THE DIMENSIONS OF MILITARY STRATEGY

by

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Strategy is a word derived from the Greek *strategos*, the art of the general. It gained great currency in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the days of prolific writers and practitioners of the martial art. In modern times it has become a general term denoting almost any sort of concept for accomplishing a task or mission. There is business strategy and legal strategy, medical strategy and educational strategy. The very breadth of application of the term reinforces the already substantial inherent inhibitants to a common understanding of its meaning. There are so many views on the matter that it seems considerably simpler to suggest a definition which will suffice for purposes of this discussion than to debate the merits of explanations offered by others.

Certainly strategy is conceptual in nature and is related to the achievement of objectives through contemplated actions which entail some degree of risk. Inherent is an element of force, or threat of force. Normally, one's strategy is designed to bring about circumstances favorable to the author and unfavorable to the opponent. Occasionally, when the contest appears to be cast in a framework other than that of a zero-sum game, a neutral outcome for either side may be acceptable.

Inasmuch as it is conceptual, it differs from tactics, which involve the specific plans and actions required to activate a concept. However, the borderline between the two is far from clear. It is often useful to think in terms of an overlap between tactics and strategy, with certain higher elements of tactics assuming a degree of preeminence over lesser aspects of strategy.

To focus more closely on military strategy, we may also recognize a higher order of study called national (or grand) strategy. This encompasses all of the intellectual effort devoted by a state to its domestic and foreign affairs for the preservation of its own existence. This effort amounts to a perpetual quest which each political element of the world society must pursue for its identity, security, independence, and prosperity. As with tactics, national strategy overlaps with

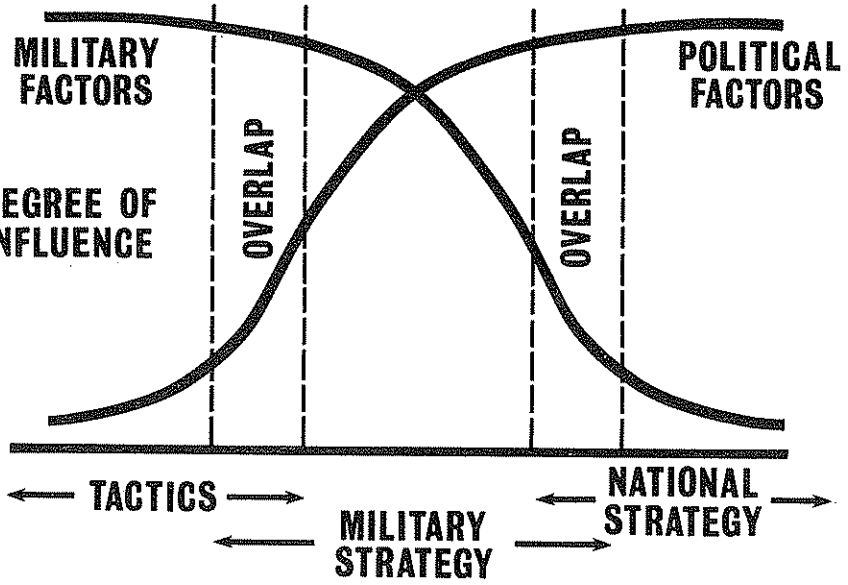

Figure 1

military strategy, from which, in turn, it draws support. To the extent that military strategy is the art of generals, national strategy is the art of statesmen.

The existence of overlaps between tactics and military strategy and between military and national strategy suggests that there are no clear limits to the concerns of either the political or the military leadership. Rather, there are reciprocal levels of concern between the two. While the statesman is involved to a great extent in national strategy, his concern for military tactics, at least within a democracy in peacetime, is nominal. With the soldier, the interest is reversed. Military factors are preeminent in tactics and of lesser importance in the development of national strategy. This suggests that the crossover point lies somewhere in between, in the realm of military strategy. The notion may be depicted graphically as in figure 1.

It is important to note that both curves approach zero concern asymptotically. Never are either the political or the military factors completely inconsequential anywhere on the scale. Political and military leaders are inseparable partners in the service of the state and are highly interdependent.

