

# LESSON 1

## GRAND STRATEGY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

*“The roots of victory and defeat often have to be sought far from the battlefield, in political, social, and economic factors, which explain why armies are constituted as they are, and why their leaders conduct them in the way they do.”*

—Michael Howard, noted author and editor of Clausewitz’s *On War*

### Lesson Introduction

Strategic Studies is a relatively new discipline; it only became a serious academic subject as a sub-field of International Relations scholarship in the 1950s. Beforehand, strategy was the province of primarily military officers, and only a handful of those officers explored the full political-military dimension of strategy as a concept. As such, the "idea" of strategy and strategic thinking confronts the student and strategist alike with many problems, not the least of which is the rapidly evolving nature of the concept itself and the influence of "real world" events on its development. Nevertheless, the subject is of extreme importance because it is concerned with issues of the utmost significance at the national and international level. In that regard, strategy has always been intimately connected with planning wars and fighting them, but strategy is much more. Fundamentally, strategy is about how states use power—in a military, economic, diplomatic, or other manner—to achieve political objectives. It therefore cannot be repeated too often that military power is but one means among many to achieve political ends. As a result, purely military definitions of strategy have virtually disappeared because they fail to encompass the scope of strategic thinking. Nevertheless, although strategy is as much about peace as it is about war, it is generally recognized that, if we fail to properly manage the former, we must be prepared to execute the latter.

This lesson is designed to help you understand the nature of strategic thinking and how that translates into the development and execution of strategy. Thus, you will gain a better understanding of how operational planning and execution is linked to strategy and policy at the highest levels in our government. Also, this lesson will promote your understanding of how, to a great extent, operational planning and its execution shapes the profession of arms to which each of you belong.

## Student Requirements by Educational Objective

### Requirement 1

Objective 1. Describe the various characteristics that make up the strategic environment. [JPME Area 3(d)]

Read:

- MCDP 1-1, *Strategy*, 12 November 1997, Chapter 1. “The Strategic Environment,” pp. 9 to 33 (24 pages), pp. 109 to 111 (endnotes)

Objective 2. Explain International Relations (IR) theory and relate it to our understanding of important security issues that shape strategy. [JPME Areas 2(b), 3(b), 3(d)]

Joseph Nye argues that even though the world is shrinking, some things about international politics have remained the same over the ages. His analysis of the two antagonists in the Peloponnesian War reveals that very similar characteristics exist between that war and the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1947. Moreover, Nye professes that alliances, balances of power, and choices in policy between war and compromise have remained similar over the millennia. The peoples who live in the nearly 200 countries on this globe want their independence, separate cultures, and different languages. As his focus orients on international politics, Nye’s thesis is that there are legal, political and social differences between domestic and international politics. The study of international conflict is an inexact science that combines history and theory. It is essential that students keep both in mind as they read Nye’s article and, in particular, that they observe what has changed and what has remained constant.

Read:

- Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts*, Third ed., New York: Longman, 2000. Chapter 1, “Is There an Enduring Logic of Conflict in World Politics?” pp. 1 to 11 (12 pgs)

International relations is a compelling subject of rich complexity. Traditionally, the study of IR has focused on questions of war and peace, that is, the contest of political wills in the international arena, the crafting of alliances, and the clash of armies. In that regard, IR scholars want to know why international events occur, why nation states behave the way they do, why wars break out, and so forth. One kind of answer is descriptive: a war breaks out because of a crucial decision by a particular leader. Another kind of answer seeks to discern general explanations: for instance, war may break out as a consequence of a general pattern in which economic issues inexorably lead to conflict. This kind of answer is theoretical because it places the particular event in the context of a more general pattern that is applicable across multiple cases. The Strategy and Policy course, not unlike the study of IR itself, is concerned with both descriptive and theoretical knowledge, for, as Thucydides points out, it would do little good to merely describe

events without drawing useful lessons from them; nor, in addition, would it be useful to concentrate on purely abstract theory without regard for the real world. The study of IR is practical in that there is a close connection between IR scholarship and the policy-making community, and this relationship informs and shapes strategic decision-making.

In 1992, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and then Secretary of State James Baker III debated the merits of the first Bush Administration's willingness to embrace the reforms of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. Baker argued that, should Gorbachev's reforms take hold, the competition between the U.S. and Russia would be reduced if not eliminated as Russia was transformed into a less autocratic and aggressive state. To Dr. Kissinger, Baker's view was in error in that it was rooted in the assumption that the only meaningful conflict in world politics was the one between democracy and communism and, by extension, the competition between the U.S. and the former USSR. According to Kissinger, this worldview is myopic, not taking into account the lessons of history and failing to consider Russian interests beyond the promotion of its former communist ideology. As he later explained, any democratic transformation of Russia would still upset the existing balance of power and Russia would seek to redress that imbalance. As Russian behavior during the debate preceding the most recent war with Iraq has amply demonstrated, Kissinger had a point. Russia, France, and Germany pursued their own national interests as they understood them, and these interests were clearly at odds with those of the United States.

As the exchange between Kissinger and Baker illustrates, worldview matters. It shapes policy and informs strategic thinking. As global change proceeds apace, we are confronted with the challenge of making the right policy choices. How do we avoid repeating mistakes of the past? What are our objectives and how do we employ the means at our disposal to achieve those ends? One way to probe these and other questions is to examine current events (and history) using the theories embodied in the time-tested classics of international relations (IR) scholarship. Despite its ambiguous reputation, IR is a practical discipline in that there has always been a close connection between IR theories and policy-making. For example, in July 2002 a reporter queried President Bush's National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, about the issues that informed her thinking on policy matters. She replied: "We had this talk, as you know [back in 1999] – the balance of power, realism versus ideals, power and values. And I said then, and I still believe, that they're inseparable. Clearly, the balance of power mattered when we defeated the Soviet Union...But you should never forget how powerful [our] ideals are. And every time, we tend to underestimate them...And you just forget how very powerful human dignity is as a principle of human behavior and how much it's supported by democracy." Thus, as Dr. Rice alludes, by examining the theoretical underpinnings of IR scholarship, we can place the current policy debate (whatever it might be at the moment) in a critical light and engage in a connected inquiry.

In light of the above, theorists agree that ideas shape decisions, and as Clausewitz posited, the decision to go to war is perhaps the supreme political choice. It is, of course, the military leader who must implement that decision to go to war. Therefore, the military professional must come to terms with the Clausewitzian “proof” of the necessity of choice. In so doing, the strategist must consider three questions:

1. What is our objective?
2. What obstacles or threats interfere with achieving our object?
3. What, then, should we do?

These questions address the matter of strategic choice in the present and in the future. These questions also help us examine past strategic decisions. What were the objectives of states in the past? How did political actors of the time interpret threats and shape their policies in that context? What choices did they make? What was the result? With the advantage of hindsight, we can analyze their actions. We can ask why they made the decisions they made. And, in determining whether the policies they pursued were successful, we can refine our own strategic choices.

The assigned chapter from Nye’s book, *Understanding International Conflicts*, illustrates the basics of realist versus liberal IR theory. The realist worldview can be said to have originated with Thucydides and Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu advised rulers regarding how to use power to advance their interests. In the West, Thucydides focused on relative power between Greek city-states, noting: “The strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept” (Penguin translation). Realism is a school of thought that explains international relations in terms of the exercise of power, and power politics is at the root of the realist perspective in what amounts to a **jungle**, characterized by a constant **state of war** between rivals. Rejecting the realist analogy of world politics as a jungle, liberals believe that international politics is a **garden** in which peaceful cooperation can be cultivated. This ideal is not new: the Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743) proposed a federal union among European states after the War of the Spanish Succession with the idea of preventing another world war. According to the liberal worldview, a state’s interests are determined, not by its position relative to other states in the international system, but by the many interests, ideals, values, and activities of multiple actors that are internal as well as external to the state. Interestingly (and perhaps ironically), the liberal tradition includes the likes of Ronald Reagan, who, not unlike Woodrow Wilson, believed that the United States is the quintessential **city on a hill** and was not raised to greatness only to hide her lamp under a bushel. By making this observation, you can point out that liberalism in IR is not the same thing as a liberal political worldview, in terms of domestic politics (something that students often have difficulty with and why some prefer the term “idealism”). For liberals, promoting democracy and prosperity abroad is sound foreign policy in that democracies generally do not go to war with other democracies. In the end, for the liberal, the principles of IR flow from morality, as opposed to power.

The assumptions of realism and liberalism are easily contrasted. The realist regards human nature as essentially selfish, whereas the liberal finds humans to be altruistic and capable of cooperation in achieving mutually beneficial ends. Realists see the state as the most important political actor, whereas liberals believe that individuals, sub-state entities, and international organizations are equally important. Whereas the realist regards the *rational* pursuit of self-interest to be the principal motivator of state behavior, the liberal finds psychological motives of decisionmakers to be of crucial importance. Finally, realists interpret the international system in terms of **anarchy**, in which a state of war exists and the law of the jungle usurps the rule of law. Liberals, on the other hand, interpret the international system in terms of **community**, within which the potential exists to overcome conflict by an emphasis on relevant international structures, education, etc.

All the above indicates the complexity of the international security environment and the challenge of strategy therein. Sun Tzu's admonition to know the enemy and know yourself is key. Coercion holds the potential to achieve national aims more efficiently than brute force and conquest, but it is neither a cheap nor easy thing to do. As Bernard Brodie pointed out in his classic 1949 essay, "Strategy as a Science," policy-makers and strategists must appreciate that, in order to anticipate the utility of military force in changing an adversary's behavior, it is necessary first to understand how states function, interact, and react.

## Requirement 2

Objective 3. Describe how national-level strategy and policy incorporates the instruments of national power as a means of exercising power and influence. [JPME Area 1(a), 3(b)(d)]

View:

- ACSC lecture, "Coordinating the Instruments of Power: The Use of Military Force," by Mr. Budd Jones (22 minutes)

Read:

- Dr. Joe Strange, "Capital 'W' War: A Case for Strategic Principles of War (Because Wars Are Conflicts of Societies, Not Tactical Exercises Writ Large)," *Perspectives on Warfighting*, No. 6 (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 1998), pages 15 to 22. (7 pages)

As MCDP 1-1 points out, war is a phenomenon "fundamentally concerned with the distribution and redistribution of power." Power can be material or moral and can be defined as a state's *ability* to get another state to behave in a particular fashion, that is, to do what that state otherwise would not have done (or vice-versa). Such a definition treats power as *influence*. If a state exerts its will successfully, and often, then that state is said to be powerful. But power in the sense of influence is difficult to measure. For that reason, power is also considered in terms of *capability*, which is easier to measure than influence.

A state with a large military is said to be powerful. Power can also depend upon certain intangibles, such as the **power of ideas** (e.g., the appeal of democracy). In that regard, the ability to influence other states without resorting to more concrete measures, such as military force, is sometimes called **soft power**. Regardless, a state has power only in relation to other states. **Relative power** is the ratio of the power that two states can bring to bear against each other. In terms of power as capability, the ratio of nuclear or conventional military forces is often cited in terms of describing the balance of power between states. National power is a complex mix of many elements— military, economic, informational, moral, psychological, etc. The exercise of power is sometimes called *realpolitik*, or *power politics*. *Realpolitik* underlies Kissinger’s criticism of James Baker. In short, irrespective of Russia’s democratic transformation, Russia will continue to compete with the United States as it pursues its own regional and global interests.

The inventory provided by MCDP 1-1 is often referred to by the acronym DIME: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic. These instruments first made their appearance in the national security strategies of the Reagan Administration and were carried forward to the first Bush Administration. The Clinton Administration dropped the explicit reference to information as an instrument, and, although all four are present in the George W. Bush Administration’s national security strategy, they are more implied than explicit.

Strategists may be inclined to advance one instrument over another, but the wise strategist knows there is a dynamic relationship among the instruments themselves as well as between the instruments of national power and the constituent elements. Without adequate natural resources, a state may be economically disadvantaged, which, in turn, may reduce the military capability of the state. Nevertheless, an instrument may be dominant at one time or another, depending upon the circumstances and the grand strategy of the state.

### **Requirement 3**

Objective 4. Determine how the full dimension of strategy as a concept and as a process relates to the policy, strategy, and military operations relationship. [JPME Areas 1(a)(b)(c), 3(a)(d)]

Read:

- Richard Betts, “The Trouble With Strategy: Bridging Policy and Operations.” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001-02. pp. 23 to 30 (8 pages)
- Drew, Dennis and Donald Snow, *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems*. Maxwell AFB: Air University Press, 1998, pp. 13 to 44 (31 pages)
- MCDP 1-1, *Strategy*, 12 November 1997, Chapter 4. “The Making of Strategy,” pp. 79 to 102 (23 pages), pp. 114 to 115 (endnotes)

Clausewitz's comments on friction in war can also be applied to strategy: "It is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult." Formulating military strategy, however, is effectively anti-political. Strategy aims to nail things down and close options, while politics—especially in a democracy—strives to keep options open and avoid constraints. However, in the simplest terms, strategy is a plan of action that organizes efforts to achieve objectives.

The key to formulating grand strategy lies within understanding the constituent elements of national power and how they can best be utilized to achieve national objectives. Military capability is only one element of national power. Other tangible elements of power include geography, population and economic capability as well as the contributions of informational, political and diplomatic factors. Policy makers and strategists are naturally inclined to consider these elements as they formulate national level policy and strategy.

When strategy was regarded as the art of the general, the objective of strategy was military victory in the field. The general moved forces and directed operations as a means to achieve victory in battle. Though infantry, cavalry, and artillery officers were expected to grasp the particulars of their respective skills, the general had to integrate all three in order to defeat the opposing general. Even though victory in war was, for the most part, an end in and of itself, war has always been understood as being the means to a larger end. Sun Tzu was arguably the first ancient to explicitly state that war belongs to the realm of politics, that the latter directs the former; but it was Clausewitz, the father of modern strategy, who clarified war as a political act arising from a political condition that is the product of a political motive. As such, the political object was for Clausewitz the standard by which to measure military action. He understood, however, that the "political object is not...a despotic lawyer; it must adapt itself to the nature of the means at its disposal." In other words, a state had to evaluate its military capability in terms of whether its objectives could be obtained through military action. Adaptation is, therefore, a political act confirming his claim that policy always influences military action. Current deliberations regarding "transformation" are evidence enough of this claim.

In the end, strategy must be understood in terms of its military and political dimensions. As constructs, these dimensions can be distinguished from one another in an analytical sense, but strategic thought itself requires that the two be merged. Doing otherwise would be a recipe for failure. As Clausewitz wrote, "First...war should never be thought of as *something autonomous* but always as an *instrument of policy*. Second...wars must vary with the nature of their motives and of the situations which give rise to them." Thus, strategy demands not only the art of the general, but also the art of the statesman.

A useful framework for examining the links between policy, strategy, and military action is Philip Crowl's Harmon Memorial lecture entitled, "The Strategist's Short Catechism: Six Questions Without Answers," presented to the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978. At the time, Crowl was head of the Naval War College's Department of Strategy and the Ernest J. King Professor of Maritime History. Crowl asserted that we study history not so much to predict the future but to define the task before us and ask the right questions.

According to Crowl, the first and fundamental question is as follows: What specific national interests and policy objectives are to be served by military action? When answering this question, two others come to mind: What is the value of the object and what price are we willing to pay? Is it worth going to war? Any number of historical examples can be given and from any perspective. Why did Germany go to war in World War I, and why did the German leaders opt for war on two fronts? Why did the United States go to war in Vietnam? In the Gulf during 1990-1991 and again in 2003? In that regard, the “why” shapes the “how.” Clausewitz noted that the supreme act of judgment is to know what kind of war we are entering. The Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual* similarly noted, “The essence of a small war is its purpose and the circumstances surrounding its inception and conduct.” Thus, knowing our aims shapes how we intend to bring about the desired goal.

This realization brings us to the second question. Once the decision to go to war is made, what is the proper military strategy, once it starts? Is the national military strategy tailored to meet the national political objectives? Crowl used the example of Otto von Bismarck’s war with Austria as an example of correctly linking decisive military victory on the battlefield with a political object, in this instance the unification of the many sovereign German states into a single empire. Once the Austrian army was soundly defeated at Koniggratz, Bismarck called off further military operations even though his generals proposed to march on Vienna. Bismarck vetoed their proposal because the object of the war had been achieved and he believed it was better to cultivate Austrian good will than humiliate them further and prolong the war. Conversely, President Roosevelt did not push his generals to drive on Berlin at the end of World War II when, in retrospect, he probably should have done so. In the absence of political direction to do otherwise, General Eisenhower halted American forces at the Elbe River, and he would not allow General Patton to advance to Prague. Eisenhower was fully justified in his decision on military grounds, yet, as Churchill understood, the post-war lines to be drawn on the European map would be largely determined by where American and British forces ended up vice the Red Army. In this instance, policy took a back seat to military strategy. General Marshall even went so far as to state that Prague was not worth it, that he was “loath to hazard American lives for purely political purposes.”

A third question posed by Crowl that strategists must ask themselves is the following: “What are the limits of military power?” The Dr. Strange reading, found in the previous requirement, also supports this notion. When the United States became embroiled in Southeast Asia, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery remarked: “The U.S. has broken the second rule of war. That is, don't go fighting with your land army on the mainland of Asia. Rule One is don't march on Moscow.” The lesson is to calculate one’s resources in relation to those of the enemy and the object desired. Napoleon and Hitler both attempted to march on Moscow and both failed. Subduing Russia was simply beyond their ability with the forces at their disposal. In small wars of the insurgent variety, it is common wisdom that military force is subordinate to the political strategy and as the *Small Wars Manual* notes, “The solution of such problems being basically a political adjustment, the military measures to be applied must be of secondary importance and

should only be applied to such extent as permit the continuation of peaceful corrective measures.”

Question number four is as follows: “What are the alternatives?” As Crowl put it, “What are the alternatives to war? What are the alternative campaign strategies, especially if the preferred one fails? How is the war to be terminated gracefully if the odds against victory are too high?” The wise strategist considers alternatives and prepares contingency plans. During World War I, Germany had an opportunity to retain British neutrality by mobilizing solely on the Eastern front. But Helmuth von Moltke (the younger) claimed that the re-deployment of over a million soldiers from the west to the east simply could not be done. Ironically, the Kaiser responded that the elder Moltke could have accommodated such a change in plans and would have agreed that it was not only possible, but also preferable given the advantages it would accrue. Yet no change was made to the plan.

The fifth question regards the home front. Is there public support for the war and the military strategy therein? As Crowl put it, “If Vietnam has taught us anything, it is that, in the United States at least, no government can wage a protracted war successfully without strong domestic support. Dictatorships might be able to pull it off, but not democracies.”

The sixth and final question in Crowl’s strategic catechism is the following: “Does today’s strategy overlook points of difference and exaggerate points of likeness between past and present?” As the *Small Wars Manual* pointed out, neither big wars nor small wars ever take the exact form of their predecessors. As a result, “One must ever be on guard to prevent his views becoming fixed as to procedure or methods.” Aristotle similarly warned, “There is as much injustice in the equal treatment of unequal cases as there is in the unequal treatment of equal cases” (*Ethica Nicomachaea*). Yet policymakers and strategists routinely use historical analogies to help them define the nature of the task before them by comparing the new situation to previous situations with which the decision-maker is more familiar. During the run-up to American intervention in Afghanistan in late 2001, the specter of Vietnam and the Soviet experience in Afghanistan were repeatedly raised as warnings against what lay in store for the United States. But the analogies proved inappropriate, at least in the short term.

In the end, as Crowl points out, “The problem of strategy is essentially an intellectual problem. But before it can be addressed, it must be defined. To define the problem, one starts with questions: What is the object? What are the means to achieve it? Are they available? What are the costs? The benefits? What are the hazards? What are the limitations? How will the public react? Are the proposed actions morally justifiable? What are the lessons of experience? How does the present differ from the past?”

According to Drew and Snow, strategy is a plan of action that organizes efforts to achieve objectives. It is a complex decision-making process that connects the ends sought (objectives) with the ways and means of achieving those ends. Step 1 is to determine the national objectives. The authors use examples of well-defined and consistent objectives (WWII) and others less so. Step 2 is to formulate the grand strategy. The strategist must

decide how to develop, employ, and coordinate instruments of national power to achieve national security objectives. Step 3 is to develop a military strategy (likewise, an economic strategy, an informational strategy, etc; but, clearly, the emphasis here is on the military instrument). Step 4 is to design an operational strategy for the employment of the forces provided by the military strategy. Drew and Snow feel that the orchestration is central to operational strategy. The final step is to formulate a battlefield strategy, what the authors call the art and science of employing forces on the battlefield (tactics).

#### **Requirement 4**

Objective 5. Discuss how the current U. S. National Security Strategy integrates the various elements of national power to achieve its goals and objectives. [JPME Area 1(a)]

Read:

- *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C. The White House, September 2002 pp 1 to 20 (18 pages), pp. 8 and 12 intentionally missing (blank pages)
- Interview with John Lewis Gaddis on the 2002 NSS as a grand strategy, PBS Frontline, 16 January 2003 (18 pages)

Strategy begins with strategic thinking, which leads to strategic planning and strategic action. Grand strategy concerns the nature of opposition and conflict that defines the interrelationships of states and peoples, from striking bargains in the interest of stability and cooperation to war. Interests and objectives establish the strategic requirements, and policies establish the rules for satisfying those requirements. Available assets provide the means. In that regard, strategy is not linear, but dynamic, because it is always practiced in opposition to the strategy of at least one other party. The first rule of strategic thinking is to *look ahead and reason back*. In other words, the strategist anticipates where his or her initial decisions will lead and uses this information to calculate the best choice. In game theory, it is not always an advantage to seize the initiative and move first because this reveals your hand, and the other player(s) can use this knowledge to their advantage and your cost (think of Germany in the world wars). Nevertheless, value judgments are made (assigning values to possible outcomes), and in the case of the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), the Bush Administration has made what amounts to a “strategic move.” Gaddis claims this NSS is the first true “grand strategy” that the U.S. has had since President Truman’s Cold War containment strategy.

It seems clear that the object of the 2002 NSS is to promote freedom, democracy, and free enterprise as a means of creating a stable international environment. The strategy embodies realist as well as liberal ideas (constructivist?) in that it is rooted in certain presumed universal values (freedom) that are “true for every person” in “every society,” yet the strategy claims to seek “to create a balance of power that favors human freedom,” thus employing the rhetoric of the realist. The most important interest as stated is to defend the nation, and the government will use every tool at its disposal to achieve that end. Nominally, the emphasis of the strategy seems to be preemptive military action; but, upon closer examination, one can argue that it is fundamentally an economic strategy.

The overarching aim is to “make the world not just safer but better.” The “goals on the path to progress” are political and economic liberty, peaceful relations among states, and respect for human rights. These goals reflect the fact that in a representative democracy such as the U.S. (being the premier example of the same), strategy is not merely *instrumental*, but it is, rather, a comprehensive worldview derived from certain fundamental principles regarding the nature of domestic and international behavior. At the heart of the strategy is the belief that a free and prosperous people are disinclined to be aggressive toward their neighbors; therefore, transforming states into free-market democracies serves the national security interests of the U.S.

Protracted sub-state war (transnational terrorism) is the immediate threat, and the first priority in that regard is to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations with global reach. In game theory there are “sequential” games (players make alternating moves) and “simultaneous” games (in which players act at the same time and make multiple moves at the same time). In broad terms, the Allied strategy in World War II was cumulative and sequential. The 2002 NSS explicitly declares that the global war on terrorism “need not be sequential.” The effort will be broad-based and on many levels. Preemption (as opposed to deterrence) is the concept that has gained the most notoriety in the 2002 NSS, but the bulk of the strategy focuses on economic issues. The basic assumption, in the NSS, is that a “strong world economy enhances our national security.” In that regard, the strategy proffers a carrot and stick approach. Assistance will be predicated on “right national policies,” for example, “Where governments have implemented real policy changes, we will provide significant new levels of assistance.” To those states that cooperate, the strategy proposes “results-based” grants, as opposed to loans. Interestingly, the word “diplomacy” appears late in the strategy, implying that diplomatic initiatives – like the military instrument – are largely subordinate to the economic instrument. In order of appearance, the instruments of national power emphasized in the strategy are (1) economic; (2) military; (3) diplomatic; and (4) informational.

## **Lesson Summary**

Although the CSCDEP course is primarily oriented at the operational level of war and joint warfighting, the assigned readings in this lesson are intended to enhance your understanding of how strategy and policy at the national level impacts the operational level of war. Each of the readings focuses, to some degree, on the elements of national power. Of critical importance, however, are the strategy and policy decisions at the national level, which determine how those instruments are to be employed.

Insofar as the CSCDEP student is concerned, the distinction between diplomacy and strategy is a relative one. The two are linked and complementary in that the object of both is furthering the national interest, which, ultimately, is a political object, as Clausewitz well understood. Thus, the military instrument can be regarded as both method and means. But as G.F.R. Henderson wrote in 1898, “That the soldier is but the servant of the statesman, as war is but an instrument of diplomacy, no educated soldier will deny. Politics must always exercise an extreme influence on strategy.” In that regard, no educated Marine, soldier, sailor, or airman will deny that strategic objectives

determine operational objectives. Thus, it goes without saying that the military professional must understand the relationship between policy, strategy, and the conduct of war – and this process necessarily begins with an understanding of the international security environment. To that end the Strategy and Policy course provides you with a framework to comprehend international politics and the interrelationship of objectives from the strategic level to operational activities at the tactical engagement level. This specific class lays the foundation, serving both to refine concepts discussed earlier in the Theory and Nature of War course as well as beginning to bridge the distance between theory and practice, as the latter is addressed in the Operational Level of War course and later in the 8800 courses.

**JPME Summary**

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5			
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D
X	X	X				X			X	X		X										

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Readings

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**Title:** MCDP 1-1, *Strategy*, 12 November 1997, Chapter 1. "The Strategic Environment," pp. 9 to 33 (24 pages), pp. 109 to 111 (endnotes)

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**A**t its most basic, strategy is a matter of figuring out what we need to achieve, determining the best way to use the resources at our disposal to achieve it, and then executing the plan. Unfortunately, in the real world, all of these things are not easily done. Our strategic goals are complex and sometimes contradictory and may change in the middle of a military endeavor. The resources at our disposal are not always obvious, can change during the course of a struggle, and usually need to be adapted to suit our needs. Our adversary often refuses to fit our preconceptions of him or to stand still while we erect the apparatus for his destruction.

## **THE NATURE OF POLITICS AND WAR**

Before we can usefully discuss the making and carrying out of military strategy, we must understand the fundamental character of politics and the violent expression of politics called war. Let us start by analyzing Clausewitz's description of war as both an instrument of policy and of politics with the addition of other means.<sup>3</sup>

War is a social phenomenon. Its logic is not the logic of art, nor of science or engineering, but rather the logic of social transactions. Human beings interact with each other in ways that are fundamentally different from the way the scientist interacts with chemicals, the architect or engineer with beams

and girders, or the artist with paints. The interaction that concerns us when we speak of war is political interaction. The “other means” in Clausewitz’s definition of war is organized violence. The addition of violence to political interaction is the only factor that defines war as a distinct form of political interaction—but that addition has powerful and unique effects.

The two different terms we have used, policy and politics, both concern *power*. While every specific war has its unique causes, war as a phenomenon is fundamentally concerned with the distribution and redistribution of power.<sup>4</sup>

Power is sometimes material in nature: the economic power of money or other resources, for example, or possession of the physical means for coercion (weapons and armed personnel). Power is just as often psychological in nature: legal, religious, or scientific authority; intellectual or social prestige; a charismatic personality’s ability to excite or persuade; a reputation, accurate or illusory, for diplomatic or military strength.

Power provides the means to attack and the means to resist attack. Power in itself is neither good nor evil. By its nature, however, power tends to be distributed unevenly in ways that vary greatly from one society to another.

Power manifests itself differently and in different places at different times. In Japan, during the 16th through 19th centuries, real political power was exercised by the shogun, who was formally subordinate to the emperor. Later, senior Japanese military leaders were for a time effectively controlled by

groups of fanatical junior officers. King Philip II of Spain, whose power was rooted in a landed aristocracy, was surprised to discover the power that Europe's urban bankers could exercise over his military strategy. American leaders were similarly surprised by the power of the disparate political coalition that forced an end to the Vietnam War. One of the major problems of strategy is to determine where and in what form real power lies and to identify those relatively rare points where military power can be applied effectively.

Politics is the process by which power is *distributed* in any society: a family, an office, a religious order, a tribe, a state, a region, the international community. The process of distributing power may be fairly orderly—through consensus, inheritance, election, or some time-honored tradition—or chaotic—through assassination, revolution, or warfare. Whatever process may be in place at any given time, politics is inherently dynamic, and not only the distribution of power but the process by which it is distributed is under constant pressure for change.

