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Protection, Command and Control,
Reconnaissance and Effects -
Key Capabilities for Success in Military Operations

*by Lieutenant General Hans-Otto Budde
Chief of Staff, German Army*

Understanding why the “Inferior Defeats the Superior”

by COL Ong Yu Lin

War As an Instrument of Politics

by COL(NS) Goh Teck Seng

Leadership Development in the SAF:
Planting the Seeds for Our Future

by LTC Adrian Chan



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Please address all contributions and correspondence to:



Editor, *POINTER*
Military Studies Branch
Centre for Learning and Military Education, SAFTI MI
500 Upper Jurong Road, Singapore 638364

or fax 6799-7758. You can also contact the Editor at tel no. 6799-7752/7755.

Our website is <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer> and our email contact is <pointer@starnet.gov.sg>

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

FEATURES

- 5 **Protection, Command and Control, Reconnaissance and Effects – Key Capabilities for Success in Military Operations**
*by Lieutenant General Hans-Otto Budde,
Chief of Staff, German Army*
- 14 **Understanding why the “Inferior Defeats the Superior”**
by COL Ong Yu Lin
- 26 **War As an Instrument of Politics**
by COL(NS) Goh Teck Seng
- 33 **Leadership Development in the SAF:
Planting the Seeds for Our Future**
by LTC Adrian Chan
- 45 **The IDF and the Second Lebanon War**
by CPT(NS) Samuel Chan
- 57 **Rethinking Political Supremacy in War:
A Review Essay of Clausewitz and Huntington**
by Mr Evan A. Laksmana

CONTENTS...cont'd

BOOK REVIEW

- 67 **Sources of Power:
How People Make Decisions**
by Mr Toh Ee Loong

FEATURED AUTHOR

- 71 **Paul Krugman**

PERSONALITY PROFILE

- 75 **World War I – Against the Odds**
Kapitän zur See Max Looff

EDITORIAL

The *POINTER* Journal aims to contribute to the continuing education of SAF officers on both professional and security issues by judiciously selecting a diverse range of articles in each issue of the journal. Much care and consideration is put into planning the line-up of a *POINTER* issue, to ensure a good mix of articles covering the themes of: warfighting and transformation; leadership and organisational development; and conflict and security studies. In this issue, we are proud to once again present six feature articles covering these three critical themes.

We are extremely honoured to have Lieutenant General Hans-Otto Budde, Chief of Staff, German Army, as the author of the lead article. LG Budde's article entitled "*Protection, Command and Control, Reconnaissance and Effects – Key Capabilities for Success in Military Operations*", discusses how the transformation of the German Army enables her to better tackle present and future challenges and threats. The article emphasises the four capabilities, as shown in the title, which have been and continue to be the decisive factors of military success for the German Army.

In the last century, there have been several wars in which militarily weaker forces triumphed over militarily superior opponents. These wars amuse strategists and stand out as classic examples of warfighting in military history. In our

second article, "*Understanding why the Inferior Defeats the Superior*", COL Ong Yu Lin studies these significant events and puts forward his explanation for the defeat of superior forces by inferior ones. Using diagrams to improve the understanding of this asymmetric kind of war, he charts out the path of each force and the various possible outcomes for each action. In determining success or failure, the correct strategy stands out as the critical criterion.

In Book VIII of Clausewitz's *magnum opus, von Krieg (On War)*, Clausewitz expounded on a specific dimension of war; namely the political character of war and the relationship between strategy and politics. The next article by COL(NS) Goh Teck Seng, "*War As an Instrument of Politics*", takes an in-depth discussion of this centuries-old idea and assesses its relevance and implications today, while drawing reference to war in theory and war in practice. Given the new socio-economic context present in our world, will Clausewitz's treatise continue to hold true today?

