

An Islaamic Guide to Strategy

By Abu Jihaad ash-Shaami

An Islaamic Guide to Strategy:

An Introduction to the Importance of Strategy:

The *Ummah* of Muhammad (S) has been described in the Qur'aan as an *Ummah* comprising of a considerable percentage of believers who are always striving for the best. Allaah, the Exalted, said:

“Then We caused to inherit the Book those whom We chose from Our slaves. From them are those who oppress themselves, and from them are those who are average, and from them are those who rush to good deeds by the Will of Allaah. That is the great blessing.” (Faatir: 32)

These three groups were also mentioned in *Surah* al-Waaqi'ah as: those who are in the forefront, the companions of the right, and the companions of the left.

In contrast however, Allaah, the Exalted, only mentioned two categories when referring to the People of the Book:

“If only they had established the *Toraah* and the *Injiil* and what was revealed to them from their Lord they would have eaten from above them and from below their feet. From them is a mediocre *Ummah* and many of them, evil it is what they do.” (al-Maa'idah: 66)

Those who rush to good deeds were noticeably not mentioned here. In fact, even when they *are* mentioned in reference to the People of the Book, elsewhere in the Qur'aan, it is only to point out that they are the exception to the general rule.

This difference is the key to understanding Allaah's superlative praise for our *Ummah*. Allaah, the Exalted, said:

“You are the best *Ummah* to be brought forth for mankind. You command the good and forbid the evil and you believe in Allaah. And if the People of the Book believed it would be better for them. Some of them are believers and most of them are sinners.” (Aal 'Imraan: 110)

Do not be fooled into believing that this superiority comes from striving in the fields of science, mathematics, architecture, and medicine. Rather, this superiority is embedded firmly in the knowledge of the *Shari'ah* and in the protection and spread of it by use of the sword. In short, this superiority comes from no other than: the guiding Qur'aan and the victorious sword.

Unlike other cultures, fighting is not separate from, or at odds with, the religion of Islaam. In fact, the *Shari'ah* has come to define the rules and conduct of fighting. It has even provided us key insights into important warfighting matters that have now become elements of what is known to us today as 'strategy.'

In fact, Allaah has commanded us to strive in this regard as He said:

“And do not become lax in seeking after the people (of disbelief)” (an-Nisaa’: 104)

Also:

“And prepare for them what you can of power and steeds of war to terrorize therewith the enemy of Allaah and your enemy and those other than them whom you do not know of, but Allaah Knows them.” (al-Anfaal: 60)

Allaah has also commanded us take our precautions without simply rushing headlong into war without proper heed to the laws and universal truths that Allaah maintains throughout His creation. He said:

“Oh you who believe take your caution and go out as squadrons or go out all together” (an-Nisaa’:71)

“And let them take their caution and their weapons. The Disbelievers would love that you become careless of your weapons and your provisions so that they may attack you all in one charge.” (an-Nisaa’: 102)

We can also see allusions to important strategic concepts in the Sunnah. The epitome of all strategic thought is captured in the statement of the Prophet (S):

“War is but a deception.” (Agreed upon)

Moreover, the *Siirah* is abundant with examples of how this strategic suggestion should be implemented:

During the Battle of Badr, for instance, the Prophet (S) took the advice of al-Hubbaab bin al-Mundhir (R) after he enquired whether the decision of the Prophet (S) was based on revelation or upon war cunning. When the Prophet (S) responded that his decision was based on the latter, Hubbaab then suggested moving the army of the Prophet (S) up to the very first well from the direction of the enemy and covering all other wells. In this way the Muslims would be in a position to cut the Disbelievers off from the entire water source of Badr to weaken them physically and morally. Additionally, he advised that the Muslims dig a basin near the well, to fill with the well water, in order to save precious time and energy during the actual battle itself.

The Battle of the Trench also exhibited the Prophet's (S) willingness to accept novel advices and innovative ideas. When the Muslims perceived that they were to be besieged

in al-Madiinah by far greater numbers, Salmaan al-Faarisi (R) suggested to the Prophet (S) that they dig a wide trench, a technique borrowed from the Persians but otherwise unknown to the Arabs, to inhibit the use of the Disbelievers' cavalry. The Prophet (S) himself shared in digging this trench, along with the rest of the companions, despite how weak they had become due to the severe food shortage incurred by the oncoming siege. The Prophet (S) was also quick to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the submission of Nu'aym bin Mas'uud. Once he accepted Islaam, he informed the Prophet (S) that his conversion was still a secret to the Disbelievers and therefore a source of strength for the Muslims. The Prophet (S) then ordered him to go back and cause dissention in the ranks of the Allies, which he accomplished skillfully.

Examining these battles in this light reveals more tactical cunning than the grand strategy genius that I intend to cover in this guide. However, when the entire *Siirah* is examined holistically, as we shall do at the conclusion of this guide, it is easily deducible how these individual tactics added up to a masterful grand strategy.

The purpose of this Islaamic Guide to Strategy, then, is to highlight that the art of strategy has long been a shining aspect of our religion. I intend to expound upon this point for two reasons:

- 1) To remind the Disbelievers of our glorious legacy. Although the Muslims have not historically focused on the codification of their wealth of strategic knowledge, they have notoriously been the leading strategic practitioners of their era without a doubt.¹
- 2) To remind the Muslims that this knowledge is not something particular to the Disbelievers and thereby something foreign or something to be shunned. Rather, the Disbelievers have merely codified what our Prophet (S) had already etched into the tablets of history over a thousand years ago. It is therefore becoming of us that we return to our excellence in this regard, without simply expecting victory each battle despite having only put forth a mediocre effort.

I did not intend, however, to produce something wholly original about this topic. Instead, the basis for this guide is the U.S. Army War College Guide to Strategy. My intent was only to summarize this guide, due to its repetitive nature, and to better organize its most important points. This of course led to the deletion of many paragraphs and at times complete chapters. Similarly many paragraphs were rearranged and, at times, entire chapters were merged.

In addition to summarizing, I focused on the *Islaamafication* of the content. In this way, the entire chapter of Ethics was scrapped. The discussion of Realism and Idealism was also completely modified to define the matter from an Islaamic perspective. Certain examples, quotes, and even first person references to the United States were also modified or excluded. Nevertheless, many important analogies and concepts - though

¹ It is also worth mentioning that this curious lack of strategic literature could also be due to the fact that the Disbelievers raided our ancient libraries to erase the Muslims' glory from the pages of history.

extremely Western in nature - were left due to the importance of understanding the mind frame of our enemy.

I also took the liberty of adding certain Islaamic examples at the end of chapters that discussed subjects relevant to the *Siirah* of the Prophet (S). New chapters from other Western literature was also added such as: the U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Manual (MCDP 1), the U.S. Marine Corps Strategy Manual (MCDP 1-1), the Little Book on Big Strategy, How Operational Art Devoured Strategy, Clausewitz's Center of Gravity It's Not What We Thought, Culminating Points, and Lessons from Somalia. I also referred to and took illustrations from numerous other sources.

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What is strategy? (p. 8):

This section introduces grand strategy in simple terms and sets down a structured format for how it should be derived.

The Nature of the Strategic Environment (p. 12):

This section illustrates the environment in which strategic thought is set.

Ethical Issues of War (p. 17):

Since the first step in deriving grand strategy, according to the aforementioned format, is determining national values, it is only natural that the issue of ethics be discussed early on.

Realism and Idealism (p. 19):

After determining values, the format advises identifying national interests. The ensuing discussion regarding the relationship between values and interests must inevitably come back to these two schools of thought (Realism and Idealism). In this section, both schools are scrutinized from an Islaamic perspective.

A Focus on the Instruments of National Power (p. 29):

It has been said that the most fundamental of all interests is national power. Paradoxically, national power is essential to protect, promote, and pursue national interests.

Credibility (p. 44):

Interests must be arranged according to priority of importance while balancing the 'domino effect' of credibility. Failing to do this will lead to a lack of clear objectives and a huge waste of action.

Force Planning (p. 53):

After determining values and interests, a threat assessment must be made. This makes choosing national objectives (developing policy) an easier task. What remains is to decide how the national resources should be used to pursue those objectives in light of any possible threats that may exist.

Strategic Risk (p. 60):

In essence, upon reaching this point, a grand strategy is born. It must be tested rigorously and scrutinized for plausibility in the volatile strategic environment. If any part of the strategy is found to be unbearably risky, it must be altered in some way to better avoid that risk.

The Importance of Defining and Considering Regions (p. 70):

This section is only meant as a reminder of the complexity involved in grand strategy. Each nation is inherently tied to those around it, leaving the formation of strategy a victim to these considerations.

Strategy as It Relates to the Military (p. 76):

After deriving a national, or grand, strategy, each particular instrument of power must have its own individual strategy. It should be developed in coordination with those of the other instruments and in support of the overall grand strategy.

A Reminder about Objectives and End States (p. 80):

One of the most important requirements for a successful military strategy is having a clear objective in mind and having a clear method of deciding when that objective has been met. Due to the seriousness of this topic, not to mention the oft-repeated mistakes in this regard, it deserved an entire section to itself.

Centers of Gravity and Culminating Points (p. 92):

These two terms are often used, and sometimes abused, during strategy formulation. It was deemed appropriate, therefore, that these two terms be discussed before closing.

General Guidelines for Strategy Formulation (p. 109):

This section reviews the most important points of the guide in the form of an outline.

Assumptions and Premises of Strategy (p. 116):

These premises are also designed to summarize the most important aspects of grand strategy, but through use of a different layout.

Strategy-Making Pitfalls (p. 118):

This serves as a final reminder of the possible complications that await the strategist on his path to mastering strategic art.

Unrestricted Warfare (p. 125):

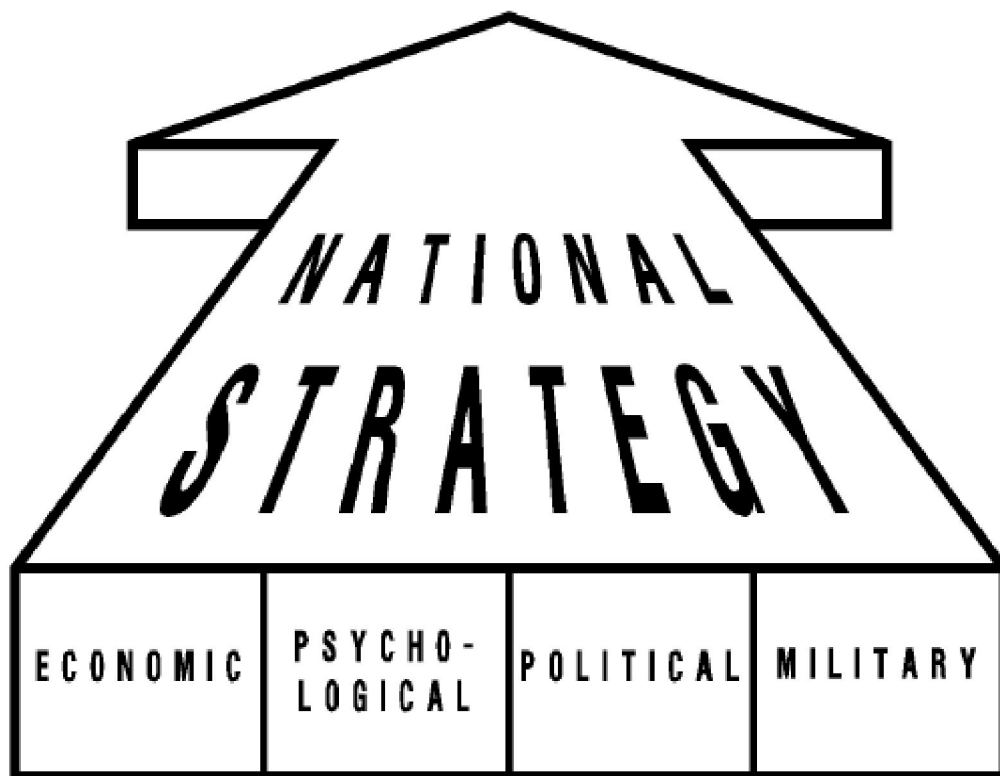
This section not only follows from the discussion of one of the most common pitfalls of our times, it also epitomizes the art of strategy this guide intends to describe. Merging the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, while simultaneously merging the instruments of national power, is the level every strategist must reach in order to remain current and functional in the ever changing strategic environment. This type of holistic thinking is the wave of the future.

The Islaamic Guide to Strategy

What is strategy?:

Strategy is defined as the relationship between ends, ways, and means. **Ends** are the objectives or goals sought. **Means** are the resources available to pursue the objectives. And **Ways**, or methods, are how one organizes and applies the resources. Each of these components suggests a related question. What do we want to pursue (ends)? With what (means)? How (ways)?

In short, a country adopts *objectives* based on its interests and values and how they are affected, threatened, or challenged in the international system. The *means* it possesses to pursue those objectives fall into three or four (depending on how one conceptualizes them) broad categories of national power, which we call “instruments of national power.” They are political/diplomatic, economic, military, and informational. How a country marshals and applies those instruments of national power constitute the *ways* of its *grand strategy*. The picture below illustrates how all of these instruments of national power tie into the grand picture of grand strategy.



The Cold War provides an excellent example of how the strategy framework can be used to describe and subsequently analyze a country's grand strategy. We examine it from the perspective of the United States. The grand strategy of the United States during the Cold War was containment, a name that derived from the core objective of that strategy which was to contain communism, or prevent the further spread of Soviet communism and its influence. The early stages of the Cold War saw the strategy develop along the lines suggested by George Kennan in his now famous "long telegram" from Moscow. Kennan wrote: "The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant *containment* of Russian expansive tendencies . . ." According to his assessment, there was both an offensive and defensive component to the strategy. The defensive objective was to hold back the political, economic and military influence and physical presence of the USSR. The offensive objective, somewhat overlooked in conventional analyses of United States Cold War policy, was the promotion of stable democracies and market economies; healthy market democracies would deprive the Soviets of fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of their revolutionary ideology. Therefore, to summarize, the overall objective of this strategy was to contain communism and the means consisted of the economic, military, and political/diplomatic instruments of power.

On the economic side, the Marshall Plan provides the best example of how the United States used its considerable economic power in support of the strategy. The Marshall Plan, by infusing large amounts of United States capital into the devastated West European economies, would help restore their economic vitality. This would then remove one of the potential sources of appeal for communist ideology (the physical dislocations and psychological pressures people feel when they have no apparent economic sources of survival). The Marshall Plan is therefore one example of a *way* in which the United States applied the economic *means* in pursuit of its overall strategic objective.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provides an excellent illustration of how the United States employed the military instrument of national power as part of its overall grand strategy. This military alliance was primarily a collective defense organization in which the United States provided the vast muscle of its military might to insure the West Europeans that the Soviet military could not threaten their physical security. Unable to marshal much in the way of their own military power, most of which had been either destroyed or exhausted in the war, the West Europeans were encouraged to rely on the capabilities of the United States. This was especially true of the United States nuclear umbrella, which was to take shape particularly in the 1950s as the Cold War unfolded. So NATO serves as an example of a *way* in which the United States applied the military *means* in pursuit of its overall strategic objective.

Finally, the United States used its considerable political/diplomatic power by initially declaring and then implementing the Truman Doctrine. This doctrine stated that the United States would support those countries seeking to resist communist movements. Obviously economic and military resources backed up this doctrine. But the fact that the United States was willing to make an open political declaration of its intentions to provide such assistance is an example of the use of political/diplomatic *means* in support

of the grand strategy of containment. One can also argue that even then, long before the “Information Age” made the use of information technology part of national security lexicon, the United States employed the informational dimension of power through Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, and the like. So the Truman Doctrine serves as an example of a *way* in which the United States applied the political/diplomatic and the informational *means* in pursuit of its overall strategic objective.

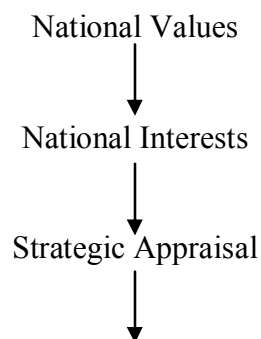
All of this is simply a critique of a previously held strategy from the perspective of hindsight. However, the real challenge lies in identifying a new grand strategy that captures the critical characteristics of the new international security environment and identifies appropriate ends, means and ways for organizing and executing the search for security in the post-Cold War world.

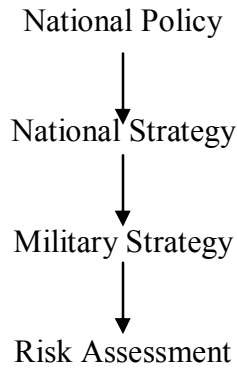
Such periods of significant transformation and change in the strategic environment are not new but they do occur infrequently. Historically, change in the international security system tends to unfold incrementally and in an evolutionary manner, rather than as a result of wholesale transformation and revolution. Yet sweeping transformation does occur periodically, and we often refer to the ensuing period in which the search for a new grand strategy occurs as a “strategic pause.”

What is often daunting in a period of strategic pause is the fact that continuity and change coexist. We must examine a newly emerging system with an eye toward identifying factors and forces that fall into four basic categories: 1) that which is “old” but still relevant; 2) that which is “old” and no longer relevant; 3) that which is “new” and relevant; and 4) that which is “new” but not relevant.

Adapting effectively to the new circumstances while simultaneously balancing against the lingering circumstances from the older system is the central challenge. If we jettison too quickly parts of the old framework, we may find ourselves ill prepared to deal with some of the traditional challenges that have endured from one period to the next. If we fail to identify and respond quickly enough to the new characteristics, we will find that we have outdated and only marginally useful instruments for dealing with the new challenges.

So how do we proceed in this search for a new grand strategy in a period of strategic pause?





The process begins with identifying core national values from which one can derive national interests. Based on the identified interests, we can develop statements of national objectives that are the ends of our grand strategy. Identifying the interests we wish to protect is an essential ingredient of a strategic appraisal. That appraisal then continues with the identification of threats and challenges to those interests. We want to know, as best we can, who or what can threaten our interests in what ways. The threats and challenges may derive from specific actors in the international system (states or non-state actors), or they may be more generally based in developments and trends occurring within the system (such as increasing economic globalization or weapons proliferation).

Once the threats and challenges to the interests of the country in question have been identified, we must examine current policy to see if it is adequately addressing the protection and promotion of the country's interests. Realigning the strategy with the protection and promotion of the country's interests, given the threats and challenges to them in the contemporary security environment, is the essence of the search for a new grand strategy.

Of course, we must also identify and articulate the other component parts of that strategy (such as a military strategy in support of the national security strategy), and conduct a risk assessment. The latter is important because no country has unlimited resources (means) with which to pursue its objectives (ends). This implies that we must make tradeoffs in what we protect and promote and how. Such tradeoffs entail risk, and we must make conscious decisions about how much risk we are willing to bear, and in which areas.

At the conclusion of this research (in the second part of this strategic series), we will provide a complete description of the strategy of the Prophet (S) throughout the *Siirah*. In the third part of this series (The Vision of the Jihaadi Movement) we will also discuss how to apply these newly explained fundamentals practically to our situation as Mujaahidiin in the 21st Century.

The Nature of the Strategic Environment:

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. Military doctrine abounds with terms like “center of gravity,” “mass,” and “friction.” However, 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.

One way of looking at this environment is through usage of the acronym VUCA, which implies that the strategic environment is marked by:

A world-order where the threats are both diffuse and uncertain, where conflict is inherent yet unpredictable, and where our capability to defend and promote our national interests may be restricted by materiel and personnel resource constraints. In short, an environment marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

Characterized by the four earmarks—volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA)—the strategic environment is always in a greater or lesser state of dynamic instability or “chaos.” The role of the strategist is to exercise influence over the volatility, manage the uncertainty, simplify the complexity, and resolve the ambiguity, all in terms favorable to the interests of the state and in compliance with policy guidance. VUCA thinking argues that the strategic environment is volatile. It is subject to rapid and explosive reaction and change, often characterized by violence. Uncertainty also characterizes this environment, which is inherently problematic and unstable. New issues appear, and old problems repeat or reveal themselves in new ways so that past solutions are dubious, and the perceived greater truth often vacillates with time. Everything is subject to question and change. This environment is extremely complex. It is composed of many parts that are intricately related in such a manner that understanding them collectively or separating them distinctly is extremely difficult and often impossible.

Sometimes the environment is so complicated or entangled that complete understanding and permanent solutions are improbable. The strategic environment is also characterized by ambiguity. The environment can be interpreted from multiple perspectives with various conclusions that may suggest a variety of equally attractive solutions, some of which will prove to be good and others bad. Certain knowledge is often lacking and intentions may be surmised, but never entirely known. VUCA thinking describes the appearance of the environment without providing a theoretical understanding of it. Since the role of the strategist is ultimately to advocate actions that will lead to desirable outcomes while avoiding undesirable ones, the strategist must understand the nature of the environment in order to exert influence within it.

The nature of the strategic environment, as the VUCA acronym suggests, is difficult to grasp and is perhaps the most challenging task for the strategist. Yet understanding its nature explains strategy's possibilities and limitations, and provides the insight and parameters for articulating strategic objectives, concepts, and resources. Two theories—chaos theory and complexity theory—serve as appropriate metaphors for understanding the nature of the strategic environment, providing an analogous description of its attributes and functioning. While founded in abstract mathematical extrapolations, these two theories capture the essence of the observed VUCA behavior of the strategic environment and have been adapted by some political scientists to describe the international strategic environment. Some even suggest these theories might be applied directly to the evaluation and selection of strategic choices, but that is not the purpose of their use in this monograph. Here, chaos theory and complexity theory are used to help the strategist think conceptually and pragmatically about the functioning of the strategic environment.

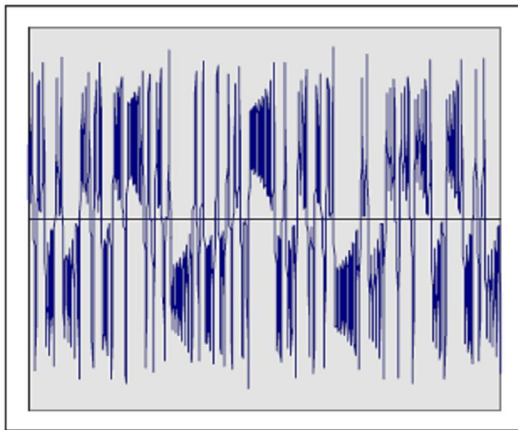


Figure 1: Perceived “random” chaos

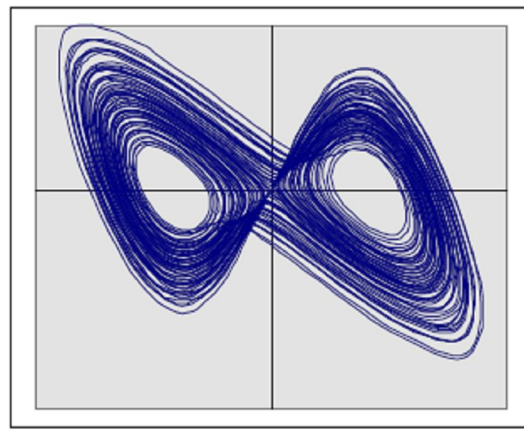


Figure 2: Chaos viewed differently

Chaos theory was popularized by Edward Lorenz, a diligent meteorologist who, while searching for a way to produce more accurate weather predictions, discovered the “butterfly effect.” He noticed that miniscule changes in his initial input to mathematical calculations for weather predictions could have extraordinary and unpredictable effects on the outcomes. He concluded that the future behavior of complex and dynamic systems is incredibly sensitive to tiny variations in initial conditions.

Over 150 years earlier, Clausewitz² understood and described this phenomenon in war and wrapped it into his definition of friction: “Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war.” Likewise, folklore captured this same reality: “For want of a nail, the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe, the horse was lost; for want of a horse . . . , the kingdom was lost!”

Computers allow scientists to do the calculations to study this effect in mathematically simple systems, thereby illuminating the “chaotic” behavior of the strategic environment and other complex systems. Chaos theory is a different way of viewing reality. Prior to the development of chaos theory, two world views dominated thinking. Systems were defined as deterministic and predictable, or random and disordered—thus unpredictable. Deterministic systems are predictable because the same inputs will yield the same outputs every time the experiment is conducted. In math’s chaos theory, chaos is not a state of

² **Carl Philipp Gottlieb von Clausewitz (June 1, 1780 – November 16, 1831) was a Prussian soldier and a German military theorist. His most notable work is titled *Vom Kriege, On War*. It has been acclaimed as the most influential work of military philosophy in the Western world. After more than a century and a half, Clausewitz's work remains the most comprehensive, perceptive, and (in key respects) modern contribution to political/military and strategic thought. In whole or in part, it remains required reading in America's intermediate-level and senior military schools, as well as in many civilian strategic studies programs The Clausewitzian phrases and concepts most frequently cited include:**

- strategic and operational centers of gravity
- the "culminating point of the offensive"
- the "culminating point of victory"
- the dialectical approach to military analysis
- the methods of "critical analysis"
- the uses and abuses of historical studies
- the nature of the balance-of-power mechanism
- The Relationship Between Political Objectives and Military Objectives in War
- the asymmetrical relationship between attack and defense
- defense is inherently the stronger form of war
- the nature of "military genius"
- the "fascinating trinity" of war
- limited war vice war “to render [the enemy] politically helpless or militarily impotent"
- "absolute war" vice "real war"
- the fundamentally social—rather than artistic or scientific—character of war
- the "fog" of war
- "friction"
- the essential unpredictability of war

utter confusion—random, unpredictable, and uncontrollable—but an observable reality that adheres to certain rules even as it appears chaotic in the evident sense. It explains observed physical behavior that possesses characteristics in common with both order *and* randomness as opposed to the more traditional either orderliness *or* randomness.

Put more scientifically, chaos theory describes unstable aperiodic behavior in deterministic nonlinear dynamical systems. A dynamical system is one that interacts and changes over time. Behavior in chaotic systems is aperiodic, meaning that no variable describing the state of the system undergoes a regular repetition of values—each changes in some part over time. The behavior in a chaotic system continues to manifest the effects of any small difference, and consequently a *precise* prediction of a future state in a given system that is aperiodic is impossible. On the other hand, chaotic behavior as a mathematical process does possess structure or patterns and, as a consequence, can be predicted and influenced to some extent, with the most influence occurring in the initial conditions.

Chaos theory is important because it helps explain why deterministic or linear systems sometimes produce unpredictable behavior. Chaos theory also demonstrates that much that appears as random, in reality is not—there are indirect cause-and-effect relationships at work, sometimes not detectable. The deterministic nature of a chaotic system ensures there is some manifestation of continuity from one state to the next, while the nonlinearity means that the consequences of any changes may appear as spontaneous and extreme. In a chaotic system, early changes can have an extraordinary effect on the long term, but the results are bounded from the extremity of total randomness. Thus chaotic systems are a mixture of continuities and change. The strategic environment can be viewed as a chaotic system in which human history represents aperiodic behavior—broad patterns in the rise and fall of civilizations are evident, but no event is ever repeated exactly.

Complexity theory also offers insights into the nature of the strategic environment, often shared by or augmenting chaos theory. The strategic environment is by definition a complex system. A system exists when a set of elements are interconnected so that changes in some elements or their relations produce changes in other parts of the system, and the system taken as a whole exhibits properties and behaviors that are different from those of the sum of the parts.

Systems are generally dynamic, and social systems are especially so. Systems may be very large or very small, and in some complex systems, large and small components live cooperatively. Complexity occurs in both natural and man-made systems. The level of complexity depends on the character of the systems, the environment, and the nature of the interactions among them. The different parts of complex systems are linked and affect one another in a synergistic manner through both positive and negative feedback. In a complex system, the numerous independent elements continuously interact and spontaneously self-organize and adapt for survival in increasingly more elaborate and sophisticated structures over time. Cause and effect are not proportional to each other and often cannot be related. Such a system is neither completely deterministic nor completely

random, but rather exhibits both characteristics—adhering to the chaos theory model. Complex systems, therefore, are not precisely predictable, and the sum of their interactions is greater than the parts.

Complex systems appear to evolve naturally to a state of self-organized criticality, at which time they lie on the border of order and disorder, teetering on the “edge of chaos.” At the point where a complex, dynamical, chaotic system becomes sufficiently unstable, an attractor (such as a minor event similar to Lorenz’s tiny mathematical changes) instigates the stress, and the system splits. This is called bifurcation—the point at which significant change occurs, and the newly resulting systems are distinct from the original while still having continuities. The edge of chaos is important; it is the stage when the system can carry out the most complex operations and the point when both opportunities (positive feedbacks) and threats (negative feedbacks) are greatest. If the system cannot maintain its balance, it seeks a new equilibrium. At the point of bifurcation, little changes produce great outcomes.

Chaos and complexity theories offer a perspective that describes the strategic environment as it is, as opposed to a direct and simplistic cause-and-effect linear model. These theories recognize that the world is composed of both linear and nonlinear dynamics. Grasping this distinction is critical to the kind of analysis the strategist undertakes! Complexity theory does not seek prediction but understanding of the various elements of the environment and the actors involved. It offers a complex worldview that accepts contradictions, anomalies, and dialectic processes. It alerts the strategist to the existence of multicausal situations, unintended consequences, circumstances ripe for change, the roles of feedback and self-fulfilling expectations, and other abnormalities discounted, or even disparaged, by the rational planning model.

Chaos and complexity theories serve as useful metaphors for the strategic environment because they provide insights to VUCA phenomena and the relationship between the strategic environment and strategy. The strategic environment is composed of elements representing both continuity and change. Relationships and interaction are the keys to understanding the nature and dynamism of the strategic environment. Characterized by instability and aperiodic behavior, it does not repeat itself precisely, although situations may closely approximate those of the past. Thus it possesses the attributes of both linearity and nonlinearity. The strategic environment is deterministic in that change is bounded by a variety of factors, including, to some degree, by what has occurred before. It will have continuities, but the exact nature and extremity of change are not necessarily predictable because of the nonlinear attributes. The strategic environment is often particularly sensitive to early changes at critical times, and the outcomes are often not proportional to the inputs, thus creating unpredictable, and at times unintended, outcomes.

To relate this to an Islaamic context, a review of the strategic environment during the times of the Prophet (S) will be included in the Strategic Study of the Prophetic *Siirah*.

Ethical Issues of War:

The laws, values, and ethics specific to the Disbelievers are not going to be covered here. However, in reference to their method of categorizing these issues, the Disbelievers commonly divide the ethics of war into two categories:

- 1) The reasons for going to war, along with the conditions leading up to it,
- 2) And the way war is conducted.

Regarding the first category, Islaamically the reasons for going to war are either defensive or offensive in nature. Defensively, it is an *individual* duty upon every Muslim to defend his fellow Muslims and the land within which they reside. Offensively, it is obligatory upon the Muslims, *collectively*, to fight the Disbelievers, who have not entered any form of peace contract with the Muslims, at least once a year.

Of course, the Khaliifah, or his deputy, (the one in charge of making the declaration of war) should not lead his army into an expedition that will lead to unnecessary casualties and losses within the ranks of the Muslims. Therefore, it is also necessary to ensure that the objective of the war is obtainable, given the situation and the resources available. In other words, the benefits should outweigh the harms.

After the cause for war has been deemed just by the *Shari'ah*, and the objective is within reasonable reach, a public declaration of war should follow. This declaration is accompanied by a formal call to Islaam, or alternatively, to paying the tax known as *Jizyah*.

With regards to the conduct of war, the rules are numerous. Those interested are urged to read the *Shar'i* resources which cover the topic of *Fiqhul Jihaad*. For the purposes of this research, suffice it to say that it is expressly forbidden to intentionally kill women and children. All pubescent, sane, able-bodied men, however, are viewed as valid targets in the *Shari'ah* regardless of their current combatant status. The only exception, of course, is the case in which such men enter into individual peace contracts with the Muslims.

On the topic of collateral damage, it is highly encouraged that the Muslims take whatever steps necessary to limit the unintentional killing of women and children. This leads to the obvious conclusion that weapons of mass destruction are to be used cautiously and sparingly.

It is also important to remember that the *Shari'ah* urges us to not simply concern ourselves with what is permissible, but rather with what is best. In the case of mutilation, Allaah, the Exalted, has forbidden mutilating the bodies of the dead Disbelievers. However, in the event that the Disbelievers begin to mutilate the bodies of martyred Muslims, Allaah has made it permissible to do unto them as they did unto us. Yet, Allaah,

the Exalted, still commanded His Prophet (S) not to take revenge for his own uncle, Hamzah (R), when he was mutilated after the battle of Uhud.

Allaah, the Exalted, said: “And if you punish then punish with similar to what you were punished with. And if you were to be patient, then that is better for the patient. And have patience, and your patience is not but from Allaah.” (an-Nahl: 126-127)

Another point to keep in mind here is that obtaining public support for war, before and during its execution, is an important byproduct of the aforementioned obligation of making sure that the war is justified and just from the very beginning. Most of the militaries of the world, without the support of the public, will not have the morale necessary to continue the fight. With respect to the current state of affairs in the Muslim world, not having public support represents for us a missing condition for guerrilla warfare. This is why the struggle for winning the public relations war has become one of the most vital 'battlegrounds' of this century. Also, to continue the metaphor, having substantial evidence to prove the legality of our war from a *Shar'i* perspective, is the most vital 'weapon' we wield.

