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# THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE QUARTERLY PARAMETERS

Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

## Special Commentary

*Linell A. Letendre and Martin L. Cook*

## Illusions of Victory

*Russell W. Glenn  
Dominic Tierney*

## 21st Century Political Warfare

*James P. Farwell  
Timothy P. McGeehan  
T. S. Allen and A. J. Moore*

## Special Relationships

*James K. Wither  
Arthur I. Cyr  
Samir Tata*



# THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE QUARTERLY PARAMETERS

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## From the Editor

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Linell Letendre and Martin Cook open our Spring issue with a Special Commentary entitled, “Right vs. Right: Personal Beliefs vs. Professional Obligations.” Ethical choices are easier when military professionals must choose between a wrong and a right. But Letendre and Cook discuss how to choose between two rights.

Our first forum, *Illusions of Victory*, features Russell Glenn’s interview of Lieutenant General Sean B. MacFarland, US Army retired, about what worked in Iraq and what did not. The forum also includes an article by Dominic Tierney, “Avoiding Nation-Building: From Nixon to Trump,” which explores how the aversion to nation-building has adversely shaped military operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The second forum, *21st Century Political Warfare*, marks what has changed in political competition short of war, a concept that has been with us since at least the 1950s. James Farwell’s “Countering Russian Meddling in US Political Processes” introduces a “team-of-teams” approach to counter information operations aimed at interfering in democratic processes. Timothy McGeehan’s “Countering Russian Disinformation” proposes additional strategies for countering a rival’s information operations. “Victory without Casualties: Russia’s Information Operations” by T. S. Allen and A. J. Moore, sheds light on some of the unique characteristics of contemporary Russian information operations.

Our last forum, *Special Relationships*, offers two points of view on the effects that Brexit might have on the special relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. James Wither’s “Brexit and the Anglo-American Security and Defense Partnership” suggests the United States should proceed with caution. Arthur Cyr’s “Brexit and Transatlantic Security” offers reason for optimism, claiming Brexit creates opportunities for greater cooperation. Samir Tata’s “US Landpower and an Indo-American Alliance” looks at another special relationship. Tata explores the possibility of using US landpower to build an Indo-American alliance to balance the growing challenge of China’s pursuit of hegemony over Asia. ~AJE





## Right vs. Right: Personal Beliefs vs. Professional Obligations

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Linell A. Letendre and Martin L. Cook

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America's servicemembers earnestly discuss notions of ethics and values throughout their professional careers. In fact, each service promulgates and aspires to certain core values, such as integrity, service, excellence, obedience, and honor. Lists of core values, however, can cause some difficulties, and there are reasons to doubt seriously the efficacy of their practice. Most obviously, these lists are often relegated to words on a wall that are given lip service on occasion but fail to guide conduct. Furthermore, even if taken seriously, core values can conflict with each other in difficult situations.

In practice, the services provide little help to military members thinking their way through such conflicts. How often, for example, does the value of loyalty lead to ethical failure because individuals think loyalty is more important than maintaining discipline and standards? In addition, many servicemembers tend to reduce *ethics* in the military to the advice of military lawyers. Rather than grappling with true ethical conflict and complexity, servicemembers may think avoiding violations of legal requirements such as the *Joint Ethics Regulation* is all that matters.<sup>1</sup> Even when ethics is approached sincerely during the decision-making process, discussions often concern dilemmas and focus on simple binary cases of differentiating right from wrong.

In reality, many genuinely difficult ethical challenges are not binary but involve tension between two or more competing *right* issues. What do military professionals do when their professional obligations collide with their personal beliefs—especially if those beliefs are grounded in deeply held moral or religious tenets? How do we resolve these issues, or counsel people who face such tough ethical dilemmas? Which right prevails—and why?

A better understanding of the ethical system grounded in the Constitution and of the military as a *profession*, in a sociologically robust sense of the term, reveals the answers. Military professionals adhere to the ideals of constitutional ethics as a consequence of their oath to protect and to defend the Constitution. Rarely, however, are members of the military provided with an opportunity to think deeply through the implications of their oath.

To understand better the requirements of this oath and the notion of constitutional ethics, this commentary reflects on the implications of the military as a profession. The discussion considers how and, more importantly, why the Constitution constrains the US military. In particular, we explore the obligations the oath imposes on the military

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Defense (DoD), *Joint Ethics Regulation* (JER), Directive 5500.7-R (Washington, DC: DoD, 1993).

profession through a review of three Supreme Court cases and one Court of Appeals of the Armed Forces decision. Then, we propose a model for thinking through clashing obligations. Finally, we highlight how one senior leader dealt with a right-versus-right issue in the context of the repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which provides a standard for military professionals to follow.

## The Military as a Profession

In recent years, the services have explored the implications of the idea that the US military is a profession in a robust sociological sense. Society uses the term *profession* colloquially to refer to anything someone does for pay, as in “professional athlete.” But a much more precise and helpful definition in the sociology literature distinguishes professional work from the work observed in a bureaucracy such as the branches of the US military. The discussion about professions throughout the Department of Defense has been energized by the recognition that inevitable bureaucratic needs must be balanced by continually reinforcing the professional dimension of military service.

Army discussions on this approach began earnestly after a collection of essays that addressed various aspects of the Army’s professional identity were published.<sup>2</sup> With the appointment of Rear Admiral Margaret D. “Peg” Klein as the senior advisor to the secretary of defense for military professionalism, a mechanism for disseminating a shared set of overarching concepts and a common vocabulary for the services developed in the form of service-specific centers and professional learning opportunities.<sup>3</sup> Thus, servicemembers can now frame questions of ethics in terms of the distinctive individual and collective professional obligations in contrast to simply the “obedient military bureaucracy.”<sup>4</sup>

How does thinking about military service as a professional activity inform a deep understanding of constitutional ethics? When individuals value their vocation in professional terms, their understanding of and motivation for their work improves. To help servicemembers think through such issues, Don M. Snider developed a framework to contrast professional and bureaucratic work through the following dimensions:

*Societal service.* Professions provide a specific service deemed essential to their societies. In the early modern period, only three true professions existed in the West: clergy, medicine, and law. In terms of the societal values at that time, those professions arguably provided the most important services: salvation, health, and justice, respectively. Similarly, the military services provide what is perhaps the most vital service, national defense, without which society would be unable to engage in other important services.

*Technical knowledge.* Professions possess a highly developed technical knowledge, and jargon, as well as a repertoire of skills and behaviors

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2 Lloyd J. Matthews, ed., *The Future of the Army Profession* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002).

3 The organizational platforms that engage in regular dialogue, share best practices, and forge shared concepts are the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center, the Profession of Arms Center of Excellence (Air Force), and the Lejeune Leadership Institute (Marine Corps).

4 Don M. Snider, “The U.S. Army as a Profession,” in *The Future of the Army Profession*, ed. Don M. Snider and Lloyd J. Matthews (Boston: McGraw-Hill Education, 2005), 16.

unique to the profession. Only members possess this knowledge, which is acquired over a long period of training, education, and experience.

*Discretionary practice.* Professions make discretionary decisions about the best ways to apply their unique knowledge and skills in the service of their clients. In contrast to highly repetitive and routinized bureaucratic work, professionals approach each situation as unique. Different professionals may, and often do, exercise discretion to approach novel situations in different ways.

*Autonomy.* Professions collectively have a high degree of autonomy, with correlative responsibility to the society for maintaining the quality, discipline, and conduct of their members. Unlike bureaucracies, professions generally control admission, promotion, and discipline of their members to the extent that they maintain the trust of the society they serve.

*Public trust.* Societies allow professions to exist only to the extent they possess and maintain a high degree of public trust. The need to maintain such trust generates an internal requirement for a strong ethic because insofar as members truly understand themselves and their fellows as professionals, they recognize that sustaining trust is vital to maintaining the society's permission to continue professional work. Every ethical failure of a profession's members invites societal intervention and regulation, which diminishes collective and individual autonomy as well as the freedom of self-regulation.

*Lifelong service.* A professional is motivated by a strong and lifelong service motive. As members mature, *what they do is not just their job*, the profession becomes integral to their identity and self-concept.<sup>5</sup>

These dimensions bear on constitutional ethics because understanding the responsibility of vowing to uphold the Constitution and to serve professionally, establishes obligations in a fundamentally different way than starting a job. Assuming a professional identity helps one realize the basic purpose of one's role and maintain society's trust toward the professional and the profession. In that light, any behavior or expression that threatens or undermines that societal purpose, or trust, is an ethical failure.

Of course, it is perfectly possible any individual member of the profession might think that he or she has a personal moral belief that is fundamentally at odds with those professional obligations. But when that occurs, if that individual strongly feels he or she can not or will not subordinate those beliefs to his or her professional obligations, the proper conclusion should cause the individual to leave the profession. In other words, when one joins a profession, one forfeits a certain degree of personal freedom of expression and moral autonomy. No person of conscience should join a profession if his or her own values and beliefs are in fundamental tension with its requirements. But what one cannot do is accept limitations, such as those associated with an oath of office, then act in ways that degrade the profession's, or the individual's, status as a full member of the profession.

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5 Snider, "The U.S. Army as a Profession," in Snider and Matthews, *Army Profession*, 3, 14.

## The Constitution and the Oath of Office

Contrary to popular opinion, one does not give up every constitutional right when joining the service. Servicemembers, as representatives of the profession of arms, do, however, forfeit several important constitutional rights upon taking the oath of office, as highlighted in the following four cases:

*Orloff v. Willoughby*, 345 U.S. 83 (1953). In this case, the Army had paid for the medical schooling of a young doctor. Prior to the doctor's commissioning, however, the Army required him to sign a form attesting that he was not a Communist. When the doctor refused, the Army denied him a commission and instead forced him to repay his commitment with service as an enlisted lab technician. The doctor sued, arguing that he was entitled to his commission. The Supreme Court rejected his claim stating, "The very essence of [military] service is the subordination of individual desires and interests of the individual to the needs of the service."<sup>6</sup> In other words, the oath of office requires that service needs trump individual desires.

*Parker v. Levy*, 417 U.S. 733 (1974). This case, too, involved an Army doctor, but this time period was during the height of the Vietnam War. Captain Howard B. Levy was a doctor who refused to train special operators because they were "murderers of women and children" and who encouraged black soldiers to refuse to go to Vietnam due to what he perceived to be discriminatory policies of the Army. The doctor was court-martialed and found guilty. He then appealed, arguing his free speech rights were violated. The Supreme Court rejected his claim citing the following lofty language: "The rights of men in the armed forces must perforce be conditioned to meet certain overriding demands of discipline and duty."<sup>7</sup> In other words, after swearing an oath, an officer no longer has unfettered ability to say whatever he or she chooses. The military's need for discipline and duty trumps one's individual rights.

*United States v. Sterling*, 75 M.J. 407 (2016). The principle that military discipline may trump individual rights was affirmed by the highest military court in the case against Lance Corporal Monifa J. Sterling, who hung three signs in her workplace that read "no weapon formed against me shall prosper." Sterling placed this biblical quotation after a dispute with her supervisor. When ordered to remove the signs, Sterling refused and was court-martialed for violating a lawful order. The appeals court dismissed the assertion that posting the signs was a protected religious exercise stating "having restraints placed on behavior that is religiously motivated does not necessarily equate to either a pressure to violate one's religious beliefs or a substantial burden on one's exercise of religion."<sup>8</sup> The court also "reject[ed] the argument that every interference with a religiously motivated act constitutes a substantial burden on the exercise of religion."<sup>9</sup> In so doing, the court reaffirmed the principle put forth in *Parker v. Levy* that the military's need for discipline may override a servicemember's right to engage in religious exercise.

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6 *Orloff v. Willoughby*, 345 U.S. 83, 92 (1953).

7 *Parker v. Levy*, 417 U.S. 737, 733, 744 (1974).

8 *United States v. Sterling*, 75 M.J. at 417.

9 *United States v. Sterling*, 75 M.J. at 418.

*Greer v. Spock*, 424 U.S. 828 (1976). The last case deals more with civil-military relations and emphasizes the importance of the military being subservient to political civilian leadership. This case involved an installation commander who refused to allow a political organization to distribute leaflets on base. The group sued, arguing the military cannot restrict the free speech of civilians. The court upheld the military's action by stating policies that keep the military "insulated from both the reality and the appearance of acting as a handmaiden for partisan political causes" are "wholly consistent with the American constitutional tradition of a politically neutral military establishment under civilian control."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the military can restrict political speech because the military must—in both reality and appearance—be apolitical.

In sum, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces have provided a roadmap to the obligations of the oath of office. When military professionals commit to support and defend the Constitution, they also affirm that the services' needs will trump their personal interests, that concepts of discipline and of duty may outweigh their personal rights, and that they cannot be or appear to be partisan. These concepts form the basis of our constitutional ethics. While easy to say and to agree to in an abstract sense, this concept can be much more difficult to practice, especially if these obligations pit deeply held personal convictions directly against solely professional obligations and requirements. To aid in resolving such dilemmas, we need a framework or model to assist with clearly analyzing them.

### **Constitutional Ethics and The Oath**

The oath of office certainly does not require military professionals to eliminate all personal thoughts or moral beliefs or to cease all personal pursuits or religious practices. Servicemembers must, however, identify situations or contexts in which their professional obligations take precedence and when their personal beliefs can reign. The following model supports such assessments.

First, a military professional should identify the circumstance: is this situation isolated in a purely personal or an essentially professional sphere or is it occurring in a complex combination of personal and professional contexts. This determination is not as easy as identifying whether one is in uniform or in the workplace when a situation develops. One's place of worship, for example, would normally be considered the height of a personal setting. But if during a coffee hour after the service, a military retiree asks for an opinion on the president's Syrian strategy or on the Defense Department's latest recommendations for retirement benefits, the context becomes a bit murky.

Factors one should consider in such circumstances include the status of the individual and the listener or audience and the characteristics of the individual's speech or actions. For example, one could encounter personal situations, such as a colleague dealing with a death in the family or a divorce, in which personal beliefs and tenets might be brought to bear while in uniform at the workplace. This would especially be the case if both parties know they share religious affiliations or other personal

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10 *Greer v. Spock*, 424 U.S. 828, 839 (1976).

beliefs and the conversation is clearly private, such as in a closed office where the conversation would not be overheard.

Next, one should identify the purpose of the action. This assessment requires honesty with oneself and time for self-reflection. One must be able to ask, and answer, tough questions such as what is motivating my action? What loyalty is driving me? Am I making this choice or statement because of a personal belief, a professional obligation, or both? In Levy's case, his personal views about the Vietnam War drove his comments, and he allowed those views to conflict directly with his professional commitments. In this situation the captain's behavior clearly diverged from the obligations he accepted with his professional oath of office. Likewise, the comments of General Stanley McChrystal and his staff to a *Rolling Stone* reporter were also motivated by a sense of personal grandeur and lack of professional self-discipline rather than the professional military ethic of selfless service described by Samuel P. Huntington.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, one should consider the likely effects of one's actions to determine whether the consequence will likely advance one's personal beliefs or one's professional obligations. Similar to the *Greer v. Spock* case, this evaluation considers the possible perceptions of a reasonable observer. Would an outsider deduce I was endorsing my personal beliefs over my professional obligations?

### Putting the Model into Practice

The decisions of General Carter F. Ham, US Army retired, while conducting an assessment of the possible repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" clearly demonstrate the practical application of this model. In January 2010, President Barack Obama delivered his State of the Union address that called for repealing the statute by the end of the calendar year. In a Senate Armed Services Committee testimony on February 2, 2010, Secretary Robert M. Gates stated the question surrounding the repeal was not "whether the military prepares to make this change but how we must—how we best—prepare for it."<sup>12</sup> At that time, Admiral Michael G. Mullen stated, "speaking for myself and myself only, it is my personal belief that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do. . . . For me, personally, it comes down to integrity—theirs as individuals and ours as an institution."<sup>13</sup> Later in the week, Ham was asked to cochair the Comprehensive Review Working Group to assess the impact that repealing the policy would have on the force.

Despite the personal beliefs held by this devout Catholic and Jesuit-educated man, Ham later commented "when Secretary Gates appointed me as co-chair of this review, I was not thrilled."<sup>14</sup> Yet, Ham

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11 Michael Hastings, "The Runaway General: The Profile that Brought Down McChrystal," *Rolling Stone*, June 22, 2010; and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), 63.

12 *Hearing on the Future Years Defense Program, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 111th Cong. (February 2, 2010) (statement of Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense).

13 *Hearing* (Robert Gates).

14 *Hearing on the Policy concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 111th Cong. 1 (December 2, 2010) (testimony of General Carter F. Ham, Commander, US Army Europe, Cochair Comprehensive Review Working Group).



recognized his professional obligations took priority over his personal beliefs. During the group's first meeting, the general stated his number one rule: "Check your personal views at the door."<sup>15</sup> He explained to the team that personal views did not matter: the secretary of defense had given the team a tasking with the expectation that the team would accomplish it to the best of its ability. Ham then directed that if anyone could not accomplish that task based on personal beliefs, he or she needed to depart the team. The question before the group was not whether the individual members approve of homosexuality in general or of gays and lesbians serving openly in the military. Instead, Ham asked whether individual members could put aside their personal beliefs to accomplish the professional task before them in an objective manner. In framing the question in this way, Ham clearly communicated that duty and discipline trumped each individual's rights and beliefs, demonstrating his commitment to the group's professional obligations.

During the first week of the group's efforts, Ham asked his legal advisor to clarify when he was required to give his personal opinion before Congress. The advisor found the agreement he signed with Congress when becoming a four-star general and determined that he was required to provide his personal opinion when asked to do so before a duly constituted committee of Congress. Over the next ten months and prior to each one-on-one meeting with senators, representatives, or staffers, he would clarify this requirement. On November 30, 2010, the working group released its final report. In it, Ham and his cochair Jeh C. Johnson, who was then general counsel for the Department of Defense and later became the secretary of Homeland Security, concluded "based on all we saw and heard, our assessment is that, when coupled with the prompt implementation of the recommendations we offer below, the risk of repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' to overall military effectiveness is low."<sup>16</sup>

That same morning, in a closed-session hearing before the House Armed Services Committee, a young democratic congressman asked Ham for his personal opinion about gays and lesbians serving openly in the military. The representative clearly expected an answer that rang consistent with Ham's professional assessment in the report. The representative—and the rest of the committee room—was instead surprised by Ham's response explaining his personal, deeply held religious views did not condone homosexuality.<sup>17</sup>

When asked just a short time later by the media to restate his personal opinion given to the closed House committee, Ham summarily responded, "I am, as all senior military officials are, obliged if asked by a member of Congress before a duly constituted committee to offer my personal opinion, and in that setting, I would do that."<sup>18</sup> This statement demonstrates Ham's clear understanding of the intersection between his professional responsibilities and his personal beliefs: he provided his

15 For more on this statement, see GEN Carter F. Ham, "Report on Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy," C-SPAN, November 30, 2010, 55:32–56:00, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?296799-2/report-ask-policy&start=2450>.

16 DoD, *Report of the Comprehensive Review of the Issues Associated with a Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2010), 3.

17 For more on this exchange, see Ham, "Report on Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy," 55:32–56:04.

18 For a similar response during this press engagement, see Ham, "Report on Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy," 56:05–56:19.

personal opinion before the committee because he had a professional obligation to do so. But the Pentagon press room setting did not give him license to repeat his personal opinion. In this context, the audience would perceive his response to be official. Perhaps an even greater testament to the general's adherence to constitutional ethics and the requirements of his oath was Johnson's reflection of Ham's conduct: "Today was the first time I heard him give any type of personal view on this issue, when asked by a member of Congress."<sup>19</sup>

### Concluding Thoughts

The military oath of office demands that servicemembers be willing and able to subordinate their personal beliefs to their professional obligations. By reflecting on constitutional ethics, military professionals can prepare themselves to recognize such dilemmas and determine which obligation prevails in a given situation. Servicemembers cannot begin thinking about such challenges only after being selected for senior leadership levels. Instead, they must challenge themselves and their subordinates to read and to think about the Constitution, the oath of office, and the role of constitutional ethics in their daily endeavors. Military members must talk about their profession of arms and its rights and obligations openly with their people and their peers. They must make constant and explicit efforts to inculcate a clear understanding of the moral meaning of constitutional ethics to junior members of the profession and to socialize all military personnel into a clear and consistent understanding of their profession and its unique obligations. And finally, every time servicemembers raise their hands and repeat an oath of office, either as the officiating officer or the promotee, they should ensure it is an open-eyed event where they recommit themselves to their profession and its obligations.

#### Linell A. Letendre

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<sup>19</sup> Mr. Jeh C. Johnson, "Report on Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy," C-SPAN, November 30, 2010, 56:25–56:44, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?296799-2/report-ask-policy&start=2450>.



## LTG MacFarland: Insights on *Illusions of Victory* and Iraq

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Russell W. Glenn

In *Illusions of Victory* author Carter Malkasian describes the cumulative events in Ramadi circa 2007 as comprising “a turning point of the Iraq War.”<sup>1</sup> He is correct in terms of the war fought by the US-led coalition in Iraq. Iraqis might have a contrary view given theirs has been of an all but continuous conflict since that coalition attacked in 2003. The turning point from the perspective of the country’s citizenry is arguably quite different, far broader in influence, and more negative in consequence: American support for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s retaining his position after his loss in the March 2010 election. The internal divides that continue to plague Iraq today are largely due to the overt sectarianism that characterized his tenure.

Malkasian recognizes Maliki’s role in undoing the progress made during the Awakening period (2007), as does Lieutenant General MacFarland, as discussed in the interview below. Both men avoid the common pitfall of overemphasizing a single factor as an explanation for the progress made during and in the aftermath of that too-short span of years. MacFarland’s assertion that the surge was less pivotal than others have argued is convincing and well-supported. Other factors—al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) cruelty, the group’s deliberate targeting of civilians, cohesion among tribes, US financial and other forms of support, fear of “the Persians” in Iran, and Shia politicians in general refusing to take the higher road after years of suppression under Saddam Hussein—are among those identified and analysed. No few of these topics receive attention in one or more of the many, and there are many, other books regarding al-Anbar province during the middle of the last decade. William Doyle’s *A Soldier’s Dream*, Kimberly Kagan’s *The Surge: A Military History*, Peter R. Mansoor’s *Surge*, Jim Michaels’s, *A Chance in Hell*, and Michael E. Silverman’s, *Awakening Victory*, which is a memoir by a battalion commander in Anbar during this period, cover much of the ground considered in *Illusions of Victory* from a variety of viewpoints.

It is therefore legitimate to question why Malkasian’s book deserves attention as yet another offering. The answer lies in perspective. His book is at times a broader investigation, one more strategic in perspective, and sometimes counter to the alternative sources on events in Ramadi and al-Anbar province during this critical period. Malkasian’s understanding of tribal dynamics is among the best offered by Western authors addressing competition for influencing the province. He avoids overly simplifying the situation by recognizing the myriad factors influencing Anbari support for AQI (and later the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria [ISIS]). His analysis is balanced, recognizing the tribal and individual dynamics

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1 Carter Malkasian, *Illusions of Victory: The Anbar Awakening and the Rise of the Islamic State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

at play over time. The author similarly, critically, recognizes those dynamics evolved over time. Originally reluctant to employ violence against civilians other than those supporting the Baghdad government, AQI cast that hesitation aside in light of other Anbari organizations' success in competing for power and influence.

Malkasian's late entry into discussions further benefits from the passage of time. Why, he is able to ask, did the highly touted progress made prior to the 2014 departure of most coalition forces evaporate with the rise of ISIS? Yes, Maliki's (and other Iraqi leaders') malfeasance was a key element in the return to previous levels of internecine violence. Yet that exodus of US forces; consequent loss of moral, political, and financial support; and inability of Anbari leaders to maintain a cohesive resistance were undoubtedly complements to the distrust sown by Baghdad in the rise of ISIS.

These positives considerably outweigh any negatives in *Illusions of Victory*. Malkasian could have provided greater depth of analysis after positing that Colonel John L. Gronski, commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division, receives too little credit for setting the conditions for the Awakening. Admirable as Gronski's initiatives were, it is questionable that they established the same kind of relationships with sheikhs as did later US leaders or that Gronski's operations involved a level of risk similar to that assumed by subsequent commanders who positioned their forces in more contested parts of Iraq's urban areas. So too, more pointed consideration of what the events in Anbar offer for future counterinsurgent undertakings would have helped to balance those superficial evaluations of counterinsurgency (COIN) that suggest its total relegation to the dustbin of history rather than providing more thoughtful evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of its application in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Malkasian's primary focus is, by choice, the operational and tactical levels of war. We therefore do not but once hear of the permeating discomfort felt and suspicions held by regional Sunnis at the community level in the aftermath of Saddam's fall or the discomfort and suspicions borne of his government's replacement by an Iran-leaning authority. Little wonder that several of these communities tolerated or provided more substantive support to ISIS. He similarly does not delve into Maliki's motivations for his sectarianism, which in its rawest form was simply the overt expression of Shia vengeance after decades of suppression under Saddam's thumb. Understandably, but perhaps naively, the world has come to expect more of national leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Ironically, if we accept that Ramadi was a turning point during the first phase of Iraq's post-2003 invasion insurgency, it was equally so in 2016 when ISIS forces were defeated in the city—a defeat facilitated by a new operational approach introduced by the recently arrived commanding general of the Combined Joint Task Force—Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in Iraq and Syria. Ramadi's fall at once shattered the myth of ISIS invincibility while at the same time convincing Iraqi leaders of America's commitment to the group's ouster. The ability of ISIS to recruit and to maintain those leaders' support suffered accordingly. As the past

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2 The reviewer thanks Colonel Wade Foote, USA Retired, for his notable insights that underlie the material in this paragraph and that immediately following.

decade and a half has demonstrated the Middle East is nothing if not extraordinarily complex. Perhaps regional stability rather than ideology should take precedence when selecting America's strategic objectives.

Then a colonel, MacFarland's performance as the commander of 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, in Tal Afar and Ramadi receives considerable attention in this and many of the other books addressing the war in Iraq. His later leadership of Operation Inherent Resolve ran from September 2015 to August 2016, and contributed valuable insight on *Illusion of Victory* during this interview on January 23, 2018.

### The Interview

Dr. GLENN. What is your overall impression of Carter Malkasian's book?

LTG MACFARLAND. Carter's book provided me a bit more texture regarding what had been going on around me. He filled in a lot of gaps. He's right that the success in al-Anbar and elsewhere was due to a combination of factors. An Awakening-type of event requires elements like those needed to operate an internal combustion engine: fuel, air, and a spark. The fuel was obviously the tribes and number of fighters who were willing to step up. Air was provided by the coalition; we gave it the room to grow. The enemy provided the spark by overplaying their hand and creating the backlash for the Awakening. You can't have an Awakening without all of those three elements present. And then success begets success. That's why when one tribe looked over at another tribe and saw they had a pretty good thing going, they wanted to keep up with the Joneses. That's how it spread. It created a domino effect.

GLENN. In your experience, what factors were key to abetting US-led coalition progress? Which instead reduced the extent and duration of success?

MACFARLAND. I would think the main impediment to progress was, of course, Maliki and his ilk and their natural suspicion of anything to do with arming Sunnis. I saw a very similar reluctance in Baghdad during Operation Inherent Resolve. Some things aren't going to change.

GLENN. Focusing specifically on the Awakening, Malkasian blames its "breakdown" on three factors: Maliki's government turning against the Sunnis, the tribal system's inherent instability, and the Sunnis' strong support for AQI and the Islamic State.

Do you agree with his conclusions? Considering more than coalition military capabilities alone, what could the United States have done to prevent ISIS's rise?

MACFARLAND. The Iraqi government tried to marginalize [the Sunnis] while we were there and then actively turned against them when we weren't. [On the second point,] I don't know if I would go so far as to say the tribal system is inherently unstable. After all, it has endured for over a millennium. I think it was destabilized by our actions as well as Maliki's . . . and even Saddam's. A series of actors for differing reasons actively sought to undermine or co-opt the tribes. It's going on today in Iraq during Inherent Resolve: Tehran is trying to buy off some Sunni sheikhs to help them achieve their goals, which are really not in the best

interests of the Sunnis. The MacFarland clan was a Scottish Highlands clan that fought on both sides, against or for the British, depending on the battle. The Sunni tribes are not that much different than a Highland clan in that respect. You could often find them on both sides of a fight. [Regarding the third point,] “AQI and then the Islamic State enjoyed a critical mass of Sunni support.” This was engendered by Maliki’s persecution of the Sunnis, driving them into the arms of al-Qaeda.

What could the US have done to prevent ISIS’s rise? Very simply: stay engaged. If we had not pulled out of Iraq at the end of 2010 and 2011, ISIS wouldn’t have had the ability to grow because the Sunnis would have felt they had a friendly external power in the United States that they could turn to for arbitration with Maliki and his government. But without us, they had no alternative other than ISIS. Although the Sunnis were very suspicious of ISIS, they probably believed because they had defeated al-Qaeda with the Awakening, they would be able to control ISIS. What they didn’t bargain on was that ISIS was a more virulent brand, which they weren’t able to control. But they were willing to give ISIS a shot to act as a buffer between themselves, Maliki and his government, and Tehran. Unfortunately, they were deluded in their thinking because what had allowed them to defeat al-Qaeda was our support. That wasn’t there this time.

GLENN. What did your enemy prisoners of war and other sources tell you were the bases for successful AQI and ISIS recruiting? What roles did insurgent intimidation of potential recruits, religion, money, or other factors play? How might a US-led coalition impede an insurgent’s success during future conflicts?

MACFARLAND. The basis for their recruiting was, “We’ll fight those dirty rotten Shia for you.” “What roles did insurgent intimidation of potential recruits play?” Well, they were running press gangs and forcing children in some cases to fight under their banner as things became more desperate. ISIS—and al-Qaeda to a lesser extent—forced people into their ranks. They were not all willing believers. Religion played about as much a role in recruiting as Catholicism did for the IRA [Irish Republican Army]. The Troubles weren’t really about whether or not my Irish forebears should go to Mass on feast days and honor the Virgin Mary; it was really more about the Protestants representing an external power, the British Crown. I think to a great extent the fighting in Iraq is because, to the Sunnis, the Shias also represent a Persian foreign power. They just don’t trust them. So religion’s a factor, but I don’t think it’s the only or the biggest factor.

Money? Money had lot to do with ISIS. Once they took over the oil fields in eastern Syria and then the banks in Mosul, they were an incredibly well-financed organization. One of the key things we did was begin a deep fight, a deliberate targeting of their oil, banks, and other revenue streams. And that hollowed them out. In fact, I named our counterrevenue campaign “Tidal Wave Two,” because their money was predominantly oil based and [Operation] Tidal Wave was the name of the bombing raids against the Ploesti oil fields in Romania during the Second World War. So we named our strikes on the ISIS oil fields in eastern Syria, and around Mosul, in honor of that operation. We needed to go after revenue streams, because you can have all of the ideology in the world, but you also need money to wage a significant campaign.

The other thing we must do to impede insurgent success is to have an enduring presence in eastern Syria, northern Syria, western Iraq, and northern Jordan to keep it from metastasizing.

GLENN. To what extent was there either formal or informal passage of coalition lessons learned and insights between those in-country and from rotation to rotation? Did this occur only internally to a service (Army, Marines) or between services?

MACFARLAND. What [then-Colonel] H. R. McMaster did up in Tal Afar—and I followed H. R. in Tal Afar before my brigade was ordered to move to Ramadi—was definitely a model that I lifted and shifted to our new area of operations. But the problem was that Tal Afar is a ship in a bottle. It is a Turkmen city in an Arab country, so progress there never had the potential of spreading. But because of my engagements there and the opportunity to work with police, army, and so forth, I could see that there were certain things happening in Tal Afar that were not present in Ramadi. One of the things I had to do was [identify] a mayor. The governor was basically the mayor of Ramadi, and there was effectively no governor of al-Anbar.

No police or tribal force was present, either. There was the Western Ramadi police station with about 140 cops when I got there, but they weren't really doing very much. My DCO [deputy commanding officer], Lieutenant Colonel Jim Lechner, stood up the west Jazirah police station, which was actually a pump plant on the Euphrates River. It was the first tribal police station, but it was not part of the central plan for police stations where the [US Army] Corps of Engineers or anybody else thought it should be. It was precisely where the tribes thought it should be, however. So that's where we put it, and a lot of former cops who had been trained and were still on the payroll came out of the woodwork with their old uniforms, willing to man that police station. These were guys that were in the immediate area, but not reporting for duty out of fear or intimidation.

We had to break that cycle of fear. Putting the police station where they felt strong enough to man it was critically important. The enemy also understood this, which is why they attacked the Jazirah police station with a chlorine bomb, a massive car bomb, and a big fuel truck as well. That fuel truck inflicted some pretty horrendous casualties on both US Army MPs [military police] and the Iraqi police. Moments after the attack, I drove over there and talked to the [Iraqi] lieutenant colonel station chief and offered to move them onto [Camp] Blue Diamond while we helped rebuild the police station. He said, "No, no, no. We can't let the enemy win." I call it the Iwo Jima moment, Mount Suribachi: the moment the Iraqi police put their flag back up that had been knocked down by the blast, and that afternoon [they] went out on patrol looking for the cell responsible for the truck bombing. . . . It was part of a series of events that led to the Awakening. Al-Qaeda bombed the police station, but that didn't work. So, they killed the sheikh who was contributing the young people for the police force. That was the final spark that really initiated the Awakening process. But without that spark, and the spontaneous reaction by the sheikhs, I couldn't have done what I did. Timing is everything, right?

There was no Awakening in Tal Afar. McMaster set up combat outposts, but he overwhelmed the opposition with coalition forces supported by Iraqi security forces. He leveraged the Shia population within southern Tal Afar. Northern Tal Afar was still “Indian territory” when we got there. The Awakening was the sheikhs’ idea, and I just went with it. Just as you set a thief to catch a thief, the tribal forces were the ideal counter al-Qaeda force because they were truly an indigenous force, even more than some of AQI.

“To what extent was there either formal or informal passage of lessons learned and insights between those in-country and from rotation to rotation?” There was a COIN academy in Taji, but I’m not sure how much we got out of that. *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24, hadn’t been written yet. In fact, General Petraeus, when he got there, asked me if I’d read it. And I said, “No I haven’t. Sorry.” He said, “Well you don’t need to. You’re doing everything it says.”

GLENN. How did your experiences in Tal Afar influence your approaches to COIN in Ramadi?

MACFARLAND. What I thought was good about Tal Afar was the combat outposts to secure neighborhoods, to lock them down. My idea was to leapfrog and secure neighborhoods in Ramadi, turn them over to Iraqi security forces, and then my guys could move onto the next set of combat outposts (COPs). But I knew I would have to provide the Iraqi police to fill in behind us. I thought it would be us, followed by the Iraqi Army, and then the Iraqi police. What happened in practice is that we turned COPs over directly to the Iraqi police, and the Iraqi police were relieved of responsibilities outside of Ramadi by tribal auxiliary forces.

The Iraqi Army was just not interested in fighting their way into the city. And even during Operation Inherent Resolve they said, “Well, you know, the army doesn’t really fight in cities. The police go into cities and the army stays on the outside.” The problem with that way of thinking is that the enemy was in cities like Ramadi, Mosul, and elsewhere and the police can’t do it all by themselves. The Iraqi Army has a very strong self-preservation instinct, which is something you don’t typically find in effective military forces. The Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service, on the other hand, had no such problem, so we relied heavily on them in OIR.

GLENN. How do you view the author’s analysis of al-Anbar tribal relationships and motivations?

MACFARLAND. Abdul Sattar Abu Risha did not start out as the leader of the Awakening. He was the spokesperson. The older sheikhs let this young hothead be the face of the Awakening so that if anybody was going to get assassinated, it was going to be Sattar. He parlayed that into a more powerful role when he became the de facto leader, and we played a role in that. I said, “Okay, if you’re running all the risks, then you are going to get the rewards.” So I funnelled money through him to the other sheikhs which elevated his status and gave him more *wasta*. It was all quid pro quo, a symbiotic relationship.

Their sheikhs’ motivations were, in my opinion, mainly self-preservation first of all, and then economic opportunity and political power. They were concerned with two threats. They were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: the Persians—the Shia—and



al-Qaeda. We offered them a way to rid themselves of al-Qaeda by arming them. This gave them the means to defend themselves against al-Qaeda and not have to rely on Persians from Baghdad, who would be just as bad if not worse than al-Qaeda, at least in their eyes. You don't want to invite a vampire into your house if you don't have to. So we said we would help them develop a home guard. They could then secure their own neighborhood and wouldn't need help from Baghdad or al-Qaeda. It's the way things were 100 years ago when the tribes provided their own security. That's what was so attractive about this to them: it was a combination of economic incentives and the ability to defend themselves.

They also hated the Iraqi Islamic Party, the IIP—Governor Mamoun [Sami Rashid] was a member of it—which they saw as aligned with al-Qaeda because it got money from outside. So, the sheikhs saw the IIP as more part of the problem than the solution and wanted to rid themselves of it in order to become more self-governing. And economically, these sheikhs make money from all sorts of sources, either legal or questionable. Smuggling is historically what Bedouins do. Perhaps that's why there are so many truck companies in al-Anbar province to run back and forth between Jordon and Syria to Baghdad. But the tribes are also into construction. It seemed as though every sheikh has his own construction company.

GLENN. Is Malkasian correct in noting, "Certain writers later accused the Marines of opposing the [Sattar] movement" but "this is untrue?"

MACFARLAND. I would rephrase it. I would say the Marines were leery of the Sattar movement and hesitant to embrace it initially. It took them longer to come around than I would have liked, but I wouldn't say they opposed it. They were just more skeptical.

GLENN. You worked for the Marines. Did you being Army give you more slack than if you had been a marine?

MACFARLAND. It worked to my benefit. I could not have asked for a better boss than General Richard C. Zilmer. To be honest, if I had been working for an Army headquarters, I don't know that the Awakening would have happened. That's not a knock on the Army necessarily. But General Zilmer epitomized the tenets of mission command better than almost any boss I have ever had.

GLENN. Was Baghdad more willing to support Sunni counter-AQI initiatives in al-Anbar than in Baghdad itself? If so, is the author correct in concluding that the key variable was al-Anbar's distance from the capital?

MACFARLAND. Absolutely. I think the mind-set with Maliki was that he was up to his eyeballs in Sunni terrorist crocodiles there in Baghdad. If we could reduce the throughput from Syria in the pipeline that ran through al-Anbar to Baghdad, it was a good thing. There were no real Shia equities at risk out there. I think he figured what happens in al-Anbar would stay in al-Anbar. He started to get a little more attentive when the Awakening moved closer to Baghdad, but as long as it remained out west he wasn't too worried. Nevertheless, he remained reluctant to provide any heavy weapons that could eventually be used against Iraqi security forces.

GLENN. But Fallujah and Ramadi weren't really that far away from Baghdad.

MACFARLAND. Well, Fallujah is pretty close. . . . And in Baghdad, the Shia see Fallujah as the boogeyman, the number one place they need to worry about. It is astride the historic line of drift of bad actors and is the first major town of any size outside of Baghdad that is Sunni. They are pretty worried about it and keep an eye on it. So, yeah, Carter was right about that.

GLENN. Malkasian wrote, "In September 2015, Sean MacFarland, now a lieutenant general, became the commander of US forces in Iraq and Syria. . . . Even he withheld from rekindling the Awakening. He realized that the movement was too broken and discredited to be resurrected." Comment.

MACFARLAND. I wouldn't say that I withheld from it. I would say that there was not an opportunity. Some of the old gang was around but their influence was much diminished. Maliki had done a pretty thorough job of undermining the tribal structure and authority. Al-Qaeda wasn't as focused as ISIS on getting everyone to behave a certain way. As long as you were taking the fight to the Americans or fighting the Shia, that was good enough for AQI. They would worry about installing their catechism—or whatever they call it—later.

Not so with ISIS. They were incredibly brutal. Everyone had to walk the talk, or else. People had to live a certain way, which was onerous even by al-Qaeda standards. Sunni tribes could sit on the fence with al-Qaeda. As long as they let AQI fighters pass through their area, they would often leave the tribes alone. It was live and let live. There was none of that with ISIS. If the Sunni sheikhs felt that if in Operation Iraqi Freedom they were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, by the time coalition forces returned to al-Anbar in Operation Inherent Resolve they were completely submerged by the deep blue sea and the devil was underwater with them. It would have been too hard; it would have been a very artificial Awakening. It was a grassroots movement in '06, but it would have been mostly Astroturf in 2015.

GLENN. Ultimately, Malkasian concludes, "The people of Anbar would have been better off had the United States stayed out of Iraq in the first place." Your perspective?

MACFARLAND. Possibly. Under Saddam, that was probably true because Saddam didn't mess with the Sunnis too badly. Now the 60–70 percent of Iraqis elsewhere in Iraq who were Shia would probably disagree with that. The reality is, Sunni and Shia, Arab and Kurd, could all have gotten along in a federalized Iraq had we stayed engaged after we defeated al-Qaeda. We were in the driver's seat. We could have ensured a good outcome for that country and put it on the road to stability. Instead, we walked away and the country fell apart . . . much to the advantage of the Iranians.

Right now there is a good prime minister in Iraq named Haider al-Abadi. If we work with him I think the people of al-Anbar might find a *modus vivendi* with the government of Iraq. But we'll have to stay engaged. It won't be as good for the Sunnis as it was during their "salad days" under Saddam. The Anbaris' memory of those days is why we



had to fight them so hard until we said, “You know, you aren’t the only ones that don’t like the Iranians. We don’t think much of them either.” And the scales then fell from the sheikhs’ eyes. They also realized we could give them a lot more money than the Iranians ever would. Unfortunately, we turned our backs on them, and they paid the price for their partnership with the United States much as was the case with [the] South Vietnamese.

GLENN. Were you there when Maliki stayed in power after being defeated in an election?

MACFARLAND. No, but I read about it. That was a strategic tipping point.

GLENN. Any concluding thoughts? How does this compare with other books on the Awakening?

MACFARLAND. Some of them have a very noticeable slant. There’s the Marine history of the Awakening. I won’t render judgment on that. It’s a very complicated story. Other people have written about it. I don’t know that anyone will get to all the little subcurrents and things that were happening simultaneously out there, most of which I didn’t know about, and few of which I controlled. My principal accomplishment was managing to navigate through all those various currents and eddies to achieve my military objectives, riding on top of them without capsizing the boat. I didn’t know what was going on beneath the surface, especially with the tribal dynamics. And there’s more to them than Carter has written about or that anybody can probably ever write about or know.

None of the Sunni sheikhs are writing any books, and if they did they would have their own bias. It’s not like the end of the Second World War when we interviewed all the German generals and they told us, “You did this and I did that” because they kept meticulous records and could cross-reference what happened on a particular day. We can’t do that in this war, so we’ll never know. The al-Qaeda guys are all dead or scattered, and so are a lot of sheikhs. But I think Carter does as good a job as any, and better than most, in piecing it together and coming up with some sort of coherent narrative.

As my previous remarks make clear, tribal relations in al-Anbar were extremely complex. For example, the chief of police in al-Anbar worked with a sheikh. The chief of police used to be the head of the border patrol, and the sheikh was a smuggler. It was kind of like a Road Runner-Wile E. Coyote relationship, [a] love-hate relationship. They had an understanding of what was allowed, what wasn’t allowed. And of course they’re all intermarried with one another. Until you can get to that level of understanding of the dynamics out there, it’s like walking into a big family argument at Thanksgiving but you aren’t part of the family. They may be talking about something that happened to a cousin’s sister-in-law fifteen years ago. And you’re wondering, “What the hell are you people talking about?” But they’ve all got it right there, in their heads. It’s as if it happened yesterday to them.

Trying to understand how that perspective affected the sheikhs’ thinking, and how they dealt with one another, was a complete waste of time for me. I just decided, “I’m just going to back a few sheikhs, and hope the other ones will fall in line to get CERP [Commanders

Emergency Response program] money or whatever. That's how I'm going to play this game." I couldn't learn how to play cricket. It was too hard for me in the time I had. I was just going find somebody to bat for me.