A key characteristic of politics is that it is interactive—a cooperative or competitive process. It cannot be characterized as a rational process because actual outcomes are seldom what was consciously intended by any one of the participants. Political events and their outcomes are the product of conflicting, contradictory, sometimes compromising, but often adversarial forces. That description clearly applies to war.

Policy, on the other hand, *can* be characterized as a rational process. The making of policy is a conscious effort by a

distinct political body to use whatever power it possesses to accomplish some purpose—if only the mere continuation or increase of its own power. Policy is a rational subcomponent of politics, the reasoned purposes and actions of individuals in the political struggle. War can be a practical means, sometimes the only means available, for the achievement of rational policy aims—that is, the aims of one party in the political dispute. *Hence, to describe war as an “instrument of policy” is entirely correct. It is an act of force to compel our opponent to do our will.*

Do not, however, confuse rationality with intelligence, reasonableness, or understanding. Policies can be wise or foolish: they can advance their creators’ goals or unwittingly contradict them. They can be driven by concern for the public good or by the most craven reasons of self-interest. Rationality also implies no particular *kind* of goal, for goals are a product of emotion and human desire. The goal of policy may be peace and prosperity, national unity, the achievement of ideological perfection, or the extermination of some ethnic minority or competitor.

Remember too that policy, while it is different from politics, is produced via a political process. Even the most rational of policies is often the result of compromises within the political group. Such compromises may be intended more to maintain peace or unity within the group than to accomplish any external purpose. They may, in fact, be irrelevant or contrary to any explicit group goal. Policy is therefore often ambiguous,

unclear, even contradictory, and subject to change or to rigidity when change is needed.

Clausewitz's reference to war as an expression of politics is therefore not a prescription, but a description. War is a part of politics. It does not replace other forms of political intercourse but merely supplements them. It is a violent expression of the tensions and disagreements between political groups, when political conflict reaches a level that sparks organized violence. Thus war—like every other phase of politics—embodies both rational and irrational elements. Its course is the product not of one will, but of the collision of two or more wills.

To say, then, that war is an expression of both politics and policy with the addition of other means is to say two very different things to strategy makers. First, it says that strategy, insofar as it is a conscious and rational process, must strive to achieve the policy goals set by the political leadership. Second, it says that such policy goals are created only within the chaotic and emotional realm of politics.

Therefore, the military professional who says, "Keep politics out of this. Just give us the policy, and we will take care of the strategy," does not understand the fundamentals of

strategy. Strategists must operate within the constraints of policy and politics. The only alternative would be for military strategy to perform the functions of policy and for military

leaders to usurp political power, tasks which are generally unsuited to both military strategy and military leaders.

## **FURTHER DEFINING WAR**

We acknowledge that war is an expression of politics and policy with the addition of violent means. Still, this description does not fully explain war.

One frequent error is to describe war as something that takes place exclusively between nations or states. First, nations and states are different things. The Kurds are a nation, but they have no state. The Arabs are a nation with several states. The Soviet Union was a state whose citizens represented many different nationalities. Second, many—possibly most— wars actually take place within a single state, meaning that at least one of the participants was not previously a state. Civil wars, insurrections, wars of secession, and revolutions all originate within a single existing state, although they sometimes attract external intervention. Wars may spill across state borders without being interstate wars, as in Turkey’s conflict with the Kurds. Third, most interstate wars are fought not by individual states, but by coalitions. Such coalitions often involve nonstate actors as well as state governments.

Another mistake is to limit our definition of war to sustained, large-scale military operations. Here the defining condition is one of scale and duration. Under headings such as “Military Operations Other than War,” this approach lumps

many forms of political conflict that clearly satisfy Clausewitz's definition of war with other events—such as humanitarian assistance—that do not.

In its broadest sense, war refers to any use of organized force for political purposes, whether that use results in actual violence or not. When we speak of warfare, however, we almost always mean actual violence of some considerable scale that is carried out over some considerable period of time. A single assassination, while certainly a violent political act, does not constitute a war. On the other hand, large-scale, long-term violence alone does not necessarily mean war either. For example, over a 25-year period—1969 through 1994—some 3,000 people were killed in Northern Ireland for an average of 120 deaths per year in a population of 1.5 million.<sup>5</sup> For that same period, there were approximately 291 murders per year committed in Washington, D.C. in an average population of 642,000.<sup>6</sup> The former situation is widely recognized as war, while the latter is not. The difference is a matter of organization. The perpetrators, victims, and targets of the violence in Northern Ireland reflect distinct political groups engaged in a power struggle. The violent death rate in Washington, D.C., roughly five times higher, seems to reflect random violence—a sign of social dysfunction rather than of some purposeful group movement toward any political goal.

From all this, we can say that war is—

- Organized violence.

- Waged by two or more distinguishable groups against each other.
- In pursuit of some political end.
- Sufficiently large in scale and in social impact to attract the attention of political leaders.
- Continued long enough for the interplay between the opponents to have some impact on political events.

## **THE NATURE OF WAR-MAKING POLITICAL ENTITIES**

Military professionals often seek a “scientific” understanding of war. This approach is appealing because the human mind tends to organize its perceptions according to familiar analogies, like the powerful images of traditional Newtonian physics. Such comparisons can be very useful. Our military doctrine abounds with terms like “center of gravity,” “mass,” and “friction.”

The attempt to apply a scientific approach can result in some misleading ideas. For example, some political scientists treat political entities as unitary rational actors, the social equivalents of Newton’s solid bodies hurtling through space. Real political units, however, are not unitary. Rather, they are collections of intertwined but fundamentally distinct actors and systems. Their behavior derives from the internal interplay of

both rational and irrational forces as well as from the peculiarities of their own histories and of chance. Strategists who accept the unitary rational actor model as a description of adversaries at war will have difficulty understanding either side's motivations or actual behavior. Such strategists ignore their own side's greatest potential vulnerabilities and deny themselves potential levers and targets—the fault lines that exist within any human political construct.

Fortunately, the physical sciences have begun to embrace the class of problems posed by social interactions like politics and war. The appropriate imagery, however, is not that of Newtonian physics. Rather, we need to think in terms of biology and particularly ecology.<sup>7</sup>

To survive over time, the various members of any ecosystem must adapt—not only to the external environment, but to each other. These agents compete or cooperate, consume and are consumed, join and divide, and so on. A system created by such interaction is called a complex adaptive system.

Such systems are inherently dynamic. Although they may sometimes appear stable for lengthy periods, their components constantly adapt or fail. No species evolves alone; rather, each species “co-evolves” with the other species that make up its environment. The mutation or extinction of one species in any ecosystem has a domino or ripple effect throughout the system, threatening damage to some species and creating opportunities for others. Slight changes are sometimes absorbed without

unbalancing the system. Other slight changes—an alteration in the external environment or a local mutation—can send the system into convulsions of growth or collapse.

One of the most interesting things about complex systems is that they are inherently unpredictable. It is impossible, for example, to know in advance which slight perturbations in an ecological system will settle out unnoticed and which will spark catastrophic change. This is so not because of any flaw in our understanding of such systems, but because the system's behavior is generated according to rules the system itself develops and is able to alter. In other words, a system's behavior may be constrained by external factors or laws but is not determined by them.

For all of these reasons, systems starting from a similar base come to have unique individual characteristics based on their specific histories.

The reason we use the complex adaptive system as a model is that it provides insight into human political constructs. Humans build all sorts of social structures: families, tribes, clans, social classes, street gangs, armies, religious groups or sects, commercial corporations, political parties, bureaucracies, criminal mafias, states of various kinds, alliances, and empires, to mention just a few. These structures participate in separate but thoroughly intertwined networks we call social, economic, and political systems. Those networks produce markets, elections, and wars.

Such networks and structures create their own rules. The unpredictable nature of these complex systems makes it difficult to predict the outcome of specific events. We can normally analyze, describe, and explain economic, military, and political events after they have occurred, but accurately forecasting the course of such interactions is difficult to do with any consistency.

When we say that politics and war are unpredictable, we do not mean that they are composed of absolute chaos, without any semblance of order. *Intelligent, experienced military and political leaders are generally able to foresee the probable near-term results, or at least a range of possible results, of any particular action they may take.* Broad causes, such as a massive superiority in manpower, technology, economic resources, and military skill, will definitely influence the probabilities of certain outcomes.

Conscious actions, however, like evolutionary adaptations, seldom have only their intended effects. Events wholly outside the range of vision of political and military leaders can have an unforeseen impact on the situation. New economic and social ideas, technological innovations with no obvious military applications, changes in climatic conditions, demographic shifts, all can lead to dramatic political and military changes. Enemy actions, friction, imperfect knowledge, low order probabilities, and chance introduce new variables into any evolving situation.

The problem for strategists is how to develop a lasting and effective strategy in the face of the turbulent world of policy and politics. Despite the difficulty of understanding the interaction of political entities, they must strive to comprehend the nature of the problem, anticipate possible outcomes, and set a strategic course likely to achieve the desired objective. At the same time, strategists must sense the complex nature of this environment and be prepared for both the unexpected setbacks and the sudden opportunities it is likely to deliver.

## STRATEGIC CONSTANTS AND NORMS

In *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, originally published in 1911, Sir Julian Corbett wrote—

The vaguer the problem to be solved, the more resolute must we be in seeking points of departure from which we begin to lay a course, keeping always an eye open for the accidents that will beset us, and being always alive to their deflecting influences . . . . [T]he theoretical study of strategy . . . can at least determine the normal. By careful collation of past events it becomes clear that certain lines of conduct tend normally to produce certain effects.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the complexity of interactions in the political realm, it is possible to discern elements that are present in any

strategic situation. These elements are at the core of the strategic environment and are the base from which the strategist develops an understanding of a specific set of circumstances. Because these elements are present in any strategic situation, we refer to them as constants and norms. While the particular aspects of these constants and norms present themselves differently in each strategic situation, an understanding of their fundamental nature provides a point of departure for its analysis.

To help understand the distinction between constants and norms and the fluctuations of a specific policy or conflict, we can use the following analogy. Annual seasonal climates of most regions of the world are predictable. Yet the weather on a given day cannot be predicted far in advance with any confidence. Still, annual vacationers in northern Pennsylvania know that a warm day in January is colder than a cold day in July, and a snow skier does not plan a ski trip for July, nor does a water skier plan on water skiing in January. Extreme variables in temporary weather patterns do not affect the long-term power and influence of global climate patterns.

### **The Physical Environment**

Geography and its related aspects are a constant in any strategic situation. All parties in a conflict must cope with the physical environment. One strategic affairs expert has noted—

Misguided strategists who misinterpret, misapply, or ignore the crushing impact of geography on national security affairs learn their lessons painfully, after squandering national prestige, lives, and treasure.

Strategic masters manipulate the physical environment, exploit its strengths, evade its weaknesses, acknowledge constraints, and contrive always to make nature work for them.<sup>9</sup>

The physical environment encompasses not only the traditional elements of geography such as land forms, terrain, oceans and seas, and climate, but also spatial relationships, natural resources, and lines of communications. Together, these factors exert considerable influence on a particular strategic situation. The political, economic, and social makeup of a nation results in part from its physical environment. We refer to Great Britain, the United States, and Japan as “maritime nations,” while Germany, Russia, and China have been traditionally labeled “continental powers.” The location and distribution of natural resources may on the one hand be a cause of conflict and, at the same time, be a major determinant of a conflict’s outcome. The nature of the interaction between political entities is in large part determined by their geographic relationships. Relations between states that border on one another are normally considerably different from those between states separated by oceans and continents.

In order to understand the nature of a problem, *strategists must understand the role of the physical environment in each situation*. Geography influences the way that all elements of

national power are applied. While the effect of geography on a conflict varies with the nature, location, and duration of that conflict, the physical environment always has an impact. Strategists must analyze and understand the local, regional, and sometimes global effects of this environment in order to use the elements of power effectively in a specific strategic situation.<sup>10</sup>

### **National Character**

Each nation, state, or political entity has its own distinct character. This character is derived from a variety of sources: location, language, culture, religion, historical circumstances, and so forth. While national character is always evolving, changes generally occur only over the course of decades and centuries and may be imperceptible to the outside observer. As such, national character can be looked upon as a norm or constant. National character is akin to global climate patterns that change very slowly through history.

Over three centuries, the British national character ran as deep and sure as the Gulf Stream across the North Atlantic. During this time, British national reaction to aggression from France, Germany, or, more recently, Argentina, was marked by many constants. Throw in a resolute and inspirational leader (the elder William Pitt, Winston Churchill, or Margaret Thatcher), add a villainous opponent bent on European domination (Napoleon, the Kaiser, or Hitler), and the British response to aggression was both consistent and predictable.

This is not to say that the British reacted the same way in each situation. The mood and inclination of the British public have been influenced by various swirls and eddies during periods and moments when issues were confused, threats ambiguous, and hopes for peace strong. For example, the British first attempted to avoid war with Germany by acceding to Hitler's demands at the now infamous Munich Conference of 1938. Then when Germany invaded Poland a year later, natural inclinations and hopes for peace vanished into a steeled determination to wage war.

Consider too the Russian response to invasions from the West. The Russians have never deliberately adopted a strategy of retreating hundreds of miles into their interior without first trying to stop an invader near their borders. The point is that they have demonstrated an *ability* to retreat deeply into their own country if they must do so in order to survive and ultimately prevail. This demonstrated ability was a matter of historical record to be considered by Charles XII of Sweden in 1708, Napoleon in 1812, Kaiser Wilhelm III in 1914, and Hitler in 1941. It is no coincidence that of these invaders, the only one to succeed (Germany in World War I) was the one that adopted a strategy containing a viable political component, in this case the support of internal revolution, used in conjunction with the military component. The Germans in World War I considered knowable Russian physical and moral characteristics and devised an effective political-military strategy accordingly. Napoleon and Hitler had access to similar knowledge but

largely ignored the Russian character in relying on a purely military strategy.

Judging the national character of an adversary (or an ally) goes well beyond traditional orders of battle and related calculations regarding military and economic power. It requires consideration of national history, culture, religion, society, politics—everything that contributes to the makeup and functioning of a nation. The strategist must compile a complete dossier on a nation similar to that commonly prepared on enemy commanders. In the popular movie *Patton*, an impatient Field Marshal Rommel interrupts his aide: “Enough! Tell me about the man” (referring to General Patton). Rommel wanted to know about Patton’s personality: Was he a gambler? Would he attack sooner rather than later? What was his style of warfare and leadership? What did his troops think of him? Rommel wanted a psychological profile of the opposing commander to help him understand his adversary. At the strategic level, success in war is facilitated by having a similar comprehensive psychological profile of each nation or political group involved in the conflict, to include enemies, allies, potential enemies or allies, and even one’s own nation.

It is of critical importance that sweeping dogmatic assertions do not govern the analysis of national characters. Such assertions often spring from ethnocentric attitudes and a failure to examine the true nature of a political presence. Rather, what is required is rational, objective, and informed thought about the makeup of a national character and its possible effects on a nation’s action or reaction to an event.

## War and the State

The state has been effective in all forms of politics, including war. It has been so effective, in fact, that virtually all of the world's land surface and its people are now recognized as belonging to some more or less effective territorial state. While entities other than the state make war, a state will almost always become involved either in self-defense or in assertion of its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Thus, we must look upon the state as one of the strategic norms or constants when we are confronted with a specific strategic problem.

While it has been said that "war made the state, and the state made war,"<sup>11</sup> the state has over time held in remarkable check the human tendency toward violence. Averaged over the first 90 years of the 20th century, even Germany's annual rate of war deaths is lower than that of many typical primitive societies.<sup>12</sup> Although warfare between states has continued, successful states have been able to control the costly endemic local warfare typical of nonstate societies.

States are normally replaced by other states. If a state fails to control the use of violence, it will likely be destroyed or taken over by some new group willing and able to take on this fundamental function of the state. This new leadership may be another state or possibly a supranational alliance like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the United Nations. It could also be a revolutionary government evolving out of what was formerly a nonstate political presence.

This is not to say that states or the interrelated system of states does not change or that strategists can always rely on stability in the international arena. From 1950 to 1980 in Africa, 47 new states won their independence. In late 1988, after 73 years of colonial rule, Africa's last colony, Namibia, gained its independence.<sup>13</sup> The United States, which sees itself as a young state, in fact has the oldest constitutional system on earth. Many people alive today were born when most of Europe was ruled by kings or emperors. Powerful states and ideologies, commanding formidable military machines, have entered and left the world stage while those people grew up. The Soviet Union, one of the most powerful nations in human history, covering a sixth of the world's surface and encompassing hundreds of millions of human beings, lasted less than a human lifetime.

However, on balance, we can look upon the state as remarkably tough and enduring. While political movements and individual states and governments that wage wars evolve and change, we must address any particular conflict or strategic problem in the context of the state system. Strategists must take into account the actions and reactions not only of their adversary, but also the actions and reactions of other states and nations. At the same time, we should remember that there is nothing permanent about any particular political entity. This lack of permanence is important because it reminds us that

every enemy, no matter how seamless and monolithic it may appear, has political fault lines that can be exploited.

### **The Balance of Power Mechanism**

We have already noted that politics and policy are concerned with the distribution of power and that conflict often arises out of attempts to change the distribution of power. One of the ways political entities achieve stability in the distribution of power and avoid a continuous state of conflict is by seeking to maintain a “balance of power.” The balance of power is a mechanism intended to maintain the status quo in the distribution of power.<sup>14</sup> It describes a system in which alliances shift in order to ensure that no one entity or group of entities becomes dominant. The balance of power is “at once the dominant myth and the fundamental law of interstate relations.”<sup>15</sup>

The term “balance of power” is usually used in reference to states, but it is applicable to any system involving more than one political power center. The balance of power can be global, as it was during the Cold War, regional/local, as it was among Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the other Persian Gulf states, or internal to one state or territory, as it was among the various clans in Somalia.

Balance of power considerations are usually at work in any strategic situation. Thus, we can consider the balance of power as a strategic norm or constant. Balance of power systems have appeared frequently in world history. Normally, such a system

is created when several entities vie for supremacy or at least independence, yet none individually has the power to achieve it alone.

A balance of power system breaks down for two reasons. The first is when one or more of the participants in the system rebel against it. Their goal is to eliminate all competitors and achieve dominance. In modern Europe, this goal has been attempted by a number of states and their leaders such as Germany under Hitler and France under Napoleon. The rebels have never fully succeeded, largely because they have to take on multiple enemies. Ambitious powers must always be wary of what Clausewitz called the culminating point of victory.<sup>16</sup> This is the point at which one competitor's success prompts its allies and other groups to withdraw their support or even throw their weight against it.

The second threat to the balance of power system is the power vacuum that occurs when there is no authority capable of maintaining order in some geographic area. Power vacuums are disruptive to the balance of power in two distinct ways. First, the disorder in the vacuum tends to spread as violent elements launch raids into surrounding areas or commit other provocative acts. The disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s has provided many examples of this sort. Another example is the disintegration of Yugoslavia that resulted in NATO intervention in Bosnia. Second, a power vacuum may attract annexation by an external power. If this act threatens to add substantially to the annexing entity's power, other states

will become concerned and may interfere. Many Russians saw NATO's intervention in Bosnia in this light. NATO's agreement to Russian participation in that mission was an attempt to mitigate such concerns.

Some have argued that the balance of power is no longer a useful concept in the post-Cold War world dominated by a single military superpower. However, it is clear that on a regional and local level the concept of balance of power remains a useful basis for strategic analysis. The balancing mechanism remains a useful strategic tool and is applicable to all levels.

Strategists must be aware of the dynamics of various balance of power systems involved in a strategic problem. Like the "invisible hand" of market economics, the balance of power mechanism is always at work, regardless of whether the system's participants believe that it is a good thing. It influences our actions as well as those of our adversaries, allies, and neutral powers.

Consider the case of the Gulf War. One of the motives for participation in the conflict by the U.S. and other Coalition forces was concern over the prospect of a region dominated by Iraq. Conversely, one of the postwar concerns was to avoid the creation of a power vacuum that could lead to increased instability in the region or greater influence by Iran. Finally, the dynamics of relations within the Coalition also involved reconciling sometimes differing views on balance of power issues. In any coalition, some participants may be only

temporary allies with long-term goals that may diverge widely from one another. Thus, balance of power considerations were at work from start to finish during this conflict.

## **THE TRINITY**

This chapter has described the nature of the strategic environment. This environment is defined by the nature of politics and the interactions of political entities that participate in the political process. The strategic environment is complex and subject to the interplay of dynamic and often contradictory factors. Some elements of politics and policy are rational, that is, the product of conscious thought and intent. Other aspects are governed by forces that defy rational explanation. We can discern certain factors that are at work in any strategic situation—the constants and norms—and use them as a framework to help understand what is occurring. At the same time, we realize that each strategic situation is unique and that in order to grasp its true nature, we must comprehend how the character and motivations of each of the antagonists will interact in these specific circumstances.

Summarizing the environment within which war and strategy are made, Clausewitz described it as being dominated by a “remarkable trinity” that is—

composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of [war's] element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government.

These three tendencies are like three different codes of law, deep-rooted in their subject and yet variable in their relationship to one another. A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.

Our task therefore is to develop a theory that maintains a balance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets.<sup>17</sup>

Clausewitz concluded that the strategic environment is shaped by the disparate forces of emotion, chance, and rational thought. At any given moment, one of these forces may dominate, but the other two are always at work. The actual course of events is determined by the dynamic interplay among them. The effective strategist must master the meaning and the peculiarities of this environment.<sup>18</sup>

## The Study of Strategy

1. Unknown.

## The Strategic Environment

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3. See Carl von Clausewitz, "War As An Instrument of Policy," *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) pp. 605–610.
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6. Based on the 1972, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1986, 1990, 1994, and 1996 versions of the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* distributed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C.).
7. For the best overall introduction to complexity theory, see M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

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13. *Compton’s Interactive Encyclopedia*, version 2.01VW, “Africa” (1994).
14. Blainey, pp. 109–114.
15. George Liska, quoted in Michael Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* (London: Routledge, 1996) p. 2.
16. Clausewitz, pp. 566–573. Do not confuse this political idea with Clausewitz’s closely related concept of the “culminating point

of the offensive” which is primarily an operational and logistical concept.

17. Clausewitz, p. 89.

18. See Edward J. Villacres and Christopher Bassford, “Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1995) pp. 9–19.

### **Strategy: Ends and Means**

1. President John F. Kennedy’s address at the U.S. Naval Academy Commencement, Annapolis, Maryland, June 7, 1961. Reprinted in Theodore C. Sorensen et al., *Let the Word Go Forth: The Speeches, Statements, and Writings of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1988) p. 243.

2. **Military strategy:** “The art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force or the threat of force.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

3. **National strategy:** “The art and science of developing and using the political, economic, and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

4. Col Dennis M. Drew and Dr. Donald M. Snow, *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Process and Problems* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1988) pp. 27–28.

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Readings

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**Title:** Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts*, Third ed., New York: Longman, 2000. Chapter 1, "Is There an Enduring Logic of Conflict in World Politics?" pp. 1-11 (12 pgs)

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# Understanding International Conflicts

An Introduction to  
Theory and History

Third Edition

Joseph S. Nye, Jr.  
*Harvard University*



Marble relief commemorating Athenians who died in the Peloponnesian War

## CHAPTER I

# Is There an Enduring Logic of Conflict in World Politics?

### TWO THEORETICAL TRADITIONS: REALISM AND LIBERALISM

The world is shrinking. The *Mayflower* took three months to cross the Atlantic. In 1924, Charles Lindbergh's flight took 24 hours. Today's Concorde can do it in three hours; ballistic missiles, in 30 minutes. In the 1990s, a transatlantic flight costs one-third of what it did in 1950, and a call from New York to London costs only six percent



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of what it did at midcentury. Global Internet communications are nearly instantaneous and transmission costs are negligible. An environmentalist in Asia or a human rights activist in Africa today has a power of communication once enjoyed only by large organizations like governments or transnational corporations. On a more somber note, nuclear weapons have added a new dimension to war that one writer calls "double death," meaning that not only could individuals die, but under some circumstances the whole human species could be threatened.

Yet, some things about international politics have remained the same over the ages. Thucydides's account of Sparta and Athens fighting the Peloponnesian War 2500 years ago reveals eerie resemblances to the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1947. The world at the end of the twentieth century is a strange cocktail of continuity and change. Some aspects of international politics have not changed since Thucydides. There is a certain logic of hostility, a dilemma about security that goes with interstate politics. Alliances, balances of power, and choices in policy between war and compromise have remained similar over the millennia.

On the other hand, Thucydides never had to worry about nuclear weapons or the ozone layer or global warming. The task for international politics students is to build on the past but not be trapped by it, to understand the continuities as well as the changes. We must learn the traditional theories and then adapt them to current circumstances.

International politics would be transformed if separate states were abolished, but world government is not around the corner. The peoples who live in the nearly 200 states on this globe want their independence, separate cultures, and different languages. In fact, rather than vanishing, nationalism and the demand for separate states have increased. Rather than fewer states, this new century will probably see more. World government would not automatically solve the problem of war. Most wars today are civil or ethnic wars. In fact, the bloodiest wars of the nineteenth century were not among the quarreling states of Europe but the Taiping rebellion in China and the American Civil War. We will continue to live in a world of separate states for quite some time to come, and it is important to understand what that means for our prospects.

### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL POLITICS?

The world has not always been divided into a system of separate states. Over the centuries there have been three basic forms of world politics. In a *world imperial system*, one government is dominant over most of the world with which it has contact. The greatest example in the Western world was the Roman Empire. Spain in the sixteenth century and France in the late seventeenth century tried to gain similar supremacy, but they failed. In the nineteenth century, the British Empire spanned the globe, but even the British had to share the world with other strong states. Ancient world empires—the Sumerian, the Persian, the Chinese—were actually regional empires. They thought they ruled the world, but they were protected from conflict with other empires by lack of communication. Their fights with barbarians on the peripheries of the empire were not the same as wars among roughly equal states.

A second basic form of international politics is a *feudal system*, in which human loyalties and political obligations are not fixed primarily by territorial boundaries. Feudalism was common in the West after the collapse of the Roman Empire. An individual had obligations to a local lord, but might also owe duties to some distant noble or bishop as well as to the pope in Rome. Political obligations were determined to a large extent by what happened to one's superiors. If a ruler married, an area and its people might find their obligations rearranged as part of a wedding dowry. Townspeople born French might suddenly find themselves made Flemish or even English. Cities and leagues of cities sometimes had a special semi-independent status. The crazy quilt of wars that accompanied the feudal situation were not what we think of as modern territorial wars. They could occur within as well as across territories and were related to these crosscutting, nonterritorial loyalties and conflicts.

A third form of world politics is an *anarchic system of states*, composed of states that are relatively cohesive but with no higher government above them. Examples include the city-states of ancient Greece or Machiavelli's fifteenth-century Italy. Another example of an anarchic state system is the dynastic territorial state whose coherence comes from control by a ruling family. Examples can be found in India or China in the fifth century B.C. Large territorial dynasties reemerged in Europe about 1500, and other forms of international politics such as city-states or loose leagues of territories began to vanish. In 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years' War, sometimes called the last of the great wars of religion and the first of the wars of modern states. In retrospect, that treaty enshrined the sovereign territorial state as the dominant form of international organization.

Thus today when we speak of international politics, we usually mean this territorial state system, and we define *international politics* as politics in the absence of a common sovereign, politics among entities with no ruler above them. International politics is often called anarchic. As monarchy means one ruler, *anarchy*—"an-archy"—means the absence of any ruler. International politics is a self-help system. Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth-century English philosopher, called such anarchic systems a "state of nature." For some, the words *state of nature* may conjure up images of a herd of cows grazing peacefully in Vermont, but that is not what Hobbes meant. Think of a Texas town without a sheriff in the days of the Old West, or Lebanon after its government broke down in the 1970s, or Somalia in the 1990s. Hobbes's state of nature is not benign; it is a war of all against all because there is no higher ruler to enforce order. As Hobbes famously declared, life in such a world tends to be nasty, brutish, and short.

The result is that there are legal, political, and social differences between domestic and international politics. Domestic law is generally obeyed and if not, the police and courts enforce sanctions against lawbreakers. International law, on the other hand, rests on competing legal systems, and there is no common enforcement. There is no international police to enforce the law.

Force plays a different role in domestic and international politics. In a well-ordered domestic political system, the government has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. In international politics, no one has a monopoly on the use of force. Since international politics is the realm of self-help, and some states are stronger than others, there is always a danger that they may resort to force. When force cannot be ruled out, the result is mistrust and suspicion.