Therefore, in our current situation, after the fall of the Khilaafah, it is even more important for us to strive to justify our war to the vast majority of Muslims who are generally ignorant of the *Shar'i* regulations related to waging Jihaad.

Realism and Idealism:

Quickly, before entering directly into the discussion of the terms 'Realism' and 'Idealism', the following is a brief definition of the term '**nation-state**':

A compound word made up of the two words 'nation' - which denotes both the human and cultural aspects of the country (language, religion, ethnicity, etc.) - and 'state' - which denotes the country's physical (territorial) and political aspects.

Realism: is a political outlook which seeks to explain the behavior of 'nation states' and the ongoing trends in the international system in order to anticipate the likely future behavior of such nation states in that system. Those who ascribe to it, realists, believe that the world is destined to always be a place of competition and conflict and a stage for recurring struggles for power.

Some realists believe that the cause for this eternal struggle lies in human nature. According to them, humans are destined to focus upon the quest for ever more power. Therefore, since individuals make up the population and government of nation states, it is only natural that the nation state should also be given to such questing as well.

Other realists believe that this competitive nature is derived from the nature of the international system. They believe that the system is characterized by inherent chaos and a lack of central authority. Due to this characteristic, nation states inevitably compete with one another within a loose system in order to look out for their own interests. In short, the only way for nation states to look after their interests in such an environment is through possessing power. This leads each nation state to become preoccupied with its level of power and its relative standing amongst other states. The result is competition (with the 'arms race' being a classic example). This second school of realist thought is by far the largest.

Regardless of the cause for this competition, realists agree that the best way of managing conflict in the international system is by balancing power with power (i.e. state capabilities and alliances). Hence it is commonly said: 'If you want peace, you must prepare for war.'

Realists are always keen to look for shifts in the overall balance of power to exploit advantages over the weak and to guard against the same. In this game nothing is static and a state must have 'no enduring allies, only enduring interests.'

Idealism: is the opposing political outlook, and idealists view human nature as a positive force. They believe that there is a natural harmony of interests among nation states because of the inherent desire of most people to live in peace with one another. However, according to them, the power politics form of nation state behavior (corruption, nationalism, evil leaders, etc.) stands as a cumbersome obstacle in the way of this positive force. Therefore, the cure is to find a way to reduce, or eliminate altogether, this particular form of interaction by preventing the rise and control of all corrupting

influences. Some suggestions for accomplishing this are: 1) the spread of democracy to give peace loving people a greater say in the actions of their state and 2) the creation of international institutions, like the UN, to encourage cooperation over conflict.

In general, the differences between the realist and idealist schools of thought show up in the relative weight they give to the three levels of analysis (the levels of: the international system, nation states, and individual actors) and to the significance of the roles played by non-state actors, especially international institutions, in the regulation and management of inter-state conflict. Not surprisingly, most realists give primary emphasis to the system-level of analysis. In fact, some realists continue to discount completely the influence of all domestic factors, such as the nature of the regime or the individuals who occupy leadership positions. To them, nation-states are rational, unitary actors who make decisions based on their interests and pursue them consistently over time regardless of who leads them. To many idealists this is a great weakness of realist thought, because they see the interests of nation-states growing out of a much more amorphous domestic competition among differing views about just what those interests are, let alone how best to pursue them. To the realist, the nation-state is all that really matters, and attempts to create supranational institutions (such as the United Nations) to help manage state behavior are doomed to fail. To the liberal institutionalist (i.e. a euphemism for an idealist), it is precisely such institutions that can bring more orderly and less conflictual patterns of behavior to the international system.

Regardless of the differences, both schools of thought have some shortcomings when we look carefully at the assumptions and their implications. For example, while realists place great emphasis on the fundamental influence of national interests on nation-state behavior, not all realists can agree on what those interests are. For example, Morgenthau was an early and outspoken critic of United States involvement in Vietnam, arguing that there was no vital national interest being threatened. At virtually the same time no less prominent a realist than Henry Kissinger was arguing that it was precisely United States vital interests that were threatened by the possible communist takeover of Southeast Asia. How did realism help decide who was correct? And in a later attempt to justify the covert United States role in the overthrow of the leftist Allende regime in Chile, Kissinger is alleged to have said that Chile “was a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica,” which to many observers (including many realists) sounded like a politician bending over backwards to produce a realist-sounding defense for a rather silly policy decision. On the idealist side, the hope that the voice of the people would establish more reason and peace in international relations seems a bit wishful when we consider that it was precisely the vengeance sought by the publics in France and Great Britain that helped produce the fatally flawed Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The punishment meted out to Germany in that peace agreement almost certainly paved the way for the eventual rise of Hitler and the subsequent explosion of the continent in World War II. And the same publics, so weary and fearful of war based on their experiences in World War I, helped produce the climate of appeasement in the 1930s that rendered any meaningful “balance of power” approach impossible to implement.

Islaam on the other hand, treads, as always, a middle path between the two extremes. We can see from the realists that they have acknowledged the necessity of warfare to protect interests, but they are quick to justify the means by the ends. Conversely, we see from the idealists that they have acknowledged the importance of upholding morality and maintaining their principles and values, but they are slow to realize that utopian concepts are no substitution for warfare. These faults are the natural results of relying upon human reason.

Muslims, however, rely upon infallible revelation. In the Qur'aan, Allaah, the Exalted, has fully explained to us the nature of man, nations, and the universe.

In *Surah Ibraahiim*, verse 34, Allaah, the Exalted, said: "Indeed man is oppressive and unthankful," and in *Surah al-Ahzaab*, verse 72, He said: "He is oppressive and ignorant." He also said: "And man is more than anything given to dispute." (al-Kahf: 54) and He said: "Say: if you were to own the coffers of your Lord's Mercy you would hold back for fear of spending. And man is ever greedy." (al-Israa': 100)

These verses seem to indicate that the natural disposition of man is not that of a loving self-less kind.

In *Surah al-Baqarah*, verse 251, Allaah said: "And if it were not that Allaah restrains mankind, placing some against others, the earth would become corrupt, but Allaah is the Bestower of Blessings upon mankind." In *Surah Huud*, verse 116, He said: "If only there had been from the generations before you a remaining group of people who forbade the corruption in the earth; (but there were none) except for a few from those whom we saved from them. And those who oppressed followed after what they had been given of worldly gain therein and became criminals." Also, in the same *Surah*, verse 118-119, Allaah said: "If your Lord desired He would have made mankind one nation, but they will not cease to differ; except those whom your Lord has mercy upon. And that is why they were created. And the Word of your Lord was fulfilled: 'I will fill Hellfire with the Jinn and Mankind altogether.'"

These verses paint for us a clear picture of inevitable lasting conflict between nations and peoples; namely between the forces of good and evil.

The last of the verses above also indicates for us that the conflict in this life is in reality a form of test based upon which Allaah rewards the good doers with good and the evil doers with justice.

This battle between good and evil and its outcome is further highlighted by the statement of Allaah: "And they will not cease to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever turns back from his religion from amongst you, and dies while a disbeliever, then they will have their actions destroyed in this life and the next and they are the companions of the Hellfire. They will dwell therein eternally." (al-Baqarah: 217)

Allaah also says: “Those who believe fight in the path of Allaah, while those who disbelieve fight in the path of the Taaghut. So fight the allies of Shaytaan. Indeed the plot of Shaytaan is ever weak.” (an-Nisaa’: 86)

To move on, I believe this small presentation is enough to conclude that Islaam is not a religion of utopian ideals that assumes that mankind will always find a way to cooperate and live together without war.

However, what remains to be explained is Islaam’s stance on protecting national interests at all costs; even at the cost of values and principles.

A quick glance at the story of Taaluut in *Surah* al-Baqarah, verse 249-251, shows that the believers will always be given victory - despite numbers and logistics - as long as they follow the commands of Allaah; whether His commands coincide with what we view to be in our interests in this life or not. In the aforementioned story, the believers were told to go forth and fight a stronger enemy - both in quality and quantity - while intentionally placing themselves at a further disadvantage by not drinking from the river and by not accepting the help of those who did. The result was that Daawud killed Jaaluut and the believers were victorious.

Al-Imaam Muslim also reported in his *Sahiih* from Hudhayfah bin al-Yamaan that he said: “I was not prevented from witnessing Badr except that I departed along with my father.” He said: “Then the disbelievers of Quraysh captured us and said: ‘You want to go to Muhammad.’ We said: ‘We do not want to go to him. We only want to go to al-Madiinah.’ So they took from us a promise and pledge by Allaah that we will go to al-Madiinah and that we will not fight alongside of him. Then we reached Allaah’s Messenger (S) and we informed him of the news. He said: “Depart. We will uphold their covenant and we will seek help from Allaah against them.””

Of course, it would have been in the interests of the Prophet (S) to add more believing warriors to his ranks at that time of need, when the Muslim forces were outnumbered 3 to 1, but, instead, he (S) chose to uphold his values and principles over caving in to worldly interests.

And it is a general principle of Islaam that: “Allaah is Good and He does not accept except that which is good.” (*Sahiih* Muslim) It is also from the established conditions for the acceptance of actions that not only must they be done with sincere intentions but also in accordance with the teachings of Islaam.

The implementation of these texts can be observed in the actions of the first Khaliifah, Abu Bakr (R), when he sent forth the contingent of Usaamah bin Zayd (R) after the death of the Prophet (S). It was a time in which most of the Arabs had apostatized and the believers had become an island in an ocean of enemies. In these trying times, Abu Bakr not only sent forth the contingent of Usaamah, that the Prophet (S) had prepared before his death, he also took the next step of fighting those who had refused to pay the Zakaah; adding more enemies to the list. He did all of this in the name of following the teachings

of the Qur'aan and Sunnah no matter the costs; while having certainty that sticking to the values of Islaam will only bring victory.

An Islaamic Perspective on the Questions that Realism and Idealism are Proposed to Answer:

First of all, what is the Islaamic stance towards the idea of 'nation states?'

If a nation state is simply defined as a territory which is populated by a people, who view themselves as 'one people', and controlled by a political body, then Islaam does not clash with such a terminology.

In Islaam, the Khilaafah is made up of a Muslim leader - the Khaliifah - who appoints other deputies to help govern the whole of the Muslim *Ummah*, over the land in which they reside, and to carry out political functions. This Khaliifah is generally elected by the most knowledgeable and influential people amongst the Muslims: *Ahlul Hilli wal 'Aqd*. The people of the Khilaafah are comprised of the entire Muslim *Ummah* who are joined by a brotherhood stronger than that of blood and kinship.

There are however key differences between the Islaamic Khilaafah system and the system of nation states. In Islaam the world is split into only two lands: the Land of Disbelief and the Land of Islaam. *Generally*, all individual peoples within the Islaamic Khilaafah are seen as Muslims and the inhabitants of the Land of Islaam despite their origin, tribe, race, nation, color, language, and culture. On the other hand, all individual peoples within the Land of Disbelief are all seen as disbelievers, until proven otherwise. The rights of the Muslims do not change and the rights of the Disbelievers do not change depending on names like: Iraqi, Palestinian, and Afghani or American, British, and Russian.

This does not go to say that Islaam is blind to the effects of such differences upon the global arena. Rather, this indicates that Islaam takes all of these factors into consideration according to their appropriate level of importance; without arbitrarily insisting that one must always be the most influential in world politics.

In this vein, it is also important to note that the term 'nation state' is often used in parallel with the term 'modern state.' This latter term comes with a heavy implication that people are naturally inclined towards a sentiment of nationalism and a love for Democracy. These two characteristics are not found in the Islaamic Khilaafah paradigm. Rather, Muslims are united not by the borders that surround them but the religion to which they ascribe. Muslims also recognize, in contrast to Democracy, that the laws of this life are only legislated by the Lord of the Worlds and those who implement them are only the most knowledgeable and righteous of the Muslims. Not every single Muslim can be considered a valid leader or deputy in the Khilaafah.

What is the defining characteristic of relations between ‘nation states’; conflict or peace?

As stated above, Islaam does not necessarily view the world in the perspective of individual ‘nation states,’ but rather from the perspective of Muslims and Disbelievers.

After making note of this distinction, Allaah has informed us that the Disbelievers will always come together to protect their interests (or their freedom to sin against Allaah), but their hearts are always divided.

About their unity:

Allaah, the Exalted, said: “The Male and Female Hypocrites, they are from one another.” (at-Tawbah: 67) And He said: “Oh you who believe do not take the Jews and Christians as allies. They are but allies one to another.” (al-Maa’idah: 51) And He said: “Those who disbelieve, they are allies one to another.” (al-Anfaal: 73)

Yet, the following verses indicate the hidden enmity they have for themselves:

Allaah, the Exalted, said: “Do you not see those who have hypocrisy? They say to their brethren who have disbelieved from the People of the Book: ‘If you are forced out we will go out with you and we will never obey anyone regarding you and if you are fought we will support you.’ And Allaah testifies that they are liars. If they are forced out they will not go out with them and if they are fought they will not support them. And if they support them they will turn their backs and then they will not be given victory. You are more terrifying in their chests than Allaah. That is because they are a people who do not understand. They do not fight you together except in a fortified city or from behind walls. Their wrath is fierce between themselves. You see them as united but their hearts are divided. That is because they are a people who do not give thought.” (Hashr: 11-14) And He said: “From those who say we are Christians, we took their covenant but they forgot a portion of what they had been reminded with. So we sowed enmity and hatred between them until the Day of Judgment.” (al-Maa’idah: 14) And He said: “The Jews said that the Hand of Allaah is tied. Their hands are tied and they are accursed for what they say. Rather His Two Hands are outstretched. He spends as He wishes. And what was revealed to you from your Lord increases many of them in oppression and disbelief. And We cast enmity and hatred between them until the Day of Judgment. Each time they light the fire of war Allaah puts it out. And they spread corruption in the earth and Allaah does not love the corrupt.” (al-Maa’idah: 64)

So we can see that the realists’ notion of continuous conflict is supported by the above verses. However, the idealists are also correct in pointing out the presence of another contradictory trend. When the Disbelievers feel threatened by the rise of the Believers, the original rule of continuous conflict between themselves is transformed into a new rule - no matter how feeble it really is - of unity between themselves against the outside danger.

What causes war and peace?

As described above, the rules pertaining to the relations between the Believers and the Disbelievers are different from the rules pertaining to the relations between the Disbelievers themselves.

As the realists have concluded, the rules of war and peace, as they pertain to the relations between the Disbelievers themselves, are generally governed by whatever conforms to the Disbelievers' worldly interests, regardless of the level within which they fall (individual, nation-state, or international).

This is also largely true when discussing the Disbelievers' motivations for war and peace, when at odds with the Believers. However, the Muslims, by contrast, are driven not solely by interests but rather by values.

Allaah has commanded the Believers to never cease fighting the Disbelievers, at least once a year, so long as they have not entered into a peace agreement with the Muslims. It has also been obligated upon the Believers to fight, regardless of the costs, when Muslim land has been invaded, or occupied, or when any Muslim has been taken captive. Therefore, the primary reason for war and peace actually derives from the values and principles taught by Islaam.

There are, of course, considerations given to what is in the best interests of the Khilaafah when implementing these commands, and they are only as binding as the capability present to perform them. However, simply prioritizing and weighing interests is not one in the same with being primarily motivated by them. The primary motivation of the Believers is to please their Creator through following His commands.

How are the interests of a 'nation state' determined?

It is generally agreed that 'nation states' (while using this term loosely) have core and vital interests. The most readily seen and agreed upon of these core interests are the basic survival interests: protecting the territory, population, and sovereignty of the state.

It is also generally accepted that core interests are accompanied by secondary level interests, or important interests. These are viewed as highly significant and failing to protect them often leads to indirectly causing danger to the core interests of the state.

Important interests are then followed by peripheral interests, which are generally of a recommended nature, and are not necessary to preserve the state's well-being.

Since survival interests usually remain the same across the board, the real bone to pick is how important interests and peripheral interests are chosen and how their appropriate level of priority is decided. The devil is always in the details.

Choosing peripheral interests and prioritizing them will constantly be a contested topic regardless of which group is concerned, Believers or Disbelievers; while cultural themes and religion hold a large role in deciding them.

Important interests are also a matter of hot debate, although to a lesser degree, in both camps. The prime reason for such debate is the inherently difficult task of deciding which interests, if lost, would not only indirectly harm core interests in a concrete sense (such as an economic venture that failed and led to a stock crash that harmed the military's ability to fund its campaigns) but also in an intangible sense. A loss of an important interest can harm core interests in an intangible sense if it leads to a loss of credibility (which will be highlighted in a later chapter). When a state loses its credibility it becomes subject to the meddling of other powerful states that would have otherwise been weary, or at least cautious, of that state's threats before it lost its credibility. The picture presented when credibility is lost is: 'If that state could allow this type of an important interest to become lost it must be weak and therefore susceptible to other losses.'

It's also important to point out here that, although values and interests can be viewed in some contexts as opposites, values can also be viewed as being a type of interest. In fact, values are often raised even to the level of being important interests. As an example, the U.S. identified three broad interests for itself in its national security strategy: "...protect the lives and personal safety of Americans, both at home and abroad; maintain the sovereignty, political freedom, and independence of the U.S., with its values, institutions and territory intact; and promote the well-being and prosperity of the nation and its people."

When dealing with the matter of values, Muslims particularly excel because they have already been provided with a Clear Criterion for deciding them and prioritizing them. It is only the Disbelievers who are always left grabbing at straws when employing their imperfect minds to deduce what their values should be.

The only instance in which the Muslims could possibly differ over a question of values is an instance in which vital interests come into conflict with vital values. This particular topic, however, is beyond the scope of this summary and requires a separate research all to itself.

Are domestic politics, and the behaviors of individuals, more important or politics at the system level when determining the overall trends within the international arena?

This question can be answered easily by simply referring back to the examples found within the Qur'aan and Sunnah. In short, all of these levels (including the non-state level which falls between the levels of individuals and nation states) are important and must be given their proper due.

In the example of Fir'awn, we can see that he was the driving force behind rejecting Musaa's (AS) call. He was a classic example of a dictator who led purely through fear

and military might. His foolish arrogance led to the revolt of Banu Israa'iil and the destruction of his army, his empire, and his own life.

Similarly, yet in another light, an-Najjaashi (R) also had a hand in changing the tide of international politics by unilaterally granting the Believers a safe haven and refuge from the onslaught of the Polytheists of Quraysh. This new safety gave the Believers assurance of survival and provided a platform for propagation outside of the oppressive censorship of Quraysh.

Bilqiis led her entire people, Saba', to answer the call of Sulaymaan to submit to Allaah without any resistance.

However, in examples like those of Hiraql or 'Abdullaah bin Salaam (R) we can see that even the most influential of leaders are sometimes incapable of changing the tide of the people they lead. In the case of Hiraql, despite accepting Muhammad (S) as a prophet, he chose to become a victim of the undertow. Yet, 'Abdullaah bin Salaam chose guidance over his people and escaped with his clothes dry.

In an example of non-state actors we can see how the group of Abu Basiir (R), who neither fell amongst the Polytheists nor under the command of the Prophet (S), despite being a believer, caused utter havoc on Quraysh and weakened them economically. Another sub-state force was that of Banu Haashim. They were not Believers, yet they also did not subscribe to the form of aggressive politics being waged against the Prophet (S) that was so common to the rest of the clans of Quraysh. Instead, they provided the Prophet (S) with political asylum and the security to spread his message.

When looking at the effects of domestic politics we can see that the deification of Fir'awn, and the subsequent totalitarianism, led to the destruction of an empire in a hell bent blaze of rage. On the contrary, the more rational advisory council of Bilqiis led to taking a much wiser choice. Quraysh was also infamous for having an advisory council yet its multiplicity of leaders led not only to a lack of unity of command, but also a lack of strategic vision and consistency. In the example of the People of Luut (AS), however, it is difficult to point out any form of leadership or advisory council. His people seemed to have a completely anarchic system based upon the fulfillment of corrupt desires. This lack of domestic influence may have, in fact, been a cause for international influence of some sort, but most probably of a negative kind.

Turning to the international stage we can see clearly how the struggle of the giants, Rome and Persia, led to the political/security vacuum in the Arabian Peninsula as well as the importance of its cheaper trade routes. On a lesser scale, we can see how the bloody battles between the Aws and Khazraj in Madiinah led to a similar vacuum that was filled by the arrival of the Prophet (S) who was greeted by both tribes with welcoming arms. Further back in history we can see a similar theme in the insecurity *Ya'juj* and *Ma'juj* were creating for the people between the two mountains. This made way for Dhul Qarnayn (AS) to win their hearts and to bring them into his empire.

In conclusion, each of these different types of actors and each of these different levels of assessment has its role to play in the grand scheme of things and none of them should be completely discounted nor raised above their proper position.

Is it the focus on nation-states and their interests, or the focus on democracy (the voice of the individual) and international organizations (like the U.N.), that is the key to success?

Based upon the Islaamic texts provided earlier, it is clear that most individuals are corrupt except for those whom Allaah guides. It was also previously substantiated that the nations of the earth will always be in conflict of some sort. Therefore, both of the idealist suggestions for causing world-wide peace are seriously flawed.

In short, for the Disbelievers, their only answer to achieving their immoral goals is, as the realists have suggested, continuing to look out for their own personal interests. This may, in turn, require them to leave their quarreling and unite when faced with the danger of an onslaught from the Believers.

However, the final solution will one day come into realization no matter how long it takes. One day the Law of Allaah will be established throughout the entire world leading to an end to the causes for war. The blessings of Allaah will descend upon the earth and peace and tranquility will prevail.

In *Sahiih* Muslim, in the Chapter of the *Dajjaal* and His Characteristics and What Comes Along with Him, an-Nawwaas bin Sam'aan narrates from the Prophet (S) that there will be trials and tribulations and 'Isaa bin Maryam (AS) will come back to the earth to fight the *Dajjaal*, the Jews, and *Ya'juuj* and *Ma'juuj*. After these trials, 'Isaa (AS) and the Believers will be left as the leaders of the earth and Allaah will command the earth to bring forth its fruits and blessings. A single palm granite fruit will suffice a large number of people, till the point that they will be able to seek shade in its peel, and a single milking of one cow will suffice an entire tribe.

A Focus on the Instruments of National Power:

The previous section indicated the importance of protecting and promoting a nation's interests, so long as this endeavor is not at odds with a nation's values. In that light, since the possession of power is possibly the most fundamental interest of any nation, it follows that the elements of national power should be discussed in detail.

Power is the strength, or capacity, that provides a nation with the ability to influence the behavior of other actors, in accordance with its own objectives. From this standpoint, the use of a nation's power in national security strategy should be a simple relational exercise. But in dealing with the concept of national power, as Clausewitz remarked of war, "everything . . . is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult."

To begin with, there are subtle characteristics of power that render its use in the national strategic formulation process more art than science. Moreover, relationships among the elements of national power as well as the context in which they are to be used to further a nation's interests are seldom clear-cut propositions. All this means that in the end, national power defies any attempts at rigorous, scientific assessment. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate why this is so and, more importantly, why - despite all this complexity - the concept of national power still remains a key building block for understanding and developing national security strategy.

THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL POWER

National power is contextual in that it can be evaluated only in terms of all the power elements and only in relation to another player, or players, as well as the situation in which power is being exercised. A nation may appear powerful because it possesses many military assets, but the assets may be inadequate against those of a potential enemy or inappropriate to the nature of the conflict. The question should always be: power over whom, and with respect to what?

Multidimensional Interrelationship. National power is historically linked with military capacity, a natural relationship since war in the international arena is the ultimate ratio of power. Nevertheless, one element of power alone cannot determine national power. For instance, there is the huge size of Brazil, the large population of Pakistan, the industrial makeup of Belgium, and the first-class army of Switzerland. Yet none of these states is a first-rank power. Morgenthau calls the mistaken attempt to define national power in terms of one element of that power the "Fallacy of the Single Factor."

Another aspect of this fallacy is the failure to distinguish between potential and actual power. Part of the problem stems from the fact that the term "power" has taken on the meaning of both the capacity to do something and the actual exercise of the capacity. And yet a nation's ability to convert potential power into operational power is based on many considerations, not the least of which is the political and psychological interrelationship of such factors as government effectiveness and national unity.

In this context, the elements of national power, no matter how defined, can be separated only artificially. Together, they constitute the resources for the attainment of national objectives and goals.

We must also remember that national power is relative, not absolute. Simply put, a nation does not have abstract power in and of itself, but only power in relation to another actor or actors in the international arena. To say that the United States is the most powerful nation on earth is to compare American power with that of all nations as they currently exist.

Nevertheless, leaders of a nation at the peak of its power can come to believe that such power has an absolute quality that can be lost only through stupidity or neglect. In reality the superior power of a nation is derived not only from its own qualities, but from that of other actors compared with its own. Many observers in the late 1930s, for example, perceived France as more than a match for Nazi Germany, since the French military of that era was superior in quality and quantity of troops and weaponry to the victorious French forces of 1919. But the French military power of 1919 was supreme only in the context of a defeated and disarmed Germany; that supremacy was not intrinsic to the French nation in the manner of its geographic location and natural resources. Thus, while the French military of 1939 was superior to that of 1919, a comparison of 1939 French military power to that of Germany in the same year would have shown a vastly different picture for many reasons, not the least of which was the German adoption of the military doctrine of blitzkrieg.

Closely allied to all this is the fact that national power is dynamic, not permanent. No particular power factor or relationship is immune to change. In this century, in particular, rapid changes in military technologies have accelerated this dynamism. America's explosion of a nuclear device instantly transformed its power position, the nature of warfare, and the very conduct of international relations. A war or revolution can have an equally sudden effect on power. The two world wars devastated Europe, caused the rise of the flank powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and set the developing world on a road to decolonization that in less than 50 years dismantled a system that had been in existence for over three centuries.

Economic growth can also quickly change a nation's power position, as was the case with Japan and Germany after World War II. In addition, the discovery of new resources, or their depletion, can alter the balance of power. Certainly OPEC's control over a diminishing supply of oil, coupled with its effectiveness as a cartel, caused a dramatic shift in power relations after 1973.

Such shifts are not always so immediately discernible. Power, as Hobbes long ago pointed out, is what people believe it is until it is exercised. Reputation for power, in other words, confers power on a nation-state regardless of whether that power is real or not. At the same time, there are examples throughout history of nations that continued to trade on past reputations, only to see them shattered by a single event. For France, the battles of Sedan produced just such effects in 1870 and again in 1940.

This subjective characteristic of power also plays a key role in deterrence, the exercise of negative power as state A influences actor B *not* to do x. The influence is effectively exercised because B perceives that A not only has the capability to prevent B from doing x, but the willingness to use that capability as well. In other words, national credibility must be a concomitant of national capability for deterrence to work. When the combination doesn't occur, as Britain and France discovered when Hitler discounted their guarantee of Poland in the summer of 1939, the result can be war. "*The men of Munich will not take the risk,*" the Nazi leader explained to his commanders on August 14, 1939.

Situational. Some elements of national power or combinations of power cannot be applied to certain situations involving certain actors. The United States in 1979-80, for instance, was powerless to rescue American citizens held hostage in Teheran, and American nuclear power during the Cold War had little value in causing nonaligned countries to modify their policies; nor did it deter North Korea or North Vietnam in their attempts to unify their countries. The Vietnam War also illustrates another contextual aspect of national power, cost-risk-benefit analysis, in which power can be exercised but the costs and risks are perceived to be disproportionate to the benefit achieved.

Power, in other words, must be relevant in the existing circumstances for the particular situation. This explains why, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the United States was not able to persuade its European allies to allow American planes to use NATO bases for refueling and maintenance. The overall economic and military strength of the United States as well as the political bonds of alliance solidarity proved less influential on European decision makers than the possible economic loss of their access to oil. This type of American power was equally irrelevant in late 1994 when Britain and France, with troops involved in peace operations on the ground in Bosnia, turned down a U.S. plan for NATO air strikes to support Muslims in the besieged town of Bihac.

This aspect of the contextual nature of national power introduces even more complications when the diversity of actors in the international arena is taken into account. In an increasingly multi-centric world, nation-states will increasingly deal with transnational actors in the exercise of national power. The European Union is just one example of international government organizations in which the confluence of political and economic trends has created a supra-national regional unit that transcends in many ways both the legal- territorial aspects of the state and the psychological unity of the nation.

This type of challenge is abetted by international nongovernmental actors ranging from multinational corporations focused on self-interested profit and national liberation movements seeking to establish new governments within existing states, to organizations such as Amnesty International or Greenpeace, seeking to mobilize international public opinion in order to bring pressure on national governments to alter particular policies.

Some of these actors respond more willingly to one aspect of national power than to another. Multinational corporations, for example, will generally react to economic factors

more rapidly than the United Nations or a national liberation movement. Conversely, negotiations and appeals to human morality may prove to be more powerful at the United Nations than in the corporate boardroom or in the field. And the allegiance of an uneducated people in a newly independent country may help create a powerful national liberation movement, yet be meaningless for a multinational corporation or the United Nations. National power, then, is contextual not only in its application to other states, but to other global actors as well.

As Muslims, we also recognize that our earthly power is limited by the Will of Allaah. We are often reminded of this point in the Qur'aan through countless examples.

In *Surah al-Anbiyaa'* (verses 68-70), Allaah, the Exalted, informs us that the Polytheists intended to throw Ibraahiim (AS) into an inferno. They had all the means necessary to perform this evil deed, and they actually proceeded in carrying out their plan. What they failed to realize, however, is that fire can only burn by the Will of Allaah. In this instance, Allaah willed that this creation of His should no longer have burning properties. Instead, the fire became cool and a source of safety for Ibraahiim.

Entire nations, the strongest of their centuries, were wiped off the face of the earth for what would be considered 'natural disasters,' in our 'modern' world.

The story of David and Goliath (Daawuud and Jaaluut) is well known to all. It teaches us that a smaller, weaker, yet determined and faithful army can overcome giants.

Allaah, the Exalted, also reminds us (in *Surah al-Muddaththir* verse 31) that no one knows the true extent of His army but Himself. The angels came down, by His decree, to participate in the Battle of Badr leaving marks of their flaming swords for the companions to witness. The birds became strategic bombers as they stoned the invading Abyssinian forces and their army of elephants. The frogs and locusts became warriors on behalf of Musaa (AS) and his people. And the examples are endless.

THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER.

It is convenient to organize the study of national power by distinguishing between natural and social determinants of power. The natural determinants (geography, resources, and population) are concerned with the number of people in a nation and with their physical environment. Social determinants (economic, political, military, psychological, and, more recently, informational) concern the ways in which the people of a nation organize themselves and the manner in which they alter their environment. In practice, it is impossible to make a clear distinction between natural and social elements.

For instance, resources are a natural factor, but the degree to which they are used is socially determined. Population factors, in particular, cut across the dividing line between both categories. The number of people of working age in the population affects the

degree of industrialization of a nation, but the process of industrialization, in turn, can greatly alter the composition of the population.

NATURAL DETERMINANTS OF POWER.

1. **Geography.** Geographical factors, whether they are location and climate or size and topography, influence a nation's outlook and capacity. Location, in particular, is closely tied to the foreign policy of a state. Vulnerable nations, like Poland caught geographically between Russia and Germany, have even had to deal with the loss of national existence. Conversely, Great Britain, the United States, and Japan have been protected by large bodies of water throughout their histories. Each, in turn, used the combination of a large navy and overseas trade to become a great power. With its oceanic moats, the United States was able to follow George Washington's advice to avoid entangling alliances and expand peacefully for almost a century, free of external interference. In addition, that expansion came about primarily without conquest, through the purchase of huge land tracts from European powers that found the location of the territories too remote to defend easily.

The connection between foreign policy and location is, in fact, so fundamental that it gave rise in this century to geopolitics as a field of study. At its most extreme, geopolitics can succumb to Morgenthau's "Fallacy of the Single Factor" or be distorted as it was at the hands of Karl Haushofer and his disciples into a kind of political metaphysics with a call for adequate national living space (*Lebensraum*) that was put into ideological service for Nazi Germany. At its best, geopolitics has many insights to offer.

Consider, for instance, the connection between the British and American development of democracy and civil rights and the relatively secure strategic locations of both countries, as opposed to the authoritarian regimes of Germany and Russia, direct neighbors for much of history, lying exposed on the North European plain. Or consider the continuing Russian drive for warm-water ports and the continuing value of choke points, as was demonstrated when Egypt's closure of the Straits of Tiran in May 1967 led to war. The persistence of this field of study was reflected in the Cold War by Raymond Aaron, who described the forward deployment of U.S. troops as analogous in geographical terms to earlier British policy:

In relation to the Eurasian land mass, the American continent occupied a position comparable to that of the British Isles in relation to Europe: the United States was continuing the tradition of the insular state by attempting to bar the dominant continental state's expansion in central Germany and in Korea.

