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**“Over By Christmas”:
Campaigning, Delusions and Force Requirements**

J. B. A. Bailey

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**The Institute of Land Warfare
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY**

AN AUSA INSTITUTE OF LAND WARFARE PAPER

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LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 51W, SEPTEMBER 2005

“Over By Christmas”: Campaigning, Delusions and Force Requirements

by J. B. A. Bailey

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Contents

Foreword	v
Introduction	1
Campaigning and the Shapes of Time	1
The Contention	1
Delusions and Decisionmaking	2
The Evidence: The Prosecution	3
Exhibit A: The Russo-Japanese War and the Pathology of Lessons Learned	3
Exhibit B: Blitzkrieg: The New “Cult of the Offensive” and Ideological Imperatives Lead to <i>Materialschlacht</i> —Again	5
Exhibit C: The Cold War and Its Proxies	6
Exhibit D: Israel and Her Neighbors—No End in Sight	6
Exhibit E: “The New World Order”—No Quick Wins	7
Exhibit F: “The Gulf War”	7
Summing Up	10
And Yet: The Case for the Defense	10
Exhibit A: The British Empire—Campaigning Without Timelines	10
Exhibit B: Northern Ireland	11
Exhibit C: The American Empire—Campaigning With Timelines?	11
The Verdict: Matching Ends, Ways and Means in a Complex Environment	14
The Dimensions of Battlespace	14
Criteria for Success	17
Conclusion	18
Endnotes	19

Foreword

The contention of this paper is that over the last hundred years military establishments and their political masters have underestimated the length and costs of their campaigns and have frequently had little idea of the actual nature of their undertakings. A common factor in this appears to be the desire that campaigns should be short, decisive and cheap, and therefore with less risk but a greater likelihood of popular support—to be “home by Christmas.” This delusion has often been reached irrespective of the historical evidence and the analysis of current capabilities to the contrary.

The desire and conviction that campaigns should, ought and in fact will be so has often led to the creation of forces to fight on terms other than those which prove optimal in the event. The result is that those seeking a short, decisive and cheap campaign have very often laid the foundations for the opposite. Their unpreparedness and delusions have abetted costly attrition, and the resulting bill in international calamity, casualties and materiel has been shocking. There are some exceptions, and these may prove instructive models for our own future conduct.

Given this unpromising context and the growing complexity of battlespace, what is the utility of American military power today and in the future? Is it to be put to some greater mission than short, selective, warfighting operations? If the West is to have some neo-imperial mission to be “a force for good in the world,” has this mission ever been clearly articulated and its implications understood? Have its forces and other agencies been configured and equipped to do more than fight the wars that they would like to fight, rather than the operations which they will actually encounter?



GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, United States Army Retired
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September 2005

“Over By Christmas”: Campaigning, Delusions and Force Requirements

Introduction

Campaigning and the Shapes of Time

There is a natural inclination to look back with the benefit of hindsight to find fresh patterns in history. Thus, for example, the period 1870–1990 can be viewed as Europe’s “Hundred-Year Civil War,” a perception not necessarily obvious to those engaged in that “war” at any particular time; and the Japanese have seen the Second World War from their viewpoint as variously a part of a “Hundred Years War,”¹ a “Seventy-Five Year War,” a “Great Pacific War” and a “Great East Asian War.” More recent operations against Islamic extremists have been seen by some on both sides in an even broader context, as further iterations of a war spanning more than one thousand years and stretching from Tours to Acre, Lepanto, Khartoum, and now to New York and Bali.

While such revisionism may be fundamental to mankind’s learning process, the evidence of the past hundred years seems to be that we have an incorrigible reluctance and/or inability to make accurate assessments as to the likely length, meaning and outcome of military operations and what is or has been required to succeed in them. We have been poor judges of time and its patterns when it comes to military matters, or more specifically to campaigning, erring on the side of lethal optimism and wishful thinking in the face of the readily available facts. This suspension of critical faculties has led to serious distortions in preparing armed forces for the challenges that face them. It seems that Clausewitz’s urging—“The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war upon which they are embarking”²—has been in vain.

The Contention

The contention of this paper is that over the past hundred years military establishments, encouraged and directed by their political masters, have persistently underestimated the length and costs of their campaigns and have frequently had little idea of the actual nature of their undertakings. A common factor in this appears to be the desire that campaigns should be short, decisive and cheap; and therefore with less risk but a greater likelihood of popular support—to be “home by Christmas.” This delusion has often been reached irrespective of the

historical evidence and the analysis of current capabilities to the contrary. The desire and conviction that campaigns should, ought and in fact will be so, has often led to the creation of forces to fight on terms other than those which prove optimal in the event. The result is that those seeking a short, decisive and cheap campaign have very often laid the foundations for the opposite. Their unpreparedness and delusions have abetted costly attrition; and the resulting bill in international calamity, casualties and materiel has been shocking. There are some exceptions, and these may prove instructive models for our own future conduct.

Politically-tainted overoptimism has often led to fundamental misappreciation of the nature of a military undertaking. This deficit in imagination and understanding is then, with some resentment, often blamed on “mission creep,” or explained away with clichés masquerading as alibis, asserting that plans “never survive the first contact” or that readily predictable consequences could not have been known in advance. Many wars have ended up with objectives and rationales very different from those the belligerents began with, and events have indeed unfolded in unexpected ways; but forces are less able to deal with this unsurprising phenomenon if their own powers of anticipation have been neglected. A negative spiral of bad decisions and inappropriate action or denial may result from this negligence.

We should do better, and a more rigorous objectivity and self-analysis, perhaps beyond what hierarchy and the military culture of deference can muster, should be turned to shape and inform our armed forces. On the other hand, if this contention has substance, some might conclude that the serial misbehaviour of which defense establishments and their political masters have been guilty is so apparently irrational and foolish that it may in some way be endemic to the civil-military condition, and not amenable to correction by better training, education or more assiduous staff work. It is perhaps but a minor act in “the Human Comedy”—in short, we may be deep into “Norman Dixon country”³ or that dangerous, manic world of overconfidence described more recently by Dominic Johnson.⁴ Understanding our tendency to this condition may prevent us from being its victims, but we should certainly encourage our opponents to continue along this path of dysfunction.

Delusions and Decisionmaking

Overconfidence seems to be especially common when strategic decisions are made by unaccountable leaders, or by democratically elected leaders who are able to operate in a small group without rigorous and critical scrutiny. It may be feared that larger, more open groups would hamper decisionmaking; and when decisions are made, those on the periphery of this inner group may fear that any criticisms they make might be viewed as unpatriotic, and move them even further from the center of power. This can lead to self-censorship, removing an important check on this “small-group behaviour.”

On the other hand, effective leaders typically accept heavy responsibility and risks, withstand setbacks and criticism and still believe they are right. The confidence of a leader is vital to confidence in him by others, and in matters of war, these qualities come to the fore. As John Maynard Keynes observed more than 60 years ago, “In the case of the Prime Minister, this

blindness is an essential element in his strength. If he could see even a little, if he became even faintly cognisant of the turmoil of ideas and projects and schemes to save the country which are tormenting the rest of us, his superbly brazen self-confidence would be fatally impaired.”⁵

Hitler wanted generals “like butchers’ dogs” who wanted to attack anyone they saw, but he did not expect them to challenge him or to cast doubt on his grand designs. The visions and convictions of Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler and Mao changed the world; but professional soldiers seldom see that as their life’s purpose—in a sense they are merely “military artisans.” The challenges of civil-military relations in Western societies have been eloquently analysed by Eliot Cohen in *Supreme Command*,⁶ and it is rare good fortune if a state can combine excellence in both its political and military leadership. Generals often offer flawed judgments, but they are nevertheless a unique and indispensable source of specialist advice about their profession. Their views deserve attention if not necessarily acceptance, and in democracies they often get that attention. The military are often prisoners of their own limited perspectives, which can make their advice lethal when taken out of a more sophisticated strategic context; but the military judgment of the soldier is also often distorted by acquiescence in the face of political pressures. Equally, sound professional advice has frequently been overruled by the conviction of those uneducated in warfare but sure of their ideology and their ultimate political power of decision.