Domestic and international politics also differ in their underlying sense of community. In a well-ordered domestic society, there is a widespread sense of community that gives rise to common loyalties, standards of justice, and views of what is legitimate authority. In international politics, divided peoples do not share the same loyalties. Any sense of global community is weak. People often disagree about what seems just and legitimate. The result is a great gap between two basic political values: order and justice. In such a world, most people place national before international justice. Law and ethics play a role in international politics, but in the absence of a sense of community, they are not as binding as they are in domestic politics.

Of the three basic systems—*world imperial*, *feudal*, and *anarchic system of states*—the last is most relevant to international politics in the contemporary world, though, as we shall see in the last chapters, some people speculate that the twenty-first century may see the gradual evolution of a new feudalism.

### Two Views of Anarchic Politics

International politics is anarchic in the sense that there is no higher government, but even in political philosophy there were two different views of how harsh a state of nature need be. Hobbes, who wrote in a seventeenth-century England wracked by civil war, emphasized insecurity, force, and survival. He summarized it as a state of war. A half century later, John Locke, writing in a more stable England, argued that although a state of nature lacked a common sovereign, people could develop ties and make contracts, and therefore anarchy was less threatening. Those two views of a state of nature are the philosophical precursors of two current views of international politics, one more pessimistic and one more optimistic: the *realist* and *liberal* approaches to international politics.

*Realism* has been the dominant tradition in thinking about international politics. For the realist, the central problem of international politics is war and the use of force, and the central actors are states. Among modern Americans, realism is exemplified by the writings and policies of President Richard Nixon and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger. The realist starts from the assumption of the anarchic system of states. Kissinger and Nixon, for example, sought to maximize the power of the United States and to minimize the ability of other states to jeopardize U.S. security. According to the realist, the beginning and the end of international politics is the individual state in interaction with other states.

The other tradition is called *liberalism*, not because of American domestic politics, but because it can be traced back in Western political philosophy to Baron de Montesquieu and Immanuel Kant in eighteenth-century France and Germany, respectively, and such nineteenth-century British philosophers as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. A modern American example can be found in the writings and policies of the political scientist and president Woodrow Wilson.

Liberals see a global society that functions alongside the states and sets part of the context for states. Trade crosses borders, people have contacts with each other (such as students studying in foreign countries), and international institutions such as the United Nations create a context in which the realist view of pure anarchy is

insufficient. Liberals complain that realists portray states as hard billiard balls causing off one another in the attempt to balance power, but that is not enough because people do have contacts across borders and because there is an international society. Realists, claim liberals overstate the difference between domestic and international politics. Because the realist picture of anarchy as a Hobbesian "state of war" focuses only on extreme situations, in the liberals' view it misses the growth of economic interdependence and the evolution of a transnational global society.

Realists respond by quoting Hobbes: "Just as stormy weather does not mean perpetual rain, so a state of war does not mean constant war."<sup>1</sup> Just as Londoners carry umbrellas on sunny April days, the prospect of war in an anarchic system makes states keep armies even in times of peace. Realists point to previous liberal predictions that went awry. For example, in 1910 the president of Stanford University said future war was impossible because the nations could not afford it. Books proclaimed war to be obsolete; civilization had gone beyond war. Economic interdependence, ties between labor unions and intellectuals, and the flow of capital all made war impossible. Of course, these predictions failed catastrophically in 1914, and the realists were vindicated.

Neither history nor the argument stopped in 1914. The 1970s saw a resurgence of liberal claims that rising economic and social interdependence was changing the nature of international politics. In the 1980s, Richard Rosecrance, a California professor, wrote that states can increase their power in two ways, either aggressively by territorial conquest or peacefully through trade. He used the experience of Japan as an example: In the 1930s, Japan tried territorial conquest and suffered the disaster of World War II. But since then, Japan has been a trading state, becoming the second largest economy in the world and a significant power in East Asia. Japan succeeded without a major military force. Thus Rosecrance and modern liberals argue that there is a change occurring in the nature of international politics.

Some new liberals look even further to the future and believe that dramatic growth in ecological interdependence will so blur the differences between domestic and international politics that humanity will evolve toward a world without borders. For example, everyone will be affected without regard to boundaries if the depletion

### 1910: THE "UNSEEN VAMPIRE" OF WAR

If there were no other reason for making an end of war, the financial ruin it involves must sooner or later bring the civilized nations of the world to their senses. As President David Starr Jordan of Leland Stanford University said at Tufts College, "Future war is impossible because the nations cannot afford it." In Europe, he says, the war debt is \$26 billion, "all owed to the unseen vampire, and which the nations will never pay and which taxes poor people \$95 million a year." The burdens of militarism in time of peace are exhausting the strength of the leading nations, already overloaded with debts. The certain result of a great war would be overwhelming bankruptcy.

—The New York World?

of ozone in the upper atmosphere causes skin cancer. If CO<sub>2</sub> accumulation warms the climate and causes the polar ice caps to melt, rising seas will affect all coastal states. Some problems like AIDS and drugs cross borders with such ease that we may be on our way to a different world. Professor Richard Falk of Princeton argues that these transnational problems and values will produce new nonterritorial loyalties that will change the state system that has been dominant for the last 400 years. Transnational forces are undoing the Peace of Westphalia, and humanity is evolving toward a new form of international politics.

In 1990, realists replied, "Tell that to Saddam Hussein!" Iraq showed that force and war are ever-present dangers. The liberal comeback was that politics in the Middle East is the exception. Over time, they say, the world is moving beyond the anarchy of the sovereign state system. These divergent views on the nature of international politics and how it is changing will not soon be reconciled. The realists stress continuity; the liberals stress change. Both claim the high ground of realism with a small *r*. Liberals tend to see realists as cynics whose fascination with the past blinds them to change. Realists, in turn, call the liberals utopian dreamers and label their thought "globaloney."

Who's right? Both are; and both are wrong. A clear-cut answer might be nice, but it would also be less accurate and less interesting. The mix of continuity and change that characterizes the world entering the twenty-first century makes it impossible to arrive at one, easy, synthetic explanation.

Because it involves changeable human behaviors, international politics will never be like physics: It has no strong determinist theory. What is more, realism and liberalism are not the only approaches. For much of the past century *Marxism*, with its predictions of class conflict and warfare caused by problems among capitalist states, was a credible alternative for many people. Even before the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, however, the failure of Marxist theory to account for peace among major capitalist states and warfare among some communist states left it lagging in the explanatory competition. In the 1960s and 1970s, *dependency theory* was popular. It predicted that the wealthy countries in the "center" of the global marketplace would control and hold back poorer countries on the "periphery." But dependency theory lost credibility when it could not explain why, in the 1980s and 1990s, peripheral countries in East Asia like South Korea, Singapore, and Malaysia grew more rapidly than "central" countries like the United States and Europe. This loss of credibility was underlined when Fernando Henrique Cardoso, an academic leader among dependency theorists in the 1970s, turned to liberal policies of increasing dependence on global markets after he was elected president of Brazil in the 1990s.

In the 1980s, analysts on both sides of the realist-liberal divide attempted to devise more deductive theories similar to those of microeconomics. "Neorealists" such as Kenneth Waltz and "neoliberals" such as Robert Keohane developed models of states as rational actors constrained by the international system. Neorealists and neoliberals increased the simplicity and elegance of theory, but they did so at the cost of discarding much of the rich complexity of classical realist and liberal theories. "By the end of the 1980s, the theoretical contest that might have been reduced to relatively narrow disagreements within one state-centric rationalist model of international relations."<sup>3</sup>

More recently, a diverse group of theorists labeled *constructivists* have criticized realism and liberalism for what they believe is their inability to adequately explain long-term change in world politics. Neorealists and neoliberals took for granted how the goals that states sought changed over time. Constructivists draw upon different fields and disciplines to examine the processes by which leaders, peoples, and cultures alter their preferences, shape their identities, and learn new behavior. For example, both slavery in the nineteenth century and racial apartheid in South Africa were once accepted by most states, but later were widely opposed. Constructivists ask why the change? What role did ideas play? Will the practice of war go the same way someday? What about the concept of the sovereign nation-state? The world is full of political entities such as tribes, nations, and nongovernmental organizations. Only in recent centuries has the sovereign state been a dominant concept. Constructivists point out that concepts such as nation and sovereignty that give meaning to our lives as well as to our theories are socially constructed, not just "out there" as permanent reality. Feminist constructivists add that the language and imageries of war as a central instrument of world politics have been heavily influenced by gender.

Constructivism is an approach rather than a theory, but it provides both a useful critique and an important supplement to the main theories of realism and liberalism. Though sometimes loosely formulated and lacking in predictive power, constructivist approaches remind us of what the two main theories often miss. As we shall see in the next chapter, it is important to look beyond the instrumental rationality of pursuing current goals and to ask how changing identities and interests can sometimes lead to subtle shifts in states' policies, and sometimes to profound changes in international affairs. Constructivists help us to understand how preferences are formed and knowledge is generated prior to the exercise of instrumental rationality. In that sense, they complement rather than oppose the two main theories. We will illustrate the questions of understanding long-term change in the next chapter and return to it in the final chapter. Suffice it to say for now that when I was trying to understand international politics and help formulate American foreign policies as an assistant secretary in Washington, I found myself borrowing elements from all three types of thinking: realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

### Building Blocks

*Actors, goals, and instruments* are three concepts that are basic to theorizing about international politics, but each is changing. In the traditional realist view of international politics, the only significant "actors" are the states, and only the big states really matter. But this is changing. The number of states has grown enormously in the postwar period: In 1945 there were about 50 states in the world; by 1998 there were 185 members of the United Nations, with more to come. More important than the number of states is the rise of *nonstate actors*. For example, large multinational corporations straddle international borders and sometimes command more economic resources than many nation-states do. At least 12 transnational corporations have annual sales that are larger than the gross national product (GNP) of more than half of the states in the world. The sales of a company such as Shell, IBM, or

General Motors are larger than the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries such as Hungary, Ecuador, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. While these multinational corporations lack some types of power such as military force, they are very relevant to a country's economic goals. In terms of the economy, IBM is more important to Belgium than is Burundi, a former Belgian colony.

A picture of the Middle East without the warring states and the outside powers would be downright silly, but it would also be woefully inadequate if it did not include a variety of nonstate actors. Multinational oil companies such as Shell, British-Petroleum, and Mobil are one type of nonstate actors, but there are others. There are large intergovernmental institutions such as the United Nations, and smaller ones such as the Arab League, and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). There are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the Red Cross and Amnesty International. There are also a variety of transnational ethnic groups, such as the Kurds who live in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq, or the Armenians scattered throughout the Middle East and the Caucasus. Guerrilla movements, drug cartels, and mafia organizations transcend national borders and often divide their resources among several states. International religious movements, particularly political Islam in the Middle East and North Africa, add a further dimension to the range of possible nonstate actors.

The question is not whether the state or the nonstate groups are more important—usually the states are—but how new complex coalitions affect the politics of a region in a way that the traditional realist view fails to disclose. States are the major actors in current international politics, but they do not have the stage to themselves.

Second, what about goals? Traditionally the dominant goal of states in an anarchic system is military security. Countries today obviously care about their military security, but they often care as much or more about their economic wealth, about social issues such as drug traffic or the spread of AIDS, or ecological changes. Moreover, as threats change, the definition of security changes; military security is not the only goal that states pursue. Looking at the relationship between the United States and Canada, where the prospects of war are exceedingly slim, a Canadian diplomat once said his fear was not that the United States would march into Canada and capture Toronto again as it did in 1813, but that Toronto would be programmed out of relevance by a computer in Texas—a rather different dilemma than the traditional one of states in an anarchic system. Economic strength has not replaced military security (as Kuwait discovered when Iraq invaded in August 1990), but the agenda of international politics has become more complex as states pursue a wider range of goals.

Third, the instruments of international politics are changing. The traditional view is that military force is the instrument that really matters. Describing the world before 1914, the British historian A. J. P. Taylor defined a great power as one able to prevail in war. States obviously use military force today, but over the past half century there have been changes in its role. Many states, particularly large ones, find it more costly to use military force to achieve their goals than was true in earlier times. As Professor Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard University has put it, the link between military strength and positive achievement has been loosened.

### ESTIMATED GDP OF SELECT COUNTRIES (IN US \$)

United States	7.61 trillion
China	3.29 trillion
Japan	2.85 trillion
Germany	1.70 trillion
India	1.54 trillion
Russia	776 billion
Vietnam	108.7 billion
Syria	98.3 billion
Guatemala	39.0 billion
Jamaica	8.4 billion
Albania	4.4 billion

Source: CIA World Factbook, 1997

### SELECT SALES OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (IN US \$)

General Motors (US)	168.4 billion
Mitsubishi (Japan)	140.2 billion
Royal Dutch/Shell (UK/Neth.)	128.2 billion
Toyota Motor Corp. (Japan)	108.7 billion
IBM (US)	75.9 billion
Daimler-Benz (Ger.)	71.6 billion
Siemens AG (Ger.)	63.7 billion
Phillip Morris (US)	54.6 billion
Unilever (UK/Neth.)	52.1 billion
Nestlé Ltd. (Switz.)	48.9 billion
Elf Aquitaine (Fr.)	46.8 billion
PepsiCo (US)	31.6 billion

Source: "The Fortune Global 500," in Hoover's Handbook of World Business 1998

What are the reasons? One is that the ultimate means of military force, nuclear weapons, are hopelessly muscle-bound. Although they have numbered more than 50,000, nuclear weapons have not been used in war since 1945. The disproportion between the vast devastation that nuclear weapons can inflict and any reasonable political goals has made leaders understandably loath to employ them. So the ultimate form of military force is for all practical purposes too costly for national leaders to use in war.

Even conventional force has become more costly when it is used to rule nationally awakened populations. In the nineteenth century, European countries

conquered other parts of the globe by fielding a handful of soldiers armed with modern weapons and then administered their colonial possessions with relatively modest garrisons. But in an age of socially mobilized populations, it is difficult to rule an occupied country whose people have become nationalistically self-aware. Americans found this out in Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s; the Soviets discovered it in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Vietnam and Afghanistan had not become more powerful than the nuclear superpowers, but trying to rule those nationalistically awakened populations was too expensive for either the United States or the Soviet Union.

A third change in the role of force relates to internal constraints. Over time there has been a growing ethic of antimilitarism, particularly in democracies. Such views do not prevent the use of force, but they make it a politically risky choice for leaders, particularly when its use is large or prolonged. Force is not obsolete, but it is more costly and more difficult to use than in the past.

Finally, a number of issues simply do not lend themselves to forceful solutions. Take, for example, economic relations between the United States and Japan. In 1853, Commodore Perry sailed into a Japanese port and threatened bombardment unless Japan opened its ports to trade. This would not be a very useful or politically acceptable way to solve current United States–Japan trade disputes. Thus while force remains a critical instrument in international politics, it is not the only instrument. The use of economic interdependence, communication, international institutions, and transnational actors sometimes plays a larger role than force. Military force is not obsolete as an instrument, but changes in its cost and effectiveness make today's international politics more complex.

Nonetheless, the basic game of security goes on. Five years before the Gulf War, a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute study showed there were 36 wars that killed between 3 and 5 million people. Some political scientists argue that the balance of power is usually determined by a leading, or hegemonic state—such as Spain in the sixteenth century, France under Louis XIV, Britain in most of the nineteenth century, and the United States in most of the twentieth century. Eventually the top country will be challenged, and this challenge will lead to the kind of vast conflagrations we call hegemonic, or world wars. After world wars, a new treaty

### THE RISE OF CHINA

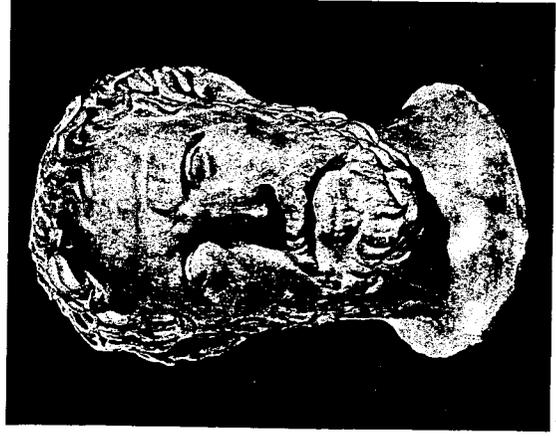
Ever since Thucydides's explanation of the Peloponnesian War, historians have known that the rise of a new power has been attended by uncertainty and anxieties. Often, though not always, violent conflict has followed. The rise in the economic and military power of China, the world's most populous country, will be a central question for Asia and for American foreign policy at the beginning of a new century. Explaining why democratic Athens decided to break a treaty that led to war, Thucydides pointed to the power of expectations of inevitable conflict. "The general belief was that whatever happened, war with the Peloponnese was bound to come," he wrote. Belief in the inevitability of conflict with China could have similar self-fulfilling effects.<sup>4</sup>

—"Clinton in China," *The Economist*, June 27, 1998

sets the new framework of order: the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the United Nations system after 1945. If nothing basic has changed in international politics since the struggle for supremacy between Athens and Sparta, will there be a new challenge leading to another world war, or is the cycle of hegemonic war over? Has nuclear technology made world war too devastating? Has economic interdependence made it too costly? Has global society made it socially and morally unthinkable? We have to hope so, because the next hegemonic war would probably be the last. But first, it is important to understand the case for continuity.

### THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Thucydides is the father of realism, the theory most people use when thinking about international politics even when they do not know they are using a theory. Theories are the indispensable tools we use to organize facts. The economist John Maynard Keynes once observed that practical men of affairs who think they do not have any use for theory are probably prisoners of some unknown scribbler whose name they have long forgotten. Many of today's statesmen and editorial writers use realist theories even if they have not heard of Thucydides. Robert Gilpin, a realist, asserted, "In honesty, one must inquire whether or not twentieth-century students of international relations know anything that Thucydides and his fifth-century B.C. compatriots did not know about the behavior of states." He then answered his own query: "Ultimately international politics can still be characterized as it was by Thucydides."<sup>5</sup> Gilpin's proposition is debatable, but to debate it, we must know Thucydides's argument. And what better introduction to realist theory is there than one of history's



Bust of Thucydides

justice. Realists (who include both moral skeptics and some state moralists) reply that the danger in the cosmopolitan's approach is it may lead to enormous disorder. Taken literally, efforts at radical redistribution are likely to lead to violent conflict because people do not give up their wealth easily. A more limited cosmopolitan argument rests on the fact that people often have multiple loyalties—to families, friends, neighborhoods, nations, perhaps to some transnational religious groups, and to the concept of common humanity. Most people are moved by pictures of starving Sudanese children or Kosovo refugees, for there is some common community beyond the national level, albeit a weaker one. We are all humans. Cosmopolitans remind us there are distributive dimensions to international relations where morality matters as much in peace as in war. Policies can be designed to assist basic human needs and basic human rights without destroying order.

Of the approaches to international morality, the skeptic makes a valid point about order being necessary for justice but misses the trade-offs between order and justice. The state moralist who sees a society of states with rules against intervention illustrates an institutional approach to order but does not provide enough answers about when some interventions may be justified. Finally, the cosmopolitan who focuses on a society of individuals has a profound insight about common humanity but runs the risk of fomenting enormous disorder. Most people develop a hybrid position; labels are less important than the central point that there are trade-offs among these approaches.

Because of the differences between domestic and international politics, morality is harder to apply in international politics. But just because there is a plurality of principles, it does not follow there are no principles at all. How far should we go in applying morality to international politics? The answer is to be careful, for when moral judgments determine everything, morality can lead to a sense of outrage, and outrage can lead to heightened risk. After all, there are no moral questions among the incinerated. But we cannot honestly ignore morality in international politics. Each person must study events and make his or her own decisions about judgments and trade-offs. The enduring logic of international conflict does not remove the responsibility for moral choices, although it does require an understanding of the special setting that makes those choices difficult.

While the specific moral and security dilemmas of the Peloponnesian War are unique, many of the issues recur over history. As we trace the evolution of international relations, we will see again and again the tension between realism and liberalism, between skeptics and cosmopolitans, between an anarchic system of states and international organizations. We will revisit the Prisoner's Dilemma and continue to grapple with the ethical conundrums of war. We will see how different actors on the world stage have approached the crises of their time and how their goals and instruments vary. As mentioned at the outset, certain variables that characterize international politics today simply did not exist in Thucydides's day. Not only were there no nuclear weapons, there were no United Nations, no transnational corporations, no cartels. The study of international conflict is an inexact science combining history and theory. In weaving our way through the theories and their examples, we try to keep in mind both what has changed and what has remained constant so that we may better understand our past and our present and better navigate the unknown shoals of the future.

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#### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What role should ethical considerations play in the conduct of international relations? What role do they play? Can we speak meaningfully about moral duties to other nations or their populations?
2. Is there a difference between moral obligations in the realms of domestic politics and international politics? On the basis of the Melian dialogue, did the Athenians act ethically? Did the Melian elders?

3. What is realism? How does it differ from the liberal view of world politics?
4. What does Thucydides pinpoint as the main causes of the Peloponnesian war? Which were immediate? Which were underlying?
5. What sort of theory of international relations is implicit in Thucydides's account of the war?
6. Was the Peloponnesian War inevitable? If so, why and when? If not, how and when might it have been prevented?

#### CHRONOLOGY: PELOPONNESIAN WARS

490 B.C.	First Persian War
480 B.C.	Second Persian War
478 B.C.	Spartans abdicate leadership
476 B.C.	Formation of Delian League and Athenian Empire
464 B.C.	Helot revolt in Sparta
461 B.C.	Outbreak of first Peloponnesian War
445 B.C.	Thirty-Year Truce
445-434 B.C.	Ten years of peace
434 B.C.	Epidamnus and Corcyra conflicts
433 B.C.	Athens intervenes in Potidaea
432 B.C.	Spartan Assembly debates war
431 B.C.	Outbreak of second Peloponnesian War
430 B.C.	Pericles's Funeral Oration
416 B.C.	Melian dialogue
413 B.C.	Athens's defeat in Sicily
411 B.C.	Oligarchs revolt in Athens
404 B.C.	Athens defeated, forced to pull down walls

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Viewing

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**Title:** ACSC lecture, "Coordinating the Instruments of Power: The Use of Military Force," by Mr. Budd Jones (22 minutes) (Provided on Course CD)

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Reading

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**Title:** Dr. Joe Strange, "Capital "W" War: A Case for Strategic Principles of War (Because Wars Are Conflicts of Societies, Not Tactical Exercises Writ Large)," *Perspectives on Warfighting*, No. 6 (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 1998), pages 15 to 22 (7 pages)

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# PERSPECTIVES ON WARFIGHTING

Number Six

## CAPITAL "W" WAR

A Case for *Strategic Principles of War*  
(Because Wars Are Conflicts of Societies, Not Tactical Exercises Writ Large)

by

Dr. Joe Strange

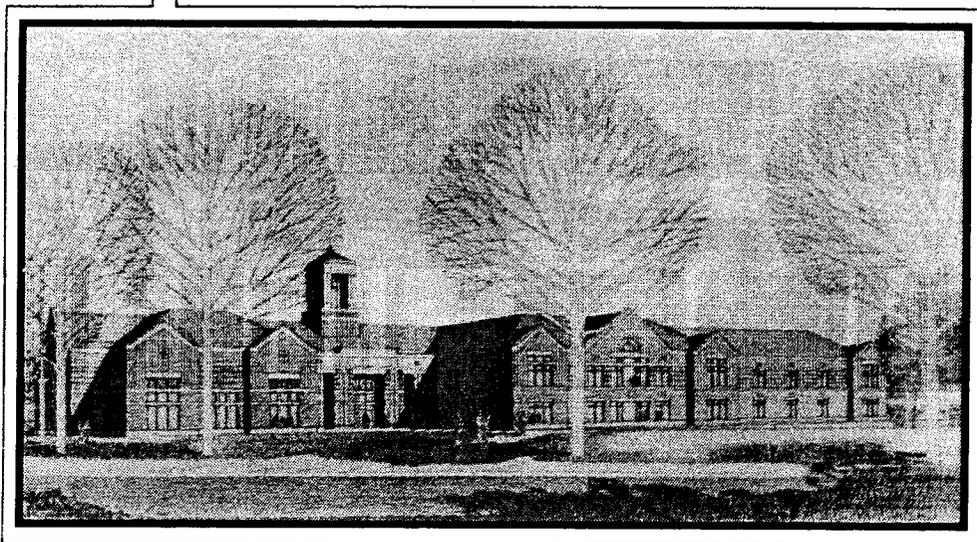
Marine Corps War College

with a chapter on

**Non-Traditional Military Missions**

by

General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC



enemy battle fleets may still be dangerous and may still be a CG, albeit one with a restricted range and/or battle loiter time.

Only vulnerabilities related to centers of gravity are "critical" vulnerabilities. If something is vulnerable but irrelevant to the war effort, then so what? We can list it as a vulnerability, but not as a "critical vulnerability."

Critical vulnerabilities are not always necessary to neutralize or defeat a center of gravity. Sometimes the job can or must be done simply through sheer brute strength – a bigger or more durable club breaking a smaller, weaker club (or shield). This is attrition warfare. We should avoid it when possible, but should be prepared to wage it when necessary.

Maneuver warfare. Maneuver warfare takes advantage of enemy critical vulnerabilities by using advantages of superior technology, mobility, command and control capabilities (quicker decision making cycle inside the enemy's "OODA loop"), training, or *esprit de corps*. The practical object of maneuver warfare is not normally to 'rope-a-dope' or 'razzle-dazzle' a credible enemy into surrendering without a fight; it is to place superior, overwhelming firepower against key enemy units or assets at critical locations, thereby defeating an enemy in detail.

## KNOW AND RESPECT THE LIMITS OF MILITARY POWER

*To know what one can do on the basis of the available means, and to do it; to know what one cannot do, and refrain from trying; and to distinguish between the two – that, after all, is the very definition of military greatness, as it is of human genius in general.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Van Creveld, Command in War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p 102.

**'Hearts and minds,' and moral limits of military power.** In some conflicts and scenarios there are **political and psychological limits** to what can be done/accomplished with military power. In the early years of the Peninsular War, 1808-1814, Napoleon's army easily defeated one Spanish army after the next. But he could not extinguish the flame of Spanish nationalism and pride. The result was six years of bitter guerrilla warfare against thousands of Spanish partisans, in which the French lost 50,000 dead each year! Napoleon referred to the experience as his "Spanish Ulcer." He blundered badly because he did not know his enemy (the Spanish nation) and thereby badly misjudged the nature of the conflict.

Vietnam provides another controversial example as debate still rages regarding the employment of superior American firepower to secure the safety and loyalty – hearts and minds – of the South Vietnamese population to a corrupt, alien Saigon government.

The Israeli invasion and military occupation of Lebanon, 1982-84, is another classic example of limits (or limitations) of military power to achieve long-term political and psychological objectives.

### **Legitimacy and the Credible Capacity to Coerce.**

Legitimacy and the credible capacity to coerce are two concepts which share an inverse relationship.<sup>1</sup> The greater the legitimacy of an act, **as defined and perceived by the target** of an act of coercion, the lesser the amount of force that will be required to make that act of coercion effective. This is nothing more than common sense. During the Peninsular War, 1808-1814, for example, Napoleon's (and his brother Joseph's) legitimacy factor was close to zero among most of the Spanish and Portuguese population. The Spanish and Portuguese will to resist was high, and Napoleon's armies suffered dreadful losses for the duration of the conflict. A French garrison numbering 300,000 troops was not

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<sup>1</sup> Larry E. Cable, "Reinventing the Round Wheel: Insurgency, Counter-insurgency, and Peacekeeping Post Cold War" (Undated Manuscript), p 2.

large enough to serve as a credible instrument of coercion, despite widespread brutality by both sides. The Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 is a far different example. The British promised national independence early on, consulted with and worked with native political leaders, applied minimum force against carefully selected (i.e., legitimate) targets, and orchestrated social and economic reforms. These British political and military acts were perceived to be legitimate by the vast majority of the ethnic Malayan and Chinese population; thereby, the combined British and Malayan military, paramilitary and police forces (which totaled relatively modest numbers compared to contemporary conflicts in Indochina and Algeria) functioned as credible and highly effective instruments of coercion among the dwindling number of enemy guerrillas (or Communist Terrorists, as they were branded by the government).

**Physical limits of military power.** There are several dimensions to the physical limits of military power:

(1) Don't send a boy to do a man's job. A division, for example, should not be given a task requiring a corps, etc.

(2) Military forces/units require logistical support and sustainment and cannot effectively or safely exceed their 'operational reach.' The defeat of Japan in WWII was accomplished in part by an island-hopping campaign designed to seize a series of stepping-stone logistical and support bases. Even in early 1944, the U.S. Pacific Fleet simply could not sail from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo and accomplish anything meaningful without support from intermittent bases. **British and American armies breaking out of Normandy in August 1944 raced across France until they ran out of gas – the Red Ball Express could stretch only so far.**

(3) More than one famous American general remarked, "Don't fight a land war in Asia." Entire armies can get sucked into vast countrysides without achieving anything decisive.

British Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery once remarked that "Military history teaches us not to try to walk to Moscow."

Napoleon's Grand Armée of 600,000 men could not defeat Russia in 1812 (despite having captured Moscow). Hitler failed in World War II. Similarly, a Japanese army of two million men could not defeat China in an eight-year war from 1937 to 1945.

### **Strategic and Operational Culminating Points.**

Strategic and operational culminating points are reached for reasons pertaining to terrain (bumped into the Alps or a 500-mile-wide desert), exhaustion, unfavorable combat power ratios, and logistics. When units or armies must stop to regroup or for logistic support structures to move forward, they are said to have reached a culminating point – i.e., a particular operation or perhaps a phase of a campaign has "culminated." Most operational culminating points are temporary. Combat and progress are resumed when reorganization, refitting, rest, and the forward movement of logistic bases, air bases, etc., have been completed.

However, some culminating points are strategic in nature. In World War II the Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces) defeated France quickly in 1940 but reached a huge culminating point at the English Channel. Even had the Luftwaffe gained air superiority over southern England, the planned German invasion (Sea Lion) probably would still have ended in disaster – i.e., by attempting to execute Sea Lion in 1940 with inadequate and untrained resources, the Wehrmacht (especially the Army and Navy) would have exceeded a strategic culminating point, with serious adverse material and psychological consequences.

In June 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. Prior planning and war games indicated that the German Army and its panzer spearheads would rapidly advance 400 miles to Smolensk before having to halt for logistics and regrouping – the culminating point of the first phase of the BARBAROSSA campaign plan. The Germans reached the Smolensk culminating point in three weeks. Supplies, logistics support structure, and Luftwaffe air bases moved forward. Panzer spearheads licked their wounds, repaired

tanks and overhauled worn engines. Meanwhile Hitler dithered and diverted forces to objectives south and north of the great advance in the center. As the time approached to resume the main drive to Moscow 200 miles away – and with winter looming on the horizon – logistics requirements compelled the German High Command to choose between bringing up either (1) supplies to drive to Moscow (gas, ammo, etc.) or (2) clothing, lubrications, and other materials required to prepare the Army for winter.

The choice was between the drive to Moscow or winter quarters. The former risked an immediate 200-mile extension of already tenuous supply lines and exposure of the Army to winter elements, in a gamble that the capture of Moscow and destruction of its defending armies (if achieved) would end the war with complete German victory. But the latter would mean failure of BARBAROSSA in 1941 and the specter of a second great effort in 1942 to finish a job left half done. The Army (not Hitler) chose Moscow, and thereby (in the next few weeks) dangerously exceeded its operational culminating point. Weakened advance elements were attacked by fresh Soviet reserves transferred from Siberia. The harsh winter caught the Wehrmacht unprepared. The German Army suffered 900,000 casualties during the winter of 41-42, mostly from frostbite and freezing to death. No succeeding German summer offensive was nearly as strong or as threatening to Soviet Russia as was Operation BARBAROSSA. Although the German Army still retained an offensive punch right through to the end of the Battle of Kursk in July 1943, it can be argued that – barring some really big Soviet military blunder (which Stalin and STAVKA, the Red Army High Command, did not make) – in the grand scheme of relative military and national power the Wehrmacht and Hitler's Germany were on the downhill slide after early December 1941.

### **Culminating Points Short of Victory.**

When the maximum war effort, progress, and/or success of a country/coalition (or the maximum effort that it is willing to make)

reaches its peak short of victory, that country or coalition has reached a "culminating point short of victory." Unlike normal strategic or operational culminating points, this type usually is permanent and occurs only once (unless the opponent in turn makes a monumental strategic blunder). Exceeding (or violating) a culminating point short of victory not only jeopardizes the violator's ability to defend what he has already won up to that point, it also places at risk his ability to defend territory and assets that belonged to him *at the start* of the war. History is full of leaders and strategists who approached and exceeded their culminating point of victory. Comforted by false assumptions and miscalculations, and deceived by vivid and compelling illusions of further progress and even final victory, they ordered their armies onward – to disaster and ultimate (and sometimes total) defeat. Consider the following two examples:

(1) Returning to Hitler. After defeating France in 1940, Hitler could have stopped, declared the war over, and left the British to fret and contemplate their strategic weaknesses. Instead, he committed his prestige and his Luftwaffe to a battle for air superiority over southern England during which it operated under serious handicaps. Even had the Luftwaffe won that battle, an amphibious invasion would probably still have been a disaster. A year later Hitler compounded this error by invading the Soviet Union. Here, he could have stopped at Smolensk, gone into winter quarters, and kept his options open for 1942. On 11 December 1941 – four days after Pearl Harbor – Hitler declared war on the United States. In the summer of 1942 he ordered his army onward to Stalingrad, where he lost a quarter of a million of his best troops. This set in motion a train of events leading to the ultimate defeat of Nazi-Germany by an overwhelming Anglo-American-Soviet coalition and the Red Army's capture of Berlin in 1945. (Your assessment of precisely when Hitler exceeded his culminating point of victory will, of course, depend on your assessment of Nazi-Germany's capabilities relative to her opponents at given points along the 1940-1942 time continuum.) This is a classic example of the draconian risks and consequences associated with

violating a culminating point of victory. Had Hitler reached, but not exceeded, his culminating point, he could have made it vastly more difficult for the Allies to defeat him. In that case, the war in Europe might have settled into a stalemate or ended in a negotiated settlement.

(2) General MacArthur in the Korean War. Following the landing at Inchon in mid-September 1950, UN forces drove north through Pyongyang and on toward the Yalu River and the border of Communist China. Ignoring Chinese warnings and the approach of winter, General MacArthur continued the UN offensive, which by 24 October had reached the narrow neck of the peninsula – roughly a line from Sinanju (on the west coast) part way up the Ch'ongch'on River thence due east to the area Hamhung-Hungnam (on the east coast above Wonsan). Meanwhile, 200,000 (ultimately to grow to 300,000) Chinese troops had sneaked across the Yalu (U.S. intelligence believed 100,000 maximum). On 25 October the Chinese struck advanced elements of the Eighth Army, then quietly pulled back on 1 November. On 6 November General Walker issued an Eighth Army operational plan for General MacArthur's 'Home by Christmas' offensive. On 24 November Eighth Army and X Corps (in the east) advanced. Soon several U.S. and South Korean divisions were at the far end of flimsy LOCs, dangerously isolated, and exposed to counterattack by the greatly underestimated and underrespected Chinese enemy. The results are well known and legendary: the rapid (but sometimes heroic) retreat of Eighth Army and X Corps back down the peninsula below Seoul; **two more frustrating years of see-saw attrition warfare and drawn-out negotiations at Panmunjom; and the erosion of U.S. public support for a 'bad' war which ended in an armistice along a line close to the original North-South Korean border.**

MacArthur's renewed offensive on 24 November 1950 exceeded an operational culminating point created by climate, terrain, logistics, and unfriendly combat power ratios. In the long run this also became a culminating point short of victory. For better or worse the Truman Administration – with the support of

the JCS – decided not to commit forces and weapons in Korea to the degree generally believed necessary to win all-out victory against the Chinese. In retrospect at least, MacArthur's 24 November offensive put at risk, and then lost, the considerable gains already won. Greater awareness and respect for the Chinese Communist Army might have led to a decision to stop at the narrow neck with the following advantages/considerations:

- UN forces in prepared, defensive positions with secure LOCs;
- UN signal (and statement) to Communist China that it will not advance to Yalu River – thus recognizing the sensibilities of a large nation (large 'Asian' nation) and offering it a face-saving gesture;
- De facto ending the war short of unconditional total defeat and occupation of all of North Korea, but in possession of all of the Korean peninsula worth occupying and with the North Korean 'aggressor' state severely punished;
- UN proclamation of elections leading to the unification of the whole of the UN-controlled portion of the peninsula;
- What remained of North Korea would be little threat to the newly enlarged South Korea, and would serve as a useful buffer between the latter and Communist China.

The above scenario would have represented a spectacular military and political success for the United States and the United Nations. That it failed to materialize can be explained by mistakes and miscalculations regarding principles of capital W war, the greatest of which was disrespect for and disregard of a potential Asian enemy – Pearl Harbor déjà vu all over again.



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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Reading

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**Title:** Richard Betts, "The Trouble With Strategy: Bridging Policy and Operations." *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001-02, pp. 23 to 30 (8 pages)

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Atlee, Truman, and Stalin at Potsdam.

U.S. Army

# The Trouble with Strategy: Bridging Policy and Operations

By RICHARD K. BETTS

**N**o subject generates more concern within the military than strategy. Yet policymakers are often indifferent to it. Some find the demand for more and better strategy to be naive resistance to inevitable ad hocery. Why is the subject never settled enough to allow leaders to get on with other business? Why do senior officers insist on clear strategy more than do civilian officials?

**Richard K. Betts is the Leo A. Shifrin professor of war and peace studies at Columbia University and the editor of *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*.**

## Everything in War

What Clausewitz said of friction in war applies to strategy: it “is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.”<sup>1</sup> The trouble begins with the term *strategy* which is a buzzword that covers a multitude of sins. Many were content with a limited conception in earlier times—planning and directing large-scale military operations. Clausewitz, however, injected politics when he defined strategy as “the use of an engagement for the purpose of the war.”<sup>2</sup> This wedge properly pushes the concept to higher levels. But some usages of the term become so broad that they are synonymous with foreign policy.

Military professionals tend to handle the ambiguity by differentiating between national and military strategy. The first is supposed to drive the second. This division is reasonable in some ways but on balance creates as many problems as it solves. It evokes a fundamental tension in civil-military relations. What is called national strategy in the Pentagon and grand strategy by many historians and theorists so overlaps policy that it is hard to distinguish them. The difference between ends and means becomes muddled from the outset. To keep concepts clear, it is less useful to think of three realms—policy, strategy, and operations—than to think of strategy as the *bridge* between policy and operations. A bridge allows elements on either side to move to the other. As a plan that bridges the realms of policy and operations, effective strategy must integrate political and military criteria rather than separate them.

Resistance to this notion has recurred frequently, especially among military leaders who seek to keep policy and operations in separate compartments. The objection is exemplified by Helmuth von Moltke (“the Elder”): “Strategy serves politics best by working for its aim, but by retaining maximum independence in the achievement of this aim. Politics should not interfere in operations.”<sup>3</sup> This is a common view among those in uniform, but it puts strategy on a slippery slope and tends to shove it downward, subordinating it to operations—the pathology that made Moltke’s successors complicit in the destruction of their own country as well as much of Europe as they piled up tactically brilliant successes at the price of strategic catastrophe in two world wars. When the integration of policy and operations is not resisted in principle, it is often resisted in practice, with the ends of the bridge—policymakers and military operators—each believing that strategic integration means simply doing it their way.

Civilian leaders rarely give conscious thought to whether objectives and operations should be integrated or separated. Some are happy to accept the view prevalent in the military that political decision and military implementation should be discreet functions, sequential and independent, so leaders can pronounce what they wish and unleash soldiers to do as they see fit. This is consistent with the Moltke view. Such an approach eases civil-military friction and sometimes works, but it risks rude surprises. Others believe in integrating political and military decisions but without grasping the ramifications for their own responsibilities. Political leaders who do justice to the view of strategy as integration must understand a fair amount about

military operations in order to judge what demands can reasonably be made. Hardly any politicians have such knowledge or the time and willingness to acquire it.

### The Body Politic

Military and civilian leaders have different expertise and duties. Professional soldiers often see politicians as irresponsible when policymakers prescribe strategy in a way that meddles in operational plans. The complexity of modern military operations evokes an engineering mentality—a compulsion to find formulas and axioms so that strategy can be carried out, in a sense, by the numbers. This is a natural urge in a business where mistakes from playing fast and loose can get people killed.

Formulaic strategy, however, is effectively antipolitical. It aims to nail things down and close options, while politics—especially in a democracy—strives to keep options open and avoid constraints. Politicians seek ways to keep divergent interests satisfied, which means avoiding difficult commitments until absolutely necessary and being ready to shift course quickly. Thus at its core, the notion of strategy by formula, strategy set in advance and buffered against demands to change course, is as naive as uninformed politicians acting as armchair generals.

Keeping national and military strategy in discreet compartments can become an excuse to avoid making real strategy. Such a split makes one part much the same as policy and the other much like doctrine and operations. This leaves open the gap between policy objectives and military plans—the gap that should be bridged by strategic calculation for exactly *how* to use force to produce a desired political result rather than just a military result.

This confusion is common. A military strategy that efficiently destroys targets is successful in operational terms but a failure in policy if it does not compel an enemy government. Or when professionals speak of a “strategy/force structure mismatch,” they usually mean a gap between forces and preferred operational plans rather than between capabilities and the *purpose* of a war. Relabeling policy and operations as national strategy and military strategy, and dividing responsibility, can leave the strategic gap unfilled while pretending something is there.

For a superpower like the United States, a strategic gap sets up the conditions for the lament that we won the battles but lost the war. The logical hierarchy of policy and operations all too easily becomes inverted when integrated strategy is absent or fails to provide a plan that works as its planners expect. Operations come to drive policy instead of serving policy. This inversion has by no



Pearl Harbor.

U.S. Navy

means been unusual. Historian Russell Weigley concludes that it has become typical, writing darkly that war has ceased to be the extension of politics and that it creates “its own momentum” and undermines the purposes for which it is launched, and that instead of the servant of politics, war has become master.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no easy formula for turning military action into political outputs. The purpose of war is to impose one’s will on an enemy. It is about who rules when the shooting stops. This is closely related to victory in military operations but is not the same. Unless one completely conquers an enemy’s territory, extinguishes its government, and rules directly as an occupying power, it is not a straightforward matter to translate operational success into desired enemy behavior in the postwar world.

### From a Different View

Despite the prevalent tendency of war to take on a life of its own, most still think of the classic model of a hierarchy of functions which proceed in sequence from one level to the next, from prewar planning, through wartime execution, to postwar activities (with policy governing strategic plans) which in turn drive operations and tactics, which win battles and campaigns—and finally produce victory and the policy objective. This standard conception might be called the linear model of war. The alternative is a circular model, where events in each phase generate feedback, altering the other functions. Results and unforeseen requirements of operations alter strategy, and changed requirements of strategy reshape political objectives. The circular model has more in common with chaos theory

than with the engineering orientation reflected in the linear model.

Practitioners usually think of strategy in terms of the linear model, but actual war usually resembles the circular. At its worst, straight-line thinking puts the operational cart before the political horse. Some divergence from the linear model is inevitable and sometimes has positive effects by allowing sensible adaptation to circumstances. In general, however, curtailing the degree to which the circular model takes over—limiting the extent to which military requirements override or deform initial political aims—is the measure of good strategy.

The U.S. Constitution is fundamentally anti-strategic. Strategy implies coherence, consistency, and direct translation of preferences and calculations into plans and action: decide what you want, figure out how to get it, and do it. The Constitution, in contrast, fosters competition and clashes among preferences, estimates, and plans. Through the separation of executive and legislative powers, it provides a structure of government that blocks any center of authority from imposing a coherent plan if the others disagree. This in turn encourages compromises that fudge choices and move in different directions at once.

The Constitution also ensures that political leadership will turn over frequently on the executive level while the agencies and services below remain in place. Bureaucracies have both longer time horizons and narrower conceptions of interest than Presidents, making them more oriented to pondering a limited range of concerns and committing to firm plans, while political leaders are more general in how they think and more ad hoc in how they operate.

**the military sees the political confusion of war not as the essence of democratic government but as an aberration to orderly ways of doing business**

All of this improves control in the sense of checks and balances, but not in consistency of action. It fosters the circular model once war is underway. Civilian politicians tend to operate instinctively by the circular model. They are accustomed to managing competing constituencies, building consensus, stitching together contradictory goals, and reacting to demands that emerge as policies unfold. Creative inconsistency is their stock in trade and they are adept at forging complicated alliances. They are not skilled at translating aims into outputs. That is why gaps between decision and implementation are chronic not just in the realm of defense policy but throughout the business of government.

Military leaders who rise to the top in Washington inevitably get exposed to these realities and resign themselves to them. But they do not like them because political chaos is antithetical to the military ethos, the engineering instinct, and the hierarchical essence of military organization. Unlike politicians, the military sees the political confusion of war not as the essence of democratic government but as an aberration that should be corrected so government can get back to orderly ways of doing business. It is temperamentally natural for professionals to see hierarchy, clarity, simplicity, precision, and sequencing—the things that make operational planning and execution work in their business—as the way things should work in the national security system as a whole.

### Between Discipline and Instinct

In many respects a rational sequence is possible. The National Security Council (NSC) was originally designed to address these problems and enforce more order on the process of creating defense policy. Even this body, however, reflects the reality that political leaders who focus on objectives and military leaders who focus on operations pull strategy in two directions.

The council as we know it today is quite different and is in some respects opposed to what it was meant to be. In James Forrestal's original conception, it was designed to discipline the President by forcing him to systematically consider the views of the principal departments instead of running around in an ad hoc manner giving whatever orders struck his fancy. The main point of NSC was to provide a forum for strategic deliberation to inform the President and bring together the disparate strands of bureaucracy and expertise in State, Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the intelligence community.

The National Security Council itself still does this but it is not actually what we have come to think of as its role. The body technically consists of four members: the President, Vice President, and Secretaries of State and Defense (with the Director of Central Intelligence and Chairman as statutory advisers). This unit is hardly what is most significant anymore. Rather, many think the acronym NSC is not the council but its staff and, above all, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. These barely existed until more than a decade after the National Security Act was passed. They make the council in the minds of most not a forum to constrain the President but rather his arm to enforce his will on the departments.

Disparities have been more obvious at some times than others. They were most evident in the administration of Richard Nixon, when the President ignored the Department of State and ran foreign policy out of the White House, using



Persian Gulf leadership.

Henry Kissinger as his point man. Such strong direction from the top is certainly conducive to the linear model of strategy, and that vision in the Nixon period saw dramatic breakthroughs in détente with Moscow and rapprochement with China that would probably never have developed as decisively or quickly if pursued through the normal process of political pulling and hauling and second guessing.

Strong direction from the top did not produce serious civil-military tensions because the President's tight control of diplomatic initiatives was not paralleled by similar direction of the military. The White House and the Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, afforded the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the services great latitude in charting their own courses within the general guidelines of foreign policy and budget ceilings. This followed the civil-military friction of the 1960s, when Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, along with their Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, controlled military operations to a degree that the Navy and Air Force considered outrageous interference.

Under both the Democrats in the 1960s and the Republicans in the 1970s, the policymaking system aimed at hierarchy and sequence, imposing strong direction from the top. The difference was that in the second case the White House did not work as hard at integrating military operations with policy direction, allowing more of a division of labor and separation of the two phases. But in the Nixon period, with few exceptions, the crucial strategic breakthroughs were in basic foreign policy. They did not involve military operations.

The White House acted differently when it came to strategic integration between foreign policy and diplomatic operations. In that realm Nixon and Kissinger showed even more disrespect for professional diplomatic expertise and prerogatives than Kennedy, Johnson, and McNamara had toward the military. The status of the Department of State was never more marginal than under William Rogers. Veteran diplomats saw the free-wheeling interference from the White House as

no less irresponsible than the military considered the picking of bombing targets by Johnson and McNamara. Gerard Smith, the U.S. representative to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, railed against Kissinger for engaging in secret back channel negotiations with Moscow that undercut the official delegation and, due to ignorance of certain technical details, nearly stumbled into an agreement that would have precluded the Minuteman III modernization program.<sup>5</sup>

The question is not just whether a classical model of sequential progression from policy to strategy to operations is practical. The point is that it is difficult to integrate policy and operations rather than separate them without having one side take over the whole show. Integration means blending two very different sets of concerns, orientations, and priorities, but officials at either end of the bridge are likely to see that as meaning the other side must accommodate. In short, defining strategy as the integration of policy and operations is a prescription for civil-military tension.

Friction can be avoided by accepting separation in the way Moltke advised—a division of labor in which policy or national strategy is set, then the military takes over, genuflects to the guidance, and focuses on the appropriate military strategy. This can work, especially when either civilian or military leadership is particularly gifted. But it raises the odds that the linear sequence of decision will yield to a circular quality of implementation because operational requirements are more likely to ramify politically in unanticipated ways.

### defining strategy as the integration of policy and operations is a prescription for civil-military tension

#### Balancing Act

What is a *good* example of strategymaking? The performance of the Bush administration in the Persian Gulf War comes closest if we include only the period *following* Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The full crisis combines evidence of both the best and the worst. Policy and strategy before the invasion were an abysmal failure. Bush made no serious attempt to deter Saddam Hussein from deciding to invade. If Ambassador April Glaspie's last meeting with Saddam was not a green light, it was barely a yellow one. Had the administration performed half as well in that phase, there might have been no war.

If we begin the assessment after August 1990 and assume that the objectives of Desert Storm were to expel Iraq from Kuwait and cripple Baghdad's ability to undertake aggression again, the Bush strategy worked effectively and efficiently. Iraq was routed at minimal cost to Washington,

and the United States and United Nations subjected it to unprecedented requirements for inspection and destruction of its weapons of mass destruction. American political and military leadership worked well together in integrating political aims and military requirements.

The administration did not make cavalier and inconsistent demands on the Joint Chiefs and U.S. Central Command, nor did it micro-manage operations; but neither did it give the military *carte blanche*. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney was as intrusive as McNamara, closely assessing operational plans and disciplining those in uniform who strayed from his view of proper behavior. He fired General Michael Dugan, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, for indiscreet public comments that represented far less challenge to civilian authority than the near insubordination of Admiral George Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations, during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Brent Scowcroft, was also instrumental in rejecting the initial straight up the middle plan of General Norman Schwarzkopf for attack into Kuwait. Although some criticized General Colin Powell for being too politicized, the close relationships he had in both directions of the chain of command facilitated communication, deliberation, and planning.

Many believed the dictator could not survive the crushing military defeat, but they were wrong. Yet it is reckless to flunk the Bush strategy on those grounds. A strategy that would have guaranteed the ouster of Saddam would have been far riskier. Its costs would have risen as the odds of success fell. American forces would have had to take Baghdad, which in turn would have dramatically raised the probability of overshooting the culminating point of victory. Instead of fewer than two hundred U.S. combat fatalities, an infinitesimal number for a war of that scale, vastly more would have been likely. The tentative and fragile political coalition of the United States and Arab nations would have frayed if not collapsed. And there is no guarantee that a victory that got rid of Saddam Hussein would not have created new and equally troublesome political and diplomatic problems in the region. Most importantly, had Saddam been pushed to the wall, he might have resorted to employing chemical and biological weapons.

#### Choices and Conundrums

There are two basic challenges in devising strategy. The first is how to use force to achieve the political objective—how to get from the operational side of the bridge to the policy side. The



Patrol in Kosovo.

55th Signal Company (Martin J. Cervantez)

second is how to do so at acceptable cost. The first, while daunting, is easier for a superpower than for most countries. The handy thing about having surplus power is that you can be careless and still get where you want to go. Efficiency and effectiveness are not the same.

Effectiveness, however, is not the only test of strategy. Clausewitz made that point when he wrote something seemingly obvious but often forgotten: “Since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds

the value of the political object, the object must be renounced and peace must follow.”<sup>6</sup>

The United States could in theory have pursued a strategy that would have won in Vietnam. It could have sent a million troops, invaded and occupied the North, imprisoned or killed the communist cadre in the North and the South and all who sympathized with them, and destroyed every uncooperative village to, as Tacitus put it, make a desert and call it peace. But such an *effective* strategy was never considered by any but a few fanatics because the price was unacceptable. As it was, American strategy worked as long as the United States was willing to stay at war; it just did not offer a way to peace without defeat.

In cases such as Kosovo, muddled policy obscures the line between a strategy’s success or failure. NATO obviously won the war against Serbia in some important senses, but at the price of compromising its objectives and boxing itself into a postwar occupation with no ready way out. The agreement that ended the war accepted Milosevic’s condition that Kosovo remain under Belgrade’s sovereignty. Combat was terminated by leaving NATO with three unpalatable choices: indefinite occupation of Kosovo; giving Kosovo independence, thus violating the peace agreement; or giving Kosovo back to Yugoslavia, betraying the Albanians for whom the war was fought in the first place. Should a military campaign that leaves this political result be deemed a strategic success?

### Guidelines

Recommendations for good strategymaking are offered more easily than they are carried out. Nevertheless, it is striking how rarely policymakers and commanders put their heads together on these points explicitly, let alone carefully. But if they can get at least that far, there are steps that might shave down the likelihood of failure.

*Estimate the culminating point of victory.* In Korea in 1950 the culminating point was probably the Inchon landing and restoration of South Korea up to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel, before the march to the Yalu and Chinese intervention. In Iraq in 1991 it was not far beyond where policymakers decided it was—although breakdowns in communication in the field and between the field and Washington prevented coalition forces from closing the gate and destroying the Republican Guard before the ceasefire.

*Determine an exit strategy.* This is not to be confused with an exit date. By what criteria will we know when the mission is accomplished, and how are operations designed to meet them? The most recent example of failure in this respect is the occupation of Bosnia.

*Decide the ceiling on acceptable costs and link it to the exit strategy.* Too often, as with bidders at an auction, policymakers pay more than they intended. They make the irrational but understandable mistake of letting sunk costs rather than prospective additional costs induce them to up the ante. The limit of reasonable costs in Vietnam was probably reached no later than 1963.

Such guidelines are easy to proclaim, but strategic decisions are made by harried officials who do not always consult Clausewitz. Politicians have to juggle conflicting concerns and are more accustomed to compromise and near-term solutions than to following checklists of general principles. Commanders easily get swallowed up in the business of keeping the military machine running rather than cogitating about vague matters of state. All these guideline tasks should be carried out, but only extraordinary people do many of them at a given time, and none do all of them all the time.

Stating guidelines is ineffectual unless they can be worked into standard procedures for the military side and comfortable political modes of

operation for the policy side. But it is often not clear that either good or bad strategic behavior can be attributed to the process—that is, the way the NSC system functioned and civil-military interaction proceeded.

Perhaps procedures in the Bush system were better than under Johnson, but this is not obvious. There is no reason to believe that anything in the Bush process, had it been in place in the 1960s, would have saved the day in Vietnam. Indeed, it was largely that experience which provided the mindsets and checklists that the Bush administration carried into the crisis of 1990–91. And it was the luck of facing an enemy utterly vulnerable to modern conventional military power that accounted for most of the difference in outcome between the Bush and Johnson strategies.

Problems of strategy are not due to the structure of the current system nor even to the constitutional dispersion of power. They originate in the convictions of powerful individuals and the temper of the times—hubris and ambition in periods of great national success and pessimism in periods of failure. Regarding the power of specific people, no prescribed process can prevent a President and his closest advisors from becoming viscerally committed to a particular course unless there is strong disagreement on the part of the

larger body politic. Success and hubris, however, foster permissive consensus and overconfidence. This cuts off the most important chance to avoid failure. Pessimism poses different risks. It may let pass opportunities that should be exploited. But at least it fits well with the recognition that in strategy “the simplest thing is difficult.” **JFQ**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke's Kriegslehren*, excerpted from *War*, edited by Lawrence Freedman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> Russell F. Weigley, “The Political and Strategic Dimensions of Military Effectiveness,” *Military Effectiveness*, volume 3: *The Second World War*, edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1988), p. 341.

<sup>5</sup> Gerard Smith, *Doubletalk: The Story of SALT I* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 413–17.

<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 92.

**strategic decisions are made by harried officials who do not always consult Clausewitz**

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE STRATEGY PROCESS

In the simplest terms, *strategy* is a plan of action that organizes efforts to achieve objectives. The broad and complex modern context within which the strategist operates, however, means that simple definitions shed little light on the factors that make strategy the most fundamental and most difficult of all military arts. In the modern era, it is much more accurate and descriptive to consider strategy as a complex *decisionmaking process* that connects the ends sought (objectives) with the ways and means of achieving those ends.

During the era of such warrior kings as Frederick the Great and Napoleon, the decisions required to produce strategy were often made by one man. In those relatively simple times, warrior kings could grasp and decide issues ranging from the broadest political direction of the nation-state to the most detailed battlefield tactics. They controlled a large vertical slice of their national command structure since they were at once absolute chiefs of state and battlefield commanders. The complexity of the modern context virtually eliminates the possibility of one person's having the ability to grasp all facets of a situation. Further, the decline of absolute monarchies (and warrior kings) in the international system has meant that no one person is in a position to exercise such complete power, particularly in the liberal democracies. The result is that strategy is now made by different people or groups with different perspectives at different levels of authority.