A last note . . . I couldn't have done half of what I did without [Stu(art) Jones, ambassador to Iraq from 2014–16]. He opened a lot of doors for me. Ambassadors are such important players, and they don't get enough credit.

### **Interviewer's Closing Thoughts**

Despite the claims of some, counterinsurgency is no more dead than is conflict. Students of the latter continue to learn, adapting lessons from post-World War II, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere to inform practitioners of the former. And adapt they must. Insurgents evolve, adopting new techniques, and technologies, as well as finding some success in urban areas, historically the graveyard of such movements. Well-reasoned additions to the literature and clear-eyed insights, such as those offered by Malkasian and MacFarland, provide guidance for essential counteradaptation and, ideally, innovations that will keep us "left of boom" in years to come.

## Avoiding Nation-Building: From Nixon to Trump

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Dominic Tierney

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores how the aversion to nation-building, a consistent theme in post-Vietnam foreign policy doctrine, has shaped military operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond.

Core element in the emerging foreign policy doctrine of President Donald Trump is the desire to use force effectively while also avoiding prolonged nation-building operations. In August 2016, Trump promised to “crush and destroy” the Islamic State as well as “decimate al-Qaeda.”<sup>1</sup> But if Trump intended to seize the sword, he would also cast aside the shovel, “the era of nation-building will be ended.”<sup>2</sup> In March 2017, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson said America’s number one goal in the Middle East was to “defeat ISIS.” But he added, “we are not in the business of nation-building or reconstruction.”<sup>3</sup> The Trump administration sought to reconcile these goals through a kinetic posture that shifted spending away from the State Department, foreign aid, United Nations peacekeeping efforts, and other programs integral to stabilization missions, and toward big-ticket hardware and symbols of American might, such as aircraft carriers.<sup>4</sup>

The challenge of employing military operations to further US interests and values while averting protracted nation-building has been a fundamental dilemma for policymakers since at least the era of Southern Reconstruction after the Civil War. Nation-building—the use of US troops to strengthen a regime and create order inside another country that is typically experiencing, or at risk of, internal conflict—encompasses a wide range of stabilization and governance activities, from counterterrorism to overseeing elections to training indigenous troops, and includes relatively nonviolent peacekeeping missions, such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s, together with sustained counterinsurgency operations, such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq during the early part of this century.

Resistance to prolonged nation-building partly reflects the striking costs of the counterinsurgency campaigns in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Moreover, the US military traditionally regards soldiers as warriors rather than as nation-builders, and views stabilization operations as

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2 Politico Staff, “Full Text: Donald Trump’s Speech on Fighting Terrorism,” *Politico*, August 15, 2016.

3 Rex W. Tillerson, “Remarks at the Global Coalition against ISIS” (speech, Washington, DC, March 22, 2017), <https://bh.usembassy.gov/tillerson-addresses-coalition-68-nations-defeat-isis/>.

4 US Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again* (Washington, DC: OMB, 2017).

a distraction from its primary job of fighting conventional interstate wars.<sup>5</sup> The principle of civilian control of the military may also produce skepticism about granting governing authority to US soldiers, even in a foreign country.<sup>6</sup> Nation-building missions are consistently less popular with the public than interstate wars. Indeed, the term *nation-building* is a highly pejorative phrase in the United States. Liberals often associate nation-building with hawkish neoconservatism or imperialism. Meanwhile, conservatives sometimes view nation-building as big government welfare, a diplomatic “Obamacare.”<sup>7</sup>

In recent decades, many prominent foreign policy doctrines—the Nixon Doctrine, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, the Lake doctrine, the Rumsfeld doctrine, and the Obama doctrine—were animated to a large extent by the wish to use force without enduring endless stabilization operations. If this quandary is perennial, it is also intractable. For half a century, America’s involvement in nation-building has been pervasive: modern warfare is overwhelmingly characterized by civil wars, and therefore, virtually any US military operation involves a stabilization component. Indeed, the quest for a doctrine to employ force without prolonged nation-building is an illusory endeavor that may actually raise the odds of a quagmire.

### Dueling Doctrines

In the late 1960s, Richard Nixon faced a fundamental predicament. As a hawkish Republican, the president sought to wield force to deter and to defeat adversaries around the world. But in the wake of the Vietnam War, with over 25,000 American fatalities and an increasingly restive Congress and public, the United States needed to avoid large-scale counterinsurgency campaigns in areas of secondary strategic interest. In July 1969, the president outlined a solution—the Nixon Doctrine—that placed primary responsibility for internal threats and nation-building on local allies.<sup>8</sup> The Nixon Doctrine became the basis for the Vietnamization policy to withdraw US troops from South Vietnam while simultaneously stepping up training and material assistance for Saigon’s military.

During the early 1980s, Secretary of Defense Caspar Willard Weinberger, together with his aide (and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) Colin Powell, faced the same fundamental challenge of waging war without prolonged nation-building. In the wake of the traumatic experience in Vietnam, as well as the costly US peacekeeping operation in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984 in which a car bomb struck the Marine barracks and killed 241 Americans, the Weinberger-Powell

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5 Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1973), 36.

6 Nadia Schadow, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017).

7 Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (New York: Little Brown, 2010); and Bruce Jentleson, “The Pretty Prudent Public: Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force,” *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March 1992): 49–73, doi:10.2307/2600916.

8 Richard Nixon, “Informal Remarks in Guam with Newsmen” (remarks, Top O’ the Mar Officer’s Club, Guam, July 25, 1969), <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=2140>. This principle was later formalized in a speech on November 3, 1969, and a White House document in 1970 entitled “Peace through Partnership—The Nixon Doctrine.”

doctrine provided a solution.<sup>9</sup> This doctrine outlined six principles to assess the wisdom of prospective military operations: (1) vital US or allied interests should be involved, (2) Washington should be committed to winning, (3) clear and achievable objectives must exist, (4) the size of the forces should continually be adjusted according to the goals, (5) there ought to be a reasonable assurance of public and congressional support, and (6) force should be used as a last resort.<sup>10</sup>

These tests would filter out most nation-building missions, where the objectives are typically vague and a victory cannot easily be defined. Furthermore, humanitarian or peacekeeping operations tend not to involve core American interests and are often unpopular with Congress and the public. Instead, only conventional interstate wars, such as the Persian Gulf War (1991), would dependably qualify.

Weinberger believed if the tests were satisfied, the United States should mobilize its full might to win: "When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we *must* commit them, in sufficient numbers and we *must* support them, as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits."<sup>11</sup> By carefully parsing prospective military operations, the United States could avoid stabilization missions, such as those in Vietnam and Lebanon, and win decisive interstate campaigns.

The Clinton administration signaled greater willingness to use force to protect human rights and to promote democracy. But in the wake of the "Black Hawk Down" firefight in Somalia (1993), which led to the deaths of 18 American soldiers during a humanitarian operation, the administration also sought to limit the risk of lengthy nation-building. The Pentagon stressed, "The primary mission of our Armed Forces is not peace operations; it is to deter and, if necessary, to fight and win conflicts in which our most important interests are threatened."<sup>12</sup> The answer, insisting on a withdrawal plan before any stabilization mission began, can be termed the Lake doctrine, after National Security Advisor Tony Lake. In 1996, Lake described an "exit strategy doctrine," where the United States should only send troops abroad if it knows "how and when we're going to get them out."<sup>13</sup> This doctrine did not apply to interstate wars or deterring external aggression but specifically targeted stabilization missions where "tightly tailored military missions and sharp withdrawal deadlines must be the norm."<sup>14</sup>

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the George W. Bush administration sought to engage in expansive military operations, preemptively and unilaterally if necessary, to defeat terrorists and their state patrons. At the same time, US policymakers were strongly averse

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9 Kenneth J. Campbell, "Once Burned, Twice Cautious: Explaining the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine," *Armed Forces and Society* 24, no. 3 (April 1998): 357–74, doi:10.1177/0095327X9802400302.

10 Caspar Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power" (remarks, National Press Club, Washington, DC, November 28, 1984), <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/force/weinberger.html>.

11 Weinberger, "Uses of Military Power" (emphasis in the original).

12 White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: White House, 1996), 23.

13 Anthony Lake, "Defining Missions, Setting Deadlines: Meeting New Security Challenges in the Post-Cold War World" (speech, George Washington University, Washington, DC, March 6, 1996), <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/force/lake/html>.

14 Lake, "Defining Missions"; and David Fitzgerald, *Learning to Forget: US Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Practice from Vietnam to Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 102.

to Clinton-era stabilization missions in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and elsewhere, which were seen as armed social work. “Let me tell you what else I’m worried about,” said Bush in 2000, “I’m worried about an opponent who uses nation-building and the military in the same sentence.”<sup>15</sup> In 2003, on the eve of the Iraq War, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld gave a speech entitled “Beyond Nation-Building” that criticized the drawn-out peacekeeping operation in Kosovo for creating a “culture of dependence.”<sup>16</sup>

The Rumsfeld doctrine tried to reconcile these goals through a policy of transformation that would provide a new generation of communications systems, smart bombs, and stealth weapons, enabling Washington to strike adversaries with shock and awe before quickly passing the baton to local allies or international troops, thereby avoiding the drudgery of nation-building. Armed with this approach, the United States toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in 2001 using a few hundred Special Forces personnel, backed by airpower and local allies, and then handed security responsibilities to Afghan warlords, tribal militia, and a modest international force. A year later, just 10,000 US soldiers were engaged in a narrow counterterrorism mission in Afghanistan, while 5,000 international troops tried to help the new regime in Kabul stabilize the country.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in 2003, the United States planned an invasion to overthrow Saddam Hussein, “stand up a government in Iraq and get out as fast as we can.”<sup>18</sup>

The Obama administration faced a familiar strategic quandary. On one hand, Barack Obama committed to using force to deter and to defeat adversaries, especially al-Qaeda and its affiliated networks. But guided by the principle of “no more Iraq Wars,” the president sought “the end of long-term nation-building with large military footprints.”<sup>19</sup> The Obama doctrine tried to resolve these aims through limited warfare. Military operations would be limited in *number* (with greater selectivity about intervening abroad), limited in *cost* (by “leading from behind” and sharing the burden with international and local allies), and limited in *scope* (by utilizing raids, cyberwarfare, and drone strikes rather than significant numbers of ground troops).<sup>20</sup>

The Obama doctrine shaped both force planning and military strategy. In 2012 the Pentagon stated, “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations.”<sup>21</sup> Obama

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15 Terry M. Neal, “Bush Backs into Nation Building,” *Washington Post*, February 26, 2003; and James Dobbins et al., *After the War: Nation-Building from FDR to George W. Bush* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 91.

16 Donald H. Rumsfeld “Beyond Nation-Building” (speech, Salute to Freedom, Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, New York, New York, February 14, 2003), [www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/sp20030214-secdef0024.htm](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/sp20030214-secdef0024.htm).

17 David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 57.

18 Toby Dodge, “Iraq,” in *Exit Strategies and State Building*, ed. Richard Caplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 246.

19 Dominic Tierney, *The Obama Doctrine and the Lessons of Iraq* (Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2012); Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President on the Defense Strategic Review” (speech, Pentagon, Washington, DC, January 5, 2012), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/05/remarks-president-defense-strategic-review>.

20 Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy,” *New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.

21 US Department of Defense (DoD), *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2012), 6.



followed the Bush administration's exit timetable in Iraq by withdrawing combat forces in late 2011. During the Libya Revolt of 2011, Washington intervened as part of a broad coalition, but primarily employed airpower and rejected any nation-building by American troops. In 2009, Obama backed a surge of troops in Afghanistan, but soon became disillusioned by the slow rate of progress and decided to withdraw almost all US forces from the country by the end of 2014. "The fever in this room has finally broken," Obama told a meeting of the National Security Council in 2015, "We're no longer in nation-building mode."<sup>22</sup>

Of course, the puzzle of how to employ force effectively, without getting bogged down in a nation-building quagmire, was not the only consideration behind these doctrines. The Weinberger-Powell doctrine, for instance, aimed to restore the US military as an institution after Vietnam. Policymakers also sought to avoid all forms of protracted and inconclusive war, including prolonged interstate campaigns, through the large-scale deployment of manpower (Weinberger-Powell) or new technologies (Rumsfeld).

But limiting US exposure to nation-building was a common theme weaving these doctrines together. First, avoiding prolonged warfare typically means avoiding prolonged nation-building. The United States has not experienced a protracted interstate war (relative to initial expectations) since the Korean War, but it has endured drawn-out nation-building campaigns in Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Second, the authors of the doctrines explicitly, and repeatedly, rejected lengthy stabilization missions. Indeed, it is hard to find other foreign policy principles that were stated so consistently across the ideological spectrum. Third, each doctrine was triggered by a negative nation-building experience: Vietnam for the Nixon Doctrine, Vietnam and Lebanon for the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, Somalia for the Lake doctrine, the Clinton-era missions for the Rumsfeld doctrine, and Iraq for the Obama doctrine.

In some respects, the doctrines overlap. The Nixon Doctrine, the Rumsfeld doctrine, and the Obama doctrine, for example, favor handing responsibility in stabilization campaigns to local allies. But there are also significant differences. The Nixon Doctrine, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, and the Obama doctrine are fundamentally entry strategies designed to avert a potential quagmire through the careful selection of military operations, whereas the Lake doctrine seeks to identify an exit strategy and a timetable for withdrawal. Meanwhile, the Lake doctrine foresaw the United States playing a role in peace operations but sought to regulate this involvement tightly, whereas the Weinberger-Powell doctrine and the Rumsfeld doctrine attempted to curtail starkly, or even end, US involvement in peacekeeping efforts.

## The Day After

How successful were the doctrines? They contributed to one overarching problem of failing to prepare for nation-building, and they produced a number of particular dilemmas: state collapse, wishful thinking, abandonment, overcommitment, and improvisation. We can

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Landler, "The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama," *New York Times*, January 1, 2017.

illustrate these challenges by considering the three major US wars after 9/11: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

Collectively, the doctrines encouraged the dangerous illusion that nation-building can somehow be avoided and, therefore, significant preparation is unnecessary. Since the Vietnam War, nation-building has been a ubiquitous experience for the US military—Panama in 1989, Iraq I (northern Iraq) in 1991, Somalia in 1992, Haiti in 1994, Bosnia in 1995, Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq II (post-Saddam) in 2003, and Iraq III (resisting the Islamic State) in 2014—because the character of global warfare changed from interstate war to civil war.

After World War II, nuclear deterrence, democratization, international institutions, and globalization, diminished the incidence of interstate war, but internal conflict did not end. As a result, about nine of ten wars during the post-Cold War era were civil wars, including prominent contemporary conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia.<sup>23</sup> Civil wars also became the main arena for interstate military competition, in the form of proxy wars, where countries back rival insurgent or government actors. Given this strategic environment, almost any conceivable use of ground forces—humanitarian, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism interventions—will have a significant nation-building component, where troops seek to bolster a friendly regime and restore order.

Despite this experience, foreign policy doctrines encouraged the view that nation-building was a deviation from the US military's true vocation of fighting and winning interstate wars. Rather than institutionalize lessons from prior interventions, American officials tended to view such operations as a mistake never to be repeated. Following the Vietnam War, the Army destroyed its material on counterinsurgency held at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and planned for an interstate war against the Soviet Union in Europe.

During the 1990s, the US military focused its professional education on conventional interstate contests such as the Gulf War. Stabilization missions were given the second class status of MOOTW, military operations other than war. Officials looked to pass off governance tasks to specialized units in the special operations community, as well as civilian agencies and international allies—any entity other than the core US military. In 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates described how sidelining unconventional war “left the service unprepared to deal with the operations that followed: Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, and more recently Afghanistan and Iraq—the consequences and costs of which we are still struggling with today.”<sup>24</sup>

Each doctrine also created particular risks. First, the Rumsfeld doctrine simultaneously sought to expand the use of force in a global war on terror and to minimize America's involvement in nation-building. Underpinning this policy was the heroic assumption that when US troops march away from the smoking ruins, local and international actors will somehow cooperate to produce a political order compatible

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23 John A. Vasquez, ed., *What Do We Know about War?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 263.

24 Robert Gates (speech, Association of the United States Army, Washington, DC, October 10, 2007), <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1181>.



with American interests—and the *day after* will be preferable to the *day before*. An obvious danger is disintegration: toppling regimes and then withdrawing at maximum speed produces an array of collapsed states.<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, the Rumsfeld doctrine triggered two prolonged quagmires in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2001, the Bush administration was determined to overthrow the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and equally committed to avoid nation-building. After the Taliban fled south, the White House wanted to stay out of Afghan politics. The lack of international forces curtailed Kabul's ability to provide basic services and led to a predictable Taliban recovery. By 2006, the insurgents controlled much of southern Afghanistan, and the prospect of decisive success had evaporated.

Meanwhile in Iraq, the enticing notion of moving beyond nation-building meant invading with no viable plan for postconflict stabilization, and too few troops to prevent widespread looting or the collapse of Iraqi institutions. As Iraq unraveled during 2003 and 2004, the White House stuck to its “small footprint” preferences by pursuing a “leave-to-win” withdrawal plan based on handing over power to Iraqi exiles, reducing US troop levels (which fell from 148,000 soldiers in May 2003 to 108,000 soldiers in January 2004), and maintaining the existing force in forward operating bases far removed from the Iraqi people. The spiral of violence worsened as local rebellions melded into a broader insurgency.<sup>26</sup>

The Nixon Doctrine's emphasis on handing over responsibility for internal threats to local allies is, in many respects, eminently defensible. Compared to American soldiers, indigenous troops may be more culturally aware, more likely to be seen as legitimate by the local people, and far cheaper to deploy. The problem lies precisely in this policy's seductive appeal. The United States is often faced by two unpalatable choices: take responsibility for nation-building or face mission failure. Training and advising programs offer an attractive third path of leaving without losing. Since the alternatives are too wretched to contemplate, officials may become overconfident about the speed and the ease of boosting local forces.

Creating indigenous security forces, however, is an extremely vulnerable process. To borrow from Tolstoy, all successful training programs are alike; every unsuccessful training program fails in its own way. In other words, effective educational endeavors must check a number of boxes, and botching any single element can doom the entire exercise. Training programs may founder due to sectarian divisions, corruption, or a local regime that is more interested in “coup proofing” its military by promoting political lackeys, rather than creating an effective fighting force that could evolve into a rival power center. Indeed, transferring responsibility to local allies is especially difficult in the toughest national security challenges, which arise precisely because capable allied forces are absent. Furthermore, the centrality of training and advising in US strategy is not matched by an appropriate degree of resourcing. These programs are often neglected in peacetime and may be moved center stage only when the United States is eager to withdraw from war. For

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25 Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

26 Dodge, “Iraq,” 249.

one thing, the US military traditionally sees advising as a relatively low-status occupation.

Nixon's policy of Vietnamization transformed South Vietnam's air force into the fourth largest in the world. But poor leadership and high desertion rates eroded Saigon's military effectiveness, and in 1975, a North Vietnamese conventional invasion overran the South in just two months. Training local forces was also seen as the ticket out of Afghanistan and Iraq. "As the Iraqis stand up," said Bush, "we will stand down."<sup>27</sup> And as with Vietnamization three decades before, "Iraqization" and "Afghanization" did not produce the intended results. Instead, there was systematic wishful thinking about the time and resources required to build capable local forces.

In the early years of the Iraq War, David Petraeus oversaw a crash program to train Iraqi troops and to smooth America's departure. As the violence worsened, recruits often defected to the insurgency or moonlighted as death squads. Petraeus compared the training mission to constructing an aircraft in flight while under fire. During 2014, after a decade of investment, the Islamic State routed Iraqi security forces in northern Iraq and captured hundreds of millions of dollars of US-supplied equipment. Meanwhile, Washington was slow to invest the necessary training resources in Afghanistan. By 2006, the Afghan National Army had fewer than 20,000 deployable troops, and a target size of only 70,000 men, which can be contrasted with the Obama administration's later and more credible plan for a combined Afghan army and police force totaling 352,000.

Would it have been wise to invade Afghanistan and Iraq with a predetermined departure date? The answer is no, which gets at the problem with the Lake doctrine. Demanding a timeline for withdrawal at the start of a nation-building mission may prevent a flexible response to conditions, turn American soldiers into lame ducks who keep checking their watches, and encourage enemies to bide their time until the scheduled departure. Missions can end up resembling what Gideon Rose called "moon landings," where the United States transports troops to a distant location, and then aims to bring them home safely, without regard for what is left behind.<sup>28</sup> Although there was not a predetermined exit date in the Afghanistan and Iraq operations, the original invasion plan called for US troop levels in Iraq to be reduced to just 30,000 by September 2003, which was wildly unrealistic and fortunately revised.

In many respects, the Iraq War validated the Weinberger-Powell doctrine because a fair application of the tests would have filtered out the operation itself, which was not fought in pursuit of vital interests and was far from a last resort, as well as the invasion plan, which lacked clear objectives or appropriate force levels. Weinberger-Powell's virtual exclusion of stabilization operations is dangerous, however, in a strategic environment where war means *civil* war and American interests and values require some nation-building. Furthermore, the doctrine's commitment to victory could also invite a quagmire. According to Weinberger, after

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27 John D. Banusiewicz, "'As Iraqis Stand Up, We Will Stand Down,' Bush Tells Nation," *American Forces Press Service*, June 28, 2005.

28 Gideon Rose, "The Exit Strategy Delusion," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 1 (January/February 1998): 56–67.

deploying US troops, “we must support those forces to the *fullest* extent of our national will for as long as it takes to win.”<sup>29</sup> But if a campaign deteriorates, Washington may need to reassess the original goals and possibly pursue a substitute for victory. Both Afghanistan and Iraq became unwinnable in the sense that a decisive victory could not be achieved at a tolerable price. In such cases, to have fought “for as long as it takes to win” would have involved grave sacrifice in pursuit of uncertain ends.

The Obama doctrine was designed to avoid an Iraqi-style scenario of prolonged nation-building by a large number of US forces. But the limited-war model might encourage a short-term and improvisational view of war that neglects the political endgame. During military operations, the White House may be reluctant to think too many steps ahead because creating a credible plan for postconflict stabilization could draw the United States into an unwanted nation-building commitment. In other words, a doctrine based on fighting a limited number of wars, in a limited manner, may also produce a limited horizon.

In Libya during 2011, the Obama doctrine encouraged a short-term mindset focused on toppling Muammar Gadhafi’s regime, rather than planning seriously for the aftermath. Here, avoiding Iraqi-style nation-building led to Iraqi-style disorder. Libya collapsed into chaos and rival militias feuded for power. In 2014, Obama explicitly recognized that the desire to avert nation-building had triggered a fiasco: “We [and] our European partners underestimated the need to come in full force if you’re going to do this . . . there has to be a much more aggressive effort to rebuild societies that didn’t have any civic traditions.”<sup>30</sup> Later, he described “failing to plan for the day after” in Libya as the “worst mistake” of his presidency.<sup>31</sup>

Recent successful cases of US nation-building often deviated from these foreign policy doctrines. In 1995, following the Dayton Accords, the United States contributed troops to a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Four years later, after an air campaign against Serbia, US forces joined a similar international mission in Kosovo. From a doctrinal perspective, the operations were deeply problematic. Rumsfeld explicitly rejected peacekeeping in the Balkans as an inappropriate use of the American military. The missions in Bosnia and Kosovo also failed the Weinberger-Powell tests because US interests were not vital, the objectives were vague, and the American public was fairly skeptical. In addition, the Lake doctrine’s requirement for a sharp withdrawal deadline was not satisfied. The original proposal for US forces to depart Bosnia after one year was abandoned, and American troops left the country in 2005. Nevertheless, by any reasonable standard, these missions succeeded. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo remain socially divided, US forces helped to stabilize the Balkans, prevent the renewal of civil war, and facilitate the return of Kosovar Albanian refugees—all with zero American fatalities.

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29 Weinberger, “Uses of Military Power.”

30 Thomas L. Friedman, “Obama on the World: President Obama Talks to Thomas L. Friedman about Iraq, Putin and Israel,” *New York Times*, August 8, 2014.

31 “Exclusive: President Barack Obama on ‘Fox News Sunday,’” Fox News, April 10, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2016/04/10/exclusive-president-barack-obama-on-fox-news-sunday.html>.

The surge strategy in Iraq was a stark rejection of the Rumsfeld doctrine. In late 2006, Rumsfeld resigned as secretary of defense and was replaced by Gates. In 2007, Bush deployed over 20,000 extra US troops to Iraq, and appointed a new commander, Petraeus, who adopted a set of tactics known as population-centric counterinsurgency, where troops lived and patrolled closer to the people, provincial reconstruction teams were embedded in combat units, alliances were developed with Sunni tribes to fight al-Qaeda, and firepower was employed selectively but effectively against irreconcilables. Whereas Rumsfeld had yearned to move beyond nation-building, Petraeus oversaw the publication of the 2006 *Counterinsurgency* manual, which declared “Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors.”<sup>32</sup> The result in Iraq was not a victory: the costs of war had risen too steeply and the country remained extremely fragile. But Iraq was pulled back from the cliff edge, and violence fell sharply after the summer of 2007.

### Conclusions and Implications

Richard Nixon, Caspar Weinberger, Colin Powell, Tony Lake, Donald Rumsfeld, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have little in common in terms of their political ideology. But they all wrestled with the same fundamental puzzle: how to wage war without endless nation-building. The emerging Trump doctrine is not simply an idiosyncratic reflection of Trump’s political beliefs and the challenges of the post-Iraq War era. It is also the latest attempt to solve an endemic strategic problem.

Since the 1960s, American officials have proposed a range of solutions: (1) hand over responsibility to allies, (2) establish tests to filter out nation-building missions, (3) create a predetermined exit strategy, (4) pursue military transformation, (5) engage in limited warfare, and in the emerging Trump doctrine, (6) adopt a kinetic posture.

None of the doctrines cracked the riddle, however, and nation-building remained a core part of the US military experience. Indeed, the belief that a template for clean war exists encouraged strategic failure in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. The doctrines ignore a difficult truth: *in a world where 90 percent of wars are civil wars, using force means nation-building*. Officials should accept the inherent relationship between military operations and stabilization endeavors and seek to manage the associated risks. The goal is to develop the American military into an institution that is exceptionally skilled at nation-building and then utilize this capability with great discretion.

The first step is to reject the notion that nation-building is a secondary endeavor compared to conventional interstate war. Instead, Washington should enhance its stabilization capabilities, for example, through improved cultural and language training programs, investment in engineers and special operations forces, and institutional learning from past counterinsurgency operations. Here, there are hopeful signs. The Army’s decision to regionally align its brigades should improve soldiers’ awareness of local culture and languages. But there are also worrying indications of a backlash against nation-building, similar to

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32 Headquarters, US Department of the Army (HQDA), foreword to *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24 (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2006).

the post-Vietnam era—for example, the decision in 2014 to close the Army Irregular Warfare Center.<sup>33</sup>

Certain aspects of each doctrine provide useful strategic guidance. As Nixon proposed, where possible, the United States ought to let allied troops take the lead in combatting internal threats. According to the US counterinsurgency manual, “The host nation doing something tolerably is normally better than us doing it well.”<sup>34</sup> The degree of investment in training programs, as well as the status and career incentives accorded to American educators, should reflect the centrality of this task in military strategy. In wartime, training operations should begin early, rather than be hastily enacted when the United States is already looking to exit. And there are numerous specific lessons that Washington can learn from the last two decades of warfare, such as the importance of creating communally mixed forces where all ethnic groups are represented.

Many of the Weinberger-Powell tests are highly valuable in judging the wisdom of military operations, especially the focus on assessing interests, identifying clear objectives, and fighting as a last resort. Two major wars of the last half century—Vietnam and Iraq—should never have been fought and could have been filtered out with an appropriate application of Weinberger-Powell. The importance of identifying achievable goals is particularly critical because the United States often goes to war with a moralistic view of the mission as good versus evil, which encourages idealistic objectives of creating a beacon of freedom.

A more appropriate aim in an impoverished and divided society, such as Afghanistan or Iraq, is ugly stability, where an insurgency is managed rather than entirely suppressed and concessions are made to draw rebels into a peace process. The Weinberger-Powell all-or-nothing approach should be loosened, however, to allow for missions like peacekeeping in the Balkans, which offer significant benefits at low risk, and to qualify the notion of winning at all costs, particularly if a mission deteriorates. We might also pose additional questions of prospective operations, such as considering the potential for unanticipated consequences and identifying traps that could derail the use of force.

The Obama doctrine rightly emphasized the value of multilateralism when nation-building. Acting in concert with multiple states who have different rules of engagement generates numerous problems, evident, for example, in Afghanistan. But the balance sheet of multilateralism is strongly favorable because allies can share the burden in blood and treasure, provide intelligence and bases, and crucially, enhance the global legitimacy of the operation, thereby reducing the flow of external aid to rebels, which is vital to an insurgency’s success.

Limiting US military operations, however, cannot mean simply improvising things day-to-day. What happens after Kabul, Baghdad, or Tripoli—or Mosul or Raqqa—falls? Who rules and in what ways? What kind of governance will deliver a better peace? Here, the Lake doctrine has value by focusing attention on the exit strategy. But rather than fixate on a deadline for US withdrawal, it is wiser to identify an endgame.

33 For a broader discussion, see Isaiah Wilson III and Scott Smitson, “Solving America’s Gray-Zone Puzzle,” *Parameters* 46, no. 4 (Winter 2016–17): 55–67.

34 HQDA, FM 3-24, 1-27.

In other words, officials should carefully identify the characteristics of enduring political success while retaining a flexible time frame.

The deterioration of security in both Afghanistan and Iraq may be a damning indictment of the Rumsfeld light-footprint model. Indeed, there is little point in overthrowing a tyrant if the result is chaos. But transformation technologies, including communication systems and smart weaponry, have an essential role in nation-building operations, for example, by facilitating precise air strikes that limit collateral damage. American airpower can be a strategic game changer in civil wars, routing the Taliban in 2001 and pushing back the Islamic State after 2014. The key is to recognize the limits of technology. The US military can hit almost anything with pinpoint accuracy, but what if soldiers cannot see the enemy?

By accepting that fighting means nation-building and by combining elements of the different foreign policy doctrines, the United States can maneuver more successfully through an age of civil wars.



## Countering Russian Meddling in US Political Processes

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James P. Farwell

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**ABSTRACT:** This article introduces a “team-of-teams” approach for countering Russian information operations such as those associated with democratic processes.

In early 2018, the Justice Department Special Counsel indicted 13 individuals and several companies associated with the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency LLC. The parties allegedly interfered in US political processes as part of a Russian scheme to create chaos, inflame emotions, and polarize a divided public.<sup>1</sup> The effort also sought to discredit Hillary Clinton, whom President Vladimir Putin expected to win the Oval Office.<sup>2</sup>

The Special Counsel charged the accused with stealing identities, using PayPal to transfer money and to purchase Facebook ads, and falsely claiming to be US activists who contacted Donald Trump’s campaign. The United States also said the accused made illegal campaign expenditures, failed to register as foreign agents, used false statements to obtain visas, and committed wire fraud. The most notable accusations involved organizing phony rallies, mounting a massive social media campaign to influence behavior, and paying Americans to carry out their objectives. It bears noting that many Western commentators presume that Putin directed this action. In our system, however, guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Likewise, George Beebe, the respected former head of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Russia analysis, stated the Internet Research Agency may have conducted this activity independently, without Putin’s involvement.<sup>3</sup>

The Kremlin’s strategy is to spread chaos for strategic effect, in order, as Peter B. Doran and Donald N. Jensen declared, “to confuse, distract, and disrupt.”<sup>4</sup> Three premises underlie this strategy. First, an authoritarian regime can conduct cohesive information warfare or cyber warfare. Second, the regime can cope better with chaos, and thus advance its agenda. Third, weakening other nations strengthens the regime’s power at home. While the United States views national security as protecting the nation, Putin sees it as ensuring his political survival.

Stopping Russian meddling requires an approach capable of developing strategic appreciation, forging and implementing a strategy,

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1 *United States v Internet Research Agency LLC et al.*, Criminal No. 1:18-CR-00032-DLF (2018), US District Court for the District of Columbia.

2 Michael Isikoff and David Corn, *Russian Roulette* (New York: Twelve, 2018).

3 George Beebe, “Here is What Trump Should Do about the Poisoning of a Former Russian Spy,” *National Interest*, March 15, 2018.

4 Peter B. Doran and Donald N. Jensen, “Putin’s Strategy of Chaos,” *American Interest*, March 1, 2018.

and anticipating effects and consequences. First, the best *mechanism* to forge and implement strategy must be established. The “team-of-teams” concept that General Stanley McChrystal used in Iraq seems optimal, especially when the team is fully empowered to act through the National Security Council. Since national security is at stake, military leadership with bipartisan congressional oversight seems ideal for building trust and credibility. Once established, the United States should employ *active defense* to discredit and to delegitimize Russian actions. America then should engage in a *strategic offense* to “extract a cost from Putin that outweighs the benefits” and to persuade him to shift his efforts from US politics to shoring up his own.<sup>5</sup>

Russian experts interviewed for this commentary emphasized the importance of framing any national security plan in the context of the Kremlin, not Russia or Putin.<sup>6</sup> Given Putin’s unpredictable, distrustful nature, attacking him personally could escalate matters. Characterizing Russia’s actions as Kremlin activity makes the point with fewer downsides.

### Team of Teams

A team-of-teams approach can leverage the unique resources and authorities commanded by the US presidency to forge and implement strategy. The public spokesperson for such a team should be a military professional such as Admiral Michael S. Rogers, the commander of US Cyber Command and director of National Security, or General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>7</sup> The team should include nonpartisan and bipartisan national security experts with extensive knowledge of the political aspects of the team’s efforts.

Such a diverse team would communicate collaboration and integrity to audiences who need to believe our nation’s leaders are speaking the truth in today’s polarized political environment. This combined effort would also balance the political polarity, often magnified by mass media, to seize and to maintain the critical moral high ground invaluable to information warfare. Audience trust is critical to enabling the government to articulate a credible rationale that explains what it is doing, why it is taking an action, and how the action will affect target audiences.

The team of teams is a proven concept. McChrystal employed a sophisticated one to fight al-Qaeda, and US political campaigns employ a simpler one. President Ronald Reagan applied the concept to counter Soviet active measures and to win public support for deployment of intermediate nuclear weapons in Europe. Ambassador Brian E. Carlson explains, “The cardinal principle of a team-of-teams approach recognizes that strategic leadership must flow from the White House.”<sup>8</sup>

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5 Dell L. Daily (retired lieutenant general, US Army; retired ambassador; former coordinator for counterterrorism for the Department of State), interview by author, March 13, 2018 (emphasis added).

6 Experts included Donald N. Jensen, chief of information warfare for the Center for European Policy Analysis and former diplomat who served in Moscow; George Beebe, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Russia analysis; King Mallory, senior researcher at the RAND Corporation; Jeffrey Starr, former deputy assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia; and others.

7 This idea emerged in discussions with Colonel Jeremiah R. Monk (US Air Force, and deputy director, NATO Centre of Excellence Defense against Terrorism in Ankara, Turkey).

8 Brian E. Carlson (former ambassador and former chief liaison with the Department of Defense on strategic communication and public diplomacy for the State Department), interview by author, February 13, 2018.



The cooperative nature of a team of teams counters the tendency of a bureaucracy to strangle planning and action.<sup>9</sup> A *Harvard Business Review* survey of 7,000 readers recently found bureaucracy creates bloat, friction, insularity, disempowerment, risk aversion, inertia, and politicking. Bureaucracy also devours time on preparing reports, complying with internal requests, and burying employees beneath multiple management layers.<sup>10</sup> A team of teams can avoid such inefficiencies.

McChrystal's business partner, Chris Fussell, observes that Putin understands how to exploit information-age threats: "Putin leverages many of the same factors that allowed al-Qaeda to become an exceptionally destabilizing force."<sup>11</sup> Fussell notes Russia employs diverse strategies, operations, and tactics in carrying out its propaganda activities. No single solution or entity, can defeat either. A wide range of parties, many working as small teams, is required.

Fussell states, "Small teams do their best work when they communicate faster and more effectively than the problems they face." The challenge is to scale that approach to the enterprise level. In Iraq, "thousands of personnel, from a wide range of organizations, resynchronized on a very aggressive cadence in order to move faster than al-Qaeda, which could rewrite the rules as they saw fit on any given day." Although al-Qaeda moved quickly, McChrystal's team moved faster, a pivotal capability that allowed the general to tailor his approach to Iraq. Fussell also notes that the communication structure moved quickly:

Resynchronizing for 90 minutes every 24 hours. . . . the sessions would include thousands of participants around the globe. More important than the cadence or methodology of these forums was the end state they aimed to achieve. The intent of each session was to reestablish a shared consciousness between those involved, that is, a common understanding of what the problem looked like in the moment, and what new intelligence was most critical to the next phase of decision-making.<sup>12</sup>

A team of teams can involve fewer participants than the thousands McChrystal engaged against al-Qaeda. The approach is what matters. A team of teams could help identify Moscow's real-time stories, narratives, themes, and messages, recognizing the active channels, voices, and key influencers. The team could facilitate integrated, cohesive, and coherent messaging and countermessaging strategies. With this information, the collaborative organization would be able to maintain situational awareness to support effective operations and tactics. Team members could quickly coordinate resources across the military, government agencies, domestic organizations, and partner nations.

The team's activities would include identifying media outlets or social media sites associated with Russian intelligence; conducting target audience analysis; and holding accountable journalists who

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9 Stanley A. McChrystal, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World* (New York: Portfolio, 2015); Chris Fussell, *One Mission: How Leaders Build a Team of Teams* with C. W. Goodyear (New York: Portfolio, 2017); and Stanley A. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task* (New York: Portfolio, 2013).

10 Gary Hamel and Michele Zanini, "What We Learned about Bureaucracy from 7,000 HBR Readers," *Harvard Business Review*, August 10, 2017; and Gary Hamel, "Why Bureaucracy Must Die," *Fortune*, March 26, 2014.

11 Chris Fussell (managing partner and chief growth officer at McChrystal Group), interview by author, September 29, 2017.

12 Fussell, interview.

sell their services to Russian news channels. This information would support Justice Department action to force such parties to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. In this manner, a team of teams can integrate all elements of national power, including the military, counterintelligence, the intelligence community, the State Department, and the Justice Department.

The military's experience in employing the team-of-teams approach in contemporary situations makes it suitable for organizing and administering the team. Military expertise in cyber and electronic warfare techniques will also prove vital to detecting Russian internet channels and mitigating their impact on American interests. Assessing options for leveraging pressure points such as Ukraine also requires an appreciation for military strategy.

### *Interagency Cohesion*

No single US government department or agency would prove as effective as a team of teams. None possesses the required authorities, resources, or political influence.

*Department of State.* The mission of the Department of State's Global Engagement Center was broadened in 2017 to fight "foreign propaganda and disinformation" directed against US national security interests and "proactively promote fact-based narratives" that support United States allies and interests.<sup>13</sup> The center's last permanent chief, Michael D. Lumpkin, earned praise and the current staff is smart and hard-working. Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia, Jeffrey Starr, summarizes one inherent challenge the institution faces: "No single department or agency possesses the clout, expertise, or resources to make things happen across the US government on the scale needed to counter Russian disinformation."<sup>14</sup> The center's authority and flexibility to sole-source contracts for required subject matter expertise, an essential requirement for forging and executing fast-moving campaign strategy, is unclear. Some State Department officials indicate proposals submitted to the Global Engagement Center may take as much as a year to process. Putting it mildly, this timeframe is too long.<sup>15</sup>

*Department of Defense.* The Defense Department brings unique strategic and organizational expertise that a team of teams requires. But countering the Kremlin's information warfare demands a strong national strategy led by the president. In this conflict paradigm, information warfare, not kinetic operations, will prove decisive. The military's resources and leadership are best deployed in this type of engagement through a team of teams.<sup>16</sup> The Defense Department's role, which includes employing cybertools and addressing escalatory issues, is broad. Our military possesses unique capabilities to conduct essential human factors analysis essential to pressuring key actors who

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13 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, Pub. L. No. 114-328, 130 Stat. 2001 (2016).

14 Jeffrey Starr, interview by author, January 30, 2018.

15 Interviews by author.

16 Robert J. Giesler (former chief of Strategy and Plans in the Strategic Capabilities Office, Secretary of Defense and former director of Information Operations and Strategic Studies), interview by author, February 15, 2018.

can influence Putin. Theater security cooperation activities offer a viable counterpropaganda platform. The military must also lead North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) cooperation important to other global security efforts.

*Interagency Fusion Cell.* The minority staff of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has advocated for a fusion cell, modeled on the approach used by the National Counterterrorism Center, to counter Russian influence operations.<sup>17</sup> The most challenging aspect of this approach involves relying exclusively on government expertise. The pace and complexity of information warfare requires a wide range of outside experts—many with unconventional skills—who can be hired on a sole-source basis. Beebe cautions such cells establish another bureaucracy as departments and agencies rarely “send their top-tier talent to these teams. And once the representatives arrive, typically their priority is to put the interests of their parent organization ahead of the fusion cell.”<sup>18</sup> As Carlson adds, such task forces have previously “crashed and crumbled on the sharp rocks of each agency’s distinct mission, budget, congressional mandate, regulations, procedures, and self-image” with little success in achieving their purpose.<sup>19</sup>

The intelligence community should support the team of teams. But in contrast to the covert nature of intelligence activities, efforts of the team of teams should be overt. Persuading the Kremlin to back down requires transparency. The public needs to understand what the Kremlin is doing. Putin needs to understand the consequences of Kremlin actions. A team of teams can capitalize on the strengths of all elements of national power to achieve its objectives and leverage the power of the presidency to maximize them.

## Employ Active Defense

The notion of active defense embraces many options. The team of teams should focus on understanding foreign propaganda efforts, recognizing the individual and organizational agents that influence American interests, involving private industry in disseminating accurate and transparent information, and improving legislative accoutrements by increasing enforcement of established laws and expanding restrictions on employing bots.

## Understand Propaganda

The military’s cybercapability is ideal for identifying the communication channels that are creating propaganda and for achieving the reach, penetration, and impact of the narratives, themes, and messages. Target audience analysis can identify what stories, narratives, themes, and messages are circulating—and the language in which they are articulated. The analysis can reveal how messages resonate with different audiences through opinion research, such as focus groups and surveys, and behavioral research that identifies how language affects audiences intellectually and emotionally. Target audience analysis also integrates

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<sup>17</sup> *Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security, Prepared for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, S. Prt. 115-21, 115th Cong 155 (January 10, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> George Beebe, interview by author, February 10, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Carlson, interview.

opinion research with intelligence sources and uses information gained from grassroots and grassstops engagement.<sup>20</sup> This information can be shared with US audiences to help them understand the nature of communications originating with parties promoting foreign interests. Measures of attitudes and opinions gained from this information will also allow the team of teams to forge winning narratives, themes, and messages and to allocate resources. The military's experience in target audience analysis makes it the most appropriate leader for this effort.

### *Recognizing Agents*

Most Americans lack awareness of the many media outlets, such as RT and RIA Global LLC (*Sputnik*), that are linked to Russian intelligence. English language shows—such as *News with Ed Schultz*, *Larry King Now*, *America's Lawyer* with Mike Papantonio, and *Going Underground*—and the employment of American journalists provide foreign news outlets with false legitimacy as independent news organizations.<sup>21</sup> Can anyone imagine the American journalist Edward R. Murrow selling his services to German propagandist Joseph Goebbels like Larry King has to RT?

Walter Isaacson, former managing editor of *Time* and chief executive officer of CNN, argues efforts to discourage individuals from contributing to such propaganda must be pursued cautiously with a goal of achieving resiliency: “I would not favor imposing official or legal sanctions on American citizens working for such organizations, because it could set a dangerous precedent that restricts free speech. . . . But if someone is shilling for an organization you believe is harmful, you have an absolute right to call them out for it, and I think that we should.”<sup>22</sup>

The United States could, for example, prohibit business activity under the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act similar to the Treasury Department and the Office of Foreign Assets Control prohibitions against Iran and Libya.<sup>23</sup> The team of teams can identify the best approach for holding US citizens accountable for associations that support and legitimize Russian propaganda while forging resilience.