The Evidence: The Prosecution

The history of the past hundred years suggests that campaigns have tended to be longer than initially imagined and allowed for. This has often proven disastrous; although where combat has not been intense, forces have had the benefit of time to adapt, and have often done so successfully.

Exhibit A: The Russo-Japanese War and the Pathology of Lessons Learned

By 1905 it was clear that the prevailing technology of firepower in defense would dominate offensive maneuver. The evidence of this was rejected.

At the end of the 19th century, some such as Jan Bloch had noted the likely length and punishing cost of a future war in Europe. His case seemed so disturbing that he was attacked for even making such suggestions.⁷ The experience of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 made it clear that the technology of indirect firing artillery, machine-guns and high-velocity magazine rifles in defense, let alone when reinforced by wire and trenches, would eliminate any likelihood of success by infantry maneuvering in the open.

This was widely recorded at the time, and in the immediate aftermath of the war was scarcely controversial. Yet these lessons of the war did not fit the strategic imperatives of the day and were distorted or discarded, with the result that what we now see as clear auguries of the future of warfare, à la 1914–18, generally went unheeded. On 10 September 1904, Colonel Charles Repington, the military correspondent of *The Times* of London made “A Plea for History”:

After being duly registered and indexed . . . the best of these reports start on a silent circular tour and pass round . . . to a number of permanent officials and political personages, mostly too busy to read them carefully and seldom troubling to do more than scratch an initial, or to write the words “very interesting,” if it finds them in exceptionally expansive mood. Then if luck has prevented the report from becoming lost, mislaid, or forgotten . . . it returns to the office of origin, and it is solemnly buried and pompously forgotten. The small and restricted governing class receive a hazy impression of something having been written somewhere by somebody; there is nothing done.⁸

As Sir Ian Hamilton noted in despair, “On the actual day of battle naked truths may be picked up for the asking; by the following morning they have already begun to get into their uniforms.”⁹

At the turn of the century, Jan Bloch had claimed support for the view that future wars would be long and costly from the memoirs of Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke. Moltke opined that “when millions of men array themselves opposite each other, and engage in a desperate struggle for their national existence, it is difficult to assume that the question will be settled by a few victories.”¹⁰ Bloch also quoted the German General (Baron) Colmar von der Goltz, who maintained that, “The economic resources will dry up before the armed forces are exhausted.”¹¹ He believed that operational deadlock would lead to unprecedented slaughter on devastated battlefields, with increasing strain on the industrial resources of the combatants and the crushing of civilian populations. He predicted famine, bankruptcy and social collapse; and he cited civilian stamina and the propensity for revolution as the decisive elements in modern war. The prescience of Bloch is now clear, whereas at the time his ideas were acknowledged but had little effect upon military planning.¹²

Nevertheless, in a paradoxical and latent acknowledgement of Bloch’s thinking, there was recognition that the slaughter and national damage of a long war would be unacceptable. All parties prior to 1914 therefore planned for a short war of rapid and decisive maneuver, making war more acceptable and thereby possible in their estimation. In the face of lethal new technologies, armies decided that there was no option but to endure and thereby prevail. Often they reached for spiritual solutions,¹³ and some hoped to manipulate human nature rather than to understand and address the emerging technologies and tactical possibilities of war.¹⁴

The more telling the evidence that new fundamentals would make any war long and costly, the greater the necessary political and military insistence that it must not be—and by perverse logic that it could not be, because neither side had the means to fight such a war. “Getting the drop” on the enemy with a slick but also unstoppable mobilization plan and rapid, precisely-executed offensive action seemed essential. In the opening battles of 1914, the French army lost as many men in its rapid, attritional maneuvering over open terrain as it did two years later in the Battles of Verdun and the Somme combined.¹⁵

Exhibit B: *Blitzkrieg*: The New “Cult of the Offensive” and Ideological Imperatives Lead to *Materialschlacht*—Again

In the 1930s, Germany planned a “rematch” of the First World War. Acknowledging that this would have to be fought on other terms, obviating a *Materialschlacht* (material battle), it adopted another “cult of the offensive.” Invasions of Germany’s neighbors proceeded against mainstream military advice and proved disastrously successful. The political powers of the day, imbued with ideological certainty and with the advantage of the strategic initiative, asserted the wisdom of their superior judgment and the necessity for decisive offensive action. Successes led to the idea and formulation of *Blitzkrieg* after the event.¹⁶ This proved to be a catastrophic liability that died on the Soviet steppe, in a *Materialschlacht*. *Blitzkrieg* had sought and failed to frustrate the prevailing dynamics of firepower and maneuver in time and space.¹⁷

The German leadership had seen the Soviet Union as a “colossus of clay without a head”; and it had been Hitler’s calculation on launching Operation BARBAROSSA that by “kicking in the door,” the “whole rotten edifice” would collapse.

The problem of German intelligence was not really the paucity of intelligence sources, nor even the quality of information available, and the structural inefficiency of the service, the problem was one of attitude.¹⁸

BARBAROSSA, which is often spoken of as some brilliant operation, was more a metaphysical plan than a military one, and the product of an article of political faith rather than dispassionate operational analysis.¹⁹ As a result of an equal misreading of their opponent’s mentality,²⁰ the Japanese were to suffer a fate similar to the Germans’, in a prolonged war of attrition in which their opponent had the materiel advantage—an advantage of which they had always been keenly aware and which they intended to circumvent through speed and surprise.²¹ In the case of the Japanese government and command, the likely failure of their war on the United States was well appreciated at the time; but it seemed to them that speed and precision in attack offered at least some possibility of success, while the alternative certainly did not.

Convinced that the Soviet Union would collapse in the face of a rapid armored maneuver, in 1940–41 Hitler prepared for Operation BARBAROSSA by stripping the Wehrmacht of much of its firepower.²² In his mind it would not be required, for the war was to be won by him by December 1941, on other terms. Any assumption that firepower and vast quantities of materiel would be required after that date would be, in essence, an assumption that his premise was wrong. This would challenge the entire enterprise, but more important the ideological tenets that underwrote them.

From 22 June to 26 August 1941 the Wehrmacht “maneuvered” its head into the Soviet noose. It suffered 440,000 casualties, a rate seldom seen in the First World War, and by December it had lost 830,000, more men than Germany had in the Battles of Verdun and the Somme combined, although the size of the killing ground and the “glamour” of the maneuvers, well-publicized by the Nazi propaganda machine, even today persuade some that it was an exemplar of operational planning and maneuver at its finest.²³ Hitler’s war,

which by his own calculations should now have been won, had almost another four years to run, and millions were yet to die. After 1942, much of the fighting on the Eastern Front degenerated to a primitive, low-technology, static warfare typical of the middle years of the First World War, which the Germans had sought to avoid and for which the Soviets had planned and were well-suited.²⁴

Exhibit C: The Cold War and Its Proxies

After the Second World War, few expected that U.S. forces would remain in Europe²⁵ and Japan 60 years later; but they do remain for many reasons, and despite a successful, if unpredicted, outcome to the Cold War in Europe after a “campaign” of extraordinary financial cost and length. In the Cold War, nuclear deterrence reinforced the Blochian notion that war would be unthinkable destructive²⁶ and increased the incidence of limited war, revolutionary struggles and insurgency in which full conventional military means could not be applied. These wars were often fought by proxies for the true contestants. With hindsight, we now see that the Cold War was itself a limited war on a massive scale, as much as any of the “small wars” it entailed. This limited war was conducted in the context of ideological struggle and was also waged by political means.