Location is also closely tied to climate, which in turn has a significant effect on national power. The poorest and weakest states in modern times have all been located outside the temperate climate zones in either the tropics or in the frigid zone. Even Russia has chronic agricultural problems because all but a small part of that country lies north of the latitude of the U.S.-Canadian border. Russia is also a good example of how geographical factors such as size and topography can have advantages and disadvantages for a nation.

The Soviet Union, with its 11 time zones, was able to use its vast size during World War II to repeat the historical Russian military method of trading space for time when invaded. At the same time, that immense size certainly played a role in the complex ethnic and political centrifugal forces that eventually pulled apart the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In a similar manner, the predominantly north-south Russian rivers are great natural resources that would have been economically and politically more valuable had they run in an east-west direction. In the future, technology may mitigate some of these factors in the same way that intercontinental missiles affected the importance of insular locations. But here, as in other areas, there are many geographical obstacles to the acquisition of power that are costly or impossible to overcome.

2. Population. Demographics in the form of size, trends, and structure are an important aspect of national power. A large population is a key prerequisite, but not an automatic guarantee of strength. Thus, there is Canada, more powerful than the more populous but less industrialized Mexico. And Japan, with a small population marked by widespread technical skills, has been able to exercise national power far in excess of China for all its masses. At the same time, trends in population growth and decline can have significant effects on national power. The Prussian unification of the German-speaking peoples in 1870, for example, instantly created a great power with a population that grew by 27 million between then and 1940, even as that of France reflected the shift in European power, increasing by only four million in the same period. In another example, the historical increase in American power was partly due to the arrival of more than 100 million immigrants between 1824 and 1924. During the same century, Canada and Australia, comparable in territory and developmental level but with populations less than a tenth of America's, remained secondary powers.

That such trends could have more complex causes dealing with other elements of power was illustrated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which had a large and growing population during most of that period, but also remained a secondary power because it was divided ethnically, weak politically, and at an extremely low level in terms of industrial development. In the future, global trends also will affect the structure and balance of national populations, particularly those of the poorest countries.

In 1830, the global population reached one billion for the first time; it required 100 years to double. It took only 45 more years (1975) for the population to double again to four billion. In the next 21 years the population increased almost two billion, reflecting a growth rate of about 90 million a year. For the next several decades, 90 percent of this growth will occur in the lesser-developed countries, many already burdened by extreme overpopulation for which there is no remedy in the form of economic infrastructure, skills, and capital.

Population structure and balance are also significant for developed nations. Important here is the percentage of the population in the most productive cohort, generally considered to be somewhere between the ages of 18 and 45, that can best meet the needs of the nation's military and industry as well as create the following generation. Comparing the numbers in this group to those in the younger cohort also provides a more

accurate picture of population trends and the interaction of demographics with all power elements. Israel, for example, has to deal with its relatively small population and the fact that the military siphons off a significant segment of the civilian workforce in the middle cohort. One consequence is government emphasis on education across all age groups. Another is the government's military focus on sophisticated weaponry, mobility, air power, and the preemptive strike in order to avoid drawn-out land warfare that could be costly in manpower.

Finally, a comparison of the middle population group to the older will provide a picture of trends that can have significant consequences for a nation's power. For example, any nation with an increasing cohort of retired people coupled with generous social welfare benefits will eventually have to face hard choices between guns and butter on the one hand, and possible limits to its national power as well as to its investment and economic growth potential on the other. These choices already face the United States as the "baby boomer" generation approaches retirement age against the backdrop of a staggering explosion in social entitlements.

3. Natural Resources. Large amounts of natural resources are essential for a modern nation to wage war, to operate an industrial base, and to reward other international actors through trade and aid, either in modern industrial products or in the raw materials themselves. But these resources, whether they be arable land and water or coal and oil, are unevenly distributed around the world and are becoming increasingly scarce. Moreover, as in the case of the geopolitical ownership of strategic places, the physical possession of natural resources is not necessarily a source of power unless a nation can also develop those resources and maintain political control over their disposition. In their raw state, for example, minerals and energy sources are generally useless. Thus, the Mesabi iron deposits had no value to the Indian tribes near Lake Superior, and Arabian oil a century ago was a matter of indifference to the nomads who roamed above it. Conversely, those nations with great industrial organizations and manufacturing infrastructures have traditionally been able to convert the potential power of natural resources into actual national power.

Very few nations, however, are self-sufficient. A country like the United States has a rich store of natural resources, and yet may be dependent on imports because of its voracious consumption. Japan, on the other hand, has few natural resources; it is dependent on imports for 100 percent of its petroleum, bauxite, wool, and cotton; 95 percent of its wheat; 90 percent of its copper; and 70 percent of its timber and grain.

Nations have traditionally made up for such difficulties in several ways. One time-honored method is to conquer the resources, a principal motivation for the Japanese expansion that led to World War II and the Iraqi invasion that led to the Gulf War. A second method is to develop resources in another country by means of concessions, political manipulation, and even a judicious use of force—all used earlier to considerable effect by the United States in Latin America. In an age of increasing interdependence, this type of economic penetration has long since lost its neocolonial identity, particularly

since both of America's principal World War II adversaries now regularly exercise such penetration in the United States.

The third and most common method for obtaining natural resources is to buy them. In recent years, however, the combination of rapid industrial growth and decline of resources has changed the global economy into a seller's market, while providing considerable economic leverage to nations in control of vital commodities. OPEC's control of oil, for example, provided its members influence all out of proportion to their economic and military power. A similar transformation may occur in the future with those nations that are major food producers as the so-called "Green Revolution" faces the prospect of more depleted lands and encroaching deserts.

Finally, there is the short supply of strategic and often esoteric minerals so necessary for high technology and modern weapons. One consequence of this diminishment of raw materials has been the emergence of the sea bed, with its oil and manganese reserves, as a new venue of international competition, in which those nations with long coastlines and extensive territorial waters have the advantage. Such shortages are a reminder of how closely connected is the acquisition of natural resources to all the elements of power, particularly for a truly dependent nation like Japan, which can neither feed its people nor fuel its high-technology economy without access to overseas markets. Absent its alliance with the United States as a means to ensure its access to such resources as Persian Gulf oil, Japan would be forced to expand its "self-defense" military force, perhaps even becoming a declared nuclear power.

How the natural determinants of power effected the strategic environment of Prophetic times shall be further discussed in the Strategic Study of the Prophetic *Sūrah*.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF POWER.

1. **Economic.** Economic capacity and development are key links to both natural and social determinants of power. In terms of natural resources, as we have seen, a nation may be well endowed but lack the ability to convert those resources into military hardware, high-technology exports, and other manifestations of power. Ultimately, however, economic development in a nation flows from the social determinants of power, whether they be political modernization and widespread formal education, or geographic and social mobility and the ready acceptance of innovation. All this, of course, is worked out against the backdrop of balanced military investment. An excess of military spending can erode the underlying basis for a nation's power if it occurs at the expense of a larger economy and reduces the national ability to invest in future economic growth. For developing countries already short of economic investment capital, military spending represents a serious allocation of resources.

But even advanced countries, especially since the end of the Cold War, have to make some choices between guns and butter. Because a nation's political stability as well as the legitimacy of its government are increasingly linked to domestic economic performance,

excessive military spending, as the former Soviet Union discovered, can be dangerous for large and small countries alike. Strong domestic economies also produce non-military national power in the international arena. Leading industrial nations have available all the techniques for exercising power, including rewards or punishment by means of foreign trade, foreign aid, and investment and loans, as well as the mere consequences their domestic policies can have on the global economy. This type of power can be weakened, however, if a nation suffers from high inflation, a large foreign debt, or chronic balance-of-payment deficits. In short, the strength of a nation's economy has a direct effect on the variety, resiliency, and credibility of its international economic options.

Finally, increasing interdependence has caused major changes in the economic element of national power. National economies have become more dependent on international trade and on financial markets that have become truly global in scope. This in turn makes it more difficult for a nation to raise short-term interest rates or to coordinate monetary policy with other international actors. In a similar manner, the ability of nations to use exchange rates to further their national interests has declined as governments deal more and more with international capital flows that dwarf the resources available to any nation to defend its currency. From a security perspective, this type of economic interpenetration is reflected in the mutual vulnerability of national economies. Moreover, a nation's economic policy is now influenced by myriad international governmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), while multinational corporations stand ready to manipulate the domestic politics of nation-states to further their transnational interests.

2. Military. Military strength is historically the gauge for national power. Defeat in war has normally signaled the decline if not the end of a nation's power, while military victory has usually heralded the ascent of a new power. But military power is more than just the aggregation of personnel, equipment, and weaponry. Leadership, morale, and discipline also remain vital factors of military power.

Logistics is also an important factor to consider. The Gulf War highlights how important power projection and sustainability are in the modern era for military effectiveness. For a global power like the United States, the focus on these factors produced not only the unique air and sea lift capability that provided transportation for a half million troops to the Persian Gulf in 1990-91, but incredible re-supply feats in an environment in which a single division during the 100-hour ground offensive consumed 2.4 million gallons of fuel, brought forward in 475 5000-gallon tankers. Allied to these factors, of course, are readiness considerations ranging from training and maneuver opportunities to the availability of fuel and repair parts. In a similar manner, a nation's potential for rapid mobilization may also play a key role. Israel, for example, has a permanent force of only 164,000 highly trained and ready soldiers. But that force can be augmented within 24 hours by almost three times that many combat-ready troops. And Sweden has the capability to mobilize a force almost overnight that can equal many European standing armies.

The quality of arms technology also has become a vital military factor for all nations in a period marked by rapid and important scientific breakthroughs. Timely inventions ranging from the crossbow to the airplane have often been decisive when accompanied by appropriate changes in military organization and doctrine. When these two components lag technological change, however, as they did in the American Civil War and World War I, the results can be horrific diminishment and waste of military power.

In addition, new technologies in the hands of rogue states or non-state actors will continue to be an important consideration for the more powerful nations. Weapons of mass destruction are and will probably continue to be of primary concern in this regard as well. But even relatively cheap, recently developed conventional weapons in the appropriate situation can also be decisive as well.

Finally, technological advances are a useful reminder once again that military power, like all elements of national power, is contextual. Technology is not an automatic panacea for producing quick victories and low casualties, particularly absent clear political direction and coherent strategy. There comes a time, as Britain's thin red line discovered under the weight of the Zulu offensive at Isandhewana, when quantity has a quality all of its own.

3. Political. This element of power addresses key questions, many of which are related to the psychological element: What is the form of government, what is the attitude of the population toward it, how strong do the people want it to be, and how strong and efficient is it?

These questions cannot be answered with simple statistics, yet they may be paramount in any assessment of national power. If a government is inadequate and cannot bring the nation's potential power to bear upon an issue, that power might as well not exist. Nor can an analysis turn upon the type of government a state claims to have, for even the constitution of a state may be misleading. The 1936 Soviet Constitution, for example, was a democratic-sounding organic law that had little in common with the actual operation of the Soviet regime. And the German Weimar Constitution, a model of democratic devices, did not prevent Hitler from reaching power and from creating his own "constitutional law" as he proceeded. What is clear is that the actual forms of government, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, play a role in the application of national power.

An authoritarian system, for instance, restricts in varying degrees individual freedom and initiative, but permits formulation of a highly organized state strategy. Democratic systems, by comparison, require policy formation by consensus-building and persuasion in an open, pluralistic society. Consequently, it is extremely difficult for democracies to develop and implement a long-range state strategy or to change policy direction as abruptly as, for example, Nazi Germany and the USSR did in the ideological volte-face marked by the August 1939 non-aggression treaty.

In addition, the level of political development within a state is also important. This development involves both the capability, and more particularly the efficiency and

effectiveness, of a national government in using its human and material resources in pursuit of national interests. Thus, administrative and management skills are crucial if a nation is to realize its full power potential. A government also takes the shape and operates the way it does for very complex reasons, many of which reflect the experience of a people and their attitude toward, and expectations of, what the government is to do and how strong, as a consequence, it should be.

For example, a fear of too much state power caused the Founding Fathers of America to deliberately make the United States government inefficient (in the sense of a quick, smooth operation) by means of “checks and balances.” In a similar manner, the French fear of a “man on horseback” in the wake of their second experience with Bonapartism caused a curtailment of executive powers that resulted in the weakness of the French governments after the Franco-Prussian War. Under both the Third and Fourth French Republics, as a result, the French strengthened the legislative branch to a degree that made strong executive leadership almost impossible. The French preferred to suffer the executive weakness rather than run the risks entailed in a strong government. Consequently, while the United States had 14 administrations between 1875 and 1940, and the British 20, France had 102. After World War II, the Fourth French Republic averaged two regimes a year.

4. Psychological. The psychological element of power consists of national will and morale, national character, and degree of national integration. It is this most ephemeral of the social power determinants that has repeatedly caused nations with superior economic and military power to be defeated or have their policies frustrated by less capable actors. Thus there was Mao’s defeat of Chiang Kai-shek when Chiang at least initially possessed most of China’s wealth and military capability, the ability of Gandhi to drive the British from India, and that of Khomeini to undermine the Shah. And it is almost a cliché that any measurement of U.S. economic and military power vis-à-vis that of the North Vietnam-Vietcong combination during the late 1960s would have led to the conclusion that US superiority in these two categories would result in an American victory. Harry Summers recounts a story, in this regard, that was circulating during the final days of the US retreat from Vietnam:

When the Nixon Administration took over in 1969 all the data on North Vietnam and on the United States was fed into a Pentagon computer—population, gross national product, manufacturing capability, number of tanks, ships, and aircraft, size of the armed forces, and the like. The computer was then asked, “*When will we win?*” It took only a moment to give the answer: “*You won in 1964!*”

National will and morale are defined as the degree of determination that any actor manifests in the pursuit of its internal or external objectives. For a given international actor, however, will and morale need not be identical at all levels of society. During 1916 and early 1917, the Russian nobility continued to plan for new offensive action even as Russian troops were abandoning their weapons and their battlefield positions. National character has an equally complex relation to national power inasmuch as that character favors or proscribes certain policies and strategies. Americans, for example, like to justify

their actions. Thus, the United States did not enter World War I until Wilsonian idealism had to confront the loss of American ships and American lives. The elevation of “moralism” in the conduct of foreign policy, in turn, diminishes the ability of the United States to initiate a truly preemptive action. In the Cuban missile crisis, for example, the choice of a blockade over an air strike was based in part on the argument that from the standpoint of both morality and tradition, the United States could not perpetrate a “Pearl Harbor in reverse.”

In all such cases, as with will and morale, it is extremely difficult to identify the constituent parts of and sources behind national character. Historical experiences and traditional values undoubtedly are important, as are such factors as geographic location and environment. Russian mistrust of the external world, for instance, is historically verifiable as part of the national character, whether it is because of the centuries of Tartar rule, three invasions from Western Europe in little more than a century, or something else. And Russian stoicism is a character trait, whether the cause is Russian Orthodox Christianity, communism, or the long Russian winters.

Finally, there is the degree of integration, which refers simply to the sense of belonging and identification of a nation’s people. In many ways, this contributes to both national will and morale as well as character. In most cases there is a direct correlation between the degree of perceived integration and the extent of ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity, all of which contribute to a sense of belonging, manifested in a sense of citizenship. On the other hand, despite examples to the contrary (Belgium, Canada, and the states of the former Yugoslavia), a lack of integration need not necessarily cause a lack of identity. Swiss unity has continued across the centuries despite low degrees of integration in ethnicity, language, and religion.

5. Informational. The communications revolution, which began over a century ago with the advent of global transmission of information, has taken on new momentum in recent decades with the development of fax machines, television satellites, and computer linkages. As the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrated in the fall of 1989, a new fact of life in the international arena is that it is no longer possible for any nation-state to deny its citizens knowledge of what is taking place elsewhere. Ideas, in other words, move more freely around the world than at any other time in the past. This has had particularly fortunate results for the United States. Even as some other aspects of power have gone into relative decline, America’s influence as a source of ideas and as a shaper of culture has increased. This “soft power,” in Joseph Nye’s words, has been a major factor in formulating the U.S. national security strategic objective of “enlargement.” So in one sense, information has contributed to the concept of the world as a global village.

This combination of enhanced communication and dissemination of information, however, is a two-edged sword that cuts across all the social determinants of power in national strategy. In the economic realm, for instance, global interdependence has been enhanced by information-communication improvements. On the other hand, near instantaneous downturns of major economies are always a possibility with the immediate

transmission of adverse economic news concerning any nation-state or transnational economic actor.

Politically, instantaneous and pervasive communication can enhance the ability of governmental elites to lead the people in a democracy or to act as a national consoler in times of tragedy, such as the *Challenger* explosion or the Oklahoma City bombing. At the same time, these developments can also aid the demagogues, the great simplifiers always waiting in the wings to stir fundamental discontents and the dark side of nationalism.

In terms of psychological power, Winston Churchill demonstrated repeatedly that the pervasive distribution of targeted information can have momentous effects on intangibles such as national will. Conversely, however, this type of openness has the pernicious potential of altering, in a matter of years, basic values and cultural beliefs that take generations to create.

Nowhere is the effect of developments in communications and access to information more far-reaching than on warfare. In the purely military realm, information dominance can create operational synergies by allowing those systems that provide battlespace awareness, enhance command and control, and create precision force to be integrated into the so-called “system of systems.”

One result of all this is to compress the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, previously considered as separate and distinct loci of command and functional responsibilities. The commander will be faced in the future with the much more complex job of recognizing those events occurring simultaneously at all three levels and integrating them into the calculation that results from the traditional consideration at the operational level of which tactical battles and engagements to join and which to avoid.

Equally important, shorter time for decisions—occasioned by both the compressed continuum of war and electronically gathered information—means less time to discover ambiguities or to analyze those ambiguities that are already apparent.

At the higher level of cyberwar, the two-edged potential of communications and information is even more evident. In the future, nations will wage offensive information warfare on another state’s computer systems, targeting assets ranging from telecommunications and power to safety and banking. Such an onslaught could undermine the more advanced aspects of an adversary’s economy, interrupt its mobilization of military power, and by affecting the integrity of highly visible services to the population, create almost immediate pressure on government at all levels. As activities rely increasingly on information systems rather than manual processes and procedures, information infrastructures of the most developed nations, such as the United States, become progressively more vulnerable to state and non-state actors. Even as there are advances in information security technologies, hacker tools are becoming more of sophisticated and easier to obtain and use. One analyst concludes in this regard that, for the United States, “the possibility of a digital Pearl Harbor cannot be dismissed out of hand.”

How the Prophet (S) masterfully wielded these instruments of power shall be discussed in depth in the Strategic Study of the Prophetic *Siirah*.

EVALUATION.

Evaluation of national power is difficult. The basic problem, as we have seen, is that all elements of power are interrelated. Where people live will influence what they possess; how many they are will influence how much they possess; what their historical experience has been will affect how they look at life; how they look at life will influence how they organize and govern themselves; and all these elements weighed in relation to the problem of national security will influence the nature, size, and effectiveness of the armed forces. As a consequence, not only must each separate element be analyzed, but the effects of those elements on one another must be considered. These complexities are compounded because national power is both dynamic and relative. Nation-states and other international actors change each day in potential and realized power, although the rate of change may vary from one actor to another. And because these changes go on continually, an estimate of a state's national power *vis-à-vis* the power of another actor is obsolescent even as the estimate is made. The greater the rate of change in the actors being compared, the greater the obsolescence of the estimate.

In other words, like all strategic endeavors, more art than science is involved in the evaluation of where one nation-state stands in relation to the power of other regional and global actors. This has not deterred one former government official from creating a formula to develop a rough estimate of “perceived” national power—focused primarily on a state's capacity to wage war:

$P_p = (C + E + M) \times (S + W)$ in which:

P_p = Perceived power

C = Critical mass: population and territory

E = Economic capability

M = Military capability

S = Strategic purpose

W = Will to pursue national strategy

Regardless of its prospective contribution in calculating a P_p value, this formula has some important lessons. The more tangible elements (C, E, M) that can be objectively quantified also involve varying degrees of subjective qualifications: territory that is vast but covered with mountain ranges and has few navigable rivers; a population that is large but unskilled and uneducated; or cases in which, despite qualitative military superiority in technology and weapons on one side, the opponent is able to prevail through superior intangibles ranging from leadership to morale. Most important, by demonstrating that national power is a product—not a sum—of its components, the formula is a reminder of how important the relational and contextual aspects are. The United States discovered in Vietnam that no matter how large the sum of the more tangible economic and military

capabilities in relation to an adversary, their utility is determined by the intangibles of strategic purpose (S) and national will (W). Zero times any number, no matter how large, is still zero.

This fact is seen through the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Material advantages are often overcome by the immaterial.

These considerations are particularly important in evaluating what some might consider to be irrational acts by states that use force to alter the status quo. In fact, these states may simply differ from others in the perception of low risks where others perceive high ones, rather than in the willingness to take risks. There is growing evidence that the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait falls into this category. In another era, many of Hitler's "Saturday surprises" in the 1930s were considered reckless by those who would eventually have to redress their consequences. These incidents came about, however, not because the Nazi leader willingly tolerated a high probability of conflict, but because he was certain that the other side would back down. When the German military opposed such policies as the Rhineland coup and the *Anschluss* with Austria on the basis that they were too dangerous, Hitler did not argue that the risks were worth the prizes, but that instead, taking the social determinants of power in Germany and the other countries into consideration, the risks were negligible.

Credibility:

Another necessary concern to keep in mind, when determining national interests, and when deciding how to pursue them using the national instruments of power, is the credibility factor. Not fully understanding how it works can lead to a serious warping effect on the national interests, which in turn leads to hijacking the instruments of power, resulting in a frantic frenzy. Let us first start by defining how our interests should be prioritized, followed by some insights on how to keep matters in perspective and avoid losing focus.

Morgenthau saw two levels of national interests, the vital and the secondary (while others categorize them into three: vital, important, and peripheral). To preserve the first, which concerns the very life of the state, there can be no compromise or hesitation about going to war. Vital national interests are relatively easy to define: security as a free and independent nation and protection of institutions, people, and fundamental values. Vital interests may at times extend overseas should you detect an expansionist state that is distant now but amassing power and conquests that later will affect you. Imperialist powers that threaten your interests are best dealt with early and always with adequate power.

Secondary interests, those over which one may seek to compromise, are harder to define. Typically, they are somewhat removed from your borders and represent no threat to your sovereignty. Potentially, however, they can grow in the minds of statesmen until they seem to be vital. If an interest is secondary, mutually advantageous deals can be negotiated, provided the other party is not engaged in a policy of expansionism. If he is engaged in expansionism, compromises on secondary interests will not calm matters and may even be read as appeasement.

Additionally, Realists like Morgenthau also distinguish between temporary and permanent interests, specific and general interests, and, between countries' complementary and conflicting interests. Defense of human rights in a distant land, for example, might be permanent, general, and secondary; that is, you have a long-term commitment to human rights but without any quarrel with a specific country, certainly not one that would damage your overall relations or weaken your power. Morgenthau would think it absurd for a country like the U.S., for instance, to move into a hostile relationship with China over human rights; little good and much harm can come from it. A hostile China, for example, offers the United States no help in dealing with an aggressive, nuclear-armed North Korea. Which is more important for the U.S., human rights in China or restraining a warlike country which threatens U.S. allies? More often than not, political leaders must choose between competing interests.

Two countries, even allies, seldom have identical national interests. The best one can hope for is that their interests will be complementary. The United States and Albania, for instance, may have a common interest in opposing Serbian suppression of Kosovar Albanians, but the U.S. interest is a general, temporary, and secondary one concerning human rights and regional stability. The Albanian interest is a specific, permanent, and

possibly vital one of forming a Greater Albania. U.S. and Albanian interests may run parallel for a time, but one must never mistake Albanian interests for U.S. interests.

The graph below illustrates the differences between the various types of interests, while providing examples of each type:

Types of National Interest		
		Examples
Importance	Vital	No Soviet missiles in Cuba
	Secondary	An open world oil supply
Duration	Temporary	Support for Iraq in opposing Iran
	Permanent	No hostile powers in Western Hemisphere
Specificity	Specific	No Japanese trade barriers
	General	Universal respect for human rights
Compatibility	Complementary	Russian cooperation in Kosovo
	Conflicting	Russian support for Serbs

When looking for strategic allies who hold similar interests, we should also remember that it is sometimes hard to anticipate how other countries will define their national interest. They see things through different eyes. Hungary in the 1990s was very cooperative with the West and eager to join NATO. In 1994, however, when the United States and France proposed air strikes to curb Serbian artillery atrocities in Bosnia, Hungary stopped the U.S. use of its territory for AWACS flights. An American looking at this refusal is puzzled: "But don't they want to be on our team?" A Hungarian looking at the refusal says, "We'll have to live with the Serbs for centuries; that border is a vital, permanent interest for us. Some 400,000 ethnic Hungarians live under Serbian control in Voivodina as virtual hostages. The Americans offer no guarantees of protection, but they expect us to join them in an act of war. Sorry, not a good deal." (The AWACS flights were quickly restored as the crisis passed.)

The diplomat's work is in finding and developing complementary interests so that two or more countries can work together. (Better diplomatic spadework would have signaled in advance the difference between Hungarian and U.S. interests in 1994.) Often countries have some interests that are complementary and others that are conflicting, as when NATO members cooperated to block the Soviet threat but clashed over who would lead the alliance. The French-U.S. relationship can be described in this way. Where interests totally conflict, of course, there can be no cooperation. Here it is the diplomat's duty to say so and find ways to minimize the damage. Do not despair in this situation, as national interests can shift, and today's adversary may be tomorrow's ally.

Much national-interest thought has a geographical component; that is, a country, waterway, or resource may have a special importance for your national interest. Britain, for example, had a permanent, specific, and often vital interest in the Netherlands. Who

controlled the Low Countries had the best invasion route to England. (For the blue-water types: the northerly winds that sweep between England and the Continent allow a sailing vessel to take a beam reach, the fastest point of sail, west from Holland to England. Here the winds, in facilitating rapid invasion, helped define England's national interest.) Whether the threat was Habsburg emperors, French kings, or German dictators, Britain felt it had to engage to secure this invasion springboard.

Morgenthau found much folly in U.S. policy during the Cold War, some of it on geographical grounds. He thought it irrational that the United States could tolerate a Soviet puppet state, Cuba, near our continent while we engaged in Vietnam on the other side of the globe. Cuba was a vital interest; Vietnam was not. Morgenthau spoke against the Vietnam War as an irrational crusade that did nothing but drain American power in an unimportant part of the world. At this same time, many claimed Vietnam was a vital U.S. interest. How can you tell at that moment who is right?

This precise question was the sweeping problem that continued to plague the U.S. throughout the entire Cold War. The priority of interests, often peripheral in and of themselves, were frequently misconstrued and distorted into important, or even vital, interests. For instance, with regards to the interest of protecting America's physical security, a successful effort was made to contain the Soviet Union on the Eurasian landmass. In terms of prosperity, the United States was economically supreme in the world. But, despite this achievement, some more idealistic Americans felt that this was not enough. They thought that this successful foreign policy must also reflect (at least in rhetoric) the values for which they believe their country stands. More specifically, the promotion of these values in the Cold War was captured in the crusade of anti-Communism, which in turn was enhanced by its linkage to the geo-strategic goal of containment. "I believe," President Truman declared in the March 1947 doctrine named for him, "that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation...to work out their own destinies in their own way."

It was in pursuit of the last category of interests, world order, that U.S. leaders discovered how the concept of credibility during the Cold War could blur the distinction between intensity of national interests. From a rational viewpoint, vital interests during that long twilight conflict should have been focused exclusively on the bipolar, superpower core as opposed to the global "periphery" of that core. But, as John Lewis Gaddis pointed out, the distant sound of dominoes falling could be just as loud as sabres rattling next door.

This type of connectivity was closely tied to the psychological aspects of credibility with potential aggressors—summed up in Pericles' classic argument against giving in to foreign demands: "If you give in, you will immediately be confronted with some greater demand, since they will think that you only gave way on this point through fear." Thus, there was the 1950 invasion of South Korea, the survival of which had been defined as outside vital U.S. interests but which, because of the nature of the North Korean attack, quickly joined that degree of intensity. "If we let Korea down," Truman briefed Congress after the attack,

the Soviets will keep right on going and swallow up one piece of Asia after another If we were to let Asia go, the Near East would collapse [and there is] no telling what would happen in Europe.

In addition, as George Kennan discovered at the beginning of the Cold War, the problems with credibility were not just confined to actual or potential enemies. There were also the psychological problems of open pluralistic societies in trying to differentiate between vital and other interests. In this context, defeats on the periphery could have demoralizing effects on the public and elites in areas where core or intrinsic interests were involved. Moreover, there was also the problem of cumulative effects. In 1947, for example, Kennan was concerned that Soviet victories might cause a bandwagon effect in West Europe, not because of any ideological affinity, but from purely pragmatic motives to join the movement of the future. And in the fall of 1961, this phenomenon was evident in President Kennedy's justification for his increasing commitment to South Vietnam. "There are limits to the number of defeats I can defend in one twelve-month period," he explained. "I've had the Bay of Pigs and pulling out of Laos, and I can't accept a third."

By that time, the domino principle was fully enshrined in the indiscriminate perimeter approach to containment with its assumption of undifferentiated interests and unlimited means. The expectations of domino dynamics in this approach caused interests to become a function of the threat and as a consequence credibility to become an interest in itself. In such circumstances, prioritization was impossible. "I don't know where the non-essential areas are," President Kennedy acknowledged in an off-the-record press briefing.

Equally important, the approach left the United States in a strategically reactive mode, since the potential adversary could create a crisis at a time and place of its choosing which the U.S., focused on universal credibility, could ignore only at its perceived peril. "Unlike those sociable games it takes two to play," Thomas Schelling once noted, "with chicken it takes two *not* to play. If you are publicly invited to play chicken and say you would rather not, you have just played."

Another example of this was played out during the Clinton administration. After a humiliating defeat in Somalia, there was more than a touch of the credibility argument in Clinton's rationalization for the deployment of U.S. forces to Haiti—all somewhat reminiscent of arguments why Britain had to suppress the Irish rebellion in World War I despite the adverse effect on the war effort: "If you tell your empire in India, Egypt and all over the world that you have not got the men, the money, the pluck, the inclination, and the backing to restore order in a country within twenty miles of your own shore, you may as well begin to abandon the attempt to make British rule prevail throughout the empire at all."

While on the topic of Somalia and Haiti, one trap to be aware of when responding to peripheral interests, is that it has been historically proven that the indiscriminate use of the military for preserving peripheral interests is self-defeating. Such use normally places troops in situations where there are no demonstrable vital, much less important national interests. The fact is that conflict on the periphery just as it is at the core is controlled by

its political objective, and that as Carl von Clausewitz long ago observed, “the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in *magnitude* and also in *duration*.” And as acknowledged by U.S. policy in the Balkans, in the absence of a convincing value for military intervention on the periphery, the cost in terms of casualties will always appear to be prohibitive. In such circumstances, the public is unlikely to suffer losses for long. The consequent withdrawal of the forces in turn undercuts credibility abroad, encouraging would-be aggressors. All this eventually undermines public support even in those situations where vital national interests are at stake.

Potentially the most dangerous policy is one of declaring certain interests to be vital but then not backing up your words with military power. This is a policy of bluff and tends to end badly, in one of two ways: either your adversary sees that you are bluffing and continues his conquests, or you belatedly attempt to back up your words, in which case you may have to go to war to convince him that you were not bluffing. One horrifying example is the U.S. policy of angry words at Japan in the 1930s over its conquest of China, words unsupported by military power or any inclination to use it. Tokyo simply could not believe that China was a vital U.S. interest; the Americans were bluffing. Was not poker, the game of bluff, the Americans’ favorite card game?

Something similar occurred in Bosnia: many strong words from the United States and the West Europeans, unsupported by military power or the intent to use it. Quite reasonably, the Serbs concluded the U.S. was bluffing. They changed their minds only when U.S.-backed Croatian and Bosnian forces rolled back their conquests in 1995. Always back your interests with adequate power. If you don’t have the power, don’t declare something distant to be your interest. Thou shalt not bluff.

There are times when the statesman must move decisively to engage his armed forces in the threat or practice of war. When the borders or existence of the state are threatened by an expansionist or imperialist neighboring state, one must arm and form alliances, and it is best to do so earlier rather than later. Accordingly, one of the great tasks of the statesman is to scan the horizon for expansionist or imperialist threats. Any state engaged in expanding its power is pursuing a “policy of imperialism,” wrote Morgenthau. A state merely intent on preserving itself and conserving its power is pursuing a “policy of the status quo.” The statesman is able to tell one from the other despite the imperialist’s claim to be for the status quo. When you see a Hitler on the march, arm yourself and form alliances. Do not wait for him to flagrantly violate some point of international law, such as the invasion of Poland, for that might be too late. Britain and France, more intent on the details of international law, failed to understand the imperialist thrust behind German moves in the late 1930s.