### *Role of Industry*

Industry groups should be discouraged from treating foreign propaganda operations as legitimate organizations. For example, when the International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences considers RT for Emmy Awards in news and current affairs, the American people might begin to associate the media channel communicating Russian intelligence messages as a trustworthy source.<sup>24</sup> By drawing upon industry and legislative expertise, the team of teams could appropriately

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20 James P. Farwell and Darby J. Arakelian, “Using Information in Contemporary War,” *Parameters* 46, no. 3 (Autumn 2016): 76–86. Political consultants refer to opinion leaders as “grassstops.”

21 “Shows,” RT, accessed April 26, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/shows/>.

22 Walter Isaacson, interview by author, February 26, 2018.

23 Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act, Pub. L. No. 115-44 (2017); “Iran Sanctions,” US Department of the Treasury, April 16, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/iran.aspx>; and “Libya Sanctions,” US Department of the Treasury, March 6, 2018.

24 “RT Becomes First Ever Russian TV Channel To Get Emmy News Nomination,” RT, January 1, 2000, <https://www.rt.com/about-us/press-releases/rt-becomes-first-russian-tv-channel-emmy-news-nomination/>.

develop sanctions that offer an actionable strategy and determine laws or amendments to existing laws to achieve this goal.<sup>25</sup>

### *Improving Legislation*

*Enforcing current laws.* The decision to require Sputnik International, RT, and *RIA Global LLC* to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which covers agents “seeking economic or political advantage for their clients,” was significant.<sup>26</sup> The act covers “foreign political parties, a person or organization outside the United States, except U.S. citizens, and any entity organized under the laws of a foreign country or having its principal place of business in a foreign country.”<sup>27</sup> The statute excludes news or press agencies if ownership is held by at least 80 percent US citizens and the organization is not directed, supervised, controlled, subsidized, or financed by any foreign principals. Using the Foreign Agents Registration Act for all sites associated with foreign intelligence agencies would force Moscow to label their “informational materials” with a conspicuous disclosure of the agents acting for a foreign principal.<sup>28</sup> Exposing this truth will help discredit the manipulative communications.

*Expanding restrictions.* A study by Oxford University’s Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard examined “the use of algorithms, automation, and human curation to purposefully distribute misleading information over social media networks,” in contexts such as the use of bots during the 2016 US elections. Their research examined 17 million tweets from 1,798,127 unique users and concluded “false news reports . . . can in many cases be considered to be a form of computational propaganda. Bots are often key tools in propelling this disinformation across sites like Twitter, Facebook, Reddit, and beyond.”<sup>29</sup> The study concluded that bots challenge the integrity of democratic political processes because they “are easily programmable . . . can be deployed by just about anyone with preliminary coding knowledge. . . . [and can be used] to create an illusion of popularity around fringe issues or political candidates.”<sup>30</sup>

Some researchers have concluded bots are “capable of massively distributing propaganda in social and online media” and can be “partly responsible for recent election results.”<sup>31</sup> Bots enable operators to flood voter perceptions with false or misleading assertions that can overwhelm

25 For one example of flawed legislation that could benefit from the team of teams, see the Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act. Peter Baker and Sophia Kishkovsky, “Trump Signs Russian Sanctions into Law, With Caveats,” *New York Times*, August 2, 2017.

26 Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, 22 U.S.C. §611 et seq (2011); Nathan Layne, “U.S.-Based Russian News Outlet Registers as Foreign Agent,” Reuters, February 17, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-russia-propaganda/u-s-based-russian-news-outlet-registers-as-foreign-agent-idUSKCN1G201H>; and “Criminal Resource Manual: 2062. Foreign Agents Registration Act Enforcement,” Offices of the United States Attorneys, <https://www.justice.gov/usam/criminal-resource-manual-2062-foreign-agents-registration-act-enforcement>.

27 “General FARA Frequently Asked Questions,” US Department of Justice, August 21, 2017, <https://www.fara.gov/fara-faq.html#1>.

28 22 U.S.C. 611(d).

29 Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard, *Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary*, working paper 2017.11 (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2017), 3, 5, 8, 9.

30 Douglas Guilbeault and Samuel Woolley, “How Twitter Bots Are Shaping the Election,” *Atlantic*, November 1, 2016.

31 Christian Grimme et al., “Social Bots: Human-like by Means of Human Control?,” *Big Data* 5, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): 279, doi:10.1089/big.2017.0044.

the capacity of humans to respond. Aided by the coming era of artificial intelligence, the dangers posed by bots are going to escalate. In *The Madcom Future*, a highly recommended publication, Foreign Service Officer Matt Chessen articulates the dangers of a dystopian social media environment that this technology poses.<sup>32</sup>

The Constitution guarantees US citizens freedom of speech. But that right does not extend to robots. In fact, algorithmic assessments and automated messages generated through artificial intelligence, especially when such “speech” influences elections, should not be protected. To prevent the use of such technology from manipulating US citizens, social media platforms should be required to authenticate whether a human is not only responsible for managing each account but is also communicating from it. The authenticity of human communications becomes more important as the ability of artificial intelligence to create artificial realities using avatars on social media platforms increases the challenges of countering fake news and disinformation.

### The Strategic Offensive

Offensive tactics and operations should be strategically layered and executed, which requires military appreciation and leadership. Persuading Putin to back down is *Realpolitik* that requires understanding his perception of the strategic situation and his motivations. Many commentators believe the Kremlin instigated the election meddling. But the Russian experts interviewed for this article agreed with reports that the Kremlin felt it merely responded to its perception of US aggression such as the bombing of Belgrade in 1999, retaining Muammar Gadhafi in Libya, and meddling in Russian elections.<sup>33</sup> The experts agree Hillary Clinton’s criticism of Putin infuriated him and served as a key motivator for the Kremlin’s meddling in the US election of 2016.<sup>34</sup>

Realistically, offensive actions may best be aimed at establishing, in Beebe’s words, a “rules of the road” by which all sides refrain from meddling in election infrastructure in Russia, the United States, and other Western nations.<sup>35</sup> Establishing that framework will require strategic military input as well as an evaluation of political and diplomatic considerations. The task is daunting but doable. Strategy needs to be thought through carefully and executed to account for Putin’s emotional, unpredictable nature.

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32 Matt Chessen, *The Madcom Future: How Artificial Intelligence Will Enhance Computational Propaganda, Reprogram Human Culture, and Threaten Democracy . . . And What Can Be Done about It*, (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2017).

33 Evan Osnos, David Remnick, and Joshua Yaffa, “Trump, Putin and the Cold War,” *New Yorker*, March 6, 2017; Arkady Ostrovsky, *The Invention of Russia* (New York: Penguin, 2015); Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin’s Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2016); Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, *The Red Web: The Kremlin’s Wars on the Internet* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015); “Statement on Addition of NDI to Russian ‘Undesirable Organizations’ List,” NDI, March 10, 2016, <https://www.ndi.org/Statement-Russian-Undesirable-Organizations-List>; and “Russia Adds International Republican Institute to Growing List of ‘Undesirable Organizations,’” International Republican Institute, August 18, 2016, <http://www.iri.org/resource/russia-adds-international-republican-institute-growing-list-%E2%80%9Cundesirable-organizations%E2%80%9D>.

34 Will Kirby, “‘Revenge’ Vladimir Putin ‘Interfered in the US Election To Get Back at Hillary Clinton,’” *Express* (London), December 12, 2016; and Isikoff and Corn, *Russian Roulette*.

35 George Beebe, interview by author, March 23, 2018.



### *Increase Political Pressure*

The team of teams could coordinate a human factors analysis through the Department of Defense to identify key state and state-proxy influentials whose agendas Putin spends much time balancing. By understanding the recipients of Putin's selective repression and manipulation, which includes arrests and feeding interpersonal animosity among Russia's leaders, strategists can target individuals such as Dmitry Rogozin, who was recently promoted from presiding over Russia's growing military-industrial complex, and Yevgeny Prigozhin, dubbed "Putin's Chef," who runs the indicted internet research company, to exert pressure.<sup>36</sup> These individuals and other influentials could add pressure for Putin to back off US election interference.<sup>37</sup> While this article refrains from itemizing all the legal tools available to make the lives of influential Russians difficult, plenty of options exist: assigning an unwanted label such as "criminal" and conducting hours of Customs and Border Protection questioning are but two inconvenient pressures. There are any number of ways to make the daily lives of Russian dignitaries more difficult, and irritate them to the point that they complain to Putin.

If more intense efforts become necessary, financial sanctions, cybertools, and weaponized social media can also play havoc in their personal lives. In this situation, Putin may find attending to the whining influentials preferable to meddling in foreign elections.<sup>38</sup> A less optimal tactic involves imposing complete sanctions at a single stroke. Layered tactics will enable the team of teams to develop an effective strategy to gradually increase the pressure and clearly communicate the tactics will stop when Putin does. Putin might not yield if the demand is to change his policies on Ukraine; however, he may well prove responsive to demands about our elections.

### *Apply Distractive Measures*

In addition to creating a political environment that forces Putin to focus his attention closer to home, the same types of weaponized social and broadcast media employed against the United States can be used to discredit and to delegitimize Putin's leadership in Russia. That strategy would also require him to respond to domestic issues. Russians are aware of the concentration of wealth and power in their country. Yet a 24/7 direct broadcast satellite news service could expose corruption, nepotism, and incompetence that Russians already suspect. America's driving of that narrative will aggravate Putin.<sup>39</sup>

Putin lacks the total control once exerted by Joseph Stalin. He does not control events. That renders his regime politically brittle. We could use social and broadcast media to attack the history the Kremlin invokes to justify its actions. That history includes the myth that World War II was a patriotic war that united Russians and that it was won without

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36 The United States has already instituted some sanctions against notable Russians. "Общегражданский проект «Список Путина»" (The All-Citizens Project: Putin's List), Forum Free Russia, December 5, 2017, <https://www.forumfreerussia.org/main/2017-12-05/obshhegrazhdanskij-proekt-sostavlyаем-spisok-putina-2/>.

37 Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men*; and interviews with Mallory, Jensen, and Beebe.

38 Donald P. Jensen, interview by author, February 27, 2018.

39 King Mallory, interview by author, February 16, 2018.



allied help.<sup>40</sup> A reminder that Stalin sent returning prisoners of war to labor camps, sponsored mass deportations of Chechens and others, and acted as a despotic tyrant would challenge Russians' perceptions of the state. Changing fixed attitudes and beliefs that a target audience holds is challenging. But Putin roots his policies in the myth, which he cannot afford to lose.

These actions require military leadership to support the target audience analysis, provide strategic appreciation, and develop the story, narrative, theme, and message. Given Putin's tendency toward emotional and unpredictable reactions, clear communications to the Kremlin about what and why actions are being taken must be conveyed by credible communicators to avert avoidable escalation. The military can also conduct beneficial military-to-military back-channel communications with the Kremlin, which provides another reason for a servicemember to be the public face of the team of teams.

### *Employ Cybertools*

The capability to use cybertools against critical infrastructure offers strategic and tactic opportunities. The *Washington Post* reported Obama "authorized planting cyberweapons in Russia's infrastructure, the digital equivalent of bombs that could be detonated if the United States found itself in an escalating exchange with Moscow."<sup>41</sup> Reportedly, he left the decision on whether to use the capability to President Trump. The complex nature of this decision, as well as the magnitude of intended and unintended consequences arising from employing malware, mandate the president seek expert advice on potential scenarios and effects before approving cyberaction.

A properly configured team of teams would possess this expertise. The knowledge would enable the team to understand the intricacies associated with precise targeting and to address relevant concepts. Some experts on the team will recognize the intended and unintended political consequences of using cybertools. The team must use this information to guide the team's development of clear explanations and recommendations for the National Security Council and the president. Experts involved with Stuxnet, for example, could explain the importance of differentiating "between the propagator, or boost-phase code that disseminates the program, and the actual payload code that creates the physical effect on a target (the distinction between the gift wrapping and the gift)" to protect the global network while affecting the intended target.<sup>42</sup>

The broad perspective developed by the team of teams can limit situations identified by Herbert Lin in which factors such as "poorly designed malware and inadequate intelligence can cause unintended collateral damage." Incidents occurring because of these factors may appear "deliberate rather than accidental . . . thereby setting the stage for escalation." Lin explains, "Using cybertools to retaliate against Russian interference in our political process may be appropriate and

40 Donald P. Jensen, interview by author, February 23, 2018.

41 Greg Miller, Ellen Nakashima, and Adam Entous, "Obama's Secret Struggle to Punish Russia for Putin's Election Assault," *Washington Post*, June 23, 2017; and Isikoff and Corn, *Russian Roulette*.

42 James P. Farwell and Rafal Rohozinski, "The New Reality of Cyber War," *Survival* 54, no. 4 (August-September 2012): 108, doi:10.1080/00396338.2012.709391.

useful, but only if the United States is willing and able to tolerate a Russian counterresponse.”<sup>43</sup> One tactic that merits close consideration is neutralizing known Russian bots that interfere in our elections such as those used by the Internet Research Agency.

### *Stabilize International Relations*

Putin has staked his leadership credibility on his actions in Ukraine, which creates a strategic pressure point. Competing schools of thought argue how best to exploit this potential. Experts such as Jensen believe Russia will never accept Ukrainian neutrality between Russia and the West; they argue for bolstering Ukrainian security and economic resilience. Experts such as Beebe are more optimistic about stabilizing these relationships and foresee a neutrality agreement that excludes the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO.

The strategy debate for Ukraine lies in another venue. Yet the pressure point of Ukrainian-Russian relations should be leveraged. Furthermore, the strategy should also include locating a military information support operations team in our embassy in Kiev.

### **Conclusion**

Nikki Halley, US ambassador to the United Nations, has characterized Russia’s meddling as “warfare.”<sup>44</sup> The White House possesses the clout to counter Russia’s disinformation activity. Employing a team-of-teams approach will improve the president’s understanding of the available options. Tough decisions may be necessary—for example, altering voter rolls or election outcomes may justify attacking Russian critical infrastructure. Such action mandates communicating the consequences to the Kremlin clearly, privately, and precedently.<sup>45</sup>

America’s communication during information and cyber warfare must build and maintain trust in the truth, articulate a credible rationale for the necessary action, and claim the moral high ground for it. The credibility of the US military argues for using it as the face of national security matters. Working with a team of teams, military contacts with the Russian military will enable constructive engagement to avert avoidable or accidental escalation. The military’s expertise in psychological and influential operations, cybertools, electronic warfare, and assessing Russian capabilities and intentions align with the pivotal role for forcing the Kremlin to stop meddling in US election processes.

An empowered team of teams can forge and execute active defense to discredit and to delegitimize Russian action in the United States. The team can compel Putin to shift his focus away from US politics to his affairs at home. But we need to take action before the escalation cycle becomes irreversible.

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43 Herbert Lin, interview by the author, February 19, 2018.

44 Maegan Vazquez, “Nikki Haley: Russian Cyberinterference into US Elections Is ‘Warfare,’” CNN, October 19, 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/19/politics/nikki-haley-russia-warfare/index.html>.

45 Annabelle Dickson and Laurens Cerulus, “British Cyber Option to Punish Russia Prompts Fear of ‘Electronic War,’” *Politico*, March 13, 2018.



## Countering Russian Disinformation

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Timothy P. McGeehan

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**ABSTRACT:** This article proposes three types of strategies for countering information operations campaigns. The author also presents considerations for the military role in these efforts.

Technology-based strategic advantages are perishable. In recent years, the accelerating pace of the diffusion of technology has shown many of these advantages to be downright fleeting. Secure worldwide communications, high-resolution satellite imagery, and unmanned aerial systems were once the purview of nations that had made massive governmental investments in long-term research and development, infrastructure, training, and personnel. Now they are all freely available, and affordable, for private civilians to purchase. Likewise, military hardware—such as precision-guided munitions, advanced sensor networks, electronic warfare systems, and cybercapabilities—have expanded beyond the inventories of a few select nations to become the backbone of adversarial antiaccess/area denial strategies to limit Western military action. In this strategic environment, the advantage lies not with the nation who overtly displays power but with the nation who covertly controls information.

Previous offset strategies rooted in industrial-age processes, relied on military technologies few nations could easily replicate. In contrast, a variety of actors now draw many advanced information technologies that may yield competitive advantage, such as big data algorithms and artificial intelligence capabilities, directly from today's industry. To some extent these technologies, and the operational concepts to employ them, have already proliferated. Furthermore, many companies working at the leading edge of emerging dual-use technologies are leery of partnering with Western governments, which frequently insist on owning the intellectual property (the lifeblood of information-age companies), impose export regulations (drastically limiting the market and opportunity for profit), and use cumbersome contracting processes (that tend to be much slower and less flexible than those of industry).<sup>1</sup> These limitations encourage technology companies to sell their wares to America's global power competitors as initiatives such as Defense Innovation Unit-Experimental (DIUx) flounder.<sup>2</sup>

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1 John Louth, Trevor Taylor, and Andrew Tyler, *Defence Innovation and the UK: Responding to the Risks Identified by the US Third Offset Strategy* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2017); and Robert Hummel and Kathryn Schiller Wurster, "Department of Defense's Innovation Experiment," Science, Technology, Engineering, and Policy Studies, June 30, 2016, <http://www.potomac institute.org/steps/featured-articles/83-department-of-defense-s-innovation-experiment>.

2 Damon V. Coletta, "Navigating the Third Offset Strategy," *Parameters* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2017–18): 47–62; and Patrick Tucker, "As Pentagon Dawdles, Silicon Valley Sells Its Newest Tech Abroad," *Defense One*, April 22, 2016.

## Influencing Perception

Modern strategists understand the well-established goal of influencing the perceptions of a population remain constant even as the technology of the Information Age evolves. Alexander the Great employed propaganda “to not just help him achieve victory but sustain his influence long after leaving.”<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz wrote at length about moral as well as matériel factors, including the importance of the passions of the people in relation to the ability of a nation to wage war. More recently, General Douglas MacArthur stated, “One cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously molded by the press and other forms of propaganda.”<sup>4</sup> Today, capabilities that target and successfully manipulate the perceptions of another nation’s public, particularly in a Western democracy, can seem to strengthen military power. As Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, observed, “The information space opens wide asymmetrical possibilities for reducing the fighting potential of the enemy.”<sup>5</sup>

War is fundamentally about securing strategic and political objectives. A nation that can achieve those objectives without resorting to physical force not only avoids the associated cost in blood and treasure but also may nullify its adversary’s military capabilities, no matter how effective they may be. Military tacticians frequently discuss “breaking the kill chain” to refer to the series of steps a combat system must take from initially detecting a target to establishing a firing solution through actually delivering a weapon. While one can attempt to interrupt this series of events at any stage, it is preferable to attack the kill chain “as far to the left” as possible in order to buy time and employ multiple defenses to increase the chance of survival.<sup>6</sup> With this in mind, the overall kill chain can be extended much further, to include the decision to deploy military forces in the first place.

In a Western democracy, the people are the ultimate decision-makers. They determine who is elected to office and, by extension, their desires broadly shape foreign policy and guide military interventions. Russia is attempting to offset Western technological superiority by going straight to the population and shaping their opinions in favor of Russian objectives. In doing so, they could preempt the entire Western war machine and ensure it is not brought to bear. This strategy was explicitly described by Russian strategists Sergey G. Chekinov and Sergey A. Bogdanov, who advocated for actively engaging in an “information struggle” to achieve “information superiority” and “create conditions for the government to achieve its political objectives in peacetime, without using armed force.”<sup>7</sup> Over 2000 years ago, Sun Tzu extolled indirect methods, deception, and

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3 Haroro J. Ingram, *A Brief History of Propaganda during Conflict: Lessons for Counter-Terrorism Strategic Communications* (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016), 7.

4 US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-53 (Washington, DC: JCS, 2003), I-9.

5 Valery Gerasimov, “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight,” *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January-February 2016): 27.

6 Jonathan Greenert and Mark Welsh, “Breaking the Kill Chain,” *Foreign Policy*, May 17, 2013.

7 Sergey G. Chekinov and Sergey A. Bogdanov, “Initial Periods of Wars and Their Impact on a Country’s Preparations for a Future War,” *Military Thought* 21, no. 4 (December 2012): 27, quoted in Michael Petersen and Richard Moss, “Use the Truth as a Weapon,” *Proceedings* 144, no. 2 (February 2018): 71.

breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting. Now, Russia is using that advice to break the kill chain about as far left as possible.

Thucydides showed the population of a democracy could be manipulated by rhetoric to pursue actions not necessarily in its best interests, and J. Robert Oppenheimer underscored this point, warning responsible employment of psychology to influence people would become even more important to Western society than the responsible use of physics and nuclear weapons. He described how advances in psychology would present “the most terrifying prospects of controlling what people do and how they think and how they behave and how they feel.”<sup>8</sup>

Today a clever adversary can leverage a modern understanding of human psychology to advance his own agenda by exploiting citizens through the dissemination of falsehoods that appear believable. Notably, this acceptance occurs because the disinformation appeals to the target audience's preexisting moral, ethical, cultural, religious, or racial beliefs. Likewise, an adversary can target the fault lines along the conflicting views of a democracy's subgroups with tailored messaging designed to polarize a debate further and drive a wedge between the groups. This tactic erodes the trust between citizens and their government, and makes the truth less about objective facts and more about subjective beliefs they hold.

While propaganda and disinformation have been employed against the populations of Western nations (most famously by the “active measures” of the Soviet Union during the Cold War), changing technology has enabled a much more potent capability.<sup>9</sup> By utilizing the internet as a direct conduit to individual Western citizens, Russia has created an extremely efficient asymmetric weapon. Russia did not have to spend lavishly, develop new technology, fund infrastructure, or procure new platforms to attack these targets: commercial industry, advertising firms, and people (the targets) provided it themselves.

For example, recent surveys have shown 77 percent of American adults reported having a smartphone, and 72 percent of Americans said that they get news on those devices.<sup>10</sup> The statistics are similar in Europe. Every time one of these citizens accesses the internet, particularly social media during a political campaign season, they essentially deploy to the front lines in an information war where they are bombarded with content. Moreover, in this war, civilians are not collateral damage; they are the target. Facebook testified to Congress that on their platform alone approximately 126 million Americans (about 40 percent of the US population) may have viewed Russian-sponsored posts and content during the last presidential election. That figure was later revised upward

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8 J. Robert Oppenheimer, “Analogy in Science,” *American Psychologist* 11, no. 3 (1956), 128.

9 Michael Dhunjishah, “Countering Propaganda and Disinformation: Bring Back the Active Measures Working Group?” War Room, July 7, 2017, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/countering-propaganda-disinformation-bring-back-active-measures-working-group/>.

10 Lee Rainie and Andrew Perrin, “10 Facts about Smartphones as the iPhone Turns 10,” Pew Research Center, June 28, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/28/10-facts-about-smartphones/>; and Amy Mitchell et al., “Pathways to News,” Pew Research Center, July 7, 2016, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/pathways-to-news/>.

to 150 million.<sup>11</sup> Russia has deployed similar information operations (IO) campaigns against elections in France, Germany, and the Ukraine, as well as the Brexit referendum and Catalan independence vote.<sup>12</sup> Other nations have taken note, and similar activity was reported in 18 elections worldwide over the last year.<sup>13</sup>

## Dissecting the IO Campaign

Interestingly, the current Russian IO campaign contains some elements of the previous American offset strategies. The First Offset Strategy, also known as the New Look, relied on the nuclear weapons capability to offset the numerical superiority of conventional Soviet forces.<sup>14</sup> Akin to employing nuclear weapons and the consequences of lingering radiation, the current Russian IO campaign not only overwhelms the information space but also pollutes it with falsehoods to the point that all truth becomes relative, rendering the information space unusable by any party. Likewise, marketing techniques developed for the “attention economy,” enable remote operatives to conduct reconnaissance and targeting from afar and to deliver tailored disinformation directly to specific audiences. This technique is reminiscent of the Second Offset’s “reconnaissance strike complexes” and the development of weapons with “near-zero miss” accuracy required after the Soviets achieved nuclear parity.<sup>15</sup> Humans can also team with botnets to ensure maximum online delivery of content during a messaging campaign, which is essentially an expression of the Third Offset’s “human machine teaming” vision. In fact, a recent study found between 9 percent and 15 percent of Twitter posts are already created by bots, which underscores this point and hints at the potential for growth.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, the current Russian IO campaign most closely resembles Giulio Douhet’s original airpower theory. Instead of attacking though an enemy’s army to reach their population, Douhet advocated flying over the army for direct contact. With severe enough punishment through aerial bombing, to include poison gas, the population would force their government to sue for peace. Douhet believed the difficulty of searching the extended airspace favored the attacker, as the defender would have to spread his assets thin, reducing the mass he could bring to bear should he find and close with the attacking bomber.<sup>17</sup> Douhet likened

11 David Ingram, “Facebook Says 126 Million Americans May Have Seen Russia-Linked Political Posts,” Reuters, October 30, 2017; Sarah Frier, “Facebook, Twitter Testimony Shows Widespread Russian Meddling,” Bloomberg, October 30, 2017; and Spencer Ackerman, “Facebook Now Says Russian Disinfo Reached 150 Million Americans,” *Daily Beast*, November 1, 2017.

12 “How the World Was Trolled: Once Considered a Boon to Democracy, Social Media Have Started To Look Like Its Nemesis,” *Economist*, November 4, 2017; “Londongrad: Russian Twitter Trolls Meddled in the Brexit Vote. Did They Swing It?,” *Economist*, November 23, 2017; and Vasco Cotovio and Emanuella Grinberg, “Spain: ‘Misinformation’ on Catalonia Referendum Came from Russia,” CNN, November 13, 2017.

13 “Freedom on the Net 2017: Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy,” Freedom House, accessed May 9, 2018, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/freedom-net-2017>.

14 Shawn Brimley, “Offset Strategies & Warfighting Regimes,” War on the Rocks, October 15, 2014, <https://warontherocks.com/2014/10/offset-strategies-warfighting-regimes/>.

15 Katie Lange, “3rd Offset Strategy 101: What It Is, What the Tech Focuses Are,” DoD Live, March 30, 2016; and Anthony D. McIvor, ed., *Rethinking the Principles of War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 85.

16 Onur Varol et al., “Online Human-Bot Interactions: Detection, Estimation, and Characterization,” Cornell University Library, March 27, 2017, <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1703.03107v2>.

17 Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans. Dino Ferrari (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998).



this defense to “a man trying to catch a homing pigeon by following him on a bicycle.”<sup>18</sup> Defending the Western public against internet-enabled campaigns to shape perception is likewise challenging. The proposition that a nation can equally counter every adversarial post, story, tweet, or advertisement is not reasonable.

### Countering the IO Campaign

If Douhet’s airpower theory provides insight into the attack, it is also worth examining for a method of defense. He advocated an active defense by attacking an adversary’s airfields to destroy their air force before it could even take off.<sup>19</sup> That would be analogous to targeting the blogging “troll farms” that the Russians use to create and spread their disinformation.<sup>20</sup> However, this solution could be fleeting, as the users could just shift locations, change IP addresses, and establish new accounts if they were located and blocked.

There are significant differences that make the airpower analogy incomplete—for example, there is a finite number of aircraft but an endless supply of disinformation. Aircraft require a sophisticated industrial base, long-term maintenance programs, and logistical support to deploy them and to keep them operational, whereas disinformation does not. If an aircraft is shot down or crashes, it is out of the fight. Disinformation can be reused with multiple audiences, or it can linger unattended until someone comes across it, much like unexploded ordnance or mines. These dissimilarities highlight the need for a different solution.

### Artificial Intelligence

Douhet’s airpower theory failed to account for the impacts of advancing technology. Airpower did not crush the United Kingdom during the Blitz in World War II, despite the bombing campaign’s deliberate targeting of the civilian population and its will. Newly deployed radar technology enabled the Royal Air Force to husband its fighter resources and vector them efficiently to intercept German bombers. The advantage of the attackers to maneuver throughout the three-dimensional airspace, complicating the defender’s search via aircraft, was “offset” by the defenders having technology that searched the entire airspace, allowing them to mass forces as desired.<sup>21</sup>

Artificial intelligence (AI) could play a role analogous to radar. Emerging AI capabilities may act as an early warning system to detect and vector limited resources, intercepting adversarial information threats and protecting Western citizens from disinformation. With advances in machine learning, AI may reach the point where it can instantaneously discern and flag fake news and other disinformation on a massive scale. Executing “command by negation,” AI could alert human analysts to the incoming disinformation, determine its origin and delivery route, and suggest additional counters, to include posting or redirecting users to information that debunks erroneous claims.

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18 Douhet, *Command of the Air*.

19 Douhet, *Command of the Air*.

20 David Filipov, “The Notorious Kremlin-Linked ‘Troll Farm’ and the Russians Trying To Take It Down,” *Washington Post*, October 8, 2017.

21 Timothy McGeehan, “Emerging Threats to Future Sea Based Strategic Deterrence,” *Submarine Review* (December 2017): 103.

### *Containment and Resilience*

The disinformation and “fake news” phenomenon also has analogies to epidemiology. During a public health crisis, identifying and containing disease outbreaks is critical. Timely responses save lives. Likewise, quickly disseminating the truth to debunk fake news is critical as the longer a story goes without comment the more truthful it appears. During the Ebola outbreak of 2014–15, for example, people in the United States unwittingly propagated incorrect information on social media regarding transmission mechanisms and reporting local outbreaks.<sup>22</sup> These rumors led the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public affairs team to focus proactively by providing accurate information via posts on its website and social media accounts, pushing information and updates, issuing timely corrections, and holding public question-and-answer sessions. Similar strategies could be employed to counter disinformation.

Another comparison to epidemiology is the idea of inoculation. Just as public health authorities give particular focus to vulnerable subsets of a population, there is a need to identify and preemptively message groups that may be susceptible to disinformation in a “mass vaccination” messaging campaign. This leads to the concept of “herd immunity,” where enough people in the population have been inoculated to prevent the spread of disease (or disinformation). Similar “self-regulating” of inaccurate information has been observed in social media during emergency management, but more as a counter to inaccurate information (misinformation), not as a counter to sophisticated large-scale campaigns of intentionally spread disinformation.<sup>23</sup> Countermessaging campaigns also will have to be synchronized and coordinated internationally with allies and partners, because disinformation, like disease, does not recognize borders.

### *Education*

The prevention campaigns described above cannot be effective if the population does not understand them, believe them, or have an awareness of their implications. Education is paramount. It is a national security imperative that Western governments produce citizens capable of critical thought and discerning the truth. In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower complemented the First Offset Strategy with the National Defense Education Act “to strengthen our American system of education so that it can meet the broad and increasing demands imposed upon it by considerations of basic national security.”<sup>24</sup> The act focused on improving the state of American education, especially in science and engineering, to create the workforce that could sustain the offset’s technical advantage. Today an analogous education effort is needed to counter disinformation.

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22 Victor Luckerson, “Fear, Misinformation, and Social Media Complicate Ebola Fight,” *Time*, October 8, 2014.

23 Tomer Simon, Avishay Goldberg, and Bruria Adini, “Socializing in Emergencies—A Review of the Use of Social Media in Emergency Situations,” *International Journal of Information Management*, October 2015): 609–19, doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.07.001.

24 Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Statement by the President upon Signing the National Defense Education Act,” The American Presidency Project, September 2, 1958, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11211>.

Western citizens must have a grasp of the functions and the mechanisms of democracy. A lack of basic understanding of the associated institutions and their complex interplay leads to a decline in trust, which can be exploited by adversaries.<sup>25</sup> While this education should be prioritized, federal funding for civics education was completely cut in 2011 and only partially restored in 2015.<sup>26</sup> This ignorance is compounded by the widespread adoption of new information technologies that have the potential to increase human performance; however, they also bring risks. Students and teachers alike deemphasize the “memorization of facts” because they can be accessed immediately using the omnipresent internet-enabled device (computer, tablet, or smartphone). This practice essentially outsources traditional memory functions.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, in looking up facts online one can quite easily be directed to false information.

In the “attention economy,” where content is tailored for quick consumption due to short attention spans instead of complete information for comprehensive analysis, many people outsource their responsibility for critical thought altogether by, again, deferring to a search engine. This reliance assumes the facts and analysis found online are reliable. This issue is magnified by “citizen reporting,” blogs, and the “death of expertise” (where the increased access to information, reliable or not, makes amateurs believe they are just as well informed as any of the world’s leading experts who have lifelong experience in a particular field).<sup>28</sup>

In the attention economy, the population disseminates suspect content that competes for attention with traditional authoritative vetted content. Network effects take over, and these ideas propagate through social networks based not upon authority but on popularity. Some of the internet’s most highly trafficked websites, such as Reddit, promote content based upon users’ ratings and have been used intentionally by Russian trolls to insert disinformation that was amplified and spread unwittingly by legitimate users.<sup>29</sup>

Many people’s capacity for deep thought and analysis has become atrophied through disuse, and they are unable to consider objectively the reliability of sources.<sup>30</sup> To help people vet content, technology providers have provided feedback and reliability ratings that give sources the appearance of authority via quantifiable measures such as the number of times a post has been “liked” or a website has been visited. However, these measures are easily manipulated, not just by state-sponsored campaigns but by marketing and public affairs firms armed with phony user accounts and automated bots, selling “retweets,” followers,

25 John Gould, ed., *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Philadelphia: Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania / Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011).

26 Max Boot, “America is Turning Into a Confederacy of Dunces,” *Foreign Policy*, October 6, 2016; and Anna Saavedra, “Strengthening Our Democracy Starts in School,” *US News*, December 17, 2015.

27 Saavedra, “Strengthening Our Democracy”; Boot, “Confederacy of Dunces”; and Nicholas G. Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 6.

28 Thomas M. Nichols, *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why It Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

29 April Glaser, “Reddit Is Finally Reckoning with How It Helped Spread Russian Propaganda in 2016,” *Slate*, March 5, 2018.

30 Carr, *Shallows*.

subscribers, “likes,” and reviews. Costs are minimal: 10,000 site visitors for \$17.00, 100 Twitter followers for \$0.34, or 100 YouTube subscribers for \$0.66.<sup>31</sup>

While education systems are adapting to target the breadth of skills required to excel in the new environment, international surveys reveal communication and creativity rank above critical thinking in education policies.<sup>32</sup> Critical thinking must receive more focus to create citizens who can objectively evaluate information and its sources, determine plausibility of content, and look for hidden agendas. Researchers at Stanford University recently published a study revealing 80–90 percent of students “had trouble judging the credibility of the news they read.”<sup>33</sup> Likewise, citizens need to understand the pitfalls of social media and be wary of the “echo chamber” effects that isolate them from the outside world and limit the information they receive to only what they already think. While there is a renewed focus on STEM education to create a capable and competitive twenty-first century workforce, Western nations need to reinvigorate their civics and social studies programs as well as focus on “digital literacy” to build citizens into “hard targets” for disinformation. The curriculum should include a continuing education component to ensure positive impacts are individually sustainable.

### Role of the Military

Returning to the air defense analogy, Western citizens expect their militaries to intercept inbound attacks; military defense from disinformation could follow a similar model. As one of the most trusted institutions in many nations, the military could have unique authority to set the record straight.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, it appears that some of the incoming disinformation is actually coming from adversary military units.<sup>35</sup>

However, this chain of reasoning raises several red flags regarding civil-military relations. Western militaries are not “thought police,” and although they may play a supporting role in interagency processes, they should not lead a whole-of-government effort. There are attribution challenges that arise from the many stories and rumors that are not necessarily articles from state-run news outlets but instead originate on social media or websites. These situations lead to additional issues like separating legitimate free speech from disinformation, particularly if a Western democracy’s own citizens post the content. These matters should be reserved for legal authorities, not the military. Furthermore, regardless of who determines disinformation, there must be transparency in the processes and algorithms to avoid abuse by authorities.

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31 Lion Gu, Vladimir Kropotov, and Fyodor Yarochkin, *The Fake News Machine: How Propagandists Abuse the Internet and Manipulate the Public* (n.p.: Trend Micro, 2017), 27–28.

32 Esther Care, Kate Anderson, and Helyn Kim, “Visualizing the Breadth of Skills Movement across Education Systems,” Brookings Institution, September 16, 2016.

33 Kelly McEvers, “Stanford Study Finds Most Students Vulnerable to Fake News,” NPR, November 22, 2016; and Brooke Donald, “Stanford Researchers Find Students Have Trouble Judging the Credibility of Information Online,” Stanford Graduate School of Education, November 22, 2016.

34 Brian Kennedy, “Most Americans Trust the Military and Scientists To Act in the Public’s Interest,” Pew Research Center, October 18, 2016.

35 Neil MacFarquhar, “A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories,” *New York Times*, August 28, 2016; and Tony Barber, “Russia’s Dark Art of Disinformation,” *Financial Times*, September 16, 2016.

Examples of successful interagency groups who counter propaganda and disinformation, such as the Active Measures Working Group of the 1980s, can provide a template for military participation in these efforts.<sup>36</sup> In late 2016, President Barack Obama signed the Countering Disinformation and Propaganda Act into law as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, which correctly cast the Department of Defense in a supporting vice leading role.<sup>37</sup>

### The Way Ahead

History has shown military offset strategies do not confer an enduring advantage. That said, they can allow one nation to nullify temporarily some aspect of another's superiority. With its current IO campaign, Russia seeks to exert a certain level of control over the perceptions of Western citizens. The true effectiveness of Russian efforts is difficult to quantify; they may even prove counterproductive in the long term.<sup>38</sup> However, the intent alone is alarming. Russia has attempted to influence Western democracies via their most fundamental command and control system, their elections, and may further attempt to undermine the mutual commitment that underpins the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>39</sup> Focusing on artificial intelligence, public health approaches, and above all education will enable Western governments to ensure any impacts of the current Russian IO campaign are short-lived.

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36 Dhunjishah, "Countering Propaganda."

37 "President Signs Portman-Murphy Counter-Propaganda Bill into Law," Senator Rob Portman, December 23, 2016.

38 Bill Bray, "Where Russian Information Warfare Is Failing," *Proceedings* 144, no. 1 (January 2018): 1379.

39 Scott Shane, "The Fake Americans Russia Created to Influence the Election," *New York Times*, September 7, 2017.



## Victory without Casualties: Russia's Information Operations

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T. S. Allen and A. J. Moore

**ABSTRACT:** This article argues Russian information operations are a decisive tool of state power rather than a supporting element. Uniquely, Russian leaders are significantly more likely to employ diplomatic, military, and economic tools in pursuit of informational objectives than other states' leaders.

Russia is a resurgent geopolitical actor that the United States identified as a major competitor in the 2017 National Security Strategy.<sup>1</sup> Russia has maintained its position as a great power, despite its relative material weakness, through its superior use of information as a tool of asymmetric statecraft. Russian leaders consider information operations (IO) a decisive tool of state power and engage in continuous international competition in the information domain executed by both state and nonstate actors. These coordinated efforts to project influence using information and disinformation make Russian foreign policy unique. The logic of information operations often guides Russia's coordinated military, diplomatic, and economic efforts. Whereas other states' information operations are generally guided by facts, Russia's foreign policymakers create "facts" to be broadcast to targeted audiences in order to achieve strategic objectives.

Although Russia has long employed information as a tool of state power, since 2013 its military thinkers have increasingly adopted a novel approach to information that places such considerations at the forefront of their strategy. Scholars and policymakers have used many phrases—including new generation warfare, new-type warfare, hybrid warfare, and nonlinear warfare—to describe this contemporary military doctrine.<sup>2</sup> But these phrases often obscure Russian thinking. Just as previous Soviet leaders did, today's Russian military leaders attempt to obfuscate their intentions and to malign their competitors by accusing their opponents of employing Russia's desired military capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

In a widely quoted article on modern warfare, Russian Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Valery Gerasimov noted the effectiveness with which Western powers were using information to subvert states. Some commentators, including many in Russia, exaggerated the importance of Gerasimov's article, claiming it was the foundation of a new doctrine. Russian-controlled propaganda outlets used a prominent repudiation of these reports as evidence that Russia had a fundamentally benign foreign

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1 Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017).

2 Timothy L. Thomas, "The Evolving Nature of Russia's Way of War," *Military Review* 97, no. 4 (July/August 2017).

3 Timothy L. Thomas, *Thinking Like a Russian Officer: Basic Factors and Contemporary Thinking on the Nature of War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2016), 5.



policy, was not subverting its neighbors, and was under attack by enemy propagandists.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Kremlin asserted the Color revolutions in Georgia (2012), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005); the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa (2010–11), and even the Moscow protests (2011–12) were the result of planned Western interventions using hybrid warfare.<sup>5</sup> Russia claims only foreign states conduct hybrid warfare (Гибридная война). But Russia clearly does as well. As Dmitri Peskov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's press secretary, said in 2017, "If you call what's going on now a hybrid war, let it be hybrid war. It doesn't matter: It's war."<sup>6</sup>

Information operations, a key component of Russia's contemporary way of war, encompasses all the uses of information and disinformation, by states or nonstate actors, as a tool of state power and includes military information support operations, cyberspace operations, electronic warfare, military deception, psychological operations, public affairs, and strategic communications. In 2011, the Russian Ministry of Defense concept for future information operations defined information warfare (информационная война) "as the ability to . . . undermine political, economic, and social systems; carry out mass psychological campaigns against the population of a state in order to destabilize society and the government; and force a state to make decisions in the interest of their opponents."<sup>7</sup> Russian military doctrine also describes a broader concept of information confrontation (информационное противоборство) that incorporates military/technical battlefield effects and informational/psychosocial effects "designed to shape perceptions and manipulate the behavior of target audiences."<sup>8</sup> The distinction between information war and information confrontation is the "subject of detailed debate in official Russian sources" but is "of little practical impact for assessing Russian approaches."<sup>9</sup> Thus, this article expands on Russian definitions to encompass all aspects of Russian information operations as it is executed.

Many people outside Russia recognize Russian information operations and statecraft are unique, a "sharp power" influence that is "not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centers on distraction and manipulation."<sup>10</sup> Some Western military thinkers have also echoed Russia's emphasis on informational/psychosocial effects. According to the US Department of Defense, information operations "ultimately register an impact in the human cognitive dimension,"

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4 Mark Galeotti, "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine,'" *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018; and " 'Gerasimov Doctrine' Finally Put To Rest? Russia 'Expert' Apologizes for Coining Snappy Term," *RT*, March 6, 2018.

5 Nicolas Bouchet, "Russia's 'Militarization' of Colour Revolutions," *CSS Policy Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (January 2016).

6 Dmitri Peskov, quoted in Jim Rutenberg, "RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War," *New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 2017.

7 *Conceptual Views regarding the Activities of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Information Space* (Moscow: Russian Ministry of Defense, 2011) quoted in Timothy L. Thomas, "Russia's 21st Century Information War: Working To Undermine and Destabilize Populations," *Defence Strategic Communications* 1, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 12.

8 Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), *Russia Military Power: Building a Military to Support Great Power Aspirations* (Arlington, VA: DIA, 2017), 38.

9 Kier Giles, *Handbook of Russian Information Warfare*, fellowship monograph 9 (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2016), 6.

10 Christopher Walter and Jessica Ludwig, "The Meaning of Sharp Power: How Authoritarian States Project Influence," *Snapshot* (blog), *Foreign Affairs*, November 16, 2017.

which is “composed of the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of those who transmit, receive, respond to, or act upon information.”<sup>11</sup> Some strategists suggest military organizations conduct cognitive maneuver to affect the cognitive domain, in a manner similar to the Russia concept of information confrontation.<sup>12</sup> But unlike the Western understandings, Russians perceive information operations to be a decisive tool, rather than a supporting element, of state power.