War was fought not merely on the battlefield but also in parallel at “peace talks.” Thus the Korean War dragged on, was not decisive, and continues in novel menacing forms 50 years later. It may yet have a nuclear phase. The United States also found in its excruciating Vietnam War that the “peace talks” in Paris, television screens, newsprint and college campuses were as much “battle fronts” as were the Mekong Delta or Hué. The factors that brought about the demise of the French, so well articulated in the United States after 1945, remained essentially valid for the subsequent U.S. experience. The war was long, decisive in the wrong sense from an American viewpoint, and very expensive. With hindsight, the war of Vietnamese national independence started well before 1945 and probably ended only with the repulse of the Chinese invasion of 1979.

Exhibit D: Israel and Her Neighbors—No End in Sight

Israel persisted in the misleading idea that quick battlefield victories, such as those in 1967 and 1973, constituted successes in some fundamental sense. True, Israel survived, and any single defeat for Israel has a meaning different from that of a defeat for its neighbors; but there was also the idea that it had defeated its opponents in some decisive way, as opposed to merely preempted or temporarily held their attack. This psychology, and the military structures and training that resulted, left Israel grievously ill-prepared to face the *Intifada* in all its rapidly evolving forms. Early episodes of the *Intifada* broadcast on television showed untrained members of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) staging what amounted to counter-riots against stone-throwing crowds, attracting worldwide opprobrium. Israel failed to see that battlefield successes were but intense and vivid moments in a campaign that would last more than 50 years, and continues without end in sight. In turn, it may now, however, be only by continuing a drawn-out campaign that Israel can achieve its own long-term, national, demographic and territorial

objectives; and that the *Intifadas* have been but wild episodes that it seeks to weather in this “biblical” epic, with a more distant ending than that which suits the Palestinians.

Exhibit E: “The New World Order”—No Quick Wins

Since the end of the Cold War, the pattern of military operations in the so-called “New World Order” has seemed clear and the requirements unsurprising. There have been many varieties of “peace operations” around the world from the Balkans to Rwanda, from Afghanistan to East Timor. Some have been tempted to attribute success in many of these operations to the critical role of airpower, which is said to have led to triumph in short and decisive campaigns. Up to a point they would be right, for air operations have indeed proven an important factor in the early warfighting phases of many of these joint campaigns. These intense phases have generally proven to be short, relatively inexpensive and highly telegenic; but success in them has far from constituted success in the overall campaign. They have, more realistically, been merely preliminary enabling operations for the main and decisive phases of operations, the nation-building and peacekeeping that followed them—for these were central to the purpose, the ends of the campaign, rather than merely its ways and means. After all, if these subsequent phases were not the most important phases, what was the purpose of the preliminary warfighting activities? Stopping immediate criminal acts was indeed often an immediate and beneficial consequence of intervention, but disengagement after a short warfighting phase would not have prevented on-going bloodshed—on the contrary, it might well have made it worse.

Although the Bosnian crisis was settled at Dayton, thousands of troops remain in Bosnia and the campaign is not over. In that sense, the idea of a modern aerial *Blitzkrieg*, so much in vogue for a while and linked to the unrealistic chimera of information superiority and the transparent battlefield, has proved an illusion in which many military establishments have been complicit. The campaign in Bosnia also taught the need to review much of the military doctrine upon which armies had trained, although much of the “new” doctrine for “Peace Operations” turned out not to be new at all.

In Kosovo, six years after the Kosovo Force (KFOR) entered that province of Serbia, there has still been no political settlement and the outcome of the campaign remains unclear. It did, however, highlight the shortcomings of airpower against forces in the field²⁷ and it provided invaluable lessons in exactly what was required when, having removed a regime, one wishes to insert a new government in toto. The rebuilding of Afghanistan—“nation-building” seems too ambitious a term to apply to this disparate state—would seem to be a very perilous and long-term project. Nevertheless, in a broad perspective, the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is probably as important in preventing future terrorism as the concurrent combat operations conducted under other auspices. That said, optimism as to its outcome may be misplaced.

Exhibit F: “The Gulf War”

The Gulf War of 1991 appeared to be a stunning success—as in many respects it was; but it was more Cannae than Tannenberg. It did not lead to the fall of Saddam Hussein any more

than Rome fell in 216 BC, or did Moscow after the “Cannae” of 1941. That said, it was only land, warfighting operations that fell dormant in Iraq as the focus of the campaign moved on to another fronts, such as the United Nations headquarters in New York. Meanwhile, air operations continued over Iraq for another 12 years and land operations took on disparate forms in the Kurdish north. Thus the Gulf campaign—for perhaps there has only been one since 1991—was not as short as it at first seemed, nor is it yet complete.

Worryingly, it may have been the appearance that victory in 1991 had indeed been rapid, decisive, technologically brilliant and cheap, at least in terms of casualties, that encouraged the initial conviction that it must indeed in some sense be over, when that was in essence far from the case. Even when it was clear that it was not, this initial interpretation seems to have encouraged the belief that a “rematch,” based in similar style on a technological mismatch, would end the matter, on conditions and in conditions defined by the coalition. It was not, however, clear whether this operation would merely topple Saddam Hussein “the rogue” or be the means of reinventing Iraq to solve greater strategic problems in the region. To some it seemed as if the two were synonymous and that the chosen military instrument was somehow one of universal application with a socket to fit all “nuts.”

The determination to fight Saddam Hussein again, with a preemptive attack on coalition terms if Saddam himself would not oblige, seemed to ensure that Saddam could not evade his fate. He would have to fight First World forces on First World terms and would not be able to hide above that threshold with his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or below it with terrorism. Once that fight had been conducted, it seemed persuasive to believe that this was indeed the end of major combat operations, for surely the regime would collapse once the “door had been kicked in” and the population “liberated.” If the intent of operations in Iraq in 2003 was merely “regime destruction,” which it was not, then the short, decisive warfighting operation of March and April 2003 might in itself have constituted success. In all other respects it might have been counterproductive, given the uncertain and destabilizing consequences for an already unstable region of merely unseating a secular Saddam Hussein, who apparently had no weapons of mass destruction. It will only have been worthwhile if subsequent operations shape the emergence of Iraq as a strong and stable nation, befitting its large and educated population and oil wealth—the outcome will not be clear for many years. “Phase 4” was all along the decisive phase, but was not recognized as such prior to the coalition’s ground operation against Iraq in spring 2003.

NATO’s intent in entering Kosovo in 1999 was “regime change” for humanitarian reasons. As a result, by 2003 very vivid, precise and recent experience was available, making clear exactly what is required when a government is replaced by force of arms—from security and currency reform to social reconstruction and the restoration of economic infrastructure. Hindsight was not required to note the nation-building task that followed “major combat operations,” for it was described in many thoughtful public analyses and by many campaign-planners themselves.

The moment troops cross the “line of departure” they create, with every pace, a rear area of complex character, requiring all forms of security, peacekeeping and nation-building, and it

entails all the legal responsibilities of an occupying power. The requirement for nation-building in Afghanistan after the demise of the Taliban had also been clear and been instructive—indeed the failure to attend to this activity after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union may have led, in large part, to the Taliban’s rise to power. While warfighting may be decisive in its own terms, it may not be so in terms of broader strategic objectives in “the war on terror,” which also seeks to address the causes of terrorism, as the United Kingdom’s “New Chapter” to its Strategic Defence Review emphasised in 2002. There seems to have been little appreciation that a long campaign in Iraq would be so “attritional”: demand so many troops, so much heavy armor and ammunition; incur such financial costs, so many casualties, at such a political price; and cause so much ill-feeling in international affairs; and yet this was understood by many.²⁸ Perhaps more worrying was the inclination to deny, even in October 2003, that the coalition faced an insurgency, for this would have challenged some of the premises of the campaign. If Iraq had been “liberated,” why would there be resistance; and if large numbers of troops were indeed required to counter some insurgency, and if Iraqi oil could not finance Iraq’s reconstruction, then the prospectus upon which the campaign was mounted might be seen to be questionable.