The modern strategy process (in both theory and successful practice) consists of at least five fundamental, interconnected, and sequential steps or decisions that define and shape strategy at each level of authority. The steps range from broad

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# MAKING STRATEGY

## An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems

by

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and occasionally abstract decisions about national objectives to narrow and concrete decisions concerning battlefield tactics. Between those two extremes are three other decisionmaking steps that we refer to as grand strategy, military strategy, and operational strategy.

### Step 1 — Determining National Security Objectives

Just as it is difficult to score a bull's-eye without a target, it is also difficult to devise a successful plan of action unless one knows the objective of that plan. The first task of the strategist is to define the national security objectives that form the foundation of the strategy process. If the objectives are ill-defined, inconsistent, or unsupported by some degree of national consensus, the strategist's function becomes exceedingly difficult.

American objectives in World War II provide an excellent example of well-defined, consistent, and widely supported objectives. The United States (and, in varying degrees, its Allies) sought the surrender of the Axis powers — not just any surrender but total and unconditional surrender. Such a stark objective formed a solid foundation on which to base strategy decisions, a fact underscored by the straightforward instruction given to Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower to enter the continent of Europe and destroy the German armed forces. In the postwar years, the advent of nuclear weapons, the cold war superpower standoff, and the fear of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union have meant that the United States would find it risky to pursue such draconian objectives in any conflict that involved the Soviets, even indirectly.

Since World War II, the broad national security objectives of the United States have revolved around the containment of the Soviets and deterrence of war, particularly nuclear war. Neither of these objectives is overly well defined nor do they

always inspire deep public support. "Contain the Soviets!" does not have the same ring as "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

The first "hot-war" test case for post-World War II objectives was the Korean conflict. Unfortunately, the microlevel objectives (flowing from containment) changed with time and circumstance, causing considerable confusion. In the first months of that struggle, the object was simply to throw the northern invaders out of South Korea. After the stunning North Korean defeat following the Inchon landings, the objective expanded to include the liberation of North Korea and the unification of the Korean peninsula. US and UN forces rolled north toward Red China's border prompting the Chinese to enter the struggle. Chinese forces then drove US and UN forces back south. With the change of battlefield fortunes came a reversion to the original objective of repelling an invasion of South Korea, this time a Chinese invasion. The eventual result was a stalemate near the original border between the two Koreas and general disenchantment of the American public.

The objective in Korea was, at the very least, inconsistent over time. In Vietnam, the stated objective was consistent, but was poorly explained. As a result, popular support for the war was not deep enough or strong enough to withstand the pressures of a protracted conflict. The stated objective in Vietnam was to maintain an independent, non-Communist South Vietnamese nation. The objective was poorly explained in the sense that large segments of the American population were not convinced of the importance of the objective. Many Americans wondered how US vital interest could be at stake in a former French colony 10,000 miles across the Pacific, one that few Americans had ever heard of before 1960. In addition, there was considerable question as to whether South Vietnam had ever been a "nation" or whether it was simply a convenient creation of the major powers following the French defeat in 1954. There was concern about American support for a regime in Saigon that was clearly authoritarian and corrupt.

On the other hand, those who supported the stated objective were disappointed in the manner in which the war was prosecuted. They clamored for decisive military action while the US government charted a course of graduated military pressure in an attempt to reach a negotiated settlement. The result was a decline in American national will and military morale, ultimately expressed in an almost audible sigh of relief as America's Southeast Asian "crusade" came to an ignominious conclusion.

Both the Korean and Vietnam wars illustrate the difficulty of translating national objectives from the macrolevel to the microlevel in the nuclear age. The experiences also indicate how the fortunes of war can affect objectives and how objectives can affect the fortunes of war. The point remains, however, that a determination of national objectives is the first and most crucial step in the strategy process. Success without clear objectives amounts to little more than bumbling good fortune.

### Step 2—Formulating Grand Strategy

After identifying and assessing national objectives, the strategist must determine which instruments of national power are necessary to achieve the objectives and how those instruments are to be used. *Grand strategy* is the art and science of coordinating the development and use of those instruments to achieve national security objectives. Political scientists often refer to grand strategy as *policy*. Although policy is an arguably broader term than this definition of grand strategy, the two terms are often used synonymously.

One should note that the definition of grand strategy includes both development and use of all the instruments of national power (e.g., economic, political, military) *and* the coordination of these instruments in pursuit of an objective. In most cases, significant objectives can be achieved only through the coordinated use of the instruments of power;

without coordination, they can work at cross-purposes. For a nonmilitary example, consider that federal health officials have, for many years, supported programs to discourage the use of tobacco. During many of those same years, federal agricultural programs paid subsidies to tobacco growers. To prevent such self-defeating behavior, grand strategy must assign roles and missions, determine methods to make the assignments mutually supporting, and identify areas of potential conflict.

Grand strategy is the highest level connection and primary interface between nonmilitary instruments of power and the military establishment. This is an important point for at least three reasons. First, grand strategy becomes the focal point for arguments about the utility of military force in international relations. This is particularly important in the nuclear age because the commitment of forces to combat could lead to escalation and unintended superpower confrontation. Second, in a major "conventional" war of any significant duration, the nonmilitary instruments of power must be mobilized in support of the military establishment and its prosecution of the war. Conversely, how a war is prosecuted depends, in large part, on how well the military forces are supported. Third, a "package" approach is required to combat the so-called revolutionary wars in the third world that have become prevalent in the nuclear age. The package is a sophisticated orchestration of political, psychological, economic, and military actions calculated to dry up support for revolutionary insurgents and to destroy their military capability. American efforts in Vietnam, for example, were criticized for purported overreliance on combat operations and lack of attention to pacification efforts (a failure to successfully address the nonmilitary roots of the problem) and for a lack of coordination between military and nonmilitary actions. Critics pointed out that precious little progress was made by building schools and digging wells in a village by day

and then bombing or shelling the same village at night because of suspected enemy activity.

### Step 3 — Developing Military Strategy

After selecting the appropriate instruments of national power and assigning their roles and missions, the strategist must focus on specialized strategies for each selected instrument. Of interest in this volume is *military strategy*, the art and science of coordinating the development, deployment, and employment of military forces to achieve national security objectives. This definition includes four particularly significant terms. One should note that *development* and *deployment* do not necessarily denote wartime operations. The development and deployment of forces and an implied or expressed threat that they will be used can lead to the attainment of national objectives. The objective of deterring nuclear attack upon the United States, for example, is based solely on the threat to use developed and deployed retaliatory forces. On the other hand, the definition also includes *employment*, a term that refers explicitly to the ultimate use of forces during hostilities. In this instance, employment refers to the use of forces in a broad, almost national, sense. For example, should a nation's forces be employed as expeditionary forces or for home defense? Will they be offensively or defensively oriented?

*Coordinating* is perhaps the most important word in the definition. Earlier in this discussion, coordination concerned relationships between instruments of power at the grand strategy level. Coordination at this level refers to relationships within the military instrument of power. All too often in the past, military forces developed and the places they were deployed have been inappropriate for the employment eventually required. Before World War II, the static fortifications comprising the Maginot Line along the Franco-German border became the keystone of French

defense. The crushing expense of its construction and the complacency it fostered delayed modernization of the French army. Unfortunately for the French, highly mobile German units sidestepped the Maginot Line in 1940, slashed deep into rear areas, and rendered the static French fortifications (and their garrisons) impotent. The French failed to coordinate the development and deployment of their forces effectively with the type of employment eventually required. They had not recognized, in a timely manner, the revolution in mobility wrought by the internal combustion engine, particularly in aircraft and armored vehicles. Consequently, the French were not prepared for the war of rapid maneuver waged by their German attackers.

### Step 4 — Designing Operational Strategy

Military strategy sets in motion the actions required to develop a military force structure (i.e., planning; procuring weapon systems and materiel; and recruiting, training, and sustaining personnel) and then deploys that force structure. These actions should be accomplished based on broad concepts of how these forces will be employed to fulfill the roles and missions assigned by grand strategy.

While military strategy is broad in its scope, *operational strategy* is much narrower and more specific. Operational strategy employs the forces provided by military strategy. We can define operational strategy as the art and science of planning, orchestrating, and directing military campaigns within a theater of operations to achieve national security objectives.

The notion of the military campaign is the key to understanding operational strategy. Campaigns consist of a series of related operations, each of which may involve a number of battles, which taken together seek to achieve a particular objective. An example will illustrate the concept. Perhaps the best-known aerial campaign in the Vietnam War

was Linebacker II, an intensive 11-day bombing campaign conducted in late December 1972. The campaign had a specific politico-military objective. The campaign consisted of discrete daily operations, each of which resulted in a number of battles involving enemy fighters, surface-to-air missiles, and antiaircraft artillery as they engaged waves of American bombers and supporting aircraft.

The word *orchestrating* in the definition is also central to the concept of operational strategy. Orchestrating suggests that within a campaign, the capabilities of various forces must be combined harmoniously to achieve a synergistic relationship. On a broader scale, orchestrating suggests that separate campaigns must be combined in a harmonious fashion to achieve the objectives sought in the larger war.

Fundamental to operational strategy is the development of campaigns appropriate to the situation and the nature of national objectives sought. Strangely, an appropriate operational strategy is not always synonymous with traditional notions of victory. In Vietnam, US forces achieved victory after victory to little avail. In contrast, during the American Revolution, the rebellious colonists won few victories but still achieved independence.

### Step 5 — Formulating Battlefield Strategy (Tactics)

In spite of clear and attainable national objectives, well-coordinated grand strategy, appropriate military strategy, and a well-designed operational strategy, a nation can still lose on the battlefield. Thus, the last basic step of the strategy process is to formulate and execute battlefield strategy, most commonly known as tactics. *Battlefield strategy* is the art and science of employing forces on the battlefield to achieve national security objectives. The classic differentiation between tactics and higher levels of strategy remains relevant in the sense that tactics govern the use of forces on the

battlefield while grand strategy, military strategy, and operational strategy bring forces to the battlefield. One can also add some clarity to the situation by stating that tactics are concerned with doing the job "right," and higher levels of strategy are concerned with doing the "right" job.

A particularly good example of the importance of proper tactics comes from the air war in World War II. The initial American tactics for daylight precision bombing of Germany involved the use of unescorted bombers. Unexpectedly high losses to German interceptors, particularly during the operations to Schweinfurt in 1943, forced American airmen to suspend operations deep into Germany until they could produce and deploy long-range escort fighters. The United States was fortunate that it had the time and means to correct this tactical error and to reevaluate the doctrine that caused the error.

### Influences on the Strategy Process

The preceding discussion outlined a theoretically simple and straightforward process for linking political ends with battlefield means. In reality, however, at least four factors complicate the process. First, the seemingly neat and compartmentalized steps of the process are neither neat nor compartmentalized. They tend to blend and flow from national objectives to tactics. Some writers have coined such intermediate terms as *grand tactics*, *low-level strategy*, and *high-level tactics* in attempts to provide precise descriptions of certain situations. Use of these exacting terms is unnecessary if one bears in mind that the strategy process is a series of interrelated decisions rather than a group of loosely related planning events.

Second, there is a reverse flow or feedback system within the process. Grand strategy, military strategy, operational strategy, and tactics change, at least in part, because of results obtained from the process. The US reaction to losses suffered

in the unescorted bombing missions over Germany is an excellent example of the effects of feedback on the process.

Third, numerous external factors constrict and twist the straight-line flow from national objectives to battlefield tactics. The list of these factors, most of which are totally beyond the control of the strategist, is almost endless and includes, at the very least, such factors as the nature of the threat, domestic and international politics, economics, technology, physical environment and geography, cultural heritage, and military doctrine. Figure 1 graphically portrays the strategy process and the pushing and tugging of outside influences on the process, but it shows only a few of the influences that form the parameters of the situation within which the strategist operates. The importance of any particular influence is situational. For example, economic considerations are highly significant at the grand-strategy step because budget allocations accompany the assignment of roles and missions. In the same manner, economic factors have a heavy impact on military strategy because of the costs involved in developing forces. However, the economic influence on tactics is only indirect.

External influences tend to constrain the number of options at each step of the process. Although economic factors are the most obvious, other influences also limit the strategist's options. One US option in Vietnam, for example, was to use nuclear weapons, but international and domestic political considerations, and perhaps cultural values, effectively precluded nuclear employment.

The fourth factor that complicates the process revolves around the questions of where and by whom decisions are made within the process. Who determines national objectives either in a broad sense or as they pertain to a specific situation? Who determines grand strategy? One might assume grand strategy would be the purview of an organization such as the National Security Council, but is that true? What role does the Congress play in those decisions, particularly given its role in

## NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

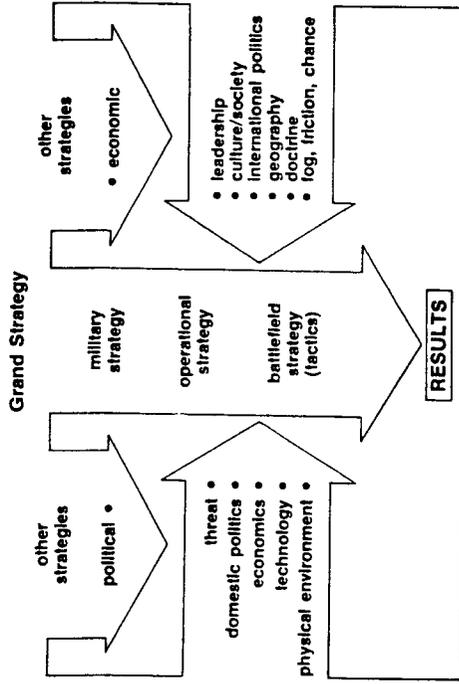


Figure 1. The Strategy Process.

providing funding? How is military strategy determined? How do the military services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff fit into the process? The same sorts of questions can be asked at the operational strategy level, particularly in relation to joint operations and the integration of allied forces. Problems exist even at the tactical level where one might assume that the commander on the battlefield would make the decisions. Yet in Vietnam, tactics for the air war over North Vietnam were often dictated in the White House.

### Continuing the Investigation

This chapter presented a brief overview of the process of making strategy. The process accomplishes the same function

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as that performed almost intuitively by the warrior kings of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The process copes with the complex context of the modern age. In the chapters that follow, we examine each element of the process (except tactics) in much greater detail, beginning with the political dimension of the process — national objectives and grand strategy.

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SECTION II

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**THE POLITICAL  
DIMENSION**

## CHAPTER 3

### GRAND NATIONAL STRATEGY

The term *strategy* is military in derivation and the clearest applications of strategy are in the military realm, but other groups and individuals have appropriated the term as part of their lexicons as well. In particular, the term is associated with the broad set of goals and policies a nation adopts toward the world (akin to the broadest definition and sense of national foreign policy).

In this adaptation, strategy also remains a process relating means to ends, but the means and ends are somewhat different. Grand national strategy is the process by which the nation's basic goals are realized in a world of conflicting goals and values. The ends of grand strategy are usually expressed in terms of national interests. The role of the strategy process is to translate those national interests into means for achieving those ends. Those means, in turn, are traditionally described in terms of the instruments of national power. They are usually categorized as the political (or diplomatic), economic, and military instruments of power.

Grand national strategy thus emerges as the process by which the appropriate instruments of power are arrayed and employed to accomplish the national interest. Thus, the building blocks of grand national strategy are the goals or national interests that are to be served and the instruments that may be used to serve those ends.

#### Vital National Interests

The idea of a vital national interest is unique to the sphere of international politics, and it is a term which is commonly

defined by two characteristics. The first characteristic is that a vital interest is one on which the nation is unwilling to compromise. By illustration, territorial integrity is a matter on which the United States would not willingly compromise; we would not, if we have any choice in the matter, cede any part of American soil. The second characteristic is related—a vital interest is one over which a nation would go to war. Thus, if someone claimed a portion of American soil, not only would we refuse to compromise our claim, we would fight to guarantee our retention.

Vital interests normally do not exist within domestic society, but only within the relations (international politics) between sovereign nation-states. The international system has no peaceful mechanism to resolve matters that are vital to its members, nor does it have mechanisms to enforce community will when vital interests clash. The reason, of course, is that since nations believe that some things are so important that they cannot be compromised, they want neither the mechanisms that might reach compromising decisions nor the mechanisms to enforce compromises. Instead, in the international realm, nations prefer to attempt to maintain maximum control over their vital interests, up to and including the use of organized armed force to protect or promote those interests.

Like all other states, the United States has a variety of interests, some of which are more important than others and some of which are amenable to promotion in different manners. Donald Nuechterlein,\* in a number of works, has provided a useful way of distinguishing between various interests. His framework is shown in figure 2.

In this depiction, "Intensity of Interest" refers to how important a given interest is to the United States, the highest level of intensity is to the left of the heavy vertical line, and the

\*Donald Nuechterlein, *America Overcommitted: United States National Interests in the 1980s* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985).

lowest is to the right. The heavy vertical line between the categories of "Vital" and "Major" indicates the point where the criteria of vital interests come into play. "Basic Interest at Stake" refers to categories of substantive interest, which are arranged in roughly descending order.

	Intensity of Interest				
	Basic Interest at Stake	Survival	Vital	Major	Peripheral
Defense of Homeland					
Economic Well-being					
Favorable World Order					
Promotion of Values					

Figure 2. National Interest Matrix.

The notion of intensity of interest is basic here, and its categories require definition. According to Nuechterlein, a survival interest exists when the physical existence of a country is in jeopardy due to attack or threat of attack. Clearly, this is the most basic interest the state has. If a state cannot survive, no other interest matters. For the United States, this means avoiding nuclear devastation by the Soviet Union, in reality the only direct threat to our survival. The strategy problem is how to avoid this circumstance (the subject of chapter 9).

The second level of intensity is vital interest, which Nuechterlein says are circumstances when serious harm to the nation would result unless strong measures, including the use of force, are employed to protect the interest. A dramatic (and not altogether implausible) example would be the coming to power of a Castroite government in Mexico. A more commonly employed example is the Soviet threat to America's closest allies, such as those in NATO and Northeast Asia.

Before proceeding to the other levels of intensity, note that protection of survival and vital interests is not always nor necessarily compatible and may, indeed, be contradictory. The clearest example of contradiction occurs when protecting a vital interest jeopardizes survival. For instance, defense of NATO Europe could entail the use of nuclear weapons, and nuclear exchange could escalate to a homeland exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union that would threaten the existence of both. Conversely, if the Soviets believe that the subjugation of Western Europe is vital to them, they face the same dilemma, since attaining that end would also involve the risk of a survival-threatening nuclear escalation.

The third level of interest is major interests, which are situations where a country's political, economic, or social well-being may be adversely affected but where the use of armed force is not deemed necessary to avoid adverse outcomes. The fourth level of interest is peripheral interests, which are situations where some national interest is involved but where the nation as a whole is not particularly affected by any given outcome.

The most difficult and contentious determination is between vital and major interests. Since the demarcation line Nuechterlein draws represents the distinction between what the nation should and should not defend with armed force, the location of the line can be argued to be the most basic item in the debate about national defense. Indeed, in the difficult debates about defense policy, defense spending, and the like, one can get a rather clear understanding of various viewpoints by knowing on which side of the line participants place different situations. There is little real disagreement over which interests are absolutely essential (detering nuclear war, for example), but there are matters of honest difference between political actors about how best to achieve goals (in other words, differences over appropriate strategies).

Similarly, there is general agreement on the least important, most peripheral matters.

As noted, it is the junction point between vital and major interests that is the problem and this is understandable. In these situations, interests are at stake and, by definition, various outcomes do make a difference to the United States. Policy disagreements tend to be about how much difference the various outcomes make, and thus what one should be prepared to do to protect these interests.

The situations in the Persian Gulf and Central America illustrate this tension and difference, if in varying ways. President Jimmy Carter, in a portion of his 1980 State of the Union Address only three weeks after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, declared free transit through the Persian Gulf and access to Persian Gulf oil to be vital American interests. What became known as the Carter Doctrine declared that the United States would defend its access to the gulf with armed force if that access was threatened. As a result, American naval vessels now routinely patrol the gulf and are stationed nearby in the Arabian Sea.

But is the Persian Gulf vital to the United States? Certainly the gulf is important in that some of the oil we need passes through it, and both our economic well-being and vision of a favorable world order would be compromised by certain political outcomes in the region. But does that constitute reason enough to use US armed force in the region? What the American public thinks about the vitality of the region and thus ultimate US commitment is not entirely clear.

The Central American, and especially the Nicaraguan, situation is a similar and even more lively situation. There is general agreement that American interests in the area would be better served by a Nicaraguan government other than that of the Sandinistas (although there is no universal agreement as to who should constitute that government). The questions that divide the political spectrum are: How much of a problem do the Marxist Sandinistas create for their neighbors and for

vital threat. For instance, the necessity of American participation in the Vietnam conflict would have been much easier to "sell" if the US government had been able to argue credibly that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong would next head for San Diego harbor.

The extended, expeditionary nature of American security objectives gives rise to a more significant debate over what security objectives should be than would otherwise be the case. Isolationism (the conscious attempt to withdraw from international involvement) is a stronger impulse in American culture than in cultures more directly threatened. The degree to which American vital interests are threatened in any given geographical area is the source of considerable division within the United States because of the physical remoteness of many areas of interest. The United States is not unique in this regard. British debate over involvement in continental European affairs during the period when the English Channel effectively shielded the United Kingdom from direct territorial peril provides a parallel example.

The remoteness of many of the areas of interest to the United States makes the debate over whether interests are vital or major/peripheral more lively and affects the debate over the relative national emphasis on security and nonsecurity goals. By definition, interests deemed vital require military resources if the gap between threat and capability (risk) is to be narrowed. Providing the required resources usually comes at the expense of other demands for resources, such as those associated with social programs. If the same interests are designated as major or peripheral, the pressure to divert resources to military ends disappears because, in risk terms, assaults on major or peripheral interests represent a smaller threat.

This competition is important because of the reciprocal relationship between grand strategy objectives and the means available to carry them out. To some extent, ends must be determined by available means and risks must be borne.

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us? And hence what should we be prepared to do about the Nicaraguan situation? Few would argue that the situation is so intolerable that the United States should contemplate direct military intervention (declare the situation a clear and compelling vital interest). Rather, the debate is over whether we should give military support to the United Nicaraguan Opposition (the Contras), thereby placing the situation astride Nuechterlein's line, or not, placing the situation in the major interest category.

Because direct defense of territorial assets has not been a major US requirement since World War II, a great concern has been determining which external situations pose threats to basic US interests. In the twentieth century, the existence of a Europe not controlled by a hostile power or powers has been identified as an imperative objective. The US military instrument of power has been employed twice in combat to that end, and the quest for European security has led to the grand national strategy of containment since the 1940s. Northeast Asia (Japan and Korea) has also been considered vital to US interests since 1945. The fact that American security interests are primarily foreign adds a special character and source of contention in the formulation of US grand national strategy. With the direct (if ultimate) threat to American territory limited to the nuclear case, the primary roles assigned to American forces (the threats to which those forces must prepare to respond) are expeditionary defenses against foreign powers posing an indirect threat to the achievement of basic American goals. This fact creates an imperative for strategic and force development not required in countries whose military forces are primarily or exclusively concerned with territorial defense (e.g., Poland has no need for a rapid deployment force), but it also causes disagreement. Expenditure and sacrifice for direct homeland defense is a far less contentious idea (although people may disagree about the levels of effort needed) than is the less immediate, more abstract notion that a situation in some distant land poses a

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(although people can and do argue vehemently about appropriate military strategies, tactics, and deployments necessary to achieve the objective). In the second case, there is ample room for disagreement. Few people doubt that the Soviets wish the United States less than well, but the nature and degree of their malevolence and the extent to which their animosity translates into a direct assault on core American goals are more conjectural. This ambiguity nurtures honest disagreement about American strategic posture toward the Soviet threat.

The translation of basic national interests into objectives leading to formulation of grand national strategy and factors influencing that translation can be exemplified. Since the late 1940s, American grand national strategy has been containment of communism. The core assumption of the strategy is that Soviet-dominated Communist states should not be allowed to spread beyond the boundaries established at the end of World War II because further spread would eventually pose a direct threat to the United States. Originally devised for and applied to the power balance in Europe, the basic containment formulation has been extended to encompass the Sino-Soviet periphery, although the primary author of the strategy, George F. Kennan, has denied that this extension was his intent. The effect of containment is to draw a line on the map and to declare that forced change outside that line is a threat to American interests. Whether those interests at any specific place are vital (so that the United States would personally defend them) or merely major (in which case our support would be more limited) has been an ongoing source of debate.

Although there has been disagreement about the operational implications of containment and the extent to which the United States should enforce the containment line, there has been remarkable consensus for containment in the postwar period. During the so-called cold war and into the 1960s, this support was explicit and forthright.

National objectives exceed resources available to fulfill them and thus are contentious in the sense that various people order them differently in the competition for resources. Advocacy of different objectives is always spirited and generally stated in terms of absolute need.

The post-Vietnam debate of the 1970s over defense can be seen in these terms. Part of that debate centered on what objectives should be pursued: where and in what situations is an American ability to project power necessary and proper? At the same time, a perceived erosion in defense capabilities, particularly relative to the Soviet Union, raised questions about American ability to meet security objectives. The Reagan administration entered office committed to the proposition that then current spending levels did not provide the wherewithal to meet legitimate objectives. It secured a large military funding increase to reduce what it considered intolerable levels of risk. By the middle 1980s, the resulting buildup had arguably reduced risk considerably, but public and congressional concern about huge budget deficits and their consequences had fueled yet another debate over relative spending priorities.

The degree of external threat and public willingness to respond to differing levels of threat are additional sources of friction that affect perceptions about vital interests. The two problems are, of course, related and sequential. If people recognize a high degree of threat, their willingness to combat it is likely to be high. But, since the direct threat to basic American values is limited to the nuclear case, the credibility of other threats is ambiguous and debatable. It is one thing, for instance, to argue the need for a credible deterrent against Soviet nuclear aggression; it is quite another proposition to argue that, in the absence of some prescribed level of military vigilance, the Soviet army would occupy Hoboken. In the first case, the threat is to survival and is unambiguous and recognized. Thus, avoiding its consequences is an objective with which grand national strategy must come to grips

potential for thermonuclear confrontation, for instance, serves as a conditioner in US-Soviet relations that forces the two superpowers to treat one another more carefully than would be the case in its absence. At the same time armed forces can be employed in a variety of other ways to influence events. Some employments are relatively mild and are more symbolic than substantial, as in the movement of naval forces into waters adjacent to a local conflict to indicate support for a particular regime. Depending on the objectives and the perceived level of threat, more active strategies include providing arms to combatants, assigning technical or combat advisers, and intervening in hostilities. The ultimate application, of course, is direct involvement in combat in support of (by definition) vital interests.

The economic instrument also takes varied forms, and the extent to which it can be employed depends greatly on the country's economic resources. In this regard, much of the concern over declines in American national power in the 1970s and 1980s was at least implicitly a commentary on the relative strength of the US economy within the global economic system. As the world's leading industrial nation (if the European Economic Community is not treated as a unit), the United States has considerably more economic tools than most of the developing world or, for that matter, the Soviet Union, which is itself a developing country in economic terms.

The economic instrument is more explicitly amenable to the "carrot-and-stick" approach than other instruments. Hence, economic assistance or preferential trade relationships can be used as positive inducements (carrot) to produce desired behavior, and the threat of withholding aid or using quotas or tariffs to disadvantage trade can be a sanction (stick) if another country does not take desired actions. The same strategy can be applied in other economic areas, such as foreign investment policy to encourage or constrain overseas activities of American corporations, and in policies more closely associated with the military instrument, such as arms transfers.

Disillusionment with application of the strategy in Southeast Asia and perception that détente was moderating US-Soviet relations resulted in less explicit references to containment as basic strategy through the middle 1970s. Burgeoning Soviet defense expenditures and third world adventurism, however, have led to a revival of explicit support of the concept in the early 1980s.

Regardless of the nature of the acceptance of containment as the guiding principle of American grand national strategy, there has always been disagreement about the best way to achieve it (a question of what is or is not the national interest). Discussion of the means to implement containment policy moves us a step down the strategy model to the instruments of power and the strategies used to employ them. (Elements dealing primarily with the military instrument of power are covered in later chapters and do not require detailed consideration here.) The interplay between the instruments of power helps to define what grand strategy is and is not.

### Instruments of National Power

In conventional terms, the instruments are generally placed in a threefold classification. The *military instrument* refers to the extent to which a nation's armed forces can be employed (or have their employment threatened) to achieve national ends. The *economic instrument* refers to the application of a nation's material resources in achieving those ends. The *diplomatic* (or *political*) *instrument* refers to the ways the international political position and diplomatic skills of the nation-state can be brought to bear in pursuit of national interest. Each instrument is applied for the same purpose: to achieve outcomes that serve the national interest.