## Origins

Modern Russian information operations are shaped by many traditions. Russian leaders have long placed exceptional value on using information to manipulate their enemies. Russian scholars developed an elaborate theory of information operations called reflexive control (Рефлексивное управление) that “occurs when the controlling organ conveys (to the objective system) motives and reasons that cause it to reach the desired decision, the nature of which is maintained in strict secrecy.”<sup>13</sup> This theory uses all means available to shape the information environment and manipulate what an opponent thinks to force him to make a desirable decision.<sup>14</sup>

At the tactical level, czarist and Soviet forces were masters of tactical military deception (маскировка). At the strategic level, Soviet intelligence and security services were primarily focused on subversion, known as active measures (активные мероприятия). Since forming the first Foreign Bureau of the czarist secret police, Okhrana, in 1883, Russia has pursued its foreign policy objectives through subversion. During the Cold War, the intelligence services were the Soviet Union’s main tool for shaping the international environment.<sup>15</sup> These agencies used active measures and reflexive control to undermine Russia’s enemies and were also paranoid regarding adversarial countermeasures. The Soviet Union’s active measures during the Cold War sought to divide the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, subvert governments not aligned with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and shape the class consciousness of targeted societies to make them more amenable to the Communist agenda.<sup>16</sup> The United States and its allies countered these efforts using both defensive means and countermeasures such as Voice of America and BBC broadcasts of pro-Western information into the Eastern Bloc. By the 1970s, about half of the Soviet population routinely listened to Western radio broadcasts.<sup>17</sup>

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11 US Department of Defense (DoD), *Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2016).

12 Allison Astorino-Courtois, ed., “A Cognitive Capabilities Agenda: A Multi-Step Approach for Closing DoD’s Cognitive Capability Gap” (white paper, Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Office, October 2017).

13 Timothy L. Thomas, “Russia’s Reflexive Control Theory and the Military,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 7 (2004): 241.

14 Can Kasapoglu, “Russia’s Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control,” research paper 121 (Rome: North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] Defense College, 2015).

15 Ben B. Fischer, “Okhrana: The Paris Operations of the Russian Imperial Police,” Central Intelligence Agency, July 7, 2008.

16 Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 9–17.

17 Gregory Mitrovich, “Cold War Broadcasting Impact” (report, Hoover Institution and Cold War International History Project conference, Stanford University, October 13–16, 2004), 19.

Although Soviet active measures efforts were more extensive, aggressive, and better coordinated than similar Western efforts, they were not ultimately successful.<sup>18</sup> The transatlantic Alliance survived, while Western information exposed Soviet hypocrisy and contributed to the political collapse of the Soviet Union. Retrospectively, some Russian scholars claimed the United States employed reflexive control to undermine the Soviet Union by provoking it into a costly arms race it could not win in the 1980s.<sup>19</sup> As early as 1990, the KGB also began publicizing conspiracy theories about vast American efforts to subvert the USSR.<sup>20</sup> Other Russians blamed the destabilizing myth of capitalist plenty and the American Dream for causing mass discontent.<sup>21</sup> In sum, many Russians believe Western efforts to subvert the Soviet Union with information were far more extensive—and successful—than they in fact were, which helps explain their confidence in the effectiveness of information operations. Russians also believe the United States continues to wage a massive information campaign against Russia. Putin has even claimed the internet is a “CIA project” intended to undermine Russia.<sup>22</sup>

Today, Russia invests in information operations capabilities due to their cost effectiveness and strategic impact. Despite recent modernization, Russia is unlikely to defeat the United States or NATO in a conventional military conflict. But the Kremlin wishes to reassert its historic control over former Soviet states, including some NATO members, and to increase its influence in the Middle East relative to that exerted by the United States. To solidify control without provoking a war it cannot win, Russia competes with the West by using a key nonmilitary means, information operations, in the gray zone short of declared war.<sup>23</sup>

## Decisiveness

Russian leaders think they can win wars with information operations partially due to their belief that America prevailed in the Cold War with Western reflexive control initiatives, intelligence-led subversion campaigns, and the promise of capitalism. Every senior Russian leader today “went to bed in one country and awoke in different ones” when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.<sup>24</sup> As Russia recovered from this catastrophe, intelligence and military officers faced near-state collapse and rampant cronyism, and in many cases, became enmeshed in organized crime.<sup>25</sup> Russian leaders also set out to rethink and to retool the art of subversion. In the 1998 book *If War Comes Tomorrow? The Contours of Future Armed Conflict*, Russian General Makhmut Akhmetovich

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18 Andrew and Mitrokhin, *Sword and the Shield*, xxx.

19 Thomas, “Russia’s Reflexive Control,” 239.

20 Andrew and Mitrokhin, *Sword and the Shield*, 479.

21 Svetlana Aleksievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, trans. Bela Shayevich (New York: Random House, 2016), 166.

22 Ewen MacAskill, “Putin Calls Internet a ‘CIA Project’ Renewing Fears of Web Breakup,” *Guardian*, April 24, 2014. Some early Internet users also thought the internet could undermine Soviet information control. Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, *The Red Web: The Kremlin’s Wars on the Internet* (New York: Public Affairs, 2015), 1–63.

23 Hal Brands, “Paradoxes of the Gray Zone,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 5, 2016.

24 Putin repeated this phrase when he described the collapse of the Soviet Union during his 2014 speech on the annexation of Crimea. “Address by President of the Russian Federation,” Kremlin, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

25 Edward Lucas, *Deception: Spies, Lies and How Russian Duples the West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 316.

Gareev argued information operations would be the decisive element in future wars.

The systematic broadcasting of psychologically- and ideologically-biased materials of a provocative nature, mixing partially truthful and false items of information . . . can all result in a mass psychosis, despair and feelings of doom and undermine trust in the government and armed forces; and, in general, lead to the destabilization of the situation in those countries, which become objects of information warfare, creating a fruitful soil for actions of the enemy.<sup>26</sup>

As early as 2004, Russian military academic Vladimir Slipchenko stated, “Information has become a destructive weapon just like a bayonet, bullet or projectile.”<sup>27</sup> More recent Russian military statements also suggest the decisive nature of information operations. In 2013, Gerasimov argued, “The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political goals has grown and, in many cases, they have succeeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness.” He claimed contemporary states can be rapidly overpowered by “means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces.”<sup>28</sup> Likewise, an article in the Russian journal *Military Thought* argued “information superiority and anticipatory operations will be the main ingredients of success in new-generation wars.”<sup>29</sup>

After invading Georgia in 2008, Russia redoubled its efforts to improve its IO capabilities.<sup>30</sup> When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, it employed these new capabilities in the culmination of a long-standing Russian IO campaign to influence the Russian diaspora in Crimea and convince the world that Ukraine, which was previously part of the Soviet Union, is not a state and has no independent culture. In 2014, about 27 percent of Ukrainians watched Russian television, which is Russia’s main propaganda tool and the primary source of information in most post-Soviet states.<sup>31</sup> Russia also has employed extensive online propaganda against Ukraine since the early 2000s.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, since Russia resumed control of the Black Sea Fleet’s leased port at Sevastopol, Crimea, in 1997, it established an air of Russian superiority over Ukrainian armed forces personnel stationed on adjacent bases, which undermined the morale of the Ukrainian forces there.<sup>33</sup>

26 Makhmut Akhmetovich Gareev, *If War Comes Tomorrow? The Contours of Future Armed Conflict*, ed. Jacob W. Kipp (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 51–52.

27 Makhmut Akhmetovich Gareev and Vladimir Slipchenko, *Future War* (Fort Leavenworth: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2007), 33.

28 Valery Gerasimov, “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations,” *Military-Industrial Kurier*, February 27, 2013, translated in Robert Coalson, “Top Russian General Lays Bare Putin’s Plan for Ukraine,” *The Blog, Huffington Post*, September 2, 2014.

29 Sergei G. Chekinov and Sergei A. Bogdanov, “The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War,” *Military Thought* 4 (2013), 23.

30 Timothy L. Thomas, “Russian Information Warfare Theory: The Consequences of August 2008,” in *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald*, ed. Stephen J. Blank and Richard Weitz (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010).

31 Kateryna Kruk, *Analyzing the Ground Zero: What Western Countries Can Learn from Ukrainian Experience of Combating Russian Disinformation*, Kremlin Watch Report 11.12.2017 (Prague: European Values, 2017), 13.

32 Samuel C. Woolley and Philip N. Howard, *Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary*, working paper 2017.11 (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2017), 4.

33 Ilan Berman, “How Russian Rule Has Changed Crimea,” *Snapshot* (blog), *Foreign Affairs*, July 13, 2017.

The Russian invasion of Crimea, the culmination of Russia's decades-long cognitive attack on Ukraine, altered the identity of Crimeans and solidified their nascent Russian identity. Instead of waking up in a different country, Crimeans woke up in a country they had been conditioned to believe was theirs all along. Before the invasion began, cells of Russian agents travelled to Crimea to coordinate unrest. Then, in February 2014, Russian soldiers wearing no identifiable insignia invaded Crimea.<sup>34</sup> The Ukrainian security services were isolated by an "electronic knockdown." The massive cyberattack by Russia's state and nonstate actors amplified the effects of tactical electronic warfare and the coordinated seizure of key pieces of physical information technology by armed forces.<sup>35</sup> The Ukrainians were also uncertain of their legal chain of command due to the ongoing political upheaval in Ukraine. Military members were uncertain if their officers had been coopted and uncertain of the enemy's identity. The majority of the Ukraine's armed forces withdrew from Crimea without fighting.

The logic of information operations drove Russian tactical actions in Crimea. Russian forces rapidly seized physical control of key media infrastructure in the region.<sup>36</sup> At key military installations, Russia paralyzed Ukrainian forces by surrounding them with concentric cordons of military personnel, Cossacks, and pro-Russian pensioners. The inner cordon of Russian military personnel was thus concealed, while the outer cordon presented a sympathetic popular face that Ukrainian relief forces could not fight through. This formation posed an impossible tactical/informational dilemma to Ukrainian forces. Russian forces ensured there were television cameras ready to film powerful propaganda if the Ukrainian forces attacked the elderly "protestors" and effectively deterred a Ukrainian defense.<sup>37</sup>

By leading with information operations, Russia conquered Crimea without physically fighting for it. Only one soldier, a Ukrainian, was killed during the annexation, a figure which stands in stark contrast to the 90,000 Russians and Germans who died fighting over the same territory during World War II. Russia had effectively used information as a substitute for blood and treasure, and had achieved what some Ukrainians refer to as "victory without casualties." Putin later admitted that Russian soldiers had seized Crimea, although during the invasion, the Russian government claimed no Russian troops were involved.<sup>38</sup> The denials were part of an extensive global disinformation campaign incorporating several narratives tailored to convince international policymakers and populations that Russia was not attacking Ukraine, which disrupted any potential international response.<sup>39</sup>

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34 Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, *"Little Green Men:" A Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare in Ukraine, 2013–2014* (Fort Bragg, NC: US Army Special Operations Command, 2015).

35 András Rácz, *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist*, report 13 (Helsinki: Finnish Institute of International Affairs [FIIA], 2015), 39.

36 Johns Hopkins, *"Little Green Men,"* 47.

37 Interviews with Ukrainian witnesses to the 2014 Russian military intervention in Crimea, 2015.

38 "Putin Admits Russian Forces Were Deployed to Crimea," Reuters, April 17, 2014; and "Little Green Men: The Annexation of Crimea as an Emblem of pro-Kremlin Disinformation," EU vs Disinfo, March 16, 2018.

39 Katri Pynnöniemi and András Rácz, eds., *Fog of Falsehood: Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine*, report 45 (Helsinki: FIIA, 2016).



Russian IO efforts have been most extensive and successful at home: “Russia is actively fortifying the mentality of its citizenry for war.”<sup>40</sup> The majority of the Russian people support Russian foreign policy, especially towards the United States and NATO.<sup>41</sup> Even the Russian opposition’s resistance to Russia’s blatantly illegal intervention in Ukraine remains muted.<sup>42</sup> Russia achieved this apparent national unity by inundating its population with pro-Kremlin propaganda at an accelerated pace since 2013.<sup>43</sup> No Russian IO efforts abroad have been comparably extensive or successful.

Efforts in Russian-speaking Ukraine extend from this internal effort. Soviet propaganda once portrayed Donbas as a cornerstone of the Soviet industrial base. Joseph Stalin named Sevastopol and Kerch Hero Cities for withstanding Nazi sieges during the Second World War. And Russia weaponizes this heritage with constant references to the Great Patriotic War and use of the St. George ribbon and Soviet iconography, which promulgate identity-based narratives that mobilize Pan-Slavic and Russian nationalism.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, messages of post-Soviet identity delivered on Russian television, from digital sources, and in print publications in Ukraine provide purpose and motivation to separatists and Russian proxy forces.<sup>45</sup>

## Characteristics

Russia’s information operations maintain *continuous activity* as the nation is always in a declared or undeclared war.<sup>46</sup> A *hybrid force* of state and coerced or co-opted nonstate actors execute information confrontation. This force promotes the state’s carefully crafted *emotional appeals* to manipulate a variety of audiences.<sup>47</sup> As a post-truth society, Russia promotes a *subverted reality* by inviting relativism through messages such as RT’s motto: “Question more.”<sup>48</sup> Through such actions as expelling foreign media and nongovernmental organizations, and maintaining state ownership of media platforms outside of Russia, Russia maintains *platform control*, which gives it the capability to reach key domestic and foreign audiences.<sup>49</sup> No less important than the previous characteristics is the *manipulation of the Russian diaspora*—individuals with actual or latent Russian identities—that Russia pursues to garner the

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40 Lukas Milevski, “Prospective Strategy for Baltic Defense: The Russian Public and War Termination in the Baltic States,” *Military Review* 98, no. 1 (January/February 2018): 68.

41 Margaret Vice, *Russians Remain Confident in Putin’s Global Leadership* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center Report, 2017).

42 Robert Mackey, “Navalny’s Comments on Crimea Ignite Russian Twittersphere,” *New York Times*, October 16, 2014.

43 Soldatov and Borogan, *Red Web*, 149–73.

44 Masha Gessen, *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2017), 435; and Sergei Kurginyan, “‘Essence of Time’ Manifesto,” *Europe Essence of Time*, August 14, 2011, [http://eot.su/sites/default/files/manifest\\_eot.pdf](http://eot.su/sites/default/files/manifest_eot.pdf).

45 Kruk, “Analyzing the Ground Zero,” 13.

46 Giles, *Handbook of Russian Information Warfare*, 16–32; and John Chambers, *Countering Gray-Zone Hybrid Threats: An Analysis of Russia’s ‘New Generation Warfare’ and Implications for the US Army* (West Point, NY: Modern War Institute, 2016), 26.

47 *Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns*, Before the Senate Intelligence Committee 115th Cong. (March 30, 2017) (testimony, Clint Watts, Robert A. Fox Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute, and Senior Fellow, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, George Washington University).

48 Gessen, *Future is History*, 22.

49 “Russia: Government vs. Rights Groups,” Human Rights Watch, March 6, 2018.

support of those most likely to accept the Kremlin's scripted narratives as fundamentally correct.<sup>50</sup>

### *Hybrid Force*

Hybrid actors receive instructions from the presidential administration and the Russian intelligence and security services. In some cases, such as Ukraine in 2014, the entities coordinate operations very effectively. But much of the time, they appear less well coordinated. The key to effective coordination is probably direct involvement and clear guidance from Putin, who is capable of taking total control of special operations when he considers it necessary despite his struggle to exercise command and control of the Russian government.<sup>51</sup> Since 2008, the Russian armed forces have also formed information operations troops and enhanced information capabilities.<sup>52</sup> Nongovernment entities such as the Internet Research Agency, an infamous troll farm that produces manipulative social media content, and groups of supportive or coerced hackers also conduct information operations in coordination with the Russian government.<sup>53</sup> The involvement of such nonstate actors has increased the flexibility and deniability of Russian information operations.

### *Emotional Appeal*

Russian leadership develops narratives with an emotional appeal that can be transmitted through traditional media and online social networks. They rely on individuals they do not command to spread their narrative. Although Russian actors employ fake social media profiles to plant stories and about 45 percent of Twitter activity within Russia originates with bots, these profiles have limited direct reach outside Russia.<sup>54</sup> To reach the international audience, Russia manipulates individuals into propagating the state's narrative using novel, emotionally appealing stories, which are often completely false.

Russia does not lead with a fact-based narrative because novel stories spread more rapidly than more mundane stories on social media. When artfully written, Russia's stories easily make the jump from the bubble of trolls and bots to mainstream audiences around the world. "Lies," as one analysis of computational propaganda puts it, "spread faster than the truth."<sup>55</sup> In one remarkable example of disinformation in 2014, Russian media claimed Ukrainian soldiers had crucified a child whose family supported Russia's annexation of Crimea. The false story rapidly went viral and spread across social media in Russia, Ukraine, and the West.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, the more believable and truthful stories promulgated by Western information operations spread less rapidly and

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50 Rhonda S. Zaharna, "Reassessing 'Whose Story Wins': The Trajectory of Identity Resilience in Narrative Contests," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 4407–38.

51 Gleb Pavlovsky, "Russia Politics under Putin: The System Will Outlast the Master," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 3 (May/June 2016).

52 DIA, *Russian Military Power*, 32.

53 DIA, *Russian Military Power*, 40.

54 Woolley and Howard, *Computational Propaganda*, 4.

55 Soroush Vosoughi, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral, "The Spread of True and False News Online," *Science* 359, no. 6380 (March 2018): 1146–51, doi:10.1126/science.aap9559.

56 Anna Nemtsova, "There's No Evidence the Ukrainian Army Crucified a Child in Slovyansk," *Daily Beast*, July 15, 2014.



are at a significant disadvantage in the competition to be novel, trending, and viral.<sup>57</sup>

### *Subverted Reality*

Beyond spreading flagrant lies, Russian information operations seek to enhance relativism and subvert the very idea of an objective, impartial, or nonpartisan truth, which leads audiences to approach every truth-claim with the fundamental belief that nothing is certain. Relativism maximizes Russian influence because relativistic populations are more vulnerable to emotional manipulation and reflexive control. Relativism also undermines the credibility of Western institutions and leaders. Moreover, these disruptions to basic political and media functions delay international responses to the Kremlin's deniable gray-zone activity by drawing out the time it takes for other states to recognize and to develop political consensus about Russian actions.

Another strategy for subverting reality, disseminating multiple contradictory narratives, creates information fatigue in which populations are overwhelmed with information and unable to determine what information is accurate—or more dangerously, no longer care.<sup>58</sup>

### *Platform Control*

The Russian government has the ability to influence or control many mass-media platforms. Within Russia, leaders have sought to eliminate sources of information that deviate from the official line. Russian officials suspect foreign entities because Russia's own media and many Russian nongovernmental organizations are tools of the state. Even in the West, many popular television channels and radio stations, such as Sputnik, RT, and Anna News, are agents of Russian influence. Numerous US media outlets, especially online, cite or copy Russian-generated stories. Online, platform control is less important, as social media can be influenced by bots and reflexive control of mainstream users.

Russia has recognized the emerging threat since at least 2000 when the Russian national security concept claimed “a serious danger arises from the desire of a number of countries to dominate the global information domain space.”<sup>59</sup> In 2014 Russian law mandated all digital data on Russian citizens be stored inside its borders.<sup>60</sup> More recently, an advisor to Putin said Russia is prepared to be isolated from the global internet.<sup>61</sup> Russia has also banned most use of personal social media accounts by its military personnel.<sup>62</sup>

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57 Mervyn Frost and Nicholas Michelsen, “Strategic Communications in International Relations: Practical Traps and Ethical Puzzles,” *Defence Strategic Communications* 2 (2017): 9–34.

58 Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money* (New York: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014); and Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, *Russia's “Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016).

59 “Russia's National Security Concept,” Arms Control Association, January 1, 2000.

60 Sergei Blagov, “Russia Clarifies Looming Data Localization Law,” *Bloomberg Law*, August 10, 2015.

61 “Putin Adviser Says Russia Ready To Deal With Internet Cutoff,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 6, 2018.

62 “Russian Soldiers To Lose Smartphone Privileges over Leaks,” *Moscow Times*, February 16, 2018.

In addition to controlling domestic access to information, Russia also seeks to isolate other states' populations from electronic information for limited periods of time similar to the Ukrainians' experience in 2014. Future electronic knockdowns may include physical attacks against information technology infrastructure that could create an immense shock in modern, information-centric societies.

### *Manipulation of the Russian Diaspora*

The most successful Russian information operations outside of Russia target Russian speakers in former Soviet countries where their narratives resonate. Narrative battles are inherently identity battles.<sup>63</sup> Russian diaspora populations exist throughout Russia's near abroad as well as the United States and Western Europe. In 1992, President Boris Yeltsin established Russia's right to intervene in neighboring states to protect Russian people. Under Putin, in both Ukraine and Georgia, Russia has portrayed itself as protecting ethnically Russian separatists from non-Russophone governments to justify military intervention. Moreover, Russia's foreign policy seeks to influence all Russian *compatriots*, which include "Russian Federation citizens living abroad, former citizens of the USSR, Russian immigrants from the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation, descendants of compatriots, and foreign citizens who admire Russian culture and language."<sup>64</sup>

Although Russia crafts emotionally appealing nationalist narratives in which it is the protector of disaffected Russian compatriots abroad, it would be a mistake to assume that Russian information operations will only target, or even primarily target, the Russian diaspora. Russia fights on all narrative fronts and prioritizes to achieve the greatest gains. In the current conflict in Ukraine, for example, Russia crafts messages to several different layers of identity-defined audiences. Within Russia, it messages Russian citizens to ensure their support for the regime, primarily on television.<sup>65</sup> Near Russia, it messages would-be Russian citizens who are fighting to secede from Ukraine, on television, in print media, and through directed word-of-mouth.<sup>66</sup> Further abroad, it messages the Russian diaspora population in the West, in Russian on television and on social media; this population simultaneously receives messages targeted at the populations of their countries of residence, primarily on social media. Since these narratives have no guiding logic of facts, audiences often receive contradictory information. This conflict would undermine fact-based information but it advances Russia's objective to increase relativism.<sup>67</sup> Russia is not concerned about its own credibility because its core identity-defined audience will likely continue to believe its messaging.

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63 Zaharna, "Reassessing 'Whose Story Wins.'"

64 Heather A. Conley et al., *Russian Soft Power in the 21st Century: An Examination of Russian Compatriot Policy in Estonia* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), 12.

65 Vera Zakem et al., *Mapping Russian Media Network: Media's Role in Russian Foreign Policy and Decision-Making* (Arlington: CNA, 2018).

66 Kruk, "Analyzing the Ground Zero."

67 Alexey Kovalev, "Life after Facts: How Russian State Media Defines Itself through Negation," openDemocracy, June 13, 2016; and Paul and Matthews, *Russia's "Firehose of Falsehood."*

## Unknown

While we have been able to observe several major Russian IO campaigns, there are still many outstanding questions about them. Most importantly, the West is uncertain if Russian information operations truly are decisive. The fact that Russia conducts information operations does not automatically mean it is successfully achieving its objectives with information operations.

As the West seeks to avert military conflict with Russia, understanding the conditions under which Russia will escalate from information operations to armed force is essential—but uncertain. Distinguishing the opening period of a hybrid campaign from routine Russian activity is challenging because “the preparatory phase of hybrid warfare does not differ that much from the conventional tools of Russian diplomacy.”<sup>68</sup> Russia’s decision to employ military forces is opportunistic and will likely be made only on the verge of actual operations, as it was in Crimea.<sup>69</sup>

Future Russian information operations will not inexorably escalate to kinetic action. Instead, Russia will consistently use information operations as an independent, decisive tool of statecraft. Russia launched an extensive cyberattack against Estonia in 2007 that was broadly comparable to its electronic knockdown of Georgia in 2008; but it did not attack Estonia.<sup>70</sup> In Estonia and Georgia, similar IO action in different geopolitical contexts, indicated disparate strategic intent. Given Russia’s emphasis on the ability of information operations to paralyze military organizations and whole societies, the Kremlin may attempt to use the tool to prevent enemy military action as a nonkinetic preemptive or preventative option.

We must determine how Russia will use information as a future escalatory or de-escalatory action. We must also determine how Russia integrates information operations across other domains, which is of particular interest to the US Army as it develops multidomain battle doctrine. Russian maneuver in the physical domains of land, sea, air, and space may be intended to cause effects or to create advantages in the information domain. It is clear that the Russian armed forces are willing to use kinetic operations to seize control of key information technology. The more interesting question is the extent to which they are willing to use kinetic operations to align ground truth with propaganda themes or create new propaganda opportunities.

## Conclusion

Russia, which claims the internet is a foreign plot, has mastered the use of the global network as a force-projection platform and a space for cognitive maneuver. By weaponizing information and employing information operations as a decisive tool of state power, Russia is now pressing its offensive advantages in the information domain to nullify its relative weaknesses in other domains. If Russia can divide any potential

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68 Rácz, “Russia’s Hybrid War,” 73.

69 Daniel Triesman, “Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 3 (May/June 2016).

70 Joshua Davis, “Hackers Take Down the Most Wired Country in Europe,” *Wired*, August 21, 2007.

political base of support for military operations against it, its military limitations become irrelevant.

Paradoxically, Russia also is vulnerable in the information domain. Thus, Russian leaders are working to isolate Russian societies from supposed Western influence while expanding their own influence abroad. The Kremlin may be more susceptible to internal pressure than many have realized, which underscores its weakness. Putin's aggressive efforts to control the information domain are driven in part by an awareness that his aggressive foreign policy carries domestic political risks.

Russia has made a concerted effort to use their most advanced information capabilities against larger populations to alter recent elections in several Western countries. Whether this effort had an impact, however, is a matter of intense debate.<sup>71</sup> If it did not, the simplest explanation is that Russian operations were always intended for use in Russia's near abroad rather than distant states. Subversion, as a general rule, cannot create political divisions but merely exploit existing divisions within a population. Russia is intimately aware of—and often responsible for—the divisions in its near abroad but has a harder time understanding and manipulating them further afield. Some divisions, however, are obvious. The most dangerous for the United States is the inherent division between America and its allies since they are America's strategic center of gravity.<sup>72</sup>

In a society which values freedom of speech and, arguably, freedom of information, the United States cannot counter Russian information operations by imitation. Even at the height of the Cold War, the United States was never willing to engage in the sort of subversive influence operations employed by the Soviet Union. The United States, a democratic country with a strong rule of law, will always be at a disadvantage in playing a disinformation game. By leveraging its dominance in the information domain, fortifying itself and its allies against disinformation, and engaging in a whole-of-society approach to countering Russian information operations, however, America and its allies can defeat the Russian threat. Ukraine, which has significantly inhibited the impact of Russian information operations with private and public partnerships, is one model to consider. The challenge is to counter Russian disinformation without undermining Western values and subverting ourselves.

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71 Robert M. Faris et al., *Partisanship, Propaganda, and Disinformation: Online Media and the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election*, version 1.3 (Cambridge, MA: Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, 2017).

72 General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., "Allies and Partners Are Our Strategic Center of Gravity," *Joint Force Quarterly* 87 (4th Quarter 2017).

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## Brexit and the Anglo-American Security and Defense Partnership

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James K. Wither

**ABSTRACT:** This article examines the impact of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on the longstanding special Anglo-American security and defense partnership.

When US President Donald Trump first met British Prime Minister Theresa May in January 2017, he praised the Anglo-American partnership as “one of the great forces in history for justice and for peace.” Prime Minister May was equally effusive speaking of the “bonds of history, of family, [and] kinship.”<sup>1</sup> This exchange is typical of the rhetoric of the so-called special relationship, but sentiment has usually played a minor role when compared to the hardheaded, common strategic interests that are its foundation. The unusual bilateral partnership, established during World War II and sustained throughout the Cold War, has facilitated close cooperation through the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the fight against Salafi-Jihadism. The idea of a special relationship has had supporters and detractors over the years. But its existence as a political phenomenon is widely recognized by academia, policymakers, and media on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>2</sup>

The referendum decision in June 2016 for Britain to leave the European Union (EU) shocked and disappointed political elites on both sides of the Atlantic. “Brexit” is arguably the most dramatic change in UK foreign policy since the Second World War. Such a significant, complex, and controversial event is bound to affect relationships with close allies. After the result, Prime Minister David Cameron resigned and the pound fell to a 30-year low against the dollar. Nevertheless, British officials were quick to downplay the impact of Brexit on the United Kingdom's security commitments. At least publically, American and British officials stressed the Anglo-American bilateral security partnership would not be affected by Brexit.<sup>3</sup>

Many commentators were not so sanguine. A senior member of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) claimed Brexit would represent

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1 “PM Press Conference with US President Trump: 27 January 2017,” Gov.UK, January 27, 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-with-us-president-donald-trump-27-january-2017>.

2 For recent analyses of the special relationship, see John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold War and After* (Houndmills, Hampshire: Macmillan, 2001); Jeffrey D. McCausland and Douglas T. Stuart, eds., *U.S.-UK Relations at the Start of the 21st Century* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006); Guy Arnold, *America and Britain: Was There Ever A Special Relationship?* (London: Hurst & Company, 2014); and Ruikui Xu, *Alliance Persistence within the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (New York: Springer, 2017).

3 Missy Ryan, “U.S. Military Ties with Britain Are Sheltered from Brexit Storm, Officials Say,” *Washington Post*, June 28, 2016; and Spencer Ackerman, “US-UK Security Officials Cement Intelligence Partnership after Leave Vote,” *Guardian*, June 24, 2016.

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the United Kingdom's most profound strategic shift since the country withdrew from a global military role in the early 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Strobe Talbott, former president of the Brookings Institution, warned, "Brexit could be the worst news yet for the trans-Atlantic community, particularly for Britain and the United States."<sup>5</sup> As Talbott recognized, Brexit appeared to undermine Western cohesion at a time when liberal democracies faced the greatest range of challenges to their security since the end of the Cold War. The aim of this article is to assess the potential impact of Brexit on the special Anglo-American security and defense partnership.

### The Relationship in Context

The special relationship has never been a partnership of equals. From the American perspective, the relationship has been one of choice. For the United Kingdom, American support was essential to counter the existential threat from Nazi Germany and later the Soviet Union. A close relationship with the United States also helped alleviate Britain's decline after World War II. Privileged access to US strategic nuclear weapons and a uniquely close intelligence partnership helped the United Kingdom maintain exceptional influence in security and defense matters.

The benefits were by no means one-sided. The British brought global diplomatic experience, a seat in the United Nations Security Council, highly effective intelligence services, and strategically significant military bases to the relationship. Despite periodic political differences over the decades, the United Kingdom has proved to be America's most reliable global ally and a champion of US leadership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). British historian, Hew Strachan, has argued "Britain's unspoken strategy has been to service its alliance with the United States and to act as the cement between Washington and NATO."<sup>6</sup>

The Anglo-American relationship weathered the end of the Cold War, and Britain's position as America's most important ally was even strengthened during recent conflicts. The United Kingdom contributed the most effective allied force to Kuwait in 1991 and played the leading role supporting US operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq between 1999 and 2003.<sup>7</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair's staunch support for America after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and his willingness to commit British forces to the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq did much to put the "special" back into the partnership.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan proved a bruising experience for both countries. The relationship came under strain after 2003 when the British, in particular, associated the Iraq War with government dishonesty and strategic incompetence. This perception caused some politicians and commentators to question the value of the close security partnership with the United States as never before. The financial crisis of 2008 created fresh challenges as austerity driven defense cuts by the

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4 Malcolm Chalmers, *Would a New SDSR Be Needed after a Brexit Vote?* (London: RUSI, 2016).

5 Strobe Talbott, "Brexit's Threat to the Special Relationship," *New York Times*, April 21, 2016.

6 Hew Strachan, "British National Strategy: Who Does It?," *Parameters* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 51.

7 Laurence Martin and John Garnett, *British Foreign Policy: Challenges and Choices for the 21st Century* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997), 106.

British government led senior US officials to lament the apparent loss of America's most militarily capable and politically willing partner.<sup>8</sup>

In 2013, the British government lost a vote in parliament to support US military strikes against Syria following the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons. This defeat for a British executive was unprecedented and inevitably led to additional concerns the United Kingdom was finally abdicating its role as principal ally.<sup>9</sup> An article in *Foreign Affairs* in 2015 further documented Britain's declining diplomatic and military capabilities at a time when the United States looked to its European allies for greater support in areas like the Sahel and Ukraine following its "pivot" to Asia.<sup>10</sup>

Britain's *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) in 2015, was intended to mark an end to the perceived decline in Britain's power and influence.<sup>11</sup> An emphasis on global reach and engagement was central to the review, which highlighted the nation's "agile, capable and globally deployable Armed Forces."<sup>12</sup> Economic prospects were much brighter than the dire financial circumstances that had driven prior defense cuts. Threat perception had also increased following Russia's annexation of Crimea and the terrorist attacks inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The 2015 review committed the government to maintain a defense budget of at least two percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and make significant investments in military equipment. The review acknowledged close security cooperation with states in the European Union, especially France, but the special relationship received notably greater emphasis. The United States was described as Britain's "pre-eminent partner for security, defence, foreign policy and prosperity."<sup>13</sup>

## The Military Partnership

The military establishments of both countries have had an easy familiarity since WW II, despite doctrinal, cultural, and occasional linguistic differences. The forces frequently hold joint training exercises, and liaison officers work together at headquarters throughout the world.<sup>14</sup> An analysis on the implications of Brexit outlined the value of the British military's expeditionary outlook, willingness to deploy and

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8 Howard LaFranchi, "Big British Defense Cuts Weaken Pentagon's Top Military Partner," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 20, 2010; and Nile Gardiner, "Mind the Gap: Is the Relationship Still Special?" *World Affairs*, March/April 2011.

9 Juliet Kaarbo and Daniel Kenealy, "The House of Commons' Vote on British Intervention in Syria," *Italian Institute for International Political Studies Analysis* 228 (January 2014): 3. The deployment of the armed forces are covered by royal prerogative and there is no legal requirement for a prime minister to seek permission from parliament.

10 Anand Menon, "Littler England: The United Kingdom's Retreat from Global Leadership," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2015): 93–100.

11 Office of the Prime Minister, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom* (SDSR), Cm. 9161 (London: HM Government, 2015).

12 Prime Minister, SDSR, 11.

13 Prime Minister, SDSR, 51.

14 In a recent conversation with the author, a senior US Air Force officer highlighted the particularly close relationship between US exchange officers and their UK counterparts, which even included occasions of USAF pilots flying RAF planes on operations against ISIS.

sustain forces overseas, and its ability to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict to support American military efforts.<sup>15</sup>

The British armed forces maintain a high level of operational readiness. In 2017, 1,350 personnel deployed in operations against ISIS in Iraq and Syria; over 1,000 served as part of NATO's enhanced forward presence (EFP) in Estonia, Poland, and Romania; and 1,200 contributed to operations in the Mediterranean, Africa, and Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> The United Kingdom provided the largest European contingent to the air campaign against ISIS and trained 60,000 members of the Iraqi security forces.<sup>17</sup> In 2016, the nation's military began a five-year exercise program with the US Army, which includes testing a UK division under a US corps-level command.<sup>18</sup> Counterterrorist operations since 9/11 have also created a particularly close partnership between British and American special operations forces (SOF).<sup>19</sup> Currently Britain is developing a new carrier task force designed to enhance NATO's strike capability and project maritime power alongside US carrier battlegroups. Finally, the strength of defense industrial cooperation is illustrated by the United Kingdom's role in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter development program: the United Kingdom is the only Level 1 project partner and British industry will build 15 percent of each of the projected 3,000 planned aircraft.<sup>20</sup>

The future of the special relationship may depend, however, on whether Britain's armed forces continue to play their customary role of capable and dependable military partner after Brexit. Doubts had understandably risen during the last decade as financial austerity drove cuts that significantly weakened British military capabilities. The defense budget decreased 8.5 percent in real terms between 2010 and 2015.<sup>21</sup> Reductions in front line capabilities included the withdrawal of Harrier attack aircraft and Nimrod reconnaissance aircraft, the early decommissioning of aircraft carriers, and a 30,000-soldier reduction in regular army personnel.

Britain's failings in Iraq and Afghanistan also suggested its defense establishment could no longer provide effective strategic leadership. The United Kingdom failed to adapt its approach after the levels of violence rose in both theaters after 2006. British forces were inadequately manned, resourced, and supported, and operational mistakes were made due to doctrinal complacency and obsolete structures and tactics.<sup>22</sup> A revitalized US Army and Marine Corps eventually adapted successfully to the challenges of contemporary small wars, not their British counterparts. The relative failure led one prominent academic

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15 Michael Shurkin, "US Perspectives on the Potential Defence and Security Implications of Brexit," in *Defence and Security after Brexit: A Snapshot of International Perspectives on the Implications of the UK's Decision to Leave the EU* (Cambridge: RAND Europe, 2017), 16.

16 See Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report and Accounts 2016–2017*, HC 21 (London: HM Government, 2017), 24.

17 Stuart Peach, "Annual Chief of the Defence Staff Lecture 2017," RUSI, December 14, 2017, [https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20171214-rusi-cds\\_annual\\_lecture-acm\\_peach.pdf](https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/20171214-rusi-cds_annual_lecture-acm_peach.pdf).

18 Ministry of Defence, *Annual Report*, 42.

19 Stanley A. McChrystal, *My Share of the Task* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 243–44.

20 George Alison, "How Much of the F-35 is British?," *UK Defence Journal*, November 23, 2017.

21 Malcolm Chalmers, *Decision Time: The National Security Capability Review 2017–2018 and Defence*, Whitehall Report 1-18 (London: RUSI, 2018), 5.

22 Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); and Richard North, *Ministry of Defeat: The British War in Iraq 2003–2009* (London: Continuum, 2009).

to question whether the United Kingdom was still America's "ally of first resort."<sup>23</sup> Hew Strachan viewed the strategic failings as the result of playing the role of junior partner and relying on the United States to provide a strategic lead, which he argued was not necessarily always in Britain's best interest.<sup>24</sup>

The 2015 SDSR sought to reassure the United States and other allies that the United Kingdom remained a committed and capable military partner. But the ambitious military plans were predicated on continued economic growth and included some optimistic assumptions about defense budget efficiency savings. Much of the anticipated equipment expenditure was for international purchases, including additional F-35s, P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, and nuclear missiles from the United States. The fall in exchange rates, largely because of Brexit uncertainties, meant a 3.5 percent reduction in purchasing power during 2017 alone.<sup>25</sup> Such effects resulted in the costs of new commitments exceeding the net increase in funding, which posed a significant risk to the equipment plan's affordability.<sup>26</sup>

In July 2017, the British government launched the *National Security Capability Review* (NSCR) to support the implementation of the SDSR.<sup>27</sup> The review covered a broad range of emerging security challenges and acknowledged significant problems in the current procurement program.<sup>28</sup> The secretive nature of the NSCR process created media speculation that the United Kingdom was again preparing to reduce the strength of its armed forces. The prospect of cuts to Britain's amphibious capabilities prompted particular alarm, not least at senior levels in the United States. Lieutenant General Frederick "Ben" Hodges III, former commander of US Army Europe, warned that Britain's position as a key ally would be at risk if its armed forces shrank even further.<sup>29</sup>

The NSCR review was completed in March 2018, and the government renewed its commitment to sustaining improvements in defense capabilities, including the £178 billion reequipment program. At the same time, the government launched a Modernising Defence Programme (MDP), which somewhat belied its claims that the defense budget remained secure. The program includes "work streams" that once again focus on efficiencies and "business modernization" despite earlier flawed SDSR assumptions that these could provide further savings.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, much will depend on the strength of the British economy as the March 29, 2019, date for formally leaving the European Union draws near. Most economic analyses of Brexit have been pessimistic,

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23 *Who Does UK National Strategy, Oral Evidence Taken Before the Public Administration Committee of the House of Commons* (September 9, 2011) (statement of Dr. Julian Lindley-French, professor of Defence Strategy, Netherlands Defence Academy), Q 17.

24 Strachan, "British National Strategy," 51–52.

25 International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), "Europe," chap. 4 in *The Military Balance 2018* (London: IISS, 2018), 80.

26 National Audit Office (NAO), *The Equipment Plan 2016–2026*, HC 914 (London, NAO, 2017), 9, 31.

27 Cabinet Office, *National Security and Capability Review (NSCR)* (London: HM Government, 2018).

28 Steven Swinford, "Ministers Face £20 Billion Black Hole over 'Unaffordable' New Jets, Warships and Submarines," *Telegraph*, January 31, 2018.

29 Jonathan Beale, "General Ben Hodges Warns Britain over Armed Forces Cuts," BBC News, November 8, 2017.

30 NSCR, 14–15.

although the gloomiest forecasts have so far proved unfounded. A government report leaked in January 2018, however, suggested Britain's economy would grow more slowly outside of the European Union even if a favorable deal were struck with Brussels.<sup>31</sup> A constrained economy would inevitably impact negatively on Britain's strategic ambitions, as might domestic political changes. May's position is weak and the Brexit process could easily trigger an early election. In principle, another Conservative Party government would back a strong defense policy. But the Labour Party could win the next election, and it is no longer the centrist party of Tony Blair. The current leader, Jeremy Corbyn, is opposed to nuclear weapons and the use of force and has a history of anti-Americanism.<sup>32</sup> The destructive impact such an outcome would have on the Anglo-American defense and security partnership, to say nothing of Britain's security, might be hard to exaggerate.

### Brexit and the UK-US Intelligence Relationship

During a recent discussion on the special relationship, Heather A. Conley, a director at the Center for International and Strategic Studies praised "the incredibly strong bilateral intelligence cooperation, which remains the key pillar of the relationship."<sup>33</sup> The United Kingdom and United States have developed unique, durable institutional intelligence sharing arrangements and habits that are likely to deepen with the formation of the National Cyber Security Centre and US Cyber Command. Both intelligence communities are intertwined through bureaucracies and personal connections. Since 9/11, the signals intelligence (SIGINT) partnership has been especially close, with National Security Agency (NSA) and Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) teams being collocated at each other's facilities. Close wartime collaboration was followed by the UKUSA Agreement in 1946, which remains the basis of cooperation between the NSA and GCHQ. A later agreement including the intelligence agencies of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand created the Five Eyes alliance.

The practical business of intelligence exchanges relies on bilateral agreements between states. Therefore, within Europe, they do not depend on the European Union and are not subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Other European countries recognize and value the intelligence capability and reach of the United Kingdom, and Britain could continue to lead intelligence cooperation in Europe.<sup>34</sup> Yet it would be a mistake to suggest Brexit will have no impact on this role. A number of former heads of agencies in the United Kingdom have expressed concern publicly about potential problems

31 "EU Exit Analysis—Cross Whitehall Briefing," in *The Progress of the UK's Negotiations on EU Withdrawal: December 2017 to March 2018* (London: House of Commons, January 2018); James Blitz, "Can There Be a Global Role for Britain after Brexit?," *Financial Times*, November 9, 2017; and Pippa Crerar, "Each Brexit Scenario Will Leave Britain Worse Off, Study Finds," *Guardian*, April 18, 2018.

32 "Jeremy Corbyn's Pacifist Illusion," *Economist*, April 19, 2018.

33 *The Indispensable Ally? US, NATO and UK Defence Relations*, HC 387, *Oral Evidence Taken Before the Defence Committee of the House of Commons* (March 5, 2018) (statement of Dr. Heather A. Conley, Senior Vice President for Europe, Eurasia, and the Arctic, Center for Strategic and International Studies), Q 117.