Ironically, while forces may have been specifically designed for rapid deployment and employment, this failure to understand how they should reconfigure and be employed was in fact a manifestation of a lack of strategic readiness and a sign of inflexibility. Forces built to achieve rapid decision had neither the means nor the orders to reach one in the novel but not unforeseen circumstances that unfolded from summer 2003. The initiative was surrendered with perhaps costly consequences, as “Clausewitzian tilt” seemed to favor an enemy, now “morphed” into an insurgent guerrilla—a morphing that had already begun before Saddam’s regime fell.

The doctrinal premise of information superiority or even dominance, of speed, fire-superiority and the avoidance of attrition had itself become a party to creating the conditions which those forces had been designed to avoid or render irrelevant. There is a need to challenge some of the fundamental tenets of our concepts and doctrine. For example, the notion that we might enjoy information superiority in the decisive operations in which we are currently engaged in Iraq, or information dominance on some future “transparent battlefield”—a term still commonly bandied about—does seem rather unreflective and self-serving. It is a grand and seductive idea that may have as much chance of success in contemporary complex operations as another such idea, *Blitzkrieg*, had on the steppes of the Soviet Union. Ironically, it would be better if our working assumption was more modestly one of our own information inferiority, and if we viewed our challenge to be to minimize that disadvantage. For example, our opponents in Iraq today undoubtedly hold information superiority over us: They are better able to identify our personnel and what they are doing than vice versa—after all, we wear especially procured distinctive dress, camouflaged military uniform. Expensive high-tech camouflage paint ensures that our vehicles are conspicuous, and these move routinely in large groups between well-identified bases, along predictable and well-observed routes. Our strategic and operational objectives and our tactical operations are probably better known to the enemy than are his to

us. Our opponents' identities, appearance, means of transport and movements are, by comparison, harder to ascertain and to understand.

Summing Up

The flawed political-military psychology of the 20th century confronts us as a cautionary tale, and evidence of recent experience is far from ambiguous. Yet what we do know is that when confronted by obvious but culturally unpalatable conclusions, many armies will seek refuge in more attractive alternatives, however dysfunctional. These usually feature the delusion that campaigns can indeed be short, decisive, high-tech and cheap; and that such campaigns require armies designed and trained to fight these, rather than the more obvious and likely, but unpalatable, alternatives. Ironically, this conviction is often the very result of armies' own extensive experience to the contrary; but that experience has been so unpleasant that military establishments have determined that they will not engage in them again—sadly, the choice has not been theirs to make, and they do relive these experiences, but now on disadvantageous terms.

And Yet: The Case for the Defense

Exhibit A: The British Empire—Campaigning Without Timelines

There have been examples in history where nations expected protracted campaigns and trained successfully to fight wars, but also to keep the peace and build nations. This may be difficult to achieve, but it was essentially the British Army's imperial mission, as both conqueror and "policeman" for hundreds of years. The tension between "continental" warfighting, expeditionary operations and "imperial/global policing" is not new, and it did create problems. In 1815, 1918 and 1945, after long continental wars, the British Army was forced by events to concentrate on imperial policing operations. The maintenance of a full warfighting capability seemed by comparison to be wasteful, and merely an unimaginative hankering to refight the last war. This imperial bias left the British Army ill-placed to fight in continental wars in 1914 and 1939, albeit the outcomes of such strategic gambles were eventually successful. By analogy, the U.S. experience in building its own continental North American empire, taking on the British, French, Spanish, Russian and native empires in the process, coincided with a reluctance to conduct full-blown military operations elsewhere. Even after the frontier had closed and the Far East had become the United States' Far West, its forces, though experienced in the Philippine insurgency, were ill-prepared for their conventional role in the First World War. The same was true of the day in December 1941 when the United States' "Monroe Doctrine" met that of Japan,²⁹ just as it met the "Monroe Doctrine" of the new Caliphate on 11 September 2001.

During the Cold War, it was necessary for the United Kingdom to mount expeditionary campaigns in the Falkland Islands and to conduct internal security duties against what was, but could not for political reasons be called, an insurgency on its "northwest frontier," Northern Ireland. This led some to suggest that the British Army really only came to terms with large-scale armored warfare in the late 1980s, as the Soviet threat was fading. Yet over centuries, despite these difficulties, the British Army managed to find a successful accommodation, albeit

one with penalties, between these two potentially contrasting demands, when simply focusing on one or the other, as some would apparently have recommended, would have been disastrous, constituting overall strategic failure.

If a deep and enduring commitment to a national strategic imperative exists, delusional thinking about short, decisive outcomes may be avoided; but the price is a willingness to train for and engage in a wide variety of campaigns that do not entail exit strategies and that are premised on nation-building and the use of force to enable it. The successful marshalling of the national will for such a grand project may be elusive in a democracy, and especially in one whose national identity and self-image are rooted in anti-imperialism.

Exhibit B: Northern Ireland

A subaltern in the British Army on his first tour of duty in Northern Ireland in 1969 might indeed have been surprised to know that, in the year he retired, 34 years later, his Army would still be conducting operational tours in the province. Yet in 1976, British military doctrine confirmed that there could be no military solution to the problem; it could merely help to set the conditions for a political solution in what had been a British possession for more than 800 years. A withdrawal from Northern Ireland like that from Kenya or Aden was highly unlikely. “Holding the ring,” limiting terrorism to an “acceptable level of violence” and waiting for the strategic scenery to change pending political progress—however long that took—was the prescribed way ahead.³⁰ There was never any expectation of a short, decisive and cheap campaign; and in difficult circumstances, the British Army has been well-structured, trained and equipped to deal with the situation.

Success in this limited sense has been dependent upon taking the long view; and of developing and maintaining high standards of training in counterinsurgency operations alongside mainstream warfighting skills. Conducting military operations and taking casualties in prolonged operations, when soldiers are offered no inspiring concept of heroic victory, requires the development of a particular self-sustaining military ethos and culture.

Exhibit C: The American Empire—Campaigning With Timelines?

Since 1945 the “American Empire” has inherited many security responsibilities in regions that seem unsurprisingly congruent with those of the old British Empire in the Levant, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and the Far East. It has carried out these responsibilities with much success, a proud awareness of its unique power and a sense that this position will be unchallenged by any peer for many decades.

The necessary paradox of the “American Empire,” given that its North American conquests had already been assimilated into a single nation state, was that it was not a territorial one, and that it occupied territory only by consent. While this consent was certainly forthcoming in many parts of the world, and the United States seemed prepared for prolonged military global engagement, it hoped that any actual combat operations would be short and decisive, won by overwhelming force, supported by superior technology.

Confidence in American power was high. Robert McNamara boasted, “We have the power to knock any society out of the Twentieth Century.”³¹ After the Cold War, the United States was in the supreme military position and had an instinct for global leadership.

The drive to inflict American leadership upon the world . . . reflects a definition of U.S. interests that is a tapestry of ideological, security and economic factors. To remove one thread would unravel the entire fabric.³²

Madeleine Albright asserted, “If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see farther into the future.”³³ In 1998, enjoying this supremacy, and before the United States had embarked on its “Global War on Terrorism,” Ralph Peters described the growing wealth of the United States in the Information Age, by which its empire would enjoy an even greater advantage over impoverished masses elsewhere. “We are not Trojans. We are mightier. We rule the skies and seas and possess the power to rule the land when we are sufficiently roused.”³⁴ He noted that this power would cause envy in those who would ultimately attack a complacent West, and those future enemies were the “perfect embodiment of all the evil potential that lies at the heart of man.” They would be let loose on the children of the West who in turn would be “sent out to fight the legions of darkness.”³⁵ . . . Man, not space, is the last frontier³⁶ Peters, often cast as the wayward radical, had anticipated the new orthodoxy of American strategic thought that was to dominate the next decade.