A range of employment strategies accompanies each instrument. The potential use of the military instrument, even when its application is not threatened, always lurks in the background to condition international relationships. The

The diplomatic/political instrument is somewhat more derivative and amorphous. Because of the US position as political leader of the Western alliance, its proposals automatically receive more attention and scrutiny than the proposals of a less powerful nation. It is not clear whether US political "clout" derives purely from that position or whether its source is American economic and military strength. What is clear is that diplomatic skill can help turn events in a nation's favor. During the nineteenth century, for instance, the influence of the comparatively weak Hapsburg monarchy in Austria-Hungary was largely the result of the diplomatic brilliance of foreign minister Count von Metternich. The ability to mediate successfully and to produce unique and mutually acceptable solutions to complex issues without application of military or economic power is the essence of the diplomatic instrument.

These instruments, of course, are not available in a vacuum. The extent to which a nation has military might, economic resources, or skilled diplomats is one source of limitation, but democratic societies have other constraints, particularly in domestic affairs. For constitutional, statutory, and political reasons, the president of the United States cannot exercise the military instrument with impunity in support of the containment strategy. Constitutional entrustment of the power to declare war to the Congress is a limit on such a prerogative, and the War Powers Act of 1973 places statutory limitations on presidential ability to employ American forces in combat in situations where war is not declared (the United States has not engaged in a declared war since World War II). Politically, the need for public support further constrains the president.

The economic instrument has similar constraints. The degree to which the US government can manipulate economic assistance is limited by the comparatively small and static size of its assistance budget. Foreign aid has been described as a budgetary element with no real domestic constituency and, as

a result, it has not grown with inflation (meaning its real value has declined). In addition, manipulation of trade relationships is constrained by domestic considerations. For example, providing favorable trade terms for such items as foreign automobiles is likely to hurt domestic industries and cause internal resistance; and restrictions on trade, such as the grain embargo to the Soviet Union following its invasion of Afghanistan, are likely to result in selective domestic sacrifices deemed unfair. In the same vein, the government cannot order private US firms to invest in particular countries, nor can it completely control their activities if they do invest. The complexities in applying the economic instrument and to what ends are well illustrated by the ongoing debate over American private participation in South Africa. The poles in that debate are punishment through divestiture and participation to bring about reform through so-called constructive engagement.

Several other factors complicate the task of developing strategies for particular instruments. First, the instruments are highly interrelated and thus cannot be viewed in isolation. In modern warfare, for instance, military success or failure depends to a large degree on the national economic, technological, and industrial base and the extent to which that base can be mobilized and applied to the war effort. At the same time, military spending is a significant part of the American economy, and the nation's economic health depends to some degree on diplomatic skill in negotiating favorable trade agreements with foreign governments. To complete the circle, diplomatic success depends on activities that can be backed up by economic and military rewards or sanctions. In other words, treating the various instruments of power in isolation oversimplifies reality.

Second, each of the instruments of power is, in fact, a combination of multiple factors, and any one factor can be crucial in a given situation. It is difficult, for example, to identify any single index of military power that allows prediction of a clash between two reasonably equal, or even

Afghanistan, have fueled the urgency for having the Rapid Deployment Force, have made necessary a permanent station for a new carrier flotilla in the Indian Ocean, and have accelerated military assistance for Saudi Arabia. At the same time, the Iranian revolution has required the United States to look for alternative political "allies" in the region. The ongoing Iran-Iraq War, and especially its extension to attacks on oil tankers entering or leaving the ports of the belligerents, has created additional requirements for naval patrols, escorts, and defense as well as air cover.

The Iranian hostage crisis illustrated both the interrelation of the various instruments and emphasis on one or another at different stages. Diplomatic activities were conducted throughout the period that American personnel were held captive, but they were muted and highly secret. Initially, the economic instrument of power was applied through such actions as levying a trade embargo and freezing Iranian financial assets in the United States. When that pressure failed to secure the hostages' release, the military instrument was applied in the unsuccessful raid at Desert One in late spring 1980. Finally, diplomatic efforts heavily assisted by Algerian intermediaries secured the release, although the effects of the economic sanctions and Iranian need for money and spare parts to continue prosecuting the war with Iraq had a considerable impact.

The fourth factor that complicates strategymaking for particular instruments of power is the fact that different countries are predisposed by culture, history, and circumstance to prefer greater or lesser reliance on different instruments of power. During the heyday of British power, the United Kingdom sought to rely primarily on diplomatic skill to maintain a balance of power conducive to British commercial interests on the European continent (a preference influenced by a relatively small British population and cultural aversion to maintaining a peacetime standing army). The Soviet Union relies heavily on the military

not so equal foes, because so many factors comprise military prowess. In addition to such obvious factors as the amount of manpower and firepower available to any contestant, numerous other influences may prove critical. Some of these factors are tangible, such as the length and security of supply lines; and others are more difficult to measure precisely, such as morale, leadership, strategic and tactical soundness, compatibility between physical capabilities and political objectives, and sheer luck. To a great extent, military history is a chronicle of calculation and miscalculation in comparing military instruments and their capacities to serve national ends.

Third, one may speak analytically about the individual instruments of power and their use in various strategies, but, in application, some combination of instruments usually must be brought to bear, often in an ad hoc rather than a planned manner. This complex intertwining occurs for two related reasons. On one hand, any given situation may involve multiple objectives with political, economic, and military/security dimensions and different strategies may be necessary for the various aspects. The extent and mix of actions employing one or more instruments of power will vary depending on the situation. On the other hand, situations evolve over time; thus, an appropriate strategy at one point may be forced to yield to another strategy at a different point. The situation in the Persian Gulf illustrates the first factor and the Iranian hostage crisis is a good example of the second factor.

As already noted, President Carter deemed the guarantee of continuing access to Persian Gulf petroleum reserves vital to American security interest, a judgment accepted by the Reagan administration and reiterated by the president in 1987. Addition of the gulf area to the containment line has dictated strategies for the various instruments of power. The implications for the military instrument, particularly in light of Soviet troops being only 300 miles from the gulf in

instrument partly because of its experience with foreign invaders and a weak Soviet economy that restricts its economic leverage. The United States has historically emphasized the economic instrument, reflecting a preeminent economic system and an aversion dating back to the American Revolution to maintaining a large peacetime military force.

Fifth and finally, the relative emphasis placed on different instruments of power fluctuates with time. In recent years, for instance, it has been fashionable in the United States and Western Europe to derogate military power as a means of realizing foreign policy objectives. Partly as a result of the Vietnam experience and partly as a result of the tremors created by the various oil "shocks" and skyrocketing energy costs, emphasis has shifted to something called economic interdependence. Advocates of interdependence argue that the world's nations are becoming so inextricably tied to one another through burgeoning trade in energy and mineral resources and in agricultural and industrial goods that no nation remains self-sufficient in any meaningful way. Nations must cooperate to survive since hostilities with virtually any rival risk cutoff of vital goods. Nation-states are forced to cooperate from fear of the consequences of not doing so, much as fear of mutual vaporization forces some level of US-Soviet cooperation. The argument for interdependence suggests the relative rise of the economic instrument among the tools of power, and its champions optimistically suggest that once cooperative patterns become widespread, they may become the norm. Such an outcome would, of course, diminish the role of military force considerably.

There is evidence, however, of a growing awareness that interdependence has a darker, more Machiavellian side in which the military instrument plays a potentially greater role. This construct suggests that mutual dependence does not necessarily lead to cooperation because one nation can withhold or threaten to withhold vital resources to put another nation at its mercy. Under such conditions, the only way to

ensure access to vital materials may be the resort to force. The "Carter Doctrine" regarding the Persian Gulf is testimony of this concern. Concerns about the future of mineral-rich southern Africa and the ability of the relatively new Soviet blue-water navy to interdict shipping lanes vital to the United States and its allies are similar indicators. In other words, the realization that interdependence is a double-edged sword may lead to shifting perceptions about the relative importance of the various instruments of national power.

### Summary and Conclusion

As the preceding discussion has suggested, grand national strategymaking is a process of determining what interests the nation has, what priorities to place on various interests, and what national instruments of power are available, appropriate, and acceptable for achieving individual interests and the aggregate of those interests. The process is inevitably political because it involves public policy choices about the relative interests that are at stake, their intensity, and the risks each involves. This determination is always contentious, especially in the gray areas separating interests that are vital from those of a lower level of intensity. This distinction is especially important for the military strategist because the location of the line between vital and lesser interests defines where the military will and will not ply its trade.

The number of vital interests a state has influences the reliance it places on military as opposed to other instruments of national power. At the same time, the availability of certain kinds and amounts of power may place limits on the interests that a nation can pursue. A small, developing state, for instance, cannot define its vital interests in global terms because it lacks the military means to prosecute them. At the other extreme, the United States and the Soviet Union possess such excessive military (e.g., nuclear) power that they are

precluded from pursuing some interests against each other for fear that their power will be activated.

Thus, matching the instruments of power to the interests of the state is a primary task of the strategist. What those interests are and what instruments will exist to pursue those interests are matters of public policy choices. The choices are made in the political realm, where decisions are made about what scarce resources are allocated to what ends. The discussion in the next two chapters looks at the "political dimension" and how it affects strategy, beginning with the political environment and then moving to the actors and institutions in the political realm.

## CHAPTER 4

### POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF GRAND STRATEGY

There is a widely held misconception that military affairs, and more specifically the making of military strategy, are somehow divorced from politics. Included in the image is a notion that the association of politics, which is viewed as impure, taints and compromises the professionalism that underlies the military art and science.

This unfortunate misconception reflects an extremely narrow view of politics. If politics is viewed broadly as the ways in which conflicts of interest concerning scarce resources are resolved, the relationship between politics and military power is intimate and reciprocal. Obviously, application of military power is one of the ways that conflicts can be resolved. The absence of more formal means of conflict resolution that marks the international system often dictates that the military instrument of power is *the* means by which conflicts are resolved.

Put a slightly different way, the reasons for using military power are politically determined. Military strategy is very much an ends-means relationship in which the ends are politically mandated and defined. The role of the strategist is to determine proper ways to apply military force to achieve those political ends. "War," as the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz put it clearly, "is the continuation of politics by other means." Its objective, to borrow from the British strategist Sir Basil Liddell Hart, is to create "a better state of the peace" and that better state is invariably defined in terms of maintaining or altering the political relationship between the adversaries.

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**H**aving considered the nature of the environment within which strategy is made, the fundamental goals of all strategies, and some ways to categorize a strategy, we now consider how strategy is actually made.

## **THE STRATEGY-MAKING PROCESS**

Despite all that we have said about the nature of politics and policy, people generally think of strategy making as a conscious, rational process—the direct and purposeful interrelating of ends and means. In fact, strategy is very seldom if ever made in a fully rational way.

Each political entity has its own mechanism for developing strategy. While certain elements of the strategy-making process may be clearly visible, specified in a constitution and law or conducted in open forum, many aspects of the process are difficult to observe or comprehend. Participants in the process itself may not fully understand or even be aware of the dynamics that take place when dealing with a specific strategic situation. Thus, it is impossible to define any sort of universal strategy-making process. It is possible, however, to isolate certain key elements that any strategy maker must take into account to arrive at a suitable solution to a particular problem. We must focus on these elements if we are to understand the strategy and strategic context of any particular conflict.

Strategy making is in effect a problem-solving process. In order to solve a particular problem, the strategist must understand its nature and identify potential solutions. We start with the nature of the problem and the particular political ends of each of the participants in the conflict. This helps us to identify the specific political objectives to be accomplished. These objectives lead to development of a national strategy to achieve them. From there, we proceed to military strategy.

While it is difficult to specify in advance the content of a military strategy, it is easier to describe the questions that military strategy must answer. First, we must understand the political objectives and establish those military objectives that enable us to accomplish the political objectives. Second, we must determine how best to achieve these military objectives. Finally, we must translate the solution into a specific strategic concept: Will our strategy result in the requirement for multiple theaters or multiple campaigns? What are the intermediate goals and objectives within these theaters and campaigns that will achieve our political objectives? The military strategic concept incorporates the answers to these questions and provides the direction needed by military commanders to implement the strategy.

### **The Strategic Assessment**

When confronted with a strategic problem, strategists must first make an assessment of the situation confronting them. This assessment equates to the observation-orientation steps of the observation-orientation-decide-act loop.<sup>2</sup> While the factors

involved and the time constraints at the strategic level are different from those at the tactical or operational levels, the principle is the same: without a basic understanding of the situation, decisionmaking and action are likely to be seriously flawed.

The assessment begins with observing and orienting to the strategic landscape. Strategists look at the factors discussed in chapter 1: the physical environment, national character, the interplay between the states, and balance of power considerations. Once they have an appreciation for the landscape, they must focus on and determine the nature of the conflict.

Assessing the nature of the conflict requires consideration of questions like these: What value do both sides attach to the political objectives of the war? What costs are both sides willing to pay? What is the result of the “value compared to cost” equation? What material, economic, and human sacrifices will the participants endure? For how long? Under what circumstances? Will the societies expect regular, measurable progress? Will they patiently endure setbacks and frustration?

Such questions are fundamentally related to the ends of the conflict and the means employed to achieve those ends. The answers to these questions are required to determine the nature of the political objectives—the ends—of the conflict and the value to both sides of those political objectives. The value of the objective, in turn, is a major indicator of the resources—the

means—that both sides will likely commit and the sacrifices they will make to achieve it. An understanding of both ends and means is required in order to develop an effective military strategy.

### **Political Objectives**

Political objectives are the starting point for the development of a strategy. The first step in making strategy is deciding which political objectives a strategy will aim to achieve. In order to design the military action that will produce the desired result, the military strategist needs to know what that desired result is, that is, what the political objective is. From the political objectives, the military strategist can develop a set of military objectives that achieve the political objectives.

In theory, the setting of political objectives seems like a relatively straightforward proposition, and sometimes it is. The World War II stated political objective of unconditional surrender by the Axis powers was simple. In practice, however, setting political objectives involves the solving of not one but several complicated and interrelated problems. Multiple problems require the simultaneous pursuit of multiple and imperfectly meshed—sometimes even conflicting—strategies. The constant pressures and long-term demands of our economic and social strategies tend naturally to conflict with the demands of preparedness for the occasional military emergency. The demands of warfighting, of coalition management, of maintaining domestic unity, and of sustaining the political fortunes of the

current leadership often pull us irresistibly in different directions. It is always crucial to remember that military strategy making is but one element of the much broader dynamic of political interaction that goes into the making of national strategy.

At a minimum, the determination of political objectives must establish two things in order to form the basis for the development of a sound military strategy. First, it must establish definitions for both survival and victory for all participants in the conflict. As discussed in chapter 2, without an understanding of how each participant views its survival and victory, it will be impossible to identify the military strategy that can attain either goal. Second, the political leadership must establish whether it is pursuing a limited or unlimited political objective. The identification of the nature of the political objective is essential to ensuring the right match between political and military objectives.

### **Military Objectives and the Means to Achieve Them**

With an understanding of the political objectives, we then turn to selection of our military objectives. Military objectives should achieve or help achieve the political goal of the war. At the same time, the use of military power should not produce unintended or undesirable political results. Fighting the enemy should always be a means to an end, not become an end in itself.

As with political objectives, the choice of military objectives may seem relatively simple. However, selection of military

objectives is not a trivial matter. First, strategists may select a military objective that is inappropriate to the political objectives or that does not actually achieve the political objective. Second, there may be more than one way to defeat an enemy. As an example, will it be necessary to defeat the enemy army and occupy the enemy country or might a naval blockade accomplish the objective? Third, the pursuit of some military objectives may change the political goal of the war. Successful pursuit of a particular military objective may have unintentional effects on the enemy, allies, neutrals, and one's own society. This is particularly true in cases where a delicate balance of power is in place; achieving a given military objective may alter the balance of power in such a way that the resulting political situation is actually less favorable to the victor. Successful military strategies select a military goal or goals that secure the desired political objectives, not something else.

The designation of limited or unlimited political objectives is a necessary prerequisite to selecting the type of warfighting strategy that will be employed—either a strategy of annihilation or a strategy of erosion. The choice of an erosion or annihilation strategy drives the selection of specific military objectives, the design of our military actions, the effects we hope to achieve, and the weight we give to our military efforts relative to the use of other elements of our national power.

In annihilation strategies, the military objective is to eliminate the military capacity of the enemy to resist. This almost always involves the destruction of major elements of the enemy's military forces. Attacks against other targets—seizing

territory, striking economic capacity, or conducting informational or psychological warfare against the enemy leadership or population—are normally pursued only when they are directly related to degrading or destroying some military capability. Thus, specific military objectives and the means for striking at those military objectives grow out of the assessment of the nature and functioning of the enemy's military capacity.

In contrast, the focus of an erosion strategy is always the mind of the enemy leadership. The aim is to convince the enemy leadership that making concessions offers a better outcome than continuing resistance. The military objectives in an erosion strategy can be similar to those in an annihilation strategy, or they can be considerably different.

The first category of targets in an erosion strategy is the same as in an annihilation strategy: the enemy's armed forces. If the enemy is disarmed or finds the threat to destroy his armed forces credible, he may submit to the conditions presented. On the other hand, certain assets that have limited military importance but are of critical economic or psychological value—a capital city or key seaport—may be seized. Similarly, the enemy's financial assets may be frozen or his trade blockaded. Again, if submission to stated demands is less painful for enemy decisionmakers than continuing to do without the lost asset, they may concede defeat. A third possible target in an erosion strategy is the enemy leadership's domestic political position. Money, arms, and information can be provided to internal opponents of the leadership. The purpose is to make

enemy leaders feel so endangered that they will make peace in order to focus on their domestic enemies.

Choosing military objectives and the appropriate means to pursue those objectives requires the consideration of two closely related concepts: the center of gravity and the critical vulnerability.<sup>3</sup>

A center of gravity is a key source of the enemy's *strength*, providing either his physical or his psychological capacity to effectively resist. The utility of the concept is that it forces us to focus on what factors are most important to our enemy in a particular situation and to narrow our attention to as few key factors as possible.

At the strategic level, the range of possible centers of gravity is broad. The enemy's fighting forces may be a center of gravity. Strength may flow from a particular population center, a region providing manpower, or a capital city. A capital city may draw its importance from some practical application such as functioning as a transportation hub or as a command and control nexus. The capital's importance may be cultural, supplying some psychological strength to the population. In the case of nonstate political entities, the source of the enemy's motivation and cohesion may be a key individual or clique or the public perception of the leadership's ideological purity. Public support is often a strategic center of gravity, particularly in democratic societies.

In contrast to a center of gravity, a critical vulnerability is a key potential source of *weakness*. The concept is important because we normally wish to attack an enemy where we may do so with the least danger to ourselves, rather than exposing ourselves directly to his strength. To be *critical*, a vulnerability must meet two criteria: First, the capture, destruction, or exploitation of this vulnerability must significantly undermine or destroy a center of gravity. Second, the critical vulnerability must be something that we have the means to capture, destroy, or exploit.

If the center of gravity is the enemy armed forces, the critical vulnerability may lie in some aspect of its organization or its supporting infrastructure that is both key to the armed forces' functioning and open to attack by means at our disposal. During World War II, the Allies sought to focus on the German armed forces' logistical vulnerabilities by attacking the German petroleum industry, ball bearing supplies, and transportation infrastructure.

As an example of how centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities are used to determine military objectives and the means to achieve them, consider the North's use of General Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" during the Civil War. The plan identified the South's physical and emotional capacity to sustain a defensive war as one of the strategic centers of gravity. Critical vulnerabilities associated with this strategic center of gravity included the South's small industrial capacity, limited number of seaports, underdeveloped transportation

network, and dependence upon foreign sources of supply for foodstuffs, raw materials, and finished goods. The Anaconda Plan targeted this center of gravity by exploiting these vulnerabilities. The plan called for a naval blockade to wall off the Confederacy from trading with Europe, seizure of control of the Mississippi River valley to isolate the South from potential sources of resources and support in Texas and Mexico, and then capture of port facilities and railheads to cut lines of transportation. These actions would gradually reduce the South's military capability to resist as well as undermine popular support for the rebellion. While initially rejected as being too passive, the Anaconda plan revisited and reimplemented, eventually became the general strategy of the North. Scott's experienced analysis of the South's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities resulted in an effective military strategy which led directly to the defeat of the Confederacy.<sup>4</sup>

An understanding of centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities forms the core for the development of a particular military strategy. Among the centers of gravity, strategists find military objectives appropriate to the political objectives and the warfighting strategy being pursued. Among the critical vulnerabilities, strategists find the most effective and efficient means of achieving those military objectives. Together these concepts help formulate the strategic concept that guides the execution of the military strategy.

### **Strategic Concepts**

An essential step in the making of effective strategy is the development of a strategic concept.<sup>5</sup> Derived from the strategic estimate of the situation and the political and military objectives, this concept describes the course of action to be taken. The strategic concept should provide a clear and compelling basis for all subsequent planning and decisionmaking.

As with the strategy itself, the strategic concept begins with the political objectives. It should identify the military objectives to be accomplished and how to reach them. It should establish the relationship and relative importance of the military means to the other instruments of national power that are being employed. It should address priorities and the allocation of resources. These, in turn should help determine the concentration of effort within a theater or campaign.

Sometimes a war is fought in one theater, sometimes in several. If there is more than one theater, a choice has to be made on how to allocate resources. This cannot be effectively done without some overall idea of how the war will be won. The strategic concept provides this idea. Normally, military objectives are achieved by conducting a number of campaigns or major operations. What should be the objective of a given campaign? Again, it is the strategic concept that answers that question. It gives commanders the guidance to formulate and execute plans for campaigns and major operations.

World War II provides a clear example of the use of the strategic concept. This concept naturally evolved throughout the course of the war. It was modified in response to various political, economic, and military developments and as a result of disagreements among the Allies. It is important to note that the strategic concept was not a single document, but rather a series of decisions made by the leaders of the Alliance. Nevertheless, in this general strategic concept, military leaders could find guidance from their political leadership for the formulation of specific theater strategies and campaign plans.

It was immediately apparent that, given the global scale of the conflict, the strength of the enemy, and the differing political objectives, philosophies, postures, and military capabilities of the Allied nations, a unifying strategy was needed. The strategic concept adopted by the Allies called for the defeat of Germany first, effectively setting the division of labor and establishing priorities between the European and Pacific theaters. As the concept developed, it forced a sequence and priority among the campaigns and operations within theaters and set specific objectives for each of the campaigns. Germany would be engaged through continuous offensive action until a decisive blow could be launched from Britain. Japan would be contained and harassed until sufficient resources were available to go on the offensive in the Pacific. Ultimately, this concept led to the achievement of the military and political objective—in this case, unconditional surrender of Germany and Japan.

## WHO MAKES STRATEGY?

Strategy making is almost always a distributed process. The various elements of any particular strategy take shape in various places and at various times and are formed by different leaders and groups motivated by varying concerns. Elements of the strategy eventually adopted may surface anywhere in the organization. We need to understand the particular characteristics, concerns, and goals of all significant participants if we are to understand a specific strategic situation.

Without a detailed examination of the particular political entity and its strategy-making process, it is impossible to determine who is providing the answers to a particular question. Nevertheless, at least in terms of the division between military and civilian decisionmakers, it is possible to identify who should be providing these answers.

Earlier, it was argued that certain questions have to be answered in order to make strategy. The question, “*What is the political objective the war seeks to achieve?*” must be answered by the civilian leadership. The question, “*The attainment of what military objective will achieve, or help achieve, the political objective of the war?*” should also be answered primarily by the political leadership. They alone are in the best position to understand the impact that achievement of the military objective will have on the enemy, allies, neutrals, and

domestic opinion. In answering the question, “*How can the military objective be achieved?*” the military leadership comes more to the fore. However, the civilian leadership will want to make sure that the means used to achieve the military objective do not themselves have deleterious effects, effects that may overshadow the political objective of the war. The question, “*If there is more than one theater, how should the war effort be divided among theaters?*” is likely decided primarily by the political leadership, because this question can be answered only with reference to the overall structure of the war. The questions, “*Within a given theater, should the war effort be divided into campaigns?*” and “*What should be the objective of a given campaign?*” would seem to be primarily military in nature. Nevertheless, decisions made here can also affect political objectives or concerns as well as impact on the availability and consumption of scarce human and material resources. No political leader would want to entirely relinquish the decision about what the primary objectives of a campaign should be.

Thus we can see that the making of military strategy is a responsibility shared by both political and military leaders. Military institutions participate in the political process that develops military strategy. The military leadership has a responsibility to advise political leaders on the capabilities, limitations, and best use of the military instrument to achieve the political objectives. Military advice will be meaningless, and political leaders will ignore it unless military professionals understand their real concerns and the political

ramifications—both domestic and international—of military action or inaction.

## JUST WAR

Traditionally, Western societies have demanded two things of their strategic leaders in war. First is success, which contributes to security and societal well-being. Second is a sense of being in the right, a belief that the cause for which the people are called to sacrifice is a just one. Strategists must be able to reconcile what is *necessary* with what is *just*. The “just war” theory provides a set of criteria that can help to reconcile these practical and moral considerations.

Just war theory has two components, labeled in Latin *jus ad bellum* (literally, “rightness in going to war”) and *jus in bello* (“rightness in the conduct of war”). There are seven *jus ad bellum* criteria:<sup>6</sup>

- **Just Cause.** A just cause involves the protection and preservation of value. There are three such causes: defense of self or of others against attack, retaking of something wrongly taken by force, and punishment of concrete wrongs done by an evil power.

- **Right Authority.** The person or body authorizing the war must be a responsible representative of a sovereign political entity.
- **Right Intention.** The intent in waging war must truly be just and not be a selfish aim masked as a just cause.
- **Proportionality of Ends.** The overall good achieved by the resort to war must not be outweighed by the harm it produces.
- **Last Resort.** We must show that there is no logical alternative to violence.
- **Reasonable Hope of Success.** There can be neither moral nor strategic justification for resorting to war when there is no hope of success.
- **The Aim of Peace.** Ends for which a war is fought must include the establishment of stability and peace.

Satisfying just war criteria is often not a simple or clear-cut process. We want to believe in the ethical correctness of our cause. At the same time, we know that our enemies and their sympathizers will use moral arguments against us. Therefore, though the criteria for the rightness in going to war may be met, the translation of political objectives to military objectives and their execution cannot violate *jus in bello*—rightness in the conduct or war. The destruction of a power plant may achieve a tactical or operational objective; however, the impact of its destruction on the civilian populace may violate rightness in

conduct and result in loss of moral dignity, adversely affecting overall strategic objectives.

In sum, the just war criteria provide objective measures from which to judge our motives. The effective strategist must be prepared to demonstrate to all sides why the defended cause meets the criteria of just war theory and why the enemy's cause does not. If a legitimate and effective argument on this basis cannot be assembled, then it is likely that both the cause and the strategy are fatally flawed.

## **STRATEGY-MAKING PITFALLS**

Given the complexity of making strategy, it is understandable that some seek ways to simplify the process. There are several traps into which would-be strategists commonly fall: searching for strategic panaceas; emphasizing process over product in strategy making; seeking the single, decisive act, the *fait accompli*; attempting to simplify the nature of the problem by using labels such as limited or unlimited wars; falling into a paralysis of inaction; or rushing to a conclusion recklessly.

### **Strategic Panaceas**

Strategists have long sought strategic panaceas: strategic prescriptions that will guarantee victory in any situation. The strategic panacea denies any need for understanding the unique

characteristics of each strategic situation, offering instead a ready-made and universal solution.

Examples abound. In the 1890s, the American naval writer Alfred Thayer Mahan convinced many world leaders of the validity of his theories centered on capital ships and concentrated battle fleets.<sup>7</sup> These theories prompted Germany to challenge Great Britain for naval dominance, contributing to the tension between the two countries prior to the outbreak of World War I. Similarly, the theories of German Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen fixated on strategies of annihilation and battles of envelopment. These prescriptive theories dominated Germany's strategic thinking in both World Wars. The deterrence strategies embraced by American Cold War theorists were equally influential. American forces accordingly designed for high-intensity warfare in Europe proved inap-propriate to counter Communist-inspired wars of national liberation.

### **Emphasizing Process Over Product**

The second major trap is the attempt to reduce the strategy-making process to a routine. The danger in standardizing strategy-making procedures is that the leadership may believe that the process alone will ensure development of sound strategies. Just as there is no strategic panacea, there is no optimal strategy-making process. Nonetheless, political organizations, bureaucracies, and military staffs normally seek to systematize strategy making. These processes are designed to control the

collection and flow of information, to standardize strategy making, and to ensure the consistent execution of policy.