Morgenthau’s favorite contemporary statesman was Charles de Gaulle of France, whom he called extraordinarily intelligent. De Gaulle indeed was able to pursue French national interests without undue sentimentality. When he realized that French colonies, especially Algeria, were a net drain on French power, he cut them free despite the howls of French imperialists. A richer, stronger France emerged from decolonization. De Gaulle also knew when to put his foot down. He reasoned that no state willingly entrusts its security

to foreigners, so he built a French nuclear force and kicked the Americans out of France. (In confining U.S. forces to the narrow width of Germany, he also pushed them into an implied doctrine of early first use, thus assuring France precisely the U.S. nuclear guarantee that it sought.)

Another issue closely tied to the subject of credibility, which shall be covered in the next section, is the matter of force planning and preparing for future conflicts (which will be discussed in depth later). This is exemplified by the Cold War dilemma that caused Robert Komer to define the “likelihood fallacy” as posturing to deal primarily with the most likely contingencies on the conflict spectrum to the detriment of the less likely but most critical ones. The ultimate result is that by ignoring the most critical contingencies, they become in fact the most likely. Such considerations have direct credibility implications for trade-offs concerning forces designed to protect vital national interests in major regional contingencies.

Prioritization, then, is the ultimate rationale for the use of national interests—the *sine qua non* for any clarity and long-term consistency in a nation’s security policy. To move interest after interest upward into the vital or important degrees of intensity is simply to avoid choice, an unrealistic policy given declining means and the myriad domestic problems facing the nation.

WARPING EFFECTS ON THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

The phenomenon of national interest warping can be caused by multiple factors such as: the global system, public and elite convictions, the mass media, and policy inertia.

Global System. The global configuration of power may at times warp national-interest thinking. Late in the nineteenth century, with the globe largely carved up by European imperial powers, many countries felt compelled to grab the leftover pieces to prove themselves major powers. A kind of contagion or copycat effect warped the national interest, leading to the U.S. seizure of the Philippines from Spain. Teddy Roosevelt engineered the move but some years later regretted it when he noticed that the Philippines had become a U.S. vulnerability in the Pacific, one that had to be defended at great cost from the Japanese.

It is easy to declare something to be your national interest but hard to back out afterward. A world divided by many powers is quite different from one divided by just two superpowers. Probably the biggest distortions come in the latter case, that of Cold War bipolarity, a zero-sum game that tended to make everything important. Limited definitions of the national interest fall by the wayside, and the superpowers plunge ever deeper into obscure corners of the world as if one more client state proved they were winning. Laos, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, everything becomes the national interest. Only Antarctica remained outside the superpower competition. Like the Sherwin-Williams paint symbol, national interests “cover the Earth” and thus lose their utility. You must be able to discriminate and rank national interests lest you spread your power too thin and in areas of little importance.

In a bipolar situation, the hegemonic superpower of each camp is forced, in order to hold its alliance together, to take on the national interests of each client state. One of the causes of the 1948 Tito-Stalin split, for example, was Tito's insistence that Trieste belonged to Yugoslavia. Trieste may have been a Yugoslav national interest, but it was not a Soviet national interest, and Stalin was reluctant to provoke the British and Americans over it. The United States was reluctant to come to French aid in the first Indochina war; it was not a U.S. national interest. To draw France into the common defense of Europe in the early 1950s, however, it was necessary to support French imperialism on the other side of the globe. U.S. involvement in Indochina started as a bribe to get French cooperation in Europe. The care and feeding of the alliance became a dominant national interest, one that blotted out a careful review of military engagement in a distant swamp.

The clients, of course, feel little obligation to make the national interests of the hegemon their own. France did not come to the aid of the United States in Indochina; de Gaulle, in fact, told the Americans they were quite foolish. Aside from the Soviets, no members of the Warsaw Pact had any interest in Afghanistan. The bipolar world thus produces a tail-wags-dog effect in pushing the hegemon to defend the clients with no reciprocity implied. As such, bipolar systems come under great stress and have finite lifespans. This bothers a Realist not at all, for no alliance lasts forever; alliances change as the national interests of their members change.

An alliance is not an end in itself; it is merely one device that, for a certain time, may support the national interest. The collapse of the bipolar world of the Cold War now permits an un-warping or normalizing of national interests. Laos, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan now receive precisely the attention they merit. The U.S. is no longer so solicitous of its European friends, whose national interests may diverge from and even conflict with its own. The U.S. is not desperate to hold together NATO and may now tell the Europeans to feel free to do whatever they wish; the U.S. may or may not back them up, depending on its national interests involved. Notice how the end of the Cold War brought some very tough talk and inflexible positions in trade negotiations. There was no longer much reason for the United States to be especially nice to the West Europeans and East Asians on trade; it seemed to be high time for Washington to look out for U.S. economic interests.

Public and Elite Convictions. The long American missionary experience in China convinced many Americans that it was the American responsibility to uplift and defend China, a conviction that contributed to war with Japan. The cultural and ethnic affinities of many Americans lead them to automatically support their country of origin and to define its national interests as America's. The Israeli and Greek lobbies are quite influential, even though Israeli and Greek interests sometimes diverge from U.S. interests. The Greek lobby, for example, made Washington hesitate for years before officially recognizing Macedonia.

A lack of interest also can be warping. If left to itself, some analysts believe, U.S. mass opinion tends toward isolationism; that is, it sees no important national interests anywhere. Americans are especially indifferent to Latin America, which is seen as having no influence on the United States except as a source of drugs and illegal immigrants. Americans mistakenly but deeply believe there are few U.S. national interests there.

Elites—the top or most influential people—pay far more attention to foreign affairs than the public at large; therefore they are instrumental in defining national interests. The anglophilia of the WASP elite of the Northeast inclined America to enter two world wars to defend Britain. This inclination was not shared by the Midwest, where elites were more Irish and German in origin; hence the purported “isolationism” of the Midwest. Economic elites may define U.S. holdings abroad as the national interest. United Fruit saw Arbenz’s reforms in Guatemala as a threat to their bananas and hence to the United States. ITT saw Allende’s takeover of the ITT-owned Chilean telephone network as a threat to U.S. interests. Some critics wonder if the U.S. war against Iraq was a defense of national interests or of oil-industry interests.

Educational elites may awaken or keep alive issues that do not interest the public at large. By inculcating a “world order” view of global politics, educators may convince students that distant problems are vital U.S. interests. As young officials these students may carry idealistic views with them into government agencies and news organizations. Some young State Department officials resigned when they could not get their way in defining Bosnia as a U.S. interest.

Mass Media. Especially important in awakening the broader public to questions of national interest is the mass media. Unfortunately, they do so on a capricious basis little grounded in calm calculation. Addicted to good visuals and action footage, television goes where the action is and brings back images of maimed or starving children—“If it bleeds it leads.” Implicit in the images is the message that atrocities so terrible automatically become a U.S. interest. But the media can be highly selective, giving extensive coverage to horrors in Bosnia but ignoring similar horrors in Peru, Sri Lanka, or Angola. South America would have to sink before U.S. television would cover it. To have the media set the national interest is to let show biz take over the guidance of the nation.

Policy Inertia. Once a policy is set, it takes on a life of its own and may continue indefinitely. It is the nature of bureaucracy to keep marching in the direction initially set, which may include definitions of the national interest. The situation may change over time, but not the bureaucracy. Dean Rusk testified that South Vietnam had become a vital U.S. interest because we had sunk so much foreign aid into it. Henry Kissinger later said that even if Vietnam had not initially been a U.S. interest, the commitment of American blood and treasure had put U.S. credibility on the line and thus turned Vietnam into a vital interest. On this basis, you can create national interests anywhere in the world where previously you had none.

The utility of national interest is not in any formula that can untangle complex issues. Beware of anyone trying to sell you a formula or pat answer; there are none. National interest is useful in training the decisionmaker to ask a series of questions, such as: How are current developments affecting my nation's power? Are hostile forces able to harm my vital interests? Do I have enough power to protect my vital interests? Which of my interests are secondary? How much of my power am I willing to use to defend them? What kind of deals can I get in compromises over secondary interests? The net effect of these questions is to restrain impetuous types from embarking on overseas military campaigns little related to national interests.

In closing, perhaps it is beneficial that we review some examples from the *Siirah* to highlight the importance of credibility and how it should be applied.

1. Qaynuqaa' - It is reported in the books of *Siirah* that Banu Qaynuqaa' had a pact with the Muslims. Then, one day, some of the Jews in the Qaynuqaa' market place began harassing a Muslim woman into uncovering her face. They tied her clothing without her knowledge causing her to rip off her covering. This enraged a Muslim who killed the Jew responsible for this action. The Jews then mobbed that Muslim and killed him. The result was a full scale military campaign on behalf of the Prophet (S) and his companions, ending in the defeat of the Jews, in order to protect the credibility that had been newly gained after the battle of Badr.

2. Humraa' al-Asad – After the short-lived defeat at the battle of Uhud, due to the disobedience of the archers of the hill, the Prophet (S) urged the companions to organize themselves for a counter attack. This was intended to show Quraysh that the small defeat at Uhud had not weakened their resolve. The result was that Quraysh continued traveling back to Makkah without looking back, indicating that the Muslims were, in reality, the stronger of the two armies.

3. Banu Nadhiir – When the Prophet (S) traveled to Banu Nadhiir in order to ask them for help in paying off a recently incurred blood debt, they gathered together in order to betray him (S). Despite their pact with the Prophet (S) they tried to assassinate him by dropping a stone on him from above. When the Prophet (S) was informed of this by divine revelation he quickly returned to Madiinah and gathered his army. Within a short time Banu Nadhiir was completely subdued and forced from their homes in humiliation.

4. Quraydhah – The story of Banu Quraydhah is yet another story of betrayal on behalf of the Jews. Despite their pact with the Prophet (S) they were eventually talked into betraying it by Quraysh and some fellow Jews from Banu Nadhiir. This action caused a stern response immediately following the trying experience of the Battle of the Ditch. The Prophet (S) was ordered by Jibriil (AS) to not take any rest but rather to march to Banu Quraydhah. After their defeat, all of their pubescent males were killed.

5. Mu'taa – When the Prophet (S) sent a messenger to the governor of Busraa, which lies within the Roman Empire, instead of being greeted and welcomed as a delegation from another rising power, the messenger of the Prophet (S) was killed shamelessly. This act

of war led the Muslims to amass the largest army, to that date, in order to march forth, despite the far distance, to punish those who had committed this act of aggression. The result was a bloody war, despite the fact that the Muslims were greatly outnumbered, which led Rome to think twice about provoking the Muslims in the future.

6. Fath Makkah – When Quraysh helped their ally, Banu Bakr, against the ally of the Prophet (S), Khuzaa'ah, the leaders of Khuzaa'ah came to complain to the Prophet (S). When Quraysh heard of this they quickly sent Abu Sufyaan to try to appease the Prophet (S) and smooth over their mistake. Knowing that giving in to such appeasement would give a message of weakness to Quraysh, the Prophet (S) chose to march to Makkah instead.

7. Usaamah bin Zayd's Ba'th – Before the death of the Prophet (S), he prepared a contingent to be sent to fight Rome, once again, for its offenses against Islaam and the Muslims. Therefore, the reason for this contingent is related to credibility in and of itself. However, the fact that this contingent wasn't sent until after the death of the Prophet (S) – after most of the Arabs, who had previously entered into Islaam, apostatized – made this contingent even more of an issue of credibility. Abu Bakr as-Siddiiq (R) refused to hold back a contingent that had been prepared by the Prophet (S) despite the number of enemies and the desperate need of men. The result was that the apostates were filled with fear seeing that the Muslims were not only preparing to come to fight them, but they were also sending contingents to fight one of the greatest superpowers of the time, Rome.

The importance of protecting credibility is shown clearly through these examples, but it should also be noted that it is equally important to keep the issue of credibility within reasonable limits. One of the clearest examples of this can be found in the battle of Mu'tah. The Muslims did not allow their need to avenge the death of the Prophet's (S) messenger to cause them to mindlessly fight on to the bloody end. Rather, instead, Khaalid bin al-Waliid saw that, in light of the dangerously disproportionate numbers, it was more beneficial to retrograde with the remaining Muslims back to Madiinah, in order that they may come back and fight another day.

This illustrates the need for the prioritization of vital and important interests without letting the dangerous matter of credibility get out of hand.

Force Planning:

To complete the process of developing a coherent military strategy, perhaps the most difficult step is to plan the forces needed to implement the strategy. Force planning is best defined as the attempt to create a military force structure of the right size and right composition to achieve the nation's security goals. Force planning involves an evaluation of the threats to the national interests, the establishment of military requirements within given constraints, and finally an assessment of the risk of failure. The risks in the ends-ways-means strategy formulation process can be manifested as an ends-means mismatch, or a ways-means mismatch. Strategists and force planners consequently find themselves engaged in an iterative process of minimizing the mismatches by either modifying the ends, adjusting the ways, or changing the means to maximize the ability to protect and further the national goals. The process of risk management will be covered in more detail in the next section.

FORCE PLANNING METHODOLOGIES

In designing forces to protect national interests, military planners must accomplish three tasks: determine how much force is required to protect those interests with a certain degree of assured success or a minimum degree of acceptable risk; determine how to posture that force; and finally convince the leadership and the public that the solutions for the first two tasks are reasonably correct. The issue of creating well-reasoned force structure requirements and convincing cost conscious politicians is not an inconsequential matter.

Since the advent of the Cold War, military planners have used two very different force-planning methodologies. The easiest to conceptualize is **threat-based planning**. This methodology is preeminent when threats to a nation's interests are easily recognized and identified. The task for the planner is to postulate a reasonable scenario, or a specific military contingency, then determine the amount of force needed to prevail in that scenario. This approach lends itself to dynamic and static modeling and provides a quantifiable rationale for the recommended force structure, and answers the question: Can the nation in question defeat the opponent or prevail in the postulated contingencies? The logic of this approach is very compelling and greatly facilitates accomplishing the planner's third task—convincing the public and the politicians.

The second major methodology is generally referred to as **capabilities-based planning**. Somewhat harder to conceptualize, analysts have proposed several variants of the same basic theme. Capabilities-based planning is most in vogue when threats to a nation's interests are multifaceted and uncertain, and do not lend themselves to single point scenario-based analysis. Instead of focusing on one or more specific opponents, the planner applies a liberal dose of military judgment to determine the appropriate mix of required military capabilities. Capabilities-based planners claim to focus on objectives rather than scenarios. Forces are sized either by a resource constraint emphasis (budget driven), or by focusing on generic military missions required to protect U.S. interests. A major problem planners have with this approach is convincing politicians that military

judgment has established the proper linkage between this uncertain future environment and the specific force levels requested.

The general characteristics of these two methodologies are summarized in the graph below.

	Purpose	Road to War	Force Determinants	Total Force Requirement
Threat based	Defeat the enemy	Scenarios (point-estimates of likely contingencies)	Wargaming (static and dynamic modeling)	Force sized to prevail in desired number of contingencies
Capabilities based: Resource focus	Optimize based on cost	Multifaceted and uncertain threats	Military Judgement (focus on inputs)	Adequate and affordable mix of capabilities
Mission focus	Accomplish required military objectives	Generic military missions	Military Judgement (focus on outputs)	Size force to carry out missions

The next graph indicates how these different methodologies were used by some of the previous American administrations.

	Strategy	Scenario (focus)	Leading Methodology	Supporting Effort
Eisenhower 1950s	New Look (nuclear war-fighting)	Strategic nuclear war with the Soviet Union	Capabilities-based (resource variant)	
Kennedy/Johnson 1960s	Flexible Response (2 and 1/2 wars)	Monolithic Communist threat •Central Europe against Soviet Union •Asia against China •Lesser contingency	Threat-based	Specialized capabilities for intervention operations
Nixon/Ford/Carter 1970s	1 and 1/2 wars	•War in Central Europe •Lesser contingency	Threat-based	Rapid deployment capabilities (RDJTF)
Reagan 1980s	Horizontal escalation	•Global war with Soviet Union •Possibly triggered by Soviet invasion of Iran	Threat-based	Continued development of rapid deployment capabilities

FORCE PLANNING INTO THE 21st CENTURY

Force planning in the 21st century is destined to be as controversial and thus as difficult as it has been in the 1990s. A clear understanding of two issues should make the job easier: mission, and the use of scenarios. The strategy formulation process around which

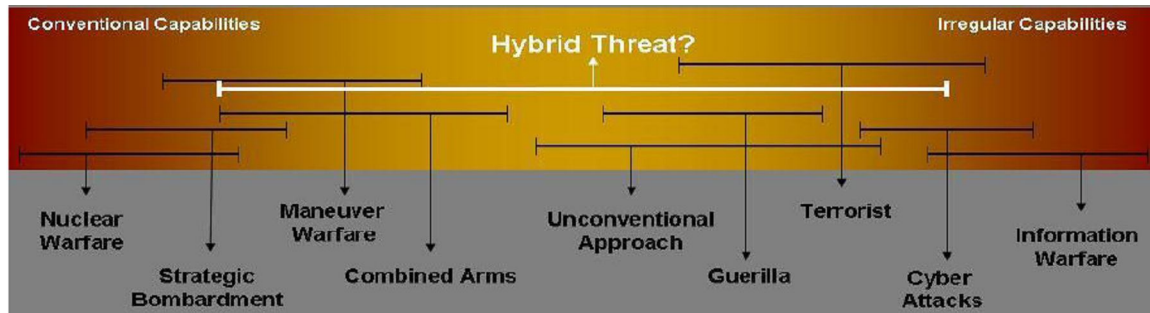
the chapters of this book are built clearly emphasizes interest-based, and in turn strategy-driven analysis.

MISSION

Without an agreement on the mission or strategy, force planning will continue to disappoint. Taking the U.S. as an example, at the present juncture there is little agreement concerning the mission of the armed forces. The on-going debate has two dimensions: shaping and peacekeeping versus warfighting; and current versus future focus. Numerous politicians, defense analysts and several senior military leaders have concluded that the two-MTW (i.e. two major theatre wars) requirement, set during the post-Cold War period of the late 90's, should be adjusted to specifically include force-sizing for peace operations. This argument is based on the experiences of the first decade of the post-Cold War period. During that time the operational commitment of U.S. military forces has increased 300 percent, and the vast majority of those deployments have been at the low end of the spectrum of conflict—shaping activities and smaller scale contingencies, not MTWs. Jeffrey Record argues that the 2-MTW force has little relevance in a world in which a “modern-day version of imperial policing is likely to consume much of U.S. military effort.” The most recent articulation of this position was contained in the Phase II report of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century, entitled “Seeking a National Strategy: A Concept for Preserving Security and Promoting Freedom.” The report claims that:

the “two major theater wars” yard stick for sizing U.S. forces is not producing the capabilities needed for the varied and complex contingencies now occurring and likely to increase in the years ahead.

It calls for a portion of U.S. force structure to be specifically tailored to humanitarian relief and constabulary missions. Two noted RAND analysts have proposed replacing the two-MTW criteria with three simultaneous sizing criteria: force needs for environment shaping; force needs for one tough MRC plus stability operations in other theaters; and force needs for two “moderately difficult MRCs.” Even the Defense Department has begun to waver on the issue slightly. The most recent edition of the *DoD Annual Report*, in addressing the use of military force in support of primarily humanitarian interests, has removed the previous qualifier that “the U.S. military is generally not the best means of addressing a crisis.” This shift in emphasis is further supported by a focus on peacetime military engagement (PME) activities as the “best way” of reducing the sources of conflict and shaping the international environment.



Strong voices, however, remain on the other side of the issue. General Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated that the U.S. military should not carve out a portion of its force structure exclusively to handle peacekeeping missions because those operations could quickly escalate into situations that only trained warfighters could handle. Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Floyd Spence, in rejecting the Commission on National Security's call to abandon the two-MTW yardstick, indicated that he fundamentally disagreed "with those who advocate shifting the composition of our armed forces toward peacekeeping and humanitarian operations at the expense of warfighting capabilities." The need for a versatile and flexible force capable of responding and executing a wide range of missions is clearly recognized. The disagreement concerns where on the operational spectrum should risk be assumed—high end (major theater war) or low end (peacekeeping or humanitarian operations)—or how to posture the force to minimize risk. Force planners will have a hard time developing an acceptable force structure in the absence of consensus on this issue.

Force planners also must resolve the issue of whether to focus their efforts on the current threat or future threats. According to the NDP:

... we must anticipate that future adversaries will learn from the past and confront us in very different ways. Thus we must be willing to change as well or risk having forces ill-suited to protect our security twenty years in the future. The United States needs to launch a transformation strategy now that will enable it to meet a range of security challenges in 2010 to 2020.

Proponents of this view contend that the "revolution in military affairs" (RMA) will have profound effects on the way wars are fought. This model would replace the 2-MTW force with a "silicon-based" superior force that would be smaller and more flexible, emphasizing mobility, speed and agility. Warfighters would benefit from technological achievements in stealth, precision weapons, surveillance, and dominant battlefield awareness. Most RMA proponents also contend that at present the U.S. has a threat deficit and therefore can afford to cut force structure and focus on research and development of new "sunrise systems," experimentation and innovation. Critics claim that both the QDR and NDP failed to propose innovative and long-term changes in the defense program. General Shalikashvili's response to such criticism brings the issue full circle back to risk assessment and how that risk should be allocated over time:

My admonition was that we need to do what we need to do to remain capable of defending our country and winning our nation's wars. I didn't want to get an award for innovation's sake. I didn't want any one gambling with our nation's security just so we could be called great innovators.

PLANNING SCENARIOS FOR MAJOR THEATER WAR

It is clear that elements of both the threat-based and capabilities-based approaches must be applied to force planning. This is even more the case in periods of increased uncertainty, as demonstrated by the Base Force and the BUR. Scenarios are extremely useful to the force planner as a yardstick against which to measure the capabilities of the force. Because they reflect key aspects of future challenges a nation might face, well-chosen scenarios help to ensure that the yardstick used has some relationship to reality. It is also important to keep in mind that no single scenario (or pair of scenarios) will ever be completely adequate to assess force capabilities.

Does the use of scenarios, as assessment tools constitute "threat-based planning?" That common question can best be answered by posing another: "Is it possible to do serious force planning without reference, either explicitly or implicitly, to some scenarios?" The answer to the second question is clearly no. Any force structure must ultimately be judged against some expected set of operational requirements—those things that the force is expected to be able to do. This is simply another way of saying "scenarios." Nevertheless, just because scenarios are used, the label "scenario-based" or "threat-based" planning should not be accepted.

Critics of the 2-MTW framework claim that the use of canonical scenarios (one in Southwest Asia and one in Korea) suppress uncertainty and do not satisfactorily measure the adequacy of U.S. force posture. Proposals include using an expanded scenario set, to include nonstandard scenarios, and examining the "scenario-space" within that set of scenarios to determine capability envelopes. Scenario-space implies the iteration of numerous scenario characteristics, such as alternative force levels (threat and friendly), buildup rates, military strategies and warning time—thereby generating a range of required capabilities.

Nonetheless, the canonical scenarios—Korea and the Persian Gulf—are clearly the most stressful and dangerous near-term contingencies for the U.S., and have served the U.S. well by creating a requirement for high-mobility forces and a diverse posture. But if fine-tuning military capabilities requires a broader look, it may be appropriate to expand the scenario set and use a scenario-space concept to examine all relevant factors.

CONCLUSION

Force planning has been and always will be a very dynamic process. Consequently, as the strategic environment changes or as the understanding of its uncertainties matures, and as both threat and friendly military capabilities evolve, there should be adjustments to the defense program. Force planning, particularly when it is done correctly, represents the

purest application of the strategic art—calculating a variable mix of ends, ways, and means.

The experience of more than 40 years of force planning indicates that elements of both threat-based and capabilities-based planning must be applied. Drawing on the logic of threat-based planning, the force planner needs realistic scenarios as a yardstick against which to measure the capabilities of a force. Adjusting the existing canonical-MTW scenarios by adopting a scenario-space approach can better ensure that all relative factors and resultant requirements are considered.

The focus of force planning should remain on the evaluation of the major theater planning cases. The vast majority of force requirements are derived from these primary cases. However, it is also necessary to examine the full range of missions, such as smaller scale contingencies and overseas presence missions in order to ensure that all unique force elements have been identified. Finally, resource constraints must be applied to examine the internal characteristics of the force posture and to build an affordable defense program.

The central role played by objectives in planning has been clearly demonstrated. At every level, the first step in planning is to state explicitly what is to be accomplished. In addition, any useful defense planning exercise must be completed within the context of the anticipated budgetary resources available for defense. In the end, as Richard Kugler points out, integration of threat-based planning with the two types of capability-based planning ensures a process that operates in positive symbiosis:

The central argument advanced here is that mission-based capability analysis can help gauge requirements for the U.S. conventional posture, and help build public understanding of why sizable forces are needed in an era when threats to U.S. interests are unclear. This is not to imply, however, that this methodology should entirely replace the other two approaches. Threat-based contingency analysis will still be needed to examine specific conflicts to which U.S. forces might be committed, and resource-based capability analysis will be needed to examine the internal characteristics of the force posture. The three methodologies thus are best used in tandem, as a package of techniques that can work together to shed illuminating light on conventional force needs.

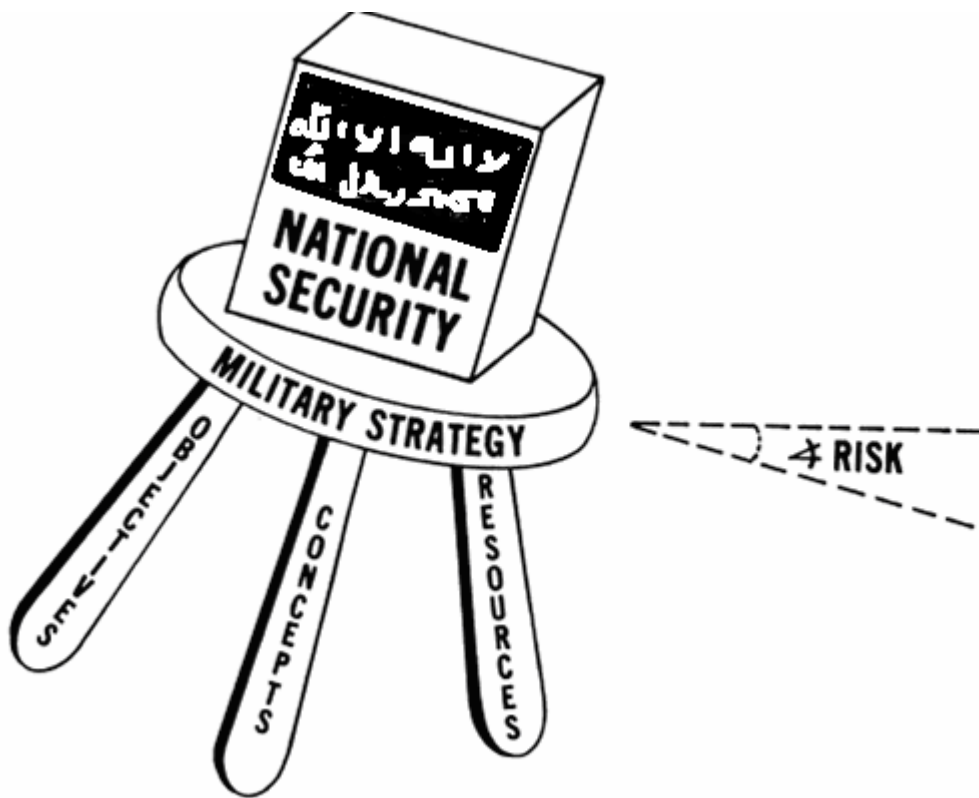
Force planners and strategists must rely on an appropriate mix of threat and capability-based planning that will allow their particular nation to achieve its strategic objectives and provide its political leadership with the answer to the question, “how much is enough?”

In regards to our current times, the Vision of the Jihaadi Movement (which may be considered the third part of this Strategy Series), has some insights into what forms of warfare and training we should focus upon and give priority (i.e. conventional versus unconventional).

Strategic Risk:

Defining risk is a relatively simple task. At its core, risk arises when ends and means are not in consonance. This is known as an “ends-means mismatch.” Strategic risk then is the probability of failure in achieving a strategic objective at an acceptable cost. The concept is simple to articulate and easy to understand. But, as in war, the simplest things in strategy are the most difficult.

The first difficulty is in understanding what Clausewitz and others meant by “means” in the ends-means equation. Current use of the term generally accepts that means constitute resources, that is, personnel, treasure, equipment, political will, time and so on. Clausewitz also intended a larger meaning that includes concepts or courses of action to achieve particular objectives; these coupled with resources constitute the means or “effort to be made.” It has become increasingly useful to separate these two components of Clausewitz’ “means”, for consideration in strategy formulation without confusing Clausewitz’ original intent. Consequently, risk can be represented by a mismatch in ends and ways or means.



Using a simple metaphor of a three legged stool, if the ends, ways and means (the legs of the stool) are not of equal length then we are left with a stool (and a strategy) that is out of balance. Continuing the analogy, this angle of imbalance is therefore defined as risk. The greater the mismatch between ends, ways and/or means, the greater the risk of not achieving ones objectives. This is a subtle but important addition to the simple ends-

means equation. One can correctly and accurately identify the objective to be achieved and provide adequate resources to achieve it. However, if the “way” of achieving it is not in balance then there is an inherent risk of failure to achieve the strategic objective. For example, during the Cuban Missile Crisis the objective of the Kennedy administration was fairly straightforward: Get the missiles out of Cuba. The means available were adequate and deliverable. However, there were several different ways to achieve the objective. Graham Allison identifies six major categories of possible response: Do nothing, apply diplomatic pressure, secretly approach Castro, conduct an invasion, conduct air strikes, or blockade. One can also see this in the continuing debate over the strategy for Kosovo and the use solely of airpower to achieve particular political objectives. In the model of the stool, the balance varies depending on which option is chosen. The degree of lopsidedness or imbalance defines risk. Choosing the right policy option (or way) to achieve the strategic objective is therefore a critical consideration even assuming a clear objective and adequate means. That is, an adequately resourced “way” that is inappropriate to the “end” would still create risk of failure to achieve the strategic objective. Thus, the definition of risk is the degree to which strategic objectives, concepts and resources are in or out of balance.

Since strategy is a dynamic process, one must understand that all three elements are variable and subject to change over time. The formulation of effective strategy for any endeavor is a constant quest to ensure balance among the variables. The definition applies to all aspects of strategy development whether dealing with national security (grand) strategy, defense, military or theater strategies, business strategy or even personal strategies.

GENIUS AND UNCERTAINTY

It is clear that calculating risk must include a heavy dose of uncertainty because of the multiplicity of ambiguous factors and the enduring presence of what Clausewitz often described as ‘the fog of war.’ Despite this uncertainty, however, there is always comfort in the knowledge that others have navigated these waters before. The challenge, then, is to somehow structure or frame the strategic problem to minimize the unknown or more importantly, to account for it. The effective strategist strives for the “closest approximation of the truth” knowing that full knowledge is an impossibility.

Clausewitz identifies two preeminent qualities in a successful strategist that bear consideration:

If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: *first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead* (emphasis in the original).

These are the elements that define what Clausewitz terms “genius.” The aspiring strategist should not be misled or discouraged by the use of the term however. Clausewitz does not refer to the result of good genetics, but to the development of a mind through

study and experience. He is clear on this point as he continues his discussion: “It is the *average result* that indicates the presence of military genius.” In other words, “genius” as Clausewitz describes it is not solely the unique gift of a Napoleon or Gustavus or Hannibal. It is an achievable skill and the “inner light” can be taught and learned. Von Moltke the Elder took up the same theme several generations later:

What is necessary is to discover the situation, such as it is, in spite of its being surrounded by the fog of the unknown; then to *appreciate soundly* what is seen, to *guess* what is not seen, to *take a decision quickly, finally to act with vigour*, with out hesitation.

The message is that an education in strategic subjects, followed by continuous historical study to maintain mental suppleness combined with vicarious experience through exercise, and actual experience, all contribute to acquiring the skills necessary for finding the “closest approximation of the truth.” Strategic ability is rarely born, more often learned, but eminently achievable.

Acknowledging the theoretical uncertainties inherent in war, conflict and policy and strategy development is an important, if unsatisfying, step in understanding risk assessment. It allows a better framing of the strategic puzzle. It is simply a matter of knowing what is not known in order to make better use of what is known and, as von Moltke suggests, to guess what is not seen. Guessing well is an inherent part of the art of Grand Strategy.

THE ENDS, WAYS, MEANS CONUNDRUM IN RISK ASSESSMENT

The essence of the challenge of strategy in general and risk assessment in particular is the core problem of relating ends to ways and means. Compounding this basic conundrum is the fact that most often the ends will be abstract while the ways and means will be relatively well defined. In addition, the real test of the master of strategic art is to translate obtuse, politically couched objectives into specific actions. This is likely to become more of a challenge as the nature, scope and direction of potential threats multiply. Articulating the political objective in the event of a major theater war is relatively easy; however, achieving significant clarity in political objectives in multiplying crises around the world, especially where vital interests are not at stake, will become increasingly problematic. One analyst notes in a critique of the U.S. foreign policy process:

Any ambiguity in the ends-means relationship, any loss in the value roots of policy, or any failure to maintain a firm commitment to the achievement of the national purpose can not help but deprive a foreign policy of essential meaning and effectiveness.

