soldiers' pact," an "unwritten code that if one soldier is wounded and on the verge of death, another should hasten the inevitable," which could potentially represent informed consent to euthanasia.¹⁶

But there are also some instances of *nonvoluntary* active euthanasia that can be morally justified as being in the "best interests" of no-longer-competent (or never competent) patients, when they can experience little or nothing more than overwhelming suffering, or when it is no longer possible for them (or anyone else in a similar condition) to value their own continued existence.¹⁷ Soldiers sometimes sustain wounds so grave that death would be more beneficial to them than continued life.

To illustrate various conditions in which battlefield euthanasia is sometimes contemplated, I turn now to several brief cases.

Illustrative Cases of Battlefield Euthanasia¹⁸

Ambrose Bierce's Tale of "The Coup de Grâce"

Bierce served in the Union army through most of the American Civil War, and later became a famous journalist and essayist. In "The Coup de Grâce," one of many short stories inspired by his wartime experience, he tells of a captain in a Massachusetts infantry regiment named Downing Madwell, who discovers a friend gravely wounded in battle:

Sergeant Halcrow was mortally hurt. His clothing was deranged; it seemed to have been violently torn apart, exposing the abdomen.... There had been no great effusion of blood. The only visible wound was a wide, ragged opening in the abdomen. It was defiled with earth and dead leaves. Protruding from it was a loop of small intestine.... The man who had suffered these monstrous mutilations was alive. At intervals he moved his limbs; he moaned at every breath. He stared blankly into the face of his friend and if touched screamed. In his giant agony he had torn up the ground on which he lay; his clenched hands were full of leaves and twigs and earth. Articulate speech was beyond his power; it was impossible to know if he were sensible to anything but pain. The expression of his face was an appeal; his eyes were full of prayer. For what? There was no misreading that look; the captain

16 Kathryn Carlson, "'An Act of So-Called Mercy': Semrau Case Hinges on 'Soldier's Pact,'" *National Post*, July 7, 2010.

17 Glover, *Causing Death*, 190-200; Rachels, *End of Life*, 179-180.

18 A few cases included in a draft version of this essay had to be excluded from publication in *Parameters* due to space constraints. They examined stories of King Saul of Israel, Napoleon's army infected by plague, and Jeremiah Gage at Gettysburg. The author will provide those case analyses to readers upon request to him at daperry@davidson.edu.

had too frequently seen it in eyes of those whose lips had still the power to formulate it by an entreaty for death.¹⁹

Capt. Madwell notices wild pigs in the distance feeding on the bodies of dead soldiers. Though Bierce does not suggest Madwell foresees a similar fate befalling his friend, perhaps while still alive, we are led to imagine that horrifying prospect ourselves. Madwell steps away from the sergeant to shoot a fatally wounded horse; then, having used his last bullet, he plunges his sword into his friend's chest. The story ends with the appearance of Madwell's superior officer with two stretcher-bearers, suggesting perhaps that Madwell may be punished for his decision to kill his friend rather than call for medical assistance.²⁰

It is unclear whether Bierce ever committed or observed any actual *coups de grâce* during the war.²¹ But he later published some of his views on mercy-killing in a newspaper column:

[I]n all seriousness I believe that the mercy which we extend to dumb animals, "putting them out of misery" when unable to relieve it, we are barbarians to withhold from our own kind.... Scores of times it has been my unhappy lot to deny the piteous appeals of helpless fellow creatures, comrades of the battle field, for the supreme and precious gift by which a simple movement of the arm I was able and willing to bestow—the simple gift of death. Every physician has had the same experience, and many (may blessings attend them!) have secretly given the relief implored.²²

Bierce indicates here that he had indeed witnessed cases like Sgt. Halcrow's during the war, but unlike Capt. Madwell he regretfully did not perform active euthanasia, perhaps out of fear of being court-martialed.

Lawrence of Arabia

T. E. Lawrence asserts in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* that "the Turks did not take Arab prisoners. Indeed, they used to kill them horribly; so in mercy, we were finishing those of our badly wounded who would have to be left helpless on abandoned ground."²³ Unlike most WWI armies, Lawrence's Arab forces typically fought guerrilla-style, far from any field hospitals where his wounded might otherwise have been deposited; indeed, his fighters apparently travelled without a medic, let alone a military physician.

Eugene Sledge

Sledge served in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII, fighting in two major battles against the Japanese on Pacific islands. In his eloquent memoir, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*, he recalls the murderous hatred that the Marines and Japanese felt for each other, which "resulted

19 Ambrose Bierce, "The Coup de Grâce" (1889), <http://www.classicreader.com/book/1168/1>.

20 Ibid.

21 Bierce came upon dead Union soldiers whose faces had been eaten by wild pigs after a skirmish in West Virginia in 1861. Roy Morris, *Ambrose Bierce: Alone in Bad Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 31.

22 Ambrose Bierce, "The Morality of Suicide," *San Francisco Examiner*, July 5, 1891, in *Ambrose Bierce: A Sole Survivor: Bits of Autobiography*, ed. S. Joshi and David Schultz (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 225.

23 T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), 363.

in savage, ferocious fighting with no holds barred.” Both sides were “reluctant to take prisoners.” The Marines were

too familiar with the sight of helpless wounded Americans lying flat on their backs on stretchers getting shot by Japanese snipers while we struggled to evacuate them.... None of us could bear the thought of leaving wounded behind. We never did, because the Japanese certainly would have tortured them to death.

Corpsmen (Navy medics who also accompany Marine units) learned to be extremely wary of treating wounded Japanese, who “invariably exploded grenades when approached ... killing their enemies along with themselves.”²⁴

One particularly disturbing incident involved a Marine on Peleliu who found a seriously wounded and partially paralyzed but still-conscious Japanese soldier:

The Japanese’s mouth glowed with huge gold-crowned teeth, and his captor wanted them. He put the point of his *kabar* [knife] on the base of a tooth and hit the handle with the palm of his hand. Because the Japanese was kicking his feet and thrashing about, the knife point glanced off the tooth and sank into the victim’s mouth. The Marine cursed him and with a slash cut his cheeks open to each ear. He put his foot on the sufferer’s lower jaw and tried again. Blood poured out of the soldier’s mouth. He made a gurgling noise and thrashed wildly. I shouted, “Put the man out of his misery.” All I got for an answer was a cussing out. Another Marine ran up, put a bullet in the enemy soldier’s brain, and ended his agony.²⁵

John Masters

During the Second World War, British Army officer John Masters served primarily in Burma fighting the Japanese. In his 1961 memoir, *The Road Past Mandalay*, he described a wrenching decision he had to make in May 1944 while commanding a brigade in northern Burma that was about to be overrun by a larger Japanese force. His unit had previously cared for and evacuated all of its sick and injured men, through extremely challenging terrain and weather. But now it lacked enough healthy men, horses and mules to safely withdraw all of its wounded: some would have to be left behind. So Masters ordered 19 of those in the worst condition, whom his medical officer judged to be near death, to be put to death immediately rather than abandoned to die of their wounds or at the hands of their captors. All of those men who were still conscious were given morphine before being shot.²⁶

Gene Woodley

Arthur “Gene” Woodley, who served in the US Army in Vietnam, 1968-69, had the horrific experience of finding a fellow US soldier who had been captured by the enemy, skinned alive, staked to the ground, and left to die. Still conscious, the victim pleaded with Woodley to kill him; he was near death and far from medical care. After about 20 minutes of anxious deliberation, and the man’s continuing requests to die, Woodley

24 Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 34, 283, 130, 118.

25 *Ibid.*, 120.

26 John Masters, *The Road Past Mandalay* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), 253-254.

shot him in the head. A commentator adds, “And after they buried him, buried him deep, Woodley cried.”²⁷

Incident at Goose Green

On 2 June 1982 during the war between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands, approximately 1,200 Argentine prisoners of war were detained in a sheep shed at Goose Green on East Falkland Island. Concerned about piles of artillery ammunition near the shed, the prisoners asked for and obtained permission to move it a safe distance away from them. Unfortunately, as several of them did so, some of the ammunition exploded, possibly due to booby traps set earlier by Argentine soldiers. As recalled by retired British Army Col. David Benest, three POWs died and nine others were badly burnt. A British medic at the scene, Sgt. Fowler, assessed one of the still-burning men to be fatally injured and possibly suffering horribly, and shot him to end his misery. (A subsequent military inquiry concluded that no war crime had been committed.) The other Argentines wounded in the explosion were treated and evacuated; one had to have both legs amputated, and died on the operating table.²⁸

Roger Maylunet in Iraq

On 21 May 2004, US Army Capt. Rogelio “Roger” Maynulet was commanding a company of the 1st Armored Division in Iraq. While searching for insurgent forces south of Baghdad near Najaf and Kufa, they chased and fired on a suspicious black sedan, which crashed after its driver and passenger were shot. As later reported in *Stars and Stripes*, “When a medic pulled the driver out of the car, it was clear he had suffered critical injuries, with part of his skull blown away.”²⁹ Although the medic (for unknown reasons) did not thoroughly examine the victim or attempt to treat him, he told Capt. Maynulet that he was dying. Maynulet then apparently aimed his gun at the driver and shot him twice in the head. The incident was captured on video by an unmanned aerial vehicle, unbeknownst to Maynulet at the time.³⁰

Defense witnesses at Maynulet’s Article-32 hearing (a military grand jury) testified that there had been battles with insurgents in the immediate vicinity of the crash, so evacuation of the wounded driver was not possible.³¹ But Maynulet was subsequently court-martialed on charges of assault with intent to commit murder and dereliction of duty.³²

27 William King, “Bloods: Teaching the Afro-American Experience of the Vietnam Conflict,” in *Soldier Talk: The Vietnam War in Oral Narrative*, ed. Paul Budra and Michael Zeitlin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 190.

28 During the Falklands conflict, Benest held the rank of captain in the Second Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, and was its Regimental Signals Officer. He recently stated, “I remain convinced that Sgt. Fowler acted in the best of motives, so as to alleviate human suffering.” David Benest, e-mail messages to author, January 5-12, 2011. See also John Frost, *2 PARA Falklands: The Battalion at War* (London: Buchan and Enright, 1983), 102. I have been unable to identify Sgt. Fowler’s first name.

29 Jason Chudy and Kent Harris, “1st AD Captain to Face Court-Martial in Shooting Death of Wounded Iraqi Man,” *Stars and Stripes*, December 8, 2004.

30 Nancy Montgomery, “Maynulet Enters Not Guilty Plea in ‘Mercy Killing’ Trial,” *Stars and Stripes*, March 29, 2005.

31 Kevin Dougherty, “Article 32 Hearing in Death of Iraqi Man Concludes,” *Stars and Stripes*, October 16, 2004.

32 Chudy and Harris, “1st AD Captain to Face Court-Martial.”

During his trial, Capt. Maynulet's attorney claimed that "his actions were guided by the part of the law of war that says 'maximize humanity, minimize suffering.'" Maynulet said in his own defense, "[The driver] was in a state I didn't think was dignified. I had to put him out of his misery.... It was the right thing to do.... It was the honorable thing to do."³³

Prosecutors countered that there is no justification or exception in the laws of war permitting soldiers to execute anyone rendered *hors de combat* by wounds. Maynulet was convicted by his court-martial panel of assault with the intent to commit voluntary manslaughter, a less serious charge than what he initially faced.³⁴ He was subsequently sentenced with discharge from military service, but no time in prison.³⁵

Cardenas Alban and Johnny Horne, Jr.

Alban and Horne were both US Army staff sergeants deployed in Baghdad, Iraq. On 18 August 2004, according to Edmund Sanders of the *Los Angeles Times*, their unit

received a tip that militants in dump trucks were planting roadside bombs.... So when ... Alban ... saw an object fall from a garbage truck in the distance, his company took positions around the vehicle and unleashed a barrage of fire from rifles and a 25-millimeter cannon atop a Bradley fighting vehicle. The truck exploded in flames. As soldiers ... approached the burning vehicle, they did not find insurgents. The victims were mainly teenagers, hired to work the late shift picking up trash for about \$5 a night, witnesses said. Medics scrambled to treat the half a dozen people strewn around the scene. A dispute broke out among a handful of soldiers standing over one severely wounded young man who was moaning in pain. An unwounded Iraqi claiming to be a relative of the victim pleaded in broken English for soldiers to help him. But to the horror of bystanders, Alban ... retrieved an M-231 assault rifle and fired into the wounded man's body. Seconds later ... Horne ... grabbed an M-16 rifle and also shot the victim.... US officials have since characterized the shooting as a "mercy killing," citing statements by Alban and Horne that they had shot the wounded Iraqi "to put him out of his misery." Military attorneys, however, are calling it premeditated murder and have charged the two sergeants, saying the victim's suffering was no excuse for the soldiers' actions.³⁶

I have not been able to determine whether the medics at the scene made any attempt to treat the man who was shot by Alban and Horne, nor if they did not, why not. Why wasn't he at least given a sedating dose of morphine? Perhaps they were too busy caring for other wounded Iraqis whom they believed had better prospects of survival.

The two sergeants were later court-martialed, convicted of murder, and sentenced to prison.³⁷

33 Nancy Montgomery, "Maynulet Testifies in Own Defense, Says Killing Wounded Iraqi 'Right Thing to Do,'" *Stars and Stripes*, March 31, 2005.

34 Nancy Montgomery, "U.S. Army Captain Is Found Guilty in Shooting Death of Wounded Iraqi," *Stars and Stripes*, April 1, 2005.

35 Nancy Montgomery and Ben Murray, "Maynulet Is Discharged from Service, but Gets No Jail Time in Death of Iraqi," *Stars and Stripes*, April 2, 2005.

36 Edmund Sanders, "'Mercy Killing' of Iraqi Revives GI Conduct Debate," *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 2004.

37 Tim Whitmire, "Short Sentences, Dismissals Show Wartime Murder Prosecutions Hard," *Associated Press*, June 5, 2005.

Robert Semrau in Afghanistan

On 19 October 2008, Canadian Forces Capt. Robert Semrau was serving in Afghanistan's Helmand Province with an Operation Mentor Liaison Team (OMLET) on patrol with an Afghan company when they were attacked by the Taliban. An airstrike was ordered, and Apache helicopters engaged the Taliban fighters. Two who had been hit by Apache fire were soon found: one was clearly dead; the other was still alive but gravely wounded in the stomach and both legs. An Afghan army captain decided that the man should not be treated, for reasons unclear. Capt. Semrau apparently agreed, and decided not to request a medical evacuation either, in spite of the availability of British helicopters at the time, out of concern the area was still dangerous. (This begs the question, are not their pilots trained and expected to land in dangerous places to save wounded combatants and civilians? Were they even consulted on the decision not to evacuate?) A few minutes later, Semrau walked back alone to the wounded Taliban fighter and fired two rifle shots into his chest. As a result, Semrau was court-martialed in 2010 on several charges including second-degree murder.³⁸

At his trial, witnesses stated Semrau told them immediately after the incident "he felt it was necessary . . . the humane thing to do. He couldn't live with himself if he left . . . an injured human being in this condition."³⁹ Semrau also reportedly said he was "willing to accept whatever followed on it and that it was a mercy kill," moreover, "he hoped anyone would do the same thing to anyone else, even himself."⁴⁰

In the end, Capt. Semrau was acquitted of murder but convicted on a lesser charge of "disgraceful conduct."⁴¹ At his sentencing hearing a military prosecutor argued, "Those incapacitated by wounds are to be treated humanely—this is one of the basic rules of humanity, this is one of the basic rules of combat. Treating a wounded combatant humanely does not mean accelerating his death."⁴² Semrau was subsequently demoted to second lieutenant and dismissed from military service by his sentencing judge, but not ordered to serve any time in prison.⁴³

Paul Robinson, a former British and Canadian military officer who has published extensively in military ethics, commented on the verdict in Semrau's case:

It's a curious result—if he didn't kill the Afghan, then he's not guilty of disgraceful conduct. If he's guilty of disgraceful conduct, then it follows that

38 Andrew Duffy, "Soldier on Trial for Wrongful Battlefield Death Was Afghan Mentor," *National Post*, March 25, 2010, and "Corporal Saw Captain Pointing Rifle at Afghan, Court Martial Hears," *National Post*, April 27, 2010.

39 Commenting on a hypothetical case based on the Semrau incident, retired Canadian Forces officer Peter Bradley asks, "Can the average patrol member determine when someone is suffering unbearably? How do we define 'unbearably'? There are also problems with the notion that the wounded enemy is going to die soon. Who knows who is going to die and when? If he is going to die soon anyway, why not wait until he dies of his wounds?" Peter Bradley, "Is Battlefield Mercy Killing Morally Justifiable?" *Canadian Military Journal* 11, no. 1 (2010): 11. But I think Bradley underestimates the ability of soldiers to make accurate judgments in cases like Semrau's.

40 Andrew Duffy, "Wounded Taliban's Death a 'Mercy Kill,' Soldier Testifies," *National Post*, April 28, 2010.

41 Kathryn Carlson and Andrew Duffy, "Semrau Not Guilty of Murdering Taliban Fighter," *National Post*, July 19, 2010.

42 Andrew Duffy, "Semrau to Wait until September for Sentencing," *National Post*, July 27, 2010.

43 Andrew Duffy, "Canadian Soldier Sentenced for Battlefield Mercy Killing," *National Post*, October 5, 2010.

the jurors were convinced that he did the deed, in which case he should also be guilty of murder or manslaughter. It doesn't square very easily—perhaps the only way of making sense of the verdict is that the jury was certain that he shot the body, but could not be certain that the body was alive, in which case the disgraceful conduct is mutilation of a dead body. More probably, though, it's a case of jury nullification—they knew he did it, but had some sympathy for him and didn't want him sent to prison for life so they found him guilty of something lesser to ensure that he got a lighter sentence but didn't get off scott free. Not good law, probably, but could have made sense to the panel. I should add that if the mortally wounded person had been Canadian, I don't believe for one instant that Capt. Semrau would have shot him.⁴⁴

Matt Gurney, an editor at Canada's *National Post*, wrote sympathetically of the dilemma that Semrau faced on the ground in Afghanistan:

Capt. Semrau may have broken the law, and there are those who could reasonably argue that he has sinned against God. I would not choose to argue those points. But I will say that were I the soldier in that situation, I would not hesitate to shoot, and were I the broken man waiting to die in the dirt, I would welcome the bullet.⁴⁵

Recent Moral Assessments of Battlefield Euthanasia

Steven Swann

In 1986 the Academy of Medicine of Washington DC awarded its annual prize in bioethics to Capt. (later Col.) Steven Swann of the US Army Medical Corps for his essay, "Euthanasia on the Battlefield." Swann's article caused quite a stir among fellow physicians and bioethicists in advocating active euthanasia in some wartime circumstances.

Writing in the waning days of the Cold War, Swann begins with a plausible scenario in a hypothetical war between NATO and the Soviet Union in Europe. He imagines himself in the role of a surgeon near the front lines who is ordered to evacuate in the face of an advancing enemy, but who cannot possibly take all of his wounded with him. He further speculates that the Russians are executing all severely wounded prisoners, so that they cannot be trusted to care for them if captured; in other words, Swann suggests a situation like the actual one that faced Masters and Lawrence above:

On the modern battlefield, physicians will be faced with wounded of all types, of many nationalities, and in greater numbers than previously known... Gunshot and fragment wounds are to be expected, but with the lethal and diverse arsenals available to potential combatants, one must expect more severe and incapacitating wounds, such as multiple trauma, multiple amputations, severe burns, chemical casualties (especially from blister and nerve agents), as well as burns, blast injuries, and lethal contamination from nuclear weapons. Many of the wounded being seen with such injuries will not be attended because treatment will not be technically or physically available. The medical support system will be overcome with wounded, will

44 Paul Robinson, e-mail message to author, January 21, 2011.

45 Matt Gurney, "On the Battlefield, Morality and Law Fight to the Death," *National Post*, July 23, 2010. The editors of that periodical made similar points after Semrau's sentencing, adding that "killing someone out of malice is very different from killing someone out of compassion. It's time the law reflected that, both on the battlefield and off." "Absence of Malice," editorial, *National Post*, October 7, 2010.

not have enough resources, will not have enough time, and will not have transportation ready to bring the wounded to a treatment facility.⁴⁶

Echoing a famous argument by James Rachels, Swann contends (in contrast to orthodox medical ethics) that there is no necessary moral difference between killing and letting-die, meaning that if someone's motives and intentions are ethical, then either choice can be justified; moreover, active euthanasia can actually be *more* ethical than letting die, if euthanasia will result in less suffering to a mortally wounded or terminally ill patient.⁴⁷ I concur.