Such systems are vitally necessary. They impose a degree of order that enables the human mind to cope with the otherwise overwhelming complexity of politics and war. However, they may also generate friction and rigidity. Standardized strategies can be valuable as a point of departure for tailored strategies or as elements of larger tailored strategies. However, when the entire process is run by routine, the results are predictable strategies by default that adversaries can easily anticipate and counter.

### **The Fait Accompli**

One class of strategic-level actions is worth considering as a distinct category. These are strategies in which the political and military goals are identical and can be achieved quickly, simultaneously, and in one blow. Done properly, these actions appear to be isolated events that are not part of larger, continuous military operations. More than raids or harassment, these actions aim to present the enemy with an accomplished fact, or *fait accompli*—political/military achievement that simply cannot be undone. In 1981, the Israelis became extremely concerned about Iraq's nuclear weapons development program. They launched an isolated bombing raid that destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear facility. The Israelis had no further need to attack Iraqi targets, and Iraq had no military means of recovering the lost facility.

A coup d'état is usually designed as a *fait accompli*. The political and military objectives are the same thing: seizure of the existing government. Noncombatant evacuations are also normally executed as *faits accomplis*. In a noncombatant evacuation, one country lands its troops for the purpose of evacuating its citizens from a dangerous situation, as in a revolution or civil war. Once the evacuation has been accomplished, the cause for conflict between the state conducting the evacuation and those engaging in the hostilities that led to it has been removed.

The *fait accompli* is another potential strategic pitfall. It is immensely attractive to political leaders because it seems neat and clean—even “surgical.” The danger is that many attempted *faits accomplis* end up as merely the opening gambit in what turns out to be a long-term conflict or commitment. This result was normally not intended or desired by those who initiated the confrontation. In 1983, the Argentines assumed that their swift seizure of the nearby Falkland Islands could not be reversed by far-off, postimperial Britain and that therefore Britain would make no effort to do so. They were wrong on both counts.

### Limited and Unlimited Wars

Another common error is the attempt to characterize a war as either “limited” or “unlimited.” Such characterizations can be seriously misleading. While we can generally classify the political and military objectives of any *individual* belligerent in a war as limited or unlimited, seldom can we accurately

characterize the conflict itself as limited or unlimited. To do so may leave us badly confused about the actual dynamics of a conflict.

If we examine the conflicting aims of the belligerents in the Vietnam War, we can see that this was never a limited war from the North Vietnamese perspective nor should South Vietnam have pursued only limited political objectives. North Vietnam's political goal was the elimination of the South Vietnamese government as a political entity and the complete unification of all Vietnam under northern rule. The North Vietnamese leadership saw victory in this struggle as a matter of survival. While the North Vietnamese military strategy against the United States was erosion, against South Vietnam it was annihilation. The South Vietnamese leadership was weak, enjoying little legitimacy with a population that had no hope of conquering the North. Its only goal was to survive. The American strategy against North Vietnam was one of erosion. However, the United States was never able to convince North Vietnam that peace on America's terms was preferable to continuing the war.

All wars can be considered limited in some aspects because they are generally constricted to a specific geographic area, to certain kinds of weapons and tactics, or to numbers of committed combatants. These distinctions are the factors at work in a particular conflict, not its fundamental strategic classification. Another common error is the assumption that limited wars are small wars and unlimited wars are big ones. This confuses the

scale of a war with its military and political objectives. Large-scale wars can be quite limited in political and/or military objectives, while a relatively small conflict may have unlimited political and military objectives. The U.S. action against Panama in 1989 can be considered a very small-scale war, but both its political and military objectives were unlimited. Panama's capacity to resist was annihilated, its regime was deposed, and its leader was put on public trial and imprisoned. It is possible that had the United States pursued more limited objectives, the result might have been a war of attrition much more destructive to both sides.

The strategic pitfall in characterizing wars as limited or unlimited is that such a label may lead to adoption of an incorrect strategy. This is particularly true in the case of limited wars. There are always temptations to limit the military means employed, even when the political objectives demand a strategy of annihilation. Such inclinations stem from the psychological and moral burdens involved in the use of force, the desire to conserve resources, and often a tendency to underestimate the enemy or the overall problem. Strategists must correctly understand the character and the resource demands of a strategy before they choose it.

### **Paralysis and Recklessness**

Competent strategic-level decisionmakers are aware of the high stakes of war and of the complex nature of the strategic environment. Successful decisions may lead to great gains, but failure can lead to fearful losses. Some personalities instinctively

respond to this environment with a hold-the-line, take-no-chances mentality. Others display an irresistible bias for action.

Unless we understand the specific problems, dangers, and potential gains of a situation, the two approaches are equally dangerous. Paralysis is neither more nor less dangerous than blindly striking out in the face of either threat or opportunity. Unfortunately, the very process of attempting to ascertain the particulars can lead to “paralysis by analysis.” Strategy makers almost always have to plan and act in the absence of complete information or without a full comprehension of the situation.

At the same time, strategists must guard against making hasty or ill-conceived decisions. The strategic realm differs from the tactical arena both in the pace at which events occur and the consequences of actions taken. Rarely does the strategic decisionmaker have to act instantaneously. The development of strategy demands a certain discipline to study and understand the dynamics of a situation and think through the implications of potential actions. While it is often possible to recover from a tactical error or a defeat, the consequences of a serious misstep at the strategic level can be catastrophic. Boldness and decisiveness, which are important characteristics of leadership at any level, must at the strategic level be tempered with an appropriate sense of balance and perspective.

The strategist’s responsibility is to balance opportunity against risk and to balance both against uncertainty. Despite the obstacles to focusing on specific strategic problems and to

taking effective action, we must focus, and we must act. Success is clearly possible.

## The Making of Strategy

1. John Terraine, *A Time For Courage: The Royal Air Force in the European War, 1939–45* as quoted in Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace, and Victory: Strategy and Statecraft for the Next Century* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990) p. 8.

2. Used as a simple but effective model of the command and control process, the observation-orientation-decide-act (OODA) loop applies to any two-sided conflict. For a detailed description, see MCDP 6, *Command and Control* (October 1996) p. 63.

3. *Critical vulnerability* is a Marine Corps doctrinal concept that appeared first in FMFM 1, *Warfighting* (March 1989) pp. 35–36. The term *center of gravity* found its way into our strategic vocabulary via Clausewitz's *On War*. Clausewitz used the term frequently and in a variety of meanings. See Clausewitz, pp. 595–597. For a full discussion of *center of gravity* and *critical vulnerability*, see MCDP 1, *Warfighting* (June 1997) pp. 45–47.

4. R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History From 3500 B.C. to the Present* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993) p. 952. See also: Shelby Foote, *Fort Sumter to Perryville* (New York: Random House, 1986) pp. 110–114.

5. **Strategic concept:** “The course of action accepted as the result of the estimate of the strategic situation. It is a statement of what is to be done in broad terms sufficiently flexible to permit its use in framing the military, diplomatic, economic, psychological and other measures which stem from it.” (Joint Pub 1-02)

6. James Turner Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War*, “A Moral and Historical Inquiry” (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981) pp. xxii–xxiii.

7. A. T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1942).

### Conclusion

1. Sun Tzu, p. 63.
2. A. T. Mahan as quoted in Heinl, *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations*, p. 311.
3. Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, before combined hearings of the Procurement and Research and Development Subcommittees of the House National Security Committee, March 29, 1997. This testimony can also be found in “Information Superiority,” *Marine Corps Gazette* (June 1997) pp. 59–60.

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Reading

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**Title:** *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C. The White House, September 2002 pp 1 to 20 (18 pages)

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# I. OVERVIEW OF AMERICA'S INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

*“Our Nation’s cause has always been larger than our Nation’s defense.  
We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace—a peace that favors liberty.  
We will defend the peace against the threats from terrorists and tyrants.  
We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers.  
And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
WEST POINT, NEW YORK  
JUNE 1, 2002

The United States possesses unprecedented—and unequalled—strength and influence in the world. Sustained by faith in the principles of liberty, and the value of a free society, this position comes with unparalleled responsibilities, obligations, and opportunity. The great strength of this nation must be used to promote a balance of power that favors freedom.

For most of the twentieth century, the world was divided by a great struggle over ideas: destructive totalitarian visions versus freedom and equality.

That great struggle is over. The militant visions of class, nation, and race which promised utopia and delivered misery have been defeated and discredited. America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few. We must defeat these threats to our Nation, allies, and friends.

This is also a time of opportunity for America. We will work to translate this moment of influence into decades of peace, prosperity, and liberty.

The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity.

And this path is not America’s alone. It is open to all.

To achieve these goals, the United States will:

- champion aspirations for human dignity;
- strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism and work to prevent attacks against us and our friends;
- work with others to defuse regional conflicts;
- prevent our enemies from threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with weapons of mass destruction;
- ignite a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;

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- expand the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
  - develop agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of global power; and
  - transform America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

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## II. CHAMPION ASPIRATIONS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

*“Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
WEST POINT, NEW YORK  
JUNE 1, 2002

In pursuit of our goals, our first imperative is to clarify what we stand for: the United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere. No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. Fathers and mothers in all societies want their children to be educated and to live free from poverty and violence. No people on earth yearn to be oppressed, aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police.

America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property.

These demands can be met in many ways. America’s constitution has served us well. Many other nations, with different histories and cultures, facing different circumstances, have successfully incorporated these core principles into their own systems of governance. History has not been kind to those nations which ignored or flouted the rights and aspirations of their people.

America’s experience as a great multi-ethnic democracy affirms our conviction that people of many heritages and faiths can live and prosper in peace. Our own history is a long struggle to live up to our ideals. But even in our worst moments, the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence were there to guide us. As a result, America is not just a stronger, but is a freer and more just society.

Today, these ideals are a lifeline to lonely defenders of liberty. And when openings arrive, we can encourage change—as we did in central and eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991, or in Belgrade in 2000. When we see democratic processes take hold among our friends in Taiwan or in the Republic of Korea, and see elected leaders replace generals in Latin America and Africa, we see examples of how authoritarian systems can evolve, marrying local history and traditions with the principles we all cherish.

Embodying lessons from our past and using the opportunity we have today, the national security strategy of the United States must start from these core beliefs and look outward for possibilities to expand liberty.

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Our principles will guide our government's decisions about international cooperation, the character of our foreign assistance, and the allocation of resources. They will guide our actions and our words in international bodies.

We will:

- speak out honestly about violations of the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity using our voice and vote in international institutions to advance freedom;
- use our foreign aid to promote freedom and support those who struggle non-violently for it, ensuring that nations moving toward democracy are rewarded for the steps they take;
- make freedom and the development of democratic institutions key themes in our bilateral relations, seeking solidarity and cooperation from other democracies while we press governments that deny human rights to move toward a better future; and
- take special efforts to promote freedom of religion and conscience and defend it from encroachment by repressive governments.

We will champion the cause of human dignity and oppose those who resist it.

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### III. STRENGTHEN ALLIANCES TO DEFEAT GLOBAL TERRORISM AND WORK TO PREVENT ATTACKS AGAINST US AND OUR FRIENDS

*“Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil. War has been waged against us by stealth and deceit and murder. This nation is peaceful, but fierce when stirred to anger. The conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
WASHINGTON, D.C. (THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL)  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

The United States of America is fighting a war against terrorists of global reach. The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.

In many regions, legitimate grievances prevent the emergence of a lasting peace. Such grievances deserve to be, and must be, addressed within a political process. But no cause justifies terror. The United States will make no concessions to terrorist demands and strike no deals with them. We make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbor or provide aid to them.

The struggle against global terrorism is different from any other war in our history. It will be fought on many fronts against a particularly elusive enemy over an extended period of time. Progress

will come through the persistent accumulation of successes—some seen, some unseen.

Today our enemies have seen the results of what civilized nations can, and will, do against regimes that harbor, support, and use terrorism to achieve their political goals. Afghanistan has been liberated; coalition forces continue to hunt down the Taliban and al-Qaida. But it is not only this battlefield on which we will engage terrorists. Thousands of trained terrorists remain at large with cells in North America, South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and across Asia.

Our priority will be first to disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach and attack their leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. This will have a disabling effect upon the terrorists’ ability to plan and operate.

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We will continue to encourage our regional partners to take up a coordinated effort that isolates the terrorists. Once the regional campaign localizes the threat to a particular state, we will help ensure the state has the military, law enforcement, political, and financial tools necessary to finish the task.

The United States will continue to work with our allies to disrupt the financing of terrorism. We will identify and block the sources of funding for terrorism, freeze the assets of terrorists and those who support them, deny terrorists access to the international financial system, protect legitimate charities from being abused by terrorists, and prevent the movement of terrorists' assets through alternative financial networks.

However, this campaign need not be sequential to be effective, the cumulative effect across all regions will help achieve the results we seek.

We will disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations by:

- direct and continuous action using all the elements of national and international power. Our immediate focus will be those terrorist organizations of global reach and any terrorist or state sponsor of terrorism which attempts to gain or use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or their precursors;
- defending the United States, the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders. While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country; and
- denying further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by convincing or compelling states to accept their sovereign responsibilities.

We will also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism. This includes:

- using the full influence of the United States, and working closely with allies and friends, to make clear that all acts of terrorism are illegitimate so that terrorism will be viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide: behavior that no respectable government can condone or support and all must oppose;
- supporting moderate and modern government, especially in the Muslim world, to ensure that the conditions and ideologies that promote terrorism do not find fertile ground in any nation;
- diminishing the underlying conditions that spawn terrorism by enlisting the international community to focus its efforts and resources on areas most at risk; and
- using effective public diplomacy to promote the free flow of information and ideas to kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom of those in societies ruled by the sponsors of global terrorism.

While we recognize that our best defense is a good offense, we are also strengthening America's homeland security to protect against and deter attack.

This Administration has proposed the largest government reorganization since the Truman Administration created the National Security Council and the Department of Defense. Centered on a new Department of Homeland Security and including a new unified military command and a fundamental reordering of the FBI, our comprehensive plan to secure the homeland encompasses every level of government and the cooperation of the public and the private sector.

This strategy will turn adversity into opportunity. For example, emergency management systems will be better able to cope not just with terrorism but with all hazards. Our medical system will be strengthened to manage not just

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bioterror, but all infectious diseases and mass-casualty dangers. Our border controls will not just stop terrorists, but improve the efficient movement of legitimate traffic.

While our focus is protecting America, we know that to defeat terrorism in today's globalized world we need support from our allies and friends. Wherever possible, the United States will rely on regional organizations and state powers to meet their obligations to fight terrorism. Where governments find the fight against terrorism beyond their capacities, we will match their willpower and their resources with whatever help we and our allies can provide.

As we pursue the terrorists in Afghanistan, we will continue to work with international

organizations such as the United Nations, as well as non-governmental organizations, and other countries to provide the humanitarian, political, economic, and security assistance necessary to rebuild Afghanistan so that it will never again abuse its people, threaten its neighbors, and provide a haven for terrorists.

In the war against global terrorism, we will never forget that we are ultimately fighting for our democratic values and way of life. Freedom and fear are at war, and there will be no quick or easy end to this conflict. In leading the campaign against terrorism, we are forging new, productive international relationships and redefining existing ones in ways that meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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## IV. WORK WITH OTHERS TO DEFUSE REGIONAL CONFLICTS

*“We build a world of justice, or we will live in a world of coercion.  
The magnitude of our shared responsibilities makes our disagreements look so small.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
BERLIN, GERMANY  
MAY 23, 2002

Concerned nations must remain actively engaged in critical regional disputes to avoid explosive escalation and minimize human suffering. In an increasingly interconnected world, regional crisis can strain our alliances, rekindle rivalries among the major powers, and create horrifying affronts to human dignity. When violence erupts and states falter, the United States will work with friends and partners to alleviate suffering and restore stability.

No doctrine can anticipate every circumstance in which U.S. action—direct or indirect—is warranted. We have finite political, economic, and military resources to meet our global priorities. The United States will approach each case with these strategic principles in mind:

- The United States should invest time and resources into building international relationships and institutions that can help manage local crises when they emerge.
- The United States should be realistic about its ability to help those who are unwilling or unready to help themselves. Where and when people are ready to do their part, we will be willing to move decisively.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical because of the toll of human suffering, because of America’s close relationship with the state of Israel and key Arab states, and because of that region’s importance to other global priorities of the United States. There can be no peace for either side without freedom for both sides. America stands committed to an independent and democratic Palestine, living beside Israel in peace and security. Like all other people, Palestinians deserve a government that serves their interests and listens to their voices. The United States will continue to encourage all parties to step up to their responsibilities as we seek a just and comprehensive settlement to the conflict.

The United States, the international donor community, and the World Bank stand ready to work with a reformed Palestinian government on economic development, increased humanitarian assistance, and a program to establish, finance, and monitor a truly independent judiciary. If Palestinians embrace democracy, and the rule of law, confront corruption, and firmly reject terror, they can count on American support for the creation of a Palestinian state.

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Israel also has a large stake in the success of a democratic Palestine. Permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy. So the United States continues to challenge Israeli leaders to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state. As there is progress towards security, Israel forces need to withdraw fully to positions they held prior to September 28, 2000. And consistent with the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee, Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories must stop. As violence subsides, freedom of movement should be restored, permitting innocent Palestinians to resume work and normal life. The United States can play a crucial role but, ultimately, lasting peace can only come when Israelis and Palestinians resolve the issues and end the conflict between them.

In South Asia, the United States has also emphasized the need for India and Pakistan to resolve their disputes. This Administration invested time and resources building strong bilateral relations with India and Pakistan. These strong relations then gave us leverage to play a constructive role when tensions in the region became acute. With Pakistan, our bilateral relations have been bolstered by Pakistan's choice to join the war against terror and move toward building a more open and tolerant society. The Administration sees India's potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the twenty-first century and has worked hard to transform our relationship accordingly. Our involvement in this regional dispute, building on earlier investments in bilateral relations, looks first to concrete steps by India and Pakistan that can help defuse military confrontation.

Indonesia took courageous steps to create a working democracy and respect for the rule of law. By tolerating ethnic minorities, respecting the rule of law, and accepting open markets, Indonesia may be able to employ the engine of opportunity that has helped lift some of its neighbors out of poverty and desperation. It is the initiative by Indonesia that allows U.S. assistance to make a difference.

In the Western Hemisphere we have formed flexible coalitions with countries that share our priorities, particularly Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Chile, and Colombia. Together we will promote a truly democratic hemisphere where our integration advances security, prosperity, opportunity, and hope. We will work with regional institutions, such as the Summit of the Americas process, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Defense Ministerial of the Americas for the benefit of the entire hemisphere.

Parts of Latin America confront regional conflict, especially arising from the violence of drug cartels and their accomplices. This conflict and unrestrained narcotics trafficking could imperil the health and security of the United States. Therefore we have developed an active strategy to help the Andean nations adjust their economies, enforce their laws, defeat terrorist organizations, and cut off the supply of drugs, while—as important—we work to reduce the demand for drugs in our own country.

In Colombia, we recognize the link between terrorist and extremist groups that challenge the security of the state and drug trafficking activities that help finance the operations of such groups. We are working to help Colombia defend its democratic institutions and defeat illegal armed groups of both the left and right by extending effective sovereignty over the entire national territory and provide basic security to the Colombian people.

In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty. This threatens both a core value of the United States—preserving human dignity—and our strategic priority—combating global terror. American interests and American principles, therefore, lead in the same direction: we will work with others for an African continent that lives in liberty, peace, and growing prosperity. Together with our European allies, we must help strengthen Africa's fragile states, help build indigenous capability to secure porous borders, and help build up the law

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enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists.

An ever more lethal environment exists in Africa as local civil wars spread beyond borders to create regional war zones. Forming coalitions of the willing and cooperative security arrangements are key to confronting these emerging transnational threats.

Africa's great size and diversity requires a security strategy that focuses on bilateral engagement and builds coalitions of the willing. This Administration will focus on three interlocking strategies for the region:

- countries with major impact on their neighborhood such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia are anchors for regional engagement and require focused attention;

- coordination with European allies and international institutions is essential for constructive conflict mediation and successful peace operations; and
- Africa's capable reforming states and sub-regional organizations must be strengthened as the primary means to address transnational threats on a sustained basis.

Ultimately the path of political and economic freedom presents the surest route to progress in sub-Saharan Africa, where most wars are conflicts over material resources and political access often tragically waged on the basis of ethnic and religious difference. The transition to the African Union with its stated commitment to good governance and a common responsibility for democratic political systems offers opportunities to strengthen democracy on the continent.

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V. PREVENT OUR ENEMIES FROM THREATENING US,  
OUR ALLIES, AND OUR FRIENDS  
WITH WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

*“The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends—and we will oppose them with all our power.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
WEST POINT, NEW YORK  
JUNE 1, 2002

The nature of the Cold War threat required the United States—with our allies and friends—to emphasize deterrence of the enemy’s use of force, producing a grim strategy of mutual assured destruction. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, our security environment has undergone profound transformation.

Having moved from confrontation to cooperation as the hallmark of our relationship with Russia, the dividends are evident: an end to the balance of terror that divided us; an historic reduction in the nuclear arsenals on both sides; and cooperation in areas such as counterterrorism and missile defense that until recently were inconceivable.

But new deadly challenges have emerged from rogue states and terrorists. None of these contemporary threats rival the sheer destructive power that was arrayed against us by the Soviet Union. However, the nature and motivations of these new adversaries, their determination to obtain destructive powers hitherto available only to the world’s strongest states, and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against us, make today’s security environment more complex and dangerous.

In the 1990s we witnessed the emergence of a small number of rogue states that, while different in important ways, share a number of attributes. These states:

- brutalize their own people and squander their national resources for the personal gain of the rulers;
- display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, and callously violate international treaties to which they are party;
- are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, along with other advanced military technology, to be used as threats or offensively to achieve the aggressive designs of these regimes;
- sponsor terrorism around the globe; and
- reject basic human values and hate the United States and everything for which it stands.

At the time of the Gulf War, we acquired irrefutable proof that Iraq's designs were not limited to the chemical weapons it had used against Iran and its own people, but also extended to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and biological agents. In the past decade North Korea has become the world's principal purveyor of ballistic missiles, and has tested increasingly capable missiles while developing its own WMD arsenal. Other rogue regimes seek nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons as well. These states' pursuit of, and global trade in, such weapons has become a looming threat to all nations.

We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends. Our response must take full advantage of strengthened alliances, the establishment of new partnerships with former adversaries, innovation in the use of military forces, modern technologies, including the development of an effective missile defense system, and increased emphasis on intelligence collection and analysis.

Our comprehensive strategy to combat WMD includes:

- *Proactive counterproliferation efforts.* We must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed. We must ensure that key capabilities—detection, active and passive defenses, and counterforce capabilities—are integrated into our defense transformation and our homeland security systems. Counterproliferation must also be integrated into the doctrine, training, and equipping of our forces and those of our allies to ensure that we can prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries.
- *Strengthened nonproliferation efforts to prevent rogue states and terrorists from acquiring the materials, technologies, and expertise necessary for weapons of mass destruction.* We will enhance diplomacy, arms control, multilateral export controls, and threat reduction assistance that impede states and terrorists seeking WMD, and when necessary, interdict enabling technologies and materials. We will continue to build coalitions to support these efforts, encouraging their increased political and financial support for nonproliferation and threat reduction programs. The recent G-8 agreement to commit up to \$20 billion to a global partnership against proliferation marks a major step forward.
- *Effective consequence management to respond to the effects of WMD use, whether by terrorists or hostile states.* Minimizing the effects of WMD use against our people will help deter those who possess such weapons and dissuade those who seek to acquire them by persuading enemies that they cannot attain their desired ends. The United States must also be prepared to respond to the effects of WMD use against our forces abroad, and to help friends and allies if they are attacked.

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It has taken almost a decade for us to comprehend the true nature of this new threat. Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first.

- In the Cold War, especially following the Cuban missile crisis, we faced a generally status quo, risk-averse adversary. Deterrence was an effective defense. But deterrence based only upon the threat of retaliation is less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations.
- In the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction were considered weapons of last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them. Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbors. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the United States and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behavior of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the United States.
- Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness. The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action.

For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat—most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack.

We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They know such attacks would fail. Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction—weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning.

The targets of these attacks are our military forces and our civilian population, in direct violation of one of the principal norms of the law of warfare. As was demonstrated by the losses on September 11, 2001, mass civilian casualties is the specific objective of terrorists and these losses would be exponentially more severe if terrorists acquired and used weapons of mass destruction.

The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.

The United States will not use force in all cases to preempt emerging threats, nor should nations use preemption as a pretext for aggression. Yet in an age where the enemies of civilization openly and actively seek the world's most destructive technologies, the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather.

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We will always proceed deliberately, weighing the consequences of our actions. To support preemptive options, we will:

- build better, more integrated intelligence capabilities to provide timely, accurate information on threats, wherever they may emerge;
- coordinate closely with allies to form a common assessment of the most dangerous threats; and

- continue to transform our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results.

The purpose of our actions will always be to eliminate a specific threat to the United States or our allies and friends. The reasons for our actions will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just.

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## VI. IGNITE A NEW ERA OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH FREE MARKETS AND FREE TRADE

*“When nations close their markets and opportunity is hoarded by a privileged few, no amount—no amount—of development aid is ever enough. When nations respect their people, open markets, invest in better health and education, every dollar of aid, every dollar of trade revenue and domestic capital is used more effectively.”*

PRESIDENT BUSH  
MONTERREY, MEXICO  
MARCH 22, 2002

A strong world economy enhances our national security by advancing prosperity and freedom in the rest of the world. Economic growth supported by free trade and free markets creates new jobs and higher incomes. It allows people to lift their lives out of poverty, spurs economic and legal reform, and the fight against corruption, and it reinforces the habits of liberty.

We will promote economic growth and economic freedom beyond America’s shores. All governments are responsible for creating their own economic policies and responding to their own economic challenges. We will use our economic engagement with other countries to underscore the benefits of policies that generate higher productivity and sustained economic growth, including:

- pro-growth legal and regulatory policies to encourage business investment, innovation, and entrepreneurial activity;
- tax policies—particularly lower marginal tax rates—that improve incentives for work and investment;

- rule of law and intolerance of corruption so that people are confident that they will be able to enjoy the fruits of their economic endeavors;
- strong financial systems that allow capital to be put to its most efficient use;
- sound fiscal policies to support business activity;
- investments in health and education that improve the well-being and skills of the labor force and population as a whole; and
- free trade that provides new avenues for growth and fosters the diffusion of technologies and ideas that increase productivity and opportunity.

The lessons of history are clear: market economies, not command-and-control economies with the heavy hand of government, are the best way to promote prosperity and reduce poverty. Policies that further strengthen market incentives and market institutions are relevant for all economies—industrialized countries, emerging markets, and the developing world.

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A return to strong economic growth in Europe and Japan is vital to U.S. national security interests. We want our allies to have strong economies for their own sake, for the sake of the global economy, and for the sake of global security. European efforts to remove structural barriers in their economies are particularly important in this regard, as are Japan's efforts to end deflation and address the problems of non-performing loans in the Japanese banking system. We will continue to use our regular consultations with Japan and our European partners—including through the Group of Seven (G-7)—to discuss policies they are adopting to promote growth in their economies and support higher global economic growth.

Improving stability in emerging markets is also key to global economic growth. International flows of investment capital are needed to expand the productive potential of these economies. These flows allow emerging markets and developing countries to make the investments that raise living standards and reduce poverty. Our long-term objective should be a world in which all countries have investment-grade credit ratings that allow them access to international capital markets and to invest in their future.

We are committed to policies that will help emerging markets achieve access to larger capital flows at lower cost. To this end, we will continue to pursue reforms aimed at reducing uncertainty in financial markets. We will work actively with other countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the private sector to implement the G-7 Action Plan negotiated earlier this year for preventing financial crises and more effectively resolving them when they occur.

The best way to deal with financial crises is to prevent them from occurring, and we have encouraged the IMF to improve its efforts doing so. We will continue to work with the IMF to streamline the policy conditions for its lending and to focus its lending strategy on achieving economic growth through sound fiscal and

monetary policy, exchange rate policy, and financial sector policy.

The concept of “free trade” arose as a moral principle even before it became a pillar of economics. If you can make something that others value, you should be able to sell it to them. If others make something that you value, you should be able to buy it. This is real freedom, the freedom for a person—or a nation—to make a living. To promote free trade, the United States has developed a comprehensive strategy:

- *Seize the global initiative.* The new global trade negotiations we helped launch at Doha in November 2001 will have an ambitious agenda, especially in agriculture, manufacturing, and services, targeted for completion in 2005. The United States has led the way in completing the accession of China and a democratic Taiwan to the World Trade Organization. We will assist Russia's preparations to join the WTO.
- *Press regional initiatives.* The United States and other democracies in the Western Hemisphere have agreed to create the Free Trade Area of the Americas, targeted for completion in 2005. This year the United States will advocate market-access negotiations with its partners, targeted on agriculture, industrial goods, services, investment, and government procurement. We will also offer more opportunity to the poorest continent, Africa, starting with full use of the preferences allowed in the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and leading to free trade.
- *Move ahead with bilateral free trade agreements.* Building on the free trade agreement with Jordan enacted in 2001, the Administration will work this year to complete free trade agreements with Chile and Singapore. Our aim is to achieve free trade agreements with a mix of developed

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and developing countries in all regions of the world. Initially, Central America, Southern Africa, Morocco, and Australia will be our principal focal points.