Even before the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. homeland, it was clear that the enemies of the United States were changing. At the end of 2000, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry H. Shelton, astutely observed,

As the diversity of threats and non-state actors increases, so too will the complexity of our military tasks. Future adversaries may try and stay below the threshold of clear aggression, further complicating appropriate response options. We can expect more failed states as people struggle for independence, for political legitimacy, economic and resource advantage, all done in climates of violence, repression and deprivation.³⁷

Others noted that this was hardly new. One Chinese analyst maintained,

All strong countries make rules, while all rising ones break them and exploit loopholes. Barbarians always rise by breaking the rules of civilized and developed countries, which is what human history is all about.³⁸

Chinese views on warfare reflect a recognition of the growing complexity of military operations.

Warfare is no longer an exclusively Imperial garden where professional soldiers alone can mingle . . . it is precisely the diversity of the means employed that has enlarged the concept of warfare . . . warfare is the process of transcending the domains of soldiers, military units and military affairs, and is increasingly becoming a matter for politicians, scientists and even bankers.³⁹

The complexity of operations in this new environment were described in 2001 by NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR), General Sir Rupert Smith, reflecting no doubt his experiences in Bosnia and involvement in operations in Kosovo:

We are conducting operations now as though we are on a stage . . . there are at least two producers . . . each with their own idea of the script, are more often than not mixed up with the stage hands, ticket collectors and ice cream vendors, while a factional audience, its attention focused on that part of the auditorium where it is noisiest, views and gains an understanding of events by peering down [their] drinking straws.⁴⁰

After the events of 11 September 2001, threats to both the United States and the American "Empire of Ideas" were treated with an appropriate "imperial" nonchalance for timelines. The speech by President George W. Bush to Congress on 20 September 2001 reflected the need to prepare his electorate for a long campaign against those who had attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. It was rich in allusions to the need to seize the "temporal initiative," in both the current and historical senses. He warned Americans that they should "not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen." He asserted that "this country will define our times, not be defined by them" in "a task that does not end"; and that they should be assured of "patient justice."⁴¹ Clearly the expectation was for a global campaign of unlimited duration, characteristic of past imperial commitments. He envisaged no walking away or possibility of isolationism. Equally, there seemed no prospect of a quick decisive "victory," which would in any case have been virtually impossible to identify.

The Global War on Terrorism was seen to be "a long haul,"⁴² yet forces were increasingly designed for short wars using highly deployable, novel technologies. While the war in Iraq from 2003 was to be regarded as an intrinsic part of the Global War on Terrorism, little was done to prepare for the sort of protracted, attritional, low-intensity operations of counterinsurgency and the nation-building that it would entail. Alternatively, it was perhaps thought that neither of these last two tasks would be required in operations in Iraq.

Such operations require: an interagency command structure harnessing all departments of government; and concepts, doctrine and equipment for guerrilla wars and nation-building, all of which are manpower-intensive. Yet, despite disappointment that operations in Iraq were proving more attritional than expected, American self-confidence seemed evident:

The America military is now the strongest the world has ever known . . . stronger than the Wehrmacht in 1940 . . . than the legions of Rome at the height of Roman power. For years to come, no other nation is likely even to try to rival American might.⁴³

This seems likely to be true. The issue, however, is whether a clear understanding of the nature of the tasks given the American military, preparation in the ways to execute them, and the means to prevail at optimal cost were provided to match the strategic endstate—if that itself was ever articulated. The issue is also a matter of how power is measured: in terms of the cost of inputs and explosive calories that can be delivered, or in terms of what effects any absolute measure of power is able to achieve in a complex strategic environment. Maybe the

“military currency” has been devalued in this respect, and high-denomination “bills” may not buy the attractive items the “consumer” imagines should be within his “budget.”

After September 2001, comparisons between the American Empire and Britain’s long-defunct one seemed increasingly valid, and these were analyzed in a flood of literature by historians such as Niall Ferguson.⁴⁴ However, the issue remained whether the United States would adopt the long perspective necessary for empires to prevail, if that perspective would entail occupying territory without consent. Max Boot maintained that when it came to protecting U.S. imperial interests and fighting enemies all over the world, “There is no finer example of how to do this cheaply and effectively than the British Empire.”⁴⁵ It is unclear, however, whether the United States, along with whatever coalition/”posse” it can muster, does identify its operations in this way or wishes to configure its forces accordingly. No doubt this will shortly be reviewed.

The pathology of campaigning over the past hundred years is that armies are prone to structure to fight the sort of campaigns they would like to fight, whether these prove apt for the campaigns that they have to fight—often they have not. This is a caution to us to do better. If a nation’s forces are designed to win only short and decisive wars, there is a grave danger that succumbing to this centennial delusion will gravely disable their ability to conduct those phases of a campaign that can also be decisive and that are likely to be primarily about nation-building, counterinsurgency and peacekeeping, which have always been the imperial lot.

The Verdict: Matching Ends, Ways and Means in a Complex Environment

The Dimensions of Battlespace

Some Western nations aspire to change regimes and promote human rights and other Western values, if necessary by force of arms. A. T. Mahan would no doubt have approved; especially as this moral and legal validation is now seen by some to extend to the right of nations to intervene unilaterally, and even sometimes preemptively, in support of this higher good.⁴⁶ The West’s new “civilizing mission,” sometimes endorsed by the United Nations, sets the rights of individuals above those of the governments of sovereign states who may be denying them their rights.⁴⁷

Such military intervention has created unusual ideological companions as the old polarities of the Cold War prove inappropriate to the new dynamic. In caricature: the old left who detest the assumption that “West is Best” denounce military intervention, seeing it as incorrigible, serial misbehavior by those who cannot let go of old imperial habits. They are joined in their policy conclusions by members of the old right, of isolationist or nationalist instincts, who believe it is not worth the bones of their grenadiers or the gold of their treasuries to save those who are incapable of ruling themselves, people who will at heart resent any help they are given.

In opposition to this odd couple are the new interventionists. They also come from the old left but are now transformed into “Fabian Imperialists.” David Livingstone took to Africa “Christianity and Civilization,” both of which have become somewhat “politically incorrect”

ideas, followed by the soldier and the “Union Jack.” These fundamentally Judeo-Christian notions have been “repackaged” for a new age and “rebranded” as Human Rights, supported by the word of international law (if not the word of scripture) and enforced by blue helmets (not pith helmets), under the UN (not national) flag. These interventionists know that “up-river in the heart of darkness” unspeakable things are being done, and that it is their moral duty to put a stop to it, by force if necessary—for their militaries are “a force for good.” Their allies come from the old imperial right, “Kipling’s Men,” who are not surprised that other folk make a mess of their own affairs, and believe that it falls to them to sort out the resultant horrors, confident in their comparative advantage, built up from centuries of global military experience.

Whatever the mission and its motives, campaign planners find that the environment for their plans is changing rapidly. Many of the most immediate threats to Western interests are no longer perceived to be confined to specific regions of the world. Globalization is as much a factor in military campaign planning as it is in cultural and economic life; consequently, the three physical dimensions of battlespace are, in a sense, expanding and space is an ever more important domain in prosecuting terrestrial operations.