It should also be noted that both sets of factors retain high levels of importance across the area of military strategy. This may be verified empirically by a glance at the situation in the NATO Alliance. The scheme for defense in the central sector, for example, calls for a forward defense. While the military wisdom of that choice may be questioned, the political value is unassailable. Certainly, both the military and the political factors weigh heavily in such decisions. It is only when questions arise relating primarily to tactics, on the one hand, or to national level strategy, on the other, that either military or political factors fade by comparison.

There is some disagreement whether strategy is both an art and a science. That it is an art there is no doubt. One writer skirts the issue this way:

> I do not claim that strategy is or can be a 'science' in the sense of the physical sciences. It can and should be an intellectual discipline of the highest order, and the strategist should prepare himself to manage ideas with precision and clarity and imagination in order that his manipulation of physical realities, the tools of war, may rise above the pedestrian plane of mediocrity. Thus, while strategy itself may not be a science, strategic judgment can be scientific to the extent that it is orderly, rational, objective, inclusive, discriminatory, and perceptive.[1]

We may conclude from this what we please. In doing so, however, we should not overlook the essence of the argument. Whatever the

nature of the discipline, whether or not it has structure and laws, it lends itself to analysis in a scientific way. It is fundamental to the thesis of this paper that strategic analysis may be undertaken using a number of different approaches, and that each approach selected will provide useful and insightful intelligence, but seldom will a single approach furnish suffficient information for high confidence in whatever conclusions may be drawn.

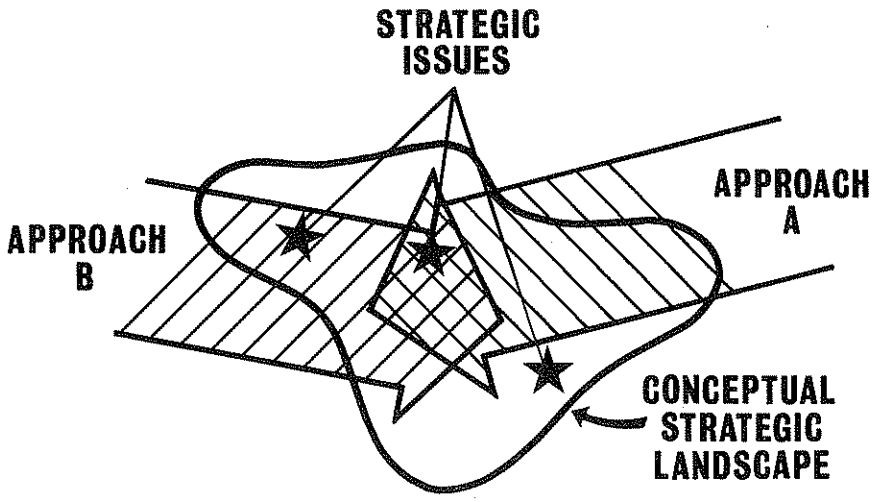

Figure 2

A second fundamental of the thesis is that while the various approaches are overlapping and ill-defined, they provide frameworks for describing the almost limitless aspects of the subject and for assembling information for decision. While important strategic issues may be relevant to more than one approach, each approach will illuminate different aspects of the issues, necessitating resort to several approaches in any in-depth analysis. This relationship of issues within the conceptual strategic landscape to various analytical approaches is illustrated in figure 2.

Five basic approaches can be identified which offer varying perspectives to strategic problems and which may serve, in turn, as a center of analytical focus. For convenience we will call these:

- The Classical (or Historic) Approach.
- The Spatial Approach.
- The Power Potential Approach.
- The Technological Approach.
- The Ideological/Cultural Approach.

None of these is sufficient in itself to provide the basis for complete exploration and analysis. The field of military strategy is so broad and so complex that it is necessary to shift one's focus of attention successively from one approach to another in order to cover all issues on the landscape. In the following discussion, we will examine in rough outline the entirety of the subject without replowing the well-tilled fields which constitute its subcomponents, and which are familiar to professional military men the world over. We will endeavor to describe in gross terms the boundaries of each approach and to identify the principal theories, and some of the theorists, associated with each. It should be understood at the outset that, just as the approaches are overlapping, so are the works of various writers. While particular writers may be associated primarily with one approach or another, the association of writer to approach is seldom one-to-one. Practitioners, of course, must of necessity consider all approaches in their analyses, either consciously or unconsciously.