- *Renew the executive-congressional partnership.* Every administration's trade strategy depends on a productive partnership with Congress. After a gap of 8 years, the Administration reestablished majority support in the Congress for trade liberalization by passing Trade Promotion Authority and the other market opening measures for developing countries in the Trade Act of 2002. This Administration will work with Congress to enact new bilateral, regional, and global trade agreements that will be concluded under the recently passed Trade Promotion Authority.
- *Promote the connection between trade and development.* Trade policies can help developing countries strengthen property rights, competition, the rule of law, investment, the spread of knowledge, open societies, the efficient allocation of resources, and regional integration—all leading to growth, opportunity, and confidence in developing countries. The United States is implementing The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act to provide market-access for nearly all goods produced in the 35 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. We will make more use of this act and its equivalent for the Caribbean Basin and continue to work with multilateral and regional institutions to help poorer countries take advantage of these opportunities. Beyond market access, the most important area where trade intersects with poverty is in public health. We will ensure that the WTO intellectual property rules are flexible enough to allow developing nations to gain access to critical medicines for extraordinary dangers like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.
- *Enforce trade agreements and laws against unfair practices.* Commerce depends on the rule of law; international trade depends on enforceable agreements. Our top priorities are to resolve ongoing disputes with the European Union, Canada, and Mexico and to make a global effort to address new technology, science, and health regulations that needlessly impede farm exports and improved agriculture. Laws against unfair trade practices are often abused, but the international community must be able to address genuine concerns about government subsidies and dumping. International industrial espionage which undermines fair competition must be detected and deterred.
- *Help domestic industries and workers adjust.* There is a sound statutory framework for these transitional safeguards which we have used in the agricultural sector and which we are using this year to help the American steel industry. The benefits of free trade depend upon the enforcement of fair trading practices. These safeguards help ensure that the benefits of free trade do not come at the expense of American workers. Trade adjustment assistance will help workers adapt to the change and dynamism of open markets.
- *Protect the environment and workers.* The United States must foster economic growth in ways that will provide a better life along with widening prosperity. We will incorporate labor and environmental concerns into U.S. trade negotiations, creating a healthy "network" between multilateral environmental agreements with the WTO, and use the International Labor Organization, trade preference programs, and trade talks to improve working conditions in conjunction with freer trade.
- *Enhance energy security.* We will strengthen our own energy security and the shared prosperity of the global economy by working with our allies, trading partners,

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and energy producers to expand the sources and types of global energy supplied, especially in the Western Hemisphere, Africa, Central Asia, and the Caspian region. We will also continue to work with our partners to develop cleaner and more energy efficient technologies.

Economic growth should be accompanied by global efforts to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations associated with this growth, containing them at a level that prevents dangerous human interference with the global climate. Our overall objective is to reduce America's greenhouse gas emissions relative to the size of our economy, cutting such emissions per unit of economic activity by 18 percent over the next 10 years, by the year 2012. Our strategies for attaining this goal will be to:

- remain committed to the basic U.N. Framework Convention for international cooperation;
- obtain agreements with key industries to cut emissions of some of the most potent greenhouse gases and give transferable credits to companies that can show real cuts;
- develop improved standards for measuring and registering emission reductions;
- promote renewable energy production and clean coal technology, as well as nuclear power—which produces no greenhouse gas emissions, while also improving fuel economy for U.S. cars and trucks;
- increase spending on research and new conservation technologies, to a total of \$4.5 billion—the largest sum being spent on climate change by any country in the world and a \$700 million increase over last year's budget; and
- assist developing countries, especially the major greenhouse gas emitters such as China and India, so that they will have the tools and resources to join this effort and be able to grow along a cleaner and better path.

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**Course:** Strategy and Policy

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**Course Book:** 8802A

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**Lesson:** 1

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**Subject:** Required Reading

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**Title:** Interview with John Lewis Gaddis on the 2002 NSS as a grand strategy, PBS Frontline, 16 January 2003 (18 pages)

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**Interview: John Lewis Gaddis (PBS Frontline: January 16, 2003)**



Gaddis is the Robert A. Lovett professor of military and naval history at Yale University and the author, most recently, of *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford, 2002). In this interview, he discusses how the Bush administration's National Security Strategy [released September 2002] represents a sweeping transformation in U.S. foreign policy. Gaddis also places some of NSS's key elements -- preemption, American hegemony, a willingness to act alone, if necessary -- in historical context and assesses the current U.S. drive toward regime change in Iraq and how this fits into a larger grand strategy. This interview was conducted on Jan. 16, 2003.

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**The National Security Strategy (NSS) that the Bush administration released in September 2002, you describe it as a "grand strategy." Why is it a grand strategy?**

... First of all, it responds to a crisis. And it is crises that generally generate grand strategies. So, just as the grand strategy that won World War II came out of the Pearl Harbor surprise attack, so this one did as well. This is not surprising that there would be a rethinking of grand strategic assumptions in the wake of something like the 9/11 attack.

Secondly, I think it's a grand strategy in the sense that it is comprehensive. It does not simply break up the world into regions and say that we have an approach for this region and an approach for that region, but these don't necessarily interconnect. I think that was often the tendency in the Clinton

administration, a bunch of parts that did not completely add to a whole. And I think that this strategy does, in that sense.

I think it's also a grand strategy in the sense that it has both short-term and long-term objectives. This grand strategy is actually looking toward the culmination of the Wilsonian project of a world safe for democracy, even in the Middle East. And this long-term dimension of it, it seems to me, goes beyond what we've seen in the thinking of more recent administrations. It is more characteristic of the kind of thinking, say, that the Truman administration was doing at the beginning of the Cold War -- thinking not only about, what do we have to do tomorrow and what do we have to do next week? But, where do we want to come out at the end of this process? So, that's why I think it qualifies as a grand strategy.

#### **And how is it an historic shift?**

The Bush strategy is an historic shift for American foreign policy because it really is the first serious American grand strategy since containment in the early days of the Cold War. We went through the Cold War, the Cold War ended, and we got into a new situation without a grand strategy. We didn't really devise a grand strategy in the early '90s in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. And that's not terribly surprising. We didn't do that either in the immediate aftermath of World War I. We went through the entire 1920s and even the 1930s without a coherent grand strategy. But the shock of Pearl Harbor forced us to devise one. And the shock of 9/11 did something like that as well.

And I would argue that the Bush grand strategy is the most fundamental reshaping of American grand strategy that we've seen since containment, which was articulated back in 1947.

**Without an event like 9/11, could something this dramatic have been possible from any administration, or this administration specifically?**

No. I think it took a shock like 9/11 to produce something that was this dramatic. Sooner or later, yes, we would have evolved policies to deal with a post-Cold War world. But I have to say that 10 years into the post-Cold War era, there was very little sign of a comprehensive grand strategy. There were strategies toward particular countries and with regard to particular issues, but very little effort to pull it altogether. 9/11 forced us basically to get our grand strategic act together. And that is the way it normally happens, it seems to me, in history.

**How has the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction factored into the creation of this new National Security Strategy?**

I think that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction changes the situation that we face in two different ways. There are two kinds of weapons of mass destruction. There is the kind that we have always worried about: nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. That concern surely was there at the time that the Soviet Union fell apart some 12 years ago with regards to their weapons, and it's been there ever since. Nothing particularly new about that.

The other kind of weapons of mass destruction -- and this was the great surprise -- is that they turned out also to be box cutters and [people] sitting in airliners. These were not the kinds of weapons of mass destruction that we had anticipated or had been thinking about in the past. And that confronted us with the fact that we simply cannot take for granted our own domestic security.

**The Bush administration's NSS represents an evolution of thinking. Describe how we got this doctrine, where it came from.**

I think the history of this particular doctrine does go back to one particular individual. This is Paul Wolfowitz in his service in the first Bush administration and the defense review that was taking place in the last years of the first Bush administration, which Wolfowitz basically authored -- a doctrine of American hegemony; a doctrine in which the United States would seek to maintain a

position that it came out of the Cold War with, in which there were no obvious or plausible challengers to the United States.

That was considered quite shocking in 1992; so shocking, in fact, that the first Bush administration disavowed it. But I think that indeed it did become the basis of that administration's thinking. I think tacitly it was the basis of the Clinton administration's thinking. I think ever since then, there has been either explicitly or implicitly the sense that we have to hang on to this remarkable position of preeminence that we have in the world. So that's one strain that has given rise to the Bush strategy here.

I think that the second [strain] has to do with the thinking that has evolved both in academic circles and in official circles about the causes of terrorism in the first place. The more the experts have thought about this, the more they've come around to the view that the terrorism that we see is not the result necessarily of poverty or injustice. Poverty and injustice exist in a lot of different places in the rest of the world, but the citizens of those places don't all get into airplanes and fly them into buildings. There's something that has happened in the Middle East.

I think the sense is that the persistence of authoritarian regimes in that part of the world -- more than in any other single part of the world, this is the one part of the world that has not democratized -- has led to a sense of resentment on the part of young men, particularly, in that population. No doubt [it has led to] a sense of resentment on the part of everybody, but [it's] the young men who tend to act, who tend to be prone to being recruited into terrorist organizations, animated by religious radicalism. So the sense has come around -- and I think this was happening even before 9/11 -- to the argument that the real problem is the persistence of authoritarian regimes in that part of the world. And that ultimately, if you're going to solve a problem of terrorism, you have to solve the problem of authoritarianism.

So, paradoxically, we have come around in a Republican administration to the sense that the task of this country, the great task of the early 21st century, really has got to be to complete the task that Woodrow Wilson started at the beginning of the 20th century and that is democratization. Because only democratization leads to a system that can accommodate the different desires of different groups and prevent this kind of frustration from developing.

**Why did the first Bush administration reject the Wolfowitz draft back in 1992?  
Why was it thought to be so dramatic, so surprising?**

Well, in the context of the first Bush administration, we're talking about 1991, we're talking about the successful coalition in the Gulf War -- a remarkable coalition effort carried out with U.N. support.

We're also talking about a period at that point when there was closer cooperation among all the great powers than we had seen in a very long time indeed. And I think it was simply considered a little too sensitive for the United States to be saying in that context that it wanted to continue to be the greatest of great powers, far greater than any of the other powers. And in that context, still a very new idea and considered pretty shocking.

As we went through the 1990s, one of the things that we saw is that there were no other contenders out there who were likely to succeed in challenging the United States. The United States came out of the 1990s, if anything, in an even greater position of hegemony and preeminence than it was at the beginning of the 1990s. And after a while, it seems to me, people came around to the view that maybe the world is getting used to this, maybe we are getting used to this kind of relationship. By the end of the 1990s, I think, we had begun to get used to it. And more important, I think, the rest of the world, to some extent, had begun to get used to it.

**Explain that. You write in your recent *Foreign Policy* article that the world, to some extent, approves of American hegemony. How so?**

I think the world in part approves of American hegemony if you ask what the alternatives are. If you just say, "Do you approve of American hegemony?" probably people are going to say, "No." Then if you ask the next question, "Well, what would you put in its place? Would you put the old balance of power system in its place?" A lot of people would say, "No," because that would mean that the Europeans and the Chinese and the Russians would have to beef up their military budgets to a considerable extent at a time when they're interested in economic development. So maybe the balance of power system is not a very good alternative.

So, would you then go to the United Nations and say, "We rely on the United Nations to run the world?" Don't hold your breath on that. So that's a problem, you see. And you run through the various alternatives. Is anarchy an alternative? Well, not a very good one. So I think it's more the lesser of evils in the eyes of a lot of people than necessarily something that a lot of people would regard as a positive good.

But there is a historical basis for this. There had been other periods in which there has been a single dominant hegemony. The most famous example, of course, is Rome -- not necessarily an encouraging example, except the Roman Empire lasted for a very long time. But even in more recent history, in international economic policy or in international economic affairs there has been a dominant hegemony to keep the global economy going: Britain playing that role in the 19th century, and the United States playing that role through much of the 20th century. So, the idea of a single hegemony is not a totally new idea.

**You said that aspects of the Wolfowitz 1992 report and the doctrine that was sort of enunciated in it were followed through by the Clinton administration. What do you mean by that? It's not normally seen that way.**

I think the Clinton administration certainly tacitly accepted the premise that we did not want to see rivals to ourselves develop. Certainly the Clinton administration put very little emphasis on collaboration among the great powers. The second Bush administration has actually been more multilateral in that sense than the Clinton administration was.

The Clinton administration was very interested in pushing justice for small powers. This was often at the expense of great power relations. So our relationship with Russia, our relationship with China, suffered a lot in the Clinton administration. Was the Clinton administration's pursuit of justice for small powers part of a strategy of achieving hegemony? No, I don't think so. I don't think they were that sophisticated. But at the same time, I think in the way that they operated, they were reflecting that. ...

There's another side to this as well, and this was the realistic circumstance that they inherited. This is the way the world was when they came into office. And the world did not change by the time that they left office. So American hegemony was not just a doctrine; it was a reality at the end of the Cold War. The Clinton administration inherited that and did nothing to change it.

**Can you talk about the debate out there between what's been called the "realists" -- the Scowcrofts, the Eagleburgers, I guess Colin Powell to some extent -- and the so-called Reaganites or neo-Reaganites, those who are moving towards the Bush doctrine?**

There is an interesting debate, first of all, within the Republican Party and, secondly, within the conservative movement -- not necessarily the same thing -- about the future direction for American foreign policy. And the debate really is between those people who think that we should simply be wielding power without trying to achieve reform. This would be basically the realists' position that reform is implausible, impossible in some parts of the world, and the best you can do is to maintain your power, your position of superiority, and can install commerce.

And this is against another tradition, which is emerging within the Republican Party and within the conservative movement. It's actually been there for a long time; it goes back to Reagan, it seems to me. And that is an optimistic view of human nature, something that's quite astonishing for conservatives: the idea that American values are indeed transportable; that democratic values can be made to work elsewhere. This was certainly Reagan's position and I think it is definitely Bush's position.

So, by a kind of back-handed circuitous route, this swing of the conservative movement has come around to an old liberal position, which is that reform of other countries, reform in other cultures, is, in fact, possible -- not just possible, but is necessary.

**But it disagrees to some extent with that old liberal position because it also says, "We'll batter you across the head if you don't agree."**

Well, there is some element of "We'll batter you across the head if you don't agree." But part of the premise of the administration is that not a lot of battering is going to have to take place in order for this to work. And here is where, I think, they're drawing on the lessons of Afghanistan. Nobody knew what the response to American intervention in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 was going to be. But what actually happened was a great surprise: the fact that we used force, we did intervene in that most unpromising country, and we were welcomed, we were cheered.

And I think that experience has had a profound influence on the thinking of the administration about Iraq and about other issues. The expectation is that, in fact, we won't have to do a lot of battering; the Iraqis will actually be quite happy that we have invaded their country; and that this will be a low-cost operation. Now this may be totally unrealistic. But, nonetheless, I think it is the thinking of the administration that not a lot of battering actually has to take place.

**And there's another part to this debate -- a multilateral approach versus a unilateral approach.**

I don't think there is necessarily a contradiction between being a hegemonic power on the one hand and functioning multilaterally on the other. I think that's largely the history of the American experience in the Cold War. We were clearly hegemonic compared to our NATO allies. Nobody in NATO was in the same league with us. And yet NATO is held out as a superb model of multilateral cooperation.

Well, it worked in part because the other members of NATO knew that the United States had an enormous amount of power and was willing to use it. But it also worked because the United States respected the views of smaller members of NATO and, at times -- in fact, more often than many people realize -- changed its own views and approaches in deference to them. So there was a very fruitful interaction, it seems to me, between hegemonic authority on one hand and multilateralism on the other. In NATO that's really what made it work.

And I think that's what has to happen now if we are going to achieve the same kinds of things we achieved in the Cold War. We obviously cannot do it alone. We obviously need allies. It seems to me that is what happened in the United Nations in the fall of last year with President Bush going and making a compelling argument to the United Nations on the need for intrusive inspection in Iraq, and then an extended debate, both in front of public scrutiny and behind the scenes as well, producing a unanimous resolution.

This is a pretty good model of how it should work. And there are always going to be those who would say, "Well, is it multilateralism if the unilateral hegemony gets what it wants?" And that's a very good question. But then the question equally could be, is it unilateralism if the multilaterals go along with what the unilateral authority wants to do? That's a good question, too.

So in the real world I think these two things are not always contradictory, and I think we've got a pretty strong historical record to show how they can be handled in such a way that is not contradictory. And I hope our leaders are thinking about that historical record as they try to deal with this new situation. ...

**You say that the policy of preemption, which is another part of the Bush doctrine, requires hegemony. What do you mean by that?**

The doctrine of preemption really has emerged in response to this new kind of threat that was demonstrated to us on 9/11. And it does go back to the argument that terrorists are not deterrable because they have prepared themselves to commit suicide. So the logic of this situation is that you have to go beyond deterrence and you have to be serious about trying to preempt before they can act in the first place. So the preemption doctrine, I think, is coming straight out of this experience of 9/11.

In order for preemption to work, you do have to be in a lot of different places at the same time, with a lot of different capabilities. So preemption does, at least in the thinking of the administration, presume hegemony. The fact is the hegemony was there before they came up with the doctrine of preemption. But I think what they're arguing is that a condition for preemption is hegemonic authority. And indeed, I think they're even arguing that this is one of the other things that the rest of the world should come to accept: that everybody has an interest in preempting terrorist attacks before they happen, and so there should be cooperation to make that preemption possible.

**How dramatic or new is this doctrine of preemption?**

Well, the doctrine of preemption has a long and distinguished history in the history of American foreign policy. Our doctrine throughout most of the 19th century -- at the time that we were expanding along the frontier and confronted European colonies along the frontier, confronted Indians, confronted pirates,

confronted hostile non-state actors along the frontier -- was very much one of preemption.

Preemption is how we took Florida. Preemption is, in some way, how we took Texas. Preemption is how we took the Philippines, basically, in 1898. So to say that preemption is an un-American doctrine is not right historically. However, preemption has not been the primary American doctrine for a very long time, and it certainly was not during the Cold War for pretty obvious reasons. Because preemption ran the risk, of course, of nuclear war, equally damaging to both sides during the Cold War. So, very little was heard about preemption, at least in public, during the Cold War.

But the idea is coming back, and it's coming back for some of the same reasons that it was there in the 19th century: because, again, we face a situation of domestic insecurity, of being insecure in our own homes and work places, which was the condition of frontier existence in the 19th century. So, in that sense, it's not totally surprising that preemption would come back.

**How does the doctrine of preemption create a problem -- or not -- in the way the world views America?**

Well, one of the great problems with preemption, obviously, is that it makes people nervous. If there is one great power and the great power has taken upon itself the right to preempt and is choosing for itself when and in what circumstances it's going to do that, obviously it leads people in the rest of the world to wonder how far this doctrine extends. And if you preempt one country or one terrorist gang today, what are you going to do tomorrow? And how far are you going to carry this strategy?

The only solution to this, it seems to me, is to use it cautiously and to use it wisely, and to use it only in situations where there is a clear and compelling case

for doing so. So it's got to be used very carefully. Otherwise it will generate resistance and fear.

**How unusual is it that this administration would be the one that would put this doctrine into force?**

Well, it's not unusual for an administration, when it gets in power, to speak and act differently from the way it spoke in the campaign. ... Probably the majority of American administrations in the 20th century have done that. Don't forget that Woodrow Wilson said shortly after taking office that it would be the greatest irony if his administration had anything to do with European affairs. So these things happen. Nobody can foresee what's going to happen on an administration's watch; administrations have to respond to these things.

There's been a learning curve, there's no question about that, with regard to international responsibilities -- a big learning curve with this administration. They were very [heavy-handed] when they came into office and generated a lot of unnecessary friction for themselves. So it's taken some learning. Again, this is not unusual in the first year or year-and-a-half of a new administration. It would be characteristic of most administrations in the past.

What's different about this one is that within just a few months of taking office, they confronted a huge national calamity and so were forced to move more rapidly than they otherwise would have.

**Let's focus on Iraq. How does a war with Iraq fit into the war against terrorism?**

Well, the argument that the administration is making about Iraq behind the scenes -- because it seems to me, here you've got to read between the lines -- is basically this: that if, in fact, the United States can find the appropriate occasion for military intervention in Iraq and go in with United Nations' support and multilateral support -- perhaps, in the view of some people in the administration,

even if the United States goes in without these things -- [it] is going to set off a reaction in Iraq very similar to what happened in Afghanistan. And that is that we will be cheered and not shot at; that there is a sufficient level of resentment and fear and frustration with the Saddam Hussein regime that the Iraqi people are just waiting for somebody to come in and topple it.

That then creates the possibility for a reconstruction of Iraq, the administration is saying, along democratic lines. And I think they are serious in what they are saying. I think that they are thinking about the reconstruction along the lines of what we did with Germany and Japan at the end of World War II. How realistic that prospect is in that country is something else. But I think that they are serious in thinking like that.

I think they are further serious -- and again this is not going to be said in public -- [that] what they have in mind as a long-term strategy is actually a kind of domino theory in the Middle East; that if, in fact, you could get a functioning democracy in a place like Iraq, that truly would have an effect next door in Iran. That's perfectly plausible; it might well have an effect elsewhere in the Middle East.

And in my own view -- definitely not something the administration is saying for publication -- this is a strategy that's ultimately targeted at the Saudis and at the Egyptians and at the Pakistanis; these authoritarian regimes that, in fact, have been the biggest breeders of terrorism in recent years. Iraq has not been; Saudi Arabia actually was. And I think the administration is thinking over the long term about that problem, too. And properly so; they should be thinking about that.

### **Why wouldn't they be able to talk about that in public?**

Well, you can't talk about this in public as long as you want the Saudis as your allies and as long as you want to use Saudi bases for the war against Iraq and as long as you are relying on Saudi oil. But, of course, if they can pull off Iraq, if they can accomplish this as successfully as many people in the administration think

they can, then they have less need for Saudi bases and they have less need for Saudi oil. And so the two parts of it fit together.

**You write in your article that the strategies that won the Cold War, containment deterrence, they do not work fighting the war against terrorism. Explain that to me.**

Well, the strategies that won the Cold War, deterrence and containment, of course were tailored to a particular kind of adversary. We knew who the adversary was. It was one big country, identifiable. So that in trying to deter there was somebody on whom you knew that you could make an impression, and you could target it in that way.

It seems to me the new situation with terrorism, particularly in the wake of 9/11, does present us with a different kind of situation because we're dealing with a much more elusive target than was the case in the Cold War. So, deterrence is difficult by way of targeting. Deterrence is also difficult in this current situation because the people who carried out the attacks on 9/11 were suicidal. And it's very difficult to deter somebody who is prepared to commit suicide. The Soviet Union definitely was not prepared to commit suicide in the Cold War, which is one reason why deterrence worked.

**How does deterrence and containment relate to the situation with Iraq?**

Iraq, as far as deterrence and containment, is a somewhat different situation, because here we are dealing with an identifiable state. My own view is that deterrence has worked with regard to Iraq. I think that the record would show that Saddam Hussein has been deterred quite a long period of time. And various reasons to think that this could continue to work, I think, in that particular situation.

But, I think the issue with Iraq goes into something beyond deterrence. This is an issue of United Nations resolutions that have been ignored. This is an issue of the world's collective security organization being able to enforce its mandates, which have been issued to Saddam Hussein. So, I think, this is another different situation than what we can find with Al Qaeda in that regard. So, I would say in this case, containment and deterrence have worked so far with regard to Iraq.

But, this still doesn't solve the problem of a state that brutalizes its own citizens, a state that has accumulated weapons of mass destruction in the past, and has actually used them in ways that other states have not done. But, most important, a state that has flouted the will of the United Nations. And to me that's the strongest argument for doing something about Iraq.

**And [returning to the larger Bush strategy] will dominoes continue to fall if we go in and are successful with Iraq? Where might this strategy end up?**

It's getting very speculative as to where this strategy winds up. But the Bush National Security Strategy was very explicit in saying that our ultimate objective is to see that democratic governance spreads everywhere in the world. And they are careful to make the statement as well that we regard no culture as incapable of practicing democracy so that they do not buy into the clash of civilizations theory. In fact, they say very explicitly in the NSS that what's happening is a clash *within* a civilization, not a clash *of* civilizations.

And so the premise is that democracy could transplant to the Islamic world as well as it has to other parts of the world over the last 50, 100 years or so. So that is the ultimate end point that we're talking about. How long that takes, how successful that will be, what are the problems that could come up along the way; nobody can answer those questions. There is a long-term vision here, which is something that has not existed -- not in this form in serious American foreign policy leadership.

**But does the world really work like that -- that there's a domino theory that could set off such historic changes?**

Well, it sounds very ambitious to say that you could democratize the world. It sounds quite utopian when you put it in those terms. But if you were to get into a time machine and go back to the year 1900 and say to somebody back then that by the end of the 20th century we would be something like 120 functioning democracies in the world, that would have been considered extremely utopian and unrealistic given how many there were in 1900.

So it is true that the historic trend is toward the spread and diffusion of democratic governments, and that the 20th century is going to be remembered as the century in which democracy spread astonishingly widely. So who are we to say that this process has stopped now that we've gotten into the 21st century? Who are we to say that the 21st century necessarily is going to be different in this regard?

Now, some trends happen in the world not because the Americans necessarily caused them to happen, but they simply reflect long-term historical forces. And there is some reason to think that the movement toward democratization is one of these.

**It's sort of an amazing thought: You get attacked by a group of terrorists, you get hit hard, and the way you combat that threat is by changing the world.**

I don't think it's astonishing to say that, on one hand, you get hit hard by terrorists and you respond by reforming the world. That's what happened at Pearl Harbor. The United States had no interest whatever in even engaging with the rest of the world. ... Our strategy was very much one of isolationism, not entanglement. ... Pearl Harbor completely changed our framework, and very quickly we shifted to the idea that it was not going to be enough just to end the war. Well before World War II was over, we accepted the idea that we had to change the conditions that

had caused the war in the first place. And that turned us into reformers and global reformers even at that point. So surprise attacks, shocks of this nature can have that effect and they can cause dramatic changes in a country's strategy.

**Do you think the general public understands the magnitude of what we are about? And if they don't, do they need to?**

I don't think that the general public completely understands the magnitude of or the scope or the sweep of the Bush strategy. I don't think anybody understands what the costs of it may be because nobody can estimate what those are. But I think the general public does understand very powerfully that something enormously important happened on Sept. 11. And we have in no way gotten over that shock. The psychological effect of that, the sense that we cannot go on business as usual in the aftermath of an event like that, I think, is extraordinarily powerful with the American public.

And so it seems to me that that sentiment, together with a reasonably plausible explanation to the American public -- and with always the proviso if things don't go badly wrong -- yes, I think this can be explained and sold.

**Does the country have to be behind it? Do they have to fully understand the breadth of the doctrine?**

Well, the country has to be behind the doctrine if the doctrine is going to work because the administration will come up for reelection in a couple of years. So, yes, public support is very important. Does Joe Six-Pack have to understand every nuance of the Bush National Security Strategy? No, no way. There are different levels of understanding. There are different levels of explanation that would be necessary. That was true of containment; that's been true of strategies in democracies of other [countries]. ...

**In the writing up of the National Security Strategy issued Sept. 17, 2002, how much do you think the Bush administration focused on the long term -- not just Iraq, not just terrorism, but where we would be 10 years down the line.**

There are two or three things to say about the question of long-term focus on the part of the administration. I think the starting point is the sense that many members of the administration had: that a great deficiency of the Clinton administration is that it did not really have a long-term strategy. So I think with some members of the Bush administration, it was the presumption from the beginning that they wanted to have a more long-term, more serious strategy.

My own conversations with a couple of people who were involved in drafting the National Security Strategy statement have suggested that, in fact, they started work on this before 9/11 and, in fact, had made the decision that they were not just going to do a routine National Security Strategy statement, the kind that is mandated [every two years] by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. ... They were going to take it as a serious opportunity to really rethink the post-Cold War strategy for the first time.

But the effort was underway even before 9/11. The context was that there was a sense in this administration that we were overdue for long-term reconsideration of a planned strategy of our place in the world. And then 9/11 came along and surely pushed that process along much more dramatically and much more rapidly perhaps than it would otherwise have happened.