As the three physical dimensions of battlespace expand, the fourth dimension—time—has contracted. The speed and intensity of media coverage, combined with a sensitized, alert, yet inconstant domestic and international opinion, have “compressed” time, making it more valuable. Strategic decisionmakers now have less time to act and achieve a desired outcome than they might have had in the past. The longer a conflict lasts the greater is the scope for objectives to change, along with the popular perceptions of the conflict that sustain its continuation.⁴⁸

Modern Western forces have largely been designed to be “one-shot weapons.” Equipment is often sophisticated in order to avoid the need for masses of it, and to make it more rapidly deployable. The great arsenals of the Industrial Age no longer exist, and the great “smoke-stack” industries which could be converted to wartime industrial production are no longer geared to such eventualities—production lines for bullets and track are few. Most armies today have ammunition stocks and other equipment for a decisive campaign as short as that envisaged in 1914, perhaps at one month of high intensity. They do not carry stocks for years of attritional consumption, for either combat or nation-building operations. It doesn’t take long to fire a “one-shot weapon” and so operations must be short—or so the reasoning goes. Equally, believing that operations will thereby be short, justifies the economy of maintaining a “light logistic tail.”

Time is relative, has value, can be billed, saved, budgeted for, won and consumed, but it is a non-renewable resource. The great commanders always appreciated the importance of time in their calculations. The draining passage of time has, in a sense, become the “barren steppe” of space that faced Napoleon and Hitler; and should be seen as a form of attrition. Seizing and holding the initiative is to time as seizing and holding vital ground is to maneuver. “Pegging” out the boundaries of this battlespace and turning the attrition of time on an opponent is an accomplishment of strategic command and operational art—but a daunting task.

Yet paradoxically, while the need to deploy more capable forces at short notice has increased, so too has the requirement to maintain them in the field over longer periods. Holding the initiative is not the same as guaranteeing that operations will be short in absolute terms. Speed of decision, deployment, employment, decisive effect and exploitation are required, but so are the abilities to endure and prevail in longer operations where the balance of advantage has already been bought by that rapid action and successes. These types of operation may have very different characteristics. The logistic demands of nation-building and counterinsurgency make demands that are attritional in their own way, but seldom factored into military procurement plans.

Those who would challenge the West may also find refuge and advantage in the dimension of time. The key for them will be to find means to avoid or prevent Western forces deploying in the first place, or to ensure that they do and expend their energies and political capital inappropriately. Adversaries will withdraw into their hinterland of time, as they try to suck their enemy into a protracted conflict of lower intensity, even seeking to win merely by avoiding defeat, while Western will dissolves as costs mount.

There is also a Fifth Dimension, Cyberspace, and at some future date there might be some new “Port Arthur/Pearl Harbor” of the Information Age, perhaps a digital *Blitzkrieg*—a cyber “torpedo attack” into the “hard drive” of the “USS *America*.”

There may be these five dimensions to warfare, but ultimately war is a human endeavour and it is not easily contained by simple formulae. It is as much about perceptions as concepts and technology, and today’s five dimensions of warfare are viewed through the distorting lens of the media; and global and domestic opinion is shaped by shifting views on ethics in different cultures, and by changing legislation and evolving opinions on domestic and international law. When operations are prolonged, it is especially important to shape these perceptions. Fuel and ammunition were the basic items of logistic constraint on fire and maneuver in “Industrial-Age Warfare,” and the supply of bandwidth is perhaps for now the constraint on networked operations in the “Information Age.” By analogy, civil power supply is perhaps the vital logistic consideration in nation-building, not least because of the perceptions it shapes and the constraints those perceptions can impose. Equally, legality and legitimacy may play the equivalent role of armor plate in promoting force protection.

An opponent may disperse and employ sophisticated techniques of camouflage and deception to reduce rapid effects. The inferior combatant is unlikely to challenge superior firepower directly, but will protect himself against a superior force by denying it a target, or turning it against itself through the generation of hostile or at least negative perceptions engendered by “propaganda of the deed.”⁴⁹ An ostensibly weaker opponent perhaps needs to suffer conspicuously at the hands of the stronger, while a more powerful one may not be able to endure such suffering and consequent humiliation for reasons of “face.” For the insurgent, time, numbers, casualties, perceptions, legal constraints and political pressures may be his allies, and these constitute forms of “virtual maneuver” to avoid superior firepower.

Criteria for Success

The criteria for success in this complex battlespace must be headed by an awareness of the strategic environment, an understanding of the desired endstate and its clear articulation. This is likely to require much greater interagency and departmental cooperation than previously accomplished. Many of those who castigated the armed forces for their lack of determination to engage more fully in joint activity over recent decades may themselves be the hardest to corral into disciplined cohesive action to ensure that broad campaign objectives are met. Difficult issues of departmental primacy will arise, and a clash of cultures seems inevitable. For example, should national aid programs in a theater of operations be directed primarily to secure campaign success, or to achieve some more general moral imperative such as the alleviation of global poverty? Such distinctions will be very real and controversial when ordering priorities of expenditure.

Military technology focuses ever more keenly on how to achieve strategic reach, gather information and deliver precise munitions at the optimum time and place, and how to sustain the warfighter with state-of-the-art logistics. A consequence of this, for U.S. forces and their allies at least, is that warfighting casualties have become, by any historical norm, astonishingly few in number. This is money well spent. Unfortunately it has often been at the expense of manpower, which is too often regarded as a burdensome overhead, when in fact a well-trained and motivated soldier is the key to any military capability. He or she cannot be bought off-the-shelf by signing a check. Creating the capability that soldier represents takes years of sustained effort and money. Even then such a soldier is unlikely to prevail if not part of an equally competent team, employed on a plan made by a well-trained and educated staff, well-versed in an appropriate doctrine. The good news is that, compared to equipment, thinking is very cheap. This capability is likely to be found only in a military that is highly motivated, one possessing a deep culture and military ethos, at ease with and supported by its own society. Money spent on a professional corps of officers and noncommissioned officers and their education is likely to be a sound investment; but military organisms are fragile and need to be tended carefully. It is also far from clear that decisions on balance of investment adequately reflect the need to equip the soldier and civilian agencies with the means to succeed in campaigns whose endstates require success in counterinsurgency and nation-building rather than a clear-cut victory.

This is not to dismiss the importance of maintaining robust conventional forces. It is, for example, the existence of dominant U.S. conventional forces that reduces the chances of their being needed. Diminishing a conventional capability is likely to make its employment more likely as others see opportunities to challenge successfully. Forces configured specifically for, say nation-building, may be lethally ill-suited to conduct warfighting operations and to meet the threat from a future peer competitor or even a medium power. Given the training and education, any warfighting force should be able to adapt to operations of a lesser intensity. The reverse is harder to achieve, not least because equipment will prove inadequate. The key is to maintain a “balanced force” in all senses, given the wide range

of operations it will be expected to undertake. We need forces in which all troops can operate across the full spectrum of conflict, transitioning readily through a continuum of operations. Too great a bias toward one type of capability is rather like deciding to read only those set books one likes, and by neglecting the half that lack appeal, ensuring that one cannot answer half the questions when sitting the exam.

Conclusion

Military establishments and their political masters have often colluded in their self-deceptions and the fantasy of short, decisive and cheap wars. Armies have been constructed to succeed in the wars of a character which their masters would wish to fight; and not for the wars which the evidence tells them are nonetheless likely. The result has often been a particular mismatch between what is required and what is available. It is the very plausibility of the unwelcome predictions that has often caused armies and politicians vehemently to resist those conclusions.

Highly competent warfighting forces may indeed prove effective in “winning” in some phases of a campaign, but may be ill-suited to succeed in operations which are defined by various, more complex political, economic and social endstates, not merely military destruction and victory. If during the peacekeeping or nation-building phase a force finds itself warfighting, it is likely to be a measure of failure, while the reverse is true the sooner it can start to nation-build in a warfighting phase.