34 Nigel Inkster, "Brexit, Intelligence and Terrorism," *Survival* 58, no. 3 (May 2016): 23–30, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2016.1186974; and Bastian Giegerich and Christian Mölling, *The United Kingdom's Contribution to European Security and Defence* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies / German Council on Foreign Relations, 2018), 6.



in areas within the European Court's competence, which include data sharing and aspects of law enforcement cooperation.<sup>35</sup>

Britain has played a prime role in counterterrorism intelligence policy in Europe and has benefitted from access to EU databases, such as the Europol and Schengen Information Systems, as well as judicial cooperation through Eurojust and the European Arrest Warrant (EAW).<sup>36</sup> During Brexit, the United Kingdom has to negotiate new arrangements for these agencies, possibly through bilateral sharing agreements such as those that already exist for Australia and the United States in the case of Europol. But there is no precedent for a non-EU country to have the same privileged access to the Europol Information System as a member state, and the legislative framework for the EAW exists under ECJ jurisdiction that the United Kingdom will leave. In February 2018, May called for a new security treaty with the European Union and offered concessions on the jurisdiction of the ECJ, but the EU leaders' response was "lukewarm."<sup>37</sup>

Assessing the effect of these developments on Britain's special intelligence partnership with the US is hard. At the bilateral level, the impact should be minimal. But Britain's loss of influence in Europe will probably force the United States to forge closer intelligence relationships with other European allies, such as Germany.<sup>38</sup>

### Brexit and US Strategic Influence in Europe

President Barack Obama's administration lobbied hard for Britain to remain in the European Union. Previous US governments were equally supportive of Britain's full participation in Europe. From an American perspective, the United Kingdom has represented an Atlanticist voice in the European Union, being an advocate of policies aligned with those of the United States, including free trade, EU enlargement, and cooperation on foreign, security, and defense issues.<sup>39</sup> The United Kingdom, for example, worked hard to persuade the European Union to adopt sanctions against Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Russia.

Many analysts believe Brexit threatens US influence in Europe and diminishes Britain's value as a strategic partner.<sup>40</sup> Ivo H. Daalder, a former US ambassador to NATO, called Brexit a "defining moment for American diplomacy" as the United States would have to work harder

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<sup>35</sup> Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, *Annual Report 2016–2017*, HC 655 (London: HM Government, 2017), 59–61.

<sup>36</sup> David Omand, "Keeping Europe Safe: Counterterrorism for the Continent," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2016): 92.

<sup>37</sup> David Bond and Guy Chazan, "May Calls for UK-EU Security Treaty," *Financial Times*, February 17, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Calder Walton, "Little Britain: Brexit and the UK-US Special Intelligence Relationship," Belfer Center, August 10, 2016, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/little-britain-brexit-and-uk-us-special-intelligence-relationship>.

<sup>39</sup> Tim Oliver and Michael John Williams, "Special Relationships in Flux: Brexit and the Future of the US-EU and US-UK Relationships," *International Affairs* 92, no. 3 (May 2016): 554, doi:10.1111/1468-2346.12606; and Wyn Rees, "America, Brexit and the Security of Europe," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2017): 558–72.

<sup>40</sup> Howard LaFranchi, "How Brexit Could Transform America's Special Relationship with Britain," *Christian Science Monitor*, June 22, 2016; and Matt Spetalnick and Yara Bayoumy, "Brexit Threatens to Undermine US-Britain Special Relationship," Reuters, June 24, 2016.

to maintain transatlantic unity.<sup>41</sup> James M. Goldgeier, a former dean of the American University School of International Service, warned that the United States would have to look for a “new best friend.”<sup>42</sup> But some conservative voices have supported Brexit. John R. Bolton, Trump’s national security advisor, claimed Britain’s participation in the European Union’s security and defense initiatives threatened to undermine NATO.<sup>43</sup> Given his opposition to multilateralism, Trump, as a presidential candidate and as president, also expressed support for Brexit.

Bolton’s unease highlights a perennial US security concern. As an EU member, the United Kingdom ensured that European specific defense and security initiatives did not threatened the primacy of NATO. Like the United States, Britain fears EU military integration might divert scarce resources from the alliance, create duplication, and be used as an excuse for further reductions in defense spending. Most recently, at the 2018 Munich Security Conference, the US delegation complained that EU military plans could undermine NATO and potentially shut out American defense firms from the European market.<sup>44</sup>

Brexit removes the main state barrier to closer EU military integration. Already the European Union has agreed to establish a joint command headquarters for military missions and to increase the European Defence Agency budget, both measures that the United Kingdom opposes. In December 2017, the European Union launched the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) initiative to integrate and strengthen further internal defense cooperation.<sup>45</sup> Although membership is voluntary, the initiative is clearly a first step towards a European defense union.

Despite British and American fears, there is little prospect that EU defense integration poses a threat to NATO primacy in the medium term. The European Union insists PESCO is complimentary to the alliance, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has welcomed the initiative as a means to strengthen its European pillar.<sup>46</sup> At the moment, PESCO is an aspiration, and its development will depend on the European Union’s leading powers—France and Germany—which do not share a common strategic goal. Unlike France, Germany views defense integration as a political rather than a military project.<sup>47</sup>

A continued close military relationship will be mutually beneficial for the United Kingdom and the European Union after Brexit.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the United Kingdom will cease to be a member of

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41 Ivo H. Daalder, “America Must Move To Save the European Project,” *Financial Times*, June 27, 2016.

42 “Brexit Vote Looms: What Will It Mean for the EU and US?,” Wilson Center, June 21, 2016.

43 John Bolton, “The UK Must Leave the EU and the U.S. Must Support Exit,” *Tribune-Review* (Pittsburg, PA), June 11, 2016.

44 Steven Erlanger, “U.S. Revives Concerns about European Defense Plans, Rattling NATO Allies,” *New York Times*, February 18, 2018.

45 “Permanent Structured Cooperation—PESCO,” European Union External Action Service, March 9, 2018.

46 “PESCO: EU Paves Way to Defense Union,” *Deutsche Welle*, November 13, 2017.

47 Daniel Keohane, “Constrained Leadership: Germany’s New Defense Policy,” *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* 201 (December 2016).

48 François Heisbourg, “Brexit and European Security,” *Survival* 58, no. 3 (June-July 2016): 13–22, doi:10.1080/00396338.2016.1186973.



the institutions that formulate and implement external EU actions, including the Political and Security Committee, and Britain will have limited influence on EU defense missions and mandates. The Berlin Plus arrangements allow EU military missions access to common NATO assets, including a headquarters detached from NATO's military structure commanded by the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR). This leadership position has traditionally been a British appointment, but the EU may be unwilling to accept continued British command of European troops for non-NATO operations. Thus, reduced British influence could potentially lead to EU operations that do not align with America's interests.<sup>49</sup>

Britain's most important bilateral defense relationship in Europe is with France. Brexit does not weaken the case for continuing this close cooperation. Since the Lancaster House Agreement in 2010, both powers have increased nuclear research and testing cooperation, developed a combined joint expeditionary force, and collaborated on equipment projects. Nevertheless, a recent RUSI study, argued the partners may drift apart following Brexit because of France's longstanding ambition to create "European military autonomy" through a common EU intervention force, defense budget, and doctrine, all of which might create future headaches for NATO planners.<sup>50</sup>

The United States has often differed with France on European security issues, but some commentators have suggested that President Emmanuel Macron may seek to capitalize on France's EU membership and military capabilities to become the new "trans-Atlantic bridge" and the leading American ally in Europe if Britain can no longer play this role.<sup>51</sup> Deepening US involvement in the Sahel region has already increased France's importance as a strategic partner.

## Brexit and Nuclear Weapons

Anglo-American nuclear collaboration began during WW II, and since the 1950s, Britain has had privileged access to US nuclear weapons technology. Strategic nuclear missiles, including the current Trident system, have been leased from the United States. One of the three US Ballistic Missile Early Warning Systems (BMEWS) is based in England, and British nuclear scientists work with their American counterparts on a range of nuclear research projects. The United States remains a strong supporter of Britain's nuclear deterrent, not least because it shares the nuclear burden in NATO.<sup>52</sup> In 2016, the British parliament voted to renew the Trident system and approved four British-built *Dreadnought*-class replacement nuclear submarines to be completed by the early 2030s.

Britain's Trident nuclear deterrent is based at Faslane, Scotland, and the missile warheads are stored nearby at Coulport. The Scottish National Party (SNP) opposes nuclear weapons and would likely seek

49 Rees, "America, Brexit," 7.

50 Peter Ricketts, *National Security Relations with France after Brexit* (London: RUSI, 2018), 5–6.

51 Benjamin Martill and Monika Sus, *Known Unknowns: EU Foreign, Security, and Defence Policy after Brexit* (London: Dahrendorf Forum, 2018): 20–21; and David Chazan, "Syrian Strikes Help Emmanuel Macron Cement Position as Key Trump Ally Ahead of Washington Visit," *Telegraph*, April 15, 2018.

52 *Indispensable Ally*, Q 118, Q 119.

their removal in the event of independence. Likewise, a significant majority of Scots voted to remain in the European Union. These factors give the SNP an incentive to call for a second independence referendum, even though current opinion polls suggest that the SNP would still lose.<sup>53</sup> Since a significant minority of Scots still supports independence, the number could grow if Brexit creates major economic problems. Such a vote for independence would create a crisis in the United Kingdom, and more broadly Western defense and security policy. Former NATO Secretary General George Robertson described the impact of Scottish independence as “cataclysmic.”<sup>54</sup>

Trident submarines and warheads could be relocated to Devonport and Falmouth in England, but this would add significant costs to Britain’s nuclear program.<sup>55</sup> Unbudgeted costs are by no means the only problem. The United Kingdom might be unable to maintain a continuous maritime deterrent if it is forced to move from Scottish bases as alternatives to the current bases were described as “highly problematic, very expensive, and fraught with political difficulties.”<sup>56</sup>

An independent Scottish government might allow Britain to continue using nuclear facilities on a temporary basis. But Scottish independence would create a multitude of additional security problems. Relocating and reconstructing nuclear capabilities could take up to 20 years. In the meantime, Britain’s nuclear deterrent would be based in a newly independent foreign country. The associated political and strategic complications might force a future British government to abandon its commitment to retain nuclear weapons. Complex and lengthy negotiations would be required to divide Britain’s fully integrated military defense—military bases, infrastructure, equipment, personnel, and training.<sup>57</sup> This process would cause an extended period of strategic paralysis until new defense and security arrangements with Scotland could be decided and implemented.

The SNP has claimed that an independent Scotland would be “a non-nuclear member of NATO . . . contributing excellent conventional capabilities.”<sup>58</sup> But there is no guarantee that Scotland—as a new, small state with significant economic challenges—would be prepared to commit adequate resources to its own defense. Scotland represents less than five percent of Britain’s population but over one third of its territory and occupies a strategic location on NATO’s northern flank. An independent Scotland that did not play its full part in collective defense would pose additional difficulties for Britain’s armed forces and for NATO as a whole. For this reason, Scottish independence would pose a

53 “How Would You Vote in a Scottish Independence Referendum if Held Now? (Asked after the EU Referendum),” What Scotland Thinks, accessed May 21, 2018. The first independence referendum was held in September 2014.

54 Griff Witte, “Britain’s Trident Nuclear Program at Stake in Scottish Independence Vote,” *Washington Post*, August 24, 2014.

55 Hugh Chalmers and Malcolm Chalmers, *Relocation, Relocation, Relocation: Could the UK’s Nuclear Force be Moved after Scottish Independence?* (London: RUSI, 2014), 19.

56 “Trident Is Removed from Scotland, What Next?,” in *The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Terminating Trident—Days or Decades?* (London: Scottish Affairs Committee, 2012), para. 45.

57 Claire Phipps, “Scottish Independence: How Would Scotland Defend Itself?,” *Guardian*, September 4, 2014; and Peter Dominiczak, “Scottish Independence Would ‘Damage’ Britain’s Defence,” *Telegraph*, April 14, 2014.

58 “Scotland’s Future: Chapter 6 International Relations and Defence,” Scottish Government, November 26, 2013, <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/11/9348/10>.

greater risk to the UK-US special defense and security relationship than Britain's exit from the European Union.

Brexit has also exacerbated tensions in Northern Ireland. A clear majority of Irish nationalists, who tend to identify with the republic of Ireland, voted to remain in the European Union. The current open border between the two parts of Ireland is threatened by Brexit as it could become a "hard" boundary if Britain leaves the EU customs union and single market.<sup>59</sup> Although low-level attacks by nationalist splinter groups have continued since the peace agreement in 2007, there is currently no mainstream support for a return to violence.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, the reestablishment of border installations and controls could provide dissident republican paramilitaries with both renewed support and a focus for attacks. Northern Ireland may, once again, divert UK security assets from international challenges to domestic counterterrorism. As the United States played a valuable mediation role during Britain's peace process with Ireland, a Brexit inspired return to violence would almost certainly create friction in Anglo-American relations.

## Conclusions

At a time when the international liberal order is under pressure from autocratic regimes, a strong Anglo-American partnership remains an essential element of Western collective defense and security. Shared history and values, a common language, liberal democracy, legal systems, and commercial networks will ensure continuing close ties between the two countries. Strategic pragmatism, however, is at the heart of the idea of a special relationship, and Brexit could create the biggest challenge to this partnership to date.

The United Kingdom will remain a close security partner of the European Union after the final separation in 2021. But Britain will no longer have a direct influence on the Union's policies or be able to act as America's interlocutor. It remains to be seen whether the rhetoric of "Global Britain" is matched by the reality. Even in a benign post-Brexit environment, it is hard to imagine that the United Kingdom could be more than a nominal global security partner for the United States, as the main threats to British interests will remain in the European theater. At best, Brexit will continue to be a distraction from broader international security challenges.

The Brexit process currently dominates Britain's political and policy agenda and is likely to remain a priority for several years. The current British government seems determined to maintain the special security and defense partnership with the United States. If Brexit is an economic success, or at least not harmful, there is a good prospect that the United Kingdom could remain America's preferred military partner. But further reductions in Britain's military capabilities, following an economically damaging Brexit, would fatally weaken that prospect.

In the worst case, Brexit is a perfect storm of economic, political, and security challenges involving a financial crisis, the breakup of the

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59 "Twenty Years after a Peace Deal the Mood is Sour in Northern Ireland," *Economist*, March 31, 2018.

60 Otso Iho, "Brexit Divisions Elevate Impact and Likelihood of UK Terrorism in the Short Term," *Jane's Terrorism & Insurgency Monitor*, July 6, 2016.

United Kingdom, and a radical left-wing Labour Party government. The military impact alone would include abandoning the nuclear deterrent and cutting conventional forces to the point of military irrelevance. As a result of these factors and pressing domestic challenges in Scotland and Northern Ireland, Britain could experience a long period of strategic introspection during which it would play only a limited role in addressing common Western security threats. In these circumstances, far from being a valued partner, the United Kingdom would become a source of strategic vexation for the United States.

## Brexit and Transatlantic Security

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Arthur I. Cyr

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**ABSTRACT:** This article discusses the regional and international security implications of the June 2016 referendum vote that Britain leave the European Union. This essay proposes Brexit creates opportunities for greater cooperation within the NATO alliance and bilaterally with the United States.

The dramatically close vote in the United Kingdom on June 23, 2016, regarding the European Union (EU) referendum continues to reverberate. Referred to as “Brexit,” the narrow decision to withdraw from the organization revealed a nation sharply divided. Public opinion polls and media information mistakenly predicted the vote would support remaining with Europe. Moreover, recent polls wrongly predicting British election outcomes also indicate the public at large remains unsettled. The same uncertainty is true for political leaders. While the bulk of public discussion and political negotiation resulting from the vote focuses on the economic dimensions and the relationships between Britain and the continent of Europe, the new state of affairs is also significant for defense and security concerns, transatlantic relationships, and the existing international system.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of Prime Minister David Cameron to secure an affirmative vote on the referendum resulted in his almost immediate resignation and the formation of a new Conservative Party government. Ironically, the 2015 general election had already created a Conservative majority in the House of Commons, ending the need for a coalition with the Liberal Democrats that had governed from 2010 to 2015. Had the Conservatives maintained the coalition, and its associated collegiality, the referendum might have successfully confirmed the pro-Europe stance of the Liberal Democrats and the predecessor Liberal Party. In contrast, Cameron’s successor, Prime Minister Theresa May, a Conservative, has been explicit—indeed emphatic—about withdrawing from the EU, a course with significant political as well as economic dimensions and risks.

The relatively subtle military implications of abrogating Britain’s involvement in the European Union vary. The Union sponsors limited military missions, some of which extend well beyond the geography of Europe. More important to the organization are coordinating efforts and sharing information related to national security, especially in intelligence realms. Britain’s role in this effort arises from its distinctive expertise in military defense and security associated with centuries of policing their

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1 “United Kingdom” refers to the entire nation, including Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. Geographically, “Britain” normally excludes Northern Ireland; but politically, “Britain” and “Great Britain” refer to the nation’s foreign policy and international relations.

global empire and managing guerrilla and other unconventional wars currently described as “low-intensity conflicts.”

The *Economist* published an insightful, indeed prescient, analysis of the security concerns involved with the referendum a month before the vote. In it, then-Home Secretary Theresa May noted the European arrest warrant and access to intelligence data are important arguments for remaining within the collaborative. In the same section, Lord Jonathan Evans and Sir John Sawers, former heads of Britain’s domestic and overseas intelligence agencies, expressed the loss of shared data and general collaboration constituted strong arguments against Brexit. Pauline Neville-Jones, a former national security adviser, likewise warned that leaving the European Union would weaken police cooperation and border control.

The future prime minister and former intelligence and security officials were reacting to a controversial statement by Sir Richard Dearlove, another retired foreign intelligence head, who observed, “The truth about Brexit from a national security perspective is that the cost to Britain would be low.”<sup>2</sup> Others also argue the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Five Eyes intelligence network—comprised of Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—provide a durable continuing structure for defense cooperation to overcome the intelligence concerns.

Additionally, Brexit supporters are suspicious of the Union’s relatively open borders, of EU administrators and officials interfering in Britain’s national defense, and of losing national sovereignty to the European Court of Justice. In fact, the fundamental purpose of the region’s supranational economic institutions is to discourage nationalism, and consequent militarism, primarily through indirect commercial means. The goal, though not the means, of European integration, since fully including Germany into the regional economy of Europe after World War II, is to make war less likely. And, thus, the Union’s willingness to undertake limited multilateral military missions as far as Indonesia indicates the fading of nationalism in Europe.

The immediate area of potential challenge for Britain, and danger for Anglo-American relations, arguably lies in and around Protestant-dominated Northern Ireland. Since Ireland’s independence in 1921, peace in the region has been fragile. After the Irish Republican Army renewed violence in the late 1960s, Britain undertook a long, complex process of diplomacy and counterinsurgency that led to the Good Friday Agreement, announced on April 10, 1998. Comprised of two documents, the agreement describes governing arrangements for Northern Ireland to bring Catholic and Protestant elements together and to guarantee the new structure, which collapsed in late 2016 because of a continuing controversy over heating fuel.<sup>3</sup>

Since Britain and Ireland are members of the European Union, Brexit directly undercuts the broader foundation of political stability as well as economic cooperation governing Northern Ireland even further. Britain will remain a committed member of NATO, maintaining military

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2 “Brexit Brief: Security Concerns,” *Economist*, May 14, 2016, 49.

3 Amanda Ferguson, “Cracks Exposed at Heart of Northern Irish Peace by ‘Cash-for-Ash’ Scandal,” Reuters, January 10, 2017.



modernization programs in the face of budget stringencies. And Ireland will sustain its military neutrality, established prior to World War II, as a result of the traditional conflict with Britain. Although reciprocal international investment in this part of the region is possible, Britain's withdrawal from the European Union almost certainly will bring new barriers to such trade.

In contrast to its relationship with Ireland, Britain has had close ties with the United States since America abandoned its traditional isolationism in World War II. Moreover, Brexit allows Britain to cooperate beyond the European Union. This freedom could support more effective collaborative partnerships to prevent controversial outcomes, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and to safeguard intelligence such as the photographs related to the Manchester Arena attack and classified information.<sup>4</sup> Yet both countries should also heed President Dwight D. Eisenhower's famous warning about the dangers of a "military-industrial complex."<sup>5</sup>

### British Roles

Understanding the consequences of Brexit on NATO, Anglo-Irish relations, and Anglo-American relations in the context of history is particularly important. Britain's traditional posture regarding Europe, in terms of both commerce and military security, involves only partial engagement. A European Union without Britain would naturally divert more attention toward NATO, an established institution for European cooperation. This trend is especially likely given the twin challenges of Islamic terrorism within and beyond Europe and the territorial expansion of Russia into Crimea, Georgia, and Ukraine. Directly across the Mediterranean Sea, the complexity becomes more apparent as the Assad regime in Syria, with vital military support from its ally Russia, has defeated a diverse array of opposing rebel forces, including elements of the Islamic State.

Britain's exceptionally long record of engagement and leadership in international relations—including economic coordination with purely military dimensions and the vexing, and at times violent, history among Britain, Ireland, and Northern Ireland—bears directly on contemporary concerns regarding global terrorism. Britain's roots of flexible internationalism transcend domestic party politics.

Though a diplomatic leader within Europe, Britain did not initially seek entry into the European Economic Community. After two painful vetoes over a decade by nationalist President Charles de Gaulle of France, Britain did achieve membership in 1973; however, it has never adopted the Euro. Thus, Brexit is only the latest development in the nation's long-standing economic ambiguity.

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4 Ewan MacAskill, "UK Faces Massive Rise in Costs to Fix Stealth Fighter," *Guardian*, February 4, 2017; Gordon Rayner and Robert Mendick, "Pictures Leaked 'after Being Shared with US Intelligence' Show Bomb Used in Manchester Attack," *Telegraph*, May 24, 2017; and Andrew Rafferty and Ken Dilanian, "Report: President Trump Revealed Classified Information to Russia," NBC News, May 15, 2017, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/report-president-trump-revealed-classified-information-russia-n759846>.

5 Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1960–1961*, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, 1961), 1035–40; and "Eisenhower's Farewell Address, 1961," American Experience, accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americalexperience/features/eisenhower-farewell/>.



Outside Europe, the long history of diplomatic and military cooperation between the United Kingdom and the United States, known as the “Special Relationship,” has both complicated relations between the two nations and provided each ally a relatively strong, though not always obvious, influence with the other. This close relationship, and its emotional component, not only magnify frictions but also make policy agreements and wider approaches relatively durable. Notably, the strength and complexity of each nation’s reliance emerges in the complementary and collaborative realm of intelligence associated with information collection and military action.

The broad compatibility of domestic political institutions and cultural backdrops helps to explain this phenomenon. These dimensions provide a device to transcend particular tensions by drawing attention to the more general accord. The cultural ties between Britain and America were among Winston Churchill’s favorite rhetorical tools. In one important speech, he dramatically described the emerging Cold War and the “iron curtain” descending across Europe, and petitioned the “fraternal association” of English-speaking peoples.<sup>6</sup> Equally relevant, President Franklin D. Roosevelt handpicked William J. Donovan, a gifted intelligence operative during the 1940s, to serve as a liaison to Britain and shape the Office of Strategic Services, which evolved into today’s Central Intelligence Agency.

Thus, the great ordeal of World War II made possible the vital bilateral partnership, which has proven durable so far. But that seminal experience, like most important understandings, was built on a history of mutual accommodation; the primary features remained largely inexplicit. Historian Herbert G. Nicholas describes “the steady spread of the idea” after World War I that the two nations would avoid armed conflict with one another.<sup>7</sup> Some contemporary analysts argue this partnership is weak, reflected in tensions on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>8</sup> The details of collaboration, however, are always difficult, and durable partnerships involve broadly similar worldviews that encourage cooperation. In the trying circumstances of war, therefore, clashes between allies are to be expected.

### Transatlantic Trends

While Americans tend to prefer clear conceptual demarcations and sometimes sudden, sharp strategic reversals, the British approach to foreign policy emphasizes evolution and instrumentalism. Throughout the Cold War, American foreign policy planners and decision-makers oscillated between alarm about Soviet bloc military power and a desire to reshape the international environment drastically. By contrast, in defense and strategic policies, as in general diplomacy, the British tried to maintain the traditional approach of working within and adjusting to the global status quo at the margins.

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6 Winston S. Churchill, “The Sinews of Peace” (speech, Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, March 5, 1946), [https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1946/s460305a\\_e.htm](https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1946/s460305a_e.htm); and Leon D. Epstein, *Britain: Uneasy Ally* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 13.

7 Herbert G. Nicholas, *Britain and the U.S.A.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1963), 22.

8 Andrew Mumford, *Counterinsurgency Wars and the Anglo-American Alliance: The Special Relationship on the Rocks* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017).

In the early 1960s, the new Kennedy administration substantially expanded defense spending across the board and emphasized quantitative analysis. The American fondness for, and emphasis on, technology found expression in technocrats personified by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and his associates. By contrast, the previous Eisenhower administration had emphasized practical budget discipline over abstract conceptualization. This approach applied to defense spending, particularly for the Army.

The Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations emphasized negotiation and détente with the Soviet Union and China. Conversely, President Ronald Reagan's first-term administration substantially expanded military spending and capabilities, including strategic nuclear weapons. This posture, reminiscent of the Kennedy administration, reflected long-term growth of parallel Soviet military power. During his second term, Reagan renewed the emphasis on arms control agreements.<sup>9</sup>

In keeping with established American practices of substantial—at times radical—shifts in military policies, these conceptual and organizational innovations were not always coordinated. In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act introduced the greatest military reorganization since the National Security Act of 1947, which unified the services under the Department of Defense. The president and the secretary of defense assumed direct authority over unified military combatant commands, the Joint Chiefs of Staff assumed advisory and training roles, and the chairman became more influential.

The Quadrennial Defense Review, mandated by Congress in 1997, represented a preoccupation with organization and doctrine. The statute, requiring modernization and budgeting through evaluation and planning force structure, was announced as a dramatic departure from the past to cope with the drastically different post-Cold War security environment. In reality, the new reviews confirmed America's propensity for doctrinal redefinition, which have shifted quite abruptly since at least World War I, to respond to funding cuts identified during such reviews and to emphasize conventional or nuclear strategic capabilities.<sup>10</sup>

In an unprecedented move to communicate a continuation of American policy, President Barack Obama retained Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates from the administration of President George W. Bush. This decision was an exceptional departure from established American political practice regarding Department of Defense leadership and cabinet-level positions in general. Obama's choice encompassed policy, executive effectiveness, and political calculation.

Gates enjoyed considerable prestige across partisan lines and, over many years at the Pentagon and earlier as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, demonstrated remarkable effectiveness at building support in Congress. Gates's standing was congruent with, and doubtlessly reinforced, public attitudes regarding the stability of America's security.

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9 The Committee on the Present Danger gained prominence and influence, and included Paul Nitze and others associated with previous Democratic administrations. They had moved to the right on defense and disarmament matters. See Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009).

10 Andrew J. Bacevich, ed., *The Long War: A New History of National Security Policy since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 190.

Despite the adroit political navigation Gates displayed, intense economic pressures led to a comprehensive budget accord between Congress and the White House in early August 2011 that drew attention to the large Defense Department budget as a principal target for cuts.<sup>11</sup>

Based upon previous experience challenging strategic defense planning while cutting specific weapons systems, Gates again shifted the policy helm: he bluntly criticized the Pentagon for preparing for unlikely major wars while ignoring the realistic challenges of unconventional wars. Afghanistan provided exhibit A. Although the retention symbolized continuity, the fundamental shift of actual defense policy demonstrates America's fluctuating attitude toward policy and doctrinal changes that contrasts with Britain's traditional ideas about engaging military forces.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the American preference for conceptual complexity and extremely detailed objectives replete with quantitative analysis and the British predilection toward less conceptual precision and technological capability, the nations have shared some strategic inclinations. Like the democratic administration of President Barack Obama in the United States (2009–17), the Conservative-Liberal Democrat two-party coalition government in the United Kingdom (2010–15) reorganized their nation's defense forces. The successor Conservative Party governments of David Cameron and Theresa May largely continued the defense shifts. These initiatives reflected severe budgetary pressures as well as other considerations. On the surface, the early British debates regarding economic stringencies that led to "Future Force 2020," appear far more intense and stark than in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

The consequential cuts resulting from the British measures significantly affected all the nation's services. The Royal Navy, for example, lost 5,000 sailors, 10 warships, and the fleet of Harrier jet aircraft. The British government nonetheless planned to continue the construction of 2 new aircraft carriers, reflecting the priority of the maritime dimension to defense policy. Looking to the longer term, Defence Secretary Liam Fox declared spending on military equipment would increase by approximately £3 billion between 2015 and 2020.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the important Levene Report proposed organizational changes to foster interservice cooperation, similar to the American innovations that granted greater authority to individual service chiefs.<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, the impending cuts resulted in intense debate and substantial criticism. The Defence Committee of the House of Commons expressed concern about the levels of force reductions that would result from the coalition government. The opposition Labour

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11 Lori Montgomery, "National Debt Ceiling," *Washington Post*, August 2, 2011.

12 Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); and Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 143. Regarding defense cuts, see August Cole and Yochi J. Dreazen, "Pentagon Pushes Weapon Cuts," *Wall Street Journal*, April 7, 2009.

13 "Fact Sheet 5: Future Force 2020—Summary of Size, Shape and Structure," United Kingdom, accessed March 21, 2018, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/62487/Factsheet5-Future-Force-2020.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62487/Factsheet5-Future-Force-2020.pdf).

14 Liam Fox (speech on defense transformation to the House of Commons, July 18, 2011), 531 Parl. Deb. H.C. (6th ser.) (2011), pt. 189, col. 643.

15 Peter Keith Levene, *Defence Reform: An Independent Report into the Structure and Management of the Ministry of Defence* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2011).

Party Shadow Defense Spokesman Jim Murphy declared a “strategic shrinkage by stealth,” combining a pun related to advanced aircraft camouflage technology with the accusation that the government had been less than forthcoming regarding policy intentions.<sup>16</sup>

In this context, Prime Minister David Cameron’s visit to the United States in 2012 emphasized the growing importance of these nations’ “unprecedented defense relationship that has helped secure [their] shared interests and values since the World Wars of the last century.” As a direct function of urgent necessity, “military interoperability and interconnectedness” in weapons and equipment, combat operations in Afghanistan, humanitarian relief in Haiti, joint training exercises, and future plans continue to be central to the Anglo-American collaboration. These collaborations, which include cyber and space along with personnel management, training, and more general dimensions, also reach well beyond the Atlantic region.<sup>17</sup> Five Eyes nations significantly benefit from the human intelligence contribution of America’s large-scale resources and personnel as well as Britain’s experience and skill.

On this global scale, the similarities and contrasts between Britain and the United States become more important, and perhaps urgent. The contemporary Special Relationship between the two countries, facilitated at times by good personal rapport between the British and American heads of government, provides a general commitment to defense and intelligence cooperation. This relational flexibility is useful because the apparent features of national security policy and political debates in both countries have often overshadowed long-established, and frequently deceptive, approaches with superficial contrasts. Historically, Britain’s orderly and sustained evolution of policies provides not only essential strategic stability but also greater lasting impact that complements the apparent continuity in US policies over the past two administrations and important long-term shifts.

### Ways Ahead for the Special Relationship

If Britain formally withdraws from the European Union, the contemporary terrorist threats to Europe and the intensifying conflict in the Middle East are the most obvious incentives to expand NATO intelligence cooperation and integration. But there are others. As one example, Turkey, which has the second largest land army in NATO, has proven a reliable military ally in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf War, and other conflicts dating back to the Korean War. Yet that nation’s poor human rights record and its currently confrontational autocratic government have created frictions with both the European Union and the United States. A reenergized NATO could more strongly encourage the Ankara government to emulate the democratic governments and reliable rule of law that characterize most members of the contemporary alliance. Recent developments reconfirm NATO’s role as the principal deterrent to Russian aggression in Europe voiced during the 2016

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16 Jim Murphy, “The Beginning of Labour’s Defence Review,” *Pragmatic Radicalism*, March 14, 2012.

17 “Joint Fact Sheet: U.S. and UK Defense Cooperation,” White House, March 14, 2012, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2012/03/14/joint-fact-sheet-us-and-uk-defense-cooperation>.

summit in Warsaw, Poland, and expanded when Montenegro became a new member.<sup>18</sup>

Two interrelated arenas that are not limited to the rise of international terrorism also show promise for expanding Anglo-American cooperation: gathering intelligence and fighting low-intensity conflicts. Before the United States became a declared combatant in World War II, military intelligence was at the core of international collaboration. The extensive experience Britain gained while successfully defeating insurgencies during the Malayan Emergency (1948–60), the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya (1952–1960), and the “Troubles” of the Northern Ireland conflict (1968–98) improved British officials’ consciousness of the limitations and the opportunities provided by geography. Thus, they are more ready to negotiate.

Understanding of the use of airpower to support ground combat operations, effective application of special operations forces, and a healthy avoidance of the massive sustained firepower characteristic of American combat, provides Britain with flexibility and restraint. This approach mitigates the basic problem of counterinsurgency that encourages brutality by blending insurgents within the wider population and enables Great Britain to avoid the sizable quagmire the United States experienced in Vietnam.

The value of Britain’s traditional mediating diplomatic role between Europe and North America increases in the context of the current frictions involving President Donald Trump, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and others in Europe. Britain’s influence may also counter the continuing propensity within the US military and civilian defense establishment to undertake doctrinal and organizational shifts, which reflects, in part, the interplay of extremely powerful interest groups. Moreover, the British preference for keeping forces small in counterinsurgency, and turn to diplomacy as difficulties mount, contrasts with the US tendency to escalate firepower and increase the numbers of forces and weapons in response to adversity. Arguably, America’s doctrinal shifts in such situations represent a substitute for the sort of in-depth analysis of actual war experience undertaken by the British and evident when contrasting America’s *Iraq Study Group* with the enormous research and analysis effort reflected in the British government’s *Iraq Inquiry*.<sup>19</sup>

Britain has extensive experience maintaining a permanent professional military and reconciling defense policy with interest group politics. British empiricism, pragmatism, and avoidance of conceptual abstraction in defense policies contrast with some American propensities. Great Britain regularly avoids turning to the American default position of increasing firepower and troops in the field. The durable NATO organization further facilitates such collaboration, and may become stronger thanks to Brexit.

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18 “Warsaw Summit Communiqué,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 29, 2017, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm).

19 James A. Baker et al., *The Iraq Study Group Report* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2006); and Sir John Chilcot, *The Chilcot Report: Report of the Iraq Inquiry: Executive Summary* (Kingston upon Thames: Canbury Press, 2016).

By expanding cooperative intelligence efforts, America and Britain can provide an important focus for future cooperation with European nations. In specific terms, the governments of both countries should make the Five Eyes group a higher priority in terms of both direct involvement of senior foreign policy officials of both governments and of the tempo of collaborative activity. Emphasis should also be on informal collaboration among intelligence professionals at all levels, with a focus on practical activity rather than formal organization charts and plans. This approach is more likely to result in tangible results, and less likely to generate media attention in times of public controversy, to provide stronger regional, and global, security despite leaving the European Union.





## US Landpower and an Indo-American Alliance

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**ABSTRACT:** This article explores the importance of US landpower and an Indo-American alliance to the growing challenge of China's pursuit of hegemony over Asia.

Landpower is now rarely thought of as the core of American military might. Current US strategic doctrine emphasizes the primacy of maritime and airpower.<sup>1</sup> In a pivotal speech to the cadets at the United States Military Academy on February 25, 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates declared, “Looking ahead . . . the Army must also confront the reality that the most plausible high-end scenarios for the US military are primarily naval and air engagements—whether in Asia, the Persian Gulf, or elsewhere.” Indeed, to drive home the point, Gates asserted “any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or in the Middle East or Africa should ‘have his head examined’ as General [Douglas] MacArthur so delicately put it.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet the Middle Kingdom, a quintessential landpower seeking to become Asia's hegemon, is systematically shifting the strategic calculus in its favor via its audacious Silk Road initiative unveiled by President Xi Jinping on September 7, 2013. Thus, the only realistic option to keep the dragon at bay might be to overcome the inhibitions of current doctrinal orthodoxy and forge a strategic alliance with India—with landpower as the military centerpiece.<sup>3</sup>

### Advantages of Facing the Dragon Together

A mutual defense treaty between the United States and India should be perceived as a partnership of equals and must clearly reflect a shared understanding that both are committed to fighting alongside the other to safeguard their vital national interests in a conflict initiated by China. Hypothetically speaking, such a treaty would not cover territories over which India has asserted sovereignty but does not exercise administrative control: Azad Kashmir, Gilgit, Baltistan, and Aksai Chin. Also, the pact would not cover US activities in Japan, Australia, South Korea, Taiwan, Philippines, and Thailand, which are addressed through separate bilateral security agreements. Accordingly, the proposed bilateral arrangement between India and America would

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1 US Department of Defense (DoD), *Air-Sea Battle* (Washington, DC: Air-Sea Battle Office, 2013).

2 Robert M. Gates, “Secretary of Defense Speech” (speech, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, February 25, 2011).

3 “President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, September 7, 2013.

be consistent with the existing US hub-and-spoke security architecture for Asia. Moreover, the explicit inclusion of the military option would mirror the strong security commitment incorporated in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization agreement. Accordingly, the operative part of the treaty might be formulated as follows:

In the event of an armed attack by the People's Republic of China against the Republic of India or the United States of America in any area under Indian or American administration or international waters or airspace in the Indian or Pacific Ocean regions, the attack shall be considered against both India and the United States, and consequently both parties agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the party so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other party, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore peace and security.

According to Central Intelligence Agency statistics for 2017, the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of India, \$9.4 trillion, and the United States, \$19.4 trillion, amounted to \$28.8 trillion, a comfortable margin over China's GDP of \$23.1. The combined population of 1.6 billion people for India, 1.3 billion people, and the United States, 0.3 billion people, was also greater than China's 1.4 billion people during the period.<sup>4</sup> As per a recent estimate, the combined active military force of an Indo-American alliance would be 2.7 million servicemembers, with both countries contributing about equally. In comparison, China's standing military force is 2.2 million active duty personnel.<sup>5</sup>

By 2037, according to projections prepared by the Energy Information Administration (EIA), the statistical arm of the US Department of Energy, such an alliance would have an aggregate GDP of \$48.6 trillion (India \$22.4 trillion and US \$26.2 trillion), while China's GDP would remain slightly smaller at \$47.4 trillion.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Indian and US economies will be approaching parity by 2037 as India's GDP will be about 85 percent of America's GDP. By then, the total population of the alliance would be about 2 billion people (India 1.6 billion and the United States 0.4 billion) providing a significant cushion over China's population which will have plateaued at 1.4 billion people.<sup>7</sup>

Crucially, an Indo-American alliance, reflecting its quantitative and qualitative edge, will be able to threaten China's energy security by cutting off the country's access to oil and gas imports transported by oceangoing tankers or land-based pipelines. India's 2,659 kilometer northern border with China, which stretches from the Kashmir region in the northwest to the state of Arunachal Pradesh in the northeast, provides a unique, albeit geographically challenging, pathway for an air attack and land invasion of China's western Xinjiang province, the terminus for energy pipelines from Central Asia (and planned pipelines

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4 "The World Factbook," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed April 9, 2018, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

5 "2018 Military Strength Ranking," Global Firepower, accessed April 24, 2018, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp>.

6 "International Energy Outlook 2017, Table: World Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by Region Expressed in Purchasing Power Parity, 2015–2050," US Energy Information Administration, accessed April 9, 2018.

7 "International Energy Outlook 2017, Table: World Population by Region, 2015–2050," US Energy Information Administration, accessed April 9, 2018.

from Iran via Pakistan). Indeed, India, by virtue of its long border with China as well as its vast strategic depth, is the only option for the United States to use landpower to counterattack the Middle Kingdom's weakest militarily points—Tibet and Xinjiang provinces. Just as important, India straddles the crucial energy trade's sea lines of communication and maritime choke points of the Indian Ocean—from the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the Gulf of Aden to the Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda Straits that are the gateways to the South China Sea and the western Pacific Ocean.

Beijing's dependence on energy imports is its most important vulnerability; severing China's energy lifeline will trigger the collapse of its economy and immobilize its military. According to EIA estimates for 2017, Chinese oil imports of 8.2 million barrels per day (bbl/d) represented about 64 percent of its total oil consumption, and natural gas imports of 2.6 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) accounted for about 34 percent of its total natural gas consumption. By 2037, China's oil imports will rise to 12.2 million bbl/d to meet about 72 percent of its total oil consumption of 17 million bbl/d, and natural gas imports will increase to 6.4 Tcf to satisfy about 34 percent of its total gas consumption of 18.9 Tcf.<sup>8</sup>

Currently, the bulk of Chinese oil and gas imports, which are purchased primarily from the Middle East and Africa, are transported along the choke points to various ports along the eastern coast of China.<sup>9</sup> In a bid to end the Middle Kingdom's dependence on seaborne energy imports, however, Beijing has embarked on an ambitious modern-day Silk Road project also known as the One Belt, One Road initiative.

Over the next two decades, these land routes, which are beyond the effective military reach of potential adversaries, will connect China to friendly major oil and gas producers. Specifically, the energy security strategy involves expanding existing pipeline systems from Russia's Siberian oil and gas fields to Daqing, in northeastern China and from Kazakhstan's oil fields and Turkmenistan's gas fields to Urumqi in western China's Xinjiang province. The strategy also proposes constructing a new energy pipeline system to transport Iranian resources via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Kashgar, also in Xinjiang province.<sup>10</sup> Within a generation, China will have an independent land-based energy transportation infrastructure.<sup>11</sup>

With an alliance, the Indian and American naval fleets will have the combined capability to blockade all five relevant maritime trade choke points in the Indian Ocean.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the alliance's land and

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8 Calculated imports reflect the difference between consumption and production. See "World Petroleum and Other Liquids Production," EIA, accessed April 9, 2018; "International Energy Outlook 2017, Table: World Liquids Consumption by Region, 2015–2050," EIA, accessed April 9, 2018; and "Energy Outlook 2017, Table: World Natural Gas Consumption by Region, 2015–2050," EIA, accessed April 9, 2018.

9 "China," EIA, May 14, 2015.

10 "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at Pakistan's Parliament," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, April 21, 2015, [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/topics\\_665678/xjpdjstjxgsfwbfydnxycxyfldrhyhwlhy60znjnhd/t1257288.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpdjstjxgsfwbfydnxycxyfldrhyhwlhy60znjnhd/t1257288.shtml).

11 For a skeptical view of China's alternative pipeline strategy, see US Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2017* (Washington, DC: DoD), 43.

12 "World Oil Transit Chokepoints," EIA, July 25, 2017. Indian and American naval forces could extend their "choke-points" blockade to cover some of Beijing's maritime silk road ports such as Gwadar, Pakistan, on the Arabian Sea and Maday Island, Kyaukpyu, Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal.

air forces will have the capability, if necessary, to attack from India's northern border to control a crucial swathe of territory in Tibet and Xinjiang and to shut down the terminals in Kashgar and Urumqi, thereby severing China's land-based access to oil and gas imports from Iran and Central Asia.

Beijing would then be completely dependent upon Russian oil and gas supplies delivered to the terminal at Daqing.<sup>13</sup> Given its distant location, the most likely threat to this terminal would be an intermediate-range ballistic missile launched from northeastern India that might periodically disrupt the complex, but perhaps not achieve an extended closure. In any event, China's capacity to sustain a major war effort would be seriously, if not fatally, impaired. Faced with such a credible threat to its energy security, China is unlikely to undertake actions that would jeopardize the vital interests of the United States or India.

### **An Indian Perspective**

China is, and will remain, India's foremost national security threat. In a serious conflict with China, India is unlikely to prevail, or even manage a draw, singlehandedly. China has seven pathways to launch an armed attack on India: (1) from Xinjiang through Aksai Chin; (2) from Tibet across the Sino-Indian border in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh; (3) from Xinjiang through Pakistan; (4) from Tibet through Nepal; (5) from Tibet through Bhutan; (6) from China through Myanmar; and (7) from China via the South China Sea through the Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda Straits into the Bay of Bengal. The last five options would involve China violating the sovereignty of a neighboring country, although Pakistan, China's ally for over a half century, may be a willing accomplice.

Undoubtedly, defending India is an enormous undertaking considering Beijing gets to choose the time, place, and manner of attack. Only a nuclear attack might be ruled out since India and China have sufficient second-strike capabilities—via land, sea, and air—for mutual assured destruction. A nuclear war would not be planned, but it could be the tragic, unintended consequence of a conventional conflict if escalatory dynamics are seriously miscalculated and spin out of control.