A second related potential pitfall facing the grand strategist is the “tail wagging the dog” phenomenon. In the absence of clear political objectives or policy guidance, the means can in fact “deflect the direction of ends.” What gets done becomes what one has the

capability of doing. The ways and means can develop a momentum of their own and the result is strategy by default, usually at the risk of desired political outcomes. The von Schlieffen Plan and America's experience in Vietnam are two stark historic examples of this effect.

This problem has been ascribed to the "triumph of technique" in American foreign policy. One critic specifically targets the militarization of foreign affairs during the Cold War and an emphasis on quantitative assessments based solely on capabilities. In such cases, Clausewitz' "ephemeral factors" are discounted and "consideration of political subtleties tends to be shunted aside." Ferdinand Foch, writing in 1903, complained of the same phenomenon but went further: "while the moral factors were depressed as *causes* [of war], they were also suppressed as *effects*." The unintended result is that strategy can become a function solely of material factors. The dramatic changes of the last decade and the growing complexities and dimensions of current and future world problems make simplistic, capabilities-based approaches dangerous at their worst, or potentially ineffective at best. Getting ends, ways and means right has always been hard; it is becoming harder.

NEUCHTERLEIN AND NATIONAL INTERESTS

Risk assessment is inherent to the entire strategy formulation process. Donald Neuchterlein addresses risk in his discussion on identifying national interests and their intensities, a fundamental prerequisite to policy and strategy development. He posits sixteen criteria for assessing a particular issue as a vital interest. These are divided into value and cost/risk factors:

Neuchterlein advocates using a simple valuation process by rating each factor high, medium or low or even assigning numerical scores to the factors. Likewise, for a particular issue, some factors may be more important than others and can be appropriately weighted or prioritized. The factor scores are then totaled. If the value totals of a particular issue are high compared to a low or medium cost/risk valuation, then the issue probably constitutes a vital interest. Neuchterlein does not claim a scientific basis for his methodology, only that:

it provides for systematic analysis of specific foreign policy issues; it should therefore lead to better judgments about levels of interest for the United States and its antagonists and, one would hope, to wiser policies than would otherwise be the case.

Thus, it provides a simple tool that assists in the discrimination of interests in relative terms. Having determined "vitalness," the policy maker/strategist is in a better position to articulate a balanced set of ends, ways and means in the strategy formulation process by accounting for degrees of risk up front.

CALCULATED RISK

The noted naval theorist, Admiral J.C. Wylie, took a more rigorous approach to the problem in a tongue-in-cheek article published in 1953 entitled “The Calculation of Risk.” The impetus for the short article apparently arose from the 1953 budget hearings in which the Army representative answered difficult questions with the rejoinder “Mr. Congressman, that is a calculated risk.” Of course no one knew what a calculated risk was or how to calculate it, so Wylie decided to try. Although intended facetiously, Wylie’s little paper does merit consideration in its own right. Using a series of variables and equations, he describes various strategic characteristics.

P = Profit if successful

C_n = Cost if not attempted

C_f = Cost of attempt that fails

C_s = Cost of attempt that succeeds

S = Probability of success

Wylie defines risk as P/C_f , or the potential profit divided by the cost of a failed attempt. As long as this is greater than 1, the enterprise (or strategy) is “encouraged”; likewise, if less than 1, “discouraged.” These machinations result in general determining equations:

If $P \times S < C_f(1-S)$ then “no go”

If $P \times S > C_f(1-S)$ then “go”

These equations describe what is already known instinctively: If the payoff times the probability of success is greater than the cost of failure times the probability of failure, the result is a winning strategy.

Risk is further defined by an equation:

$$C_f/C_s < S/(1-S)$$

That is, the cost of a failed attempt over the cost of a successful attempt must be less than the probability of success divided by the probability of failure.

Having had his fun with the reader, Wylie further stipulates that:

To insure success in its use, there is only one condition that must be met: the factors involved must never be expressed in arithmetic quantities. That would blunt the fine edge of judgment and obscure the true balance of intangibles.

Wylie clearly subscribes to the Clausewitzian notions of uncertainty and unpredictability in war and he makes this clear in his important and short book *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control*. In it he further admonishes the reader to plan for a complete spectrum of strategies in order to have a “reserve” of strategies for the inevitable changes that will occur. He also warns that “the player who plans for only one strategy runs a great risk simply because his opponent soon detects the single strategy-

and counters it . . . planning for certitude is the greatest of all military mistakes . . .” Wylie’s reserve of strategies is essentially conceptual hedging for uncertainty with its inherent risk. This, to borrow from operational art, is planning for strategic branches and sequels or for potential developments requiring adjustments in ends, ways or means as a particular strategy is implemented.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The process of risk assessment is dynamic in nature over time and circumstance. That is, the variables are in constant flux. Risk assessment is simply the constant effort to identify and correct imbalances among the key variables. The first ability of the strategist is to recognize when variables change. The second is to adjust the remaining variables to account for the “delta” or, as it has been defined, the risk. This is known as risk management. In simplest terms, the strategist has several clear options:

MODIFY ENDS

When the price to achieve a particular objective is too high or the ability to affect a “center of gravity” is limited, it may become necessary to reduce the overall objective to more realistic terms. Examples include the decision to forego a cross-channel attack in 1942 in favor of North Africa, or accepting a lesser objective than the unification of the Korean peninsula after the Chinese intervention.

MODIFY MEANS.

An increase or reallocation of resources may affect the ability to implement a strategy and achieve the objective. This is, however, not simply a quantitative solution. A definition of resources includes unpredictable and changeable elements as well. For example, public support of a particular policy/strategy is a key consideration in a democracy and must be accounted for even if difficult to measure. Vietnam is a classic example of not adequately modifying means by calling up the reserves and generating sufficient public support for the effort.

MODIFY WAYS.

Assuming that the objective is sound and resources are adequate, there will likely be multiple ways to achieve the desired end-state. Use of the various elements of power (political, military, economic, informational) in differing combinations with varying emphasis may enhance the ability to achieve the same overall objective. The recent Kosovo experience serves as a good case of modifying ways: The deployment of Task Force Hawk and increasing information about planning for possible ground options coupled with retargeting the air operation are thought to have contributed to Milosevic’s decision to withdraw forces.

REASSESS THE RISK

Over time some of the going-in assumptions may be proven invalid. Additional information may become available or gaps in knowledge filled. The strategist needs to recognize the potential strategic effect of more or less information, recognizing that the 100% solution will always be elusive due to the “ephemeral factors.” It is important to reemphasize that this process is dynamic and “at once abstract and rational, [and] must be capable of synthesizing both psychological and material data.” Indeed, one man’s risk is another man’s certitude and therefore grist for the continuously grinding strategic mill.

FIVE PATTERNS OF STRATEGY FOR RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Andre Beaufre addresses the “ends-means” conundrum in his classic book *Introduction to Strategy*. His intent is to provide a series of models, what he calls patterns of strategy, to assist in the process of strategic thinking. The models are intended to show how various and fundamentally differing strategies can spring from the dynamic relationship between ends, ways and means. These five patterns are macro-descriptors and it is clear to see that countless variations are possible.

Ends Moderate, Means Large. This is described as a strategy of “direct threat”; nuclear deterrence strategy is given as example of this pattern.

Ends Moderate, Means Limited. Consisting of a pattern of “indirect pressure,” this pattern is useful when freedom of action is limited. It emphasizes political, diplomatic, and economic elements of power at the expense of direct military action. It models the basis of Soviet strategy, that is, avoiding direct military confrontation with the United States

Ends Important, Ways Limited (Low Freedom of Action), Means Limited. This pattern constitutes a combination of “direct threat” and “indirect pressure” applied in successive actions and reflects the strategy of indirect approach as described by Liddell-Hart. It is most appropriate to nations strong defensively but with limited resources.

Ends Important, Ways Unlimited (High Freedom of Action), Means Inadequate. This reflects a strategy of protracted war but at a low level of military intensity. It is the theoretical basis for Mao Tse-Tung’s theory of protracted struggle.

Ends Important, Means Unlimited. This traditional pattern is characterized by “violent conflict aiming at military victory.” Beufre describes it as the classic strategy of the Napoleonic era with Clausewitz as its principle theorist.

With these five patterns of strategy as a basis, Collins addresses risk specifically with seven examples of how to balance the strategic equation:

- Eliminate waste [modifying ways and/or means]
- Compress objectives [modifying ends]
- Adjust strategy [modifying ways]
- Augment assets [modifying means]
- Reduce ends and increase means [modifying ends and means]
- Bluff [adversary misinterprets your ends, ways, means]
- Give up on the objective [the ultimate modification of ends]

Achieving strategic balance, and hence strategic effectiveness, may require the application of one or more of these examples (or even the application of completely different creative elements) to induce change in the strategic equation.

CONCLUSION

Assessing and managing strategic risk is an inherently inexact process. It encompasses a combination of inputs, both material and moral, that defy empirical resolution. Weighing these inputs, identifying possible outcomes and planning for uncertainty should be done with the clear understanding that a complete solution is impossible to achieve but always striven for. Once a strategy is developed, the most important strategic skill and the true mark of strategic “genius” is accounting for potential change and recognizing actual change in a timely enough manner to adjust the strategic variables and thereby ensure a valid strategic equation oriented firmly on achieving the political objectives at hand. This is increasingly difficult to do in a dynamically changing strategic environment with myriad threats, challenges, actors and unclear potential effects. This is why the development and execution of strategy is primarily an art and why the requirement for developing masters of that art is so essential. In the end though, the essential elements of strategic risk are unchanged through the ages and consist in the proper balancing of ends, ways and means to achieve the desired strategic outcome. Understanding that fundamental relationship and “guessing well” through study, exercise and experience will ensure that assessing and managing strategic risk rises above simply “the comfort level of strategic planners.” A gastro-intestinal assessment is not good enough. It never was.

Before closing, the following are some examples from the *Siirah* which shed light on how these principles are to be applied (although they are more accurately described as relating to operational strategy instead of grand strategy).

Mu'taa – The Prophet (S) sent the companions with a clear mission (ends): call those who killed his (S) messenger to Islaam and fight them if they refuse. He (S) also sent them with a set amount of resources (means): three thousand fighters with their weapons, transports, and provisions. The method of fighting (ways), however, was not specifically outlined, although it is obviously implied that the normal tactics of war fighting were to be employed. The only explicit advice given in this regard was that the Prophet (S) named the leader of the mission, Zayd bin Haarithah, along with his successor in the event of martyrdom, Ja'far bin Abii Taalib, and his successor, 'Abdullaah bin Rawaahah (R). This advice gives us an insight in to what type of battle was to come: a hard one.

After all, it's not always anticipated that the leader of a campaign will become martyred, much less two leaders in succession!

When the companions heard that the enemy could reach the outlandish number of two hundred thousand, there was need for a serious advisory council session regarding what to do. One proposal was to write to the Prophet (S) to ask for a decision: either to send back-up (a modification of the means) or to order them on (accept the level of risk as appropriate). However, 'Abdullaah bin Rawaahah (R) seemed to feel that the Prophet (S) had sent them for this mission with full knowledge of the possible risks. Therefore, he decided that martyrdom was not only acceptable, but an objective in and of itself.

This remained the decision of choice until all of the leaders, including 'Abdullaah bin Rawaahah (R) himself, were martyred and the Muslims had to agree upon a new leader from amongst themselves. Once they chose Khaalid bin al-Waliid (R) to carry on the battle, he carried out another risk assessment and decided that it would be necessary to make an adjustment to the ends and the ways that had previously been set prior to the current situation in which the Muslims had found themselves.

Khaalid (R) chose to abort the original mission of crushing the will of the enemy through normal methods. Instead, he organized a planned retrograde to protect his remaining soldiers from falling victim to piecemeal reactions and acts of desperation. The methods he chose were to change the positions of his men, in order to give the perception that back-up had arrived, and to retrograde slowly while keeping fighting positions, in order to leave the enemy weary of a possible trap.

At-Taa'if – The Muslims besieged at-Taa'if for around a month with tough opposition from the fortress of the Polytheists. They were shooting arrows in plenty, martyring around twelve companions and causing the Muslims to change their positions further out of range.

The Muslims then changed their tactics (ways) and began using a catapult to launch projectiles at the walls of the fortress. When a hole was made in the wall the Muslims attacked only to find themselves victims of molten metal and more arrows.

It is reported in the *Siirah*, that the Prophet (S) changed the ways once more by simultaneously terrorizing the enemy, by cutting down their orchards, and extending his hand in mercy, by offering amnesty and freedom (in the case of slaves) to anyone who would surrender. Eventually, he added to his appeal to compassion by responding to the pleas of Thaqiif who asked him to stop the cutting of their orchards out of honoring family ties.

Finally, when it became clear that Thaqiif had found a strong fortress in at-Taa'if the Prophet (S) made another risk assessment and concluded that the benefits of the siege were outweighed by the risks. He (S) decided to change the ends by lifting the siege. When the companions (R) refused to accept defeat that easily, the Prophet (S) was

flexible in his decision and allowed them to carry on fighting until they themselves came to the same conclusion.

Eventually, when everyone was certain of the Prophet's (S) decision, the Muslims decided to leave the cowering fox in his hole. The Prophet (S) then asked Allaah to guide them and to bring them to Islaam willingly.

Time illustrated that this was the best decision to be made because once Maalik bin 'Awf (the man who had thus far been leading Hawaazin and the Thaqiif) realized that his wealth and women (which had been captured at the previous battles from Hunayn up to at-Taa'if) had been split amongst the Muslims, his resolve crumbled and he surrendered. He was then given the responsibility of fighting the same tribes he had previously led, until they also resolved to surrender and become Muslims.

This battle also reinforces what was previously discussed about not allowing the issue of credibility to run amuck and cause reason and sound judgment to go afoul.

The Importance of Defining and Considering Regions:

WHAT IS A REGION?

Regions may be defined and distinguished according to an approximate combination of geographic, social, cultural, and political variables. It will always be difficult, however, to create clear lines of separation. As an analytical category in international relations, the “region” is fated to remain contingent and contentious. Geographical contiguity is clearly a prerequisite for tightly defined regional identity, and without some geographical limitation the concept loses all coherence, but drawing uncontested boundaries is usually an impossible task. The concept of “eastern Europe” once had a fairly high degree of integrity, but since 1989 it has virtually disappeared from the political lexicon. The phrase “Middle East,” which was originally the product of colonialist and Eurocentric world views, continues to be used to describe an extremely diverse area stretching from the Maghreb into distant Central Asia.

Meanwhile, the designation of an eastern Mediterranean Levant has fallen out of fashion. The Balkans have been regarded as a distinctive European sub-region for well over a century, but almost any Balkan state with elsewhere to turn rejects the designation unambiguously. “All regions,” writes Andrew Hurrell with some justification, “are socially constructed and hence politically contested.” One of the more influential recent attempts to delineate regions according to cultural criteria has been Samuel Huntington’s clash of civilizations thesis. Huntington identifies nine world civilizational zones based significantly, though not entirely, upon confessional affiliation. The argument that geostrategy will be increasingly dominated by civilizational conflict waged along the “faultlines” dividing these zones has been widely used to explain the apparent upsurge in ethnic conflict of the past decade. Huntington’s argument, however, is neither entirely novel nor altogether convincing. Geopolitical analysis has long used the idea of the “shatterbelt,” defined as a politically fragmented and ethnically divided zone that serves as a field of competition between continental and maritime powers.

Great civilizations cannot be precisely bounded spatially, and they are rarely either entirely homogenous or mutually exclusive. Huntington’s attempt to designate geographically bounded civilizational zones, and to use these zones as the foundation for a theory of geostrategy, rests on suspect premises. Barry Buzan has developed the concept of the “regional security complex” in an effort “to offset the tendency of power theorists to underplay the importance of the regional level in international security affairs.” He offers the assertion that in security terms, “‘region’ means that a distinct and significant subsystem of security relations exists among a set of states whose fate is that they have been locked into geographical proximity with each other.” The existence of a “subsystem” of security relations presumes high levels of interdependence, multiple interactions, and shared sensitivities and vulnerabilities. Any attempt to identify such complexes empirically, however, poses obvious problems. Regional security complexes are rarely if ever defined exclusively by geographical proximity, they are often

dominated by external powers, and they are sometimes held hostage by national-cultural variables or systemic dynamics.

The U.S. makes an approximate distinction between geographic regions in the Unified Command Plan that lies at the basis of its war-fighting strategy, by fixing the contours of unified command areas assigned to combatant commanders-in-chief (CINCs). The present division designates a European Command combining western and central Europe with Africa, a Central Command approximately contiguous with an extended Middle East, a Pacific Command covering most of eastern and southern Asia and Oceania, a Southern Command including much of Latin America and the Caribbean, and a Joint Forces Command based in the United States.

This approach originally evolved from the division of responsibilities adapted by the U.S. to fight the Second World War, and was formalized by the National Security Act of 1947. Over the years the geographic division of responsibility has been adapted repeatedly, on the basis of changes in the international security structure, technological advances, and strategic calculation, but also bureaucratic infighting over areas of responsibility and access to resources. Geographic CINCs have recently been required to draw up an annual Theater Engagement Plan defining regional shaping priorities, but the CINC is primarily a war-fighter, and the division of responsibility which the current unified command plan structure embodies is geared to position the U.S. to prevail in armed confrontations.

Current U.S. national security strategy, which mandates readiness to fight two nearly simultaneous major theater wars, concentrates the attention of the CINCs on the areas where such conflicts are presumed to be most likely—in the Middle East/Southwest Asian and Western Pacific/Northeast Asian theaters. Three major nations of critical importance to U.S. security—Canada, Mexico, and the Russian Federation—are not attached to geographic CINCDoms. The distinction between CINCDoms is not altogether arbitrary, but it is geared to the performance of the functional tasks of warriors, does not rest upon careful conceptual distinctions, and is partially incomplete.

David Lake and Patrick Morgan define region minimally, as “a set of countries linked by geography and one or more common trends, such as level of development, culture or political institutions.” Their definition has the advantages of simplicity and flexibility. It is, however, too broad to be really useful, and also potentially misleading. The nation-state is an inadequate building bloc for regional complexes. Any viable definition of the post-Soviet Central Asian region would have to include China’s Xinjiang province, whose population is composed of 60 percent Turkic Muslims. Russia’s far eastern provinces are an integral part of the Asia-Pacific region, while the core of historic Russia is an extension, both geographically and culturally, of a greater Europe. Ukraine’s population is divided politically along the line of the Dnieper River, with the western provinces affiliating with an enlarged central Europe and the eastern provinces oriented toward the Russian Federation and Eurasia. Northern Mexico and southern California have become intimately associated as a result of high levels of economic interaction and cross-border movement of peoples. The European Union has even sought to

institutionalize transnational communities, by creating multi-state districts designated as “Euro-regions.”

The commonalities used to distinguish regions cannot be terminated artificially at national boundaries, and “one or more common trends” is too weak a foundation for association to give regional designations analytical substance. In its regional studies curriculum, the U.S. Army War College designates six major world regions on the basis of broad geographical criteria—Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Russia and Eurasia, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Americas. These are designations of convenience intended primarily for pedagogical purposes. Our working definition of what constitutes a region is of necessity broad and multidimensional. Geographical propinquity; a sense of identity and self-awareness based upon shared experience, ascribed traits, or language; a degree of autonomy within the international state system; relatively high levels of transactions; economic interdependencies; and political and cultural affinity may all be cited as relevant criteria. It is presumed that there will be gray areas and significant overlap between regions however they are defined. The Turkish Republic, for example, is simultaneously part of a greater Europe, an extended Middle East, and post-Soviet Eurasia. No single set of associations is essential, and in the best of cases fixing the contours of major world regions and sub-regions will remain a problematic exercise.

However regions are defined and differentiated, the impact of local, national, and regional dynamics upon world politics is substantial and destined to grow larger.

Geopolitics

Many currently fashionable approaches to international relations assume the decline of territoriality as a motive for state behavior. The dominant trend in world politics is persistently, albeit vaguely, described as globalization, implying a rapid increase in interactions fueled by revolutions in communications and information management, the emergence of a truly global market and world economy, the primacy of economic competition as a mode of interstate rivalry, and an unprecedented space-time compression that places unique demands upon decision-makers. The globalization scenario is built on overarching generalizations about world order and it rests upon universalizing premises that leave little space for sticky concern with the intricacies of regional affairs. There are alternatives to theoretical perspectives cast on so high a level of abstraction, however, that bring regional issues into the forefront of international discourse. Most important among them is the tradition of geopolitics.

The core challenge of geopolitical analysis is to link the systematic study of spatial and geographical relations with the dynamic of interstate politics. As a formal discipline, geopolitics dates from the late nineteenth century work of the Leipzig professor Friedrich Ratzel. His 1897 study *Politische Geographie* (Political Geography) presents states as organisms with a quasi-biological character, rooted in their native soil, embedded in a distinctive spatial context or *Lebensraum* (living space), and condemned to either grow and expand or wither away. In the works of various contemporaries and successors, including Alfred Thayer Mahan, Rudolf Kjellén, Halford Mackinder, Alfred de Severing,

Klaus Haushofer, and Nicholas John Spykman, these insights have been pushed in a number of directions. The strong influence of geopolitical categories, especially as transmitted through the work of Haushofer, upon Adolf Hitler's strategic program during the 1930s has brought enduring discredit upon the discipline, widely but unfairly regarded as a vulgar amalgam of social Darwinism and military expansionism. In fact, in its manifold and not always consistent manifestations, geopolitical analysis presents a range of alternative strategic perceptions whose common ground is a sense of the permanent and enduring relevance of spatial, cultural, and environmental factors in world politics. These are also the factors that stand at the foundation of regional studies.

Geopolitics is rooted in the study of geography, broadly but relevantly defined by Saul Cohen as "spatial patterns and relations that reflect dynamic physical and human processes." Geography is a rich and complex construct that provides a context for weighing the impact of a number of significant but often neglected variables. These include ethnicity, nationalism, and the politics of identity; access to natural and strategic resources; geostrategy and the role of lines of communication and strategic choke points; relations between human communities and their natural environment; and the strategic implications of increasing environmental stress. It encompasses demographic issues such as population growth, cycles of migration and changing patterns of population distribution, and "decision-making milieus" including Huntingtonian civilizational zones, political systems and political cultures, as well as the spatial distribution of power within the world system. Geopolitical analysis is best known in the West as refracted by Halford Mackinder's heartland concept, which defines control of the Eurasian land mass as the key to world power.

Mackinder distinguished between a *World-Island* encompassing the joined continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, the Eurasian *Heartland* approximately equivalent to Russia and Central Asia, and the *Rimlands* (including east-central Europe) along the Eurasian periphery. "Who rules East Europe," he wrote in a famous passage, "controls the Heartland. Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island. Who rules the World-Island commands the World." Mackinder was not a fascist militarist, but a moderate professor and civil servant, whose thinking lay at the foundation of British strategy through much of the twentieth century. By calling attention to the spatial dimensions of grand strategy, his work points out the extent to which geostrategic concepts have been and continue to be at the heart of modern statecraft.

A striking contemporary illustration of the continuing impact of geopolitical perspectives is provided by the heartland power *par excellence*, the Russian Federation, where disillusionment with the gilded promises of globalization and integration with the U.S.-led world economy have led to a rapid and broadly influential revival of geopolitical theory. The new Russian geopolitics has been dismissed in the West as a manifestation of radical extremism, a sort of Russian fascism born of the post-communist malaise. In fact, core geopolitical perceptions (the need to maintain the integrity of the Russian Federation, the call to reassert a strong sphere of influence in the territories of the former Soviet Union, the cultural distinctiveness of the Russian Idea and its historical role as a force for integration in the expanses of Eurasia, the need for alliances to balance and contest

American hegemony) have moved into the mainstream of Russian strategic thought and share nearly consensual support.

Haushofer has written that “geopolitics is the science of the conditioning of political processes by the earth,” and that “the essence of regions as comprehended from the geopolitical point of view provides the framework for geopolitics.” This is a *plaidoyer* for the concrete and substantial, for a theory of world politics built from the ground up. Effective geopolitical reasoning leads us back to the earth, to the distinctive political communities nested upon it, to the patterns of association that develop between them, and to the conflicts that emerge from their interactions. It is not the only school of thought that prioritizes the relevance of geography and regional studies, but it provides a particularly good example of the relevance of the textured study of peoples and places as a foundation for effective strategy.

The Cultural Dimension of Warfare

The maxim “know thy enemy” is often counted as the acme of strategic wisdom. It is unfortunately a maxim that has not always been highly respected. War has organizational and technological dimensions which make it a rigorous, practical, and precise enterprise, but wars are also waged between calculating rivals in a domain of uncertainty, and by distinctive political communities in ways that reflect deeply rooted, culturally conditioned preferences. During the Cold War the U.S. made an intense effort to understand the societal and cultural dynamics shaping the perceptions of its Soviet rival, arguably to good effect. In general, however, in depth knowledge of national and regional cultural dynamics has not been a strong point for U.S. strategy, which has tended to rest upon the sturdy pillars of relative invulnerability and the capacity to mobilize overwhelming force. In the volatile and uncertain security environment of the years to come, however, the assumption of technological and material advantage may not be a safe one, nor will these advantages always suffice to ensure superiority in every possible contingency. The People’s Republic of China represents a potential long-term rival with considerable assets and great self-confidence, derived in part from a highly distinctive and ancient culture. Russia’s current time of troubles has temporarily brought her low, but eventually the inherent strengths that made the USSR so formidable a rival during the cold war decades will reassert themselves. The U.S. will need to know “what makes them tick” if it wants to manage its relations with potential peer competitors successfully. Effective intervention in complex contingencies will likewise demand sophisticated knowledge of real or potential rivals. Strategy is not uniquely the product of culture, and culture itself is not a lucid or unambiguous construct. But all strategy unfolds in a cultural context, and cannot be fully or properly understood outside it.

Colin Gray defines strategic culture as “the socially constructed and transmitted assumptions, habits of mind, traditions, and preferred methods of operation ... that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community.” The foundations of strategic culture are the fundamentals of culture itself; shared experience, language, common governance, and values. The cultural orientation that derives from these commonalities, it can be argued, affects the ways in which politics conduct

diplomacy, define and pursue interests, and wage war. In his controversial *History of Warfare*, John Keegan suggests that throughout history war has always been an essentially cultural phenomenon, an atavism derived from patterns of group identification and interaction rather than the purposeful activity implied in Clausewitz's famous dictum that "war is the continuation of politics by other means." Victor Hanson argues that the ancient Greek preference for physical confrontation and quick decision has created a "Western way of war," dominated by a search for decisive battle and strategies of annihilation, that remains alive to this day. Such conclusions are extreme, but they are useful in underlining the fact that wars are conceived, plotted, and waged by socially conditioned human agents.

A better understanding of the strategic cultures of real, or potential adversaries, places another weapon in a nation's arsenal and strengthens its prospects for success. In Bernard Brodie's classic formulation, "good strategy presumes good anthropology and sociology. Some of the greatest military blunders of all time have resulted from juvenile evaluations in this department." Knowing the enemy goes well beyond order of battle, to the sources of strategic preference and military operational codes that are grounded in the social and cultural context of distinctive nations and regions.

CONCLUSIONS

Substantive understanding of major world regions demands a thorough mastery of the relevant specialized literature, careful and persistent monitoring of events and trends, appropriate language skills, and a period of sustained residence allowing for immersion in regional realities, accompanied by periodic visits to keep perceptions up-to-date. Regionalists need refined skills that demand a considerable investment of time and resources to create and maintain. In an increasingly integrated world system, geographic, cultural, and environmental factors that are importantly or uniquely manifested in the regional context will play an increasingly important role in shaping national priorities and international realities. Strategic culture is a vital context for war-fighting, as relevant to contests with peer competitors as it is to clashes with less imposing adversaries in regional contingencies. Shifting patterns of regional association, often motivated by a heightened sense of regional identity and a search for meaning and relative security in the face of the impersonal and sometimes dehumanizing forces of globalization, is an important worldwide trend. However, to assert the importance of regional approaches, in a balanced strategic studies curriculum, is not to deny the relevance of alternative perspectives. Universalizing theory is essential and unavoidable. The formal and technical specializations necessary to make sense of political and military affairs are ineluctable. And there is the ever-present danger of regionalists falling into a narrow preoccupation with local problems and personalities, while missing the larger, structural forces at work in the background. In context, however, and approached with appropriate modesty, regional perspectives have an essential place in strategy formulation.

The relationship between local regions and the global stage as it relates to the Mujaahidiin, shall be covered in The Vision of the Jihaadi Movement.

Strategy as It Relates to the Military:

There needs to be a general agreement on a conceptual approach to military strategy: a definition; a description of the basic elements that make up military strategy; and an analysis of how they are related. For the purpose of this discussion, we will use the definition approved by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff:

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.

General Maxwell D. Taylor characterized strategy as consisting of objectives, ways and means. We can express this concept as an equation:

Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means.	
<i>Component</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Ends	Objectives towards which one strives
Ways	Course of action
Means	Instruments by which some end can be achieved

This general concept can be used as a basis for the formulation of any type strategy—military, political, economic, etc., depending upon the element of national power employed. We should not confuse military strategy with national (grand) strategy, which is:

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.

Military strategy is one part of this all-encompassing national strategy. The military component of national strategy is sometimes referred to as national military strategy. Military strategy must support national strategy and comply with national policy—a broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives. In turn, national policy is influenced by the capabilities and limitations of military strategy.

With our general concept of strategy as a guide, *Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means*, we can develop an approach to military strategy. “Ends” can be expressed as military objectives and “Ways” are concerned with the various methods of applying military force. In essence, this becomes an examination of courses of action (termed military strategic concepts) that are designed to achieve the military objective. “Means” refers to the

military resources (manpower, material, money, forces, logistics, etc.) required to accomplish the mission. This leads us to the conclusion that:

Military Strategy = Military Objectives + Military Strategic Concepts + Military Resources.

Some readers may question this idea, thinking that while military resources are necessary to support a strategy, they are not a component of that strategy. They would limit military strategy to a consideration of military objectives and military strategic concepts. However, in discussing the importance of superiority of numbers, Clausewitz states that the size of military forces “is indeed a vital part of strategy.” And Bernard Brodie points out the “Strategy in peacetime is expressed largely in choices among weapons systems...” By considering military resources as a basic element of military strategy, we may also alleviate the problem of disregarding the importance of military objectives and strategic concepts while concentrating mainly on force structure issues.

Military objectives and military strategic concepts of a military strategy establish requirements for resources, and are in turn influenced by the availability of resources. If we fail to consider military resources as an element of military strategy, we may be faced with what has been called a strategy-capabilities mismatch. This is the usual case when we are developing a long-range strategy requiring improved military force structure capabilities. However, it may be disastrous if we are concerned with an operational strategy upon which contingency plans and military operations will be based. That is why operational strategies *must* be based on capabilities.

Let’s discuss the first basic element of any military strategy—a military objective. It is defined as a specific mission or task to which military efforts and resources are applied.

Several examples come to mind:

1. Deter aggression,
2. Protect lines of communication,
3. Defend the homeland,
4. Restore lost territory, and
5. Defeat an opponent.

The objectives should be military in nature. While Clausewitz, Lenin, and Mao have all emphasized the integral relationship of war and politics, military forces must be given appropriate missions within their capabilities. Liddell Hart stresses that:

In discussing the subject of “the objective” in war it is essential to be clear about, and to keep clear in our minds, the distinction between the political and the military objective. The two are different but not separate. For nations do not wage war for war’s sake, but the pursuance of policy. The military objective is only the means to a political end. Hence the military objective should be governed by the political objective, subject to the basic condition that policy does not demand what is militarily—that, is practically—impossible.

In our definition of military strategy, the ultimate objectives are those of national policy. Sometimes policy guidance is unclear, ambiguous or difficult to find. National policy also concerns itself with all the basic elements of national power: political, economic, socio-psychological, and military. To make things even more interesting, national policies in these various fields are often overlapping, and may even be contradictory. There are seldom “purely military” or “purely political” objectives. National leaders may choose to use the military instrument of power in pursuit of national policy objectives that are primarily political or economic in nature. This can cause problems because sometimes-military force is not the appropriate tool. Military commanders may then have difficulty in deriving feasible military objectives from the objectives of national policy.

Now for an examination of a military strategic concept; it can be defined as the course of action accepted as the result of the estimate of the strategic situation. Military strategic concepts may combine a wide range of options, such as: forward defense (forward basing and/or forward deployment), strategic reserves, reinforcements, show of force, prepositioned stocks, collective security, and security assistance. These are a few of the ways military forces can be used either unilaterally or in concert with allies. The determination of strategic concepts is of major importance. However, one should not make the mistake of calling a strategic concept a strategy. Strategic concepts must always be considered in relation to military objectives and resources.