If there is a new “imperial mission,” which has yet to be clarified but should be, it is clear that this requires a “long view” and forces trained for all aspects of “imperial policing.” If this prospect is too daunting, culturally unacceptable or morally repugnant, then it may well be tempting to follow common historical precedent: Regret the nature of current operations, determine not to undertake them on those terms again, define the types of operations that would be preferred, design, finance and equip a force to satisfy that craving and then be surprised when that force is significantly ill-suited to what transpires to be required of it in future operations.

We are after all but actors in a long-running “human comedy.”

Endnotes

- ¹ The Australian Russell Braddon recalled his release from Japanese captivity in 1945. Passing a defeated Japanese officer, he asked in elation and spite, “This war last one hundred years?” “Ninety-six years to go,” came the reply. Russell Braddon, *The Other Hundred Years War: Japan’s Bid for Supremacy* (London: Collins, 1983), p.129.
- ² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. and Ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
- ³ Norman F. Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Cape, 1984).
- ⁴ Dominic D. P. Johnson, *Overconfidence in War* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- ⁵ Quoted in Johnson, *Overconfidence in War*, p.85.
- ⁶ Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command* (New York: Free Press, 2002).
- ⁷ His arguments were blamed by Colonel Maude for failures in the Boer War. F.N. Maude, “M. Bloch as a Prophet,” *National Review*, No.37, March 1901. The French general François de Negrier was condemned by Marshal Joffre as a member of the intellectual elite that was undermining the offensive spirit of the French Army by his pessimism in the face of defensive firepower, and for propagating “a whole series of false doctrines in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War.” Marshal Joffre, *The Memoirs of Marshal Joffre*, Vol.1 (London: Bles, 1932).
- ⁸ Quoted in Sebastian Dobson, “Introduction,” *The Russo-Japanese War, Reports from Officers Attached to the Japanese Forces in the Field (London, 1905–06)* (London: Ganesha Publishing, 2000), p.10.
- ⁹ Sir Ian Hamilton, *A Staff Officer’s Scrapbook*, Vol. II (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), Preface, p.v. Learning lessons and benefiting from them is not easy, as even that astute formulator of lessons himself was to discover at Gallipoli.
- ¹⁰ Jan Bloch, “The Wars of the Future,” September 1901, reproduced in *Jean de Bloch: Selected Articles*, Combat Studies Institute Reprint (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, July 1993), pp. 22–23. Bloch was also condemned by the likes of Russian Generals Dragomirov and Puzyrevskii, who claimed that his work was based more on “mathematical equation” than military experience. Carl van Dyke, *Russian Imperial Military Doctrine and Education, 1832–1914* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. 115.
- ¹¹ Bloch “The Wars of the Future,” p. 23.
- ¹² An analysis of the contemporary debate as to the length of a future war in Europe is offered in Hew Strachan, “Shell Shortage and the Short War Illusion,” *Proceedings of the Royal Artillery Historical Society*, Vol. 8, No. 2, March 1999, pp.40–59.
- ¹³ “Life is an accident which death atones for. . . . To the force which this moral develops must be added that intense gratification, that under all trying conditions, no matter what a man’s social condition may be, he will have no feeling of fear. It is for the man sure source of consolation, of which decadent nations have deprived themselves, because the materialism in which they wallow necessarily destroys noble sentiments by the degradation of character.” De Negrier, “The Moral of Troops,” reproduced in *JRUSI*, 1905, p. 1429. In a vision which seems less fantastic today than it probably did at the time, Colonel Maude predicted the day of the “automatic regiment” in which the commander would be the sender of “waves” and each private a “Marconi receiver,” with an esprit de corps impervious to suffering. T.H.E. Travers,

- “Technology, Tactics and Morale: Jean de Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900–1914,” *Journal of Modern History*, No. 51, June 1979, p. 283. Modern ideas about how thoughts might be transmitted between brains without wires are outlined in Carl Zimmer, “The Ultimate Remote Control,” *Newsweek*, 7–14 June 2004, p. 73. Sony’s plans for a device that can transmit data directly into the brain are described in Michael Horsnell, “Sony 3-D Cinema Directly to the Brain,” *The Times*, London, 7 April 2005, p. 15.
- ¹⁴ Brigadier General Sir Richard C. B. Haking stressed the importance of willpower and the offensive spirit to overcome man’s weak inner nature, “the little devil inside.” Brigadier General R. C. B. Haking, *Company Training* (London: Hugh Rees, 1913), p. 344.
- ¹⁵ The maneuvers of 1914 and 1918 proved more costly than the apparently attritional, static battles of 1916 and 1917. The Germans’ famous yet catastrophic maneuvers of Spring 1918, designed to break the deadlock on the Western Front, merely broke the German Army, ensuring that it would be defeated in 1918.
- ¹⁶ The term was invented after the invasion of France in May 1940 by the Nazi propaganda machine to explain retrospectively, in the most favorable light, what had happened more by “*Risiko und Wagnis*” (risk and venture) and “*Miracles on the Meuse*” than by any grand design. See also Karl-Heinz Frieser, *Blitzkrieg Legende*, Militaergeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Military History Research Institute) (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995).
- ¹⁷ See J. B. A. Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004), chapter 18.
- ¹⁸ Jurgen Förster and Evan Mawdsley, “Hitler and Stalin in Perspective: Secret Speeches on the Eve of Barbarossa,” *War in History*, 2004 11 (1), p. 68.
- ¹⁹ The distortion of the Wehrmacht’s structure prior to Summer 1941 showed a stunning misunderstanding by political masters of the type of forces required for the operations upon which they were about to embark. A cowed military was entirely complicit in that, despite its own contrary analyses of the requirement. From May to September 1940 in the Battles of France and Britain, the Luftwaffe lost 3,064 aircraft, 65 percent of its force. In September 1940, the month that Germany lost more planes than it produced, Hitler ordered that planned aircraft production be cut; that year British aircraft production outstripped Germany’s. Between July and December 1941, the Soviet Union produced 5,173 fighters and the Germans 1,619. Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower*, p. 338.
- ²⁰ The Japanese also felt that the Americans had “misread” their resolve. In their subsequent study of the Pearl Harbor operation, the Japanese characterized the American belief that Japan would back down in the crisis that led to war as an underestimation of Japanese determination and strength, similar to that of the Russians prior to the Russo-Japanese War. Donald M. Goldstein and Katherine V. Dillon, *The Pearl Harbor Papers* (Dulles, Va.: Brassey’s, 2000), p. 281.
- ²¹ Japan miscalculated the likely cost of the war. For example, the Japanese Navy estimated that Japanese losses in the first year would be 1,000,000 tons of shipping and 800,000 tons in each subsequent year. In fact, losses in the first year were 1,250,000 tons, 2,560,000 tons in the second and 3,480,000 tons in the third year, four times the estimate. Robert J.C. Butow, *Tojo and the Coming of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).
- ²² In July 1941 as Operation BARBAROSSA was launched, a 70 percent cut in planned artillery production was ordered, and between April and December 1941, funding for artillery ammunition was reduced from RM69.1 million to RM15.7 million. John Ellis, *Brute Force* (London: A. Deutsch,