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

The classical (or historical) approach to the study or analysis of strategy is fundamental to military operations at all levels. This approach provides the basic language of organizational maneuver and of relationships between opposing forces in the field. On the one hand, it introduces such terms as "envelopment" and "breakthrough," while on the other, it deals with static concepts, such as "interior

lines" and "cordon defense." The focus is upon deployed forces and upon the exercise of command over their arrangement and movement to maximize their chances of success in combat when committed. At the tactical level, such arrangements and movements are conducted in the presence of the enemy; at the strategic level, they are planned and executed in contemplation of future enemy contact. In terms suggested by Count Karl von Clausewitz, a leading classicist, this approach provides the "grammar" of war (but not the logic).

A second major contribution of the classical approach is the identification of strategic principles, or axioms, which provide a modicum of objective underpinning for the exercise of the art of force employment. Often these guides are referred to as the principles of war. A formal set of such principles made an initial appearance in the appendix of Clausewitz' collected works, *On War*. Later writers and governmental agencies have modified and elaborated on the original list. The United States Army presently recognizes some ten such principles in its official military literature.

The classical approach to strategic theory has a well-developed pantheon of honored philosophers.

Sun Tzu is probably the classicist of greatest esteem in the pre-Christian era. Whether or not his thirteen chapters of numbered verse were the work of one man or of several is the subject of some controversy, but there is little dispute that the totality is a remarkable compendium of observations and guides to planning and conduct of successful warfare which the modern commander cannot ignore. Writing about the year 500 B.C., he identified five fundamental factors affecting military estimates: moral influence, weather, terrain, command, and doctrine.[2] He also provided unequivocal advice relating to various conditions of the enemy forces, which carries a familiar ring to readers of twentieth century revolutionary literature:

> All warfare is based on deception.... When [the enemy] concentrates, prepare against him; where he is strong, avoid him... keep him under strain and wear him down.... When he is united, divide him.... Attack when he is unprepared; sally out when he does not expect you.... These are the strategist's keys to victory....[3]

Sun argued that war is a vital process to the survival of the state and must be studied with diligence. He identified the need for, and argued acceptance of, a concept of three basic elements of an army: a reconnaissance element; a fixing, or engaging force (the *cheng*); and a maneuvering force (the *chi*). Success, he contended, depends upon foreknowledge derived through spies—rather than through consideration of analogous situations or through spiritual readings of omens—and upon the artful coordination of the *cheng* and the *chi*. He suggested the formation of "the general's staff" to include weather forecasters, mapmakers, commissary officers, and engineers for tunnelling and mining operations. He also identified the need for expert advisors in river crossings, flooding, and smoke and fire operations.[4]

Napoleon Bonaparte provided the greatest grist for the mill of classical analysis. While his written contribution was modest, his genius was the model for Clausewitz and

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Antoine-Henri Jomini, who have emerged as giants of the classical school. One admirer argued that Napoleon's letters "are actually treatises, which might find a place in any theoretical work on strategy,"[5] while another contends that Napoleon "was not an intellectual pioneer in the purest sense. His forte was to develop existing theories and apply them with perfection . . . he left no written record of his concepts and philosophies, save 115 maxims, which are military clichés."[6] Whatever the facts of that debate, classical strategic literature probably owes more to Napoleon's thinking and actions than to any other man in history.

Clausewitz concentrated his analysis on the nature of war itself. He argued that armed conflict is an act of both social development and of political expression. While he recognized the peculiar nature of organized violence, he denied it as an anomaly, arguing that it represented a continuation of foreign policy by different means. He also contended that victory in battle was the first rule of war. Once joined, combat should issue complete destruction of the opposing forces.[7] In this sense, he may have been uncomfortable with Sun Tzu's preference for avoidance of decision by battle, if possible, and for provision of routes of escape for cornered opposing foes.