Leadership development in the SAF can be compared to gardening. In order to become an effective developer of leaders, one has to adapt a training pedagogy acronym from OCS, TALAG (Train and Act Like A Gardener). These are just some of the ideas discussed in our next article by LTC Adrian Chan, "*Leadership Development in the SAF: Planting the Seeds for Our Future*".

Tackling the issue of how leaders can develop leaders, the article first draws the line between an effective leader and an effective developer of leaders. It then gives a brief overview on the history of leadership development in the SAF before examining upcoming leadership development capabilities for the SAF.

Between July and August 2006, Israel and Hizbollah fought a war on the Israel-Lebanon border. The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) launched an aerial bombardment and a ground incursion but failed to accomplish its objectives of eradicating Hizbollah and extracting the two kidnapped Israeli soldiers. CPT(NS) Samuel Chan sheds light on this conflict after providing the background to the two warring forces in “*The IDF and the Second Lebanon War*”. The Israeli incursion into Lebanon was precariously planned and executed, and turned for the worse within the 34 days of fighting. The cause for this turn of events, as explained by CPT(NS) Chan, lies deeper within the IDF and stems primarily from a trichotomy of crisis in the organisation.

The last feature article is entitled: “*Rethinking Political Supremacy in War: A Review Essay of Clausewitz and Huntington*” by Mr Evan Laksmana. It has been noted that Huntington’s concept of civil-military relations was heavily influenced by Clausewitz’s work on political supremacy in war. Laksmana reviews Clausewitz’s work, compares the careers and lives of the two writers and looks into the possibility of Huntington misinterpreting Clausewitz’s work. Through his analysis and details, Laksmana concludes the article with his own view on the theory of civil-military relations.

In our Personality Profile section, we conclude our four-part special series under the theme, “*Against the Odds*”. *POINTER* will be examining the achievements of World War One hero, *Kapitän zur See* Max Looff.

We hope you will enjoy this issue. Happy Reading!

Covering Editor, *POINTER*

Protection, Command and Control, Reconnaissance and Effects - Key Capabilities for Success in Military Operations

*by Lieutenant General Hans-Otto Budde
Chief of Staff, German Army*

Introduction

Until two decades ago, the question as to what constitutes success in military operations was relatively easy to answer: victory in a war fought by regular forces, winning a largely “symmetrical” armed conflict. For us, security was equated with deterrence and a defence capability aimed at maintaining the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Germany. This was the principle towards which the structures, equipment and training of the German Army were consistently oriented. The paradigm shift in security policy after the end of the Cold War changed that equation in an incredible and unforeseeable way. Today, the German Army is an “Army on operations” with the capabilities to conduct full-spectrum operations – at all times and on a worldwide scale.

Future Challenges

For many countries, including Germany, symmetric threats have progressively been replaced in recent years by new risks and threats: from international terrorism, religiously motivated extremism, the break-up of entire regions combined with the privatisation of force, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems to the danger

of covert nuclear armament. Latest threats, such as attacks on information systems, which can very quickly make themselves felt on a worldwide scale pose a hitherto unknown type of threat. Going hand in hand with this is a progressive trend towards the privatisation of warfare that has taken place over the past two decades.

While inter-state conflicts and wars cannot be ruled out in the future, the crucial development is that the state is slowly but surely losing its monopoly on the use of force.

The Defence Policy Guidelines, the Bundeswehr Concept and the Federal Government’s White Paper on Germany’s security and defence policy all respond to these challenges to our security in the 21st century. Thus, the central task of the armed forces continues to be national and collective defence in the classical sense, but for the foreseeable future, the most likely tasks will be operations in the context of international conflict prevention and crisis management, including the fight against terrorism.

This necessitates the German Army to have the capabilities to conduct military operations across the entire spectrum of

peace enforcement and peacekeeping in support of nation-building through to humanitarian assistance. For 15 years now the German Army has borne the main responsibility for operations in the context of the German contribution to international crisis management. Approximately 3,000 Army personnel are presently deployed over three continents on operations for peace, security and stability. In addition to this, the German Army regularly contributes land forces to the NATO Response Force and some 50% of the necessary troops for the European Rapid Reaction Force.