Thomas Beam

Beam is a retired colonel who served in the US Army Medical Corps, directed a hospital operating room during the Persian Gulf War, and was a medical ethics consultant to the Army Surgeon General. He contributed an essay on battlefield medical ethics to an impressive two-volume anthology on military medical ethics, in which he commented on euthanasia in wartime.⁴⁸

Beam notes that the normal moral obligation to respect the autonomous preferences of patients is limited in the military context. For example, although competent civilian patients have a right to refuse all life-sustaining treatments (in which case their physicians must allow them to die), soldiers don't have that right to the same degree or scope: military medics and doctors may be obliged to save soldiers lives against their will if doing so will allow them to return to the fight later. In addition, a severely wounded soldier might desperately want to be saved, but may nevertheless be placed by doctors in the lowest-priority category of battlefield triage ("expectant," i.e., expected to die even if treated) in order to devote critically scarce medical resources on salvageable patients instead.⁴⁹

Beam addresses questions of battlefield euthanasia with commendable nuance and balance, analyzing directly the provocative positions taken by Swann. Considering in turn several relevant ethical principles—respect for autonomy, beneficence and nonmaleficence toward patients, distributive justice, and utility—Beam concludes points both for and against euthanasia can be made under each one, making him reluctant to take a categorical stance either way. For instance, nonmaleficence can be construed both to forbid killing *and* to forbid allowing someone to suffer needlessly, though physicians have tended historically to side with the former when it conflicts with the latter. In the end, Beam advocates upholding the current military law and policy (in effect) prohibiting euthanasia, out of a concern for potential abuses if it were legally permitted. But he admits he could not rule out resorting himself to euthanasia under conditions like those hypothesized by Swann.⁵⁰

46 Steven Swann, "Euthanasia on the Battlefield," *Military Medicine* 152, no. 11 (1987): 546.

47 James Rachels, "Active and Passive Euthanasia," *New England Journal of Medicine* 292 (1975): 78-80, and *End of Life*; Swann, "Euthanasia on the Battlefield," 546-8.

48 Thomas Beam, "Medical Ethics on the Battlefield: The Crucible of Military Medical Ethics," in *Military Medical Ethics*, vol. 2, ed. Thomas Beam and Linette Sparacino (Washington: Office of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army, and Borden Institute, 2003), 367-402.

49 *Ibid.*, 379, 383-384.

50 *Ibid.*, 384-394.

Michael Gross

Gross teaches applied and professional ethics at the University of Haifa and has served in the Israeli military. His many publications include *Bioethics and Armed Conflict*, one of the most comprehensive treatments of the subject published by a single author.⁵¹

Gross argues that the normal obligation of military medical personnel not to abandon their wounded can be overridden by military necessity in cases where doing so would put an important military mission at risk, such as delay a tactical retreat in circumstances experienced by Masters and imagined by Swann. Gross further claims that soldiers who have been incapacitated by wounds—at least if their wounds will prevent them from ever returning to combat—have thoroughly ceased being combatants and thus regain all the rights they had as civilians, including a right to refuse life-sustaining treatment, which Gross contends “military organizations rarely recognize.”⁵² But then, very few civilians anywhere in the world have a legal right to obtain active euthanasia, even where they have the right to refuse all life-sustaining treatments. So the question becomes, do mortally wounded soldiers have a moral right to be euthanized, in spite of legal and professional prohibitions?

Like Rachels and Swann, Gross believes there is not always a clear moral difference between passive and active euthanasia, since even passive euthanasia can be immoral if done with evil intent, e.g., to collect on their life insurance. But unlike Rachels and Swann, and consistent with orthodox medical ethics as evinced by Paré and Desgenettes, Gross regards the intentional killing of patients as always immoral. So, according to Gross, while it might be justified to abandon wounded soldiers in the face of an overwhelming enemy advance, it would be unethical to use active euthanasia on them (as Masters ordered in Burma), even when those soldiers are likely to die of their wounds in great suffering. Curiously, Gross seems to be vaguely amenable to euthanasia in the face of near-certain torture by enemies. But overall, he judges, “Commanders may place their soldiers in harm’s way but they may not kill them.” Although he thinks that withholding life-sustaining treatment on request is not murder, he contends “killing on request is still murder.”⁵³

However, Gross’s argument against active euthanasia stumbles in at least two ways: first, he fails to show how dying of one’s wounds is any less horrible from the victim’s perspective than dying under enemy torture, hence why euthanasia would be clearly wrong in the former case but possibly justified in the latter. Second, he does not recognize that acceding to the request of competent adults to kill them is obviously *unlike* murder in that respect—in other words, Gross ignores the question of whether competent adults can credibly *waive* their right not to be killed (as Brock persuasively argued they could).

51 Michael Gross, *Bioethics and Armed Conflict: Moral Dilemmas of Medicine and War* (London: MIT Press, 2006).

52 Ibid., 127.

53 Ibid., 129-134.

Stephen Deakin

Deakin is a professor of leadership at the United Kingdom's Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. His 2013 article, "Mercy Killing in Battle," is one of the most recent scholarly treatments of the subject. The greatest strength of this essay lies in Deakin's rich use of vivid narratives of wartime mercy killing during the past two centuries, including the Napoleonic Wars, the Franco-Prussian War, both world wars, and recent conflicts in the Falklands, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The author persuasively argues that battlefield euthanasia is much more common than civilians have assumed, in part because veterans have been reluctant to speak or write about it.⁵⁴

However, Deakin's ethical analysis is problematic in some respects. First, a minor quibble: he states early on, "Battlefield mercy killings are repugnant. Intentionally to take an innocent person's life is a very grave matter both legally and ethically: it is battlefield murder."⁵⁵ Legally that is true, it is a war crime, an "atrocities," but if Deakin has already concluded that *ethically* it is murder, then there was no reason for him to pursue the matter further, because murder by definition (i.e., unjust killing) is unethical. His point would have been clearer had he stated more narrowly that mercy killing is considered murder under the laws of armed conflict.

Second, Deakin claims because mercy killing is outside of battle (or combat) *per se*, therefore the ethical considerations of *jus in bello* do not apply. Here the author makes a serious mistake, since the *jus in bello* criteria of noncombatant immunity, military necessity and proportionality clearly bear on whether it is permissible intentionally and directly to kill noncombatants. In other words, *jus in bello* criteria are obviously relevant to mercy killings. At the very least, Deakin would need to show mercy killings are justified *exceptions* to the *jus in bello* rules, and ideally also to wrestle with what those exceptions would entail in terms of modifications to the Geneva Conventions. Instead, the author appeals to "last resort"—a *jus ad bellum* criterion not obviously appropriate in this context—and "good faith"—which he never clearly defines but which seems to encompass several ethical principles that ought rather to be distinguished.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Deakin helpfully points out that stress-filled wartime situations in which euthanasia might seem justified usually differ from end-of-life choices in peacetime hospital settings, where withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatments can occur in light of a patient's advance directive, medical prognosis, etc. But, he also rightly hints that domestic euthanasia debates may have increasing relevance to battlefield cases.⁵⁷ This reader wishes that he had explored those connections in more depth, since there can be important similarities regarding consent (e.g., waiving one's right not to be killed), scarcity or futility of life-sustaining treatments, alleviation of severe suffering, and whether patients/soldiers value extending their lives any further.

54 Stephen Deakin, "Mercy Killing in Battle," *Journal of Military Ethics* 12, no. 2 (2013): 162-171..

55 *Ibid.*, 163.

56 *Ibid.*, 172-177.

57 *Ibid.*, 172, 178.

Concluding Reflections

As argued above, as people have a *prima facie* right not to be killed, it is usually unethical to kill anyone who poses no imminent lethal threat to others, or has not committed a capital crime. However, I'm also persuaded that some instances of battlefield euthanasia are not only morally justifiable, they can be more ethical than allowing someone to die in agony from wounds or disease. Thus, I am uncomfortable with the current strict prohibition on battlefield euthanasia, which I think unfairly punishes some morally justified acts.⁵⁸

But should we change military laws to permit mercy-killing? Several military officers have expressed strong objections to that idea. Retired US Marine Corps lawyer Col. Stephen Shi argues that "hard cases make bad law," and concludes that it is better to keep the rule for soldiers very simple: do not kill anybody who is not a threat.⁵⁹ A similar view is held by retired US Army lawyer Col. Fred Taylor, who also thinks it would be unfair to ask soldiers to bear the burden of making euthanasia decisions or carrying them out, given all of the other pressures and traumas weighing on them in combat and counterinsurgency operations.⁶⁰ Retired US Army Col. Robert Knutson, worried about the effects of shock and sedation on seriously wounded combatants, doubts that we could plausibly consider their requests for euthanasia under such conditions to be rational. He also believes it would be dangerous to allow soldiers to make euthanasia decisions for others.⁶¹ These are important concerns, though they might be eliminated by restricting those authorized to perform battlefield euthanasia to military medics and physicians exclusively.

The most our troops would typically expect on the battlefield is for medics to treat wounds and save lives as best they can, and use as much morphine as needed to alleviate suffering, even if the dose required might also suppress the victim's breathing. (In the domestic medical context, this is sometimes called "terminal sedation.") Some even tougher cases may continue to arise in war, where the numbers of seriously wounded soldiers overwhelm the ability of medics to treat or sedate them, or when military necessity requires the most gravely wounded to be abandoned. In those situations, I fully sympathize with commanders who feel compelled to end their misery directly rather than let them suffer and die of wounds or torture.

I confess, though, that I am unable to construct a satisfactory rule explicitly permitting battlefield euthanasia capable of being practically incorporated into legal Rules of Engagement, let alone see any possibility of relevant changes being made to our more fundamental treaty obligations under the Geneva Conventions. The general rule against directly and intentionally killing anyone who is not a threat is so important in

58 Bradley, "Is Battlefield Mercy Killing Morally Justifiable?" 11, claims that because battlefield euthanasia is illegal, it therefore cannot uphold Kantian obligations to act only on universalizable maxims and treat persons as ends and not merely as means. But he ignores questions of whether the law itself should be changed to uphold the right of a competent patient to obtain active euthanasia, and whether respect for human dignity permits nonvoluntary euthanasia, in or out of wartime.

59 Stephen Shi, e-mail message to author, January 21, 2011. (See also Gross, *Bioethics and Armed Conflict*, 132.) Before becoming a military lawyer, Shi was a combat infantry officer.

60 Fred Taylor, telephone message to author, December 29, 2010, and e-mail message to author, January 16, 2011.

61 Robert Knutson, e-mail message to author, December 3, 2010.

most wartime scenarios, and so difficult to uphold consistently amid the psychological terrors and hatreds that war induces, that it seems unwise to stipulate legal exceptions to it, even to permit morally justified cases of mercy-killing.⁶² This may seem an anticlimactic conclusion to reach—affirming the moral justification of active euthanasia in some instances, yet failing to endorse a legal authorization for it on the battlefield—but there are previously mentioned precedents for that combination of views in domestic US law, namely the five states that permit physician-assisted suicide, but also prohibit active euthanasia, out of concern that legalizing the latter would lead to regrettable abuses.

However, it may be that consideration of the kinds of harrowing dilemmas that I have explored in this essay might at least encourage court-martial panels and convening authorities to impose lenient sentences on well-intentioned soldiers convicted of battlefield euthanasia.

62 See my book *Partly Cloudy*, ch. 4 on “Anticipating and Preventing Atrocities in War.”

Review Essay

American “Declinism”: A Review of Recent Literature

Michael Daniels

Is America in decline, yet again? Recent literature suggests some negative trends - an erosion of power, legitimacy and authority that bodes ill for the future of American primacy. However, this perspective is not new. At least three other American declinist periods have arisen since the 1950s, and others still earlier in US history. Some pundits say this time is different: America cannot fix what ails it, and there is no stemming the “rise of the rest,” especially China. Others disagree, and contend there are no current ills that cannot be cured. Some claims are overstated, some appear to be repackaged from previous warnings, and others are simply repeating popular conceptions within political, policy, media, and social circles.

It is a challenge to select only a few voices from this crowded field to frame the issue, define its scope, and determine its merits. The five books reviewed below were chosen because they were authored by respected and/or experienced hands and are recent additions to this debate. They were also selected for their unique perspectives. These books, in sum, provide the reader a full appreciation of the current debate, and are complementary. They do not necessarily offer definitive answers, but no single book published to date completely addresses this complicated domestic and international debate.

The Upside of Down: Why the Rise of the Rest is Good for the West

The first book is *The Upside of Down: Why the Rise of the Rest is Good for the West*, by Charles Kenny. Kenny is an economist, and currently a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development. As the subtitle of his book indicates, America and the West may be in decline, but the rest of the world is trending upward, which should be a reason for celebration. Kenny provides a unique argument amongst declinists. He sees global advances in public health, education, and economic opportunity providing opportunities for growth and stability. His main argument is the United States and the West must better understand this current trend, stop fighting it, and find sensible ways to embrace this new world economic order.

Kenny faults many of the policy prescriptions proposed by declinists. He views

Books Reviewed:

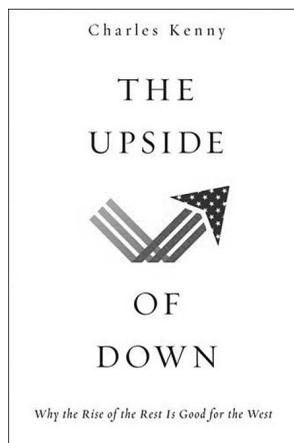
The Upside of Down: Why the Rise of the Rest is Good for the West
By Charles Kenny

Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent
By Edward Luce

The Myth of America's Decline: Politics, Economics, and a Half-Century of False Prophecies
By Josef Joffe

The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat
By Vali Nasr

Foreign Policy Begins at Home: The Case for Putting America's House in Order
By Richard N. Haass



Charles Kenny, *The Upside of Down: Why the Rise of the Rest is Good for the West* (New York: Basic Books, 2014). 256 pages. \$26.99

Colonel Michael Daniels is a US Army engineer officer, and a 2014 USAWC graduate. He is currently assigned as the Chief of Plans and Operations for United States Forces Korea Engineers.

their pessimism as unnecessary and myopic; US leadership cannot reverse this global trend. In this view, he veers away from mainstream thinking as expressed by those like Charles Krauthammer, who declares “decline is not a condition. Decline is a choice.” Kenny says we need to accept and prepare for this new world order rather than building an ineffectual bulwark against the inevitable tide of change. He sees increases in global health and prosperity creating a more resilient and stable planet. This reduction in tension and instability provides a more level platform on which to trade and interact, which also decreases the amount of resources America has to invest while “securing the world.”

As an economist, most of Kenny’s points concern the benefits of an interconnected world in an era of globalization. In his estimation, since economics is not a zero-sum game there can be no losers, only winners, as all benefit from the rise of others. These new opportunities do exist, but Kenny seems to overstate, and oversimplify, this economic trend. The rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS—and others in the developing world) generally has a positive impact on regional, and international, trading partners. This economic ink-spot model has some validity, but it is incomplete in its description of the global environment. Kenny only briefly addresses the increases in nationalist tensions, especially in South and East Asia. He claims the risk of global misunderstanding and violence will be reduced through these economic linkages, and “the potential for clashing civilizations is distinctly on the decline.” This “McDonald’s theory” of international order and conflict is a little thin; economic interdependence only goes so far, as the world is starting to observe.

Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent



Edward Luce, *Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2012). 320 pages. \$26.00

Kenny’s glossy reassurances may be uplifting, but they are neither pragmatic nor substantive. Edward Luce’s *Time to Start Thinking* offers a much darker outlook. Luce, an experienced and respected journalist—most recently as the Washington bureau chief for the *Financial Times*. Kenny’s optimistic description of the current state of affairs is worlds away from that described by Luce, as evidenced by this book’s subtitle of “America and the Spectre of Decline.” Luce is not an optimist; nor is he a doomsayer. However, his book paints a stark picture of “anti-Democracy” in America.

Luce’s description of what ails America is very detailed and thorough, and his list of interviewees is equally expansive and impressive. As such he provides both a width and depth to his argument and main thesis, that America has lost its essential pragmatism but retained its exceptionalist tendencies. Exceptionalism has always been a sword that cuts two ways. Luce’s contention is that creed now trumps both substance and action, resulting in a sclerosis from which the United States

may not recover. It is a dark work. One reviewer, Jonathan Rauch, wrote it could have been titled “Time to Start Drinking.”

Luce has structured his book around the main challenges facing America: an education system in decline, a “hollowing out” of the middle class, a decrease in investment in research and development and decline in innovation, an oversized and ineffective bureaucracy, and the poisoning of politics by increases in partisanship and the influence of money and special interests in a never-ending election cycle. Again, there are very few, if any, positive takeaways from this book. Luce sees America as increasingly divided between camps of cynics and hypocrites, with the majority of Americans in the middle, quite apathetic.

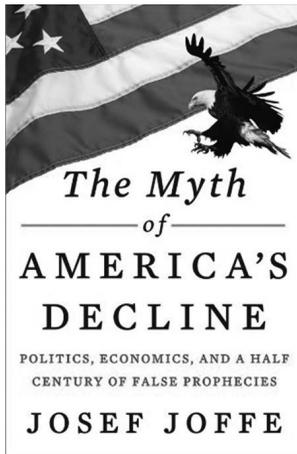
Like Kenny, Luce does not believe the “rise of the rest” is a threat, but rather a trend to be celebrated for its likely and potential positive impact around the world. His critique is reserved for the increasingly dysfunctional US political, social, and economic infrastructures. Luce claims previous critics got it wrong: America’s resilience and exceptionalism overcame past challenges. He believes, regardless of what may happen to a rising China, European Union, or other state actors, America has lost its ability to shape its destiny, perhaps permanently.

Luce contends US leaders and policymakers lack the ability and will to pursue policies required to turn the country around. He says most of these reforms are viewed as too wide-ranging, serious, and extreme to be politically viable. He sees the rise of political risk aversion as one reason for inaction, with the concomitant rise of the “tyranny of the minority” as another factor. He expends a great deal of invective on the Tea Party movement, less for its ideology and more for the corrosive impact it has had on the political process. These trends have eroded the resilience and “suppleness” of US government, and as such he cannot envisage any coalescence short of another major shock or black swan that forces action. Even then, as he points out, both Presidents Bush and Obama “wasted” their opportunities for serious, enduring reforms when presented their “unifying” moments (9-11 and the financial meltdown).

Luce’s conclusion is America’s challenges are not unique, either viewed through the lens of history or in the challenges faced by contemporary western nations. However, he believes this time is different, and America cannot simply wish away the problem, expecting unforeseen events will somehow change the dynamic and stem this negative trend. The reader gets the impression Luce wants America to succeed, but cannot see how its leaders can overcome the increasing friction to accomplish anything of substance. This view stands in marked contrast to the writing of Josef Joffe.

The Myth of America’s Decline: Politics, Economics, and a Half Century of False Prophecies

Joffe is the German publisher-editor of *Der Zeit*, a Hoover Institution fellow and a Stanford educator. He has been a long-time supporter of the “idea” that is America. In many respects his enthusiasm and positive American outlook make him a modern day Alexis de Tocqueville. Joffe’s latest book is *The Myth of America’s Decline: Politics, Economics, and a Half Century of False Prophecies*. The author’s thesis is “declinism markets



Josef Joffe, *The Myth of America's Decline: Politics, Economics, and a Half Century of False Prophecies* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013). 352 pages. \$26.95

a self-defeating prophecy,” and declinists purposefully sound the alarm. Why? Joffe provides a number of post-World War II examples wherein politicians claim the “sky is falling” only so they can be seen to save the day, once elected (or re-elected). This interpretation is hard to refute given the facts he presents.

However, it is a thin argument, particularly in light of the many issues facing the United States. On this point, Joffe claims, unlike previous empires, no outside power will be the downfall of America; that task can only be accomplished by America. He argues against the simplistic linear interpretations of history many declinist commentators appear to offer. He saves particular invective for Paul Kennedy, whose book *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* is described as a doom-saying prophecy,

which is hardly the popular view.

The great critique of this line of argument, and of the book in general, is it explains away or neglects a fuller discussion of America’s current challenges. The details of these woes are missing, and all Edward Luce describes seems dismissed or ignored in Joffe’s work. Any reader who tackles these books in tandem will wonder if the authors are talking about the same country; their views are that different. It is as though Joffe has written the book to reassure US leaders, as well as key allies and partners. Joffe sees no cause for alarm; the United States will weather this down period, as it has all others.

Joffe still views the United States as the world’s “Überpower” (the title of his previous book), and as no state is capable of assuming the mantle it is a role the United States cannot shirk. America’s global influence, legitimacy, and credibility may have eroded, but just as important is the lack of will (or ability) to act. Again, Joffe fails to address US domestic challenges in depth. As such, he misses the critical correlation and friction between domestic and international policy. America cannot be the global leader he envisions with its fractious and issue-laden domestic situation. This is the author’s greatest omission and it weakens his argument that China will never overtake the United States. As Joffe himself wrote, “only America can do in America.” According to Luce and others, the United States appears to be well down that path.