- 1990), pp. 46–8. By December 1941, artillery ammunition production was falling fast. In December 1941 Germany produced 9,000 light howitzer shells but consumed 1,260,000. See Joachim Engelmann, *German Artillery in World War II, 1939–1945* (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer, 1995), p. 112.
- ²³ This was also an operational disaster of greater magnitude than Verdun, to which General Fedor von Bock compared it on 30 November 1941. Ellis, *Brute Force*, p. 72.
- ²⁴ Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), chapter 1.
- ²⁵ Henry Wallace, former Vice President but now Secretary of Agriculture, condemned Winston Churchill's "shocking" "Iron Curtain Speech" at Fulton on 5 March 1946, on the grounds that, "It was not a primary objective of the United States to save the British Empire," and that Britain was now trying to lure the United States into an anti-Soviet alliance. John E. Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail* (London: Macmillan, 1999), p. 184.
- ²⁶ A study of the relevance of Bloch's vision to the circumstances of the 1990s is given in Christopher Bellamy, "Civilian Experts and Russian Defence Thinking: The Renewed Relevance of Jan Bloch," *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute (JRUSI)*, April 1992, pp. 50–56.
- ²⁷ During NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999, battle damage assessment (BDA) was massively skewed, perhaps because of the positive interpretation placed on every possible success and the eagerness to report these to a demanding chain of command. Had KFOR made a forced entry into Yugoslavia on a plan based on the BDA briefings, it might have had an unpleasant surprise.
- ²⁸ In 1965, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Earle G. Wheeler, told Robert McNamara that winning, suppressing all insurgency and eliminating Communists from South Vietnam would take 750,000 men and up to seven years. Senior advice about the scale of resources that would likely be required in Iraq during the occupation of the country was also available before major combat operations were launched.
- ²⁹ Tasker Bliss, president of the U.S. Army War College from 1903 to 1905, cautioned of American expansion in Southeast Asia, in a paper of 1904: "There is no doubt that this will result in due time in the formulation of a second line of foreign policy; we shall then have one policy based on contact with, and another policy based on isolation from, the rest of the world. We may yet find ourselves fighting for our Monroe Doctrine on one side of the world, and fighting somebody else's Monroe Doctrine on the other side of the world. However, that time has not yet come." It came in 1941. Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), p. 21.
- ³⁰ The British Army acknowledged that there could be no "military solution" to the problems of Northern Ireland in its *The Way Ahead* of 1976.
- ³¹ Quoted in Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback* (New York: Owl Books, 2004), p. 139.
- ³² Christopher Layne and Benjamin Schwarz, "American Hegemony—Without an Enemy," *Foreign Policy*, No. 92, Fall 1993, p. 21.
- ³³ Quoted in Johnson, *Blowback*, p. 217.
- ³⁴ Ralph Peters, "Our Old New Enemies," in *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated*, Ed. Lloyd J. Matthews, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College (Carlisle, Pa.: July 1998), p. 238.

- ³⁵ Lloyd J. Matthews, Introduction, "Part II: Threats," *Challenging the United States Symmetrically and Asymmetrically: Can America be Defeated*, Ed. Lloyd J. Matthews, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College (Carlisle, Pa.: July 1998), p. 115.
- ³⁶ Peters, "Our Old New Enemies," pp. 215–16.
- ³⁷ Quoted in Daniel Gouré, *The Limits of Alliances* (Arlington, Va.: Lexington Institute, 2004), p. 25.
- ³⁸ Quoted in David Harrison and Damien McElroy, "China's Military Plots 'Dirty War' Against the West," *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, 17 October 1999.
- ³⁹ Quoted in Bill Gertz, *The China Threat* (Washington D.C.: Regnery, 2002), p. 16.
- ⁴⁰ General Sir Rupert Smith, quoted in Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army Field Manual (FM) 3-06 (FM 90-10), *Urban Operations*, June 2003, p. 2-21.
- ⁴¹ Available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.
- ⁴² U.S. Joint doctrine notes the need for perseverance, defined as, "The measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims." Joint Publication 3-07, pp.II-4 to II-5.
- Frank Hoffman has pointed out that national will and the capacity to endure and succeed in protracted campaigns are characteristics beyond persistence. Persistently misunderstanding the nature of the endeavour, and persistently applying inappropriate tactics will be counter-productive. F. G. Hoffman, "Principles for the Savage Wars of Peace," in *Rethinking the Principles of War: The Future of Warfare*, Ed. Anthony McIvor (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005).
- ⁴³ Russell P. Galeti, Jr., "Terrorism and Asymmetric Warfare," Landpower Essay No. 04-3 (Arlington, Va.: Association of the United States Army, October 2004), p. 3.
- ⁴⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2004).
- ⁴⁵ Boot noted that Britain controlled a quarter of the globe with 331,000 servicemen and spending just 2.4 percent of its GDP on defence. Max Boot, "The Struggle to Transform the Military," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2005, p. 2. He advocated the creation by the United States of a class of colonial administrators and agents similar to that of the British Empire, and the use of large numbers of indigenous auxiliaries, conducting nation-building by proxy and by stealth. Boot claimed that what "Afghanistan and other troubled lands cry out for is the sort of enlightened foreign administration once provided by self-confident Englishmen in jodhpurs and pith helmets." Bernard Porter, "We Don't Do Empire," *History Today*, Vol. 55, March 2005, p. 32.
- ⁴⁶ Mahan asserted the right of people to be governed under their own arrangements, but it should not be assumed that this meant that oppressive regimes represented the interests of those they ruled. Regimes should therefore be overthrown in the interests of their people. "There need be no tenderness in dealing with them as institutions." Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Problem of Asia* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2003), p. 104. "That rude and imperfect, but not ignoble arbiter, force . . . which . . . still secures the greatest triumphs of good" would have to be applied. Mahan, *The Problem of Asia*, p. 18. After all, "Force has been the instrument by which ideas have lifted the European world to the plane on which it now is, and it still supports our political systems, national and international, as well as our social organization." Mahan, *The Problem of Asia*, p. 115.
- ⁴⁷ In *An Agenda for Peace*, the then Secretary-General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, wrote, "The time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty has passé." Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of

the Security Council on 31 January 1992, A/47/277-S/24111, 17 June 1992. The first real expression of this new mood was seen in Operation SAFE HAVEN in 1991 to protect the Kurds in Northern Iraq. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in his Ditchley Park 35th Foundation Lecture, at Ditchley Park in the UK in June 1998, said, “The [UN] Charter protects the sovereignty of peoples. It was never meant as a licence for governments to trample on human rights and human dignity. The fact that a conflict is ‘internal’ does not give parties any right to disregard the most basic rules of human conduct.” This seemed to set the scene for future “Mahanian intervention,” albeit on an international mandate. In 1999, at the UN General Assembly, Annan called on States to accept the necessity for intervention wherever civilians are threatened by war and mass slaughter. He invoked the principle of “rights beyond borders” and called for unity to ensure that massive and systematic violations of human rights—wherever they occur—should not be allowed to stand. He accepted that intervention should always be the last resort—but not to act when confronted with crimes against humanity was to be complicit in them.

⁴⁸ In some operations of very low intensity, such as that of the United Nations Force in Cyprus, it has proved possible to sustain missions for decades. Whether this has prevented a settlement or laid the foundations for a lasting one in due course is debateable.

⁴⁹ In terms of the British Army’s Northern Ireland experiences, this is crystallized in three notorious episodes: “The Falls Road Search” (3–5 July 1970), “Internment” (9 August 1971) and “Bloody Sunday” (30 January 1972). The British Army reacted to an attack upon it by the Provisional IRA by searching for firearms in the Falls Road area of Belfast. Overnight a generally welcoming Roman Catholic community became antagonistic to it and remained so for decades, providing the PIRA with a “sea” in which to swim. It is generally accepted that this was probably the purpose of the PIRA in staging the original attack. The pressing advice in 1971 that the internment of suspects in special camps, without trial and outside the normal legal process, was essential to save lives and to gather intelligence on terrorists in the short term proved a legal and public-relations disaster, not least for Britain in the United States. Internment was ended in 1976 when these true costs became apparent. Whatever the outcome of official and legal enquiries into the events of “Bloody Sunday” in Londonderry in 1972, the consequence was a public-relations disaster domestically and internationally for the British government and the Army, which appeared to have used excessive force against civilians. That perception persists. A positive outcome of these three and other episodes has been the shaping of British military culture to understand such phenomena and be conscious of them when operating in, for example, Iraq.