Suitable Forces and Capabilities for Each Task

In today's crisis and conflict regions throughout the world, a successful outcome of operations has two dimensions for the German Army: relatively short and intensive peace enforcement, and long-term nation-building. It is essential to prevail and win in both of them. To this end, the basic organisation of the German Army already provides for forces with specific capability profiles. They are augmented with personnel from the Specialised Operations Division and the Airmobile Division, depending on the specific mission.

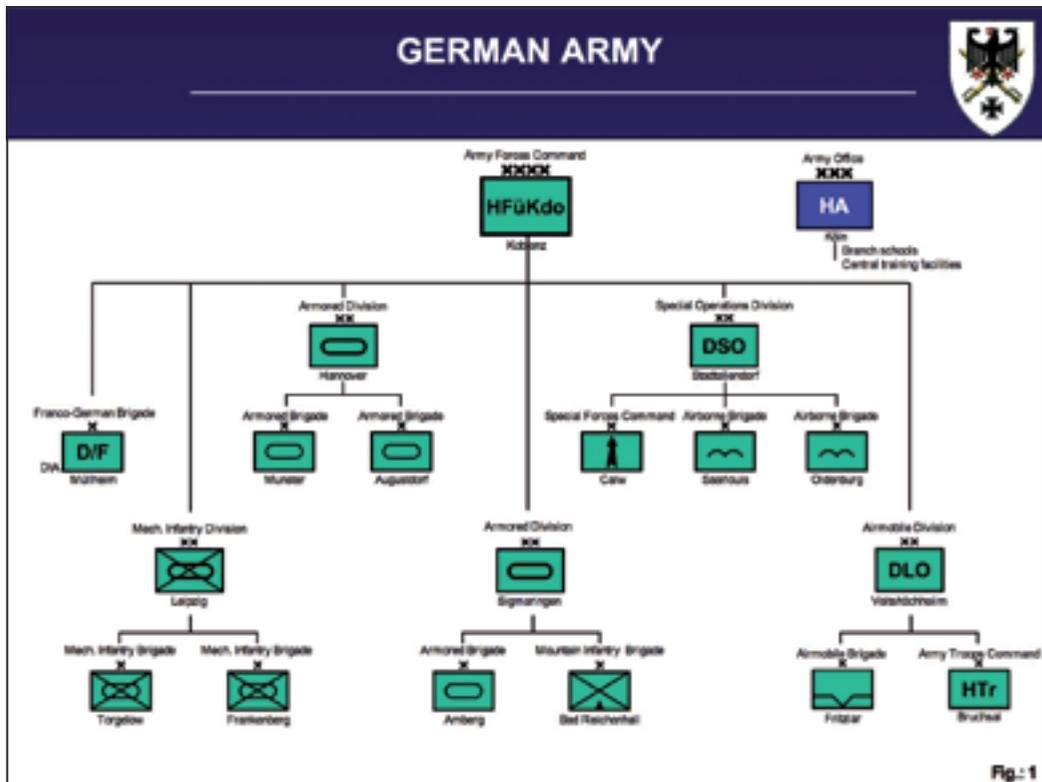


Figure 1. Organisational Diagram of the German Army

This “single set of forces”, on the one hand, consists of forces particularly suitable for conducting major combat operations in the context of multinational peace enforcement and under largely network-enabled conditions against a more or less militarily organised adversary. Moreover, they are capable of performing rescue and evacuation as well as stabilisation operations. They are the first choice when it comes to establishing a safe and secure environment. The German Army additionally has forces available for deployment in multinational operations of longer duration, usually in the low to medium-intensity spectrum of peace stabilisation operations. The German Army currently contributes this category of forces to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Northern Afghanistan.