The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat

The last two books, written by foreign policy experts, also focus on the United States’ role as world leader, and discuss decline relative to others, not necessary to America alone. Vali Nasr, currently the dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and formerly a senior advisor to Richard Holbrooke, has written *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*. This work contrasts *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* by Richard Haass, president of the Council

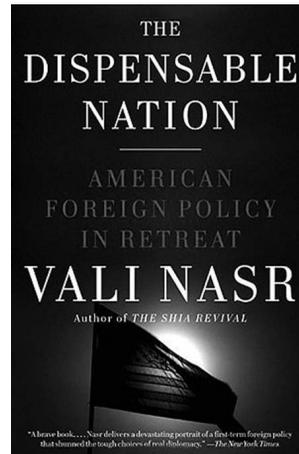
on Foreign Relations. Both authors refute current claims of decline, but each offers a different interpretation—Nasr focuses on US leadership and foreign policy choices, while Haass looks at foreign policy influences through a domestic lens.

Vali Nasr's book is highly critical of the foreign policy decisions of the Obama administration. His view is informed by his disillusion with the political process after his experience as an advisor in the US Special Representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Nasr contends President Obama too often fell in line with the "destructive" policies of his predecessor, and pursued options of political expediency over sound foreign policy. His criticisms are at times harsh, perhaps reflecting a naive belief in the power of diplomacy when backed by hard power. The memoir-aspect of this book is illuminating, but it fails to link with and support Nasr's policy prescriptions for China and the Middle East. His descriptions of endless turf battles, and what appears to be unvarnished praise for Ambassador Holbrooke further serve to detract from his overall argument.

Nasr supports aggressive involvement in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region, the Middle East (especially in Iran and Syria), and with China. Nasr would have the United States engage more in these regions, and believes Washington has not reached out enough. Again, the author neglects to consider domestic political realities and challenges, believing international credibility trumps domestic will. President Obama's pragmatism falls short in Nasr's liberal internationalist worldview, which is one reason for his title choice (though he inaccurately attributes the original "indispensable nation" quote to President Clinton, rather than Secretary Albright).

In the end Nasr's book is wanting. His critiques and foreign policy recommendations are either too aggressive and off the mark (as with China), politically untenable (as with Iran), or not in the vital interests of the United States (as with the remainder of the Middle East). Nasr's book is still a worthy addition to the foreign policy debate given its breadth and the author's experience, but must be read with some skepticism. His greatest contribution may be in developing a case for future Afghanistan and Pakistan policies. Lastly, his concern that America is now seen internationally as "dispensable" is off the mark. While President Obama's pragmatism can be characterized at times as over cautious, the administration has had to prioritize domestic over international policy. Nasr does not understand, or recognize, the political aspects of US leadership.

One author who does recognize this dynamic is Richard Haass, as evidenced by his recent book *Foreign Policy Begins at Home*. He admits the title seems a bit strange coming from a longtime foreign policy hand. Haass' view of US global leadership in the current environment is more constrained than that proposed by Nasr. Haass terms his



By Vali Nasr, *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2013). 320 pages. \$28.95



Richard Haass, *Foreign Policy Begins at Home* (New York: Basic Books, 2014). 224 pages. \$15.99

approach “restoration,” as in getting the domestic house in order and being more discriminate in international forays. Haass also differs with Nasr on where the United States should prioritize its international efforts. Haass’ position nests with that of the current administration in terms of an increased focus on this Asia-Pacific and less emphasis given to the Middle East.

The book is short, and the author freely admits he did not write it to suggest possible policy options. Haass does not believe America is in decline, but he thinks it is performing suboptimally. His emphasis is on “rebuilding at home and refocusing abroad,” characteristic of the pragmatism demonstrated by the current administration. He provides some detail on how to improve the economy and domestic climate,

with an emphasis on domestic spending reforms to reduce the national debt. Haass also modestly outlines requirements for energy security, economic growth, educational opportunity, and sustainable immigration policies. His domestic recommendations are sound, but too general and cautious to be of great value for readers wanting more substance.

Haass recognizes the United States does not currently face an existential threat, and this presents a unique opportunity to refocus at home. However, he is concerned about those who would carry that effort too far, and chart a more isolationist course. His concerns are warranted given current debate and rhetoric. Haass’ greatest contribution is his emphasis on the need to prioritize US interests abroad. His recommendations are sound, not surprisingly, given the depth and breadth of his experience. Haass does not see “wars of necessity” on the horizon, and strongly encourages avoiding further “wars of choice.” He believes the United States will weather this period after a brief respite, but only if it takes this moment in history to get its domestic house in order.

In conclusion, these five very different books describe America’s place in the world at a time when there are great challenges at home and abroad. Together they represent a comprehensive view of the current debate regarding the phenomenon of decline, and its causes and impacts in both foreign and domestic policy. The future may not be as dark as described by Edward Luce, nor as bright as characterized by Josef Joffe. Decline may be a choice or a state of mind, and may or may not apply to the United States currently. Most contemporary writers agree the United States must act, regardless of its relative or actual decline. The world is in transition, and the United States must prepare itself to provide stability, opportunity, and leadership.

Commentaries & Replies

On “Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS”

Christopher J. Bolan

This commentary is in response to David S. Sorenson’s article “Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS” published in the Autumn 2014 issue of Parameters (vol. 44, no. 3).

In “Priming Strategic Communications: Countering the Appeal of ISIS,” David Sorenson makes a compelling case that the brutal actions of this terrorist group “significantly violate fundamental Islamic tenets.” Sorenson uses his extensive knowledge of prominent fundamental Islamic theorists to demonstrate the violence inflicted by ISIS on other Muslims, minorities within the region, and Westerners falls well outside the scope of even the most conservative interpretations of Islam (Salafiyya thought). He goes on to note correctly that in many instances the ruthless actions of ISIS are expressly forbidden by “the most legitimate source of Islam, the Qur’an.” Sorenson thus lends critical analytical depth and support to the contentions of Western and Islamic leaders alike that the doctrine and actions of ISIS are contrary to the basic tenets and historical traditions of Islam.

From this solid base, Sorenson makes a less credible assertion that the United States could effectively employ these arguments to mount an information campaign ultimately to “degrade and defeat ISIS.” As he notes, the State Department’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications has been an abject failure in countering the appeal of ISIS. Despite the State Department’s best efforts, ISIS has managed to recruit as many as 6,000 new members in June 2014 alone. Moreover, he also admits the United States “faces significant obstacles in launching a counter-ISIS information campaign, as they lack credibility in the minds of most Muslims.” Sorenson is almost certainly understating these challenges given the disastrous outcome of the US military invasion of Iraq, the Abu Ghraib scandal, the indefinite detention of Muslim suspects at Guantanamo Bay, and recent revelations of the CIA’s use of “enhanced interrogation” (torture). His solution to these challenges is to mount “covert information operations” providing funding and support to Muslim voices willing to facilitate an anti-ISIS narrative. To these efforts he would also devote some attention to educating Muslims in a “better understanding of traditional Islam.”

A combined information and education campaign might indeed yield some marginal progress in the ideological battle with ISIS. We should undoubtedly continue to develop these programs at some level. However, it is a stretch to believe such an investment will significantly contribute to the defeat of ISIS and like-minded terrorist organizations. Muslim leaders across the globe quickly condemned the attacks in France, apparently inspired by al-Qaeda-like groups, such as ISIS, that

Dr. Chris Bolan teaches national security policies, strategy formulation, interagency decision-making, and Middle Eastern studies at the US Army War College. He served as a strategic intelligence officer and Middle East Foreign Area Officer in Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan, and as an advisor to Vice Presidents Gore and Cheney. He received his MA and PhD from Georgetown University.

began in the offices of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. The Grand Mosque of Paris issued a statement saying it was “shocked” and “horrified” by death of so many innocents. Al-Azhar University, a center of Islamic learning in Cairo, characterized the attack as a “criminal act” declaring “Islam denounces any violence.” The Organization of Islamic Cooperation also condemned the attacks, offering sympathies and condolences to the people of France and the families of the victims. Iranian President Rouhani denounced the attacks as “terrorism” and Iran’s Foreign Ministry declared “all acts of terrorism against innocent people are alien to the doctrine and teachings of Islam.” There are no shortage of Muslim voices already denouncing the terrorist acts committed by ISIS and others in the name of a wickedly distorted interpretation of Islam. Will adding a few more voices to this already loud chorus really make a difference to the fraction of the global Muslim community vulnerable to the messages of these extremists?

The key to breaking this cycle as noted by *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius and Brookings scholars Daniel Byman and Jeremy Shapiro may well be found less in waging information warfare, and more in fostering and funding partnerships between local law enforcement agencies and Muslim communities in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. Leaders, parents, imams, and police in these communities can be sensitized to the warning signs of radicalization. Such programs can provide those most vulnerable to extremist messages constructive alternatives to joining violent organizations (such as participating in humanitarian relief campaigns). Alerted by these early warning signs, law enforcement officials could also act to prevent the travel of would-be extremists to Syria and other locations for training. In coordination with international and national intelligence organizations, these same local law enforcement officials could move aggressively to disrupt any plot approaching operationalization, as officials in Belgium and elsewhere have already done in the wake of the Hebdo attacks. Indeed, given the evident failure of a military-centric approach to the global war on terrorism, it is remarkable that a strategic approach grounded in intelligence and law enforcement does not receive more attention.

In summary, Sorenson contributes to the policy debate by making a convincing case that the history, doctrine, and tenets of Islam (properly understood) are not the proximate cause of radical terrorism. He is also correct in arguing a solution to Islamic extremist violence will require a “whole-of-government” approach that employs the full range of national power. However, he likely over-estimates the contribution a US-led covert information campaign alone will make to the defeat of ISIS and other Islamist terrorist organizations.

The Author Replies

David S. Sorenson

I appreciate Christopher Bolan's response to my call for an enhanced information campaign against the Islamic State, though I am a bit puzzled at his critique that my proposals "...might indeed yield some marginal progress in the ideological battle with ISIS." I agree; at the conclusion of my article I state, "If even a few potential recruits and active members can be persuaded that they will not obtain ISIS' promised heavenly reward, the counter-ISIS campaign will have succeeded." I hardly argue for dramatic results in a counter-ISIS information campaign. In combating a determined foe, almost all aspects of the campaign will produce marginal benefits, as is the case currently regarding air operations. Early results of such attacks were disappointing; after 600 initial air strikes against ISIS targets, 1000 foreign fighters continued to stream into Syria each month, virtually unchanged from pre-airstrike days.¹ It took almost six months and over 700 airstrikes to liberate the village of Kobani from ISIS fighters, killing around 1000 ISIS members, roughly one and a half militant per airstrike.² In war operations, most parts of the overall campaign contribute marginal results, to include information operations. In such a vicious fight, all elements of power must be brought to bear, including information war. Even if the contribution is "marginal," it may be no more marginal than airstrikes have been.

While Bolan argues I "overestimate" the contribution an information campaign will make in the anti-ISIS fight, he does not provide support for his conclusion. He does not, for example, use past information operations campaigns to assess the overall value of such operations, nor does he suggest reasons *why* my proposal might not achieve meaningful results. Instead, he seems to argue there are already enough Muslim narratives condemning violence in the name of Islam, stating, "Muslim leaders across the globe quickly condemned the attacks..." However, this commentary only reinforces one of my main points, which is that statements from Muslim "leaders" condemning violence in Islam's name are hardly sufficient to deter committed Jihadists. Such statements have not even dented ISIS's ability to recruit and retain members. As I argue, what has been largely missing from the information arena are the reasons *why* Islam forbids the acts ISIS routinely carried out, including the murders of innocent Muslims, the judgment of Yazadi, Alawi, Shi'a, and non-radical Sunni as apostates, and the declaration of a "caliphate" without Muslim consent. Statements declaring "shock" and "horror" are virtually meaningless unless filled in with Quranic verses refuting ISIS belief and praxis, or statements from respected Islamic theorists like Ibn Taymiyya or Said Qutb rejecting the permissibility of such ISIS practices as wonton *takfir* declarations of apostasy.

1 Greg Miller, "Airstrikes against Islamic State do not seem to have Affected Flow of Fighters to Syria," *Washington Post*, October 30, 2014.

2 Tim Arango, "In Liberated Kobani, Kurds Take Pride Despite the Devastation," *New York Times*, February 5, 2015.

Bolan argues partnerships between law enforcement and Muslim communities might be more effective than an information war campaign, but he offers no evidence to support his claim. I agree that such partnerships should be fully engaged, and models like these (built in the US on the community policing approach of the 1990s) have had success.³ But it is critical to note that relations between law enforcement and Muslim communities have been fraught with distrust on both sides, and it will take a considerable effort by both to foster cooperation. Moreover, to diagnose the “warning signs of radicalization,” requires that such signs are detectable, yet experience suggests that for each known radicalized jihadi (the Charlie Hebdo attackers, for example), a much larger number go undetected. Often family members did not know sons or daughters had joined a jihadi group until they showed up in Syria. Of course, some of this failure may involve simple denial, though most jihadi recruits, especially the “lone wolf” types, have been very successful at hiding their intentions until they either travel to the Middle East or carry out their violent actions at home. Again, to paraphrase Bolan, community policing should be tried vigorously, but it may not make more than a marginal difference.

Nonetheless, Christopher Bolan contributes positively to the dialog on fighting ISIS by reminding us we cannot expect any particular policy effort to generate decisive results by itself. This is true of bombing, of community counter-jihadi education and policing, and of all other efforts to defeat this terrorist organization. So it has been in all wars; the United States used everything from strategic bombardment to “Victory Gardens” in an overall effort to defeat the Axis, and in Vietnam, everything from “search and destroy” to the “Chieu Hoi” defector encouragement program widely derided by US military officers, yet yielded almost 30,000 Vietnamese communist defectors.⁴ So it is with the type of information campaign I proposed in my article; both what I propose and what Bolan counter-proposes may have limited effects in the overall campaign to defeat ISIS, but given the danger that ISIS poses to the Middle East and beyond, all policy elements with even a small chance to make a positive difference must be employed.

3 Jerome P. Bjelopera, *American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 23, 2013), 56.

4 Tal Tov, “Learning from the Past for Present Conflicts: The Chieu Hoi Program as a Case Study,” *Armed Forces & Society* 38, No. 1 (January 2012): 142-163.

On “Reforming the Afghan Security Forces”

Todd Greentree

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This commentary is in response to Daniel Glickstein and Michael Spangler’s article “Reforming the Afghan Security Forces” published in the Autumn 2014 issue of Parameters (vol. 44, no. 3).

Daniel Glickstein and Michael Spangler deserve commendation for their combined effort. It is highly gratifying to see a National Guard soldier and a Foreign Service Officer write an article together about the importance of ANSF force development, acknowledging the indivisible unity of political and military dimensions in the Afghan war. Separation of the civilian and military realms—ironically symbolized in the awkward term ‘whole of government’—remains a strategic weakness of US policy and performance. Had the United States, from leadership on down across two administrations, invested more authentic effort in getting our own civil-military house in order it might have been possible to avoid such enormous profligacy while achieving some measure of enduring success.

Glickstein and Spangler’s central argument is essentially on target: expansion of the Afghan Local Police under the mentorship of Afghan Army Special Forces, with an overlapping system of local and national accountability – and continued international assistance – are essential elements of assuring lasting stability and security in Afghanistan. It is unfortunate that, as is so often the case, available budgets drive strategy rather than the other way around. Rather than comment on the fiscal concerns and force ratio options central to the article, it seems worthwhile to give further consideration to the policy and strategy implications as a whole.

To lend perspective to their proposal, it is important to step back before going forward. As pragmatic and authoritative as they are, the US-Afghan Bilateral Security and NATO Status of Forces Agreements should be seen as something less than strategies for the future. Belated adoption of counterinsurgency and the misfortunately time-bound surge that began in 2009 in reality amounted to compensation for errors committed immediately following overthrow of the Taliban in December 2001. (Diversion to Iraq in 2003 was not the source of those errors, but it did allow them to fester for years.) The opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom relied on effective economy of force that married US-led special operations proficiency to the Afghan way of war. Operation Enduring Freedom should have evolved from that successful method. Instead, indiscriminate manhunting for Al Qaeda terrorists became entangled in a direct war against tribal Islamism. The resulting precedence given to warfighting over Afghan force development violated T.E. Lawrence’s famous caution that, “It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them.” Thus, the opportunity to build a reasonably effective ANSF at a much more sustainable size – say 50,000 – at the moment when the Taliban had disintegrated and were seeking to align with the victorious side according to Afghan custom, was lost.

Todd Greentree is a Research Associate in the Oxford Changing Character of War Programme. A former US Foreign Service Officer, he has served in five conflicts. In Afghanistan, he was political-military advisor to Task Force Warrior in RC-East and to 5/2 SBCT in Kandahar, and headed the RC-South Initiatives Group in 2010-11.

Thirteen years later, the unilateral US determination that ‘the tide of war is receding’ has resulted in a new Afghan dilemma: drawdown without ending the war. The ensuing resurgence of insurgent-initiated attacks bears out the prediction the Taliban successfully waited for the coalition to weary and have now resumed their offensive in earnest. Discard the politically infeasible option of resuming direct intervention, and the insufficient expedient of relying on drones and covert action to hunt terrorists. This leaves the alternative of developing the ANSF with its dubious variants of size and unsustainability.

What begs clarifying in the first instance is the true aim, something that the article touches on at several points. The policy framework that envisions a long-term partnership for strengthening the Afghan National Security Forces while targeting the remnants of Al Qaeda is creditable, but narrowly conceived. Afghanistan has been for millennia at once a backwater and a crossroads among competing powers. Since 1978, the United States, through action and inaction, has been complicit in the corrosion of war and revolution that Afghanistan has suffered without respite. In the absence of decisive and enduring commitment, these unfortunate conditions will continue; so will the risk of consequences, as both 9-11 and the eruption of ISIS in Iraq and Syria signify.

To add to Glickstein and Spangler’s case in point from Nangarhar, the 10th Mountain Division in Regional Command – South during the main effort of the surge in 2010-11 experienced surprisingly rapid success supporting Afghan leaders – among them the Karzai clan – who rallied their fellow Pashtuns across the South with an appeal to Loy (Greater) Kandahar, a traditional unifying cause. This was no quixotic attempt to win ‘one valley at a time.’ Rather, an integrated campaign plan helped mobilize support for Loy Kandahar to link village, district, and provincial levels politically to Kabul; combined security operations with efforts to reintegrate Taliban into their communities; and recruited Afghan Local Police units while professionalizing the ANSF. These measures served the reciprocal aims of weakening the Taliban in their center of gravity and strengthening the authority and legitimacy of the Afghan state.

Our obligation to the Afghans includes sustained light footprint counterinsurgency that integrates political-military strategy and is based on remembering that our purpose is to help them win their war. This is a key element of the way forward in Afghanistan.

The Authors Reply

Daniel Glickstein

We appreciated Todd Greentree's support for our central thesis that the incorporation of local defense forces into specially mentored local police units would help stand up more sustainable and reliable Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). We also concur with his characterization of the Coalition "surge" strategy of 2010-12 as "belated" and "misfortunately time-bound."

Of course, any "surge" strategy, relying on foreign troops to help consolidate regime change, seems inherently limited in duration due to the high costs involved. As a result, the effectiveness of a surge appears to depend on whether it can serve as a bridge to political agreement among conflict groups or, short of that, the creation of a resilient national security architecture that can outlast conflict groups. In our opinion, the Coalition's surge is under critical scrutiny now mainly because it attempted too many lines of effort, thereby diluting the paramount mission of training and equipping Afghan security forces. Indeed, the literacy component of ANSF training began too late (in 2009 along with the surge) although it constituted a key incentive for improving ANSF retention and building civil society.

While more historical data on the surge needs to be examined, this strategy was partly designed to serve as a bridge to hand wider security operations to the ANSF. The Coalition's own focus on the clear-and-hold function of counter-insurgency, however, proved irresistible as soldier body-counts rose, and the reputation and capability of the Afghan government fell. Especially now, given the withdrawal of American soldiers amidst declining budgets, more resources and attention must be directed towards the new ANSF and the Afghan administration.

As Greentree indicates, too much attention was devoted to Coalition-led efforts to combat hostile groups, while ANSF development was belatedly and too quickly accelerated, contributing to an oversized army and relatively neglected police. Regrettably, this training effort was, and continues to be, hampered by improvised explosive devices, mortar, and insider attacks as well as internal impediments such as drug-use, attrition, absenteeism, and a general lack of will to fight in some areas. Our initial article was devoted primarily to these issues, with the development and institutionalization of localized security to mitigate these threats.

Having served as a foot-soldier, I am well aware there are times enemy combatants will be confronted, but falling into tunnel-vision focused solely upon the enemy and ignoring the civilian population has been a critical failing of the Afghan strategy and must be avoided in the future.¹ I therefore recommend further study be devoted to Greentree's contention that "manhunting for al Qaeda terrorists became entangled

¹ See Lessons Learned from "Key Enablers for Peacekeeping and Stability Operations," *US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute*, <http://pksoi.army.mil/Lessons%20Learned.html>

in a direct war against tribal Islamism.” In particular, some analysts claim the Coalition expanded Taliban recruitment in 2005 partly by trying to identify and detain Taliban suspects in the south and east of Afghanistan.² If true, these actions helped to promote the Taliban resurgence.