In 1962, India and China fought an undeclared border war over competing sovereignty claims with respect to the Aksai Chin area of Indian administered Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh. India was completely routed. In a second urgent letter to President John F. Kennedy on November 19, 1962, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru acknowledged India's peril and requested American aid: "With the advance of the Chinese in massive strength, the entire Brahmaputra Valley is seriously threatened and unless something is done immediately to stem the tide the whole of Assam, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland

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13 The previously mentioned EIA projections for 2037 forecast Russia's total oil exports (calculated as the difference between production and consumption) to be 7.5 million bbl/d and total natural gas exports to be 11.2 Tcf. With domestic production and 60 percent of Russia's available energy exports, which would be 4.5 million bbl/d of oil and 6.7 Tcf of natural gas, China could meet 55 percent of the nation's total consumption requirement of 17 million bbl/d of oil and 100 percent of its natural gas consumption requirement of 6.4 Tcf.

would also pass into Chinese hands.”<sup>14</sup> China, perhaps to preempt the possibility of a major US military intervention, unilaterally decided to retain Aksai Chin, whose vital corridor linking Tibet and Xinjiang was a strategic priority, but withdrew completely from Arunachal Pradesh without relinquishing its sovereignty claims over the area.

More than half a century later, India continues to suffer a huge power disparity relative to China. India’s gross domestic product in 2017 was about \$9.4 trillion or about 41 percent of China’s GDP of \$23.1 trillion, and India’s foreign exchange reserves of \$407 billion were a mere eighth of China’s \$3.2 trillion.<sup>15</sup> India’s estimated defense spending as a percentage of GDP in 2016 was 2.5 percent compared to China’s 1.9 percent.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, since India’s GDP is only 41 percent of China’s, to achieve parity in absolute terms Indian defense spending would have to be 2.4 times the Chinese rate of 1.9 percent, or 4.6 percent. As India spent 3.9 percent of GDP on defense in 1987, it is reasonable to assume that India could step up to a 4 percent spending rate on defense over time.<sup>17</sup> India, nevertheless, cannot grow out of its relative power deficit based upon forecasts for 2037 that indicate India’s GDP of \$22.4 trillion would be only 47 percent of China’s \$47.4 trillion.<sup>18</sup>

New Delhi continually struggles to balance the very real scourges of malnutrition, disease, and illiteracy that sap the country’s vitality with the contingent risk to national security posed by China. As early as November 18, 1950, Prime Minister Nehru grappled with this issue: “If we really feared an attack [by China] and had to make provision for it, this would cast an intolerable burden on us, financial and otherwise . . . there are limits beyond which we cannot go at least for some years.”<sup>19</sup> This agonizing quandary of guns versus butter continues today.

Ultimately, an India determined to defend itself alone faces a strategic dilemma in confronting a significantly larger, and equally determined, adversary such as China. The amount of resources India can mobilize for its defense is limited by the size of its economy, and once that limit is reached, New Delhi must either accept the hegemony of the more powerful adversary (and the attendant diminution of India’s sovereignty) or seek an alliance as an equal partner with a powerful state that is in competition with the common foe, which would imply sharing sovereignty with the ally with respect to certain national security issues.<sup>20</sup>

Since the fundamental strategic calculus is not in New Delhi’s favor, there is only one realistic solution to India’s strategic dilemma—an

14 Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to President John F. Kennedy, telegram, November 19, 1962, 10:01 p.m., Nehru Correspondence, November 1962, 11–19, JFKNSF-111-016, Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, National Security Files, Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, MA.

15 “World Factbook,” Central Intelligence Agency.

16 “Military expenditure (% GDP),” World Bank, accessed March 20, 2019.

17 According to a 2016 Indian public opinion survey, about 63 percent were in favor of increasing defense expenditures. See Bruce Stokes, “India and Modi: The Honeymoon Continues,” Pew Research Center, September 19, 2016, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/09/19/india-and-modi-the-honeymoon-continues/>.

18 “World Gross Domestic Product (GDP),” EIA.

19 “The History of Sino-Indian Relations and the Border Dispute between the Two Nations (5),” *Resurgent India*, March 23, 2015.

20 Crafting hub-and-spoke bilateral security arrangements with smaller Asian states such as Japan, Australia, Vietnam, and Singapore as an alternative to an Indo-American alliance will not materially change India’s adverse security calculus relative to China.

alliance with the United States. Arguably, from the time of Prime Minister Nehru's brief encounter with President Kennedy in 1962 to more recent flirtations over the past 25 years of Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi with Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, and the warm embrace of current Prime Minister Modi with President Donald Trump, New Delhi appears to be signaling its willingness to shed its commitment to nonalignment and strategic autonomy, and albeit gingerly, enter into an arranged partnership if not marriage.<sup>21</sup>

### Can India Pivot to an Alliance with America?

In his seminal address to a joint session of Congress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi confidently declared, "Today, our relationship has overcome the hesitations of history. A strong India-US partnership can anchor peace, prosperity and stability."<sup>22</sup> And, in a reassuring sign of strategic continuity, the joint communiqués, issued at the time of Prime Minister Modi's visit with President Obama in June 2016 and his visit a year later with President Trump, were remarkably similar and stressed three key themes: freedom of navigation, peaceful settlement of territorial and maritime disputes, and sharing critical defense technology with India on the same basis as the closest US allies.<sup>23</sup>

While a formal Indo-American alliance may be in sight, it is prudent to consider possible obstacles—such as India's legacy commitment to nonalignment and strategic autonomy, doubts about the reliability of the United States as a strategic partner, and possible adverse economic consequences of provoking China—of which none are insurmountable obstacles.

Since gaining independence from Great Britain in 1947, India has embraced nonalignment as the best way to preserve sovereignty and to avoid becoming entangled in the bipolar conflicts of the Cold War. As a practical matter, nonalignment and neutrality became synonymous, although rhetoric from New Delhi had a decidedly pro-Soviet tilt. With the end of the Cold War, India adopted a doctrine of nonalignment, rebranded as strategic autonomy, to reflect a multipolar world.<sup>24</sup>

Any attempt to sacrifice an Indo-American alliance on the altar of nonalignment and strategic autonomy is likely to fail. Adherents of this legacy doctrine would have to demonstrate that India, sans the proposed alliance, will have the capability to defend itself in a serious nonnuclear kinetic confrontation with China. Given the significant economic disadvantage, there is no credible basis for believing New Delhi can

21 For different perspectives on the likely trajectory of US-India relations see Sumit Ganguly, "Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy?," *Washington Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 131–43, doi:10.1080/0163660X.2017.1328929; and Rajesh Rajagopalan, "U.S.-India Relations under President Trump: Promise and Peril," *Asia Policy* 24 (July 2017): 39–45, doi:10.1353/asp.2017.0042.

22 "Text of the Prime Minister's Address to the Joint Session of U.S. Congress," *Hindu*, June 8, 2016.

23 "Joint Statement: The United States and India: Enduring Global Partners in the 21st Century," White House, June 7, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/07/joint-statement-united-states-and-india-enduring-global-partners-21st>; and "United States and India: Prosperity through Partnership," White House, June 26, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/26/united-states-and-india-prosperity-through-partnership>.

24 Siddharth Varadarajan, "Interview: There Is a New China in the NSG and India Needs To Find a Way To Deal with It," *The Wire*, accessed June 30, 2016.



independently close the chasm between its capability and its intention to defend itself.

In fact, New Delhi has demonstrated that in extremis it is prepared to jettison nonalignment and strategic autonomy to safeguard national security. In 1962, with the Chinese steamroller threatening to overrun northeast India, Nehru proposed what was effectively an Indo-American defense pact that provided for an immediate infusion of US military equipment that included stationing 12 US Air Force squadrons and establishing a network of American military radar installations in the country.<sup>25</sup> Anticipating an Indo-Pak war, New Delhi signed a security pact with Moscow on August 9, 1971, that was designed to ensure India retained a continual flow of Soviet military equipment and, crucially, deter a possible Chinese intervention.<sup>26</sup>

While challenging the facts underpinning the decisive advantage of China in terms of capabilities is difficult, some who cling to a policy of nonalignment counter that Beijing's intentions are benign. These proponents believe China is willing to normalize the Sino-Indian boundary, with possible minor rectifications, and rhetoric notwithstanding, the Middle Kingdom does not have irredentist ambitions toward Arunachal Pradesh—or Southern Tibet in official Chinese terminology—which lies within India's border established by the McMahon Line.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, despite sporadic border incidents over the past 55 years, peace has prevailed along the line of actual control representing the *de facto* Sino-Indian border, which testifies to China's satisfaction with the status quo. Consequently, an Indo-American security pact would be perceived by Beijing as a threat to the current geostrategic status quo.

It is highly unlikely that fear of arousing the otherwise contented dragon would derail the prospects for an Indo-American alliance. The security pact would cover only the territory under the administrative control of India and would not extend to territory that is under Beijing's administration but could be claimed by New Delhi. Far from threatening the status quo along the Sino-Indian border, the pact would deter China from future attempts to change the *de facto* border by forcefully reclaiming Arunachal Pradesh. Current intentions do not preclude future Chinese irredentism emboldened by India's continued relative weakness. Even a successful Indian effort to craft a *modus vivendi* with China, while desirable, would not obviate the need for a security pact with America. In the absence of an Indo-American alliance, and given the disparity in relative power, India would have to rely on Chinese forbearance. New Delhi cannot escape the harsh reality of asymmetrical capabilities by invoking wishful symmetrical intentions.

This debate regarding Beijing's intentions is not new. When China proceeded to reclaim Tibet in 1950, the potential of China morphing

25 Nehru, telegram.

26 "Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation," Ministry of External Affairs (India), accessed April 9, 2018, <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5139/Treaty+of+>.

27 Shortly after the commencement of the Sino-Indian border war, the United States stated it recognized the McMahon Line as India's northeastern boundary while remaining silent on Aksai Chin and the northwestern boundary. This continues to be the American position. See "Memorandum from the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kaysen) to President Kennedy," October 26, 1962, document 181, Office of the Historian, accessed April 9, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v19/d181>.



into a serious threat to India and its sphere of interest had to be considered. Then the deputy prime minister and home affairs minister, Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai “Sardar” Patel, cautioned “even though we regard ourselves as the friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends.”<sup>28</sup> Likewise, Shri Aurobindo, an erstwhile freedom fighter and revolutionary politician who had long since withdrawn from the political arena to pursue poetry, philosophy, and yoga, bluntly warned “the basic significance of Mao’s Tibetan adventure is to advance China’s frontiers right down to India and stand poised there to strike at the right moment and with the right strategy.”<sup>29</sup>

Tragically, Nehru dismissed the likelihood of a conflict with China declaring “it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future.”<sup>30</sup> His faith in Chinese restraint, purchased with a decade of conciliatory accommodation of the dragon’s sensitivities, was disastrous. Having gambled once, New Delhi cannot afford to do so again in hopes of a more favorable outcome.

Resistance to an alliance between India and the United States could also emerge from those interested in Sino-Indian trade who may raise concerns about the potential adverse economic consequences to India, such as terminated agreements with its largest trading partner. According to Indian government trade statistics, for the fiscal year (FY) ending March 2017, total exports and imports with the Middle Kingdom amounted to \$71.5 billion, compared to the total trade with the United States of \$64.5 billion.<sup>31</sup> A more sophisticated approach to assessing the strategic importance of trade relations, and to counter misguided concerns, would focus on the relative value of Indian exports, which generate foreign exchange revenues that help fund the country’s economic growth. Namely, Indian merchandise exports to China during FY 2017 amounted to \$10.2 billion (3.7 percent of total exports) while exports to the United States were \$42.2 billion (15.3 percent of total exports). Clearly, the United States as an export market is far more important than China since the adverse economic consequences of China closing its markets to India would not be significant.

A key driver of New Delhi’s nonalignment policy is the desire to avoid conflicts, particularly those between more powerful nations that do not affect India’s vital interests. An Indo-American alliance, according to some partisans of strategic autonomy, unnecessarily intertwines the Sino-Indian border dispute with the Sino-American dispute over the South China Sea. Certainly, the fundamental quid pro quo of such a security pact would be America’s willingness to fight beside India to preserve the status quo along the Sino-Indian border in exchange for India’s willingness to join arms with America to safeguard freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. This linkage is appropriate because

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28 “Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on 7 November 1950,” Friends of Tibet, accessed April 9, 2018, <http://www.friendsoftibet.org/main/sardar.html>.

29 Quoted in Sudhir Ghosh, *Gandhi’s Emisary* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2008), 277.

30 “Sino-Indian Relations,” *Resurgent India*.

31 “Trade Statistics: Export Import Data Bank (Annual): China PRP” Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, accessed April 24, 2018, [www.commerce-app.gov.in/eidb/default.asp](http://www.commerce-app.gov.in/eidb/default.asp).

it reflects the convergence of vital national interests and recognizes the security interdependence of both countries.

A strong case can be made that the South China Sea is a vital Indian national interest. About 80 percent of China's oil imports, which will be essential to interdict in the event of a major conflict with China, currently flow through the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea.<sup>32</sup> In any major Indian conflict with China, it will be essential to interdict such energy imports. India cannot sustain an effective naval blockade without American help.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, New Delhi will need to ensure that the Chinese Navy does not cross the South China Sea and pass through the Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda Straits to attack India's east coast. Again, India will need US assistance to keep the Chinese fleet confined in home ports. Therefore, it is in India's vital national interest that the US Navy operate freely in the South China Sea.

Opponents of an Indo-American alliance could also argue the United States may be an unreliable partner. They will point out that Washington placed its interests in forging Sino-American détente to counter the Soviet Union in 1971 over India's national security concerns arising from the civil war between East and West Pakistan. Specifically, the United States assured Beijing that it would not object to intervention in support of West Pakistan, sent a US naval task force into the Bay of Bengal to intimidate India, cut off economic aid to India, and encouraged the transfer of fighter aircraft from Jordan to West Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> Currently, the United States is embroiled in a dangerous dispute with North Korea over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program and is seeking Beijing's help to pressure the Kim regime. Washington could be lured once again by the siren song of a grand bargain with Beijing, which could result in shortchanging India's vital national interests.

This concern regarding American reliability can be overcome on the basis that vital national interests will trump commitments to others. The real question, therefore, is whether the vital national interests of the United States and India with respect to China are converging in such a way that a similar threat perception will likely be shared for the foreseeable future. The joint communiqués of 2016 and 2017 confirm the strong convergence of interests.

Importantly, in October 2017, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson addressed concerns about American reliability and commitment to India by highlighting the centrality of the threat posed by China; reaffirming the military, geographic, and economic importance of India; recognizing New Delhi as an equal partner; acknowledging India's economy will surpass that of the United States by 2050; and predicting the strategic partnership between the two countries will endure for a century.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, issued by President Trump in December 2017, declares China to be a

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32 OSD, *Annual Report to Congress*, 43.

33 For example, China currently has an overwhelming 4:1 advantage in submarines with 68 compared to India's 15. The United States has a fleet of 70 submarines. See "2017 Military Strength Ranking," Global Firepower.

34 "Memorandum of Conversation," December 10, 1971, document 274, Office of the Historian, accessed March 20, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v11/d274>.

35 Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), *Defining Our Relationship with India for the Next Century: An Address by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson* (Washington, DC: CSIS, 2017).

national security threat for the first time: “China seeks to displace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, expand the reaches of its state-driven economic model, and reorder the region in its favor.” Crucially, the strategy embraces India’s ambitions to be a leading power and enshrines India as a strategic partner to address China’s threat: “We welcome India’s emergence as a leading global power and stronger strategic and defense partner.” To drive home the central importance of India, the strategy reiterates: “We will deepen our strategic partnership with India and support its leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region.”<sup>36</sup> The bogey of a de facto Sino-American condominium that would trifle with India’s vital national interests is simply not credible.

The Indian public’s opinion provides grounds for optimism that an Indo-American alliance is a realistic possibility. According to a Pew Research Center survey published on November 15, 2017, 49 percent of Indians have a favorable view of the United States, while only 9 percent have an unfavorable view and 42 percent have no opinion. By contrast, only 26 percent have a favorable view of China, 44 percent have an unfavorable view and 30 percent express no opinion.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, 56 percent consider China’s increasing military power as bad for India while only 19 percent consider American power to be a negative for India. In an earlier Pew survey issued in September 2016, about 69 percent were worried about the Sino-Indian border dispute.<sup>38</sup>

It is not surprising that over the past quarter century, all Indian prime ministers, regardless of party, have supported increasingly closer strategic ties with America.<sup>39</sup> Kenneth I. Juster, the current US ambassador to India, has highlighted this bipartisan consensus: “Significantly, there has been strong, consistent, and sustained support for this [Indo-American] partnership from the major parties in each of our countries, across multiple changes of government.”<sup>40</sup> Indian public opinion, which must be cultivated and cannot be taken for granted, is unlikely to be a stumbling block for the prospective alliance.

### **An Alternative Strategic Calculus?**

For the United States, the strategic calculus, absent India, is not very attractive. Without New Delhi, Washington will suffer a continuing decline in its strategic position relative to Beijing. America’s longstanding bilateral alliances with Japan and Australia will not materially change this adverse strategic calculus. Central Intelligence Agency statistics indicate the combined GDP of the United States, Japan, and Australia in 2017 totaled \$26 trillion slightly ahead of China’s GDP of \$23.1 trillion, while the combined population of the three allies amounted to 475 million

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36 Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 25, 46, 50.

37 See Bruce Stokes, Dorothy Manevich, and Hanyu Chwe, “Three Years In, Modi Remains Very Popular,” Pew Research Center, November 15, 2017, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/11/15/india-modi-remains-very-popular-three-years-in/>.

38 See Stokes, “India and Modi.”

39 The efforts of prime ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh of the Indian National Congress and Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party to forge a strong strategic relationship with the United States indicate a favorable bipartisan interest for such an initiative.

40 “Remarks by Kenneth I. Juster U.S. Ambassador to India: U.S.-India Relations: Building a Durable Partnership for the 21st Century,” U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India, January 11, 2018, <https://in.usembassy.gov/u-s-india-relations-building-durable-partnership-21st-century/>.

people compared to China's population of 1.4 billion. Based on recent Global Firepower estimates, the combined active military force of the three allies was about 1.6 million servicemembers compared to China's military of 2.2 million.

By 2037, however, China has a decisive advantage. Per EIA projections, the combined GDP of the United States, Japan, and Australia is expected to be only \$33.1 trillion or about 70 percent of China's GDP of \$47.4 trillion, and the combined population of the trio is expected to be 528 million people or about 38 percent of China's population of 1.4 billion. Moreover, the US alliances with Japan and Australia do not provide a geostrategic gateway along China's soft southwestern underbelly that would support an effective landpower option to counter China's Silk Road strategy. While it is likely to take two decades for China to execute fully its alternative pipelines strategy, it would be a monumental mistake to gamble on China's failure.

In 1950–51, American and Chinese military forces took the measure of each other during the Korean War. Numerically superior but technologically inferior Chinese troops fought the Americans to a stalemate. Arguably, the outcome—not winning—was effectively a military defeat for the United States. Washington grossly underestimated Beijing's intentions and capabilities. As a result, Chinese military forces were able to achieve local battlefield dominance and successfully realize Beijing's strategic objectives.

If past is not to be prologue, China must be convinced that it will be unable to achieve local area dominance along India's northern border or in the vital sea lines of communication and maritime choke points of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Only an Indo-American alliance can effectively counterbalance, deter, and contain an assertive, resurgent China bent on becoming Asia's hegemon.

### **Implications for US Landpower**

Doctrinal orthodoxy rests on the presumption of a static strategic universe and is invariably disrupted by dynamic reality. Secretary Gates's 2011 speech reflected the current reality that US adversaries, such as China, were heavily dependent upon seaborne trade. Consequently, the central challenge for the US military was to ensure continued control of the global maritime and air commons and thereby safeguard America's role as the sole global power.

China's response, announced two years later, was to launch its Silk Road initiative that essentially turns the table on America's strategic assumption of the primacy of maritime and airpower by leveraging the Middle Kingdom's historic strength as a landpower. If successful, China's Silk Road will completely bypass the maritime commons and render US naval and air supremacy irrelevant within a generation.

Current American military doctrine, given its focus on maritime and airpower, cannot deal with China's brilliant landpower counter move. Rather than doubling down on maritime and airpower, or simply hoping that China will fail, it is imperative that Washington trump Beijing's strategy with a daring decision to restore landpower as the primary military means to check the Chinese juggernaut.

An Indo-American strategic alliance incorporates the centrality of landpower since it is designed to threaten China's energy security via a land invasion across India's northern border into Tibet and Xinjiang provinces to shut down energy pipeline terminals in Kashgar and Urumqi. Putting sufficient boots on the ground, and sustaining them to ensure local area dominance, is the army's primary competency.

To assume such a Himalayan challenge, the US Army will have to ensure its troops are ready for combat in an extraordinarily inhospitable environment: frigid temperatures, ice and snow, rapidly changing weather conditions, very high altitudes, and treacherous mountains—the domain of infantry, artillery, and supply logistics. In short, the Army will have to be prepared to demonstrate that it has the capability—in terms of manpower, equipment, and training—and the capacity, in partnership with the Indian Army, to prosecute a major ground war in Asia.<sup>41</sup>

Entering into a new security agreement that potentially obligates America to fight another land war in Asia will not be easy. Given China is expected to be America's greatest national security threat by 2025, the next 5–10 years is the likely time frame for establishing a US-India mutual defense treaty to deal with the ripening Chinese threat. Transforming a tentative and hesitant relationship into a formal committed alliance will require strategic patience, persistence, and perseverance.<sup>42</sup> Yet, by leveraging their combined landpower—the crucial missing link—together with supporting maritime and airpower, the American eagle and Indian tiger, jointly but perhaps not severally, can continue to keep the Chinese dragon at bay for the foreseeable future.

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41 Joint military exercises such as the armies' Yudh Abhyas (since 2004) and the navies' Malabar (since 2002) are good building blocks for enhancing joint operability.

42 See *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC, for Reappointment to the Grade of General and Reappointment To Be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Before the Senate Committee on Armed Services*, 115th Cong. (September 26, 2017) (statement of General Joseph F. Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

## Emory Upton and the US Army

Paul C. Jussel

### Books Reviewed

*Emory Upton:  
Misunderstood Reformer*  
By David J. Fitzpatrick

*Correspondence of Major  
General Emory Upton:  
Volume 1, 1857–1875*  
Edited by Salvatore G.  
Cilella Jr.

*Correspondence of Major  
General Emory Upton:  
Volume 2, 1875–1881*  
Edited by Salvatore G.  
Cilella Jr.

Today, US Army officers know very little of Major General Emory Upton and his reforms, even if they know his name. Yet Upton was one of the great thinkers of our profession at the end of the nineteenth century. His influence is felt today. Yet he and his reforms are very misunderstood, as author David J. Fitzpatrick explains clearly in his book, *Emory Upton: Misunderstood Reformer*. He provides a portrait of Upton that is very different from current perspectives. Fitzpatrick paints a picture of a man who was deeply concerned with the professionalism of the US Army, the officer corps in particular; the civil-military relationship between America's militia, since the United States National Guard had not been fully organized yet; and the regular Army. Why is this portrait so different from current perspectives? Why is it so different from the opinions of such renowned authors as Stephen E. Ambrose and Russell Weigley? What happened to the ideas and proposals of Emory Upton? In short, Peter S. Michie's work, *The Life and Letters of Emory Upton*, published in 1885, is what happened.

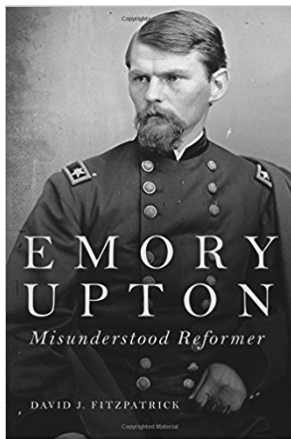
In the 1880s, Michie, an 1863 graduate of the United States Military Academy, became an influential and well-respected professor at the academy. His work on Upton served to raise the general to the highest level. His hagiography of the then-recently deceased reformer was not without its faults. While Michie relied on many of Upton's letters to create his portrait, he often redacted or modified the letters to show what he wanted Upton to be: a stalwart, God-fearing, nearly puritanical reformer who despised the national belief in state militia, reviled politicians, and regarded a professional army as the only solution to the nation's ills.

Fitzpatrick shatters that image. The author has lived with Upton for over two decades through the general's letters. Research for the dissertation, articles for the *Journal of Military History*, and now this book have been Fitzpatrick's work as he traced Upton's life. The book's value is obvious as the author starts from Upton's early years, his cadetship at West Point, and the opening years of the Civil War, as very formative times for the young officer. Upton's life at West Point was not without frivolity—he garnered demerits for acting out—while he was certainly a studious cadet. His dislike for politicians traces to his time at the academy when he realized many of his fellow cadets did not attend due to dedication to the ideals of the institution, but rather as political favors from family friends and relatives.

The first years of the Civil War also provided lessons for the somewhat idealistic young officer. First serving with the artillery branch, then the infantry, Upton witnessed random acts of vandalism and barbarity by Union soldiers. Though he eschewed those acts, Upton soon came to

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By David J. Fitzpatrick, *Emory Upton: Misunderstood Reformer* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 344 pages, \$39.95

understand what Sherman called “the hard hand of war.” Upton also saw how volunteers could be turned into soldiers when ably and competently led. Fitzpatrick takes the reader through the war’s last years as the young officer rose in rank and responsibility, first as an infantry brigade commander, then as a cavalry division commander. Through these experiences, he ended the Civil War with firm ideas on the value of trained volunteers and the associated horrors when they were not trained.

Fitzpatrick is at his best when he describes Upton’s postwar career. He shows the general as an inspired tactician, a caring husband, and careful observer of foreign armies. The author does not shy away from controversy as he points out Upton’s benign neglect of his duties as West Point’s Commandant of Cadets. Fitzpatrick provides an excellent overview of each of Upton’s assessments of foreign armies, showing how Upton got some mostly correct and others very wrong.

The two chapters on reform are where the author refutes the charges laid at Upton’s feet by following generations of politicians, military leaders, and historians. Fitzpatrick clearly shows Upton favored a volunteer-based army and had strong political support from politicians, but he saw the military as an instrument to suppress “rebellions” in the country, much as the volunteer armies did during the “War of the Rebellion.” Maintaining a skeletal military (a cadre military in current terms) was important to Upton for a variety of reasons. He favored the call for volunteer units if, and only if, there were sufficiently trained officers for them. The practice of forming all-volunteer units—from senior officer to lowest private—was an abject failure in Upton’s mind.

Indeed, Upton favored serious reform to military policy, all of which was in the congressional realm. Not understanding how difficult that reform would be, Upton often fought uphill battles against his political opponents. The year of 1878 became crucial for Upton’s efforts. Through the work of Representative James A. Garfield and Senator Ambrose E. Burnside, a reform bill eventually made it to the Senate floor, where it went down in defeat. Such historians as Weigley have cited the bill, largely based on Upton’s intellectual work, as evidence that Upton wanted a Prussian system for the US military; Fitzpatrick shows “this was not a contemporary concern” (217). Rather, as the author points out, the bill failed for lack of active support by the Army Commanding General William Tecumseh Sherman, who should have been the most vocal military supporter, and by an “intense lobbying effort” from the Army’s staff bureau chiefs (221).

Upton continued to write and promote the idea of military reform for the next several years. Finally promoted to colonel in the regular Army in 1880, he took assignment to the 4th Artillery at the Presidio in California. In March 1881, Upton ended his life with a bullet to his head.

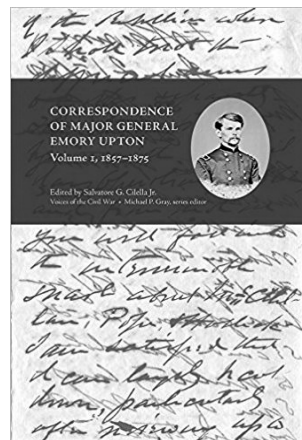


Fitzpatrick does great service in his last chapter, which outlines Upton's continuing influence. The author explains how Secretary of War Elihu Root adopted many of Upton's ideas, modified others, and brought the army into the early twentieth century. What are known as the Root reforms had their basis in many of Upton's proposals. Further, Fitzpatrick examines Upton's alleged "militarism" and "antidemocratic" leanings and finds those critiques wanting. The author tackles the final barrier to Upton's legacy in his assessment of John McAuley Palmer's critiques and dismantles them completely.

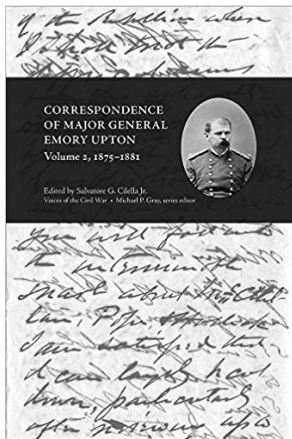
While Fitzpatrick has done great service to anyone interested in US Army reform and the late-nineteenth-century army, Salvatore G. Cilella Jr. has helped even more. In his two-volume work, *Correspondence of Major General Emory Upton*, he offers the reformer's thoughts in Upton's own words. These volumes are invaluable in understanding Upton. Any reader can page through the books to see how Upton evolved through the letters. Starting with Cadet Upton's first letter to his brother John in 1857 and ending with his March 14, 1881, resignation the works tell a more complete story of Emory Upton.

From these pages, Upton emerges as a caring brother to his siblings and a respectful son to his parents. He appears as both a serious and studious cadet, while bemoaning his demerits. As a newly minted officer, he was dedicated to his duties as a staff officer and eventual battery commander, and as a regimental commander and trainer for the 121st New York Infantry. His letter describing Grant's Overland campaign and his plan of attack on May 10, 1864, at Spotsylvania is remarkable not only in its brevity but in its humility (140). While Commandant of Cadets, Upton's letters to the superintendent and members of the House Committee on Military Affairs detail the challenges Upton faced during his tenure at West Point. More importantly, many letters show Upton's efforts at tactical reform, at meaningful national military reform, and his attempts to influence potential and actual stakeholders in those ideas. A reader can almost feel Upton's frustration as he writes his closest friends, James Wilson and Henry DuPont, about his efforts.

Cilella's work is more valuable with the author's notes for every letter in the two books. His research to uncover each person Upton mentions, their relation to the letter's subject, and other background information makes these works more appealing to historians for it gives the background and context for so many of Upton's ideas. While the editor was forced to rely on Michie's century-old biography for some letters, his efforts to find letters Michie missed and redacted makes this new version more valuable. Not only did Cilella research the context for all of Upton's letters to 1881, he also provides context for Upton's world tour in 1875–76. The author's efforts to provide an understanding



Edited by Salvatore G. Cilella Jr.,  
*Correspondence of Major General Emory Upton: Volume 1, 1857–1875* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 406 pages, \$58.00



Edited by Salvatore G. Cilella Jr.,  
*Correspondence of Major General Emory Upton: Volume 2, 1875-1881* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 67 pages, \$58.00

of the different armies Upton's entourage studied over those seventeen months is very impressive.

For both books, the bibliographies and endnotes are very helpful to the professional interested in exploring more from this period. The discussions over large standing armies, a professionalized officer corps, and the role and responsibilities of the National Guard are as vital today as they were in Upton's time. Despite the arguments against the reformer's ideas offered by such experts as Weigley and Ambrose, those involved in national defense and reform will be well served by studying what Upton thought at a time when the Army was under serious pressure to change. Today's Army faces many similar challenges; old thoughts may prove more than useful to modern leaders.

## On “The ‘War’ in Russia’s ‘Hybrid Warfare’ ”

Miguel Peco

*This commentary responds to Andrew Monaghan’s article: “The ‘War’ in Russia’s ‘Hybrid Warfare’ ” published in the Winter 2015–16 issue of Parameters (vol. 45, no. 4).*

Andrew Monaghan suggests “the war in Ukraine has refocused Western attention on Russia and its ability to project power, particularly in terms of ‘hybrid warfare’” (65). Using the label “hybrid” in fact could result in overlooking the evolution of Russian military thinking, which contemplates “the increasingly prominent role of conventional force, including the use of high intensity firepower, in Russian warfighting capabilities” (65). As a consequence, the author warns that “NATO as a whole, and even the US itself cannot rely on the automatic assumption that it would win a conventional war” and suggests recalibrating away “from Hybrid warfare to mobilization” (74, 65). State mobilization, or *mobilizatsiya*, is a concept included in the military doctrine of the Russian Federation (2014) referring to measures for activating resources and capabilities in order to achieve political aims. According to Monaghan, mobilization provides a “more flexible understanding of how the Russian leadership might view how that war might be fought and won.”

Monaghan’s analysis on the implications of the hybrid warfare phenomenon is insightful, and the proposal about the need to refocus on the reality behind that label is consistent and pertinent. The concern the author highlights the most—how to deal with a supposed Russian conventional military superiority “in a specific place and at certain time”—however, is arguably not the highest priority, or at least not the first one that NATO may have. At the political level, NATO’s main concern is a potential blockade of its reaction mechanisms, which are constrained by the threshold set in Article 5, as well as an eventual lack of consensus among member states. At the military level, nuclear capabilities are more worrisome than conventional ones, especially when their potential use is contemplated under the concept of de-escalation as an extension of conventional war. For these reasons, I would suggest that, instead of state mobilization, a better framework for analyzing the implications of a potential conflict between the Russian Federation and NATO is what has been labeled “strategic deterrence” (*strategicheskoe sderzhivanie*).

Lieutenant Colonel Miguel Peco, Head of Unit, Geopolitical Analysis Area, Spanish Ministry of Defense and part-time professor of geopolitics and strategy in the Spanish Joint Staff College, holds a PhD in international security.

## The Author Replies

Andrew Monaghan

Miguel Peco argues that instead of “strategic mobilization,” a better framework for analyzing the implications of a conflict between NATO and Russia is “strategic deterrence,” which he terms *strategicheskoe sderzhivanie*. This, he offers, is because a supposed Russian conventional military superiority is not NATO’s highest priority, which at the political level is a potential blocking of its decision-making and reaction mechanism, and because Russian nuclear capabilities are more worrisome than conventional ones.

These are important points. As I note in my article, understanding Russian capabilities is not only about Russian conventional capability: Moscow has both prioritized the maintenance, modernization, and even enlargement of its nuclear triad, and also rehearsed how this might be used. Indeed, one of the main points of the article was to draw the emphasis away from understanding Russia through the prism of “measures short of war” and to highlight that by 2015 Russia had been preparing its armed forces for a regional confrontation with possible escalation into using nuclear weapons for at least four years; in other words, big warfighting operations with big formations. Nuclear capabilities are sewn into Moscow’s defense and security thinking and posture, and it would be a mistake to see Russia’s conventional and nuclear capabilities as somehow separate.

Peco’s point about deterrence raises two further questions. First, while deterrence has become a central feature of the debate about the Euro-Atlantic community’s relations with Russia, many policymakers and analysts alike have argued deterrence theory and practice has been largely forgotten by the Western policy community in the post-Cold War era and are having to be relearned. Moreover, *strategicheskoe sderzhivanie* is too limited a framework for analyzing the implications of potential conflict with Russia: it is just one pillar of strategic deterrence—deterrence by denial. To this should be added deterrence by punishment—in Russian, *ustrasheniye*.

And these are the reasons state mobilization is the main framework for thinking about Russia today and for the foreseeable future. Deterrence is primarily about the adversary, about understanding what and how that adversary thinks and operates, why the adversary acts as it does, and what will deter it from acting. Without such an understanding, deterrence cannot work—indeed, without understanding the differences between *sderzhivanie* and *ustrasheniye*, the wrong signals may be sent, and signals from Moscow incorrectly understood, if received at all. State mobilization is a concept that illuminates Russian activities across the whole state, including the essential elements of how Moscow conceives warfighting at the strategic level. It is the foundation, therefore, for much Russian activity, incorporating readiness and state resilience, as well as escalation and Russia’s own efforts to establish deterrence.

# Book Reviews

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **The Life and Work of General Andrew J. Goodpaster: Best Practices in National Security Affairs**

By C. Richard Nelson

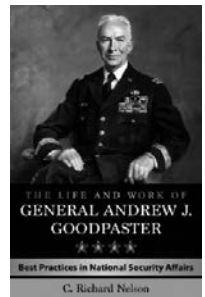
Reviewed by Charles D. Allen, professor of leadership and cultural studies, US Army War College

**T**he *Life and Work of General Andrew J. Goodpaster* is part of the American Warrior series from the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) that examines unique historical contributions of individuals with enduring legacies. The subject of this book, Andrew Goodpaster, is an iconic military leader and exemplary national security professional who many feel has not gotten proper acknowledgment commensurate with his impact. This reviewer was understandably cautious and approached the task with healthy skepticism, given the project was sponsored by two activities for which Goodpaster was associated for more than a decade. Written as a biographical tribute, the book is published in partnership with the AUSA, the Atlantic Council, and the Eisenhower Legacy Council.

C. Richard Nelson has impressive credentials as a soldier-scholar and is eminently qualified to present Goodpaster to a new generation of national security professionals. The author retired from two careers—as a US Army officer and an analyst with the Central Intelligence Agency—during which he served on the faculty of the Command and General Staff College as well as the National Defense University. With a PhD in international relations, he also served as director of the international security program under Goodpaster at the Atlantic Council. Nelson thus had close association with the subject to complement his intensive and comprehensive research on Goodpaster. His effort more than adequately addressed the shortcomings noted in the 2013 book *Unsung Hero: The Life of Gen. Andrew J. Goodpaster* by Robert Jordan. Indeed, it is over a hundred pages longer.

Nelson appropriately organizes this book into three major sections: “Earning a Reputation,” “Conducting National Security Affairs,” and “Collaborative Leadership” to present chronologically the growth and development of a farm boy who would become one of the mostly highly sought after and respected strategic advisors of our nation. A quick reading of the three-page selected chronology (298–300) illustrates the breadth and depth of Goodpaster’s service and contribution to US national security.

Goodpaster’s intellect and leadership talent were recognized while a cadet at the United States Military Academy (West Point). There he caught the attention of Colonel George “Abe” Lincoln who taught in the Department of Social Science. Within five short years after graduation, Goodpaster established himself as a warrior-leader, earning the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, and two Purple Hearts as an engineer battalion commander with his unit fighting as infantry in the World War II Battle of Monte Cassino. It was Colonel Lincoln who subsequently advocated for Lieutenant Colonel Goodpaster to be



Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016

300 pages

\$45.00

assigned with him as a strategic planner for Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. There he learned at the feet of the master strategic leader and thinker Marshall. For his broadening experience, Goodpaster was a member of the initial officer cohort of the “Lincoln Brigade” of soldier-scholars sent off to civilian education—within three years, he earned two masters degrees and then a PhD in international relations from Princeton.

Goodpaster’s reputation for strategic thinking and staff coordination led to his selection to serve with the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Dwight D. Eisenhower. It was Goodpaster who drafted General Order Number 1 (GO #1) by which Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) assumed operational control of sovereign national forces for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Less than two decades later, the GO #1 drafter would become the SACEUR. The SHAPE assignment was the start of a long mentoring relationship and friendship between Eisenhower and Goodpaster.

When Eisenhower became president of the United States, Goodpaster served as his staff secretary and the president’s defense liaison officer. Goodpaster was clearly the progenitor of National Security Council (NSC) methods and procedures now collectively referred to as the interagency process. Subsequent to the Eisenhower administration, Goodpaster served Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard M. Nixon in varied capacities interspersed with traditional command and staff assignments for a military flag officer. Those assignments included commanding general of 8th Infantry Division, director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commandant of the National War College, deputy commander of US Military Assistance Command Vietnam, and SACEUR.

In his retirement, Goodpaster continued to serve in the arena of national policy and strategy formulation in advisory groups, commissions, academic institutions, and think tanks. This reviewer read in anticipation of discovering what else Goodpaster had been a part of. Like a strategic “Forrest Gump,” Goodpaster was just off camera for Eisenhower’s New Look, Kennedy and Johnson’s assessment of Vietnam, Nixon’s NATO-Warsaw Pact détente, and as other presidents wrestled with a new world order of the post-Cold War era as well as challenges of a new century.

In reflection, an appropriate subtitle for this book would also be *A Profile in Strategic Leadership: A Talent Well-Managed*. Goodpaster’s career exemplified the frame of reference development and the metacompetencies (conceptual, technical, and interpersonal) in the *US Army War College Strategic Leadership Primer* (Gerras, 2010).

Nelson has captured the legacy of principled leadership demonstrated by Goodpaster. As Nelson offers in the preface, “Each new generation of national security officials believes they are facing challenges of unprecedented complexity and uncertainty. In retrospect, however, all challenges are similar to the extent that they all need to be well thought through” (x). This book establishes that Goodpaster, over the course of his long service to the nation, could answer in the affirmative to the question often posed by his mentor Marshall, “Are you confident that you’ve thought this through?” Current and future national security



professionals, both uniformed and civilian, will be well-served to consider and think through the lessons offered by this American warrior-scholar.

## Our Year of War: Two Brothers, Vietnam, and a Divided Nation

By Daniel P. Bolger

Reviewed by Mike Perry, Executive Director, Army Heritage Center Foundation

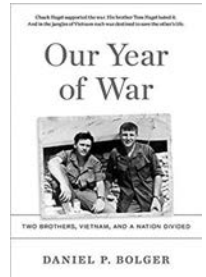
Lieutenant General (Retired) Daniel P. Bolger writes in the preface of *Our Year of War: Two Brothers, Vietnam, and a Divided Nation* that he seeks “through the story of Chuck and Thomas “Tom” Hagel, to explain the lasting significance of the tumultuous events of Vietnam and 1960s America”. While he does not fully meet this goal, leaving many aspects of 1960s America and Vietnam unexplored, he does knit together valuable and focused insights on the political and social environment of the mid-1960s, the Army, its culture, and the Vietnam War. He explores how American reaction to the Tet Offensive affected the conduct of the American approach to the war in Vietnam, the Army leadership, and the soldiers who fought there. For Bolger, the Hagel brothers provided a valuable and useful structure for his analysis.

The Hagel brothers’ Army experience began when victory in Vietnam was still expected, and both volunteered for service in the Army. After basic and advance infantry training, both were assigned to Vietnam. Chuck Hagel, the future senator and secretary of defense, arrived first in December 1967 and Tom, a future attorney of note, in mid-January 1968. Through some gamesmanship, the two brothers were assigned to the same platoon of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division. The two brothers were inseparable, serving as crewmen on the same infantry personnel carrier and often sharing the responsibility of walking point on combat patrols.

Their battalion’s area of operations, west of Saigon, included nearby installations such as Long Binh Post, the Army’s largest, and Tan Son Nhut Air Base. During the Tet Offensive, both installations were major objectives for the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. The mobility of their units drew them into some of the hardest fighting of the war.

Bolger’s exploration of the post-Tet fallout in the United States is sound. He details and effectively describes how the North Vietnamese public relations victory effected the decision of President Lyndon B. Johnson not to seek reelection and the impact the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy had on the social fabric of the country. He successfully highlights how the raucous 1968 Democratic Party convention in Chicago and the campaign of George Wallace helped facilitate the election of Richard Nixon to the presidency; however, much more can be written about Tet’s effect on the home front. What Bolger does most effectively, however, is explore Tet’s effect on the Army, the Army’s approach to the war, aspects of the Army’s culture, and the effect of the changing environment on those who fought.

The public relations’ victory of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, though not reflected on the battlefield, led to the departure



Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2017

368 pages  
\$17.99

of General William C. Westmoreland in the late spring of 1968. Westmoreland, who had been committed to a war of attrition, was replaced by General Creighton W. Abrams Jr., who over the remaining years of combat would, according to Bolger, “shoulder the unwelcome task of losing the war as slowly as possible.” The author discusses how Abrams’s approach to the war sought to reduce the adverse effect on the civilian population and to limit US casualties. Abrams’s efforts, would eventually lead to the Vietnamization of the war. But, in mid-1968, Westmoreland’s emphasis was major unit combat. In contrast, Abrams placed a greater emphasis on small unit actions and combat patrols.