Stabilisation operations may well be of a high intensity at the tactical

level and include elements of classic combat, as clearly illustrated by the situation in Afghanistan. That is why the forces whose structures are geared more towards peace stabilisation are also proficient in their soldiering skills as warfighters. These companies and battalions are no “lightweights” when it comes to fighting a war. At brigade level, their basic organisation does, however, provide specific capabilities for stabilisation operations (such as engineer, signal, logistics and reconnaissance units).

All Army soldiers must be capable of enforcing the mandate they have been given, even in the face of resistance, in other words be capable of fighting. But that is not all. All soldiers in the German Army must additionally be able to protect people and property entrusted to their care, to act as mediators between conflicting parties and to provide assistance in emergencies.



Figure 2. Requirements to be met by Army personnel

Ultimately, the challenge in any operation is to achieve effect, be it at the strategic, operational or tactical level, with one's own assets or in the sense of an "effects-based operations" approach. This is the goal that all efforts must be aimed at: diplomatic, information, military as well as economic means. It is primarily four capabilities, i.e. efficient active and reactive protection, superior command and control, precision intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and quick and precision effects that have been and continue to be the decisive factors of military success in the companies and battalions of the German Army.

Success through Efficient Protection

Efficient force protection is an important prerequisite for mission accomplishment, because a wounded soldier can no longer fight, protect,

mediate and provide assistance. Force protection in the German Army is an integral system of active and reactive components, comprising equipment, weaponry and mission-oriented training, as well as operational doctrine and procedures. Force protection is also of vital importance to retain the capacity for political action. Optimum force protection is the foundation on which the armed forces of post-heroic societies will counter the threats to our security. It also underscores a society's will and willingness to support its soldiers in fulfilling their dangerous tasks in the best possible way.

The German Army is concentrating its efforts in the field of force protection on four areas. Firstly: High-quality personal protection systems. These include the Future Infantryman system which is proving its worth in Afghanistan, and – for all non-infantry personnel – the Soldier on Operations



Figure 3. Chart on Protection

system. Secondly: Protection of camps and facilities. A defence system against ballistic threats is one of the means under development for this purpose. Thirdly: Vehicle protection. To perform command and control, reconnaissance, combat, support and transportation tasks on operations, various types of vehicle platforms are needed with different levels of protection. No single type of vehicle can meet all these varied requirements. However, the new BOXER multi-role armoured vehicle offers an unprecedented level of protection for a wheeled vehicle. Its impressive mobility and high loading capacity make it the ideal basic vehicle for infantry use and underscore its suitability as a transport and medical vehicle. As a command post vehicle equipped with the new command and control information system, the BOXER is interoperable with other NATO partners.

Force protection in the German Army also includes the consistent use of modern technologies and capabilities, such as robotic systems. In the long run, they can be employed to do the so-called “3-d” jobs, namely the dirty, dull and dangerous ones; they are thus the ideal systems to free up military personnel for more sophisticated tasks. Robotics thus offers major potential for the future in all capability categories.

Success through Superior Command and Control

Successful accomplishment of operations means, both at operational and tactical level, being faster, more accurate, having greater stand-off capabilities and being more target-effective than an adversary, dictating the course of action and taking or retaining the initiative. It requires knowing faster, understanding faster and implementing



Figure 4. Command and Control

analysed information faster in one's own conduct of operations. A decisive prerequisite for this, in the age of information technology, is the digital linking of sensors, information systems and effectors. In the context of network-enabled operations, the integrated system of command and control, reconnaissance and effect will provide situational awareness of a new quality and topicality at all levels of command. The relation between the factors of time and information thus becomes a decisive element.