By 2010, many Western military analysts argued that only a small percentage of hardened extremists constituted the irreconcilable core of the Taliban. The remaining majority was comprised of Kilcullen’s “accidental guerillas,” civilians swept into the conflict by personal grievances with military forces, those complicit in insurgent strikes out of fear and coercion, or for economic gain. By giving primacy to political reconciliation over kinetic strikes, the Afghan government can and should pursue local defense programs to co-opt this majority into efforts to protect its own communities. The remnants can then be dealt with by localized security forces. This strategy has the potential to end the conflict; a continued kinetic-centric, top-down approach only ensures a perpetuation of the insurgency.

Moving beyond insurgents, the larger stability of the Afghan state is directly tied to the success or failure of its government. Periodic violence seems inescapable, as the current headlines regarding attacks in France and Nigeria show. What matters after the fact are the strength and authority of the state. France’s powerful, legitimate government was able to rally from the recent terrorist attack and bring millions of citizens and foreigners, along with heads of states, to march in the streets of Paris. Nigeria, conversely, continues to suffer from corruption and an impotent government. As a result, the militant group Boko Haram wreaks wider havoc throughout the country.

The desired end-state is a strong, legitimate Afghan government which has the capacity to protect its people and its borders. We must be patient in fostering this development. Afghanistan’s civil society has degraded over the past four decades, and it will take at least that long to help it recover. Without a bottom-up effort, Afghanistan will remain in chaos and a safe haven for extremists. As Scott Mann argues, Afghanistan requires persistent long-term security assistance combining the best practices from places like Colombia with new authorities to enable US Special Operations Forces to assist the Afghan Special Forces in setting up localized defense capabilities.³ Only by going local and changing the game will marginalized Afghan populations re-connect with their government and render violent extremists strategically irrelevant.

2 Marc W. Herold, “The American Occupation of Afghanistan and the Birth of a National Liberation Movement,” *Global Research*, Edited Transcript of a Public lecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, August 2010, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-american-occupation-of-afghanistan-and-the-birth-of-a-national-liberation-movement/20946>).

3 Scott Mann, “Bypassing the Graveyard: A new Approach to Stabilizing Afghanistan,” *Small Wars Journal*, July 30, 2014.

Book Reviews

STRATEGY & POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Military Responses to the Arab Uprisings and the Future of Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East

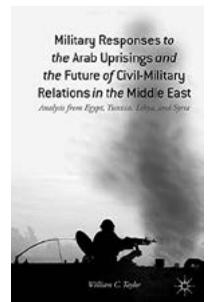
By William C. Taylor

Reviewed by W. Andrew Terrill, PhD, Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

The actions of Arab military leadership were overwhelmingly important during the recent “Arab Spring” uprisings, though they receive less scrutiny than they deserve. The narratives of these struggles are usually dominated by imagery of young people standing up to regime police and hired thugs or outmaneuvering them with social media. These aspects of the uprisings are clearly more dramatic than military officers making careful calculations before choosing a side, but the latter activities were equally important to the outcomes of the crises. William C. Taylor has correspondingly helped to fill an important gap by considering the role of national militaries in the Arab uprisings. In particular, the military leadership of all these countries had to decide whether they would remain loyal to their governments or side with the protesters. Such high-stakes decisions were not always easy.

The case studies employed in this work are Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, and Libya. The author also occasionally mentions the unrest in Bahrain and Yemen, though these countries are not addressed in any comprehensive manner. Taylor’s work is enriched by his clear expertise on the history and structure of the Arab militaries central to his case studies. Sometimes the author’s major points get a bit lost in the details, but in general Taylor’s methodical approach allows one to understand a great deal about military decision-making in each country. This work uses the concepts of interests and restraints to help define military leadership behavior. Essentially, this means the military leaders had to define their corporate interests during the uprisings and then ask themselves what they were capable of doing to influence the outcome of the struggle. They then had to decide when and if they should take strong actions. No military leader wants to be out front of a revolution that fizzles, but neither do they wish to go down with an unpopular regime.

Unsurprisingly, Arab militaries did not respond uniformly to the crises in their countries. In Tunisia, where the first uprising broke out, the police and other security forces were the dictatorship’s first line of defense. The security units’ vanguard status allowed the military to remain on the sidelines while internal security forces struggled to defeat angry protestors, often using deadly force. Tunisia’s army, which had been treated poorly by the dictator, had little incentive to fight for the regime and carefully gauged the progress of the protestors in their struggle against the detested government. When Tunisian dictator Zein al Abidine Ben Ali finally ordered General Rashid Ammar, chief of the Tunisian Armed Forces, to support faltering regime loyalists, the general refused to do so and told the dictator that he was “finished.” This was checkmate, and Ben Ali quickly fled the country to seek asylum abroad. In the aftermath of the confrontation, the military dramatically improved



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363 pages
\$100.00

its position within Tunisia's leadership structure at the expense of the pampered and arrogant security forces. General Ammar was declared a hero of the revolution.

In Egypt, pre-revolutionary circumstances were dramatically different. The military had lost a great deal of its political influence, but this change did not mean it had given up its considerable economic assets across the country or its respected role in society. Nevertheless, many officers were at least somewhat unhappy with the regime and especially with the idea that President Mubarak was grooming his son, Gamal, to succeed him as president. Gamal had never served in the military and was often seen as the vehicle for extending the life of a failing government system that could not continue indefinitely. After the uprising spread to Egypt from Tunisia, Mubarak refused to rule out the possibility his son would run for president until almost the last minute when such promises were viewed as desperate and insincere. Neither Taylor nor any other author is likely to establish the precise role of Gamal's potential succession in pushing the military away from the regime, but it may have been highly significant. Taylor also notes the military remained neutral for quite some time, balancing statements about people's legitimate rights with assertions that looting and criminality would not be tolerated. When it became clear the protestors were gaining the upper hand and the army's inaction was threatening its interests, they decided to remove Mubarak.

If the Arab Spring's changes of governments in Tunisia and Egypt were relatively rapid and decisive, events occurred in an almost totally opposite manner in Syria. In the years prior to the Assad family rule, Syria was notoriously prone to military coups. This situation changed after 1970 when the first Assad regime (under the current president's father) began. Under both Assads, every effort was made to "coup proof" the regime, which ruled largely by fear and was structured to crush any internal revolt. When a March 2011 uprising occurred in Syria, the regime had both the tools and the will to respond with overwhelming brutality. In Syria, the military leadership was dominated by members of President Assad's Alawite religious minority who, displayed "fervent support for the regime policies," fearing unyielding revenge if their sect and its allies ever relinquished the levers of power. Spikes in government brutality led to new defections among Sunni soldiers, but enough of the military remained loyal, or intimidated, to prevent regime defeat. Although the Assad regime offered limited concessions to the protesters, it relied more heavily upon its security services and the military to implement a policy of unrestrained and indiscriminate use of force. The policies have so far allowed the regime to survive.

The Libyan military was different from the other armed services considered in Taylor's study due to its lack of cohesive leadership with a strong corporate identity. Taylor notes Libyan leader, Muammar Qadhafi, had previously faced a number of coup attempts and therefore treated the armed forces with tremendous distrust. Officers were retained and promoted almost entirely on the issue of loyalty and the ranks were filled with informants and "people's commissars." Libya maintained a deeply unprofessional and demoralized military that was starved of resources except for the elite units. Regime security was provided by the security services, African mercenaries, and elite military units often under the

command of Qadhafi family members. Thus when faced with a popular uprising against the regime the military fractured. Elite and mercenary units remained loyal to the dictator, while many within the neglected, non-elite forces eventually sided with the revolutionaries. Sometimes the non-elite forces remained non-committal until the revolutionaries seemed to have a good chance of overthrowing the dictator. The NATO decision to use airpower to support the revolutionaries naturally increased the willingness of waverers to commit to the rebels, ensuring Qadhafi's defeat and leading to his death.

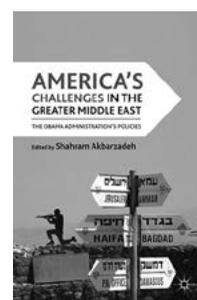
The final two chapters in this work concern US and other Western efforts to influence Arab militaries through programs such as the International Military Training and Education Program (IMET). Taylor maintains that previous officer involvement with IMET, Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and other interactions with Western militaries had almost no effect on Arab military decision-making during the uprisings. Likewise many leaders with long exposure to the West (including London-educated Bashar Assad) showed no inclination to favor democratic values during times of crisis. Taylor states IMET has value for a variety of reasons such as improving communications between US forces and other militaries, supporting coalition-building, and familiarizing allies and potential allies with US military doctrine, but not socializing foreign officers to American values to the point they based their most important decisions on such considerations. Rather, Arab officers in the Arab Spring acted primarily on the basis of cost-benefit considerations and corporate identity. Taylor further supports his conclusions with a limited amount of survey research of officers and soldiers who have participated in US-sponsored training and military education or other forms of exposure to the West. While his conclusion that military organizations act in their own interests is not very surprising, he usefully discredits views that Arab military cravings for US-style democracy were a key motivating force for their actions during the uprisings.

America's Challenges in the Greater Middle East: The Obama Administration's Policies

Edited by Shahram Akbarzadeh

Reviewed by Colonel Robert E. Friedenber, Levant Division Chief, J-5, Deputy Directorate of Middle East, Joint Staff and former US Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to Syria.

President Barack Obama's speech in Cairo on June 4 2009 described seven sources of tension between the United States and the Islamic World. In an attempt to draw a distinction between his and the previous administration, he declared that extremism, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Iran, democracy, religious freedom, women's rights and economic development were mutual interests that must be addressed so Muslim countries and the United States to forge a new relationship after the 9/11 attacks and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Only two years later, democracy and economic development in the Middle East came to the forefront when a young fruit vendor in Tunisia set himself on fire to protest the lack of either in his country. His death set off a chain of



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McMillan, 2011

288 pages
\$34.00

events that has impacted the Middle East more than any other single event since the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

President Obama's Cairo speech is a theme that winds its way through *America's Challenges in the Greater Middle East*. Every chapter, from Shahram Akbarzadeh's introduction, through those on Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel and Palestine, to the Maghreb, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, all deal with President Obama's attempt to distance himself from the previous administration and to reestablish a positive relationship with the Islamic Middle East.

Unfortunately, the book was published in 2011, before two events that would shape the Obama administration's relationship with the Arab world: the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, and the attempt to re-draw America's relationship with Iran. From the vantage point of late 2014, this book is dated. The chapters on Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Egypt all go to great lengths to describe the folly of the Bush administration's attempt to force democracy on Arab governments – and Obama's attempts to walk Bush's "democracy-first" policy back and emphasize non-intervention in internal governance. The interventions in Libya, the post-Morsi Egypt policy, and in Iraq and Syria showed events in the Middle East continue to force the Obama administration to stay active in the region and engage these governments in their internal affairs.

Another theme running through the book is how the actions of the Bush administration resulted in a loss of US credibility with Arab governments and their populations. The Cairo speech was to be the first attempt to repair that credibility. It is true that Obama has not been as close to Israel as the previous two administrations, but his administration is seen by Arabs as ineffective in keeping Israel from building new settlements and prosecuting war on Palestinians. Additionally, Sunni Gulf States led by Saudi Arabia now believe the Obama administration may be abandoning them in pursuit of what they consider is an ill-advised détente with Iran.

Most of the book's chapters simply focus on criticizing the Bush administration and lauding Obama. Chapters on Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iran focus on Bush-era mistakes and hope for Obama's success. However, in other chapters, there is some diversity and insight. Written just after the fall of Mubarak, Michele Dunne's chapter on Egypt recognizes the military junta that replaced him is not the end of the story; "Egypt's transition will unfold over years, not months." A balanced chapter on Pakistan written by Touqir Hussain recognizes Pakistan is contributing to the fight against extremism but at the same time undermining it with its support of extremists in Afghanistan and India. William Maley's chapter on Afghanistan cautions against using the number of US troops on the ground as a metric for stability.

The danger of books written about this turbulent region is they can become obsolete very quickly. Many books written subsequent to *America's Challenges in the Greater Middle East* will be more relevant and insightful to those interested in US Middle East policy. But given everything that has transpired since the book was published, Akbarzadeh's introduction contains an extremely prescient paragraph. He writes that unlike Bush, Obama's approach is seeking not to implement change in the Middle East, but to manage the existing situation. Akbarzadeh then

wonders if such an approach “further undermines the United States’ standing in the Middle East.” Given the frustration apparent from many Middle Eastern governments over the Obama administration’s lack of action against the Assad regime in Syria and its halting intervention against the Islamic State in Iraq, one wonders if in some corners of the region, there is a wistful longing for the interventionist days of his predecessor.

STRATEGY & NUCLEAR WAR

The Permanent Crisis: Iran's Nuclear Trajectory

By Shashank Joshi

Reviewed by Christopher J. Bolan, PhD, Professor of National Security Studies,
US Army War College

Whitehall, London, UK:
Royal United Services
Institute, 2012
160 pages
\$25.00

The author is a young and talented scholar writing from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London. This relatively brief and clearly written analysis does an admirable job of placing Iran's nuclear activities into a broader regional and historic context, which is useful background for anyone interested in making informed judgments about the way ahead for US policy. This book has the added advantage of being organized into stand-alone chapters enabling readers to consume its insights offered efficiently.

The first substantive section “How We Got Here, and Where We Stand” ably summarizes the historical context informing and influencing contemporary policy debates over how best to deal with Iran's growing nuclear capabilities. Those familiar with this history can skim or skip this chapter entirely, but newcomers will benefit tremendously from this background. Particularly relevant is his examination of at least a “partial convergence of American and Iranian interests” on regional issues in the immediate wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Perhaps surprising for many, Shashank notes the degree of active US-Iranian cooperation in these early days of the war against terrorism. The Iranian military was actively supporting the efforts of both the CIA and US Special Forces to supply the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Iranian diplomats facilitated successful US negotiations leading to the Bonn Agreement in 2001, and the establishment of a transitional national government in Afghanistan. Moreover, Iranian officials had gone so far as to extend an offer “to work under US command to assist in building the Afghan National Army.” US policymakers debating Iran policy should remember the United States and Iran continue to share many of these same interests today in battling violent Sunni extremist groups and in fostering stability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Shashank also correctly observes prospects for building on these limited successes virtually collapsed with President George W. Bush's inclusion of Iran in his “axis of evil” reference in his 2002 State of the Union Address and the subsequent US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Shashank also astutely tracks domestic political developments remarking the rise of increasingly conservative elements in both Tehran (Ahmadinejad) and Washington (neoconservatives) served to heighten “mutual US-Iranian threat perceptions” and seriously undermined prospects for a negotiated solution. He also notes these trends have more recently reversed with the election of President Obama and President Rouhani. Both have expressed their determination to explore a negotiated solution over the extent of Iran's nuclear programs.

The next chapter, “Policy Today,” charts the evolving negotiating positions of the Western powers and Iran. Although many “experts”

might be tempted to ignore this fairly uncontentious history, Shashank offers some discerning reminders useful for contemporary policymakers. In particular, he tracks the relative weakening of Western negotiating positions over time. He notes the West has long insisted on the unrealistic goal of eliminating all Iranian enrichment activities. In the absence of a negotiated solution, however, Iran has proceeded with the creation of new “facts on the ground,” adding to its existing nuclear capabilities and effectively providing “new areas of bargaining leverage.” Shashank also briefly covers the risks of a strategy reliant on military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities – the obvious alternative should a strategy grounded in sanctions or negotiations fail. More importantly though he makes a strong case for defining the essential objectives of a negotiated solution from a Western perspective, namely, extending the potential breakout time for an Iranian nuclear weapon and strengthen the international inspections regime in Iran.

The third major chapter, “The Implications of a Nuclear Iran,” should be read by novice and expert alike. Here Shashank is at his best in carefully examining contrasting viewpoints of the potential dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran while downplaying some of the more alarmist concerns. For example, he convincingly dismisses arguments that Iran is an irrational actor. He explains Iranian leaders are subject to traditional cost-benefit calculations which means even a nuclear-armed Iran could be effectively constrained by more traditional strategies of containment and deterrence. He examines the broader history of nuclear proliferation in Asia and concludes an Iranian nuclear weapons capability need not necessarily spur further regional proliferation. He also persuasively argues nuclear weapons will have only limited utility to leaders in Tehran – primarily as a deterrent to foreign military interventions aimed at regime change. Finally, he suggests US policymakers would be wise to begin working with Iran now to strengthen nuclear safety mechanisms. Effective controls over these nuclear-related activities will serve both Western and Iranian interests even should Iran eventually develop a nuclear weapon.

The most significant shortfall of this book is the 2012 copyright. Readers will have to refer to newspaper accounts and recent think-tank papers to fill in the gap covering important developments since then.

On Limited Nuclear War In the 21st Century

By Jeffrey A. Larsen and Kerry M. Kartchner, editors

Reviewed by Rebecca Davis Gibbons, PhD candidate in International Relations at Georgetown University

Consider for a moment that in 2015 a single nuclear weapon has just been detonated in anger. Where did the explosion occur? What actors were involved? What was the goal of such a limited use of nuclear arms? Was this a demonstration shot, a limited counterforce strike, or perhaps an attack intended to terminate a conventional conflict?

The twelve authors in the volume *On Limited Nuclear War in the 21st Century*, edited by Jeffrey A. Larsen and Kerry M. Kartchner, want policy-makers to consider and plan for such possibilities. With increasing



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\$27.95

tensions and opportunities for miscalculation in the South China Sea, a growing North Korean arsenal, unclear Iranian intentions surrounding nuclear weapons, and President Vladimir Putin posting video of himself practicing the launch of Russian strategic forces on YouTube, the authors are correct to argue that the likelihood of nuclear use may be increasing.

In his foreword to the book, the late Nobel-prize winner Thomas Schelling praises this effort to encourage deeper thinking about nuclear use in the present day: “This book is the only one I know that can induce national leaders, or their advisers, to take seriously the prospect of minimizing mutual damage in a nuclear war.”

In twelve distinct and diverse chapters, the authors consider the theory, practice, and implications of limited nuclear war. In contrast to the all-out nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union feared during the Cold War, limited war is defined by the authors as nuclear conflict restrained along one or more of five possible dimensions: numbers of nuclear weapons used, scope of the area affected, the duration of use, political objectives of use, and the targeting plan.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first, “Assessing the History of the Cold War,” examines the history and theory of limited war from the Cold War to the present. Those seeking to examine the chapters focused especially on the concept of limited war should read Andrew Ross’s comprehensive chapter on limited war theory in this section.

The second section, “Managing the Risk of Nuclear War in the 21st Century,” provides considerations for how limited nuclear war could occur today. Paul Bernstein summarizes the capabilities and interests of actors most likely to be involved in future nuclear war, while Thomas Mahnken provides five scenarios for potential future limited nuclear use. Such scenario-based thinking surrounding limited war is needed, but any grouping of five potential scenarios risks being both too narrow and far-fetched to readers. Instead, this middle section could have been improved with a chapter exclusively focused on the various theoretical bases for how nuclear weapons might come to be used in the future and then adding accompanying real-life scenarios for each theory. Theories of use are interspersed throughout the book (e.g., demonstration shots in crisis, use for war termination, etc.) but a chapter dedicated to defining a typology of employment would have been helpful for considering the scope of possible use and policy-options for addressing such contingencies.

This middle section also includes a chapter by George Quester on the nuclear taboo and how the sixty-five-year pattern of non-use could be disrupted. Quester touches on the need for the United States to consider how to reestablish this pattern, or tradition, after nuclear use. Greater consideration of this topic would also benefit US policy-makers. After an instance of nuclear use the United States and its allies will have to think quickly through how to ensure the initial nuclear use is not perceived as beneficial for the attacker. In other words, how will the United States work to send the message that nuclear use does not pay? This question is also one in which scenario planning would be beneficial.

The final section, “Confronting the Challenges of Nuclear War in the 21st Century,” includes a useful chapter in which Bruce Blair provides a net assessment of US capabilities for engaging in a limited nuclear war, noting areas where US capabilities may need to adapt.

Although there are many well-researched and thought-provoking chapters in this volume, a complete reading of the entire volume will provide the reader with a valuable tutorial on a breadth of topics related to limited nuclear use. Most importantly, perhaps, the book instills an appreciation of the great and sometimes contradictory nuclear challenges facing the United States today: reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in a world where the relevance is increasing for some actors, while maintaining a nuclear arsenal credible to allies and adversaries alike.

Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age: Power, Ambition, and the Ultimate Weapon

By Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, editors

Reviewed by Bradley A. Thayer, University of Iceland/Háskóla Íslands

Once in a while a work comes along that is a pleasure to review due to the importance of its argument. Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes have brought together an essential collection of essays centered on the consequences of nuclear proliferation, with an emphasis on East and South Asia. The work makes two broad arguments. First, the world has entered what Paul Bracken termed the “Second Nuclear Age,” where proliferation has moved beyond the transatlantic environment to Asia. While there are similarities with deterrence during the Cold War, this second age promises greater complexity due to the proliferation of nuclear weapons to more states, and to the connection between nuclear weapons and the power and ambition of states in East and South Asia. Second, the authors evaluate how the Second Nuclear Age impacts the nuclear strategies of China, India, Iran, Japan, North Korea, Pakistan, and South Africa. Here is where the book makes a detailed, thoughtful, and significant contribution.