Jomini's focus was different and yet complementary. He sought to devise a system for victory on the battlefield. One writer has described his work as providing "for the study of war something akin to that which Adam Smith did for the study of economics," and has insisted that "Jomini's systematic attempt to get at the principles of warfare entitles him to share with Clausewitz the position of co-founder of modern military thought."[8]

Jomini focused on the theater of war and the campaign, and, unlike Clausewitz, who urged destruction of the opposing force, he urged occupation of the enemy's homeland. The task of strategy he saw as that of establishing lines of operation to bring military and geographic factors into harmony. From this basis he derived his famous concept of the strength of interior lines.[9]

Other writers and practitioners merit mention in any survey of the Classical Approach. Notable was Niccolo Machiavelli, with his *Art of War* in 1520. Like Clausewitz, he identified a close relationship between the civil and military spheres. Frederick the Great was another; he developed the notion of a professional army and used it in successive campaigns, first against one foe and then against another. Jomini may have had some of Frederick's operations in the Seven Years' War in mind as he laid out his arguments for use of interior lines.

There were also the ancients, the great captains of Carthage, Rome, and Greece. Writing two thousand years after the event, Field Marshal Count Alfred von Schlieffen cited the victory of Hannibal over the Romans at Cannae as a model of the strategy of annihilation. Half a century later, General Bedell Smith would comment that Eisenhower and other graduates of US Army schools "were imbued with the idea of this type of wide, bold maneuver for decisive results."[10]

Genghis Khan, and his general Sabutai, are not to be overlooked. Their great campaigns across the Eurasian landmass showed remarkable preplanning and grasp of strategic principle.

In later years, commanders such as Lee and Grant, Jackson and Sherman, contributed their records. World War I brought such extremes as the nimble guerrilla operations of Lawrence of Arabia, on the one hand, and the static trench warfare of the Western Front, on the other. Hans Delbrück introduced the theory of *ermattungsstrategie*, the strategy of exhaustion. In World War II, the German blitzkrieg, urged unsuccessfully upon the western democracies earlier by B. H. Liddell Hart, fired the imagination of the world. But it is primarily to Sun Tzu and the writers of the Napoleonic period that we must look for the original descriptions of classical strategic thought. Subsequent practitioners and chroniclers have enriched the pages of military history, but few have contributed much that cannot be found in some form in the works of Sun, Clausewitz, and Jomini.

THE SPATIAL APPROACH

With due recognition of his contributions to the classical approach, Jomini must also be recognized as an early theorist of the spatial school. His concepts of lines and positional relationships bore close similarity to ideas prevalent on the continent after the death of Frederick the Great. Certainly, in its earliest applications the spatial approach appeared as a logical offshoot of the classical school. It was concerned with geographical questions within the theater of operations, the familiar domain of the classicists. It was from modest beginnings in this restricted realm that the spatial approach evolved over time to its modern focus upon questions of military bases, spheres of influence, transit and overflight rights, and the extension (or denial) of military power and influence on a regional or global basis.

After Frederick, the mainstream of military thought in Europe had turned toward concepts considered more "scientific" and "mathematical." The eighteenth century was the era of enlightenment, and it was natural that the martial art should share in the new liberalism. War was to be less of a bloody test by battle and more of an intellectual contest between opposing commanders, each vying for superior positions, lines, and angles. Theorists of the day placed heavy reliance upon the value of topographical advantage and geometrical precision. While the distances involved were not great, geography, cartography, geometry, and mathematics crept to the fore as the principal determinants of military success. Ideally, the new school suggested, superior positions and deployments could achieve victories without the onerous act of battle.[11]

The Marquis de Vauban, an engineer, came to symbolize much of the new thinking. Like Sun, he deplored the frontal assault, but on quite a different basis. Rather than reliance on ruse and maneuver, he favored slow, methodical digging and construction of field works to adapt the features of the terrain to the mission of fortress reduction. Similarly, he emphasized fortress design which would maximize the value of position and facilitate concentration of fire on avenues of attack. Battles were regarded as incidental and undesirable. The game was one of intellectual challenge to the commander to maximize his advantages over the enemy through geometry. The display by an opponent of an obviously superior seige technique was deemed sufficient to justify a fortress commander seeking terms of surrender without further struggle. Like a chess player, the genteel commandant was expected to recognize a losing situation and to retire honorably. Years later, Lazare Carnot, the French Minister of War, would comment that "what was taught in the military schools was no longer the art of defending strong places, but that of surrendering them honorably, after certain conventional formalities."[12]