In the conduct of operations, gaining an edge in time always means increased freedom of action, improved protection and a chance to take the initiative. This will ultimately result in effects superiority. The new, NATO-interoperable command and control information system, a top priority project of the German Army, constitutes the first step towards implementing network-enabled operations as an essential capability of military operations in the 21st century. With it, we have succeeded in creating an integrated information network that combines the capabilities of all levels of command, all service branches and weapon systems in one network. Network-enabled operations, however, should not be confined to technical aspects. It will always be a commander's leadership skills, rather than his digital vantage point, that are crucial to his success. The military commander, not the network or the technology, remains the focal point. Technology will continue to be an enabler, albeit a powerful one. It is all the more important to prevent possible side effects

of increasing "technicalisation" such as micromanagement or information overflow. Findings on how network-enabled operations affect command and control procedures, chains of command and operational doctrine must therefore be obtained prior to the introduction of complex systems. This is currently being studied in the German Army in a series of experiments at company and task force level, because this is where, even today, success or failure is decided.

Success through Precision Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)

In addition to protection and command and control capability, precision ISR is another vital factor for the success of military operations. Only with an accurate picture of the situation of friendly and enemy forces, and real-time information fed into the command and control process can timely, precise and thus successful effects be brought to bear on an adversary. This is nothing new either; it was already dealt with over 2,500 years ago by Sun Tzu, the Chinese philosopher and general, in his book on the art of war.

The German Army has therefore combined airborne reconnaissance assets (ALADIN, LUNA, KZO) and ground-based reconnaissance systems (FENNEK) as well as field intelligence forces under unified command in its new army reconnaissance branch. Certain components such as the LUNA and ALADIN UAVs or the FENNEK armoured reconnaissance vehicles have



Figure 5. Army Reconnaissance Corps

already proven a success in operations. The synergetic pooling of the individual reconnaissance assets into an efficient integrated system at company and battalion level will decisively improve our capabilities for delivering quick and precision effects and consequently, enhance force protection.

Success through Quick and Precision Effects

The ability to deliver effects, also in terms of assured robustness, is indispensable in operations; on the one hand when it is required by the situation or the mission, and on the other for reasons of self-defence. It is ultimately irrelevant by whom or by what means

these effects are delivered – be it fire support provided by the Army’s own artillery and mortars, by the Air Force or by naval gunfire, or even by non-lethal effectors. Stand-off engagement capability, precision effects and the prevention of collateral damage take top priority.

That is why our efforts focus on creating a system of different effectors which meets these requirements. With the LEOPARD 2 A6, the German Army has one of the world’s best main battle tanks at its disposal that, with additional mine protection or the new multi-purpose ammunition, can be successfully employed for stabilisation operations. Proof of this



Figure 6. Selected Weapon Systems

has been provided by the German LEOPARD 2 A6 M (mine protection) main battle tanks lent to Canada, which have been a great success in Southern Afghanistan. Another milestone in German defence planning is the new PUMA air-transportable armoured infantry fighting vehicle. Offering modular protection, it meets the highest robustness, mobility and protection requirements. Here again, it goes without saying that the vehicle is interoperable, thanks to implementation of the NATO-compatible command and control system. Effective engagement capability is also provided by the TIGER multi-role support helicopter with the PARS 3 Long Range anti-tank missile system as its main armament. This main armament system enables the TIGER to achieve its full effectiveness

in all types of operations when engaging high-value targets or on convoy protection. With the TIGER and the NH 90 light transport helicopter that were first fielded in December 2006, the German Army will succeed in taking a pioneering and innovative leap in quality as well as a decisive step towards air mechanisation. In the field of combat support, the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) for the Medium-range Artillery Rocket System (MARS) will bring about a marked improvement in terms of precision and stand-off capability. The first systems are scheduled to enter service from 2009 onwards. Another item on the procurement list is a weapon system offering the capability for stand-off engagement of single and pinpoint targets while largely avoiding

collateral damage; this is to be seen in combination with unmanned airborne reconnaissance systems (such as the KZO target acquisition drone).