In this short review, it is not possible to give each chapter the attention deserved. Readers may be assured all chapters are well executed and insightful. Given constraints, I will only consider two. The first is by Christopher Yeaw, Andrew Erickson, and Michael Chase on China’s strategic doctrine. This chapter well captures the evolution of Chinese nuclear strategy from the Maoist period until today. In a masterful analysis, the authors consider Chinese nuclear doctrine and the growth in the Chinese arsenal. They argue, first, that China is moving away from a “minimum deterrence” posture that defined its strategy since 1964. Beijing is moving toward a larger, more diverse second-strike posture and one in which the nuclear deterrence mission is incorporated with conventional missile force strike operations. Second, this posture is a cause of great concern in Asia and to the United States and could lead to instability in a confrontation with the United States. This is because Chinese thought on crisis behavior may promote risky and dangerous actions. In this respect, a danger faced in the Cold War might be worse

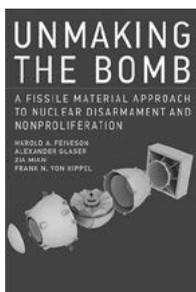


Washington, DC:
Georgetown University
Press, 2012
256 pages
\$32.95

today because the actions China takes to deter might cause escalation. The chapter is concise but rich in evaluation of China's strategic forces, doctrine and training; hence it should inform analyses of China's strategic direction.

The second chapter is by the editors themselves. Holmes and Yoshihara advance a useful thought experiment on why and how Japan would go nuclear. While this concern was important in the "First Nuclear Age," is has greater resonance in the "Second." This change is due to the growth in Chinese power and its consequences, particularly for power projection. For Tokyo, this possibility means thinking through the "day after Taiwan." It is also due to the reduced US conventional force structure in the region, particularly regarding the size of the Pacific fleet. While Holmes and Yoshihara do not see a nuclear Japan as especially likely, they first review possible Japanese motives to do so; second, the prospect of Japanese "nuclear hedging;" third, the technical feasibility of a rapid Japanese breakout; fourth, they review possible force structures and strategies available to Japan before considering an agenda for future research. One of their most insightful conclusions is if Japan were to acquire nuclear weapons, it would likely do so in slow motion. The chapter is a model of a policy-relevant thought experiment.

The study is well balanced and the authors cover their topics concisely. Yoshihara and Holmes' conclusions neatly underscore the importance of strategy and many of the dangers faced by the United States and the other parties in the region. The study is an excellent contribution and will remain as a useful prism through which to understanding nuclear proliferation, its consequences, and nuclear developments in South and East Asia.



Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2014
291 pages
\$30.00

Unmaking the Bomb: A Fissile Material Approach to Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation

By Harold A. Feiveson, Alexander Glaser, Zia Mian, and Frank N. Von Hippel

Reviewed by Ward Wilson, award winning writer and scholar, director of the Rethinking Nuclear Weapons project, and a Senior Fellow at British American Security Information Council (BASIC)

Unmaking the Bomb is a book by renowned experts that ably summarizes the current situation with respect to fissile materials and suggests practical steps to "unmaking" the bomb and ensuring that it stays unmade.

Dwight D. Eisenhower believed a nation's industrial capacity was the key to victory in war.

The faculty of the Army War College—many of them veterans of the Great War—drummed this basic point into the heads of Eisenhower and his classmates. 'War today involves the whole nation', they emphasized. Most fundamental, military power is ultimately the reflection of a nation's industrial mobilization potential.¹

1 Andrew P. N. Erdmann, "War No Longer Has Any Logic Whatever: Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Thernonuclear Revolution," in *Cold War Statesmen Confront the Bomb: Nuclear Diplomacy Since 1945* by John Gaddis, Philip Gordon, Ernest May, and Jonathan Rosenberg.

A state's capacity to make war is of strategic significance. The army of the United States may have been small in 1939 (just behind Portugal), but that did not reflect the United States' actual strength. Once war began, the United States military became one of the pre-eminent fighting machines of the 20th century.

The authors of *Unmaking the Bomb* share a similar outlook with Eisenhower when looking at the problem of nuclear weapons. They see capacity as the crucial element in the problem, rather than numbers. Disarmament has often involved obsessing over how many nuclear missiles and nuclear warheads are in active service. Given the destructiveness of nuclear weapons this question is important. But in the long run, it is also important to focus on the larger question of national capacity. *Unmaking the Bomb* focuses on the process behind all those warheads—the capacity that underlies an arsenal.

Unmaking the Bomb presents, in careful and meticulous detail, a persuasive case that the best way to deal with nuclear weapons, over the coming years, is to tackle the fissile materials problem. After all, as the authors point out, the most difficult part of the process of building nuclear weapons is the refining and enrichment of the materials needed to make the explosive: fissile materials. These materials are, therefore, a “choke point” in the process of making nuclear weapons. Why build a dam where a river is widest when it is much easier to stop the flow by damming it where it is narrowest? In thinking about whether it would be feasible to eliminate the world's arsenals of nuclear weapons, the authors argue, persuasively, that fissile materials are the key. *Unmaking the Bomb* summarizes the existing situation, explains the technology and science behind the various options for producing fissile materials, and talks straightforwardly about how a path could be charted to a world in which nuclear weaponry could be effectively—and verily—eliminated.

The narration is a model of clarity, which is particularly impressive for a book that involves so much physics and so many sophisticated manufacturing issues. The four authors represent a remarkable collection of expertise in the field. Drawn from the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University, all have worked on these problems for more than 20 years and two of them have been internationally acknowledged experts in the field for much longer. The solid factual content of the book and its sober tone accurately reflect the attitude of the authors; this serious problem can only be resolved with careful thinking, meticulous scholarship, and realistic appraisals of facts on the ground.

The book opens with a brief overview of the history of nuclear weapons followed by the less well known history of producing fissile materials. The authors detail current international stockpiles of fissile materials, explain key links in the connection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the steps necessary to ensure that fissile materials are not diverted from commercial nuclear power plants. Looking forward, they explore how it would be possible to end the separating of plutonium and the use of high enriched uranium (HEU) for reactor fuel. In the third and final section of the book, they map out reasonable steps for ending production of fissile materials for weapons and disposing of existing stocks of fissile materials.

One of the book's great strengths is its many graphs. Collecting and visually representing data is much harder than it seems and the tables and graphs in this volume are models of careful, clear presentation. It's a relief to read a book about nuclear weapons where exaggeration, histrionics, and moralizing play no role. It is the sober and serious examination of policy where American scholars once excelled.

If you want to understand the facts about fissile materials and how they might sensibly be controlled and eventually eliminated, there is simply no better source.

MILITARY ETHICS

**The Warrior, Military Ethics and Contemporary Warfare:
Achilles Goes Asymmetrical**

By Pauline M. Kaurin

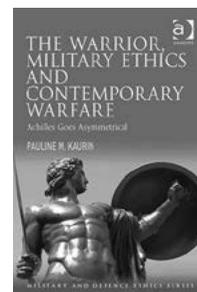
Reviewed by Sibylle Scheipers, PhD, senior lecturer in international relations at the University of St. Andrews

In *The Warrior, Military Ethics and Contemporary Warfare*, Pauline M. Kaurin sets out to devise a new approach to thinking about military ethics and, crucially, to teaching it to cadets and soldiers. Her basic assumption, and hence the rationale of the book, contemporary warfare is “asymmetric” and the moral approach to fighting it has to be adapted to this condition of asymmetry. The book covers a number of specific pertinent issues such as the question of the moral and legal equality of combatants, drone warfare and non-lethal weapons (though it is not entirely clear why those two are covered in the same chapter, given their moral implications are vastly different), and the application of the law of armed conflict in humanitarian interventions.

This book is well intentioned, but deeply flawed. Weaknesses include sloppy editing, lack of attention to the details of its presentation, weak positioning of the main arguments in the context of pertinent research literature, and, most importantly, a shaky foundation within the framework of the over-hyped, but analytically feeble concept of “asymmetric warfare.”

A few words on the presentation, before I turn to the more substantial problems: parts of the text are littered with typos, names of referenced authors are misspelled (Samuel Huntington is introduced as Huntingdon), and the text suffers from over-capitalization (“Military Professionalism,” “Utilitarianism,” “Justice”). At times, the author’s somewhat colloquial style sits uneasily with the complexity of the topic (“What this really boils down to [23];” “At the end of the day [134]”). The text is filled with a dizzying number of acronyms (the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy is shortened to “DADT [91]”) – but there is no list of abbreviations included.

The book’s bibliography is a mere three and a half pages long. It does reference major names in the field, but the author is oblivious to others. Mark Osiel, for instance, has presented an important argument on reciprocity and post-reciprocal military ethics, which speaks to many of the central issues which Kaurin is wrestling; yet, his book is conspicuously absent from the bibliography.¹ Kaurin also devotes a whole chapter to the reformulation of the distinction between combatants and civilians, in which she opts for a broadening of the range of categories from clear-cut combatants to vulnerable civilians and claims this is underpinned by “actual field practice in recent conflicts.” However, she fails to mention the International Committee of the Red Cross’ study on

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VT, 2014

150 pages

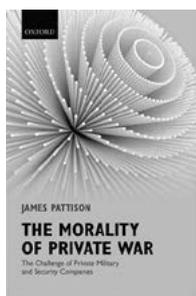
\$104.94

1 Mark Osiel, *The End of Reciprocity: Terror, Torture, and the Law of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

direct participation in hostilities, which addresses precisely this issue.² More importantly, the latter suggests a completely different approach, which upholds the dichotomy between combatants and civilians, but introduces temporary suspensions of civilian protections for those civilians who take up arms. This error is bound to lead to confusion at best (and criminal liability at worst) for those who are at the receiving end of the teaching of military ethics.

The deepest flaw of the book is its insufficient conceptual grounding in the idea of asymmetric warfare. Kaurin discusses critical assessments of the concept of asymmetric warfare. Unfortunately, she comes up with a definition that turns out to be impractical: “In other words, I see asymmetrical warfare (especially the contemporary version of it) as an attempt to alter the discourse and ground rules about what constitutes war, how it is to be waged and what counts as success or failure (9).” This definition would have also applied to contemporary perceptions of Napoleonic warfare, but surely this is not what Kaurin had in mind.

What remains, then, is a well-intentioned attempt to popularize the teaching of military ethics, which is indeed a worthwhile and often-neglected topic at staff colleges around the world. The parts in which Kaurin discusses the way moral problems should be debated are the best ones in the book, and often guided by good intuitions, for instance Kaurin’s warning that penalizing those who take up arms unlawfully could have negative moral *and* strategic implications. However, these insights are not grounded in the conceptual basis of the book. On the contrary, Kaurin’s repeated talk of “moral asymmetry” as the most basic feature of asymmetric warfare make them seem surprising, if not unconvincing.



The Morality of Private War. The Challenge of Private Military and Security Companies.

By James Pattison

Reviewed by Birthe Anders, Teaching Fellow in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London

Scholars in war studies have long been concerned whether Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) are morally reprehensible and undermine the democratic control of military force — in effect, whether the companies are nothing more than modern-day mercenaries. James Pattison’s *The Morality of Private War* tackles these questions in a very comprehensive and thorough way. The short answer is, from a moral point of view, PMSCs should not be used. The longer answer is much more complex.

Pattison, a professor of politics at the University of Manchester, examines PMSCs, their employees, and their clients through the lens of Just War Theory. The book is structured in four parts: addressing individuals, the employment of PMSCs by states and alternative arrangements of military force, as well as the companies’ effect on the

² Nils Melzer, *Interpretive Guidance on the Notion of Direct Participation in Hostilities under International Humanitarian Law* (Geneva: ICRC, 2009).

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272 pages
\$82.50

international system. In the final part of the book, the author summarizes by whom and in which roles PMSCs can be used, assesses the state of current regulation and proposes how military force should ideally be organized, namely, through a global monopoly on military force. This review can only provide a brief synopsis of this very dense book and highlight crucial points in Pattison's argument.

Central to the author's analysis is what he calls the Cumulative Legitimacy Approach, by which the legitimacy of the military can be assessed. Pattison argues prominent theories of civil-military relations (those of Huntington, Janowitz, and Feaver) do not adequately address the morality of force. According to the Cumulative Legitimacy Approach four factors determine legitimacy; Effectiveness, Democratic Control, Proper Treatment of Military Personnel, and Communal Bonds. These features are scalar and cumulative. Thus, not doing well on one of the criterion, can to some extent, be ameliorated by doing well on the others. Legitimacy here means how effective an agent (the military as well as PMSCs) is in promoting basic human rights and fighting just wars.

In the first part of the book, the author focusses on individual contractors and asks whether it is permissible to be a contractor, meaning whether it is allowed under just war and human rights criteria. Pattison rightly observes one of the most prominent objections to private military force is that PMSCs and their employees are mercenaries because they are (at least partially) motivated by financial gain. The author contests this objection and poses two questions not usually addressed in the literature: (a) would it actually be problematic if an individual was primarily motivated by financial gain, and (b) is that more likely to be the case for a contractor than for a soldier?

Pattison finds contractors are indeed more likely than soldiers to be primarily motivated by financial gain. Perhaps not a very surprising find, but what follows is interesting. In contrast to the dominant interpretation of this argument the author finds financial motives are not necessarily a major objection to private force. It can be permissible to be a contractor, even if part of one's motivation is financial gain. However, it cannot be the dominant motivation. The next section goes on to examine when it is permissible to be a contractor. Here, individual *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* need to be followed. These are same principles determining just wars for states, *inter alia* just cause, last resort, legitimate authority, and proportionality. It should be noted that Pattison's analysis is a theoretical one without looking at new data, which means novices to such detailed legal analyses might find the book a bit dry and tedious to read. However, if you have a taste for this kind of book, the detail and thoroughness are very enjoyable.

What could be an alternative to PMSCs? As Pattison examines in the second part of the book, contractors are not the only ones facing moral problems, state forces do as well. The all-volunteer force (AVF) is the preferable arrangement of the military as conscription faces a number of moral problems. One example is the restriction of individual autonomy. In part three of the book, the author broadens the level of analysis from individuals and companies to the international system and analyzes several ways in which the use of PMSCs negatively affects the stability of the international system. Readers might think problems with PMSCs identified in the first three parts of the book could be

alleviated by tighter and more effective regulation. Pattison considers this problem in his final chapter and summarizes existing regulations at the international and national level as well as self-regulation. He rightly points to the patchy nature of current regulation as well as to difficulties of overseeing and enforcing self-regulation by the industry.

One could also argue the answer to the question of whether it is permissible to work for a PMSC, or employ one, depends on the type of service required; logistical support services differ from armed security work. A minor flaw of the book is its sweeping use of the terms private war and private force and its focus on potential combat roles of PMSCs. While the author acknowledges PMSCs offer a variety of services (on a spectrum from logistics to armed security to combat), it has actually been many years since PMSCs were last hired by a state for direct combat.

Ultimately, the problems with private and public military force laid out in the first three parts of the book can only be solved by establishing a global public monopoly on the authorization and provision of military force. Pattison proposes a reformed UN and especially a restructured Department of Peacekeeping Operations be put in charge of such a force. It is easy to dismiss this proposal as entirely unrealistic and, indeed, the author concedes this is a valid objection; but it "...misses the point. At issue ...is the most morally desirable way of organizing military force." Thus, this ideal should be worked towards, even if its full implementation is unlikely.

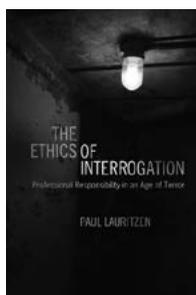
Who should read *The Morality of Private War*? The book should be of use to anyone with an interest in private military and security companies, military ethics or civil-military relations. It is a welcome addition to the field of PMSC research, and should especially stimulate debate on PMSCs' effect on democratic control of the military and civil-military relations as well as on future regulations. The author does not offer much guidance for practitioners already working with PMSCs, but that is not the aim. He addresses the moral legitimacy of individual contractors, PMSCs and their clients and does it well. The book is a theoretical analysis of a practical issue, and one that should be read by anyone working with or for a PMSC.

The Ethics of Interrogation: Professional Responsibility in an Age of Terror

By Paul Lauritzen.

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas A. Pryer, author of *The Fight for the High Ground: The U.S. Army and Interrogation during Operation Iraqi Freedom, May 2003 – April 2004*.

The Ethics of Interrogation may sound like a philosophical discussion. This book is not one. For that, see an earlier book with a strangely similar title and cover, Michael Sherker's *An Ethics of Interrogation*. What interests Lauritzen is the internal debates of four professions on the ethics of interrogation and the importance of such debates to our republic during an age of rapidly changing security threats. The result is a fascinating, albeit flawed, study.



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227 pages
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Lauritzen begins by arguing the social-trustee model of professionals as servants of the public good is largely dead. In its place has arisen the view of social scientists that professions are “centers of neutral expertise.” This trend, he says, must be reversed, leading to his thesis: “I hope to show that the professions are where democratic character traits may take root and that we need to nurture a view of professionals as servants of the common good.”

He examines the acrimonious debate within the American Psychological Association (APA) about the participation of psychologists in interrogations. Soon after 9/11, APA amended its Code of Ethics to justify this participation, effectively stating members could participate even in abusive interrogations if these interrogations were legal. This stance led to a revolt within the ranks that “the dissenters won.” But, he contends, dissenters have gone too far by trying to keep psychologists out of interrogations completely, and failing to account for legitimate national security concerns.

Next, he retells the well-known story of executive branch lawyers enabling “enhanced” interrogation techniques (EITs). The American Bar Association’s reaction was an angry one, and the Office for Professional Responsibility (OPR) investigated the conduct of John Yoo and Jay Bybee. Lauritzen points out OPR’s inconsistency in failing to investigate Steven Bradbury when Bradbury later signed memoranda giving legal cover to an even more expansive list of coercive techniques. No lawyer was ever disbarred or fined, but Lauritzen believes the legal profession positively influenced its members’ conduct.

Lauritzen also looks at the torture debate within the medical profession. While the UN and American Medical Association (AMA) prohibit medical personnel from certifying the fitness of prisoners for harmful treatment, US medical personnel conducted such certifications anyway. The Office of the Surgeon General ignored this unpleasant fact by defining “participation” as direct participation in interrogations and then denying medical personnel participated in any interrogations. Lauritzen does not attribute this to prevarication. Rather, he points to the tension between the UN’s and AMA’s expansive prohibitions and “the expectation that physicians will treat detainees in need”—a tension remaining unresolved.

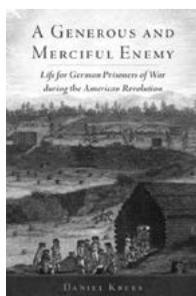
In subsequent chapters, Lauritzen addresses how professions use licensing and oversight boards to regulate their members’ behavior and how virtue theory relates to professions. When discussing the latter, he holds up the military profession as the exemplar. The military profession’s inculcation of virtues, he argues, is what led the military (that is, service JAGs) to oppose abusive interrogation tactics, and it would behoove other professions to follow the military’s example.

This brings us to the book’s flaws, which could be due to the author’s lack of military experience or research (or both). For one, Lauritzen fails to consider the large number of officers who embraced “enhanced” interrogation techniques. Officers commanded Gitmo, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram. Special mission units routinely employed “enhanced” interrogation techniques, as did many intelligence units supporting the conventional army in Afghanistan and Iraq. The fact that so many officers “bought into” prisoner abuse “to save lives” demonstrates either

the weakness of the profession's avowed virtues or the profession's real values are something other than advertised. It also undermines Lauritzen's thesis and the important role of professions in developing character traits.

Lauritzen also fails to consider the expertise of military interrogators when he asserts "torture works" in producing valuable intelligence. He offers the example of a true confession (torture almost always produces confessions, true or not) and cites as authoritative an increasingly discredited figure in the torture debate, Jose Gonzales. Lauritzen seems unaware of Army doctrine, which has long declared torture to be a poor and unreliable means of collecting intelligence—a conclusion supported by the overwhelming evidence of histories and memoirs and, most recently, the senate report on CIA interrogation practices.

There are other flaws, such as Lauritzen's unconvincing description of why some "enhanced" interrogation techniques recognize human choice and dignity and should be allowed (such as "walling") and others do not and should not be allowed (such as "stress positions"). Such flaws should dissuade professors from choosing this book as a text for impressionable students. Nonetheless, there remains much to commend it to the mature reader. Lauritzen argues dispassionately, clearly, and fairly (if not comprehensively), and his research not only informs, it directs the reader to many of the most important thinkers and works in the torture debate.



Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013
392 pages
\$24.95

A Generous and Merciful Enemy: Life for German Prisoners of War during the American Revolution

By Daniel Krebs

Reviewed by MAJ Jason W. Warren, PhD, Concepts and Doctrine Director, Center for Strategic Leadership and Development, US Army War College

Ansbach, Germany still displays the colors of its regiments deployed during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), and a visitor to this quaint town in Mittelfranken would not depart thinking that the Ansbachers were mercenaries. Daniel Krebs, a native German speaker, in fact claims the term was a misnomer for Germans in British employ during the war. In his well-crafted "new military history," *A Generous and Merciful Enemy*, Krebs makes excellent use of the extant primary sources to explore the social aspects of these soldiers' backgrounds, families, military experience, and life after combat. In so doing, he relates a story heretofore marginalized in Anglo-American accounts of the conflict.

This commitment of soldiers by the resource-starved tiny principalities of the Holy Roman Empire—then the sick-man of Europe—was no small matter. During and immediately after the war, German cultural elites depicted their princes' motivations for contributing troops as the greedy pursuit of a life of debauchery. Later German nationalist writers derided these rulers as insufficiently German. Krebs counters that the reality was more nuanced. Sovereigns, in addition to raising money for domestic projects (often to better their subjects' condition), also sought prestige for themselves and their kingdoms; then a not uncommon objective for royalty. There was also the matter of supporting a British

king of German ethnicity from the Hanoverian line, and the tradition of supporting Protestant war efforts, particularly after the Catholic French and Spanish joined with the American revolutionaries.

Although not all German “subsidy soldiers,” as Krebs refers to them, were Hessians, “almost the entire Hessen-Kassel army entered British service” (22) and eventually numbered 20,000 regulars (plus replacements) during the war. Krebs is able to pattern a mosaic of the varying American treatment of these soldiers by time and place because more than 14 percent of all German subsidy soldiers fell into revolutionary hands. Colonial treatment of the Germans even differed within American states, as Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at first provided generous conditions, while nearby Reading failed to provide adequate treatment. In Chapter 4, Krebs uses the topic of handling prisoners as an opportunity to detail how the Western tradition evolved over centuries in matters of military captivity. He examines how the reality of prisoners’ treatment on and after the battlefield often ran afoul of the lofty philosophical ideals of the drawing room.

The American revolutionaries deemed Pennsylvania a sound location for prisoner of war camps because of the German ethnicity of many of the state’s inhabitants, although major camps also existed in nearby Maryland, as well as Virginia and Connecticut. Language and ethnicity mattered during the war with German-American soldiers at Trenton even enticing the surrender of German subsidy soldiers’ in their native tongue (97). Indeed, the mix of volunteers, conscripts, and pressed soldiers in the German ranks often mirrored that of the American Continental Army and militia units. The topic of similarities between locales in the early modern era (and beyond) is fertile ground for future historical focus, and Krebs rightly calls for more military history of the Atlantic world (25). Kyle Zelner’s *A Rabble in Arms* is a good example of a work with similar social-history methodology focusing on the early colonial period. It details how the Essex County militia of Massachusetts Bay also consisted of pressed troops a century prior to the arrival of “Hessians” of the American Revolution.

One point in this solid monograph could use fine-tuning. Krebs argues the nascent nationalism of the American and French revolutions turned German “mercenary” troops into anachronisms. The German troops, therefore, were caught in changing social circumstances, victims of enlightenment ideals now taken root on the battlefield (32-34). Krebs’ “modern” definition for mercenaries calls for a broader discussion. Mercenary troops, as contractors in modern-day Iraq and Afghanistan may readily qualify by his definition.

Instead of looking forward to the French Revolution, Krebs would have been better served by examining the Thirty Years War, a conflict in which mercenaries came to be viewed by all sides as a threat to European civil order. The first truly professional armies since the collapse of Rome emerged from the destruction of 1618-1648, which saw Ansbach, for instance, nearly depopulated. Given the devastation and the large-scale employment of mercenaries, there were no battle standards from this era preserved in the town. I have spoken with some Ansbachers (one, a local historian), who trace their ancestry back to Austria, as Austrian-Germans repopulated the locale after marauding mercenaries decimated it. They viewed 1648 as more devastating for the region than 1945. It was

from this apocalyptic landscape that mercenaries derived a bad name. With an expanded tactical and operational approach, Krebs might have established more context for his “subsidy soldiers.” This is a weakness of the “new military history” which sometimes strays too far from what scholars have derided as a “drum and bugle” approach. The crucible of war tells us as much about ourselves in difficult circumstances—and indeed of humanity itself—no matter how unpleasant the dialogue. It is within this terrible environment that historians must analyze German subsidy-soldiers’ behavior. If many German troops in fact acted with mercenary-like behaviors on the battlefield, as some accounts indicate, then perhaps the boots fit.

This criticism notwithstanding, *A Generous and Merciful Enemy* is a much-needed account of a glossed-over American Revolutionary War topic, and one importantly related from the German perspective. Krebs’ monograph also includes useful maps depicting little-known Holy Roman Empire geography, which is part of the outstanding overall aesthetics of the book. It is an excellent edition to the Campaigns and Commanders series.

WAR & THE STATE

Failed States and the Origins of Violence: A Comparative Analysis of State Failure as a Root Cause of Terrorism and Political Violence

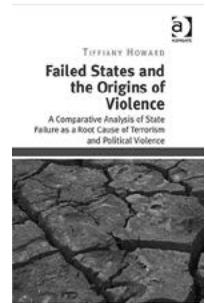
By Tiffany Howard

Reviewed by Janeen Klinger, Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College

The starting point for the author of *Failed States* is the lack of scholarly consensus regarding the origin of terrorists and the lack of quantitative research on the subject. Dr. Howard's purpose is to remedy the shortcoming by providing a broadly comparative approach that tests the extent to which weak and failed states are the impetus for individuals to engage in political violence. This potentially admirable effort at comparison includes chapters on sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Southeast and South Asia, and Latin America. Howard's analysis draws links between state failure and domestic terrorism, and only touches on the issue of transnational terrorism. The first problem with Howard's analysis is, despite drawing on a number of indices of weak and failed states, her category is applied so expansively it encompasses what in an earlier era may have been termed simply the "underdeveloped" world. One example of the dubious application of the term is the characterization of the Philippines as a failing state because, Howard argues, it is "struggling to develop economically" and is facing internal upheavals.

Howard's research methodology also suffers from limitations. She draws on survey data concerning respondents' views of governance in their state and the number of people interviewed is small (1200 in each of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa). One must wonder if the views recorded are genuinely representative. Perhaps a more serious flaw than sample size is that some questions did not directly ask about governance, so the author is forced to use what she terms proxy questions and draw inferences from them. For example, the survey conducted in the Middle East and North Africa asks respondents: "In your opinion, which is the most important problem facing your country today; economic conditions, corruption, authoritarianism, ending the US occupation in Iraq, or the Arab-Israeli conflict?" Howard concludes that respondents who view authoritarianism as the most important problem are, therefore, more likely to support the use of violence against the state than respondents who chose another answer. Similarly, the survey data from Latin America asks respondents if social movements are necessary mechanisms for the development of society. Howard's leap of logic here concludes that, because social movements are antecedents to social revolutions, an affirmative answer to the question suggests support for political violence.

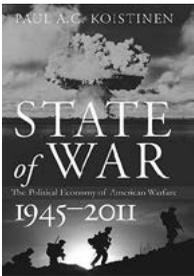
Even granting the validity of the survey data, do the results lead to a greater understanding of the origins of terrorism and, therefore, prove useful for national security professionals? In this book, the quantitative methods validate the obvious, that is, people living in a dangerous environment are likely to support, if not participate, in violence. In fairness



Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co, 2014
222 pages
\$119.95

to the author—she readily admits when the data contradict some of her hypotheses. For instance, in her discussion of sub-Saharan Africa, the survey data suggest the perceived presence of the state increases the probability a person will support violence—which runs contrary to Howard’s hypothesis that ungoverned spaces provide a haven for terrorists.

While using quantitative methods to confirm the obvious is relatively harmless, there remains a greater danger from a more philosophical standpoint. The extent to which quantitative methods can wrap themselves in the cloak of scientific certainty engenders the risk that policy-makers, guided by such approaches, will develop such hubris they will not be able to see or admit errors in judgment. What is missing in a quantitative approach like Howard’s is the rich historical and cultural tradition of scholarship found in classic works of comparative politics, such as Reinhard Bendix’s *Kings or People*, or Barrington Moore’s, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, which (despite their flaws) add much to our understanding of the evolution and change in societies.



Lawrence, KS: University
Press of Kansas, 2012

328 pages
\$39.95

State of War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1945-2011

By Paul A.C. Koistinen

Reviewed by Isaiah “Ike” Wilson III, Colonel (USA), Chief, Commander’s Initiative Group (CIG), US Central Command, MacDill AFB

As the fifth and final volume of Professor Paul Koistinen’s comprehensive study of the political economy underpinning America’s wars from colonial beginnings, through the great industrial wars of the 20th century, *State of War* is literally a tour de force – a walk through our nation’s comings-of-age as a nation, and after 1945, as a global superpower. As such, Professor Koistinen (in my view) achieves his intended goal of “providing a comprehensive, analytical, and interdisciplinary study of the economics of America’s wars.” Moreover, through his multivolume study, Professor Koistinen provides us with an essential appreciation for what is likely the most important factor in understanding the political economy of America’s state of war and peace: the “political” and power dynamics define, stress, as well as strengthen and re-define over cycles of time, the social patterns of American political life.

Koistinen offers three “lenses” through which to view his historical accounting of the cycles of continuity and change in economic mobilization – each lens is a view into three major stages over the course of American history, each revealing its own unique “pattern” of economic mobilization, and identifying four key factors of economic mobilization. Koistinen’s analysis reveals at least three major insights are particularly relevant to today’s challenges in rebalancing defense budget stringencies with current and future national security imperatives. Firstly, Koistinen shows harnessing the economy for war was more readily accomplished in the “transitional stage” (1816-1865) than in any other stage. Secondly, strength of economic and political systems is a determinant in not only a state’s ability to mobilize a war economy, but bring about success or defeat. Thirdly, and perhaps the most instructive, if not most worrisome

of lessons gathered, is over time and through these historical cycles, we witness a blurring of distinctions between government and industry, particularly defense industries, feeding and in some instances even creating potentially destructive civil-military imbalances.

President Eisenhower was particularly concerned about three developments: first, the rise of a technological elite; second, an unnecessary growth of large organizational systems, particularly the integration of military and business interests, to a degree of integration could cause or perpetuate international conflict; and third, his concern with technological-military-industrial alliances which were regaining their wartime ascendancy and were poised to exercise influence out of proportion to their appropriate role in a peace time democratic society. Eisenhower's January 1961 Farewell Address was itself a speech representing a transition between eras. As a warning for the future it was grounded in Eisenhower's analysis of mid-century political and cultural currents, which in turn was based upon his reflections about the momentous changes occurring during his lifetime – changes Koistinen shows us perhaps persist as past lessons gathered but unfortunately not yet learned.

The basic problem facing the United States today, in what seems could be yet another Koistinen “transitional stage” of not merely evolutionary but revolutionary change in political-military and economic affairs, stems from at least four additional and simultaneous challenges: first, a growing national debt and debt-to-GDP ratio, which is higher now than at any time since World War II; second, continued recession with slow economic recovery; third, an increasingly aging population which will significantly and persistently increase entitlement costs (Social Security, Medicaid/Medicare) over the long run, absent entitlement reform; and fourth, political polarization among policymakers, exacerbated by compressed timelines for action and pre-election year politics, structurally and procedurally impeding the ability for compromise. Any three of these would be difficult, but all four problems simultaneously, and manifest by, and within, a near-perpetual military-industrial complex (MIC)-driven war economy, are particularly problematic.

As the United States continues into a period of stark fiscal austerity, policy makers will be required to make hard choices about where best to spend declining discretionary dollars. Recognizing this as strategic choice, and understanding the bounds shaping and constraining and redefining the limits of that choice, is an important insight raised from Professor Koistinen's body of work. There is a longstanding American distaste for tragedy, or rather the want of tragic sensibility (or pragmatism) in our strategic culture has led US strategists and policymakers to mistake mere force for power. Understanding the difference between force and power is vital to America's rise as a durable and balanced global power, and not merely as a forceful hegemon. This understanding is all the more imperative at a time of compounding global security challenges and austerity. A renewed American grand strategy would acknowledge the nation's tragic flaw: its pride in its force and technology; as Koistinen shows us, a pride flawed in and by the design of a post-WWII military-industrial, political-economic complex persists. It would also acknowledge the proximity of this flaw to the nation's virtue: the set of principles and institutions for restraining force have proven in earlier periods uniquely adept at producing abundant prosperity, force,

and with them unsurpassed power; yet more recently and at present seem mostly impotent.

There are at least four critical questions raised in the pages of *State of War* central to the outcome of the struggle to redefine and resource American grand strategy. First, how will current political realities affect the range of strategic choices available to policy makers? Are some courses of action unrealistic, given the contemporary political climate? Second, how does the budget interact with and limit our strategy? Given what we know, or can estimate, regarding the cost of achieving our objectives, which options are broadly untenable? Third, how can the United States government make the best possible strategic choices given our political and budgetary constraints? Are there certain precautions our government should take to limit or control political influence over the budget? And if so, who should lead this effort? And finally, the existing tapestry of US relationships and regional partnerships must be incorporated into any new or emerging strategic framework, if for no other reason than to return an economy of scale balance to US force and defense budget expenditures. What role will these relationships play, and how should our military forces be structured both to confront new areas of interest and reassure traditional allies? American global presence must be calibrated carefully with political and budgetary constraints. What are our national priorities in the global community, and how can we organize most effectively to meet our goals?

All of these questions are, finally, questions of grand strategy; they involve the calculated relation of means to large ends. In this sense, the fundamental challenge facing the United States might be put this way: After sixty-five years of pursuing a globally-engaged grand strategy—nearly a third of which transpired without a great power rival—can the United States discover a way to navigate this new era of uncertainty while preserving American dominance as a leading power in, and of, the international system? These questions will be at the core of our political debates in the years to come. Paul Koistinen's *State of War* and his preceding volumes could not have come to us at a more important time.



Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014

279 pages
\$27.95

Waging War: Alliances, Coalitions, and Institutions of Interstate Violence

By Patricia A. Weitsman

Reviewed by Russ Burgos, Lecturer in Global Studies at UCLA

Allies are the most aggravating of people. They introduce considerations of their own national politics, none of which have the faintest bearing on the matter of immediate issue [but] their most annoying characteristic is the astonishing way they seem incapable of recognizing how sound, how wise, how experienced are our views."

Diary of Field-Marshal William J. Slim, commander of the British 14th Army in World War II

In *Waging War*, Patricia A. Weitsman argues our understanding of what the late military historian Russell Weigley famously called “the American way of war” needs to be brought into the 21st-century. Weigley claimed annihilation – destroying the enemy’s armed forces and (ideally)

occupying his capital – was the basic American strategy in war. While European great powers hewed closely to the Clausewitzian understanding of war as a continuation of diplomacy by other means – a necessary limitation for nation-states embedded in a delicate continental balance of power – the United States approached war as kind of violent intermission to diplomacy: we negotiate, we fight, we negotiate again, making peace on our terms. Weigley’s thesis cohered nicely with 20th-century notions of “American Exceptionalism” and strategic unilateralism.

To Weitsman, however, that is its principal weakness: in fact, the United States doesn’t simply make war (or peace) on its terms. America is embedded in a network of global alliances, coalitions, and institutions simultaneously enabling and constraining its power. As a result, Weitsman argues, the American way of war is profoundly multilateral – profoundly *political*. “The norm of multilateralism,” she writes, “is entrenched in the American way of waging war.” This means American policymakers and strategists must take into consideration the goals, objectives, and objections of its allies and coalition partners at all stages of war fighting – compromises can, and often do, frustrate policymakers, public opinion, and even the conduct of America’s wars themselves.

Waging War is not a book about the operational aspects of coalition warfare, though one can glean some insights from Weitsman’s case studies. Her book is a contribution to scholarly debates about alliances and coalitions within the international relations and security studies disciplines and as a result may frustrate those professionally interested in the operational or political-military dynamics of alliance and coalition warfare.

Weitsman frames her argument in the context of what she calls “realist institutionalism,” attempting to bridge the gap between the two dominant strands of International Relations theorizing – realism, with its emphasis on interests, and neoliberalism, with its emphasis on formal and informal international institutions – showing military alliances and coalitions not only constrain America’s strategic operations in war but also facilitate the exercising of American hegemonic power across the globe. Weitsman develops her theory in five case studies, ranging from the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to NATO’s Kosovo and Libya interventions, emphasizing the political history of the alliance, its decision-making structure, the intra-alliance distribution of power, its size, its war-fighting effectiveness, and the impact of those factors on the perceived legitimacy of each of the military operations.

Because these “institutions of interstate violence” matter for the exercising of US power, therefore, American policymakers must attend to intra-institutional political dynamics – which often include, as Field-Marshal Slim lamented, the domestic political considerations of institution members. Frustrating as it may be, she argues, alliances and coalitions are, in effect, strategic multipliers. As a result, the US has an interest in maintaining them to its own benefit.

There is, however, a catch: the more dependent the United States becomes on coalition warfare, the greater its “alliance security dilemma” becomes: American policymakers are torn between fears of entrapment – constraints on America’s freedom of action imposed by the necessity of satisfying allies – and the fear of abandonment – the risk, in fact, the

United States will have to go it alone. Weitsman shows balancing those fears often leads to the creation of complex, overlapping, and inefficient command-and-control relationships which actually diminish military effectiveness. Given the increasingly powerful constraint of global public opinion on military action, maintaining legitimacy has in effect become a key strategic objective in any use of American military force. Weitsman notes, for example, negative European public opinion over the conduct of operations in Afghanistan became a critical problem for American policymakers; she suggests accepting the political costs and limitations imposed by coalitions has become a critical part of the new American way of war.

Waging War offers important insights into the strategic benefits the United States derives from the web of global coalitions it has created since World War II and into the political and operational costs attendant to maintaining them.

INSURGENCY & COUNTERINSURGENCY

The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency

By Jeffrey Moore

Reviewed by Marina Miron, Assistant Editor with *Infinity Journal* and PhD Candidate at the Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales Canberra

Recently, the concepts of irregular warfare and counterinsurgency (COIN) have gained attention in academic and military circles. Among the works devoted to counterinsurgency are those concerned with the various campaigns in Southeast Asia. However, certain regional conflicts, in Thailand, for instance, are understudied. With his book, *The Thai Way of Counterinsurgency*, Jeffrey Moore seeks to fill this gap. He believes his study provides useful insight for American and Thai practitioners of counterinsurgency and shows Thailand, albeit slowly and through trial and error, has gained valuable experience conducting counterinsurgency campaigns. The Thai successfully defeated two major insurgencies in recent years: the countrywide communist insurgency of 1965-1985, and the southern border insurgency from 1980-1998. However, since 2004, the country has suffered from a Pattani separatist insurgency in the southern part of the country. In addition, Moore's study aims to provide an examination of Thai national security issues and related decision-making on a broader front. Most controversially perhaps, the author claims his book can explain how to conduct COIN on strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is Moore's framework of analysis called, "COIN Pantheon." It uses the same three pillars of counterinsurgency – political, security, and economic – which Australian counterinsurgency theorist, David Kilcullen, uses to support his own triptych. Kilcullen's pillars are supported by a platform of information and are topped off by a roof denoting control. Moore's pantheon differs from Kilcullen's as his base is strategy and coordination, while his three pillars of political, security, and economics are covered by an additional layer called insurgent capabilities and intentions. The roof of the pantheon, rather than being control, is made up of "at-risk population" (xviii-xxii). Thus, Moore's main emphasis for achieving success in any counterinsurgency campaign falls upon the strategic dimension and the coordination that should be aimed at winning over the indigenous at-risk population. Additionally, Moore employs David Galula's and Robert Thompson's basic counterinsurgency tenets as supplementary analytical filters – as he calls them – to illustrate how "the Thai organize for and wage COIN." (xx)

Moore emphasizes the importance of strategic dimension in counterinsurgency, which enriches his analysis given that he looks beyond operational and tactical levels in order to understand how counterinsurgency functions. As part of this approach, Moore follows the population-centric tradition of Galula and Thompson regarding winning-over populations as the ultimate prize. What is implicit in Moore's analysis is, similar to Kilcullen, he assumes support of the population is



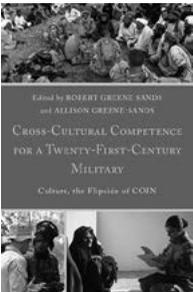
Arlington, VA: Muir Analytics, 2014
476 pages
\$20.00

paramount for insurgent survival and it should also attract the attention of the counter-insurgent. Moore also notes, despite his emphasis on the population, that one should not underplay the centrality of kinetic operations. As the author asserts “[k]inetic operations were a close second in importance” (73) to psychological operations during the latter phase of the Thai counterinsurgency campaign of 1980 against the communist insurgents. Vital in that specific case, he argues, was the fact that such kinetic operations were highly intelligence-driven.