It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that the spatial approach achieved its modern stature. From a purely local or regional context, it expanded to global proportions. Writing between 1890 and 1911, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan suggested that it was not the theater of conflict that was so important as it was the great ocean spaces which connected nations with one another and with key geographic points around the world. He drew heavily upon Jomini, effectively applying his "lines" to the ocean environment. England he saw in a particularly powerful position with base "sentries" overlooking every other nation: Heligoland over Germany; Jersey and Guernsey over France; Nova Scotia and Bermuda over North America; Jamaica over Central America; and Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands over the Mediterranean countries. Further, he perceived England as controlling all important strategic posts on the routes to India and having overwhelming naval power, such that it could only be matched by a coalition of all other seafaring states. In sum, he argued that England effectively dominated world trade, world resources, and the prosperity of mankind through her control of the ocean spatial environment.[13]

While Admiral Mahan was spelling out his concepts of seapower and the importance of global strategic position, Sir Halford

MacKinder introduced his landmark thesis regarding the fundamental imperatives of geopolitics and their impact on the power of nations. He described the great landmasses in novel terms, suggesting that the Eurasian continent and Africa constitute a "world island," and that the island is dominated by a "heartland" composed of the great grasslands of Russia, inaccessible by sea. The rest of the world he cast as either part of an inner or marginal crescent (primarily Europe, India, and China), or part of an outer, or insular, crescent (North and South America, southern Africa, and Australia). The relationship of the "heartland" to the rest of the world he summarized in the triplet:

> Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland.
> Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island.
> Who rules the World Island commands the World.[14]

Although somewhat less clearly a writer and thinker with a purely spatial approach to strategy, the air-minded Italian, General Giulio Douhet, made a most valuable contribution to the spatial literature in his *Command of the Air* in 1921. Distressed with the static carnage of World War I, Douhet sought to compress the limiting factors of time and space and to reach out to the enemy's homeland in a third dimension. The concept of strategic bombing, so prominent in World War II, owed its intellectual underpinnings to Douhet, as did the concept of the development by the United States of air bases ringing the USSR and China in the 1950's. Some extremist adherents to his teachings advocated abolition of ground and sea forces altogether, believing air forces capable of achieving decision before other types of forces could bring their weight to bear on the issue.[15] (To the extent that Douhet's thesis was dependent on flight technology, he may also be considered as a contributor to the technological approach, discussed below.)

A recent adaptation of the spatial approach has been made by a former State Department Director of Intelligence and Research in his assessment of strategic options available to the United States. Mr. Ray Cline has suggested that:

> The United States should protect the security of its people and society by maintaining an alliance system which will prevent a hostile totalitarian nation or combination of such nations from establishing political or military control over central Eurasia *plus* any substantial parts of European peripheral rimlands.[16]

The thrust of Mr. Cline's argument centers around "politectonic" imperatives, which he describes as the "formation and breakup of power groupings, mainly regional in makeup, that determine the real balance of influence and force in today's international affairs."[17]

In sum, the spatial approach focuses upon factors of strategy related to geographical position; to the shape and size of landmasses and bodies of water; and to the utility of air and seaspace for transit or defensive, denial, or offensive actions. Such concepts as natural spheres of influence of major powers and the formulation of tailored regional politico-military policies are compatible with this approach. There is a broad interface with technological limitations of range and payload factors of weapons systems and transport vehicles, but more importantly, there is emphasis upon the utility of bases and of choke points on transit routes. There is also some concern with the utilization of broader spatial reaches for weapons platform survivability (as with ballistic missile submarine operations). However, the fundamental and overriding consideration in modern times is the matter of spatial control of the three environments—air, sea, and land—particularly in a global context.

THE POWER POTENTIAL APPROACH

Perhaps the most widely used approach to strategic analysis is the comparison of the military forces and mobilizable power of potential adversaries. In narrow analyses, and

in those restricted in time, the focus is usually upon forces in being, by type, and to some extent by location. Commonly, comparisons have been made of such measurables as the sizes of ground forces, numbers of capital ships in commission, and numbers of first-line combat aircraft. Somewhat more sophisticated comparisons include data regarding equipment capabilities, troop morale and motivation, martial tradition, levels of training, logistical support, operational doctrine, organization, and quality of leadership. Whatever the factors included, however, the emphasis is upon numerical and qualitative comparison of forces and upon the potential of the adversaries for fielding reinforcements over relevant periods of time (the latter often expressed in numbers of days following a mobilization order).