Bolger uses this transition to begin an interesting examination of command and biases that his military experience enhances. He explores, in some detail, the disconnect that occurs between leaders, even at senior levels. He describes that after Tet, Abrams sought to reduce the adverse impact on the civilian population. Meanwhile, the commander of the 9th Infantry Division, Major General Julian J. Ewell, saw General Abrams’ new approach as an opportunity to take the fight to the enemy. Ewell placed heavy reliance on combat patrols and the use of artillery. His efforts may have contributed to higher civilian casualties, and Bolger highlights how postoperations analysis often identified fewer seized weapons than enemy killed. Some, including those on Ewell’s and Abrams’s own staffs, believed that a portion of the killed were civilian.

Bolger also goes on to examine prejudices in the Army and how commander’s biases affect their evaluation of combat effectiveness. The 9th Infantry Division was a composite unit and included standard “straight leg” infantry, mechanized infantry, and riverine (“Brown Water Navy”) battalions. Ewell disliked his mechanized and riverine units, believing they lacked the “it” of his infantry units. Bolger points out that while some of his distain was a product of an operational environment that limited their effectiveness to specific locales, he also highlights how this dislike adversely affected the leaders and the soldiers of those units. In the Hagel brothers’ situation, Bolger describes how the need to man combat patrols as well as maintain their M113 armored personnel carriers led to undermanned patrols sent to conduct combat operations that placed soldiers at risk and yielded results that only aggravated Ewell’s dislike of his mechanized units.

Bolger also examines how the Army’s personnel policies led to the declining effectiveness of many units that plagued the Army in the final years of the war. He describes when the Hagels began their year of service in Vietnam, their leaders and their noncommissioned officers were experienced veterans with years of service. In this terminology, they knew “the deal.” He then describes the slow loss of experience as the one-year rotation policy and casualties stripped the unit of experienced leadership and highlights that by the end of Chuck Hagel’s tour, he is a platoon sergeant with less than two years of service in the Army.

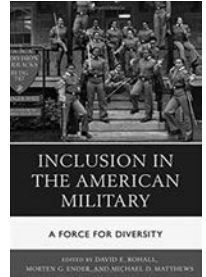
While not achieving his lofty goals of placing the Vietnam War and the 1960s into context, the book is an interesting read. Neither a pure biography of the Hagel brothers’ experiences in Vietnam nor a complete history of the war, he effectively uses their experiences to provide a good examination of one unit’s travails fighting a war in 1968 that was not to be won.

## ARMED FORCES AND SOCIETY

**Inclusion in the American Military: A Force for Diversity**

Edited by David E. Rohall, Morten G. Ender, and  
Michael D. Matthews

Reviewed by Jacqueline E. Whitt, author of *Bringing God to Men: American Military Chaplains and the Vietnam War* and associate professor of strategy, US Army War College



The image chosen for the cover of *Inclusion in the American Military: A Force for Diversity* says a lot: it is an “old corps” photo from West Point, taken in 2016. It features sixteen black women—cadets posed in front of the 1st Division barracks, outfitted in dress uniforms, wielding sabers, and ready to take on the world. Yet it is not the most well-known image from this photoshoot. It is not the photo of these sixteen women with their fists raised, the one that went viral and attracted reaction and comment from nearly every corner of the internet. That photograph prompted an investigation and may have ramifications for these young officers’ careers for years to come.

Like the cover image, which hints at a controversial backstory but does not confront it head on, this book gives us just a taste of the myriad issues and conversations that continue about diversity in the American military. *Inclusion* promises a lot and delivers a series of solid essays, but it does not quite deliver the knockout analytical punch that one might hope for. Nevertheless, it is an important volume, and it should find its way onto the library shelves of undergraduate programs, base libraries, and reference collections. The steep price tag makes it a difficult book to recommend to personal libraries.

After a brief introduction that serves as a literature review and overview on diversity within the US military, the book’s eight substantive chapters each address the inclusion of a specific minority into the military. The first section explores questions of race and ethnicity with chapters on African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. The second section includes three chapters on sex, sexual orientation, and gender and a fourth chapter on religion. The chapter on religion is, in some respects, odd as it explores the integration of not one group, but many. Its inclusion, however, hints at how one might approach some of the broader questions of diversity that are not explored in depth: socioeconomic status, region of origin, disability, family history, and political thought.

As with all edited volumes, the quality of the essays varies, and some tread more familiar ground than others. All of the essays ably cover the basic history for each of the groups examined and suggest areas for future study and analysis. The most successful essays also manage to make an argument that offers an analytical point of view as well. In the first section, Deenesh Sohoni’s essay on Asian American service and citizenship and William C. Meadows’ chapter on Native American service and the syncretic nature of “warrior” cultures stand out in this regard. Sohoni expertly traces two ideas about citizenship,

Lanham, MD:  
Lexington, 2017  
230 pages  
\$95.00

civic and ethnocultural, and explores the relationship between these two conceptions of what it meant to be fully “American” in light of Asian American military service and the string of legal cases that weighed in on the issue. Meadows’ essay, in addition to covering historical information, also suggests traditions surrounding the “warrior” and the warrior’s reintegration into society have been essential for Native American service members’ understanding of their military service and status as veterans.

In the second part of the book, the essays sometimes veer into advocacy, which is problematic, if understandable. These are, after all, many of the issues that are most politically sensitive in the contemporary United States. In the chapter on the integration of women, which ably traces both the progress women have made and the significant cultural and structural challenges that remain, Janice H. Laurence writes, “it is time to move ahead and more fully accept women in service” (123). Statements like this one, even if they might garner wide support from both scholars, observers, and practitioners, may also open the authors up to (in my mind, unfair) critique about their “objectivity” by accusing them of espousing a political position rather than engaging in scholarly analysis. These essays are likewise limited by the fact that policies and experiences with these integration projects are still very much unsettled and in flux. In the second part of the book, especially, there is a great sense of anticipation, but also some sincere uncertainty, especially in light of the political climate of 2017, about what the future holds.

Each of the eight substantive essays includes some variation on the idea that “x group has served honorably in the military since at least the American Revolutionary War.” This repetition may seem, on first glance, trite and cliché, but it underscores a vital point. The American military is—and always has been—a diverse place. There is no mythological past in which the American military was populated solely by white, cisgender, Christian men. These essays, together, make that point with resounding and relentless evidence, and that is a valuable thing, indeed.

The book’s editors offer five reasons that these, and other, questions about diversity matter. First, they argue that the size of the US military makes it a critical player in national conversations about diversity. Second, the American military imagines itself as a “model for diversity and inclusion in the workforce,” and this idea ought to be interrogated (192). Third, the authors suggest that “if diversity cannot work in the armed services, it may not work anywhere in society” (193). Fourth, they suggest the experience of diversity in the US military suggests that attitudes can and do change over time. Finally, they take a stand against the argument that the military should not be a social experiment, arguing instead that “the military represents a natural experiment of sorts” (194). Each of these five conclusions deserves significant and rigorous further analysis. These essays provide a launching point and a factual baseline from which future studies can work. But the conversations are far from over, and these brief essays, probably most appropriate for an undergraduate classroom or basic research, are far from the last words on this important subject.

## Wartime Sexual Violence: From Silence to Condemnation of a Weapon of War

By Kerry F. Crawford

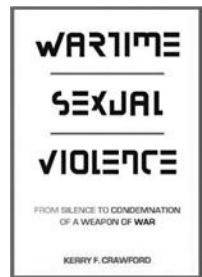
Reviewed by Dr. Patricia M. Shields, professor, Texas State University

For millennia soldiers have used sexual violence as a way to demoralize an enemy and as a reward of victory. Even during World War II, rape was considered inevitable and did not merit formal prosecution at the Nuremberg trials. This changed in the mid-1990s when new social norms, particularly around human rights and women's rights in particular, encountered the atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Rwanda. The international community's explicit and implicit acceptance of conflict-related sexual violence ended. In its place, were forceful condemnation of the practice and initiatives to prosecute perpetrators and to provide aid to victims.

In *Wartime Sexual Violence: From Silence to Condemnation of a Weapon of War*, Kerry F. Crawford examines how basic changes in the way "advocates and decision makers think about and discuss conflict-related sexual violence" led to a shift from silence to action (2). The shift occurred as wartime sexual violence was reframed as a weapon of war. This captured the attention of powerful members of the security community who demanded, initiated, and paid for institutional and policy change. Crawford examines the legacy of this key reframing.

She does this by providing background information on the use and extent of sexual violence in wartime, by defining the key ideas that make up the weapon of war frame, and by promising a model to evaluate the success of the frame (chapter 1). In chapters 2–4 she examines the impact of the weapons of war frame using three detailed case studies. These include the US response to sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008), and Britain's Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative. The book concludes with an assessment of how well the wartime sexual violence frame worked to secure a lasting and effective anti-sexual violence agenda.

In the first chapter, Crawford developed a six-stage model of potential international responses to incidents of wartime sexual violence. She describes the initial phase or zero phase as one of nonrecognition and no action. The first response stage occurs when sexual violence is documented and is the subject of a report, hearing, or conference. In the second response stage rhetorical condemnation occurs. Leaders condemn the actions in a speech, press release, or impromptu remarks. The condemnation is not followed by resources, however. The third response stage includes an initial commitment. Here a state or international organization issues a binding resolution or policy and devotes resources to address or to mitigate sexual violence. This can be tied to a specific conflict or be more general. The initial commitment is followed by the fourth response stage—implementation and obligation. Here, formal, legal initiatives are translated into military training or deployment. Multilateral peacekeeping operations would be instructed to address sexual violence for example. Finally, in the fifth response



Washington, DC:  
Georgetown University  
Press, 2017

224 pages

\$89.95



stage lasting behavioral change occurs (norm change). Sexual violence as an aspect of a conflict “is considered unacceptable and effectively held accountable” (38).

*Wartime Sexual Violence* is a well-reasoned and carefully documented study that examines the weapons of war frame from an international studies perspective. Realism, constructivism, and feminist security studies are used to make sense of intentions and policies. The case study of state and international organization chapters, demonstrates the many ways the weapons of war frame has been used to address the problem of sexual violence during war. These impressive chapters incorporate important details and are unified through the policy development model introduced in chapter 2.

I sometimes got lost in the detail and was happy each chapter presented the model and corresponding case evidence in table format. These tables explained how evidence fit into a larger pattern across cases. All three cases demonstrated that the weapon of war frame incorporated documentation, condemnation, commitment, and implementation. In no case, however, did the frame contribute to norm change. Perpetrators were not consistently and effectively held accountable. Lasting normative and behavioral changes were yet to occur. This, in a way, captures the message of the book. The weapons of war frame effectively activated a sleeping international response. This represents remarkable progress. On the other hand, its narrow focus has serious limitations.

Chapter 2 examines the US response to sexual violence in the DRC between 1990 and 2013. Specifically, it shows how the weapons of war frame contributed to US efforts to confront sexual violence in the DRC. For example, there were house hearings, Secretary Hillary Clinton discussed sexual violence in a visit to the DRC, and the United States withdrew financial support (2013). Chapter 3 shifts the focus to the UN and examines the passage and implementation of UN Resolution 1820 (2008). This resolution “created an obligation to monitor wartime sexual violence occurring in conflicts that are on the Security Council’s agenda, and it established the precedent that sexual violence as a weapon of war is a matter of international security for member states to address” (105). In chapter 4, Britain’s Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative is explored. This generously funded initiative deployed a team of experts to UN agencies dedicated to tackling sexual violence. Britain also leveraged its role as head of the Group of Eight to end impunity for perpetrators.

Although Crawford certainly sees the merit in the weapons of war frame to move an issue onto policy agendas and programs, she is also highly critical. The frame artificially narrowed the broader issue of sexual violence to an international security concern and minimized its importance as a human rights issue. This purposeful framing securitized sexual violence and limited its focus to deliberate wartime atrocities against specific populations.

This book would be attractive to international relations scholars who want to examine the impact of a change in policy framing on the actions of the security community. Scholars new to the issue of wartime sexual violence will find a great introduction including historical context and useful definitions. Clearly, the world has made great progress and there is still a long way to go to stop sexual violence during war.



## STRATEGY

**Strategy: Context and Adaptation  
from Archidamus to Airpower**

Edited by Richard J. Bailey Jr., James W. Forsyth Jr., and  
Mark O. Yeisley

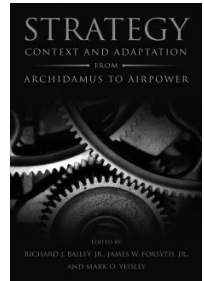
Reviewed by Thomas Moriarty, professor, American University

Reading and evaluating an edited volume often produces a mixed bag of thoughts and emotions. Much like listening to an album where a few truly great songs are overwhelmed by an avalanche of mediocre “fillers” that sound more like your old high school grunge band than a professional musician, edited volumes often have a similar nefarious reputation of sacrificing quality for quantity. I am pleased to report that *Strategy: Context and Adaptation from Archidamus to Airpower* largely avoids this trap.

*Strategy*, a collection of eleven thoughtful essays written by faculty members of the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base, is not about what strategy is. Rather its primary focus is an extended discussion of how to think about strategy. Despite the impressive breadth of topics covered, the underlying themes are the same: the book is about interaction. While we tend to view strategy from a military or political perspective, the authors of these essays want readers to understand the relationship between strategy and the environment in which that strategy is developed. This is because strategy, whether we care to admit it or not, is influenced both directly and indirectly, both positively and negatively, by the perceptions, beliefs, and even the educations (yes, pedagogy matters) of those crafting it. As the essayists note repeatedly, context matters. As such, this volume differentiates itself from other books about strategy by studying how contextual conditions affect our strategic cognitive abilities.

As the title implies, the topics—and the methods used to explore them—vary greatly in this book. James Wood Forsyth Jr. provides a useful critique of realism, relying heavily on Thucydides. M. V. Smith argues space has already been militarized and, as such, spacepower can become an effective form of deterrent. Richard J. Bailey Jr. explores the cyber realm and wonders whether our existing decision-making structures are ill-suited for the age of cyberwarfare. Readers interested in irregular warfare will find Mark O. Yeisley’s exceptional essay particularly valuable if somewhat controversial, as he claims US airpower has performed “brilliantly” in this arena. I found Stephen E. Wright’s examination of the roles and differences between strategists and planners, along with the sources of disconnect between the two, of profound interest and importance.

My one sustained critique of the book as a whole is that several of the essays tend to lose focus of their greater arguments or get caught up in protracted discussions on points that could have been made more quickly or are not of direct importance to their larger arguments. In



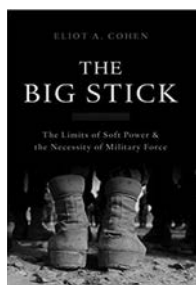
Annapolis, MD: Naval  
Institute Press, 2016

288 pages

\$39.95

other words, they drift into the weeds or off on tangents that didn't best highlight the central findings of their research. To be clear, this doesn't impact the overall quality of thought produced in this volume. But it is certainly something to be made aware of.

The target audience for this volume is students of strategy. Students at the various command and staff colleges and war colleges may find this volume particularly useful. Yet anyone with an interest in strategy will surely find this book of value. This is a great "thought" book, designed to encourage healthy and productive intellectual debate—something the field is currently lacking.



New York: Basic, 2017

304 pages  
\$11.99

## **The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Power**

By Eliot A. Cohen

Reviewed by Steven Metz, US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute

The United States may be the most psychologically insecure great power in history. For some reason Americans repeatedly question whether they are worthy of global leadership and whether hard power—military force—should play a central role in their nation's strategy. These periods of self-doubt seem particularly intense following conflicts with unsatisfactory endings. This happened in the 1970s following Vietnam and now, after sixteen years fighting violent Islamic extremism, the United States is once again contemplating the purpose and nature of its national power, with some on both the political right and left calling for strategic disengagement.

In *The Big Stick* Eliot Cohen makes an elegant, erudite case for American global leadership and strength from a right-of-center, realist vantage point. There is nothing shocking or pathbreaking in the book; however, as Professor Cohen intended, it provides a reminder of things Americans once knew and believed but now seem to be forgetting.

Cohen begins with an inventory of American power—what might be called a strategic net assessment. He concludes that, while America may not have the same expansive global dominance as it did immediately after the end of the Cold War, the United States remains militarily superior to any challenger or enemy, and has the economic strength to sustain it. Calls for American disengagement are not, Cohen believes, inevitable or even necessary but a reflection of political and leadership challenges. The United States can and should, he argues, sustain its preeminent world role.

The bulk of the book then assesses America's four security "problem sets:" China; "revisionist middle powers" like Russia, Iran and North Korea; violent Islamic extremism; and ungoverned spaces, particularly space and cyberspace.

Of these China is the most vexing and potentially dangerous problem. "No geopolitical challenge to the American world role," Cohen writes, "comes close to that posed by the newly prosperous, nationalistic, and sometimes belligerent Middle Kingdom" (101). Deterring China

requires an “ability to generate large forces in relatively short periods of time” but also the ability to fight a long war (120). And the United States must be able to exploit China’s weakness: since it is ruled by a “regime dependent on economic prosperity” the United States needs a “powerful navy and air force that can reassure, strengthen and protect allies, and cripple China by blockading its ports and disrupting its commerce” (120). For this reason, Cohen advocates a “substantial naval and aerial buildup in the Pacific” (121).

However taxing, the Chinese security problem is relatively straight forward. Countering violent Islamic extremists—“jihadis” as Cohen calls them—is significantly more complex, in part because the enemy is a fluid network rather than a nation ruled by an identifiable regime, and in part because the foundation of the extremists’ power is an ideology rather than tangible national resources that can be targeted militarily. “By 2015 the war that one president had hoped to win (in part) through a shock diverted to the Arab world and an appeal to representative government and that another president had hoped to secure by routine, if selective and exquisitely precise, killing,” Cohen notes, “was not close to success, save in one key respect—preventing another mass attack on the American homeland comparable to 9/11” (142). That said, Professor Cohen’s recommended approach is continuing the current course: “wearing down terrorist organizations, dividing them, waging political warfare against their base, as a last resort intervening to help stabilize countries threatened by them” (147).

On the other two problem sets—containing and deterring revisionist middle powers and helping stabilize the global commons—Cohen concludes the United States has generally taken the right approach but needs more military resources to sustain its edge. Because the security problem set requires such diverse capabilities, “America needs a substantially larger military than the one it now has” (195).

While the power of Cohen’s prose and logic will leave most readers convinced that hard power has enduring utility and that the United States needs a bigger military, two points merit further consideration. One is treating the conflict with violent Islamic extremism as a variant of war. In this Professor Cohen is very much in the mainstream, but a case can be made that not all uses of armed force should be portrayed or treated as war, and that approaching the task of “managing the barbarians”—something that civilizations have had to do for millennia—does not really fit the concept of war with its implication of a discrete beginning and end to the conflict.

Second, Army readers will recognize the military expansion that Professor Cohen advocates mostly means more air and naval power. His view of landpower reflects a longstanding tradition: the United States needs a relatively small active land force, heavy on special operations and partner support capabilities and the ability to mobilize a larger force if a protracted major war occurs. While some landpower advocates may take issue with this position, support for it is growing. When a scholar of Cohen’s stature makes a case for it, everyone interested in US security, whether in the military or outside it, must take it seriously.

ADMIRAL RAOUL CASTEX,  
FRENCH NAVY**STRATEGIC  
THEORIES**

Selected, translated and edited, with an introduction by Eugenia C. Kiesling

Annapolis, MD: Naval  
Institute Press, 2017

494 pages

\$29.95

**Strategic Theories**

By Admiral Raoul Castex

Reviewed by Dr. Lukas Milevski, Baltic Sea Fellow in the Eurasia Program at Foreign Policy Research Institute

Admiral Raoul Victor Patrice Castex (1878–1968) is *le stratège inconnu*, the unknown strategist. He was a naval officer predominantly of the French Third Republic, so prolific that in maritime strategy his writings are second only to Alfred Thayer Mahan. His magnum opus was a five volume work published between 1927 and 1935 initially comprising 2,493 pages titled *Théories Stratégiques*, with a sixth volume published posthumously. *Strategic Theories*, the abridged English edition first translated by Eugenia Kiesling in 1994, was reprinted in a paperback edition in 2017. Weighing in at a mere 428 pages of text, *Strategic Theories* cannot of course compare in magnitude to the original work.

The chapters included in *Strategic Theories* are drawn from all five of the core volumes of *Théories Stratégiques*. As not just translator but also editor, Kiesling's ambition was to emphasize the numerous highlights of Castex's strategic thought rather than provide a direct translation of the whole work into English. Choices were necessary, as she emphasized that Castex's work could be understood in three distinct ways: "as a prescriptive strategic handbook, as a text in the history of strategic thought, and as a source of insight into French military policy in the years between the costly victory of 1918 and the wrenching defeat of 1940" (xviii).

Three of Castex's favorite strategic themes run through Kiesling's translation: Castex's theory of strategic *manoeuvre*, the idea of *stratégie générale*, and his particular theory of "perturbation." Kiesling also excised many of the chapters of historical narrative, while keeping only two on German naval operations in the North Sea from 1914 to 1916 as examples of Castex's style of historical narrative and analysis, particularly the manner in which he incorporated and employed his own idiosyncratic theoretical concept of *manoeuvre*. At the core of the work, of both the conceptual and historical chapters, is Castex's method of studying strategy.

As a French admiral, Castex confined much of his writing, but not his perspective, to maritime strategy. Castex was a strong believer in *stratégie générale*, or what today would be understood as joint warfare—cooperation among the services. Also befitting a French admiral was his emphasis on the idea of *manoeuvre*, which is "to move intelligently in order to create a favorable situation" (102). Although he discussed it primarily within the context of maritime strategy, the concept is clearly one of general strategic relevance. It was comparable to ideas emerging at the same time elsewhere in Europe, whether from the writings of J.F.C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart or the soviet invention of operational art.

Castex's conceptual and theoretical reflections are as relevant today as they were when first committed to paper, whether *manoeuvre*, the emphasis on jointness, or his writings on the relationship between policy and strategy. This latter topic represents Castex's third volume, forming

the centerpiece of his work. His exploration of the topic is sure to be of interest to anyone academically or professionally invested in strategy, as he examines it from a number of angles including policy's influence on strategy as well as the reverse, an interaction which ultimately led Castex pessimistically (or perhaps realistically) to describe the ultimate product of the two as the least bad compromise.

Castex also dwelt on the subjects of offense and defense, treatments which are less satisfying, in part because he contradicts Clausewitz without ever seriously engaging with him—the latter a recurrent theme through his work which was reflective of Castex's attitude toward the Prussian. His theory of perturbation is, from our modern perspective, probably the most antiquarian aspect of his work. This theory stipulates, in brief, that in every century, Europe gives rise to a single power—the *perturbateur*—which aims to revise the great power system on the continent: Spain, then France, then Germany, and as Castex was writing the Soviet Union was already looming as the next *perturbateur*.

Yet this was merely localized perturbation, for Castex also applied the theory on a global scale, in the context of an anticipated general East-West conflict, with the non-Western world cast in the role of the barbaric *perturbateur* eager to tear down the West, which was the pinnacle of human civilization (at least up to that point in time). In Castex's eyes, seapower necessarily plays a decisive role in such a struggle between East and West, even though he also acknowledged that landpower was the queen of *stratégie générale*.

For anyone who seriously studies or practices strategy, reading Castex is rewarding, albeit unevenly so. He provides an idiosyncratic, interwar French perspective on topics of eternal relevance, including but not exhausting the conduct of military operations, civil-military relations, the influence of geography on strategy, offense and defense, and through the theory of perturbation, on international relations on a continental and even global scale. At the heart of his treatment of all these topics is his basic method of strategic analysis, wherein he artfully combines a historically induced sense of strategy together with the specific material conditions which must be taken into account for any strategic analysis to be of practical value.

## DEFENSE STUDIES

**Organized Violence  
after Civil War**The Geography of Recruitment  
in Latin America

Sarah Zukerman Daly

New York: Cambridge  
University Press, 2016

344 pages

\$31.99

**Organized Violence after Civil War: The  
Geography of Recruitment in Latin America**

By Sarah Zukerman Daly

Reviewed by Dr. R. Evan Ellis, research professor for Latin America and the Caribbean for the US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute

Internal conflict and violence in Colombia is one of the most extensively covered topics in Latin American studies. The mixed criminal and political nature of the combatants and the associated processes of peace and demobilization are some of the most polemical topics in the discipline. In the present context, the controversial 2016 agreement between the Colombian government and representatives of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to demobilize, and the ongoing negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) to do the same lends importance to understanding the conditions under which such processes succeed or fail. For this reason, Sarah Zukerman Daly's excellent study of the factors driving remobilization and the return to violence of Colombian armed groups demobilized from 2003–6 is both important and timely.

Daly's book is an outstanding work of political science, effectively integrating quantitative methods with a detailed comparative analysis of cases, extensive field research, and a demonstrated deep knowledge of her subject. The work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of Colombia, the dynamics of internal conflict, and the determinants of successful outcomes in conflict resolution between groups.

At its core, Daly's work argues social networks are more important than other factors such as group character or access to resources in determining whether demobilized groups in an armed conflict will reconstitute their military structures and return to violence. She maintains the critical factor is the local versus nonlocal basis of the group's recruitment. In her analysis of the 37 paramilitary groups demobilized in Colombia by agreement with the government from 2003–6, Daly finds that, while nonlocal recruitment did not necessarily make groups less effective on the battlefield (e.g. the nonlocally recruited Catatumbo block, prior to its demobilization, was highly capable militarily relative to other groups), nonlocal groups dispersed from the zone of operation after the agreement (often to their areas of origin) more than their locally recruited counterparts, reducing the influence of the group and its ability to remobilize, while also impairing communications and preventing commanders from adequately assessing the changed situation of the group in the face of subsequent incentives remobilize.

Daly finds that, regardless of other factors such as the character of the group (e.g. criminal versus ideological motivations), in areas dominated by locally recruited groups, following demobilization, group organizational coherence declined less rapidly, and former leaders retained a clearer



understanding of the group situation and balance of power, helping to avoid remobilization and return to violence driven by miscalculations.

By contrast, where one or more of the militias was primarily nonlocal, the erosion of group power, combined with the increased possibility of miscalculation regarding the balance of power and group's ability to reconstitute itself, made remobilization and renewed violence more likely. Impressively, Daly's parsimonious theory accurately predicts remobilization in 31 of the 37 cases examined.

Daly's effective integration of solid quantitative analysis with detailed case studies is particularly impressive. On the quantitative side, Daly employs numerous databases from the Colombian government, transnational, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as her own field surveys, and the use of her own expert knowledge and external authorities to categorize group characteristics and geographically located events. She creatively uses the geolocation of data on groups, events, and individual combatants to make credible data-based conclusions regarding local versus nonlocal groups.

Daly takes the time to explain the origins and calculation of her results, and walks the reader through the exploration of alternate hypotheses in a manner that is credible without being excessively technical for those who are not experts in statistics and other quantitative methods.

Her qualitative analysis is equally impressive as an example of the power and correct application of the comparative method. The cases that she examines in-depth, the Bloque Cacique Nutibara in Medellín, the Bloque Catatumbo, and the Bloque Elmer Cardenas, skillfully cover the three major permutations of her analysis (all groups locally recruited, all groups nonlocally recruited, and a mixed case). Daly's narrative maintains its focus on the key variables of her theory, while giving the reader a feel for the detailed context and why each situation unfolded as it did, including effectively placed quotes from conflict participants, and other demonstrations of insight gained through the local commanders, militia members, and community members she has interviewed.

If her analysis has a weakness, it is the relative lack of attention, outside of her case study chapters, to the FARC and ELN as key players in the conflict dynamics where they were operating.

While Daly's work does not explicitly touch upon the 2016 agreement between the Santos government and the FARC in Colombia, it suggests several hypotheses regarding future prospects. In the cases examined by Daly, social and political pressures ultimately led the Colombian government away from the "deal" that the paramilitary leaders expected when they entered talks, ultimately contributing to the imperatives for their remobilization.

In the current context, the economic and political difficulties of the Colombian government in fulfilling promises regarding land reform, crop substitution programs, the development of remote areas, and transitional justice potentially create similar pressures for groups to remobilize or metamorphize into new types of extralegal entities. Daly's work suggests that, in the context of such problems, different FARC fronts and blocks are likely to respond differently, based in part

on the local or nonlocal origins of their own combatants, in ways that the Colombian government can prepare for.

Daly's work also finds the availability of resources from criminal enterprises does not play a determining role in remobilization and violence. Indeed, in her case studies, she notes that groups can appropriate criminal income without reconstructing former military structures. Thus, as coca production in Colombia continues to grow with no prospect for the resumption of aerial glyphosate spraying, Daly's work ironically suggests criminal groups could significantly expand their influence over the Colombian state, even while violence declines and Colombian politicians laud the success of the peace process.

*Organized Violence after Civil Wars* is a must-read for both scholars and policymakers far beyond Colombia and Latin America, insofar as that the permanence of demobilization by armed groups is fundamental to the success of negotiated settlements in a broad array of countries. This work contains generalizable, data-based insights potentially relevant as a tool to anticipate areas of risk in those cases, and to manage the survival of the peace.



Lincoln: University of  
Nebraska Press, 2017  
228 pages  
\$65.00

## America's Digital Army: Games at Work and War

By Robertson Allen

Reviewed by Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Written by Robertson Allen—an ethnographer with expertise in digital games, war, and violence—*America's Digital Army: Games at Work and War* is part of the *Anthropology of Contemporary North America* series published by University of Nebraska Press. Foremost an academic and theoretical work hailing from the field of anthropological cultural studies, game studies and Marxist influences are also evident. Additionally, the book presents a case study and offers a descriptive narrative that is more military professional in its orientation.

The book focuses upon the *America's Army* project (later *Army Game Project*) that ran from July 2002 (the original online game release) to roughly June 2009 (the release of the third version). The book is intertwined with research themes and arguments related to the proposition “that digital games and simulations act as channels for enlisting and militarizing immaterial labor” and “that virtual soldiering is central to how contemporary US military institutions exert power over individuals” (36, 163). The underlying ethnographic research (utilizing field sites immersion, data collection, and analysis) was partially funded by the National Science Foundation, along with some additional academic support, as well as the cooperation of elements of the US Army and many of the game designers and programmers involved with the *America's Army* and derivative projects themselves, which was initially approved by the project director, Casey Wardynski, at the United States Military Academy, West Point.

The case study related to *America's Army (AA)/Army Game Project* is a fascinating one and is uniquely facilitated by the author's association

within the project for ethnographic purposes. *America's Army* is a highly successful, award winning, and innovative first-person shooter (FPS) online game created by the US Army utilizing the Unreal Engine (a well-known game development tool). Unlike many FPS games that promote individualistic play, *America's Army* stresses team play and ethical adherence to the legitimate rules of engagement with penalties for nonadherence. Depending on one's perspective, the game can either be considered a form of strategic communication and recruitment marketing for the Army or a form of slick high-tech propaganda. Integral components of the game include archetypes related to the use of a "swapping paradigm"—so that opposing teams playing the game "appear to themselves as US soldiers but to one another as enemies"—and the use of "aspirational figures" for recruitment purposes (67, 88).

Gore is minimalized in game-play with the opposing force initially appearing as generic terrorists and later as the forces of the fictional nation of Czervenia with its own made up language and geography (67–69). The latter is representative of a Krasnovian-like opponent some readers may remember from their old National Training Center rotations. The history of the primary FPS game can be viewed from inputs, game design and production, outputs, and impact perspectives. Related project components such as the Army Experience Center (AEC), Virtual Army Experience (VAE), *Real Heroes*, and graphic novels are also discussed in the work.

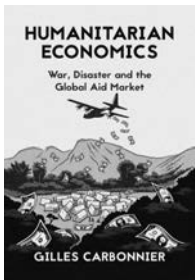
Given the bureaucratic nature of the US Army, it is a wonder that such an entrepreneurial Silicon Valley game was created, although over time fissures developed both between Army elements and the designers and contractors and within the competing Army elements. Of note, elements of the project are still in existence with the *America's Army* website (<https://www.americasarmy.com>) offering a Steam link to the *AA: Proving Grounds* game (released October 1, 2015), a link to *AA Comic* Issue #15, and other franchise elements.

Criticisms of the work are minor, but they do inhibit an easy reading. They do not focus upon the main effort itself but rather on some of the terminology and concepts utilized and the need for additional useful supportive information. While the US Army has been routinely criticized for its own internal nomenclature, this anthropological study is also guilty at times of slipping into its own use of discipline jargon and worldviews. Cases in point are the use of the terms "post-Fordist" (the information economy and social networks), "immaterial labor" (knowledge workers and those with soft skills), and constructs focusing on "the society of control" (a shift from binary disciplinary institutions [e.g., defined hierarchical organizations] to a diffused and distributed disciplinary form of power across society [e.g., interlocking networks blurring institutional boundaries]), and "pervasive cultural militarization" (partially by means of using high-tech labor and the blending of entertainment and war technologies and economies) (28–33).

With regard to supportive information, the addition of a timeline of significant *America's Army* project and franchise (e.g., VEC, VAE, et al.) events is very much needed in order for the reader to understand the underlying chronology of this study. Additionally, a figure and a table that show the relationships of the *America's Army* components and entities—both governmental and contractors—as well as input and

output metrics (e.g., budgets, downloads, experience visitors, et al.) to better describe the program would be helpful.

The work operates on multiple levels of abstraction with an inherent tension between its academic (theoretical) component and its professional (descriptive) component evident. The reviewer enjoyed the descriptive over the theoretical aspects of the work but ultimately saw the value of such a focused ethnography being turned, in this instance, inward upon the US Army and its game design and programming contractors rather than being applied to cultural groups in say Afghanistan or Iraq, as was done with the Human Terrain System. Given Allen's unique and sustained ethnographic access to the *America's Army* program, this book—while conceptually bifurcated—now has to be considered the authoritative work on this subject matter.



London: Oxford University Press, 2015  
224 pages  
\$37.50

## Humanitarian Economics: War, Disaster, and the Global Aid Market

By Gilles Carbonnier

Reviewed by Jill Russell, teaching fellow, Defence Studies Department, King's College London

Whether treasure and trade, resources and manufacture, or banking and finance, the breadth of economic influences upon conflict cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, the subject does not figure significantly enough in the scholars' and practitioners' realms of diplomacy and war. While important as a work in its own subject, Gilles Carbonnier's slim but powerful primer on the field of humanitarian economics in theory and practice is also an excellent demonstration of the valuable perspective that economic analysis can bring to intellectual and practical approaches to military affairs. This review will briefly assay the course of the book's argument and the detail in support, before turning to an examination of the critical ways in which the work interacts with important readerships.

Considering the book's broad assets, there are several which demand mention here. *Primus inter pares* is Carbonnier's writing, being both thoroughly readable and well researched. There is a masterful literature review of the relevant scholarship in his field that is complemented by a range of collected and noted reference materials. On this basis, it is a work to be consulted to gain a foothold in the subject and indications for further research and reading. Building on this mastery of the scholarship, the author also further demonstrates his own balanced understanding between study and practice. No doe-eyed naïf in the field, Carbonnier adds his experience to the depth of analysis, such that the practical and the intellectual issues are addressed equally, offering consideration of what to do regarding policy as well as how to approach gaps in the research and analysis.

On the detail itself, I would split this book into two parts. The first is broad and universal the latter is specific to narrower topics. Chapter 1, "Reason, Emotion and Compassion," is the sort of unifying, metadiscussion one imagines when considering Clausewitz's opening

pages in *On War*. Mirroring the avoidance of economics in the scholarly traditions on war, Carbonnier confronts the dearth of economics scholarship in his own field of humanitarian work. Traditionally, economics viewed such emotional aberrations to rationality as altruism and war “as an exogenous event neither amenable to economic analysis nor worthy of scholarly interest” (4). He uses this intellectual tension to examine the current bounds of humanitarian economic inquiry. The second chapter, “The Humanitarian Market,” offers an overview of the growing human security sector since its early days in the late nineteenth century. Taken together, these chapters provide an excellent primer on economics, humanitarianism, and war. In the second half of the work, the chapters explore the economics scholarship and practice against the variety of standard contingencies that would fall under the broad umbrella of humanitarian activities. In these chapters, rich in scholarly and empirical references and sources, the author reviews how humanitarian economics interact within different security realms. These dynamics include the issues related to war, terrorism, disaster, and survival, highlighting how each situation is influenced by the economic component. And although the book is easily readable in total, these chapters can easily be used independently for subject-specific inquiry.

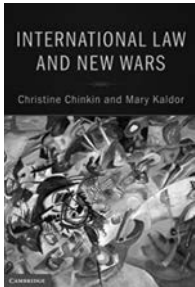
But even as this is an excellent primer of its own subject, the work has a broader application to the world of military affairs and should be viewed as mandatory for the *Parameters* readership. This relevance is defined by what it can offer to professional military education (PME), military affairs scholarship, and the security policy arena. Turning first to PME, it is a singularly important read because economics is a poorly studied subject within the military academy. As this work focuses on the economics of a discrete portion of national security and conflict, it offers a particularly relevant lens by which military professionals can enter economics beyond budgetary topics. More important in the contemporary security framework, humanitarianism is on the rise as a critical mission area for armed forces, America’s allies, and partners. The future operating environment in the littorals is largely premised on their vulnerability to climate related disasters, as in Haiti or Indonesia. Related, urban conflict models will relate to the humanitarian requirements of civilians in war zones or security as an element to medical operations, as in Sierra Leone.

In the security policy world, the book is a cautionary tale. At the most fundamental level, the monetary value of the humanitarian sector demands best practices. And as the demands of humanitarianism will only grow in the twenty-first century, to leave the sector as an afterthought in the security policy arena will warrant being considered negligence. While this work is necessary to begin to understand the complexity of the issues in these events, it should also alert the practitioner to consider economic scholarship elsewhere.

As concerns the academy, the work is valuable. Most basically, considering its value in the classroom, the book is exceedingly teachable and applicable across a number of security related academic fields. Moving to research, the book identifies and begins to fill a critical void. There is little room to dispute that the scholarship on economics and conflict is entirely too thin. Limited to issues related to resourcing armed forces or the costs of weapons programs and defense budgets, the



economic perspective in military affairs demands expansion. Finally, to give a sense of its potential to military affairs scholarship, the book has the feel of Walter Millis's call to military history to expand its purview to include the social and cultural dimensions in its analysis.



New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017  
608 pages  
\$39.99

## International Law and New Wars

By Christine Chinkin and Mary Kaldor

Reviewed by Cornelia Weiss, a colonel in the US Air Force Judge Advocate Reserve Corps

Christine Chinkin and Mary Kaldor's *International Law and New Wars* should be on the reading list of every service as well as that of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it should be taught in every war college. Why? As children of military members are now serving in the post-September 11, 2011 war in which their mothers and fathers engaged, we are facing the possibility of third and subsequent generations fighting in similar iterations.

The authors contend "it is the failure to take into account the logic of new wars that, to a large extent, explains why most responses to new wars are so problematic" (7). Rejecting Clausewitzian "old war" thinking, the authors of this book argue that, in "new wars," "armed groups have more to gain from war itself, from fighting, than from winning or losing" and "where wars have more of the logic of a mutual enterprise than the logic of a contest of wills, they are likely to lead to persistence and spread, to be long, sporadic, difficult to end and difficult to contain geographically, in contrast to Clausewitzian war that tend to the extreme" (7).

*International Law and New Wars* includes within its category of new wars violence in Syria, Ukraine, Libya, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan. That is, new wars "take place where states are weak or failing, where governments lack legitimacy" (519). With regard to the threat of the day, the Islamic State (IS), the authors contend the group is a "symptom—a response to the sectarian behavior of the Iraqi government and the collapse and abuse of state authority in parts of Syria" while arguing that "IS has not been able to move into areas where local authorities command respect and support" (519). The authors offer a solution: "human security" which "entails a law-based rather than a war-based approach to security" (528). They base their argument "on the reality that war methods do not work" and contend that it "is unlikely that military action can inflict long-lasting defeat on IS or other terrorist networks" (533).

*International Law and New Wars*, in addressing the law-based approach to human security, contends that international humanitarian law (IHL) provides an inadequate legal framework for addressing new wars as it is based on old war assumptions. Instead, it maintains a triad of humanitarian laws is required: IHL, criminal law, and human rights law "not that IHL should be rejected, but rather that it needs to be complemented by human rights law, which has at its heart the dignity of human beings, and international criminal law, which at least



in theory increases the accountability of those who use force” (539). Under this approach, America would not have responded to the events as “an attack by a foreign power on the United States that demanded a military response” but instead would have “treated what happened as a humanitarian catastrophe and focused on the needs of the victims, methods of preventing any repetition, and efforts to arrest those responsible” (507).

*International Law and New Wars* asks the reader to engage with many questions: “Can a government that is committing gross violations of human rights against its own people request assistance from another government, even though the objective is ostensibly to defeat an extremist group, IS, in opposition to that government?” (146) “Why is the community of the state privileged over the town, or region, or even horizontal communities of shared belief, for example that cross state boundaries?” (170) And “Can war, which of its nature is collective on both sides, be used to protect individual rights?” (225)

*International Law and New Wars* addresses various models used as justification for war ranging from the “war on terror” to a “responsibility to protect/humanitarian.” The authors contend

Military interventions in the name of the War on Terror (Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria) or geopolitics (Georgia and Ukraine) . . . far from causing violence to cease . . . have tended to fuel the mutual enterprise that constitutes a new war. And those military interventions in the name of humanitarianism or the Responsibility to Protect (Kosovo, Libya, and Cote d'Ivoire) may well have succeeded in avoiding or reversing immediate humanitarian catastrophes, but they also involved violence and have empowered violent actors that are associated with continuing polarization, instability and disorder. (479)

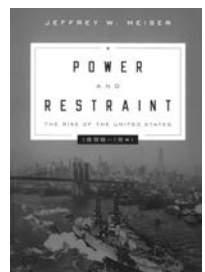
Like Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, this is a book that should be read again and again. It is an energizing vehicle for facilitating vigorous discussion. Coauthored by two intellectual pioneers in the separate fields of security and international law, *International Law and New Wars*, like *On War*, is not an easy read. More complex than *On War*, it does, however, provide those seeking solutions an arena in which to grapple with how best to engage with international law and new wars.

## Power and Restraint: The Rise of the United States, 1898–1941

By Jeffrey W. Meiser

Reviewed by Andrew L. Ross, professor of International Affairs, George H. W. Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University

Realists tell us that rising states are war prone and revisionist, intent on reshaping the world order. Rising powers are expected to be expansionist. In a masterful book, Jeffrey Meiser, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Portland and an associate professor at the College of International Security Affairs at the National Defense University, focuses on a critical exception: the United States. Why did the United States as a rising power not become a revisionist power? Why did the United States expand so little, compared



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Georgetown University  
Press, 2015  
344 pages  
\$104.95

to other rising powers, such as Great Britain, Japan, Germany, and the Soviet Union during its rise from 1853–1941? Why was American grand strategy more restrained than that of other rising powers?

These are the central questions animating this important book, a work that has implications for not only our theoretical and historical understanding of America's rise but for contemporary American grand strategy. Meiser persuasively argues, "the United States exhibited a grand strategy of restraint during its rise to the status of potential hegemon because the domestic political structure of the United States delayed, limited, undermined, and prevented the implementation of an expansionist grand strategy" (24).

Domestic structural restraint—institutions and culture—led to strategic restraint. Repeatedly, the separation of powers, federalism, and anti-imperialist norms delayed and limited expansion and fostered retrenchment. Congress, elections, public opinion, public and presidential (particularly Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Herbert Hoover, and Franklin D. Roosevelt) sentiment—all served to temper imperial ambitions.

From the start in this convincing challenge to the conventional wisdom, Meiser proceeds clearly and systematically. Key terms and concepts—rising power, expansion, restraint, grand strategy, institutions, strategic culture—are defined. The research design—methodology, case selection—is carefully explained. Meiser draws upon an exhaustive, if not exhausting, set of 34 cases ranging from the annexations of Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam to interventions, occupations, withdrawals, and noninterventions in Central America and the Caribbean. Within-case process tracing and counterfactual analysis (after all, for Meiser, US strategic restraint from 1898–1941 is a case of a dog that didn't bark) are employed.