At the end of each chapter, Moore applies his unique methodological framework to help explain outcomes. Despite the logical coherence of his model, however, it is difficult to see how it helps in establishing the Thai way of counterinsurgency and why he uses only Galula and Thompson given the panoply of theorists from which he could have drawn. This list includes the likes of Robert Bugeaud, Hubert Lyautey, Charles E. Callwell, Roger Trinquier and Frank Kitson.

Moore’s conclusion offers a good summary of practices implemented by the Thai government(s) in the two past insurgencies and in the ongoing one. Further, he proceeds with an evaluation of Thai principles setting them against Galula’s and Thompson’s core tenets (364-368). His findings suggest the Thai have violated two of Galula’s principles: counterinsurgent forces should not imitate the insurgents; and civilians, not the military, should take the primary lead in the counterinsurgency effort. Despite Moore’s reservations, the Thai were successful in their efforts. In the introduction, Moore stated the Thai case would have valuable lessons for US COIN doctrine, yet he does not explain which lessons are worth replicating. An elaboration would have been a valuable addition to what is otherwise a rich, historical narrative of Thai counterinsurgency.

Overall, this study – designed for readers familiar with counterinsurgency theory – is a significant contribution. Moore’s research is thorough and he uses a large number of sources including many personal interviews. He provides us with an informative account that helps us understand the peculiarities of the Thai way of counterinsurgency, rather than instructing us on how to conduct such campaigns in the future.



Cross-Cultural Competence For A Twenty-First-Century Military: Culture, the Flipside of COIN

Edited By Robert Greene Sands and Allison Greene-Sands

Reviewed by Colonel Robert M. Mundell, Chairman Department of Command Leadership and Management, US Army War College

Robert Greene Sands and Allison Greene-Sands, two leading scholars on culture in the national defense community, in partnership with a host of social and behavioral scientists and practitioners, provide a comprehensive and convincing analysis of the importance of cross-cultural competence (3C) that transcends beyond advocating its counterinsurgency (COIN) specific benefit. In doing so, the authors demonstrate the relevance of 3C given the human-centric and evolving nature of war and conflict in the 21st century. Importantly, the book also provides insights

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Publishing Group: Lanham,
MD, 2012

386 pages
\$145.98

cautioning against the notion of 3C as a niche and temporal capability declining in value as the US military transitions from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Accordingly, *Cross-Cultural Competence for a Twenty-First-Century Military* is a must read for military professionals and practitioners responsible for delivering education and training programs designed to develop the type of expert knowledge required to fight and win in complex and ambiguous security environments. As defined in the book, 3C is the knowledge, skills, and affect/motivation that enables individuals to adapt effectively in cross-cultural environments. (19)

The book's basic premise centers on three main factors validating the importance of 3C education and training programs: uncertainty and ambiguity in the international security environment will require military forces to operate in any global region; US forces will most likely operate in partnership with joint interagency, intergovernmental and multi-national forces; and a decade of lessons learned from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan codify the importance of 3C in understanding and negotiating the complexities of conflict and war. Equally as important, the book identifies three impediments for advocating 3C moving forward: the challenge of communicating 3C as something other than an enabler; the reliance on sociology and behavioral science in support of 3C research and the associated difficulty in describing tangible educational and training outcomes; and the tendency to pair 3C with regional specific and language education training efforts, which can compel decision makers into an either/or decision making paradigm. All three impediments are important for decision makers to consider in an era of fiscal constraint and uncertainty.

The book is arranged in five logically sequenced sections analyzing a series of interrelated topics including the history and background of the development of 3C as a concept, an examination of 3C developmental models applicable across three military education levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced), strategies for 3C education and training programs, on-going 3C research efforts, and useful ideas and concepts for applying 3C during operations in cross-cultural environments. All five sections contain data and compelling stories demonstrating the value of 3C for the military. Of note, chapters 6, 7, and 8 are particularly useful. These three chapters provide firsthand accounts by practitioners applying their experiences to discuss and describe how 3C is developed over time and what is required to succeed in cross-cultural environments. Importantly, all three chapters emphasize how the development of 3C is a lifelong learning endeavor. Similarly, chapters 13, 14, and 15 provide thoughts allowing military professionals to transition cultural training and education from a just in time based training and education methodology to a more deliberate and enduring concept, enabling 3C to become firmly rooted in military culture.

The single most relevant idea contained in the book, in the opinion of this reviewer, centers on the importance of cross-cultural competence in relation to critical thinking—a must for current and emerging senior leaders. Specifically, the book notes the value of 3C in assisting senior leaders in making a relevant shift in how they think about others and themselves. All six 3C components, which are self-awareness, self-regulation, cultural learning, intercultural interaction, cultural perspective taking and cultural reasoning enable this shift in thinking and allow

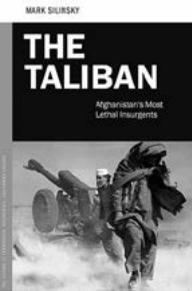
senior leaders to apply competencies such as sense making, differentiating fact from inference, and suspending judgment in a way which allows leaders to think differently.

While generally very useful, the book does have its drawbacks. It is unnecessarily redundant in characterizing the complexity of the current operating environment and its use of Iraq and Afghanistan to emphasize the importance of culture. The vast preponderance of data and examples in the book are primarily applicable at the tactical and operational levels, and provide minimal strategic-level insights. Finally, as with many documents and publications developed over the past decade, the book continues to advocate for additional research to quantify the concept. The latter does not bode well for a military enterprise habitually constrained by clearly defined and proven outcomes required to justify resources in an era of fiscal constraint. Perhaps the insights contained in this book will aid in overcoming this cultural impediment.

The Taliban: Afghanistan's Most Lethal Insurgents

By Mark Silinsky

Reviewed by Yaniv Barzilai; US Diplomat and author of *102 Days of War – How Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda & the Taliban Survived 2001*



Westport, CT: Praeger
Security International (PSI)
Publishing, 2014
263 pages
\$52.00

Thirteen years into the longest war in American history, precious little is known about the Taliban. Indeed, most Americans probably could not identify Mullah Omar as the leader of the Taliban by name or recognize him as one of America's top enemies from the two grainy pictures of him that exist in the public domain. *The Taliban: Afghanistan's Most Lethal Insurgents*, a part of the PSI Guide to Terrorists, Insurgents, and Armed Groups series, seeks to fill that void. A 31-year veteran of the defense intelligence community, Mark Silinsky has written a useful, concise, and readable primer on the Taliban. The book is ambitious in its scope. In less than 200 pages, Silinsky attempts to provide an account of the history of the Taliban, tactics and strategy the Taliban employs in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the connections the Taliban maintains with other militant organizations and foreign powers, and an overview of US counterinsurgency efforts against the Taliban. Scattered throughout the book are short, vivid profiles of individuals who crossed paths with the Taliban, adding color and personality to the narrative.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of *The Taliban* is the description of the way the organization operates. Silinsky succinctly discusses the structure and leadership of the Taliban, then explores how the Taliban uses violence, intimidation, and information operations to achieve its objectives. He also compares the Taliban to a criminal organization and identifies the various criminal activities it uses to support its operations. Experts looking for new information on the Taliban are unlikely to discover it in this book, but those who are less familiar with the Taliban and the US war in Afghanistan will probably enjoy Silinsky's accessible overview of what he deems "Afghanistan's most lethal insurgents." Similarly, his analysis, which is rooted within the framework of US counterinsurgency doctrine, is familiar but thoughtful.

According to the extensive notes section, Silinsky attributes most of his information to news articles. While the information presented is not necessarily wrong, other stronger and more reliable sources – including extensive scholarly research and primary documents – exist that would better support some of his claims. Perhaps for this reason, Silinsky misses some nuances and is at times imprecise in his retelling of the history of the Taliban.

Silinsky also leaves some of the most important questions unanswered, such as how the Taliban has changed since its rise to power, the existence of moderate elements within the Taliban, the prospects for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and the relative strength of the Afghan National Security Forces. While each of these topics could merit their own books, his extensive analytical experience put him in an ideal position to discuss these critical issues further.

His final conclusion, the Taliban will ultimately lose the war because of cruel and regressive tendencies, is appealing for Westerners but not necessarily supported by historical facts. While most of the world may share this hope, the Taliban's first rise to power in the mid-1990s should be a vivid reminder that barbarous insurgents have defeated their kinder, morally superior opponents in the past.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Ahmed Rashid's book entitled *Taliban* served as the handbook for soldiers and intelligence officials on their way to war, as well as a guide for Americans struggling to understand an obscure enemy in a distant land. Today, Mark Silinsky's *The Taliban* can serve a similar purpose. While America's role in the war is coming to an end, this book will be valuable to the small contingent of soldiers and civilians deploying to Afghanistan as well as Americans seeking answers after 13 years of war.

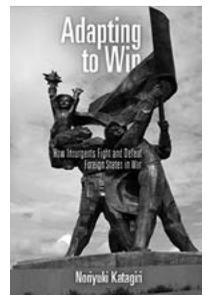
Adapting to Win: How Insurgents Fight and Defeat Foreign States

By Noriyuki Katagiri

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Adjunct Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Adapting to Win is written by Dr. Noriyuki Katagiri, a political scientist, who presently teaches at the Air War College. It is derived from his 2010 dissertation "Evolving to Win: Sequencing Theory of Extra-systemic Warfare" at the University of Pennsylvania. The book represents over five years of research and study on this topical area and benefits from a great deal of support, including fellowships – in both the United States and Japan. As a result, the work is extensively researched, tightly designed, and is both well written and innovative. It represents a very polished product drawing upon the Correlates of War (COW) data spanning the years 1816 to 2010.

The intent of the book is to present "...an alternative research project to the mainstream body of security studies that until recently been fixated on great power interstate conflict and civil wars" and "...to enrich the policy-making community through the study of what lessons powerful states can learn to fight foreign insurgencies (4)." It focuses on



Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014

320 pages
\$69.65

the concept of “extrasystemic” wars, which are a blending of civil wars in which “...a foreign government intervenes in a civil war on either side (5).” The work proposes insurgents use conflict phase-sequencing (conceptually derived from evolutionary biology and evident in revolutionary warfare) as they attempt to prevail in taking over a state.

Six models of extrasystemic war based on sequencing are evident. Each model witnesses from one to three phases derived from conventional war, guerilla war, and state-building as the starting point. The first four models (Conventional, Primitive, Degenerative, and Premature) are quite common, only possess one or two stages, and typically fail. The last two models (Maoist and Progressive—a Maoist variant) are rare, possess all three stages, and typically see their insurgencies succeed. Table 3: Six Models of Extrasystemic War (49) helps to highlight the various models and phases. Not surprisingly, “The central argument of this book is that insurgent groups are likely to defeat foreign states in war when they achieve an orderly combination of three phases: state building, guerilla war, and conventional war” (169) which is very Maoist-insurgency oriented.

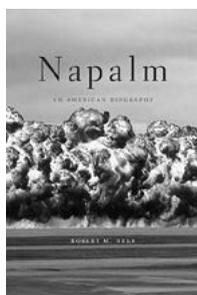
The work is divided into nine chapters: how insurgents fight and defeat foreign states in war, origins and proliferation of sequencing, how sequencing theory works, presentations of the six sequencing models and case studies (the Conventional model—Dahomean war, 1890-1914, Primitive model—Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960, Degenerative model—Iraq War, 2003-2011, Premature model—Anglo-Somali War, 1900-1920, Maoist model—Guinean War of Independence, 1963-1974, and Progressive model—Indochina War, 1946-1954), and a conclusion.

Criticism of this work focuses solely on the COW data. The author has done a phenomenal job of analyzing the data. But since data drive analysis, their use is problematic from the perspective of the reviewer. Nineteenth-century extrasystemic war data are given the same value as contemporary data, which ignores the fact that the international environment is dynamic—not static—meaning the host environments in which states exist dramatically change over time. Thus, the data value of at least the first hundred extrasystemic wars should be questioned—although Fig 3: “How extrasystemic wars change over time” (48) does help to show which models are dominant over which periods, with the once highly occurring Conventional model fading away by 1960.

Further, late twentieth-century extrasystemic wars with continuity into the early 21st century have proven themselves very different from those of the past. These wars are represented by later #146-148 (COW 476-New data) case studies referring to Soviet-Afghan (1980-1989), Somalia (1992-1995), and Iraq (2003-2011) along with other conflicts not included in the work—Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq (post-2010) and the cartels in Mexico and Central America (which do not fit the typical insurgency profile and may or may not be considered extrasystemic). These conflicts exist in a security environment in which the illicit economy is pronounced, the Westphalian state system is under increasing pressure, and the preferred non-state actor goal is to create “other-than” nation-state organizational forms (eg. Caliphate or narco rule). Thus, they are “historically dissociative” from earlier insurgency types and in variance with most of the COW extrasystemic war listings.

In summation, this a superb and innovative work on historical “insurgency phase sequencing” utilizing the COW data. The question scholars, policymakers, and practitioners must ask themselves, however, is how much of data are out of synchronization with twenty-first century insurgency? The more it is, of course, the more the concluding analysis presented in this work must be considered with a critical eye. Still, some of the work’s major policy suggestions—such as “...consider[ing] wartime evolution of enemies as a central part of its strategy making in future engagements in irregular war” (175) and curbing insurgent evolution by denying them weapons, and creating a rival political structure (175)—are inherently sound. This leaves us with a bit of a conundrum as to the lessons of this work, which will ultimately come down to one’s confidence in the utility of the COW data. What cannot be denied, however, is the sequencing theory may also have potential for utility in other areas of security studies. It would, therefore, be wise to keep abreast of Dr. Katagiri’s future work, and track his use of this form of analysis as it matures and is applied to other internal security phenomena.

WAR & TECHNOLOGY



Cambridge, MA: Belknap
Press, 2013
352 pages
\$29.95

Napalm: An American Biography

By Robert M. Neer

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, Adjunct Research Professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, former Minerva Chair and Distinguished Visiting Professor

Dr. Robert Neer, an attorney and core lecturer in the History Department at Columbia University, has written a splendid and important book on the history—one could say the rise and fall—of the incendiary weapon, napalm. The author’s specialization in twentieth and twenty-first century US military power is evident in his writing of this extremely well researched and balanced work. The term napalm initially derived from “...the first two letters of naphthenate with the first four letters of palmitate,” (32) but later had no chemical meaning as the composition changed to a different metal-soap and gasoline-gel formula. The fact scientists at Harvard in early World War II undertook the actual composition and weaponization of napalm, and Neer’s book was published by a Harvard University Press, seems quite an appropriate way to close the loop on this weaponry saga.

One might ask why a book on napalm is needed. Unbeknownst to many readers, is the stark reality that the fire bombings of Japan in World War II utilizing napalm filled incendiary devices caused far more urban devastation and killed more of the Japanese populace than the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. Napalm also represented a deadly workhorse weapon in the island fighting campaigns against Japan and was commonly used against massed North Korean and Chinese attacks in the Korean War, and against guerrillas and infantry targets throughout the Vietnam War. This weapon also saw earlier use in Europe in World War II, against northern urban targets in the Korean War, and has been utilized in other regions throughout the world. Hence napalm, representative of mass-produced industrial-age weapons, played an incredibly important part in America’s past wars and deserves to have its story told.

The work is divided into thematic sections entitled Hero, Soldier, and Pariah along with a prologue and epilogue, and notes, acknowledgements, an index, and quite a few historical photos and drawings. Five “hero” chapters exist and cover the need for development of napalm through its use in the island fighting campaigns of World War II and into the mass fire bombing of Japanese cities. The soldier theme comprises four chapters focusing primarily on the use of napalm in Korea and Vietnam along with the increasing criticism of its use in the later war as its unpopularity rose at home. The “pariah” chapters are five in number and chronicle how both US public and international views on napalm have soured and view use of the weapon as tantamount to a war crime.

The many stories woven together and insights provided about the development, history, and use of napalm are not only highly informative but also provide a good read. A compressed weapons systems lifecycle

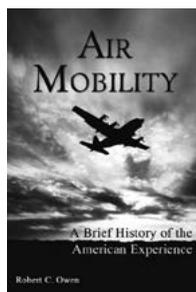
from the entrepreneurial through the institutionalized and later the satirized phases is readily evident: from Harvard tennis players fleeing during the initial field test in July 1942 (entrepreneurial), the Island campaigns and later firebombing of Japan in 1943-1945, its use in the Korean War in 1950-1952, and in Vietnam in 1963-1972 (institutionalized), and the anti-napalm arms control movement that picked up synergy with the infamous photo of a naked nine year old Vietnamese girl—Kim Phúc—burned by napalm and the subsequent “Napalm Sticks to Kids” cadence-song parody (1972), the surreal scenes from the movie “Apocalypse Now” (1979) related to napalm use, and other negative elements promoted by popular culture (satirized).

The book contains many gems of information including highlights of the work of Harvard professor Louis Fieser and his team in developing napalm, the metrics behind testing napalm in both optimizing its weaponization characteristics and its effectiveness in burning down various forms of structures, and discussions and analyses of its battlefield use from mid-World War II into the modern era. The early ill-fated attempt to combine napalm with bats for delivery purposes is also covered along with perspectives on international law and legitimate forms of weaponry—including increased hostility to land mines and cluster munitions—affecting what can now be used in early twenty-first century warfare.

This reviewer very much agrees with the author’s contention that no mention of this weapon should be made openly in this day and age and “...napalm violates the spirit of contemporary civilization” (222). Of course, various interpretations and exceptions to the III Protocol of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CWC) still exist concerning the use of incendiary weapons in civilian areas allowing states some flexibility in the munitions that they deploy (222).

During its heyday, napalm was representative of an older style of attrition-based warfare between competing sovereign states. For this reason, Neer’s work should be considered both a biography of an important US borne-and-bred weapon as well as a commentary on how war has changed over the last seven decades. In many ways, this time was a much simpler and straightforward one, unlike what Army professionals now face. Today’s world is one in which napalm—whose imagery and effects do not play well on global news and social media—has become politically toxic.

In summation, the work is highly readable and informative with few flaws—the location of Pomona College where an anti-napalm sit-in took place in 1967 was misidentified (131), for instance. The author did a great job from the initial research through the book’s structure, writing, and editing and has to be commended for his efforts. The work has primary applicability for courses on strategic use of airpower (Pacific theater), close air support (CAS) operations during World War II through Vietnam, and the evolution of incendiary and flame weapons from early “Greek fire,” fire pots, and flamethrowers into more modern fuel-air and thermobaric weapons. It also provides us with numerous vignettes into the human costs of war and insights into how contentious the Vietnam era protests were. This book may have some secondary utility for courses on changing perspectives on international law and civil-military relations during times of national duress.



Washington, DC:
Potomac Press, 2013
313 pages
\$45.00

Air Mobility: A Brief History of the American Experience

By Robert C. Owen

Reviewed by Jill Sargent Russell, Doctoral Candidate in War Studies, King's College London

When people speak of the might of airpower, the first thought is bombing. Save for nuclear weapons, however, the decisive influence of air-delivered destruction remains debatable. On the other hand, remembering the term actually includes air mobility—transport and lift by air—argues for that part of the capability to be considered a game changer in warfare. Robert Owen's *Air Mobility: A Brief History of the American Experience* provides a narrative which makes this interpretation compelling. His book intends a significant task, to recount the rise of a pillar in 20th century American power within the framework of an age which saw major changes in warfare. Opening with air mobility's first awkward steps which accelerate with its growth, maturation and emergence as a decisive force in war, Owen's narrative covers many issues; hardware, personnel and training, organisation and structure, tactics, doctrine, strategy and politics, and the influence of wars all receive attention. Despite this complexity he weaves a sensible narrative from these threads, effecting a comprehensive review of a long historical arc. What he has written is a biography of a capability formed of a complex mix of platforms servicing diversified missions through the fluxuations of rapid development. This review focuses on the key elements—detail, narrative methodology, and decisive points in the history that deserve highlighting—which shape the quality of the work and its place on a bookshelf or in a syllabus.

Before moving on to the substance of the review, it is worth noting the book is titled in a way that belies how engagingly written it is. Given the dull caricature of a subject like logistics it would be unfortunate for some to pass it by for its unassuming presence. In this age of hype, Owen's book under-promises on its cover and over-delivers in its content.

Promised as a "brief history," the narrative covers the critical points in the trajectory of air mobility's rise. This promise might be its arguable flaw for, in brevity, the focus and detail must be constrained. Nonetheless, in a book just over 300 pages it would be foolish to expect such breadth or depth. It is entirely defensible to tell the story primarily through the lens of the United States Air Force. Secondly, the work must lack much of the detail of any given era or event. Despite these limitations, Owen renders a sufficiently thorough story of air mobility's rise and one that is well-integrated with the greater 20th century history.