Finally, we should study the “Means” portion—the military resources that determine capabilities of our military strategy equation. These may include conventional general-purpose forces, strategic and tactical nuclear forces, defensive and offensive forces, active and reserve forces, war materiel and weapons systems as well as manpower. We should also take into consideration the roles and potential contributions of our allies and friends. The total force package must be well rounded with combat, combat support, and combat service support elements that are adequately equipped and sustained. Depending upon the type of strategy we are developing, the forces we consider employing may or may not currently exist. In short-range operational strategies, the forces *must* exist. In longer-range force developmental strategies, the strategic concepts determine the type of forces that *should* exist and the way they are employed.

One should remember that under ideal circumstances military objectives and strategic concepts determine force structure and worldwide deployments of military forces. However, the existing capabilities and limitations of the military forces necessarily affect military objectives and strategic concepts.

It is also worth mentioning that military strategy may be declaratory or actual. In other words, the strategy, as stated by a nation’s leaders, may or may not be the real strategy. Some say that it is unwise, impossible, or even dangerous to enunciate openly a military strategy. This very act may limit our options in a crisis situation, or tip-off our potential adversaries on what our actions might be. A nation may need *more than one* military strategy at a time. For instance, if a nation has only a deterrent strategy, and deterrence fails, what does it do then? Surrender? Submit to piecemeal attacks and incremental

losses? Unleash a massive strategic nuclear attack? These are some of the options if it does not also have a warfighting strategy. Military strategy can change rapidly and frequently, since objectives can change in an instant. However, it takes much longer to alter the military forces so that they may be responsive to new objectives and concepts.

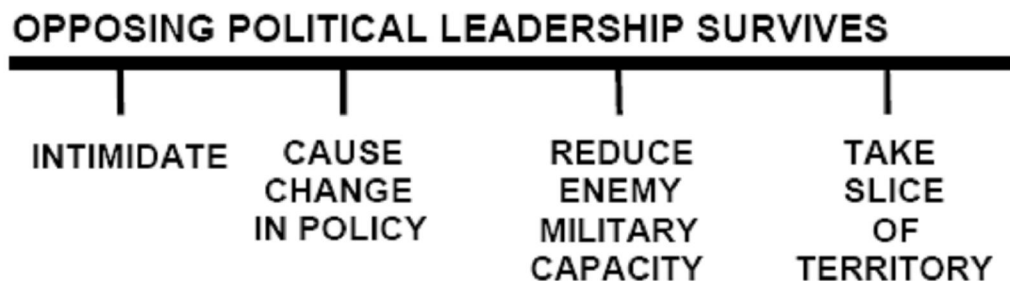
In summary, military strategy consists of the establishment of military objectives, the formulation of military strategic concepts to accomplish the objectives, and the use of military resources to implement the concepts. When any of these basic elements is incompatible with the others, national security may be in danger.

A Reminder about Objectives and End States:

The first step in making strategy is deciding which political objectives a strategy will aim to achieve. After all, 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. Political entities go to war for a variety of reasons, ranging from the simple, such as seizing or protecting a valuable piece of territory, to the abstract such as “defending national honor” or “maintaining the balance of power.” Despite their diversity, political objectives in war can be labeled as either *limited* or *unlimited*. The distinction is fundamental. An unlimited political objective amounts to the elimination of the opponent as a political entity. A limited political objective, on the other hand, is one in which the enemy leadership can survive and remain in power.

LIMITED

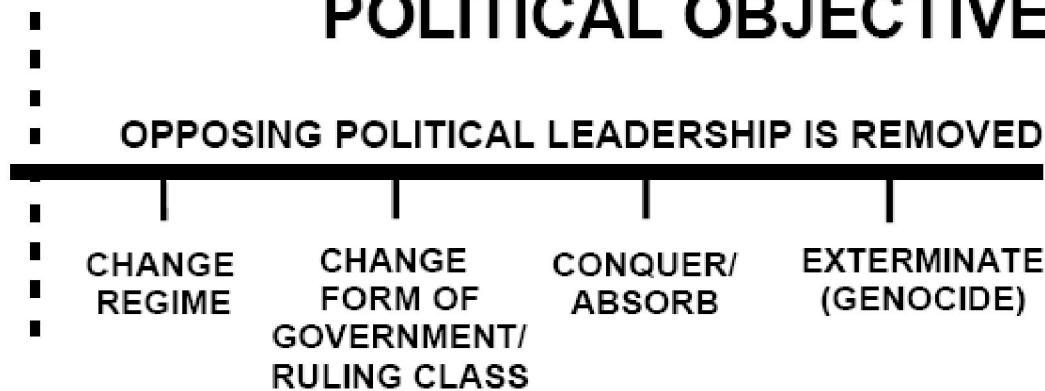
POLITICAL OBJECTIVE



When a political entity seeks an unlimited political objective, its enemy’s leadership is to be removed (perhaps merely deposed, perhaps exiled, imprisoned, or executed), while the enemy’s former assets (territory, population, economic resources) may be absorbed, redistributed, or eradicated. Absorption can mean many things. With the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbia began an effort to systematically reabsorb each of the newly established states with the intent to reestablish a new Yugoslavia under Serbian control. On the other hand, the United States’ invasion of Panama successfully disposed of the current regime but upon reconstitution left the Panamanian people in control of their government. Both cases provide examples of unlimited political objectives. The first demonstrates the desire to remove the current leadership and absorb territory, population, and resources. The second demonstrates the desire to remove the current leadership and redistribute the sources of power.

UNLIMITED

POLITICAL OBJECTIVE



An unlimited political objective, then, may embrace anything from merely deposing a particular leader to physically exterminating an entire people or culture. Ideological revolutionaries, would-be world conquerors, and both sides in most true civil wars tend to seek unlimited political objectives. Occasionally, defensive alliances seeking to eliminate a habitual aggressor will also pursue an unlimited political objective. Conversely, a limited political objective includes anything short of eliminating the political opponent. It is envisioned that the enemy leadership will remain in control after the conclusion of hostilities, although some aspects of its power (influence, territory, resources, or internal control) will be reduced or curtailed. Limited political objectives are characteristic of states seeking better positions in the international balance of power, clans vying for political position within a larger society, mafias or street gangs battling for “turf,” and reformist political movements.

Just as a national strategy will have a number of political objectives, a particular military strategy will have a number of specific military objectives. However, there are only two fundamental ends behind the use of military force. The first is to physically overpower the enemy’s military capacity, leaving him unable to resist our demands. The other is to inflict such high costs on the enemy that he is willing to negotiate an end to hostilities on the terms we desire. The first of these alternatives represents what we call a strategy of *annihilation*. In an annihilation strategy, our military objective is unlimited: we seek to eliminate the enemy’s ability to resist, thus leaving him helpless to oppose the imposition of our will. The second alternative is a strategy of *erosion*. Here, our military objective is limited: we seek only to raise the enemy’s costs so high that he will find ending the war on our terms more attractive than continuing to fight.

The goal of a strategy of annihilation is to deprive the enemy of the ability to resist, to make him militarily helpless. Annihilation does not require the complete physical destruction of the enemy’s military forces. Rather, it requires that the forces be so demoralized and disorganized that they become unable to effectively interfere with the

achievement of our political goals. What is being annihilated—literally “made into nothing”—is the enemy’s physical means to oppose us. Normally, a strategy of annihilation is viable only when one of the participants possesses some very great superiority over the other in terms of brute strength, military skill, leadership, technological capabilities, or morale. Without such an advantage, annihilation strategies often fail, resulting in protracted conflicts and requiring such a commitment of resources that one or all the parties find themselves exhausted before the enemy can be eliminated. The 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War and the Bosnian conflict from 1992 to 1995 are representative examples of what happens when states pursue annihilation strategies without the necessary advantages. Sometimes the necessary superiority can be obtained through surprise, although this is hard to achieve and dangerous to rely on. If the opponent has any strategic depth, he may recover from his surprise before victory is assured.

The objective of the second approach—a strategy of erosion— is to convince the enemy that settling the political dispute will be easier and the outcome more attractive than continued conflict. To put it another way, erosion strategies seek to present the enemy with the probability of an outcome worse *in his eyes* than peace on the adversary’s terms. This is accomplished through eroding or wearing down the enemy’s will to fight, rather than destroying his ability to resist. Erosion strategies are used to pursue a limited political objective when one combatant is either unable or unwilling to destroy the opponent’s war-making capability. In many cases, an erosion strategy is required simply because the enemy is too powerful or difficult to annihilate. In other cases, this approach is used because one party does not want or need to destroy the other’s military capacity. Perhaps the goal requires such a modest concession from the enemy that it is reasonable to believe he will acquiesce after modest resistance. In another example, there may be a continuing need to keep the opponent’s military forces in existence as a buffer or as a factor in the balance of power.

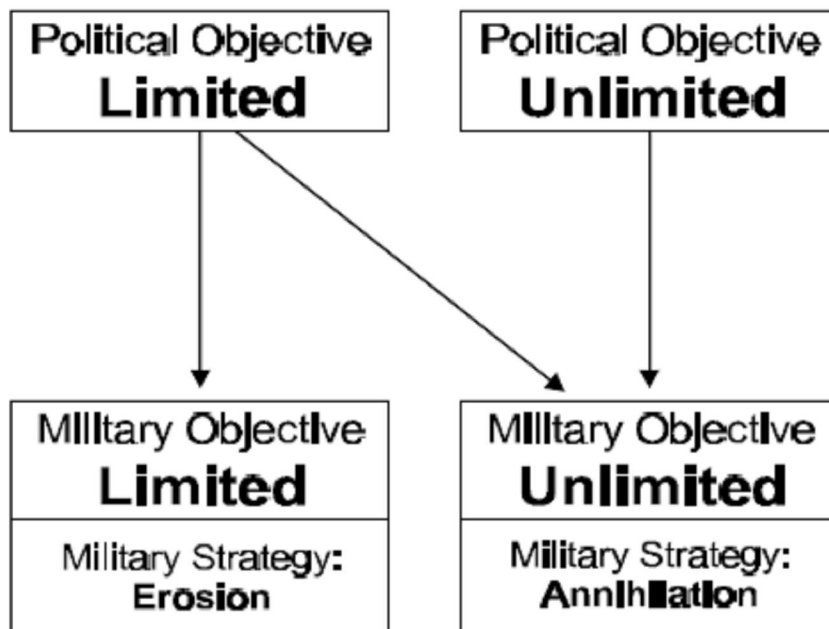
With this distinction laid clear, it is evident that the political objective of the Prophet (S) in the *Siirah* was no other than annihilation. The entire regime of Quraysh and the polytheistic principles for which it stood, had to be completely changed. It follows then that the military objective was also of an unlimited nature.

Relationship Between Political and Military Objectives

Political objectives and military objectives are very different things. Political objectives describe, in a sense, where we want to go. Military objectives describe what we have to accomplish militarily in order to get there. If the political objective is unlimited, the military strategy must be unlimited. Conversely, a limited political objective may call for a military strategy with limited objectives—that is, an erosion strategy. In Afghanistan, the Mujahidin sought a limited political objective: to get the Soviet Union to withdraw from the struggle. Accordingly, they pursued an erosion strategy, seeking to make the Afghan adventure too costly for the Soviet government to sustain.

Though our political objective is limited, it does not necessarily follow that our military strategy must also be limited. The Gulf War provides an example of an unlimited military strategy applied successfully in pursuit of a limited political objective. The Coalition had a limited political objective: restore Kuwait's independence. In order to attain this objective, however, it was necessary to destroy all capability of the Iraqi forces to resist and forcibly eject them from Kuwait. Thus, the Coalition employed a strategy of annihilation, pursuing the total defeat of Iraq's military capacity within the Kuwait theater of operations.

Strategies of annihilation are conceptually simple. The focus of operational efforts is the enemy's armed forces and the object is to render them powerless. Those forces may be annihilated through battle or through destruction of the social or industrial infrastructure that supports them. The main effort is the armed forces. The diplomatic, economic, and informational instruments of national power support the military effort. Victory is easily measured: when one side's fighting forces are no longer able to present organized resistance, the other side has won.



By comparison, erosion strategies involve many more variables. In erosion strategies, there is a much wider choice in the designation of a main effort among the instruments of national power, the relationship of military force to the other instruments of power, and the definition of victory. Attacks may be focused on the enemy's armed forces, as in an annihilation strategy, or some other valuable resource such as territory, commerce, or financial assets may be seized, threatened, or neutralized. Military forces are normally the main effort in the seizing and holding of territory. Successful embargoes and the freezing of financial assets, on the other hand, often depend primarily on diplomatic and economic

power. It may also be possible to undermine an enemy's domestic or international political position through the use of informational or psychological operations. Victory in a strategy of erosion can be more flexibly defined or more ambiguous than is the case with an annihilation strategy. The enemy's submission to our demands may be explicit or implicit, embodied in a formal treaty or in behind-the-scenes agreements. Convinced that we have made our point, we may simply "declare victory and go home." A compromise may allow both sides to claim success. Victories in erosion strategies thus tend to be undramatic, but they can have tremendous political consequences. The West's success in its containment of the Communist bloc, essentially a very long-term erosion strategy, offers a powerful example.

Distinguishing Between Erosion and Annihilation Strategies

Although annihilation and erosion are conceptually quite different, in practice it is often hard to distinguish between them. There are several reasons for this ambiguity. First, annihilation and erosion become practically indistinguishable when one side or both pursue annihilation, but neither has an overwhelming military superiority. In such a case, unlimited political and military objectives can be obtained only through "slugging it out." This guarantees roughly comparable losses on both sides and can lead to negotiated settlements, even though one or both sides originally sought unlimited objectives.

Second, these two strategies can overlap, or one can lead to the other. Sometimes it is the *threat* of annihilation that forces the enemy to make a deal. In that case, the difference between an erosion strategy and one of annihilation is that the enemy is offered an option of settling the issue before he is made helpless. Conversely, if an enemy cannot be worn down through an erosion strategy into accepting a settlement, it may be necessary to switch to a strategy of annihilation. Third, a strategy that has not yet fully taken shape may be ambiguous. In some cases, this ambiguity reflects calculation: either the strategy is decided but is being disguised, or the strategist has goals that can be fulfilled via either approach and is waiting to see how his opportunities develop. In other cases, ambiguity reflects poor strategy making: the strategy maker does not know what he wants to achieve or how to achieve it.

Ultimately, however, a successful strategy must turn out to be one or the other. At war's end, a strategy that has neither eliminated the enemy's ability to resist nor worn down his will to continue the struggle is a strategy that has failed.

The distinction between strategies of annihilation and erosion is fundamental. The successful strategist must be able to distinguish which strategy is being pursued or should be pursued in a given situation. The ability to determine which strategy is appropriate in turn depends upon the strategist's understanding of the ends of national strategy and the means employed to achieve those ends. Without this foundation, it is impossible to arrive at the specifics of a particular military strategy: the determination of military objectives, the identification of the appropriate means to achieve those objectives, and the development of the strategic concept.

These two types of strategies are not the only forms of strategic opposites. The following are a few more examples:

INITIATIVE AND RESPONSE

All actions in war, regardless of the level, are based upon either taking the *initiative* or reacting in *response* to the opponent. By taking the initiative, we dictate the terms of the conflict and force the enemy to meet us on our terms. The initiative allows us to pursue some positive aim even if only to preempt an enemy initiative. It is through the initiative that we seek to impose our will on the enemy. The initiative is clearly the preferred form of action because only through the initiative can we ultimately impose our will on the enemy. At least one party to a conflict must take the initiative for without the desire to impose upon the other, there would be no conflict. The second party to a conflict must respond for without the desire to resist, there again would be no conflict. If we cannot take the initiative and the enemy does, we are compelled to respond in order to counteract the enemy's attempts. The response generally has a negative aim, that of negating—blocking or counterattacking—the enemy's intentions. Like a counterpunch in boxing, the response often has as its object seizing the initiative from the opponent.

The flux of war is a product of the continuous interaction between initiative and response. We can imagine a conflict in which both belligerents try to take the initiative simultaneously - as in a meeting engagement, for example. After the initial clash, one of them will gain the upper hand, and the other will be compelled to respond—at least until able to wrestle the initiative away from the other. Actions in war more or less reflect the constant imperative to seize and maintain the initiative.

With regards to the Prophetic *Sīrah*, the strategic initiative was seized after the Battle of the Trench.

DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE STRATEGIES

The strategic attacker is the antagonist seeking to add to his relative power. It usually is the side that initiates a war, although defenders sometimes launch preemptive attacks. An attacker may be seeking to completely overthrow the balance of power or may simply want an upward adjustment in his relative position. This distinction affects the kinds of strategies both sides pursue and the intensity of the struggle.

The strategic defender is the participant that wants to keep what he has or to maintain his relative position in a balance of power system. In many important respects, defense is inherently stronger than offense. The strength of the strategic defense derives from human psychology and the balance of power mechanism as well as the forces of friction and inertia. People are naturally willing to endure great sacrifices in defense of their homes and homelands and much less willing to endure such sacrifices in military adventures abroad. An aggressor's action frequently causes anxiety and hostility in neighboring allied and neutral countries; they often interpret a challenge to the existing balance of power as a threat and are more naturally inclined to support the defender.

Friction and inertia are normally on the side of the defender as well: it is inherently easier to hold onto something than to take it away from someone else.

These political and psychological strengths of the strategic defense are present in all wars, even those in which territorial gains and losses are not a major factor. The strength of the defense is often reinforced operationally since the attacker is normally moving away from his base of supply and the center of his political power, while the defender is falling back on his.

Note, of course, that this superiority of the strategic defense is not an absolute. Obviously, a defender with few resources and poor leadership is not stronger than an attacker with vastly greater resources and good leadership. However, all other things being equal, the defender has the advantage.

At the tactical and operational levels, the roles of attacker and defender may frequently change hands or even be shared more or less evenly. At the strategic level, however, the roles tend to be fixed throughout any given conflict. In World War II, for instance, the Western Allies held the advantages of the strategic defense even as their armies marched into Germany. They were perceived as being restorers of the balance of power rather than as threats to it. However, in some situations, the roles of strategic attacker and defender can be reversed. When war is endemic in a society, when the origins of the conflict are poorly remembered, or when the war guilt has come to be equally shared, the advantages of the original defender tend to be lost. In such a case, the balance of power mechanism usually tends to support the current defender and to oppose whichever contender seems momentarily to have the initiative.

The Battle of the Trench also represented the moment after which the defensive strategy of the Prophet (S) changed into an offensive one.

SYMMETRICAL AND ASYMMETRICAL STRATEGIES

Strategies can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. That is, the contending powers may pursue mirror-image ends or rely on similar means, or they may pursue quite different kinds of goals or apply dissimilar means. A symmetrical military strategy is one that attempts to match—or rather, to overmatch—the enemy strength for strength, to beat him on his own terms. An asymmetrical strategy is one that attempts to apply one category of means against another category, to use some means to which the enemy cannot effectively respond in kind.

Many wars are fought between very different enemies and are thus profoundly asymmetrical in character. For example, a terrorist organization may wage war against a government or even against the international community as a whole. The terrorist campaigns of the Irish Republican Army against the United Kingdom and the Palestine Liberation Organization against Israel are illustrations. Most states would like nothing better than for terrorists to act symmetrically and resort to open battle, which would make them vulnerable to the state's superior conventional military forces. On the other hand,

terrorists may also seek to provoke a symmetrical response: the purpose of many terrorist attacks is to provoke governments into actions that antagonize ordinary citizens such as restrictive security measures or even reprisals in kind. These acts undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the government and play into the hands of the terrorist strategy. Because of the fundamentally different natures of the adversaries, the political effects of these similar actions are dramatically different.

Most real-world strategies are a mixture of symmetrical and asymmetrical elements, and it is often difficult to determine the overall balance between them. Thus any discussion of symmetry or asymmetry in war is a matter of degree as well as kind. The usefulness of the concept is that it helps us analyze the dynamics of a struggle. For example, the American strategy of containment during the Cold War always involved strong elements of both symmetry and asymmetry. From a military standpoint, Eisenhower's massive retaliation policy was fundamentally an asymmetrical strategy: the United States would reply to any type of Soviet aggression "by means and at places of our own choosing."³ This was generally interpreted to mean a U.S. nuclear response to a conventional Soviet provocation. From the national strategic standpoint however, Eisenhower's strategy was broadly similar to the Soviet Union's in that both relied primarily on deterrence rather than on the actual application of military force. The Kennedy administration's subsequent flexible response strategy was militarily a symmetrical strategy of matching the Soviets strength for strength. However, it also took advantage of economic and political asymmetries.

There is no innate advantage or disadvantage to either a symmetrical or asymmetrical strategy. The choice depends on the situation and on the constraints of time and creativity. The interplay between symmetry and asymmetry in any struggle is unique and covers a wide range of possibilities. In India's post-World War II struggle for independence, for example, British military power was overthrown by the most asymmetrical approach imaginable: Gandhi's campaign of nonviolence.

A particular strategy must take into account the similarities and differences between the opponents and must—when necessary or advantageous—seek to create new ones. The effective strategist is not biased in favor of either symmetry or asymmetry but is keenly aware of both and of the interplay between them.

The Prophet (S), did not limit his options to either one of these two strategies. His strategy was more of a hybrid in that he would not refuse to fight Quraysh toe to toe, but he also exercised a mastery of ambushes, raids, and assassinations.

DETERRENCE: STRATEGIES OF REPRISAL OR DENIAL

Deterrence means dissuading an enemy from an action by means of some countervailing threat. There are essentially two methods of deterrence: denial and reprisal. To deter by denial means to prevent an enemy's action by convincing him that his action will fail. Conceptually, this is a symmetrical approach (although the actual means of denial may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical). For example, a state may deter conventional

invasion by maintaining sufficiently credible forces to defend its borders. It may deter the use of poison gas by training and equipping its forces and population to function effectively in a chemical warfare environment.

Terrorists may be deterred from attacks on airports by tight security. The second approach, reprisal, is conceptually asymmetrical. We may concede to the enemy that he is capable of taking what he wants from us but seek to convince him that his prize will not be worth the price he will pay for it. For example, a state weak in conventional forces may seek to deter enemy occupation by credibly preparing to wage a long, painful guerrilla war of resistance. Conventional invasion might also be deterred through the threat of nuclear retaliation. There are overlaps between denial and reprisal. Tight airport security may deter terrorists by convincing them either that their efforts will fail (denial) or that they will be caught and punished (reprisal). A demonstrated capability to wage chemical warfare may deter a gas attack both by denying the enemy an advantage and by threatening to retaliate in kind. As these examples indicate, in practice denial and reprisal are often more effective when applied in tandem. The ability of one side to deny its enemy an advantage cannot always be absolutely convincing, especially if the other side is inclined to take risks. Deterrence by denial also implies a certain passivity.

An enemy may be willing to test the defenses if he believes that failure carries no further penalty. On the other hand, while deterrence by reprisal compensates for some of the weakness of denial, reprisal has its own weaknesses. Retaliation, even if carried out successfully, may come too late to avoid suffering significant damage.

Given the fact that the Muslims were typically outnumbered, they were often forced to choose deterrence of reprisal over denial.

STANDARDIZED OR TAILORED STRATEGIES

Usually, when we talk about the conscious formulation of a particular strategy, we are talking about a specific way of using specific means to reach specific ends. This is a strategy “tailored” to deal with a particular problem. Our means are finely adapted to fit our ends, and vice versa. There are classes of problems, however, that do not initially lend themselves to such tailoring. These problems usually fall into two categories. First, we lack the time to tailor a unique response to a specific problem. This can be the case in rapidly unfolding strategic problems or when we are unwilling or unable to adapt for some other reason. Second, we lack the specific knowledge needed to craft a unique strategy but recognize the problem as fitting a certain pattern.

In such cases, we normally adopt a standardized strategy, whether or not it is truly appropriate to the specific problem. Standardized and tailored strategies are not mutually exclusive. Often a standardized strategy provides the point of departure for a tailored strategy that evolves as the situation develops. If we run into certain types of problems often enough, we develop standardized responses that are generally appropriate to that type of problem. Experience has taught us they will work more often than not. In many

cases, standardized strategies are designed to gain time to find an appropriate, specific solution.

Standardized strategies are not fixed; they can be changed and improved, usually on the basis of experience. These strategies build a certain reputation that may strongly influence the behavior of friends, foes, and neutrals. Standardized strategies generally find expression not within a single war, but over the course of many conflicts. Such a strategy's immediate payoff in any particular case may be less than completely satisfying, but it can offer great advantages over the long term.

As an example, the United States has employed a standardized strategy of providing nation-building support to defeated enemies. During the period of reconstruction, the United States assists in rebuilding the defeated states' industrial base and infrastructure. Two notable examples are the reconstruction of Germany and Japan following World War II. More recently, the United States provided post-conflict aid to Grenada, Panama, and Haiti.

In its conduct of war, the United States pursues a standard strategy that includes respect for the independence of allies, relatively mild occupation policies, the generous and systematic reconstruction of conquered states, as well as a persistent economic isolation of hostile nations. These policies reflect a recognition that wars end and that the victors must live with the survivors. This approach also makes it easier for other states to act as American allies and difficult for enemies to create and sustain popular resistance to American power and influence. Combined with the American reputation for overwhelming firepower and a demonstrated willingness to use it in war, such policies have contributed greatly to America's strategic success.

STRATEGY BY INTENT OR BY DEFAULT

Not all strategies are the product of conscious thought. Warfare is driven by politics, and rational calculation is only one of many factors in politics. Strategies by intent are those developed primarily through the rational consideration of options and their likely implications. Strategies by default, on the other hand, are those dictated by circumstances or determined primarily by ideologies, unconscious assumptions, and prejudices that prevent strategists from considering all of their options in what many would consider a fully rational manner. While conceptually distinct, the two are rarely mutually exclusive; most strategies involve elements of both intent and default.

Consider the Russian strategic response to invasion by Germany in World War II. The Russian intent was to defend their country at the border. The strength of their enemy forced the Russians into a strategy of delay and withdrawal until the invader could be worn down sufficiently to be defeated. Conversely, the Nazis' blind adherence to their racial ideologies led to their failure to take advantage of the indifferent attitudes of the Belorussian and Ukrainian peoples towards the Soviet regime. Had they pursued a rational policy towards the population of occupied Soviet territory, they might have undermined the growth of a powerful partisan movement behind their lines.

The functioning of coalitions offers another illustration of the interplay between strategies of intent and default. Coalition warfare is often entered into as part of an intentional strategy. However, strategies adopted by the coalition are complicated or even subverted by the ideological motivations of the participants.

Dictatorships generally have difficulty participating in coalition warfare. However sensible it might be to cooperate with other political entities in pursuit of common goals, dictatorships by their very nature demand the right to make decisions unilaterally. They attempt to treat potential allies as servants, subordinating others' interests completely to their own.

What we have described are only tendencies. Insightful and strong-willed leaders occasionally overcome such tendencies. Strategists must seek to understand which elements of their own and the enemy's strategies are fixed by nature and which are subject to conscious change. A policy that seeks to convince the enemy to change his behavior will fail if he is incapable of change.

Avoiding Mission Creep and Mission Loss

Not having practical objectives, and a clear end state, in mind when planning and executing strategy can lead to the phenomenon called: mission creep. In short, this means that activities, which are seen as necessary in order to meet the mission objectives, in turn, become the objective itself. Mission creep can also be defined as: activities that take commanders beyond a strict interpretation of their mission. These activities are usually of a continuous nature without a clear marker of finality. The result of mission creep, therefore, is a never ending wild goose chase...or a complete loss of mission.

This term has become infamously tied to the American's operations in Somalia. As these operations unfolded, Johnston found himself authorizing military involvement in several endeavors not listed in his mission statement or implied tasks. A partial inventory of the unanticipated undertakings initiated or supported by UNITAF includes helping to set up a Somali police force, executing civic action programs, working for local political reform, assisting in the resettlement of Somali refugees, negotiating with clan elders and religious leaders, and performing tasks that could be interpreted as falling into the category of nation building.

What was not clear at the time was whether mission creep was a phenomenon inherent in a dynamic situation, and thus something that commanders and their staffs needed to anticipate and adjust to, or whether it was an insidious process that commanders could avoid through thorough planning and operational discipline. In this particular case, we can see that Johnston initially resisted the proposal to help reestablish a Somali police force, but the realization that this initiative, although not found in his OPORD, would

actually work to enhance the security of his own forces while improving the prospects for stability in Mogadishu presented him with a logic that quickly overcame his objections.

Therefore, in consideration of this particular scenario, we can see that talk of completely avoiding or even totally abolishing mission creep thus seems, from a historical perspective, nonsensical. Instead, the lesson for the future is that military leaders have a critical responsibility to select milestones that best indicate mission success or failure. These indicators must answer two critical questions: What is the mission and how will we know when we have accomplished it?

If these steps are taken properly, and so long as the true objectives are kept squarely in sight, there is nothing wrong with a commanding officer exercising his initiative within means of 'commander's intent', but the trick is to not let 'pragmatism' turn into something which is actually counterproductive.

Another possible unintended result, of not having a clear end state in mind when formulating and executing strategy, is portrayed best in the example of the Americans in Iraq. The Americans had no plan for what was to come after defeating Saddam's Ba'athist Regime. Were they to simply leave the country without a government? Or were they to rebuild the nation? Bathsheba Crocker said in December 2004:

So far as the situation in Iraq is concerned, the planning/ strategy failures are legion: there was no plan to prevent looting, no plan for security/stabilization, no plan for running the country; bureaucratic warfare between the department of State and DoD over team personnel and other issues were not reined in by the National Security Council; Presidential Envoy Bremer's CPA and its predecessor "have been undermanned and operating with team B from the beginning," with no standby capacity and bodies having to be scrounged from the State Department: the international police, justice, and rule of law teams were never brought in; there was no planning for a stabilization force, there were not enough troops, and there was no mandate to perform stabilization tasks for what troops we had; the war was essentially continued throughout the reconstruction effort, with lack of security shutting down some contractor work; there is a lack of good intelligence; it is not clear to whom the government will be transferred, . . . public information/psyops needs fixing; lack of greater international involvement hurts the legitimacy of our effort.

This fatal mistake has led the United States to fumble its way through a decade of wars; committing at times and disengaging at others.

Without a real end state, declaring victory is impossible, and leaving before achieving victory will destroy the credibility of America. Therefore, getting in to something without first deciding how to get out, is a sure fire way to shoot yourself in the foot!

Centers of Gravity and Culminating Points:

Centers of Gravity

Over the last two decades, the U.S. military has struggled to understand the center of gravity concept as developed by Carl von Clausewitz and to find practical ways to apply it. In the process, however, each of the services—shaped as they are by different roles, histories, and traditions—has brought individual perspectives to Clausewitz’s expression and redefined it in its respective image.

Thus, the U.S. Marine Corps, a relatively small force designed more for winning battles than fighting campaigns or wars, prefers to strike at enemy weaknesses. Accordingly, it initially equated enemy centers of gravity (CoGs) with key vulnerabilities. Recently, however, Marine Corps doctrine has distinguished between CoGs and critical vulnerabilities, considering them different but complementary concepts; CoGs, for the Marines, are now “any important sources of strength.”

By comparison, the U.S. Air Force, which takes a “targeting” approach to warfare, sees centers of gravity as multiple strategic and operational critical points that it can attack with its bombing assets. Airpower theorists like John Warden, with his notion of “concentric rings,” have in fact identified so many CoGs as to reduce the concept to absurdity.

In contrast, the U.S. Army, which has the role of fighting campaigns and winning wars, sees the enemy’s center of gravity as his “source of strength.” Accordingly, the Army tends to look for a single center of gravity, normally in the principal capability that stands in the way of the accomplishment of its own mission. In short, the Army considers a “friendly” CoG as that element—a characteristic, capability, or locality—that enables one’s own or allied forces to accomplish their objectives. Conversely, an opponent’s CoG is that element that prevents friendly forces from accomplishing their objectives.

Likewise, the U.S. Navy, as America’s force for winning *maritime* wars, has a center-of-gravity concept that resembles that of the Army and the Marines. Like the Army, the Navy’s doctrine states that a “center of gravity is something the enemy must have to continue military operations—a source of his strength, but not necessarily strong or a strength in itself. There can only be one center of gravity.” Like the Marine Corps, the service it supports most, the Navy has made the linkage between CoGs and vulnerabilities more explicit.

Recently the Joint Staff’s *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Joint Publication 3-0) attempted—with only limited success—to pull these various perspectives together into a single definition. Joint doctrine currently asserts that the essence of the operational art—a term that Clausewitz would not have used—rests in being able to mass effects against the enemy’s sources of power, or centers of gravity, to gain a decisive advantage. The Joint Staff now defines centers of gravity as those “characteristics, capabilities, or locations

from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight.” At the strategic level, they can include a military force, an alliance, national will or public support, a set of critical capabilities or functions, or national strategy itself. At the operational level, they are generally the principal *sources of combat power*—such as combat forces that are modern, mobile, or armored—that can ensure, or prevent, accomplishment of the mission. At its core, this definition is capabilities based, despite the presence of terms such as “national will ”and “public support.”