In a broader context, the power potential approach may incorporate a number of factors of national strength which can influence the military strategy of a state, either directly or indirectly. These factors are drawn from the nature of the state itself: its political and economic makeup, its psycho-sociological fiber, and its capacity for dealing with issues in a sophisticated international milieu. Obviously, an abundance of raw materials and a modern industrial plant are of utmost importance in a period of prolonged tension or hostilities. Political coherence is important to provide reliable underpinnings for development and support of policy decisions. Psycho-social strength insures a commonality of effort through shared values and perceptions, and the quality of manpower which may be mobilized to meet emergencies. Differences in technological development are similarly important. An optimum military strategy will be designed with due consideration for all of these disparate aspects of total strength.

Examples of exploitation of the power potential approach to strategy abound in history, both in the narrower framework of force comparison and in the broader context of national power. Clausewitz would characterize battle itself as the manifestation of an aim to improve the military balance through the destruction of the enemy force. Jomini might characterize it as an effort to get at the base of the opponent's strength in his homeland. Hans Delbrück, who focused upon the erosive aspects of warfare, suggested that the latter technique was part of the total effort of exhaustion of the opponent, and should be accomplished by blockade, destruction of commerce and crops, and, ultimately, the seizure of the opponent's territory. Napoleon's Continental System was an effort to undermine England's power, as was the German U-Boat warfare in World Wars I and II.

In more recent times, the comparison of US and Soviet forces has been a major preoccupation of strategic analysts the world over. A lively debate has arisen over the equity and wisdom of the SALT I accords and over the balance of forces in such critical areas as central Europe, and the Mediterranean and Indian Oceans. In the former case, the determination of balance has tended to center on numbers and quality of strategic nuclear weapons launchers and delivery vehicles, while in the latter instance, numbers of troops and tanks and numbers of ships and ship-days spent in the area are prominent dimensions.[18] However counted, such comparisons must be treated with skepticism and reserve. Napoleon insisted that the moral aspects of military power were superior to the physical in a ratio of ten to one. Analysts using this approach must guard against any temptation to compare identifiable factors and to ignore those of more subtle nature. The result of such oversight can be badly misleading.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACH

The technological approach to strategy is related to the technological element of national power potential, but differs in a number of important respects. While the *approach* is dynamic, the *element* is static. The *approach* is oriented toward strategic application of technology, while the *element* pertains to the broader matter of the character of the society itself. The *approach* deals with the ever-recurring question of the

adaptation of strategy, organization, and doctrine to technological change, and with the mangement of research and development to meet the needs of evolving strategic problems. The power *element* compares the relative strength and potential of competing technological bases, usually as part of an overall comparison of national power and capabilities.

This approach to strategic analysis tends to assume that superior technology on the part of one belligerent may be a critical determinant in the outcome of a conflict. Hannibal's use of elephants, the introduction of the mounted knight, the crossbow, and the machine gun are all cited as instances of technological advances which determined the course of history. As the author has written elsewhere, this approach tends to reflect a belief in the revolutionary nature of the flow of military technology. It emphasizes the magnitude of the changes brought about by the introduction of new devices on the battlefield. While it recognizes countervailing efforts by the opposition to reduce the effects of new machines through modifications of tactics and weaponry, and acknowledges that some equilibrium may result, the technological approach suggests that such equilibrium is invariably achieved at a higher—or on quite a different—plane than that upon which it rested before.

Warfare of the Middle Ages was different by orders of magnitude from warfare in the nineteenth century. The same may be said for the differences between the American Civil War and World War II. Technology leads to irreversible changes in the scope of conflict, and the pace of change is accelerating. Aviation came of age militarily in the First World War; sixty years later, space is a routine environment for military purposes, limited only by international accord. Weapons revolutions have become routine and are really held in check only by limitations of the imagination of those who contemplate their meaning.