Conclusion

The deployment of German armed forces is never an end in itself. The four capabilities of protection, command and control, reconnaissance and effects are now, and will continue to be, the specific military contribution to networked security. Every soldier must first and foremost be able to fight, as well as protect people and property entrusted to his or her care, to

act as a mediator between conflicting parties and to provide assistance in emergencies.

It is both an ambition and an obligation to give our servicemen and women optimum protection and effective means to accomplish the mission assigned during operations, and that includes consistent use of all available assets and technologies in the fields of command and control and reconnaissance. That is why, in the German Army, the well-balanced and comprehensive build-up of these capabilities is at the centre of all efforts. 



LG Hans-Otto Budde was born in Kirchohsen in 1948 in the Federal Republic of Germany. Budde enlisted in the Bundeswehr in 1966 soon after completing his general school education. In the Bundeswehr, Budde embarked on what would be a very distinguished career spanning over 40 years. Among his key appointments in the Bundeswehr, Budde was appointed Chief of Staff of the 5th Armoured Division in 1990 before moving to Mulheim where he became the Commander of the German/French brigade. In 1997, Budde was made Commander of the Multinational Brigade Centre in Sarajevo. Upon returning to Germany, Budde assumed the role of Commander of Bundeswehr Special Operations in Regensburg before moving to become Chief of Staff of the German Army in Mar 2004. LG Budde is married and has a son and a daughter.

Understanding why the “Inferior Defeats the Superior”

by COL Ong Yu Lin



Introduction

The realist world favours the big and powerful actors, and the small and weak actors are deemed to be irrelevant objects in international relations.¹ The principle of international relation theory² is that being big and powerful implies the ability to exert its influence and achieving its interest at will especially over smaller and weaker actors. If power implies victory in a conflict, then weak actors should never win against stronger opponents, especially if the gap in relative power is very large,³ but yet in history there are many examples where weak actors defeated stronger actors. Some of these famous examples where powerful states were defeated by less powerful and smaller state and non-state actors were conflicts between the US and Vietnam, the USSR and Afghanistan, the US and the Somalia Warlords, and Israel and

the Hizbollah. There are even more examples at the campaign levels where a numerically inferior force was able to defeat a numerically superior force. These include the Japanese invasion of Malaya between the British allied forces and the Japanese military, the Battle of Great Britain between the German Luftwaffe and the Royal Air Force, and the Battle of Midway between the Japanese Imperial Navy and the depleted US Navy.⁴

The concept of “using the inferior to overcome the superior” has its roots in ancient Chinese military history which emphasises stealth, deception and indirect approaches. It is an integral part of the Chinese culture to present oneself as weak and humble before seeking to exploit opportunities and demonstrating strength. This deceptive and stealthy

approach is designed to lower the opponent's defences. In contrast, the Western approach seeks to project strengths as a way to gain advantages and opportunities with the intent to frighten one's opponent to yield. In more recent history, the experiences of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Revolutionary War, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the War of Liberation⁵ have reinforced the belief that the inferior can overcome the superior⁶ by relying on superior military art and strategy rather than power to achieve victory.

This article examines the nature of being superior and the sources of power for state and non-state actors. Strategy involves the creative employment of these power attributes as means to achieve political objectives. Political objectives are derived from national interests⁷, and national interest is the most important factor shaping strategy as it is both the start and destination of strategy.⁸ As the inferior actor is operating from a relatively disadvantageous position, the inferior actor cannot defeat the superior actor from the onset of the conflict in a decisive engagement. Through a series of clever application of strategy, the inferior actor moves from a position of inferiority to parity to superiority. The article examines how the shifting of this balance in favour of the inferior actor occurs and in doing so, understands dynamics of the inferior defeating the superior, and why superior strategy rather than power can produce favourable outcomes. As the outcome of a conflict

is the result of the interaction of the opponents' strategies, the article will also determine the type of strategies to be used for the inferior actor to move from inferiority to parity, and finally to superiority.