On this view, all elements—whether leadership, national will, or public opinion— tend to flow from an opponent’s capability to resist. However, this capabilities-based definition differs substantially from Clausewitz’s own concept, which is effects-based. To be sure, no one is under an obligation to accept a concept developed nearly two centuries ago by a military theorist who was influenced by a long-disappeared cultural environment and used conceptual tools quite different from those available today. Moreover, each of these definitions certainly has its own beneficial points that aid in strategic thought. But, the dilemma lies in the fact that each of the services believes that its definition of the center of gravity is the true intention of Clausewitz’s concept; which simply can not be so. The following, for what is worth, is an explanation of the true definition of Clausewitz’s center of gravity, which is not to discount the utility of the previous definitions in their own domain, under certain circumstances.

CLAUSEWITZ’S CENTER OF GRAVITY

The quintessential “cerebral savage,” Clausewitz borrowed a number of intellectual constructs, theories, and concepts from the leading philosophers, scientists, and other thinkers of his day in order to understand and describe what he observed as the various aspects of war. Several of his concepts—friction, polarity, and center of gravity—are analogies or metaphors drawn from the “mechanical sciences” (today’s physics). In particular, the original German text of *Vom Kriege (On War)* reveals that Clausewitz used the center-of-gravity metaphor— expressed primarily as *Schwerpunkt* (center of gravity, or main point)—more than fifty times. He appears to have derived his military concept of a center of gravity after hearing a series of lectures by the German physicist Paul Erman, a professor at the University of Berlin and the Prussian *Allgemeine Kriegsschule* (war college). Clausewitz served as director of the war college from 1818 to 1830; he and Erman knew each other cordially.

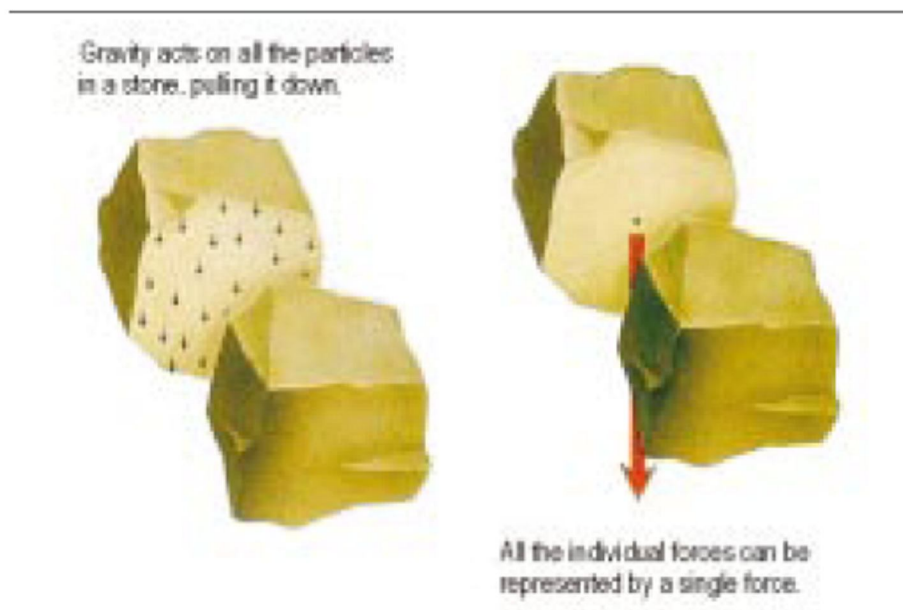
Clausewitz’s use of the center of gravity in *On War* remains essentially consistent with the concept’s representation in the mechanical sciences. Most English language sources that cite his definition of a center of gravity draw primarily from one of two passages— pages 485–86 in Book VI (“Defense”), or pages 595–96 in Book VIII (“War Plans”), from the translation of *On War* by Sir Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Unfortunately, that translation, while perhaps the best available, is somewhat misleading. For one thing, it strips away the physics metaphors that Clausewitz used to describe his military concept, metaphors essential to understanding his basic idea. Furthermore, it creates the false impression that centers of gravity derive from “sources” of strength, or that they are themselves “strengths.” Clausewitz never used the word “source” (*Quelle*) in this

connection, and he never directly equated the center of gravity to a strength or source of strength. Finally, the Howard-Paret translation makes Clausewitz's concept appear static, bereft of the intrinsic dynamism he appears to have envisioned.

This article will offer alternative translations of select passages that come closer to Clausewitz's original sense:

It is against that part of the enemy's forces where they are most concentrated that, if a blow were to occur, the effect would emanate the furthest; furthermore, the greater the mass our own forces possess when they deliver the blow, the more certain we can be of the blow's success. This simple logic brings us to an analogy that enables us to grasp the idea more clearly, namely, the nature and effect of a center of gravity in the mechanical sciences.

Since in this passage Clausewitz introduces the analogy in a theoretical sense, it is appropriate to review how a center of gravity functions in elementary physics. In general, a center of gravity represents the point where the forces of gravity can be said to converge within an object, the spot at which the object's weight is balanced in all directions. Striking at or otherwise upsetting the center of gravity can cause the object to lose its balance, or equilibrium, and fall to the ground. A physical object can be thought of in two ways: as a composite of many smaller particles, each of which is acted upon by gravity; or as a single object, acted upon by gravity only at a single point.



Understandably, physicists prefer the latter, since it makes other calculations concerning the interaction of force and matter much easier. However, physicists also acknowledge that a center of gravity amounts to little more than a mathematical approximation, since gravity acts simultaneously upon all the points in an object.

Calculating the center of gravity for a simple, symmetrical object—a yardstick, a marble, or a boomerang—is not difficult. The center of gravity of a yardstick is at its middle; the CoG of a sphere lies at its geometric center. Interestingly, the center of gravity of a boomerang, as can be readily calculated, lies not on the object itself but in the V-shaped space between the arms.



Calculating the center of gravity of more complex objects—such as human beings, with many moving parts—is more difficult. Such objects must be artificially frozen in time and space; if their distribution of weight or position changes, or external weight is added, the CoG moves. For example, a soldier standing at port arms will normally have a CoG in the middle of the pelvis, roughly behind the navel. If the soldier raises his arms, his center of gravity rises to a point somewhere behind and above the navel. If the soldier dons a rucksack, the CoG will shift again. If he begins to move about rapidly, the center of gravity will change just as rapidly (see figure 4). If he becomes locked in hand-to-hand combat, the gravitational forces acting on both bodies will affect the CoG of each. A physicist could treat both masses as one and calculate a common center of gravity of the total mass; however, if the struggle proceeds at a rapid pace, the CoG will change constantly.

Strictly speaking, therefore, the soldier's center of gravity is not a source of strength. Rather, it represents the point of confluence where gravitational forces come together. A soldier's strength (or power) might derive from muscles, brains, weapons, or any combination of these—all of which relate to the center of gravity only so far as the soldier needs balance to use them. Nor, strictly speaking, is a center of gravity a weakness. A soldier might lack physical strength, be "intellectually challenged," or not have the proper weapons; these conditions would constitute weaknesses, but they have little to do with the soldier's CoG, per se. Nonetheless, although neither a weakness nor a vulnerability, a center of gravity can lie open to attack and, therefore, be vulnerable. Clausewitz pursues the analogy:

Just as [in physics] the center of gravity is always found where the mass is most concentrated, and just as every blow directed against the body's center of gravity yields the greatest effect, and—moreover—the strongest blow is the one achieved by the center of gravity, the same is true in war. The armed forces of every combatant, whether an individual state or an alliance of states, have a certain unity and thus a

certain *interdependence* or *connectivity* [*Zusammenhang*]; and just where such interdependence exists, one can apply the center of gravity concept.

Accordingly, there exist *within* these armed forces certain centers of gravity that, by their movement and direction, exert a decisive influence over all other points; and these centers of gravity exist *where* the forces are most concentrated. However, just as in the world of inanimate bodies where the effect on a center of gravity has its proportions and limits determined by the interdependence of the parts, the same is true in war.

The previous two passages, as Clausewitz mentioned, serve only to introduce the basic theoretical concept. Hence, we should take the description of the center of gravity in a metaphorical rather than a literal sense. Unfortunately, U.S. military analysts and doctrine writers have failed to do that, preferring instead to interpret Clausewitz's center of gravity literally, as a concentration of force.

These passages reveal two important points. First, the CoG concept only applies where a certain "unity" (*Einheit*) and "connectivity" or "interdependence" (*Zusammenhang*) exist between the enemy's forces and the space they occupy. The type and number of centers of gravity the enemy possesses will thus depend upon the degree of connectivity, or overall unity, that his forces possess. Second, Clausewitz's statement that the center of gravity lies "where the forces are most concentrated" refers less to the forces than to the thing that causes them to be concentrated. As in the mechanical sciences, Clausewitz's military CoG is a *focal point*. Hence, combat forces tend to concentrate there and, at times, to emanate from there.

In Book II, chapter 5 ("Critical Analysis"), Clausewitz uses an example that clarifies this point. In the course of illustrating the importance of critical analysis, he argues that the then-common opinion about Napoleon's "Brilliant February" campaign of 1814 was wrong. Napoleon, confronted by advancing Prussian and Austrian forces, first defeated Field Marshal Gebhard von Blücher's Prussian army, then turned on Field Marshal Karl Philip Schwarzenberg's Austrians and drove them back. However, Napoleon failed to achieve a decisive victory in either case; his enemies were able to recover and defeat him a month later, eventually forcing him into exile. Clausewitz maintains that instead of pursuing two (incomplete) victories, Napoleon should have continued hammering Blücher until the Prussian force was decisively defeated. "Blücher," he maintains, "although weaker [numerically] than Schwarzenberg, was nonetheless the more important [adversary] due to his enterprising spirit; hence, the center of gravity lay more with him [Blücher] and *it* pulled the others in his direction."

In Clausewitz's view, decisively defeating Blücher—the alliance's center of gravity—would have induced the Austrians to withdraw as well. This example shows that the CoG concept refers less to the concentrated forces than to the thing—in this case, Blücher—that causes them to concentrate and gives them purpose and direction. Clausewitz also states that centers of gravity have a "sphere of effectiveness" and that their "advance or retreat" can have an effect "upon the rest" of the forces involved. As they advance or

withdraw across the battlefield, centers of gravity can “pull” friendly forces with them, as Blücher would have. In other words, to return to the physics analogy, military centers of gravity possess a certain centripetal (as opposed to centrifugal) force. Accordingly, they represent in Clausewitz’s mind much more than a mere concentration of forces. Indeed, his concept in general reflects an intrinsic dynamism—not easy to capture on paper but conveyed by the analogy in chapter 1, Book I, of a pendulum actively oscillating among three magnets.

In Book VIII (“War Plans”), Clausewitz discusses the relevance of centers of gravity to war planning. Contrary to some of his critics, Clausewitz does not overextend the analogy by suggesting that several CoGs could exist beyond the enemy army. In fact, the opposite is true. Book VI adheres almost *too* closely to the physics analogy, at the expense of clarity as to military relevance. Book VIII addresses that relevance and reveals the inherent flexibility of the concept:

What theory can admit to thus far is the following: Everything depends upon keeping the dominant conditions of both states in mind. From these emerge a certain center of gravity, a focal point of force and movement, upon which the larger whole depends; and, it is against the enemy’s center of gravity that the collective blow of all power must be directed. . . . Small things always depend on large ones, the unimportant on the important, the incidental on the essential. This relationship must guide our thoughts. . . . Alexander the Great, Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII of Sweden, and Frederick the Great each had their centers of gravity in their respective armies. Had their armies been destroyed, these men would have been remembered as failures. In states with many factions vying for power, the center of gravity lies mainly in the capital; in small states supported by a more powerful one, it lies in the army of the stronger state; in alliances, it lies in the unity formed by common interests; in popular uprisings, it lies in the persons of the principal leaders and in public opinion. The blow must be directed against these things. If the enemy loses his balance because of such a blow, he must not be given time to regain it; blow after blow must follow in the same manner. In other words, the victor must always direct all of his blows in such a way that they will strike at the whole of the enemy, not just a part of him.

This lengthy passage shows that the identity and location of a center of gravity can be perceived only by considering the enemy holistically—that is, by drawing connections between or among an adversary’s (or adversaries’) various parts and then determining what “thing” holds them all together. For example, the armies of Alexander, Gustavus, Charles XII, and Frederick were significant not because they were “sources” of power but because they enabled their leaders to hold their power systems together. In different circumstances, the personalities of key leaders, a state’s capital, or the community of interests of a network of allies perform this centripetal or centralizing function. The salient issue once again is *Zusammenhang*—interdependence, or connectivity.

Clausewitz reinforced this point in chapter 9 of Book VIII, when he explains that reducing the enemy’s force to one center of gravity depends “first, upon the [enemy’s] political connectivity or unity itself” and “second, upon the situation in the theater of war

itself, and which of the various enemy armies appear there.” The criterion once again is the extent to which the enemy’s (or enemies’) forces can operate as a single entity. In World War I, Germany, fighting on two fronts, had to look for two centers of gravity, one Anglo-French and one Russian.

Hence, the unity (or lack thereof) formed (or not) by military forces and the geographical spaces in which they have to fight can create more than one CoG. Clausewitz, of course, advocates tracing these back to a single one, whenever possible, but he allows for the possibility that no one, specific CoG might exist. The key question, then, is whether the enemy is so “connected” that actions against him in one area will have a decisive effect in other areas as well.

AN EFFECTS-BASED APPROACH

Clausewitz’s center of gravity, then, is a “focal point,” neither a strength (or even a source of one) nor a weakness, per se. Second, CoGs are found only where sufficient connectivity exists among the various parts of the enemy to form an overarching system (or structure) that acts with a substantial degree of unity, like a physical body. Third, a center of gravity exerts a certain centripetal force that tends to hold an entire system or structure together; thus a blow at the center of gravity would throw an enemy off balance or even cause the entire system (or structure) to collapse. Fourth, using the concept necessitates viewing the enemy holistically.

The U.S. military’s various definitions lack entirely Clausewitz’s sense of “unity” or “connectivity.” By overlooking this essential prerequisite, the U.S. military assumes centers of gravity exist where none might—the enemy may not have sufficient connectivity between its parts to have a CoG. In that case the analysis does little more than focus on the most critical of the enemy’s capabilities.

As previously mentioned, Clausewitz’s CoG concept focuses on achieving a specific effect, the collapse of the enemy. Hence, it is an effects-based approach rather than a capabilities-based one. In this sense, it resembles the emerging concept of “effects-based operations” (EBO) more than the U.S. military’s capabilities-based concept of CoG, with the exception that it seeks only one particular effect—total collapse of the enemy. EBO has the benefit, as General Anthony Zinni (U.S. Marine Corps, retired) has remarked, of forcing political and military planners to focus on the specific effects that they want military (and nonmilitary) action to achieve. Effects-based operations have been characterized as dissolving “the glue” that holds a table together, rather than striking at its individual legs.

By implication, then, if Clausewitz’s CoG assumes the enemy constitutes a system, EBO goes a step farther and posits that the enemy is a mappable system. Like effects-based operations, Clausewitz’s center of gravity concept requires the ability to predict, with reasonable accuracy, how at least first and second-order effects, and possibly more, can be achieved. That said, it is important to point out that Clausewitz considered the calculation of a CoG a matter of “strategic judgment” (*strategische Urteil*), to be

addressed at the highest levels. It is doubtful that he would have approved of current efforts to develop prescriptive formulae.

Furthermore, Clausewitz's CoGs were "operative" (*wirksame*) only in campaigns or wars designed to defeat the enemy completely. In such wars, military and political objectives are essentially complementary. In limited wars, on the other hand, CoGs (because they by definition relate to the total collapse of the enemy) tend to compete with political objectives. Notwithstanding, U.S. joint doctrine asserts or implies that CoGs exist for all kinds and at all levels of war.

Presumably, there are tactical centers of gravity, the defeat of which facilitates the accomplishment of tactical objectives, which in turn contribute to the defeat of operational CoGs, the destruction of which assists in the accomplishment of operational objectives, and so on, until national security objectives are achieved. Yet to insert a center of gravity into the strategic planning process is contrived and unnecessary. In the Gulf War (1990–91), for example—a limited conflict in which, according to Clausewitz, the CoG concept should not have been applied—the regional commander's notion of the enemy's center of gravity did not accord with those of the joint force air component commander. The former saw three distinct CoGs: Saddam Hussein, the Republican Guard, and the Iraqi chemical, biological, and nuclear infrastructure. The air commander identified twelve "target sets" ranging from national leadership and command and control to railroads, airfields, and ports, each of them constituting a center of gravity. As Lieutenant Colonel Joe Purvis, who headed a team of U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies graduates who assisted in ground-component planning during the war, later admitted, "The CENTCOM [Central Command, the regional command] staff became more focused on what [the CoG] was as opposed to what do we do with it." However, even simply translating the war's strategic objectives—expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and reduction of Iraqi offensive capability—into operational and tactical objectives would still have identified the capabilities that coalition forces had to defeat in order to be successful.

Clausewitz was a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, and his emphasis on concentrating forces and energy for a knockout blow derived from his observations that such concentrations often brought about success. He had obvious concerns about the temptation to fritter away resources on ventures that would not bring about a decisive end. These concerns were well placed. For one thing, the army officers of his day were not the school-trained professionals of today; competence varied considerably. In addition, the operational art was not well developed; there were, for example, no standardized principles of war, such as mass and objective, to encourage commanders to focus their efforts.

Today, military commanders concern themselves less with massing forces than with massing effects. Nonetheless, joint doctrine still maintains that the purpose of identifying a center of gravity is to assist commanders in focusing their efforts and resources, just as in Clausewitz's day. As Brigadier General Wass de Czege (U.S. Army, retired) has explained, "Trying to approach the problem from the perspective of a center of gravity

leads you to see very quickly that some vulnerabilities are interesting but a waste of resources because they do not lead anywhere useful in the end.” At the same time, joint doctrine acknowledges that CoGs may not always be readily discernible and that they can change at any moment during an operation. If this is true, then why, as civilian analysts like Eliot Cohen have asked, should the U.S. military bother with them? Joint doctrine’s answer is to insist that both enemy and friendly centers of gravity be analyzed continuously throughout an operation. However, this solution works only if planning processes can keep pace with change and if political and military leaders have the flexibility to redirect their efforts in midstream.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

As this article has argued, the U.S. military has long misunderstood Clausewitz’s concept of center of gravity, believing that its own capabilities-based definitions are closely linked to his effects-based one. Ultimately, capabilities-based definitions merely reflect back what each of the services wants to believe about its own strengths and weaknesses and about those of its potential adversaries. Perhaps that is why no single, reliable method for determining a center of gravity has emerged after two decades of effort.

Confusion has fallen equally upon those wishing to pursue the concept and those who would abandon it. The question arises, in fact, of whether attempting to understand Clausewitz is worth the effort. Do his ideas in general, and those related to the center of gravity in particular, offer anything of enduring value to the strategist or the warfighter today?

As others have pointed out, many of Clausewitz’s ideas possess a transcendent quality that makes them relevant not only to his era but always. These enduring insights include friction in war, the culmination of the attack, and the roles of chance and uncertainty. The center of gravity is another. The idea offers something worthwhile for twenty-first-century strategists and warfighters. However, its application must be judicious. The center of gravity needs to be redefined as a “focal point,” not as a strength (or a weakness) or a source of strength. A CoG is more than a critical capability; it is the point where a certain centripetal force seems to exist, something that holds everything else together.

Commanders and their staffs need to identify where the connections—and the gaps—exist in the enemy’s system as a whole before deciding whether a center of gravity exists. The CoG concept does not apply if enemy elements are not connected sufficiently.

Nor should the notion of a center of gravity be applied to every kind of war or operation; if it is, the term may become overused and meaningless or be conflated with political-military objectives.

The industrial-age paradigm of warfare, in which the distinction between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels is inviolate, needs to be replaced with one that regards all activities of war as interdependent. Clausewitz did not distinguish between tactical,

operational, or strategic centers of gravity; he defined the center of gravity holistically—that is, by the entire system (or structure) of the enemy—not in terms of level of war.

It would be better to abandon the center of gravity concept altogether than to apply it in circumstances and ways not appropriate to it. The risks of misapplying it, especially in an environment in which opponents can operate in a wholly decentralized manner but with potentially devastating power, are too great.

From the perspective of the *Siirah*, we can see multiple centers of gravity.

With regards to the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, Makkah was the most obvious center of gravity. The custodian of the Ka'bah was the uncontested policymaker in political, financial, and religious affairs. Soon after the conquest of Makkah the entire Arabian Peninsula had embraced Islaam.

On a smaller scale, the center of gravity for Quraysh, as a single tribe, was no doubt its chieftains and elite. Whatever that small group decided would be the final decision for the entire tribe, as was the case for most of the Arabian tribes at that time.

With regards to the alliance of the Confederates, the center of gravity, or rather the glue that held them together was the sense of trust that existed between the Jews and the Polytheists. Once that trust was dented, the resolve of the large allied forces was left blowing in the wind.

The center of gravity for the companions and the army of the Prophet (S) was no doubt their undying belief in Allaah and the Last Day. This is what bound them together as brothers and spurred them to strive for the impossible despite all obstacles and all odds. Not even the tragedy of the death of the Prophet (S) was sufficient to deal the deciding blow to the unity of the Muslims. With faith, we will always persevere.

'Umar reminds us that: 'We used to be a humiliated people, then Allaah honored us by Islaam. No matter how hard we seek honor through other than what Allaah honored us with, Allaah will humiliate us.'

Culminating Points

Throughout history, some concepts have lain dormant for more than a century between their formulation and the time they gained acceptance as doctrine within the intended profession. The concept of culminating points is one of them. Clausewitz formulated the idea in his *On War*, published posthumously in 1832. It was recognized 150 years later as a "key concept of operational design" in the current US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations.

When a concept takes that long to attain recognition, it is probably abstract and it is likely to be profound. A profound concept in the military profession is one that superintends the whole of tactics and the implements of war. Clausewitz's concept of culminating points is

undeniably an abstraction. Whether it is equally profound remains to be seen, but a good case can be made that it is, and on a par with the principles of war.

FM 100-5 starts the discussion on culminating points in clear terms that immediately convey both the meaning and the significance of the concept.

"Unless it is strategically decisive, every offensive operation will sooner or later reach a point where the strength of the attacker no longer significantly exceeds that of the defender, and beyond which continued offensive operations therefore risk overextension, counterattack, and defeat. In operational theory, this point is called the culminating point. The art of attack at all levels is to achieve decisive objectives before the culminating point is reached. Conversely, the art of defense is to hasten the culmination of the attack, recognize its advent, and be prepared to go over to the offense when it arrives."

The manual next lists a number of reasons for this phenomenon, followed by examples. The reasons include insufficient logistic support, increasing vulnerability of lines of communication and losses sustained during the offensive before decisive battle begins. The discussion concludes:

"For his part, the defender must seek to bring the enemy attack to or past its culminating point before it reaches an operationally decisive objective. To do so, he must operate not only on the enemy force itself, but also on its sustainment system. The more readily the defender can trade space for time without unacceptable operational or strategic loss, the easier this will be.

"Once operations begin, the attacking commander must sense when he has reached or is about to reach his culminating point, whether intended or not, and revert to the defense at a time and place of his own choosing. For his part, the defender must be alert to recognize when his opponent has become overextended and be prepared to pass over to the counteroffensive before the attacker is able to recover his strength."

A well written commentary of this caliber needs no further explanation per se, but three aspects beg emphasis.

First, the culminating point for the defending and the attacking commanders is one and the same, although it is not a static point (or line) on the ground. The defender tries to move the point farther away from the attacker (toward himself) in order to wear down the latter's effective strength; whereas the attacker tries to prevent that delay or shift, or failing to do so, he should break off an attack when it is obvious he has passed the point before engaging in decisive battle. It is a tug of war of sorts, with the knot in the rope analogous to the culminating point.

Second, FM 100-5 implies the offensive may continue after the culminating point is reached, albeit subject to defeat. Clausewitz was more pessimistic. He implied that once the culminating point was passed, the chance of victory was foreclosed unless the enemy yielded from fear without engaging in decisive combat. If the enemy chose to fight it out,

he would prevail. Restated, when the attacker passes the culminating point, further progress is merely forward motion on the road to perdition. Clausewitz wrote:

"Once the mind is set on a certain course toward its goal . . . it may easily happen that arguments which would compel one man to stop, and justify another in acting, will not easily be fully appreciated. Meanwhile the action continues, and in the sweep of motion one crosses. . . the line of culmination, without knowing it . . . We believe that this demonstrates without inconsistency how an attacker can overshoot the point at which, if he stopped and assumed the defensive, there would still be a chance of success . . . It is therefore important to calculate this point correctly when planning the campaign. An attacker may otherwise take on more than he can manage and, as it were, get into debt; a defender must be able to recognize this error if the enemy commits it, and exploit it to the full . . .

"This culminating point in victory is bound to recur in every future war in which the destruction of the enemy cannot be the military aim, and this will presumably be true of most wars. The natural goal of all campaign plans, therefore, is the turning point at which attack becomes defense. If one were to go beyond that point, it would not merely be a useless effort which could not add to success. It would in fact be a damaging one, which would lead to a reaction; and experience goes to show that such reactions usually have completely disproportionate effects."

Third, the culminating point can be a moot consideration. When the attacker has overwhelming strength and resolve, the point occurs only as an imaginary locus far behind the opponent's main battle lines. Conversely, when the attacker is hopelessly weak, the point coincides with the line of departure. During the 1987 Wimbledon tennis matches, Pam Shriver, having been thoroughly trounced in the semifinals, said afterward that the turning point, read culminating point, of the match occurred when she walked out onto the court. With these aspects in mind, the dynamics of the culminating point concept explain the outcome of the most famous battle in American history, as a tactical encounter, as part of an operation, and within the context of a major war.

Gettysburg

The climactic time and place of the Battle of Gettysburg occurred during the early afternoon of 3 July 1863, and is said to have been the highwater mark of the Confederacy. The great cyclorama maintained near the battlefield depicts the drama on Cemetery Ridge in magnificent detail, but Cemetery Ridge did not mark the culminating point. That point was passed on the approach to the ridge. The ensuing battle was the foreclosure on the debt, to use Clausewitz's analogy, incurred by General Robert E. Lee when he ordered the attack.

For as capable and distinguished a general as Lee was, he suffered a momentary lapse of judgment that day. He had ordered an attack uphill, across a wide open field held against an experienced, entrenched defender, fighting on his own soil, who had the advantage of interior lines, reinforcement from reserves without interdiction and the capable leadership

of General George G. Meade. Lieutenant General James Longstreet had recognized the futility of the plan of attack and had tried to dissuade Lee from pursuing it. Lee persisted, but admitted later the same day, "All this has been my fault. It is I that have lost the fight." He recognized, after the fact, he had ordered a decisive battle beyond the culminating point, and as such the Union decided it for him.

Yet, this does not imply the culminating point functions like the law of gravity. On the contrary, an astute tactic can shift the point beyond the decisive place and time. Longstreet had recommended some form of tactical envelopment of the Union forces on Cemetery Ridge. Had Lee accepted his advice, the battle might have gone to Lee. But not the war.

In the larger perspective of Lee's operation, and indeed the entire war itself, the South arguably had passed the culminating point before Gettysburg. It was expending irreplaceable resources, while the North was able to replace its losses. Worse, the Confederacy was betting on the wrong horse. Bruce Catton put the case this way:

"Lee at Gettysburg was fighting against a man who never wore a uniform or fought a battle: the eminent Illinois civilian Abraham Lincoln. The whole rationale of the Confederate offensive that summer. . . was the belief that the Northern government would crack under the strain, that it would take troops away from General Grant, lose confidence in final victory when it saw the Confederate troops in the Northern heartland, find the price of war too great to pay, and so consent at last to a final separation. None of this happened."

Recall Clausewitz's prediction that the culminating point was bound to recur in any future war in which the destruction of the opponent's forces was not the objective. The South intended only a limited war, with the objective of securing recognition of the Confederacy. The North, by contrast, was intent on the absolute defeat of the South's ability to wage war. Since the North had the resources to prevail, and the South had neither the intention nor ability to destroy those resources, the culminating point of the Civil War was reached and passed long before Lee intruded into Pennsylvania.

Other Examples

The difference between the culminating point and the high water mark should be reiterated. For example, some may say that German General Erwin Rommel's drive into Egypt culminated at El Alamein. This is true, but paralleling Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg, El Alamein was not the culminating point, per se. That point, from an operational perspective, occurred earlier when superiority of resources accrued to General Bernard Montgomery. Either Rommel failed to recognize the culminating point or recognizing it, passed it due to Adolf Hitler's order to fight to the last man irrespective of the futility.

Another interesting application of the culminating point demonstrated itself at Gallipoli during World War I. The British national objective was naive, but the operational failure

did not foreshadow national or Entente failure. The national objective had been to end the war early and decisively. This objective was translated into an operational objective to put the British fleet opposite Istanbul (then Constantinople). The theory was that Turkey would crumble politically at the sight of the fleet, withdraw from the Triple Alliance, join the Entente, and thus bring Kaiser Wilhelm to his knees.

The operational objective, however, was within range of the possible, even if the anticipated national consequences were ludicrous. But this objective required passage of the Dardanelles. The strait was heavily mined at its narrowest part and was protected by Turkish forts out of range of effective naval bombardment. Precipitous as the risk was, sagacious tactics might have won the day. Instead, the British forces committed multiple mistakes, resulting in a protracted struggle and dismal failure.

In short, the passage of the tactical and operational culminating points coincided, whereas passage of the strategic culminating point occurred when the British forces left port, or at the latest, as they sailed into the region. That the failure to prevail in the operation did not result in national defeat is due to the fact the Entente had sufficient resources and resolve to pursue the war on the main, Western Front. Also, the distant failure gave Germany no particular advantage on that Western Front to exploit. Yet, it should be asked if the expenditure of force at Gallipoli reduced the Entente forces on the Western Front below the point where victory might have been attained much earlier and without US intervention some years later.

The loss of sufficient combat strength prior to decisive conflict in these examples, as elsewhere, ensues from many causes. Some were mentioned above. In more detail, unofficial doctrine holds that it takes a 3-1 strength ratio for an attacker to dislodge a defender. In some cases, determined defenders have held out against ratios of 10-to-1 or even higher; for example, the Pusan perimeter during the early months of the Korean conflict. Now if the attacker tends to sustain greater losses during an approach and if the uncertainties of war tend to work hardest against the side in motion, how much strength is required at the line of departure to ensure a 3-1, or possibly much higher, force ratio at the decisive times and places of battle? Moreover, because the defender usually can "trade space for time" in order to move himself to the beneficial side of the culminating point, the required initial force ratio can be much higher than estimated.

In short, the culminating point thesis gives literal meaning to the expression battle calculus. The figure illustrates this phenomenon in terms of the principles of war. If superior mass is dissipated prior to attaining the objective, the principle of the offensive, which means to retain the initiative, is foreclosed. The loss of initiative is tantamount to loss of the battle. The attacking commander has bought the farm, irrespective of delays in settlement. In this calculus, the position of the culminating point, given relatively fixed strengths of the attacker and defender, can be shifted to the right or the left by, respectively, a brilliant or inadequate maneuver. This shifting can be further enhanced, or retarded, by a similar application or misapplication of the other five principles, such as surprising the opponent before he has adequate time to react effectively. These enhancements have the effect of multiplying actual combat strength without additional

cost. In a close contest, the difference between victory and defeat is often attributable to how well these "supporting" principles are applied.

Operation of the Culminating Point

The principles of maneuver, unity of command, economy of force, surprise, security and simplicity serve as factors to advance or retard the culminating point with respect to the objective by changing the effective mass or strength of the attacker. If the strength is insufficient before decisive conflict, then the initiative is lost. The degree the remaining principles of war are used raises or lowers the strength curve of the attacker, which raises or lowers the strength ratio curve, which thus shifts the culminating point. The analysis also pertains to the operational and strategic levels of consideration, even though the principles of war are stated primarily in tactical terms. That is, culminating points operate at these higher levels, but the principles of war themselves take on different meanings. For example, at the operational level, the principle of mass evolves into a stress on sustainability of military strength. This may require a more discrete sequence of tactical objectives in lieu of fewer, larger battles.

A good example was the conduct of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance during World War II. Though he achieved solid results in the battles of Midway and the Philippine Sea, he declined to pursue the retreating Japanese forces on both occasions. Initially criticized for these decisions, he knew that pursuit under the circumstances would have passed the tactical level culminating points, incurring casualties and damage incommensurate with any possible tactical gains, and would have weakened the US ability to prevail at the operational level. Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., in contrast to Spruance, relished a good fight at almost any cost. The results were that he often failed; that during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, he left a major amphibious operation unprotected (and as a consequence almost destroyed); and that his fleets twice suffered unnecessary damage from violent storms. He narrowly escaped being court martialed or at least relieved of command on two occasions.