The history reads as a biography with a twist. Although roughly chronological, the narrative proceeds as a series of vignettes critical to the growth of air mobility. It is an engaging approach to a biography, because individual chapters can stand nearly on their own, as with those on the Berlin Crisis and the integration of air mobility and combat in Vietnam. The first, recounting the standoff with Stalin over the fate of Berlin, provides the substance behind a strategically effective act of military symbolism, captured by the iconic image of "Airborne" Candy

Bar Diplomacy for what it meant about the resolve and logistical might of the allies. The second reveals the innovative application of rotary lift in the Vietnam War to landpower's advantages in battle, giving air mobility its bite and shaping successive American military operations.

Other chapters explain how and why air mobility developed as it did. To frame doctrinal developments that defined future capabilities, Owen engages the Congressional military airlift hearings in 1960. Seemingly relatively mild and prosaic events, they are rendered as the hammer and anvil that shaped air mobility and warfare in later decades. Alternatively, the contentious acquisition history of the C-17 highlights the complicated dynamics ruling the development of critical platforms. Withal, the structure of this book engages the reader and serves its story well.

Finally, for what they reveal about military technological development, the first chapters on the infancy of air mobility beckon for further scholarly attention. Chronicling the interaction between commercial, civil service, and military activities in the emergence of the aircraft's use to move troops and materiel, Owen depicts the decisive role civilians played in the early years of airborne lift. Such actors as the postal service and commercial aviation were, in fact, the first to use aircraft to move personnel and materiel when the military used this capability only as support to aviation units. This multi-faceted relationship is important for its role in air mobility's story, but also for the questions and insights it suggests for the contemporary era of technological transformation in the military. This is a compelling case study, which should inspire inquiry elsewhere in the history of military technology and development.

Finally, it is necessary to place this book for the reader. Among thematic surveys like Marc Levinson's *The Box* (2006), Owen's work rates highly, especially for bringing attention to a neglected corner of military history. Considered in terms of biography, it works as the briefest sketch which provides the fullest picture, reminiscent of the virtues of Mark Stoler on *George Marshall, Soldier Statesman of the American Century* (1989). It is thus quite easy to hold it out to the military historian as worthy for reading and classroom use, and I might further specifically recommend it to the USAF as a necessary reminder of its full profile. A better appreciation of air mobility might argue for it as the "King of Air Battle," which is not a half-bad achievement for a brief history.

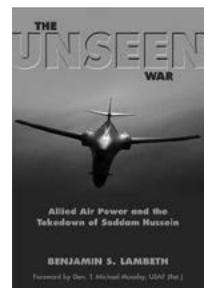
The Unseen War: Allied Airpower and the Takedown of Saddam Hussein

By Benjamin S. Lambeth

Reviewed by Dr. Conrad C. Crane, Chief of Historical Services, US Army Heritage and Education Center

After describing the overwhelming 2003 campaign to topple Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Stephen Budiansky closes his book *Air Power* (2004) with this passage:

The great historical joke on airmen was that after having struggled for a century to escape the battlefield in their quest for equal status and independence – having fought so many bitter battles to free themselves from the indignity of providing “mere support” to ground forces – it was on the



Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013

480 pages
\$59.95

battlefield where air power finally achieved not merely equality, but its claim to ascendancy.

That quote has caused very lively debates in classrooms at the Army War College, and now Benjamin Lambeth has provided the most thorough evaluation available of airpower's role in the 23 days of formal conventional combat that began Operation Iraqi Freedom. Lambeth is the most eloquent and enthusiastic writer on American airpower today. Though published by Naval Institute Press, his study was initially written for RAND under the sponsorship of US Air Forces Central (AFCENT), known until 2009 as US Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF). Lambeth does not claim quite as much as Budiansky, but he does argue "counterland air attack has increasingly begun to move doctrinally beyond solely the classic supporting roles of CAS (direct support) and air interdiction (indirect support) toward missions that are not intended just to support the friendly ground force, but rather to destroy the enemy's army directly and independently as the overall main weight of effort." (296) Readers who are prone to discount such assertions as USAF hype need to read Lambeth's account and think seriously about the implications of what he has to say.

While the beginning of OIF was "an all but flawless undertaking by joint and combined forces" including not only land components but indispensable contributions from "virtually the entire spectrum of allied, air, maritime and space capabilities," (4) Lambeth points out correctly the air campaign has been underreported in postwar accounts of the march on Baghdad. This was not only due to the lack of embedded reporters with air units, but also because the continuing violence in Iraq quickly overshadowed the early successes. There was far more coverage of air operations in 1991, with the long period of initial bombing before the ground attack was launched.

Lambeth aims to fill the gaps, and does so admirably. He describes the high-level planning in Washington and in headquarters at CENTCOM and CENTAF. The initial "shock and awe" plan was modified by desires to limit noncombatant casualties and to preserve infrastructure, and by General Tommy Franks' decision to attack early. That meant CENTAF's major air offensive started 28 hours after ground forces had begun their advance and had overrun many areas. As a result, only 39 percent of leadership or command and control targets initially scheduled for attack would be struck during the three-week air campaign.

However, air power had already done much with both kinetic and static operations to prepare the battlespace. Airmen in the No-Fly Zones had already suppressed Iraqi air defenses and gathered a great deal of valuable intelligence. After the full air campaign began on the night of March 21st, the nonstop precision bombardment by ground and carrier based aircraft "so resoundingly paved the way for allied ground forces that the entrance of the latter into Baghdad was a virtual fait accompli." (127) Republican Guard units around the city lost over 1000 of their 2500 tanks before they were engaged by any ground elements. Losses for other defending divisions were even more severe, severely reducing possible resistance on every front.

Lambeth spends a chapter highlighting the biggest reasons for such overwhelming success. These include improvements in air-ground

coordination and force connectivity, more time-sensitive targeting capability, better command and control, contributions from UAVs and J-STARS, and better and more inertially-aided munitions. He is also frank that Iraqi blunders and ineptitude helped. But there were still some problems encountered. Fratricide still occurred, and the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment's attempt at a deep attack failed miserably. There were difficulties coordinating joint battlespace, especially with Fire Support Coordination Lines, and some continuing shortfalls in integration and information sharing. One persistent major deficiency is the delayed process of Battle Damage Assessment, that not only lessens our own ability to evaluate and follow up operations effectively, but also gives our enemies time to control the flow of information concerning raids.

This well documented and well written book deserves serious consideration by anyone who desires to understand the current capabilities of American airpower and its role in modern war. Even as Lambeth heralds a new era where the United States has finally mastered high-intensity conventional warfare, he admits the same era also has produced "a refined mode of fourth generation asymmetric warfare" (309) to counter that preferred American methodology, and no acumen in tactics or operations can make up for flawed strategy. His closing comments, written against the backdrop of continuing strife in Iraq and Afghanistan, are more somber than Budiansky's. For Lambeth, the most enduring lesson from OIF about modern warfare "surely must be that even the most capable air weapon imaginable can never be more effective than the strategy it is intended to underwrite." (311)

From Above: War, Violence, and Verticality

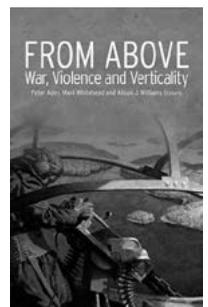
Edited by Peter Adey, Mark Whitehead, and Alison J. Williams

Reviewed by Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., Major General (USAF Retired)

For intellectual plebeians like your reviewer, any book with a made-for-academia word like "verticality" in its title might be a bit off-putting. And, indeed, much or most of *From Above* is written for – and by – academics. The majority of the predominantly British contributors are professors of geography or the liberal arts. They are not specialists in military or strategic matters.

It would be a mistake, however, for military professionals to dismiss this volume because important chunks of it do, in fact, build the reader's intellectual database in a positive and insightful way. Moreover, it allows those who do have expertise in related military or strategic matters the opportunity to see how other thoughtful thinkers view their craft.

"Verticality," it seems, is professor-speak to describe the aerial view. According to the editors, this perspective has brought about "seismic shifts" for "life on the ground." They add that the book "makes significant moves to understand the view from above within the pathos and passions of the societies that have produced and consume[d] it, perspective that art, literature and other forms of expression have been more used to exploring."



London, England, UK:
Hurst Publishing, 2014
376 pages
\$30.52 (paper)

Perhaps so, but the approach the editors took presents real challenges to creating a coherent narrative as there are, in addition to the triumvirate of editors, thirteen different contributors, each of whom penned separate chapters. Getting a baker's dozen of academics to fit into any sort of logical framework is no small task. In their effort to do so, the editors divided the writings into three sections, respectively entitled "Science, Militarism and Distance;" "Aerial Aesthetics, Distortion and the View from Below;" and "From the Close to the Remote." Along with an energetic - and editorially heroic - organizational effort in the introduction, they sought to provide a context for chapters diverse not just in subject matter, but in style - and verbosity - as well.

The results were mixed, and will likely mean readers will skim or skip some chapters. For sure, a couple may be obtuse to all but the most dedicated specialist. Others - such as one laboriously entitled "Project Transparent Earth and the Autopsy of Aerial Targeting: The Visual Geopolitics of the Underground" - contain some nuggets but only if one perseveres long enough to discover them.

Still, there are, however, a few gems. The chapter on balloons is fascinating, tracing not just the technical development, but also with the psychological impact the then never-before-experienced aerial perspectives had. The author highlights individuals who grasped the military potential of verticality along with the contribution that ballooning made to "militarized aeromobility."

In his chapter, "Line of Decent," Canadian Professor Derek Gregory grapples not so much with verticality (though he sprinkles such terms as "political technology of vision" and "visuality"), but with the whole notion of aerial attack and the risk to civilians by surveying such operations from World War II bombings through drone operations in contemporary conflicts. He does an able job trying to discern the propriety of an operator striking a target from a distance vis-à-vis the risk to innocents on the ground, ultimately concluding - somewhat reluctantly it seems - that "it is a mistake to turn distance into a moral absolute."

Separate chapters address the idea of establishing and maintaining sovereignty and control via aerial means in the Falklands and also in colonial Iraq. The latter, while interesting, slides into a largely uninformed discussion of drone use in contemporary operations. Another chapter with the attention-grabbing title of "Targeting Affective Life from Above: Morale and Airpower" simply does not deliver much more than a hostile assessment that might have been more effective if it was better informed not just by the law of armed conflict, but also by a better understanding of targeting in general.

Hostility towards the military instrument flavors the entire book. For example, the much-anticipated chapter on drones is disappointing, mainly because the contributor's obvious disapproval of the technology would lead the uninformed reader to think the aircraft were autonomous weapons' systems as opposed to ones under human control.

In fact, in more than one chapter, reference to "verticality" or the "view from above" earns little more than a nod from the contributor who will then write something that may only be tangentially related. Thus, for example, a chapter entitled the "Scopic Regime of Rapid Dominance" is more a critique - and a debatable one at that - of the

Revolution in Military Affairs, the rise of precision weaponry, and effects-based operations – than “verticality” per se.

The book is also burdened by dense and ponderous writing. Consider this virtually unintelligible (to this reader anyway) passage from the chapter on photomosaics (the process of matching individual aerial photos to form a more comprehensive view):

According to this biaxial scheme, the vertical is the axis of order, paradigm, symbolic function, disutility, unimpeded sightlines and disembodied omniscience, whereas to the horizontal belong disorder, syntagm, enunciative function, utility, partial sight lines and exposure to visibility.

Whatever all that means. Sure, such language may be lucid to photomosaic experts, but in a volume which embraces such a broad range of scientific and artistic disciplines, it is unlikely that more than a few readers would.

In the end *From Above* does accomplish its mission in the sense that the reader does come away convinced the “verticality” perspective is fundamentally unique, and impacts perceptions of the ground environment more than one might think. Not for everyone’s bookshelf, but an intriguing addition for the scholarly-inclined servicemember as it is a quintessentially academic take on matters the military professional might see very differently.

THE FIRST & SECOND WORLD WARS



New York, NY: Osprey
Publishing, 2012
312 pages
\$25.95

Challenge of Battle: The Real Story of the British Army in 1914

By Adrian Gilbert

Reviewed by COL Douglas V. Mastriano, PhD, Department of Military Strategy
Plans & Operations, US Army War College

Challenge of Battle: The Real Story of the British Army in 1914 by Adrian Gilbert is a modern retelling of the experience of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in the opening months of the First World War. Corresponding to the Centennial of the Great War, Gilbert wrote the book to offer a “realistic assessment” of the BEF. Citing distortions in the historic record, the author tried “to look afresh at the British Army during 1914” by using first-person accounts and primary archival sources.

Challenge of Battle begins with an exciting account of the celebrated Major Tom Bridges of the 4th Royal Dragoon Guards in Mons, Belgium on August 21, 1914. The reader is given a gripping description of the opening engagement of the war between the BEF and the Imperial German Army. After this stirring introduction, *Challenge of Battle* provides background to the BEF assembling in Great Britain and its movement across France and Belgium. Filled with personal commentary from soldiers, this book provides an excellent feel to the general mood of the BEF as it prepared to fight the German army.

After a brief description of the fighting near Mons, Belgium, *Challenge of Battle* offers an interesting description of the tragic retreat of the BEF in the face of overwhelming German force. This retreat is hampered by poor coordination with the French army, a breakdown in command and control, and lack of situational awareness. This situation, combined with reliance on antiquated tactics, brings the BEF close to destruction by the German army. After surviving the retreat, the BEF, together with the French Army counterattack and force the Germans to dig in. Thus, trench warfare becomes the defining feature of the Western Front for the next four years.

Challenge of Battle lives up to the author’s desire to offer a fresh look at the BEF. Without being revisionist, Adrian Gilbert provides the reader an honest assessment of the BEF’s performance, leadership and tactics in 1914. The book concludes the BEF was hampered by lack of command and control, outdated Napoleonic tactics, poor integration of artillery, infantry, cavalry and aviation and the lack of an efficient noncommissioned officer corps. These issues alone could be fatal to an army, but to compound the matter, its commander, Field Marshal John French, did not trust his counterpart, French Fifth Army Commander, General Charles Lanzerac. Adrian Gilbert says the result of this lack of trust meant, “...both armies, although deployed side-by-side, would operate and fight separately.” This situation nearly had catastrophic results for the BEF, demonstrating that personal relationships matter more than we often realize.

Although providing an excellent assessment of the BEF in 1914, *Challenge of Battle* does have several areas of concern. Foremost is the

inadequate use of German sources. One would expect a scholar to approach this topic from multiple perspectives in order to offer a more accurate history. There is perhaps no better way to offer a “fresh new look” than to see what the adversary had to say about the BEF. Yet, Gilbert uses few firsthand German sources. Also, there are virtually no French sources; the reader is left to wonder what the French view of the BEF was. Instead, we have merely the British view of the British Expeditionary Force.

Another issue is *Challenge of Battle* rehashes some analysis from Terrance Zuber’s book, *The Mons Myth*. This is problematic for serious historians. Zuber has made a habit of claiming certain ideas or events are myths that he, of course, debunks. His books have included, *The Moltke Myth* and *Inventing the Schlieffen Plan*. The latter of these was written with the idea that the Schlieffen Plan never existed (it did). Yet, some of Zuber’s ideas related to Schlieffen have been rebuffed, bringing into question his assertions on other topics. For more on this debate, see *The Schlieffen Plan: International Perspectives on the German Strategy for World War I*, edited by Hans Ehlert, Michael Epkenhans, and Gerhard P. Gross. English translation edited by David T. Zabecki, USA (Ret.)

With these concerns aside, *Challenge of Battle* is an interesting book that offers a refreshing look at the performance of the BEF in 1914. Adrian Gilbert strips away the sentimentality, without being revisionist, and provides an excellent overview of the British Expeditionary Force in the critical first few months of that catastrophic war. This book is a welcome addition to those arriving during the Centennial commemoration of that terrible period of history.

Monty’s Men: The British Army and the Liberation of Europe

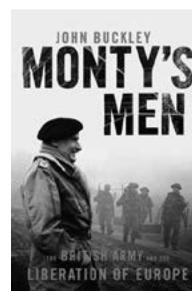
By John Buckley

Reviewed by Dr. James D. Scudieri, CRGT Research Analyst, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), US Army War College

This work on WW II appears very much revisionist, but it is not truly some radical revelation. Rather, it restores balance in light of previous, incomplete analyses and/or simplifications to the point of simplistic. The specific issue concerns the generally negative assessments of the British Liberation Army (BLA) in the Campaign in North West Europe (NWE), 1944-45. The focus covers Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery and mostly the British troops in 21st Army Group.

The Introduction in Chapter 1 begins with a sweeping review of historiography from soon after war’s end to the present day. This array of key WW II historians includes B. H. Liddell Hart, Max Hastings, Carlo d’Este, Cornelius Ryan, Anthony Beevor, Robert Citino, and some WW II films.

First, comparisons with their German counterparts have failed to examine the entire picture. Some post-war German interrogations and memoirs were attempts to demonstrate an apolitical distance from the Nazi regime. Second, troop effectiveness came at heavy cost. SS units exhibited great fanaticism. Compulsion in German units, when punishments could extend to entire families, not just the soldiers, attained



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370 pages
\$35.00 (hardcover)

serious levels. There does remain a question how the Germans had institutionalized tactical skill so thoroughly, despite heavy casualties, beyond fanaticism and fear. His dissection of the BLA leaves no such open question.

He articulates quite definitively that the BLA was a drafted, citizen army with much different government and attitudes, working towards different operational, strategic, and policy goals. The challenge was forging an effective military instrument to defeat Germany and retain it as a bargaining chip of sorts for the post-war world. Chapter 2 thus describes the army which Churchill launched across the Channel: strengths, weaknesses, preparation, and training. This chapter is important to understand the military culture with its concepts, doctrine, and techniques how best to wield the instrument. The BLA in June 1944 in general was well trained, but largely inexperienced.

The remaining chapters describe the campaign chronologically. Each one has considerable breadth and depth of carefully-explained detail. Chapter 3 covers D-Day and the first weeks back on the continent. He believes that the complexity of pre-invasion planning did not integrate the most-current intelligence, and unknown were certain 21st Panzer Division deployments along the route for the rapid seizure of Caen. Chapter 4 goes into the bloody fighting at Caen. Of particular note is Montgomery's major alteration to Operation Goodwood against the intent of British 2nd Army commander Lt. Gen. Miles Dempsey. Chapter 5 covers the ensuing, frustrating stalemate and reviews the state of BLA tactics, techniques, and procedures. Chapter 6 analyzes the breakout situation in late July which led to the British execution of Operation Bluecoat and the ramifications for the famous Falaise Gap later. Chapter 7 concerns the pursuit. It analyzes BLA capability and capacity, among which the skills of the Royal Engineers (RE) figure prominently, and aspects of the broad front or narrow thrust debate.

Buckley's assessment of Operation Market-Garden in Chapter 8 believes the key question is how it came so close to success, since it was "poorly conceived, ill considered, and deeply flawed" in higher-level planning, giving due recognizance to Allied victory disease. His crux is that the concept asked the BLA to accomplish a mission "for which it was not mentally equipped." He also addresses the issues of the degree of German recovery, the operation's air support writ large, and the relationship to Montgomery's attempt for a "semi-independent strategy."

Chapter 9 discusses the BLA's depressing winter of 1944 under adverse weather conditions. The main effort became the long-delayed clearance of the Scheldt Estuary to open Antwerp. Buckley also explains that the failure of Market-Garden to achieve a Rhine crossing still provided an active front. Chapter 10 covers multiple aspects of the Rhine crossing to the end of the war, a period still full of action, as the BLA fought on German soil.

This review can only highlight examples of Buckley's meticulous attention to detail. Continuous assessment explains how the BLA was in fact a learning organization, albeit one which had given short shrift to a unified army doctrine. The evolution of tank-infantry cooperation rightfully receives a lot of attention, as does the reliance on a powerful artillery and dominant air support. He also cites the development of a

risk-averse culture. The analysis includes specific assessments of units from division-level and below, including their evolution over time, as well as veterans vs. green troops with appropriate statistical analysis of available disciplinary, medical, and other data.

Despite extant biographies, there has been an historical tendency to focus British actions in NWE on Montgomery. This assessment has refreshing balance with meaningful discussion of 2nd Army's Lt. Gen. Miles Dempsey and VIII Corps' Lt. Gen. Richard O'Connor, famed tactical commander of Operation Compass in 1940 in the Western Desert. A further look at short-lived 8th Army commander Lt. Gen Neil Ritchie of XII Corps would have been welcome.

Monty's Men is a must read. The level of nuanced and sophisticated analysis is impressive. He assesses the breadth of evidence, both primary and secondary, whether the good, the bad, or the ugly. Their juxtaposition and interaction were complex. Buckley places the tactical detail in operational and strategic contexts. Finally, the perceived accomplishments and shortcomings of the BLA had major ramifications in the immediate post-war period to create the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) which supported NATO.

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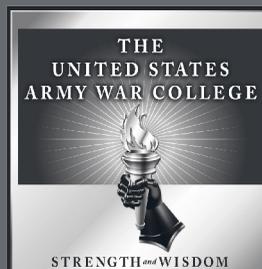
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