This approach argues that revolutionary weapons technology needs more innovative application that is normally exercised in cases of simple hardware redesign. Rather than replacing old weapons for new, it pleads for a reassessment of the whole concept of weapons application. While eight ranks to a phalanx may have been a suitable organization for the lancement of Philip of Macedonia, the adoption of modern individual automatic weapons involves something more than one-for-one substitution. Organization, tactics, command, and communications should all be reassessed when a major new system is introduced. The side which can maximize the effects of the new technology first is likely to be the better prepared for the next conflict.[19]

The validity of this approach is most readily recognized in the case of the nuclear weapon. The device is so revolutionary that one prominent writer, André Beaufre, suggests that there are not battles in nuclear strategy, only technological races. The success of the strategy of one contestant over another depends not upon his ability to defeat the other, but upon his ability to render the other's weapons obsolete through technological innovation. Actual battle would be ruinous to both sides.[20] Technology is the focus; other factors are subordinate.

THE IDEOLOGICAL/CULTURAL APPROACH

The fifth of the basic approaches to the study and analysis of strategic matters relates to the ideological and cultural values of the society involved. The underlying thesis of this approach suggests that a state with a particular political or ethical disposition will tend to identify with other states of similar disposition, and that they will generally pursue their security interests using predictable means and in culturally compatible patterns. It holds that democratic countries, for instance, will have less difficulty in understanding the processes and interests of other democratic countries than will totalitarian countries, and that this facility will be manifested in the types of security arrangements which they seek and the nature of the alliances and force posturing they pursue. (Spain's difficulty in developing security ties with other western European

countries is a case in point.) Further, the thesis suggests that the state's ideological and cultural identity will serve as a strong determinant of the strategic options which may be considered for the maintenance of its security.

For illustration, one may consider the broad compatibility of the interests of the United States, Great Britain, and France in the twentieth century and the comparative ambiguities of the relationships of those powers with their sometime ally, Russia. Similarly, one might consider the relative ease with which Nazi Germany was able to coordinate operations with its Fascist partner, Italy, on the one hand, while suffering frustrating rejections of its strategic proposals by democratic Finland, on the other.

This approach accepts certain proclivities, such as Arab interest in Panarabism, Marxist interest in international class struggle, and Western interest in liberalism, as fundamental determinants of national and military strategy. It accepts developments such as the manifestation of republican spirit in the institution of the *levée en masse* in the Napoleonic armies as a natural impact of ideology on military structure, and (indirectly) upon strategy. Similarly, it regards Western tactical and strategic doctrine emphasizing the minimization of casualties and protection of property as unsurprising adjuncts of Western philosophy. While a China may be able to resort to human sea tactics, or a Japan to kamikaze attacks, a Belgium or an England cannot. When the French Army was subjected to prolonged bloodletting in World War I, it almost collapsed in rebellion. Disciplined, totalitarian Germany suffered no such problem with recalcitrant troops. The ideological and cultural factors were fundamentally different on the two sides. As one writer has pointed out, Germany was in the grips of social Darwinism with its doctrine of racial superiority over the Slav and Latin races, and this philosophy tended to shape its strategy and to drive it along the path of conquest.[21]

In a similar vein, the ideological approach emphasizes the effects which Marxist ideology has upon the thinking of Communist strategists. Marixism creates a clear expectation of the collapse of "imperialist" states from within. War may occur as such states lash out in their dying stages in a hopeless attempt to regain their former power; therefore, the maintenance of powerful armed forces by the members of the "socialist camp" is only prudent, but overt aggression is seldom necessary. In Lenin's words, "The class struggle in almost every country of Europe and America is entering the phase of civil war."[22] What need is there under these circumstances, the ideologue may ask, to risk serious losses at the hands of a decaying West if the internal contradictions of the capitalist states will eventually cause their collapse anyway? Better to exercise restraint in one's military strategy and to allow time for the rot to set in. Historical determinism drives the strategy toward a peculiar conservatism and avoidance of direct confrontation.

The effect of western culture upon the United States is different. Here one is led to believe that man has a high degree of influence over his destiny. The work ethic and the frontier spirit press for one to seize one's opportunities to make of his future what he will. There is nothing magic about the march of history. Americans tend to believe that "the Lord helps those who help themselves." "Don't put off 'til tomorrow . . . ." translates in strategic matters to a search for quick solutions and decisive action, clearly the point Bedell Smith was making about US Army doctrine. Coupled with the natural bent of a high-technology society, this gives impetus to such devices as reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence of aggression by others.