The theoretical target, the essentially realist theory of expansion, is clearly and fairly explained at the outset of chapter 1. Unlike some prominent contemporary realists, Meiser admirably refrains from caricaturing rival theorists. Also in chapter 1, Meiser draws upon and integrates international relations, comparative politics and American politics research on the domestic sources of international political behavior to develop a sophisticated domestic-structural theory of restraint.

The conditions under which great power restraint is likely are explicitly identified (19–21). Counterarguments, particularly those of defensive realists and economic interest group theorists, are seriously and constructively engaged (again, caricatures are avoided). In the set of six well-developed, meticulously-documented, and nuanced chapters that constitute the empirical heart of the book, Meiser shows how the relative importance of domestic structural restraints—the separation of powers, federalism, and anti-imperialist norms—varied over time.

Initially, checks and balances and anti-imperialist norms held sway. Subsequently, public opinion and presidential anti-imperialism compensated for weaker institutional constraints. Finally, presidents tempted by imperial ambitions were constrained by the separation of powers, electoral concerns, and public opinion. The argument "that between 1898 and 1941 the American domestic political structure

presented policymakers with strong incentives to oppose territorial expansion” is shown to be empirically robust (260).

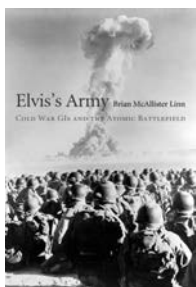
Meiser appropriately closes out this impressive volume with a discussion of its theoretical and practical implications. Unsurprisingly, he concludes, “international relations theories of rising power grand strategy are incomplete,” our understanding of the behavior of rising powers requires “a more systematic account of the influence of domestic structure on foreign policy” (264). Meiser briefly, too briefly, touches on the implications of his work for contemporary calls for American strategic restraint. He nicely makes the case for the significance of emphasizing domestic political structure, and restraints, in assessments of the rise of China, which have been more alarmist than not.

More could have been written about the implications of this work for both theory and practice. The theoretical work that Meiser correctly finds incomplete is realist work. He draws on liberal and constructivist theories to unpack the black box of the state to reveal that domestic political structures shape state preferences, including those of rising states. It is unclear why Meiser stops short of explicitly calling out realism. Realism is not only *not* a theory of foreign policy, it is *not* a theory of grand strategy.

On the practice front, the discussion of contemporary calls for American grand strategic restraint are limited to those made by the likes of realists such as Barry Posen. Yet Meiser’s focus on the restraining effects of political structure is more G. John Ikenberry and John Ruggie than Barry Posen. To paraphrase Ruggie, the rise of an *American* hegemon was no less significant than the rise of an American *hegemon*. [*International Organization*, 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998), 863]

It must be noted, finally, that for a modern work of social science, this is a remarkably accessible volume. Meiser has, thankfully, kept the book blessedly free of the mind and soul numbing accoutrements of what passes for political science these days, at least the form of methodologically-induced, small-ball political science that is featured in the likes of the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*.

## MILITARY HISTORY



Cambridge, MA: Harvard  
University Press, 2016

464 pages  
\$29.95

## Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield

By Brian McAllister Linn

Reviewed by Stephen G. Harlan, faculty instructor, Department of Distance Education, US Army War College

Throughout its history, the United States Army struggled to define its identity during interwar years. Executive branch administration turnover, the pace of technological advancements, and changes in demographics are among the contributing factors policy and military leaders must consider to reshape the Army for the next war. The period between the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953 and the commitment of US ground forces to Vietnam in 1965 was arguably the foundational era of the modern challenges in defining the American military force of the future. During those 12 years, US Army policy and strategy leaders set about to design a modern army that could meet the threat of tactical nuclear strikes on the battlefield. Today, joint leaders are defining skills and attributes necessary across the armed services to meet both the known and unknown aspects of cyberwarfare, while contending with the exponential commercial advancements in that domain. In contrast, US Army leaders in the post-Korean War period not only sought a model that would deter or respond to the nuclear threat, but that would also catch up to the technical proficiency of its air force and navy competition.

Brian McAllister Linn skillfully analyzes this overlooked period in US Army history in his recently published *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield*. Entrenched institutions by nature are slow to accept change. Linn painstakingly reinforces that common assertion in his examination of the army's 1950s modernization efforts challenged by friction from within and outside the service. For the dozen years prior to 1953, American soldier (and marine) skills predominantly focused on small arms and crew-served weapons proficiency in infantry and armor force-on-force tactics to compel an adversary to surrender the field. Those skills are still the basic requirement for all service members today. However, the 1950s added the new challenge of long-range nuclear artillery and missiles not necessarily delivered by a bomber fleet. By middecade, the air force and navy had cornered the market on developing a skilled force to deliver and counter nuclear arms. The army faced a relevancy conundrum of reinforcing the necessity of preparing land-based operations against the Eisenhower administration's caution against a growing military-industrial complex and of focusing on advancing the growing middle class economy as part of the Cold War strategic arsenal. Linn successfully navigates the complexities of the social, technological, and military cultural factors considered, or ignored, in leader decisions to reinvent the US Army.

Linn's narrative chronicles army enterprises introduced to bring the institution into the atomic age and the social norms affecting the individual and collective rank and file. Desegregation, imposed moral standards, and on-base civilian education equivalency programs, whether

instituted by statute or voluntary practice, all influenced the attitudinal responses to the change in technical training. Linn provides a no-holds-barred assessment of US Army chiefs of staff General Matthew Ridgway and General Maxwell Taylor as they introduced training doctrine aimed to ready the postwar force for an improbable feat on a nuclear battlefield. Leadership promoted a resurgence of public relations to tell the army story and narrow the growing civil-military divide. Linn's statement on page 235 that career officers questioned self-promotion of a branch that was unable to agree on an organizational vision resonates today. The chapter discussing marketing the improved army reflects Linn's appreciation of the effects of such a divide. The emerging popular culture, usurped by expanding commercial advertising, connected soldiers with the American public more readily than during the war years. However, the army was unable to co-opt 1950s advertising to pique the interest of recruits prequalifying for the skills necessary for the nuclear army.

Scholarly history of the army often overlooks what the casual reader considers mundane and dull as compared to the perceived excitement of battlefield narratives. Building on his premise in *The Echo of Battle* (2009), Linn provides a well-researched, focused study of the army's peacetime personality crisis at a time of stiff peer competition from the Soviet Union. As a son and nephew of Elvis-era airmen, soldier and sailor draftees, this reviewer appreciated Linn's important study on what defined them and their societal contributions as Cold War veteran civilians during the Vietnam War years. The themes and narrative arc of *Elvis's Army* continue to resonate today. Military and policy senior and midlevel strategists should include it in their bookshelves.

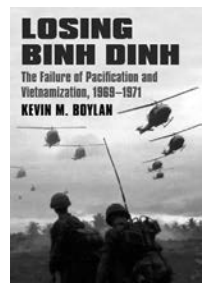
## Losing Binh Dinh: The Failure of Pacification and Vietnamization, 1968–1971

By Kevin Boylan

Reviewed by J. P. Harris, Senior lecturer in war studies, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst

Kevin Boylan's monograph is an impressive contribution to the history of the Second Indochina War. With over forty pages of notes, it is obviously a serious piece of scholarship based on detailed primary research. Research provides a mass of hard, factual information on developments in Binh Dinh between 1969 and 1971 not available (to the best of this reviewer's knowledge) in any other published work. Therefore anyone attempting to build a library that covers this war in a comprehensive way needs to include Boylan's work, and anyone trying to reach an in-depth understanding of the war should read it. It is at least arguable that we need many more detailed monographs, such as Boylan's, on particular parts of South Vietnam at particular periods of the war before it will be appropriate for anyone to attempt yet another single volume history of the conflict as a whole.

Yet some readers may find one aspect of Boylan's work disquieting: his militant partisanship for a particular faction among American historians is proclaimed in the introduction, referred to in the main



Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2016

376 pages

\$34.95

body, and reemphasized with great fanfare in the conclusion. Boylan apparently sees writing the history of this conflict as a sort of intellectual war in its own right in which members of the “orthodox” school are locked in combat with their enemies, the “revisionists.” The orthodox belief, according to Boylan, is that the American intervention in Vietnam was misguided, futile, and from the outset doomed to defeat. The revisionists, by contrast, see some sense in what the American intervention was intended to achieve and suggest another outcome was possible had the war been fought differently. Boylan admits there is some variety of views among the revisionists and concedes there are historians whose work does not fit neatly into either of these entrenched positions. He makes it clear, however, that his personal foxhole is deeply dug on the side of orthodoxy; his monographs a powerful intellectual weapon supporting that creed.

It must be conceded that Boylan’s conception of American scholarship in this field as a sort of ideologically-driven civil war between historians has some basis in reality. But such a state of affairs is surely unhelpful to the pursuit of a mature and balanced historical understanding and is likely to be deprecated.

An introduction normally offers an account of the inception of a project, but Boylan’s does not really do this. The reader may thus be left with the suspicion that his purpose from the outset was to find and publish evidence reinforcing the position that the war was, from the American point of view, futile and “unwinnable.” It is also possible to infer, from a remark made towards the end of the introduction that the intention to discredit the concept of population-centric counterinsurgency was revived in the US armed forces during the Iraq War. This may be a naïve and old-fashioned view, but should not historians try to keep an open mind when they begin research, allowing the evidence to take them wherever it leads? It is indeed possible that Boylan adopted such an approach, but the tone of the introduction, and much of the rest of the book, suggests otherwise.

Binh Dinh was particularly important because it was one of the largest and most populous provinces in South Vietnam, lying in a crucial geographical position between the central highlands and the coast. Until 1968 it was just about the most completely Communist-dominated province in the country, as it had been since at least 1949. The destruction or withdrawal of Communist “main force” units as a result of the intense fighting of 1968 seemed to give the Americans and the South Vietnamese government the chance of some real pacification (i.e. actual village-level counterinsurgency) in this province. In 1969 the 173rd Airborne Brigade was employed in Operation Washington Green, which supported South Vietnamese provincial and locally-based troops. Initial results appeared encouraging. But Boylan argues that both pacification and Vietnamization had failed in Binh Dinh by late 1971. He goes on to contend that such failures were the underlying realities across South Vietnam.

Boylan convincingly indicates that much of the Communist political and logistical apparatus, the “Viet Cong infrastructure,” survived in Binh Dinh. He is far too good and honest a historian, however, to bury evidence that might be used against other aspects of his case. In a province that had formerly been a major recruiting ground for



Communist troops, the great bulk of the fighting on the Communist side in 1969–1971 seems to have been done by men from North Vietnam. While South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces were generally pretty poor in Binh Dinh, they had some notable successes. At certain times and places the Communists seemed to be losing control of Binh Dinh's civilian population. Determined to show they were still a force, the Communists lashed out with indiscriminate terrorism indicative of desperation if not of panic.

Studies of other provinces (most notably Jeffrey Race's on Long An) show that locally-based South Vietnamese government forces became devastatingly effective there during this period. By 1971, the Communist Party in Long An was in a very weak position; the success or failure of the Communist cause in the South depended almost entirely on the North Vietnamese Army since relatively few southerners were fighting on that side. Yes, facing the massive Communist offensive of 1972, South Vietnamese government troops needed massive US air support to hold their own, but US ground troops had practically never done serious fighting in Vietnam without that kind of help.

From the beginning of 1973, American air support ceased. The war did not. Progressively abandoned by their erstwhile allies, the South Vietnamese armed forces fought on for another twenty-eight months, an interval considerably longer than that separating Chancellorsville from Appomattox and slightly exceeding that separating the end of the Stalingrad fighting from the fall of Berlin. It is estimated that South Vietnamese government forces lost over 50,000 dead in addition to other casualties during that period. If this war was truly unwinnable for the anti-Communist side it was surely because the American political system, and the American public, could not sustain the will to support the southern state, not because the people of South Vietnam had an underlying collective desire for a Communist government.

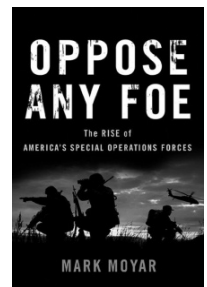
## Oppose Any Foe: The Rise of America's Special Operations Forces

By Mark Moyar

Reviewed by Rebecca Jensen, PhD candidate, University of Calgary, dissertation fellow at Marine Corps University

Since September 11, 2001, the budget for special operations forces (SOF) in the US has quintupled, while its staffing has doubled, and the number of general officers and flag officers associated with SOF has increased eightfold. These forces are used in an increasing range of theaters, are considered without equal tactically, and have the capacity to underpin a new strategy for advancing American interests. Despite the rapid rise of SOF, there is little comprehensive academic work on the origins, evolution, and future of these forces.

Mark Moyar's *Oppose Any Foe* corrects that deficiency. An academic who has published on military operations and Special Forces in the past, Moyar has also taught at the Joint Special Operations University, which allows him to bring both a command of the literature and theory



New York: Basic, 2017

432 pages

\$17.99

and contact with the world of practitioners, to this work. The result is a useful history of the American SOF world, an examination of its often complex and ambiguous relationship with policymakers and other elements of the military, and a look at the challenges and opportunities facing SOF, and those who would use SOF as a policy tool, in the future.

As Moyar acknowledges, while many books have been written about individual feats and missions carried out by SOF, and histories of particular units from the SOF community abound, these tend to take on a hagiographic tone and do not attempt to synthesize these individual components of the story into a synopsis that examines broad trends, commonalities, and differences between services, missions, and time periods. From the birth of SOF in World War II, *Oppose Any Foe* traces the development, employment, and often subsequent disbanding of the various units that were the forebears of today's SOF. A frequent pattern, he points out, is of mixed operational success, with victories being perceived as threats by the parent services of the SOF units who saw in well-publicized and successful missions a potential challenge to their autonomy, identity, and resources.

The history of SOF is as much one of institutional struggle as of warfare, in Moyar's telling. From its earliest days, it clashed with the OSS, forerunner to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), about the scope of its missions, and conflict that was mirrored at the level of civilian direction. If SOF and regular units often worked in harmony, complementing each other, in wars from the Korean peninsula until the wars of the twenty-first century, they equally often clashed, whether when SOF were tasked with roles more suited to regular infantry, or when lack of coordination between SOF and regular units operating in the same space led to inefficiencies, or even worked at cross purposes.

The meteoric rise of SOF after 9/11 fills almost the second half of the book. The role that Special Forces played, alongside the CIA, in supporting the Northern Alliance in expelling, or at least marginalizing, the Taliban in northern Afghanistan, counts as a great success in the wars fought there, even if it was not matched by efforts against al-Qaeda near Pakistan in the east. The initial phases of the war in Afghanistan, in which both special and conventional forces achieved great operational success, set the stage for yet more bureaucratic wrangling for personnel, resources, and assignments.

The model of counterinsurgency adopted in Iraq, and then in Afghanistan, following the publication of *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24 in 2006, created breathing space for both types of forces. A widely dispersed presence throughout the theater—in which small units would patrol, live amongst the locals, and establish rapport while providing security wherever possible—called for extensive involvement of conventional forces, who often used skills outside those they had mastered in training. These efforts were complemented by the “industrial counterterrorism” pioneered by General Stanley McChrystal, in which the tempo of operations increased by an order of magnitude, and networks of insurgents were often rolled up before any members were aware that one of their own had been captured. It is not an overstatement to say this combination, of retail counterinsurgency throughout the country with the frequent and effective use of SOF strikes, represented a novel strategy; nor that it was one that saw great success in its initial phases.

At this point, however, Moyar moves to perhaps the most innovative and valuable section of his argument. The acclamation, and adulation, that accompanied news of successful SOF raids, in particular the killing of Osama bin Laden, fed into a culture of self-aggrandizement among SOF, particularly among former SOF members, who broke unspoken (and occasional formal) codes against publicizing their work. This hubris came to be mirrored, to some extent, by the most senior leaders of SOF, who expected their remarkable accomplishments to insulate them from criticism or scrutiny in Washington, DC. Congress ultimately struck back, cutting the funds upon which SOF had been expecting to set up the infrastructure to become a de facto separate service.

Additionally, the increased emphasis on direct action, raids, and a rapid tempo of deployment, in addition to creating tremendous strain on the personnel and families of SOF units, drew time and resources away from what had been a core responsibility of SOF since their inception: security force assistance, the training and mentoring of local forces in support of American strategic goals. Such missions require deep knowledge of language and culture, and the establishment of lasting relationships with local militaries and political figures, a role essentially antithetical to the brief, spectacular raids for which SOF had gained so much publicity and admiration since 2001.

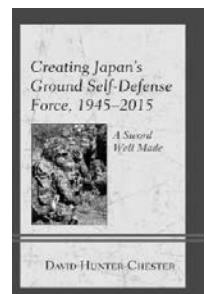
Ultimately, Moyar concludes, SOF will have to be reintegrated into the broader military community, complementing their efforts rather than competing with them, and working under combatant commanders and unified theater commanders. The challenge then will be maintaining the essential differences of SOF, which attracts different personality types and invests in different and often more extensive and costly training, while harmonizing operations and administration with those of the conventional forces of all services. This integration is not likely to succeed, Moyar cautions, without a better understanding of the history, capabilities, and limitations of SOF.

## **Creating Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force, 1945–2015: A Sword Well Made**

By David Hunter-Chester

Reviewed by June Teufel Dreyer, professor of political science at the University of Miami

David Hunter-Chester has produced the first English language treatment on the development of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), which like Voldemort, cannot be called by its true name: an army. Drawing on a wide range of sources in English and Japanese, Hunter-Chester guides the reader through the protracted debates that resulted in Article Nine of the Japanese constitution in which the nation renounced not only war but the means to prosecute it. Although American pressure was instrumental to the final document, the author makes clear that there were differences of opinion among the Americans involved in the process on how extreme disarmament should be. As the Cold War between the United States and its former



Lanham, MD: Lexington,  
2016  
314 pages  
\$100.00

ally the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics intensified, those who felt that a perpetually unarmed Japan, far from assuring peace, would instead undermine international security, began to seem more realistic. The problem of how to do this within the confines of the constitution is a central focus of this important work.

Initially founded in 1950 as a relatively small group equipped with only light infantry weapons, the National Police Reserve (NPR) was renamed the National Safety Force two years later, with its current name of GSDF conferred in 1954. Particularly in the early period, tremendous care was paid to avoid the appearance of remilitarization: the top officer of the reserve was referred to as “mister” or “superintendent” rather than general. To avoid the standard term for soldier, *gunjin*, enlistees were referred to as *taiin*, unit members, and their officers as *kanbu*, meaning staff members. The design of uniforms presented similar difficulties: they must not look too much like the pre-1945 styles of the Imperial Japanese Army, nor should they too closely resemble those of the conquerors. Initially, there was even reluctance to use the GSDF to aid humanitarian disaster response efforts, lest there be a public backlash.

Deftly interweaving an institutional history of the GSDF with policy issues, the author details the tremendous obstacles that impeded the development of the force. Domestic resistance stemmed partly from revulsion against the militarist regime that had brought such destruction on Japan and partly for economic reasons. We see American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles urging a recalcitrant Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru to rearm, with Yoshida arguing that doing so would impede his country’s efforts to rebuild its damaged infrastructure as well as arouse both internal and foreign concerns. Who won may be inferred from the emergence of the Yoshida Doctrine, under which Japan would focus on economic development while the United States would be the guarantor of its security. The doctrine shaped defense policy for decades to come, as American pressure, euphemistically referred to as *gaiatsu*, or foreign pressure, nudged successive governments forward in what might be called constrained rearmament. In truth, many of them used *gaiatsu* to rationalize what they wanted to do anyway.

Each attempt to expand GSDF functions met great internal resistance, with the most violent being the Anpo riots of 1960 in which otherwise loosely connected leftist forces came together to protest the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. At the same time, a countertrend grew with the revival of nationalism, exemplified a decade later in the ritual suicide of internationally acclaimed author Mishima Yukio, in protest against the suppression of Japan’s martial tradition. Ironically, the author points out, the GSDF’s rejection of Mishima’s call for it to conduct a coup to restore Japan’s pride had the opposite result: members pledged to serve the civilian government held fast and demonstrated that a coup was unthinkable.

The 1990s proved a *tenkanten*, or turning point, with the combination of a strong prime minister elected in 2001, Koizumi Junichiro, international criticism of Japan’s at first timid assistance in the Persian Gulf War, and rising perceptions of danger from North Korean nuclear proliferation as well as the rise of China as both an economic and military threat. Even so, there was resistance: when, in 1992, the Koizumi government

submitted a bill allowing the Japanese to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations to the Diet, members of the opposing Japan Socialist Party staged an “ox-walk” protest, a kind of filibuster technique that involved painfully slow walking into the legislative chamber in order to slow down the vote. The tactic backfired, with the bill passing and a public backlash punishing the party in the next election.

Hunter-Chester places the GSDF’s search for identity in the larger context of Japan’s identity as a nation. A chapter subtitled “Reimagining the Soldier” traces the image of military figures in popular culture—manga, anime, books, mass market films, and art cinema. As the author notes, every society needs heroes, and the image of the military in these has become more positive. In a case in point, he summarizes the plot of the 2001 reboot of a Godzilla film in which Godzilla is overtly identified with the spirits of Imperial Japanese forces slain in World War II. The film opens with a lecture on the role of the GSDF under the Japanese constitution; at the end, Godzilla is, of course, slain. Although the hero is a sailor rather than a GSDF member, Hunter-Chester deems the film to be a cinematic validation of the GSDF as a whole.

Over the past seven decades the GSDF has evolved into a thoroughly modern force now largely accepted by society and even valued for its humanitarian assistance work. Still, barriers to its participation in combat remain and are unlikely to be changed by any event short of a catastrophe. Current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has moved the process forward, albeit slowly, in the face of popular resistance. Though he does not explicitly say so, Hunter-Chester seems optimistic that it will eventually get there, hopefully without the impetus of a major catastrophe.

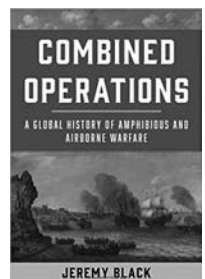
This book is a fine work of scholarship that should be of interest to all those concerned with America’s most important ally. While somewhat peripheral to the author’s concern, some discussion of how Japan’s neighbors viewed the gradual moves toward rearmament would have been useful. This reviewer hopes that Hunter-Chester’s publisher will consider a paperback version of the book, since the high price of the hardback may discourage those who should read it.

## **Combined Operations: A Global History of Amphibious and Airborne Warfare**

By Jeremy Black

Reviewed by Robert Bateman, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and former strategist assigned to the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense

A few decades ago, when I was in graduate school, one of my professors, a distinguished scholar of military history, acidly observed about Jeremy Black, “As historians we all go through multiple iterations of each new work . . . but Jeremy is the only one who publishes each draft as a separate book.” At the time Black had, perhaps, a “mere” 40-plus titles to his credit. Today that number is more than 100, with twenty of them appearing in just the past five years. This is an incredible pace in any field; but for an academic historian, it is essentially unmatched. Yet such



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247 pages

\$89.00



efforts do come with a cost. Usually that is in accuracy, though not in this one, nor to be fair, in most of his works. True, in *Combined Operations* Black does make a few, niggling, and I would assess, excusable errors. It happens. But they are minor, and only specialists will pick up on them. No, here the problem, if one is to call it such, is that for all intents and purposes this book lacks a thesis.

Now that does not necessarily mean that the work is without value. Indeed, one could make the very valid argument that in writing this unified book on a single theme, Black created a decent single-source survey on the topic. It is shallow, of course, because it is almost impossible to cover the stated topic, encompassing some 3,000 years of history in just 247 pages, with any depth. But for those who are seeking a deeper meaning, or even perhaps some guiding principles extracted from the study of a particular era or type of conflict, there is little here beyond a skeletal framework. This is a recitation.

Just looking at a few of the other titles Black recently published gives one an indication of why this may be. Last year he published *Naval Warfare: A Global History since 1860* as well as *Air Power: A Global History*. These two books, obviously, rely upon the same batch of research that led to the first two books. But with *Combined Operations*, there is at least the slightest thematic twist to make it nominally a separate work. The endnotes also tell part of the story in that his sources for the Ancient period through the 1700s are almost exclusively secondary, a survey of the extant literature. Not until he enters the period in which he started his own scholarship does he begin to use primary sources, and those are almost exclusively British.

All of this means *Combined Operations* is little more than a reference. And that can be fine for some readers. Indeed, this book does have utility for those deeply steeped in history because a literature survey can be a wonderfully useful thing. Though there is no bibliography (a curious omission), one can extract volumes from the endnotes.

Still, even for the period in which he *is* an acknowledged primary source, using expert Black is confined. To showcase this expertise, consider the example of combined operations—which means “more than one service” by his formulation and “joint” to today’s American military—that recounts General James Wolfe’s multiple landings and eventually successful assault upon Quebec in 1759. Wolfe died, as did his French opponent the marquis de Montcalm, in that fight. But it changed history in a fundamental way. Black gives it three paragraphs.

Similarly looking at the massive littoral and riverine operations of the American Civil War—arguably the largest combined operations period of the entire nineteenth century, and the War of 1812—included, gets a whopping two pages. This is wrong. More than 300,000 men, at sea and on land, in combined operations from 1861 to 1865 are dismissed in two pages? Really? Leaping forward, the Battle of Iwo Jima gets just a few paragraphs, as does the Allied Invasion of Sicily, operations in the south of France, and even D-Day on June 6, 1944. Now we are up to millions of men addressed in the briefest of summary statements. One cannot avoid observing that most of these men were not British.

The best history helps us understand. This principle applies to all areas of history, though usually it is delayed and muted in effect by



practitioners, history matters. In the field of military history this has a direct and obvious utility for professionals.

There is a horrid tendency among historians writing reviews to essentially say, “If I wrote that book I would say . . .” This is not right, and I reject that idea. I could never write this book, but that is a personal choice. Black’s book has merit. It is accurate, with only tiny errors in the things he chooses to cover, and for future scholars it brings together a body of secondary and, in a limited way, some primary sources. If this is an area where a professional needs to study then this book is the obvious starting point, as it marks the trail for where one might go for a deeper understanding.

## **American Airpower Strategy in World War II: Bombs, Cities, Civilians, and Oil**

By Conrad Crane

Reviewed by Jeremy Black, professor of history at Exeter University

An effective study when it came out in 1993, *American Airpower Strategy in World War II: Bombs, Cities, Civilians and Oil* is an excellent second edition that reflects Crane’s careful scrutiny of the field since. The flaw in the original remains, but it is shared by most work on World War II airpower namely, a failure to incorporate the situation at sea, where aircraft turned out to be of great tactical, operational and strategic significance, notably against shipping, not only against surface vessels and submarines, but also against shore targets. This significance, moreover, helps to shift attention from the bombing of civilians as well as ensure precision bombing remained highly important. Indeed, airpower was crucial for bombing surface and submarine targets at sea.

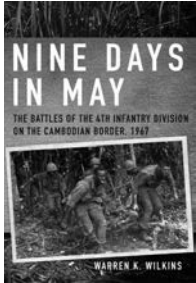
Crane, by focusing on strategic bombing on land, however, becomes far more concerned about issues of morality, and they come to play a major role in his discussion of effectiveness. This aspect is particularly seen in the chapters on “Strategic Airpower in Limited Wars” and on “Legacies,” but the issues of effectiveness and morality in effect cover independently operating variables that cannot be fixed in a model of appropriate air warfare. In fact, the idea of conflict not entailing civilian casualties is of limited applicability, and this is especially so if the issue of indirect casualties is considered.

Ironically, the emphasis on the situation in World War II is misleading as subsequent conflicts were very different in character, and notably so, as the power employing such airpower was not similarly threatened. In 1944 and 1945, the German use of rocket attacks, an aspect of strategic bombing that attracts insufficient attention, notably, from German apologists, ensured there was a degree of symmetry, and practice, that Allied bombing often involved more “precision.” The situation subsequently has been different, which makes the North Korean acquisition of long-range missiles of interest. Despite the limited relevance of World War II, the use of airpower then set much of the tone for subsequent discussion, as well as the intellectual, legal, emotional, and visual understanding of air warfare. This element was particularly



Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016  
288 pages  
\$34.95

true for popular culture, as the conflict dominated war films. In practice, the role of missiles was underplayed, ensuring subsequent shifts in the relationship between bombers and missiles were not approached in an appropriate contexts.



Norman: University of  
Oklahoma Press, 2017  
423 pages  
\$34.95

## **Nine Days in May: The Battles of the 4th Infantry Division on the Cambodian Border, 1967**

By Warren K. Wilkins

Reviewed by Dr. Kevin M. Boylan, history instructor at Emmanuel College

The late Russell Weigley once observed that although combat is the defining characteristic of warfare, academic military historians display an odd aversion to writing about it. This remains true today, and battle histories that delve into the gory details of tactical engagements are still generally written by veterans, journalists, or amateur historians; often aim at the popular market; and frequently lack objectivity and scholarly rigor. But Warren K. Wilkins' *Nine Days in May* is an example of the genre at its best. The book is exhaustively researched (drawing upon Vietnamese language publications, archival documents, and interviews with dozens of American veterans), well-written, and conveys all the brutality, confusion, and terror of close quarters combat while maintaining its objectivity and scholarly tone.

Wilkins' subject is Operation Francis Marion, which pitted the US 4th Infantry Division against the 1st North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division in Pleiku province during May 1967. Both sides welcomed these battles in the wilds along the Cambodian border in South Vietnam's strategic central highlands. General William C. Westmoreland, the top US commander in Vietnam, sought to keep the NVA as far as possible from the densely-populated coastal plains, while B-3 Front Commander General Chu Huy Man aimed to undermine allied pacification efforts in the lowlands by drawing American troops away from them. Since two of the 4th Division's brigades were on the coast, the units screening the border found themselves outnumbered when they ran into the 32nd and 66th NVA Regiments. Another brigade shifted into the highlands, but its battalions were fed in one at a time, and at no point were there more than two of them in the field opposing the pair of enemy regiments. And since a company generally had to be left behind to guard firebases, most American battalions operated at only two-thirds strength.

*Nine Days in May* is organized into three parts, each of which describes the battle of a specific US battalion (the 1/8th, 3/12th, and 3/8th Infantry) in painstaking detail. These units encountered few of the disciplinary problems that afflicted draftee units later in the war because they were still manned predominantly by "originals" (i.e., soldiers who had been serving in the 4th Division when it deployed to Vietnam in late 1966). But Wilkins stresses none of the battalions had yet seen action against NVA regulars and found them much tougher opponents than the Vietcong they had encountered in the coastal plains. As one veteran put it, "We bumped into 'Mr. Charles' in the Highlands, instead of 'Charlie'" (295).

Wilkins's accounts of the five major battles fought during Francis Marion are gripping, graphic, and highly revealing. For his minute-by-minute dissection of these engagements shows that while the US battalions were cohesive, well-trained, and generally well-led, they were no match for the NVA in fieldcraft or familiarity with the remote area of operations. They were thus consistently taken by surprise, thrown on the defensive, and obliged to fight on the enemy's terms. They were also handicapped by their reliance upon helicopters for resupply and reinforcement, even though landing zones were rare in the triple-canopy jungle, and by having to fight so close to the foe's cross-border sanctuaries. Since the Johnson administration refused to admit publicly that NVA were operating in Cambodia, absurdly restrictive rules of engagement even prevented the 4th Division from striking hostile mortars that were openly firing across the border.

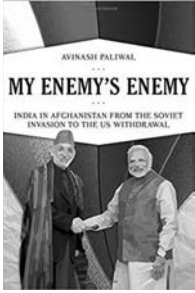
The 4th Division ultimately prevailed in all five battles thanks to the skill and bravery of its troops, and massive supporting fires. Wilkins characterizes Francis Marion as a victory because the enemy suffered disproportionately heavy casualties, as Westmoreland intended, and a planned NVA offensive in the central highlands was forestalled. However, he notes that General Chu Huy Man had also achieved a primary objective by pulling US formations away from the plains, and observes that American casualties were so numerous that the "original" battalions ceased to exist and many 4th Division soldiers felt "more like survivors than winners" (242). Wilkins ultimately concludes that Francis Marion was a sterile victory because its outcome did little to alter the strategic stalemate in the central highlands.

While *Nine Days in May* is good narrative microhistory, analytical issues do not always get the attention they deserve. For instance, although Wilkins describes soldiers being amazed by enemy firepower, he does not delve into the reasons why NVA infantry units were superior in that respect. The fact that they fielded belt-fed Ruchnoy Pulemyot Degtyaryova (RPD) machine guns at the squad level while American squads had only a pair of box magazine M16 rifle variants is not mentioned. Nor is the vast superiority of the ubiquitous NVA rocket-propelled grenade launchers over the disposable, short-ranged US light antitank weapon. Wilkins also does not explore how the NVA managed to bring significant numbers of mortars into action, including heavy 120mm models, when American units found them too cumbersome to carry.

Some key macrolevel topics are also given short shrift. For example, Wilkins describes early on how the 4th Division's commander, Lieutenant General William R. Peers, intended to employ a defense in depth, engaging NVA regulars only after they had penetrated some distance inside South Vietnam and no longer had easy access to their Cambodian sanctuaries. Later he explains that Peers was overruled by his superior, General Stanley R. Larsen, who insisted that the NVA be hit as close to the border as possible. Yet Wilkins never really reaches any conclusion as to whether it was an error to fight so close to border—or if Larsen deserves to be condemned for the heavy losses Peers's troops suffered there.

*Nine Days in May* is, nonetheless, a riveting battle narrative that graphically illustrates the cruel realities of how search-and-destroy

operations targeting NVA regulars functioned at the tactical level. Since virtually every engagement of note fought during Francis Marion was enemy initiated, Wilkins also demonstrates the futility of Westmoreland's efforts to destroy Communist regular units through attrition. None of the May 1967 battles would have occurred if the 1st NVA Division had not wanted them to.



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400 pages  
\$45.00

## **My Enemy's Enemy: India in Afghanistan from the Soviet Invasion to the American Withdrawal**

By Avinash Paliwal

Reviewed by Dr. Sumit Ganguly, Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations, Indiana University

Though not widely known, India is currently the fifth largest aid donor to Afghanistan. Its assistance, within the foreign aid community, however, has been recognized as one of the most effective. Nevertheless its strategic presence in the country has mostly been circumscribed. In part, until the last days of the Obama administration and the advent of the Trump regime, the United States had actively sought to limit India's role in the country strictly to developmental assistance. America's reluctance to allow India to play a larger role in the country stemmed mostly from Pakistan's misgivings about permitting India to expand its presence.

Only when substantial frustration grew with Pakistan and its unwillingness to rein in support for the Afghani Taliban in the waning days of the second Obama term did some American officials express a willingness to grant India a wider role in the country. The Trump administration has actually urged India to step up its assistance and may not be averse to seeing India even broaden its security role.

Avinash Paliwal's book deftly demonstrates, contrary to Pakistan's stated concerns, Indian policymakers may not be in accord in seeking a more substantial security presence in Afghanistan. The lack of a consensus on expanding India's security footprint in Afghanistan, Paliwal argues, stems from the existence of policy coalitions with divergent views within the Indian foreign and security policy establishments. He suggests these coalitions, for analytic purposes, can be divided into two distinct groups: partisans and conciliators. Partisans wish to pursue a more aggressive set of policies toward Pakistan and are not chary about using Afghanistan as a staging ground for these efforts. Conciliators, on the other hand, are reluctant, if not opposed, to such strategies and would prefer simply to work with Afghanistan to develop friendly bilateral ties.

It is important to underscore these coalitions cut across intelligence, defense, and foreign policy bureaucracies. Proclivities aside, their ability to pursue particular strategies have been either boosted up or hemmed in based upon the preferences of particular prime ministers who have sought to impose their will.

The strength of these coalitions, he shows, have waxed and waned over time and have thereby led to significant policy shifts. One fascinating and counterintuitive leitmotif, however, that clearly emerges from his detailed historical exegesis is that India has, on a number of occasions,

refrained from imposing costs on Pakistan even when opportunities have presented themselves. Such self-abnegating choices clearly run counter to the popular assumption that anti-Pakistani animus has consistently informed Indian policy toward Afghanistan. For example, Paliwal shows that Indian leaders as diverse as Inder Kumar Gujral to Narasimha Rao on the basis of both political conviction and circumstance eschewed opportunities to create havoc in Pakistan using Afghanistan as a proxy.

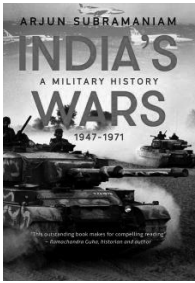
Paliwal, who has a granular knowledge of the complexities of Afghanistan's history and recent domestic politics, also shows the difficulties that India has encountered in formulating and implementing coherent policies because of the existence of a range of political factions and ethnic fissures in the country. Courting favor with a particular faction or group has often risked alienating others. During the time when the Taliban was consolidating its hold over the country India was to face this problem in a particular acute fashion.

It is to Paliwal's credit that he does not shy away from tackling contentious issues that have vexed relations between India and Pakistan as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan. Specifically, he quite forthrightly tackles Pakistan's vehement claims that India has sought to foment separatism in the troubled Pakistani province of Balochistan that lies athwart Afghanistan. He argues that the truth about India's involvement in Baloch and also Pashtun issues is complex. It falls significantly short of Pakistan's lurid claims but is nevertheless not entirely untrue. Obviously, when provoked with attacks on its own soil or on its assets in Afghanistan, Indian policymakers have contemplated and even carried out retaliatory acts in Pakistan. Given the existence of both Baloch and Pashtun separatist movements within the country these have proven to be the logical venues for exploitation.

Paliwal also shows how an abiding concern about Pakistani support for insurgents in Kashmir has profoundly shaped India's policies toward Afghanistan on particular occasions. For example, despite reservations about the mujahideen led government after the fall of Najibullah, New Delhi chose to reach out to the new dispensation in Kabul. This decision, in considerable part, stemmed from New Delhi's concern that Pakistan would exploit the emergence of the mujahideen regime to stir further discord in Kashmir.

The book's scope, its careful research based upon declassified documents, extensive use of interviews with former and serving officials and reportage and its organization combine to make it a substantial contribution on India's foreign policy toward an important neighboring state. Given the paucity of scholarly analysis of this subject Paliwal's book constitutes a most useful step in addressing a crucial lacuna in the extant literature.





Annapolis, MD: Naval  
Institute Press, 2017  
576 pages  
\$40.00

## India's Wars: A Military History, 1947–1971

By Arjun Subramaniam

Reviewed by Dr. Patrick K. Bratton, associate professor of national security strategy at the US Army War College

While there is an abundance of books on Indian cultural, religious, social, and political history, quality books on the military history of South Asia are rare. This is ironic given the world's focus on a rising India and its military power. Arjun Subramaniam's book is an important step in filling this gap. The author is a retired Air Vice Marshall of the Indian Air Force. His work draws deftly upon both his experience and his historical research. From the start, the author sets the tone and intent of the book to be a first cut of Indian military history or, as the author terms it, a "sighter burst" in old fighter pilot slang. The book gives a sweeping narrative history of India's military and conflicts, focusing on the first decades after independence from the first Indo-Pakistani War in 1947 to the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

The book seeks a wide audience, general readers interested in the subject and specialists. Even scholars who are familiar with these conflicts will have much to gain from the author's weaving together of many overlooked details. The book is based upon published secondary sources, the author's extensive research into personal memories, and the drawing together of other firsthand accounts. The lack of primary sources and archival work is understandable, considering both the limitations on access to Ministry of Defence archives and the book's intent of being a "first cut" of Indian military history. The author mixes narrative histories of the wars in question with analytical sections that examine the conflicts in terms of strategic, operational, and leadership lessons.

The book is valuable in several ways. First, it takes a joint perspective (or "triservice" from the Indian view). Traditionally, the accounts of these conflicts have focused on the Indian army, which makes sense given both the dominance of India's army and that India's wars have been over defense of homeland and territory. Subramaniam, however, gives substantial attention to the important role that the navy, and particularly the air force, played in conflicts. The author also reassesses the respective performances of both the Indian and Pakistani air forces during the wars, by examining not just their air to air record, as is commonly done, but also their ability to work with their respective armies. Even in conflicts where there was no air to air combat, like Kashmir (1947–48), the Indian Air Force played a vital but forgotten role in getting ground forces to the theatre in time to fight and supporting them during the war.

Second, this joint approach allows the author to bring to light many overlooked aspects. Subramaniam's coverage of the early days of the Indian Air Force and navy in the interwar and Second World War years yields several gems. For example, while the slow process of "Indianization" of the British Indian Army through the 1920s to the 1940s is well known, it would surprise many readers to learn that the Indian Air Force was conceived from the start as an "all Indian" force with no British officers. Similarly, many of the forgotten conflicts are



covered in detail, like the use of the military to occupy Hyderabad in 1948 or Goa in 1961.

Third, perhaps the greatest strength of this work is the large number of personal vignettes the author has unearthed. He put in the effort to not only gather memories of various officers, but also contact those still living or their relatives to record their stories. Many of these accounts are not generally known and are of interest. The author utilizes these stories to effectively bring to light much of the backdrop to military operations. Military historians often focus exclusively on frontline tactics and operations, while neglecting the support functions or secondary theatres. For example, when discussing the origins of the Indian Air Force, Subramaniam tells the story of Indra Lal Roy, a pilot in the Great War, and includes examples of the sketches he did during the war in France. Similarly, he relates the experiences of soldiers and pilots fighting at high altitudes in Ladakh during the Bangladesh Liberation War which are generally not known.

Given the work is a general overview, some views and choices are open to debate. When the book shifts from the tactical and operational levels to the strategic and political ones, the book reflects many dominant narratives in the Indian military about the Indian political elite, in particular Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Subramaniam makes strong assertions about Nehru's liberal-idealism and "diffidence" about security issues without much engagement in recent scholarship that has questioned and problematized this narrative. Similarly, while the author makes a valid assertion that examinations of Indian military culture should include the influences of armies and traditions before the Europeans arrived on the subcontinent, he surprisingly dismisses the contribution of the Mughal dynasty to Indian military heritage. Given the dynasty's impact on the social, economic, political, and military history of India, this is a debatable point.

Fortunately, these aspects are not critical to the book and its purpose. The author gives a readable narrative of India's military history and also brings in perspectives from the other services to give a fuller picture of those wars than is generally acknowledged. It is a recommended addition to any library on South Asian military history.



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<b>Scope:</b>	The manuscript addresses strategic issues regarding US defense policy or the theory and practice of land warfare. Visit our website ( <a href="http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/submission.cfm">http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/submission.cfm</a> ) to gain a better understanding of our current editorial scope.
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<b>Concurrent Submissions:</b>	The manuscript is not under consideration with other publishers and has not been published elsewhere, including on the Internet.

### Formatting Requirements

<b>Length:</b>	5,000 words or less.
<b>File Type and Layout:</b>	MS Word Document (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) file; Times New Roman, 12-point font; double-spaced; 1-inch margins.
<b>Visual Aids:</b>	Only include charts, graphs, and photographs when they are essential to clarify or amplify the text. Images must be grayscale, a minimum of 640 x 480 pixels, and submitted in their original file format (.tiff or .jpg). It is not sufficient to submit images embedded in a .doc or .rtf file.
<b>Citations:</b>	Document sources as footnotes. Indicate all quoted material by quotation marks or indentation. Reduce the number of footnotes to the minimum consistent with honest acknowledgement of indebtedness, consolidating notes where possible. Lengthy explanatory footnotes are discouraged and will be edited. <i>Parameters</i> generally uses the conventions prescribed in the <i>Chicago Manual of Style</i> .

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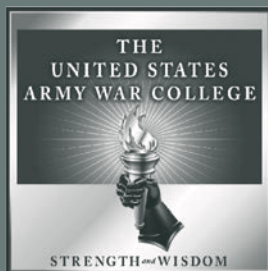
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