In sum, success of battle or war comes only when the attacker has sufficient clout to remain the superior force in spite of losses incurred before decisive engagement. For an operation, this means a sufficient number of tactical engagements must succeed to guarantee the operational commander will prevail in the theater. Warriors may elect to ignore this fine print; the calculus of battle, and of war, does not. Even a cursory review of military history suggests that passage of the culminating point is a common occurrence, and if so, it is fair to ask why. At least four reasons exist, discussed in descending order of justifiability.

The first reason includes justifiable losses at lower levels of command for the sake of success at higher levels, tactical bunts as it were. Calculated risks at the tactical level will occasionally meet defeat, but, collectively, can increase the overall efficiency of operations. The sacrifice of a forward unit can enable the main (but otherwise outnumbered) force to inflict decisive damage. The forward element of Stonewall

Jackson's forces during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign in the Civil War sustained repeated mauling, but the operation was a brilliant, if local, success.

The second reason is the difficulty of perceiving the culminating point, particularly in pitched battles. This reason is further justified by the standard of conduct imposed on battlefield leaders. At Gettysburg, Major General George E. Pickett, who led the Confederate attack up Cemetery Ridge, would have been branded a coward had he retreated before reaching the top, notwithstanding Longstreet had correctly foreseen the defeat. This reason, of course, is less justifiable at the higher levels of command, because commanders at these levels have more time and are expected to reflect on the course of an operation or war.

The third reason comprises mistaken notions of heroism. Unquestionably, heroism and courage are the prime virtues of the man in uniform. It is natural to admire great courage even in futile circumstances, a human attribute that raises the conduct of war to a sometimes undeserved level of merit. But courage is not something senior commanders should attempt to organize into brigades, light or heavy. The late General Bruce Clarke wrote in a classic essay that the commendable attributes of small unit battlefield leadership are not the basis for the controlled audacity and organizational skills required of senior commanders.

This brings the discussion to the fourth reason, obsession and egotism, which in some cases may be a mistaken notion of heroism carried to an extreme. Though Clausewitz advised wars were a continuation of policy by other means, he devoted a substantial part of *On War* to the explanation of why nations ignored this precept and instead let wars run amuck. Chief among those reasons were "excessive emotionalism" and "greed for honor." This is a shortcoming that can afflict the most prudent of soldiers. Colonel T.E. Lawrence, whose distinguished performance during World War I may be unparalleled and who was humble enough to decline the award of the Victorian Cross, later admitted:

"As time went by our need to fight for the ideal increased to an unquestioning possession, riding spur and rein over our doubts . . . It became a faith. We sold ourselves into its slavery, manacled ourselves together in its chain gang, bowed ourselves to serve its holiness with all our good and ill content . . . By our own act we were drained of morality, of volition, of responsibility."

B. H. Liddell Hart restated the case in less philosophical terms:

"Peaceful nations are apt, however, to court unnecessary dangers, because when once aroused they are more inclined to proceed to extremes than predatory nations. For the latter, making war as a means of gain, are usually more ready to call it off when they find an opponent too strong to easily overcome. It is the reluctant fighter, impelled by emotion and not by calculation, who tends to press a fight to the bitter end."

The clearest example of a culminating point in the Prophetic *Siirah*, comes at the conclusion of the Battle of the Trench, after the defeat of the Confederates. This army

represented the largest force the local enemies of Islaam (the Jews and the Polytheists) could field. After their alliance broke and their resolve cracked, the tide had noticeably turned. The Prophet (S) signified this change by declaring: "Now we will attack them, and they will no longer attack us." (al-Bukhaari).

After the Confederates had returned home, the Prophet (S) took the opportunity of disunity to finish off one of the peskiest of the Jewish enemies, Quraydhah.

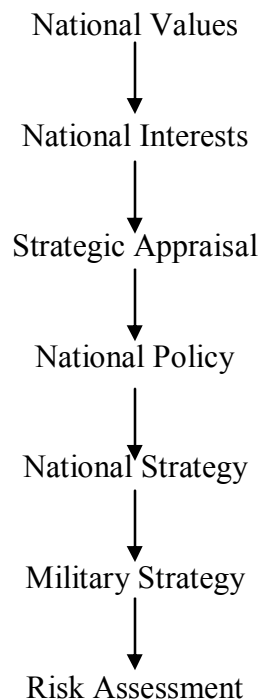
In this spirit, the next encounter between the Muslims and Quraysh, after the Battle of the Trench, was Hdaybiyah in which the Polytheists were left shocked and shaken by the appearance of the Muslims at their doorstep. The resultant peace treaty clearly displayed that the Muslims had reached the level of strength that they could now dictate terms over their enemy.

General Guidelines for Strategy Formulation:

I. General. Strategy is an art, and a highly creative one at that. It is also somewhat scientific, in that it follows certain patterns which require a common understanding of terminology, adherence to certain principles, and disciplined, albeit creative, thought processes. In that spirit, offered herein are some guidelines, definitions, and rules of thumb.

II. Strategy Formulation Guidelines. Understanding that these are guidelines and not formulas, strategy will be developed in keeping with the particular features of the time, place and personalities involved. Nevertheless, they offer an approach to address the complexities of strategy formulation, and are intended for strategists attempting to achieve the coherence, continuity, and consensus that policy makers seek in designing, developing and executing national security and military strategies.

III. National Strategy (or National Security Strategy or “Grand Strategy”).



A. National Values. Values represent the legal, philosophical, and moral basis for continuation of a nation’s system. A nation’s values are the core of its national interests.

B. National Interest. Nations, like individuals, have interests—derived from their innate values and perceived purposes—which motivate their actions. National interests are a nation’s perceived needs and aspirations largely in relation to its

external environment. Hence, national interests determine the nation's involvement in the rest of the world, provide the focus of its actions to assure their protection, and thus, are the starting point for defining national security objectives and then formulating national security policy and strategy.

1. As a rule of thumb, interests are stated as fundamental concerns of the nation, and written as desirable conditions without verbs, action modifiers, or intended actions. For example, a nation's national interests might be stated as:

- a. Access to raw materials — (Not—protecting sources of raw materials).
- b. Unrestricted passage through international waters (Not—securing sealines of communications).

2. For simplicity, we group national interests into four categories and three degrees of intensity.

a. *Categories* help us to organize. Keep in mind the breakdown is normally artificial. Thus, while “Unrestricted access to Persian Gulf Oil” as a national interest has a primary category of “Economic Well-Being,” it also ties into the other three categories of national interest. The four categories are:

- (1) Defense of the Homeland
- (2) Economic Well-being
- (3) Favorable World Order
- (4) Promotion of Values

b. *Intensity of interests* helps us to determine priority of interests, recognizing that without prioritization, there is the potential for unlimited derivative objectives and the consequent mismatch of those objectives (ends) with resources (means), which are always finite.

(1) There are three degrees of intensity: VITAL, IMPORTANT, HUMANITARIAN.

(2) There are core national objectives, used to create core national interests, which correspond generally to the four categories listed above:

(a) Defense of the Homeland. Physical Security refers to the protection against attack on the territory and people of a nation-state in order to

ensure survival with fundamental values and political systems intact.

(b) Economic Prosperity.

(c) Promotion of Values.

(d) Favorable World Order. Note that this category is tricky because “its universalism makes it exceedingly difficult to distinguish between more and less important national security interests.”

(3) The three degrees of intensity are determined by answering the question: What happens if the interest is not realized?

(a) *Vital* — if unfulfilled, will have immediate consequence for core national interests.

(b) *Important* — if unfulfilled, will result in damage that will eventually affect core national interests.

(c) *Peripheral* — if unfulfilled, will result in damage that is unlikely to affect core national interests.

C. Strategic Appraisal.

1. The strategic appraisal begins with the sorting out of interests by category and intensity using the general criteria above.

2. The next step is examining the domestic and international environments to ascertain the challenges (forces, trends, opportunities and threats) that affect national interests.

a. In particular, in assessing the relationship of an external threat to a national security interest, the following criteria can be used to relate the effects on that interest with the core national interests:

(1) Immediacy in terms of time.

(2) Geographic proximity.

(3) Magnitude.

(4) “Infectious” dimensions.

(5) Connectivity — How many links in a chain of events from threat (situation/event) to core national interest.

b. It is important that this step take place after the sorting out of interests by category and intensity. The degree of intensity of an interest, in particular, should be determined **before** a detailed analysis of threats to those interests. It is important that interests not become a function of a particular threat. If a government

begins with a threat assessment before a conceptualization of interest intensity, it may react to a threat with major commitments and resources devoid of any rational linkage to that intensity. Rational cost-benefit analysis should not be allowed to affect the intensity of interest. Although U.S. administrations sensibly make just such cost-benefit calculations, Blackwill points out that:

These should be analytically independent from judgments about how important to the United States a particular national security interest is. We may choose to defend a peripheral U.S. interest because it is not costly to do so; the interest nevertheless is still peripheral. Or we may choose not to defend vigorously an important-hopefully not vital-U.S. national security interest because we decide it is too expensive in a variety of ways to do so; the interest nevertheless is still important, and we may well pay dearly for our unreadiness to engage.

3. The appraisal must be more than a listing of challenges. To be useful, an appraisal must analyze and explain which and in what ways U.S. interests are affected. The assessment should seek to identify opportunities and threats to national interests. As a consequence, the strategic appraisal will not only be influenced by current national policy, but will help identify recommendations to change existing policies.

4. Following is an outline for developing a strategic appraisal.

Step 1: Determine National Interests

- By category: defense of the homeland; economic well-being; favorable world order; promotion of values.
- By intensity: vital; important; peripheral.

Step 2: Identify and Assess Challenges to National Interests

- Defense Trends (Threats & Opportunities)
- Economic Trends (Threats & Opportunities)
- World Order Trends (Threats & Opportunities)
- Promotion of Values Trends (Threats & Opportunities)

Step 3: Comparison to National Strategy. Discuss where your assessment agrees or differs from the current national security strategy, and the reasons you disagree.

Step 4: Policy Recommendations. Based on this assessment, present policy recommendations for national diplomatic, economic, and military policies that must be changed currently and in the

future to protect against threats and to take advantage of existing opportunities.

D. National Policy. To secure national interests, the national political leadership establishes policies to guide the formulation of a national strategy. National policy is a broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.

E. National Strategy. (synonymous with national security strategy). The art and science of developing and using all the elements of national power during peace and war to secure national interests.

1. You must be able to develop strategies employing all of the elements of power. Remember, the formulation of national strategy, as it does at any level of strategy, employs the strategic thought process based on the use of Ends, Ways, and Means:

- a. National Objectives — ENDS.
- b. National Strategic Concepts — WAYS.
- c. National Resources — MEANS.

F. Military Strategy. Military strategy is meaningful only in the policy context outlined above.

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.

Military Strategy = Objectives + Strategic Concepts + Resources

Generic Military Answers

Ends Objectives What?

Ways Concepts How? (+Where & When)

Means Resources With What?

The next crucial step then, is translating **national policy objectives** and guidance into clear, concise, and achievable **military objectives**.

1. **Military Objectives.** *What* is to be achieved by the military element of power? As a rule of thumb, military objectives should:

- ☐ be appropriate, explicit, finite, achievable, and, if necessitated by policy guidance, limited in scope.

□ directly secure one (or more) stated interest(s). An effective first step in articulating a military objective is to attach an appropriate verb to each previously identified interest. For example:

Interest: access to raw materials

Objective: secure access to raw materials

Interest: a region free of conflict

Objective: deter intraregional conflict

Interest: survival of Country X

Objective: defend Country X

If no realizable military objective can be articulated to satisfy a given interest, a policy choice to use the military element of power should be questioned.

2. Military Strategic Concepts. Strategic concepts are broad courses of action or *ways* military power might be employed to achieve the aforestated objective. They answer the question of “*How*.” Here is where the originality, imagination, and creativity of the strategist come into play. As Clausewitz observed, there are many *ways* to achieve a given end; presumably many can be right, but real genius lies in finding the best. As a rule of thumb:

□ Each military objective must have one (or more) concept(s) detailing *how* means (resources) are to relate to ends (objectives).

□ Stated strategic concepts represent the preferred options of the possible courses of action considered.

□ Strategic concepts also detail when, where, phasing, sequencing, roles, priorities, etc., as appropriate.

Example:

Interest: Access to Middle-East oil

Objective: Secure sea lines of communication to the Middle-East

Strategic Concept: Naval forces and embarked land forces will maintain a periodic presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in peacetime; be prepared to provide full-time presence in crisis; and be prepared to achieve naval superiority in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean in wartime.

3. Military Resources. Finally, the strategy must have resources—i.e., military forces and means implied by the objectives and concepts

identified. Military resources are often stated as forces (divisions, wings, naval groups), but might include things such as time, effort, organization, people, etc. As a rule of thumb:

—Military resources must be identified for each objective and concept articulated.

—Supportability of forces should be addressed (in terms of strategic lift, sustainability, host nation support, reinforcements, etc.).

G. Risk Assessment. As almost no strategy has resources sufficient for complete assurance of success, a final and essential test is to assess the risk of less than full attainment of objectives. Living with risk is part of our business in the modern world, and being able to articulate its extent is the first step in reducing its impact. Where the risk is determined to be unacceptable, the strategy must be revised. Basically there are three ways:

☐ Reduce the objectives.

☐ Change the concepts.

☐ Increase the resources.

In other words, the strategist must reconcile the ends, ways and means to minimize the risk inherent in a particular strategy.

IV. Conclusion. This thought process applies equally to national strategy, national military strategy, and theater military strategy.

Assumptions and Premises of Strategy:

1. Strategy is proactive and anticipatory but not predictive. Strategy seeks to promote or protect national interests as the future unfolds. In doing this, it must consider change and make assumptions. Both change and assumptions are bounded by existing facts and realistic possibilities. Strategy is clear on what are facts, assumptions, and possibilities.
2. Strategy is subordinate to policy. Political purpose dominates all levels of strategy. Policy ensures that strategy pursues appropriate aims in an acceptable manner. However, the development of strategy informs policy; policy must adapt itself to the realities of the environment and the limits of power. Thus, policy ensures that strategy pursues appropriate aims, and strategy informs policy of the art of the possible.
3. Strategy is subordinate to the nature of the environment. Strategy must identify an appropriate balance among the objectives sought, the methods to pursue the objectives, and the resources available within the particular strategic environment. Strategy must be consistent with the nature of the strategic environment.
4. Strategy maintains a holistic perspective. It demands comprehensive consideration. Strategy is developed from a thorough consideration of the strategic situation and knowledge of the nature of the strategic environment. Strategic analysis highlights the internal and external factors in the strategic environment that help define strategic effect and the specific objectives, concepts, and resources of the strategy. Strategy reflects a comprehensive knowledge of what else is happening within the strategic environment and the potential first-, second-, and third-order effects of its own choices on the efforts of those above, below, and on the strategist's own level.
5. Strategy creates a security dilemma for the strategist and other actors. Any strategy, once known or implemented, threatens the status quo and creates risk for the equilibrium of the strategic environment. The strategist must determine if the end justifies the risks of initiating action, and other actors must decide whether to act and in what manner.
6. Strategy is founded in what is to be accomplished and why it is to be accomplished. Strategy focuses on a preferred end state among possible end states in a dynamic environment. It provides direction for the coercive or persuasive use of the instruments of power to achieve specified objectives, thereby creating strategic effects leading to the desired end state. The strategist must comprehend the nature of the strategic environment, the policy, and the nation's aggregate interests to determine what strategic effect is necessary before proper objectives can be determined.
7. Strategy is an inherently human enterprise. It is more than an intellectual consideration of objective factors. The role of belief systems and cultural perceptions of all the players is important in the development and execution of strategy.

8. Friction is an inherent part of strategy. Friction cannot be eliminated, but it can be understood and accounted for to a greater or lesser extent.
9. Strategy focuses on root purposes and causes. This focus makes strategy inherently adaptable and flexible. Strategy learns from experience and must be sufficiently broad and flexible in its construction to adapt to unfolding events and an adversary's countermoves. Strategy's focus on root causes and purposes ensures that direction of subordinate levels is sufficiently broad to be adaptable and flexible.
10. Strategy is hierarchical. Just as strategy is subordinate to policy, lower levels of strategy and planning are subordinate to higher levels of strategy. The hierarchical nature of strategy facilitates span of control.
11. Strategy exists in a symbiotic relationship with time. Strategy must be integrated into the stream of history; it must be congruous with what has already happened and with the realistic possibilities of the future. Small changes at the right time can have large and unexpected consequences. Consequently, an intervention at an early date has greater effect at less cost than a later intervention. Strategy is about thinking and acting in time in a way that is fundamentally different from planning.
12. Strategy is cumulative. Effects in the strategic environment are cumulative; once given birth, they become a part of the play of continuity and change. Strategies at different levels interact and influence the success of higher and lower strategy and planning over time.
13. Efficiency is subordinate to effectiveness in strategy. Strategic objectives, if accomplished, create or contribute to creation of strategic effects that lead to the achievement of the desired end state at the level of strategy being analyzed. In that way, they ultimately serve national interests. Good strategy is both effective and efficient, but effectiveness takes precedence over efficiency. Concepts and resources serve objectives without undue risk of failure or unintended effects.
14. Strategy provides a proper relationship or balance among the objectives sought, the methods used to pursue the objectives, and the resources available. In formulating a strategy, the ends, ways, and means are part of an integral whole and work synergistically to achieve strategic effect at that level of strategy, as well as contribute to cumulative effects at higher levels. Ends, ways, and means must be in concert qualitatively and quantitatively, internally and externally. From the synergistic balance of ends, ways, and means, the strategy achieves suitability, acceptability, and feasibility.
15. Risk is inherent to all strategy. Strategy is subordinate to the uncertain nature of the strategic environment. Success is contingent on implementation of an *effective* strategy—ends, ways, and means that positively interact with the strategic environment. Failure is the inability to achieve one's objectives, the thwarting of achievement of one's objectives by other actors or chance, or the creation of unintended adverse effects of such magnitude as to negate what would otherwise be regarded as strategic success.

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. 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 inappropriate to counter Communist-inspired wars of national liberation.

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 decision-makers 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 decision-maker 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 presented by focusing on specific strategic problems and taking effective action, we must focus, and we must act. Success is clearly possible.

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.

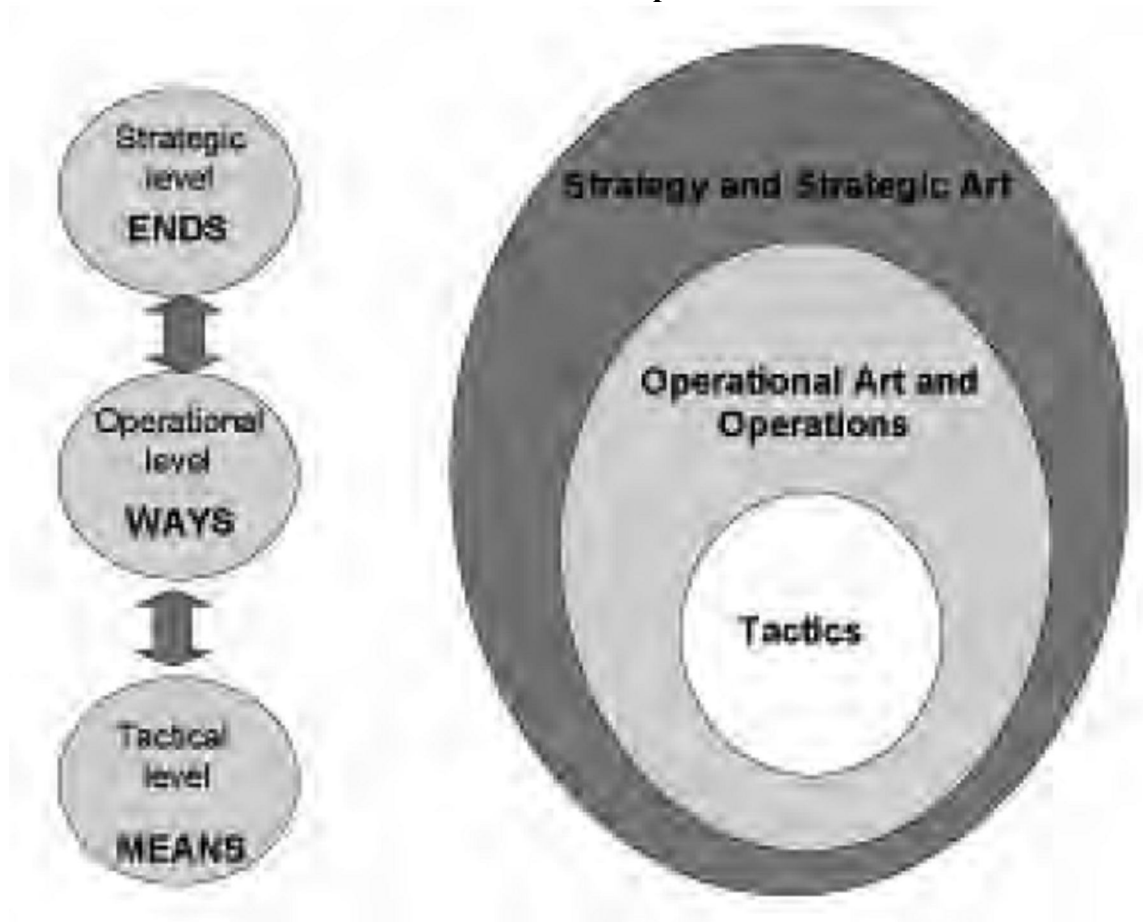
Emphasizing Paradigm over Purpose (Operational Art Devouring Strategy)

Related to the previous pitfall is the mistake of allowing the paradigm (of having a vertical column comprising of policy, strategy, operations, and tactics) to become more important than the purpose for which this paradigm was conceived. This is exemplified in the case of operational art. Not only is it often forced into situations where it may not fit, operational art also has the habit of becoming an obstacle in the discourse between strategy and tactics. In fact, at times, the operational level of war seems to dictate, or even commandeer, the entire military strategy, and even grand strategy on occasion.

On the contrary, however, war needs to be managed as a whole—with the two-way conversation between strategy and tactics also being a continuous one. Secondly, any attempts to gain understanding by breaking a system into its constituent parts (in this case strategy-operations-tactics) means to isolate in theory what is actually united in praxis. As a result, such analysis generates theory that is practically and literally meaningless.

In specific, the English-speaking world has grown to have a linear view of war, with ends, ways, and means arranged hierarchically and linked to discrete levels of command. At least implicitly, most of the conversation is one-way traffic: strategy directs and tactics obeys. This is war on Henry Ford's assembly line with Frederick Taylor measuring progress. It demeans the importance of the continuous and intimate two-way conversation that is essential for success. A more satisfactory perspective would notice that these are nested.

Two Contending Views of the Ends-Ways-Means Relationship



This is more than a semantic difference. By taking a hierarchical view and linking discrete responsibilities to specific levels of command, we risk degrading the intimacy of the conversation among ends, ways, and means, making it easier for strategy to make unreasonable demands.

Antulio Echevarria has argued that:

the American way of war tends to shy away from thinking about the complicated process of turning military triumphs, whether on the scale of major campaigns or small-unit actions, into strategic successes. This tendency is symptomatic of a persistent bifurcation in American strategic thinking—though by no means unique to Americans—in which military professionals concentrate on winning battles and campaigns, while policymakers focus on the diplomatic struggles that precede and influence, or are influenced by, the actual fighting. This bifurcation is partly a matter of preference and partly a by-product of the American tradition of subordinating military command to civilian leadership, which creates two separate spheres of responsibility, one for diplomacy and one for combat. . . . [This means that there is an American way of Battle not an American Way of War]. . . . [T]o move toward a

genuine way of war, American military and political leaders must address two key problems. First, they must better define the respective roles and responsibilities of the logic and grammar of war, and, in the process, take steps that will diminish the bifurcation in American strategic thinking. Second, political and military leaders must habituate themselves to thinking more thoroughly about how to turn combat successes into favorable strategic outcomes. Such thinking is not new, but it is clearly not yet a matter of habit. Failure to see the purpose for which a war is fought *as part of war itself* amounts to treating battle as an end in itself.

Unfortunately, the hierarchical separation of levels of war on which the continuum of war is based is not reflected in practice. Strategy is free to expand, contract, or alter its objectives as circumstances create new opportunities or foreclose others; or as the costs-benefits calculus changes. The connection between war and politics gives strategy its functionality; therefore, war is necessarily vested with the same volatility as politics. Any attempt in theory to insulate the practical conduct of war from this volatility is erroneous. This means that there is not an overlap between strategy, operational art, and tactics, they are completely fused. Tactical actions necessarily carry strategic implications, while strategy conceptualizes, creates, and applies tactical forces, as well as shaping their diplomatic, economic, demographic, and operational environments.

Any attempt to conceptually separate tactics from strategy denies this connection. Campaign planning should be a strategic artifact, conducted in national capitals and involving the detailed coordination of domestic and international politics with military, diplomatic, economic, and informational actions. This resulting multi-modal campaign will likely comprise a number of lines of operation, both military and nonmilitary. Within this multi-modal campaign, there are two alternative models for operational art:

- It can be focused on the achievement of the campaign objectives within one line of operation, either within a geographic subdivision of the theater, or within the theater as a whole; or,
- It can be focused on the achievement of campaign objectives for all the lines of operation within a geographic subdivision of the theater.

It is clear from the doctrines of the Anglophone armies that they aspire to the latter model in which the relevant commander is applying both military and nonmilitary resources to the achievement of objectives in social, political, economic, and security arenas within his assigned boundaries. The extent to which this more attractive comprehensive model is achievable will depend on the extent to which strategic art is able to establish unity of command. It is only sensible to ask a commander to conduct multi-modal operations across a number of lines of operation if he is also delegated control over the necessary resources. The procedures for this in the military are well established, but control of interagency and other resources remains problematic. Without this control, the independence necessary for the commander to sequence tactical actions in pursuit of campaign objectives—i.e., to perform operational art—is missing. Resolving conflicting

interagency priorities, work practices, and worldviews by negotiation and consensus-building may be necessary in today's complex operations, but it is not operational art: it is simply muddling through. The type of multi-modal coordination described, for example, in the Australian Army's concept *Adaptive Campaigning*, the U.S. *Joint Operating Environment*, and the British *Comprehensive Approach* cannot be realized without the establishment of a high degree of unity of command across military and nonmilitary agencies that is, in turn, further delegated to geographically focused headquarters. This is a worthy aspiration, but one which will likely remain only aspiration until demands arise that are more compelling than the current rash of small wars. Even the less ambitious first model above is exceedingly difficult, but it at least proffers the prospect of practicality. In this model, military or nonmilitary leaders would be responsible for sequencing actions within a specified line of operation. This allows the problems of interagency coordination, at least potentially, to be managed as part of the management of the campaign as a whole instead of becoming a problem delegated to some hapless junior commander. If strategic art is able to achieve sufficient bureaucratic consensus to deliver a practical level of unity of command within a line of operation, then there may be opportunities to achieve operational art within that line.

This, however, again threatens to take a relatively simple idea and extend it into new and untested areas. Are actions sequenced within a line of operation focused on infrastructure or law and order actually operational art? They fit the formal definition but may no longer involve military resources, military objectives, or military command. Is extending its meaning into this realm productive or useful? In answering this question, we must go to the functions of any military theory. Does "it" (the redefinition) help us better understand the problem of war, train individuals, structure organizations, or acquire equipment? Does it explain the military problem to political leadership? Again, it seems to us that by unwittingly extending the meaning of operational art to meet emerging conceptual needs, its meaning and military utility are diluted and devalued. Interagency cooperation needs be explained, trained, and done by governments, it needs be taught to commanders, and the military needs to be prepared to participate. This does not, however, define its place in theory. Interagency coordination within a campaign is not necessarily operational art because not everything that happens within a campaign is.

If operational art were to be returned to its traditional enclosure—as the sequencing of tactical actions to achieve objectives provided by the campaign plan—and if it were to retain its traditional focus on the enemy, then it has utility as an intellectual framework supporting the preparation for war. It would not, however, be the war but simply an aspect of warfare to be exploited or ignored as the circumstances demand.

Unrestricted Warfare:

The previous discussion regarding the compression of strategy, operations, and tactics leads us into the theory of unrestricted warfare.

Despite continuing debates about the rise or decline of the state, the impacts of resource scarcity, pandemic diseases, urbanization, global warming, economic globalization, demographics, etc., there is a degree of consensus surrounding the likely character of warfare in the next epoch. A number of authors have proposed conceptual models, many of which are worth careful reading. But the one model we find most relevant and interesting here is set forth in the 1999 book by two Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Colonels: Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare* was written in the aftermath of the campaigns in Iraq and Kosovo as a conceptual response to U.S. conventional military predominance. Essentially, it argues for the exploitation and acceleration of a universally accepted trend presently underpinning the evolution of warfare: diffusion.

“Diffusion” describes the blurring of the conceptual boundaries that we have customarily used to aid our understanding and conduct of warfare. The basic premise is that diffusion of warfare from the confines of the traditional battlefield into all the spaces of human activity will inevitably lead to unrestricted warfare:

The great fusion of technologies is impelling the domains of politics, economics, the military, culture, diplomacy, and religion to overlap each other. The connection points are ready, and the trend towards the merging of the various domains is very clear. All of these things are rendering more and more obsolete the idea of confining warfare to the military domain. . . .

As a result, in unrestricted warfare there is no longer any distinction between what is or is not the battlefield. Spaces in nature, including the ground, the seas, the air, and outer space, are battlefields, but social spaces such as the military, politics, economics, culture, and the psyche are also battlefields. Moreover, the technological space linking these two great spaces is most susceptible of all to serving as a venue for conflict which antagonists spare no effort to win. National power can be military, quasi-military, or nonmilitary. It can employ violence or nonviolence. It can be a confrontation between professional soldiers or between newly emerging forces consisting primarily of ordinary people or experts. These characteristics of unrestricted warfare “mark the watershed between it and traditional warfare, as well as the starting line for new types of warfare.” This theme was taken up and expanded in the Australian Army's concept, *Complex Warfighting*, which noted that the boundaries between war and peace, combatants and noncombatants, the home front and the battlefield, special and conventional operations, state and nonstate actors, military and nonmilitary power, and geographical features themselves, were all in the process of dissolution. Although warfare has always involved the application of all of the instruments of national power and always been intended to impact the psychology of the target population, warfare has customarily expressed these relationships through the

application of military force. Diffusion removes the primacy of military force, making it simply one of a suite of levers that can be utilized.

A corollary to the foregoing evolution is that military defeat of the enemy is no longer the principal, or even an important, step on the path to winning a war: annihilation is no longer the objective. The objective of unrestricted war rather is to directly attack the target population's will to resist by attacking its self-perceptions, directly imposing on it the economic and social costs of war, diplomatically isolating it, undermining the morality of its position, and, in short, inducing the people to reject the continuance of the war. It is warfare which focuses on the political aim to the exclusion of all else.

According to its authors, the prosecution of unrestricted war requires:

- **“Omnidirectionality,”** which is “360 degree observation and design involving the combined use of all related factors and making plans . . . employing all measures, and combining the use of all war resources which can be mobilized, to have a field of vision with no blind spots, a concept unhindered by obstacles, and an orientation with no blind angles.”
- **“Synchrony,”** which seeks to employ all the military and nonmilitary resources in a concentrated and orchestrated way in temporally compressed wars: “So many objectives which in the past had to be accomplished in stages through an accumulation of battles and campaigns may now be accomplished quickly under conditions of simultaneous occurrence, simultaneous action, and simultaneous completion. Thus, stress on ‘synchrony’ in combat operations now exceeds the stress on ‘phasing.’”
- **“Multidimensional Coordination,”** which refers to coordination and cooperation among different forces in different spheres in order to accomplish an objective. “On the face of it, this definition is not at all novel. . . . The only difference between it and similar explanations is, and this is a great difference, the introduction of nonmilitary and nonwar factors into the sphere of war directly rather than indirectly.”
- **“Adjustment and Control of the Entire Process—During the Entire Course of a War, from Its Start, through Its Progress, to its Conclusion, Continually Acquire Information, Adjust Action, and Control the Situation.** Warfare is a dynamic process full of randomness and creativity. Any attempt to tie a war to a set of ideas within a predetermined plan is little short of absurdity or naïveté. Therefore, it is necessary to have feedback and revisions throughout the entire course of a war while it is actually happening to keep the initiative within one's grasp.”

The thrust, if not the detail, of *Unrestricted Warfare* represents the current orthodoxy on the ways war will, or should, be fought in the immediate future. The challenges of diffusion and the need to align all the instruments of national power behind the prosecution of war are increasingly represented in the military doctrines of the world.

The 'Sequel' to this guide shall explain the Islaamic method of applying these strategic concepts in a practical sense through a careful study of the Prophetic *Siirah*.

May Allaah make this a source of benefit for the *Ummah* of Muhammad (S).

May He bestow His peace and *salaah* upon His final Messenger, and upon his family and companions.

And the last of our calls is 'all praises are due to the Lord of the Worlds'.