Other aspects of American culture make it unseaworthy in prolonged conflicts where the goals and stakes are obscure. The Korean and, more particularly, the Vietnam experiences have illustrated the limitations of ambitious military strategies for this country.

Other examples abound, but one must be careful to avoid misleading stereotypes. National characteristics and ideologies change. So do perceptions of motivation and national "will." While the Jews of Europe in the 1940's may have been unable to defend

themselves, the Jews of Israel have shown remarkable coalescence and military skill. In recent years, questions have arisen regarding the ability of the United States to execute bold initiatives, considering political, ethical, and legal encumbrances which have evolved in American society in the last decade. Nevertheless, strategic analysts cannot overlook the ideological/cultural approach in their search for understanding of the dynamics at work in this area.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES OF THE MAJOR POWERS

At this point, we may attempt to identify the most prominent approaches to military strategy currently pursued by the major powers. While not clear in every case, the choice is instructive in that it focuses attention upon the diversity of the principal strategic frameworks which tend to shape the players' approach to problems and provides an additional dimension of analysis over and above the customary examination of specific issues and interests in problem areas.

United States: The geographic insularity of the United States lends it a unique set of security considerations and requirements. It is primarily concerned with threats to its interests at great distances from the homeland. As a result, it has a fundamental orientation toward the maintenance of geographical reach to the continent of Europe, on the one hand, and to the western shores of the Pacific, on the other. Further, it is deeply concerned with the maintenance of regional security arrangements and of basing and transit rights on a global scale. In this sense, the *spatial approach* to strategy appears dominant in American thinking. However, the *technological approach* may be a close second in the American intellectual process, and may, at times, be overriding.

USSR: The Soviet Union is faced with potential foes at both ends of the Eurasian landmass. While historical, cultural, and ideological factors all impact upon its addressal of security issues, another one seems even more prominent. Whatever the rationale may be—and we do not really know what it is in so tightly closed a society—numbers and mass appear dominant. For some time, it has been apparent that the Soviet Union seeks the means for accomplishing its security objectives through the maintenance of overwhelming force in all dimensions. Most notable since World War II has been the size and capabilities of the Soviet Army in comparison to its potential adversaries; more recently, the growth of Soviet strategic weapons systems and of the Soviet Navy have earned special attention. We may conclude that the *power potential approach* has special relevance to the Soviet situation.

Communist China: The PRC is a massive country with rather more modest capabilities for producing or maintaining modern military forces. Instead, it appears to rely as it has for centuries upon its resilience and ability to absorb invaders for its security. The impact of its current ideology upon its military strategy is compatible with its tradition and culture. Mao's concepts of people's war are superbly suited for China. The primacy of pursuit of the *ideological/cultural approach* to military strategy in this case is quite clear.

West Germany: Situated at the forefront of the European NATO countries, West Germany provides a rough model of the region for this discussion. Western ideological and cultural values play a strong part in the fundamental orientation of the country and in the development of its military security policy. More cogent, however, would seem to be its concern with traditional security threats, not altogether different from those which German leaders have perceived across their borders since the turn of the last century. Germany is central to the potential main theater of operations in an East-West conflict. The suggestion is strong that Germany is driven along a strategic approach which generally matches that of the *classical/historical* pattern described above. To a lesser extent, the same may be true for France and Great Britain as well, since their divestiture of most of their former colonies and of their global concerns.

PERSPECTIVE

In conclusion, our delineation of the broad dimensions of military strategy has indeed revealed that there are no precise units of measure; that such as there are yield varying constructs in the hands of varying practitioners; and that this variety and flexibility should forewarn us against attempts to formulate some magic theoretical template for universal application to strategic analysis. The positive value of our investigation, however, remains as stated at the outset: the dimensions thus revealed can serve us well as a framework or vantage point from which to gain the strategic perspective so necessary for sound national decisionmaking. To paraphrase Archimedes, it gives us a place to stand as we attempt to view the world.

NOTES

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