The Nature of Being “Superior” or “Inferior”

Conflict is a contest of wills as well as a contest of relative strength to achieve victory and political outcomes. In such a contest, the belligerents can be classified as superior or inferior relative to the other. The terms “superior” and “inferior” better describe the relative nature of power than the terms of “weak” or “strong”. Yet, the nature of being superior or inferior is never absolute as the superiority that one enjoys depends on the relative strengths and advantages one can bring to bear at a particular point of time and place, and/or the ability to conceal relative weaknesses and disadvantages from his opponents. Whilst one may be relatively superior as a whole, there can be pockets of relative weaknesses and inferiority. Therefore, in superiority one can find inferiority and in inferiority there is superiority. If the inferior actor wants some chance of success in a conflict with a superior opponent, he has to identify the superior actor's weaknesses and use his pockets of superiority to strike at the superior actor's pockets of relative inferiority while avoiding his strengths.⁹ Finding ways to strike at an adversary's weaknesses, bypassing his main strengths and thus avoiding a head-to-head confrontation is the focus of every strategist¹⁰, as it promises an early capitulation of the adversary.

State Actor	Non-State Actor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior and well-developed power infrastructures (political, economic, social, etc.) that are efficient and effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive and resilient organisational structure of a known or unknown nature. Power is usually centred on individuals – its leader and his lieutenants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful military with high readiness levels. This is the state’s strength and ability to fight and win a war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed faction that offers protection, conducts limited offensive, or coerces local populace support and is the nucleus of a military force.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly developed economy including technologically advanced industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superior financial resources or numerous and reliable sources of funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed population in terms of quantity and quality (culture, and science and technology). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy mass but interspersed support. Ability to recruit a large number of “loyal” members through persuasion, inspiration or intimidation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantageous natural geography including geographic position, size and shape of territory, natural resources, national capital’s location, frontiers and national boundaries, relative distance between states, and grand strategic space (maritime, atmospheric, and outer space).¹¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to move or manipulate information to exploit the media, and to influence the masses and win their hearts and minds. A well-developed information and intelligence network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable international and domestic mass opinion and support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high moral ground arising from a true or perceived just cause that resonates with the masses.

Table 1. Power Attributes of State and Non-State Actors

Being superior is to attain relative superiority and local superiority. Relative superiority implies possessing a relative advantage in terms of elements of power while local superiority implies focusing these elements of power at a particular time and space to create a relatively favourable situation. The sources of strengths for a superior state actor come from the elements of national power while that of the non-state actor come from power attributes of similar nature but with several key differences summarised in Table 1. A superior state and non-state actor usually possesses all or a combination of these power attributes.

Shifting the Balance – Inferior Defeating Superior

Understanding why the “inferior defeats the superior” is to gain insights of how and why these inferior actors defeat superior actors, and how a superior actor can retain the initiative and prevent the shifting of the balance in favour of the inferior actor. Understanding the concept is also to understand a deeply rooted Chinese strategic military mindset, and how this thinking is shaping the conceptualisation of PLA future military thinking, concepts and doctrines of a rising power. The concept is clearly evident in the PLA seminal book, “The

Science of Campaigns” which theorises how China can and must find ways to defeat superior adversaries by timing attacks well, concentrating firepower on key enemy targets and destroying enemy morale and political will. The concept also provides a useful frame to understand PLA emerging force structure as it seeks to build up pockets of superiority. Conceptually, writings on PLA Joint Operations also demonstrate how joint operations are viewed as one of the means of overcoming overall qualitative inferiority by exploiting synergies and individual Services advantages to create local qualitative parity, if not superiority, against a generally technologically superior opponent.



Source: www.sino-defense-forum.com

PLA soldiers at training

The Process of “Inferior Defeating the Superior”

The heart of the concept of “the inferior defeating the superior” is the clever application of a series of strategy that gradually shifts the balance of

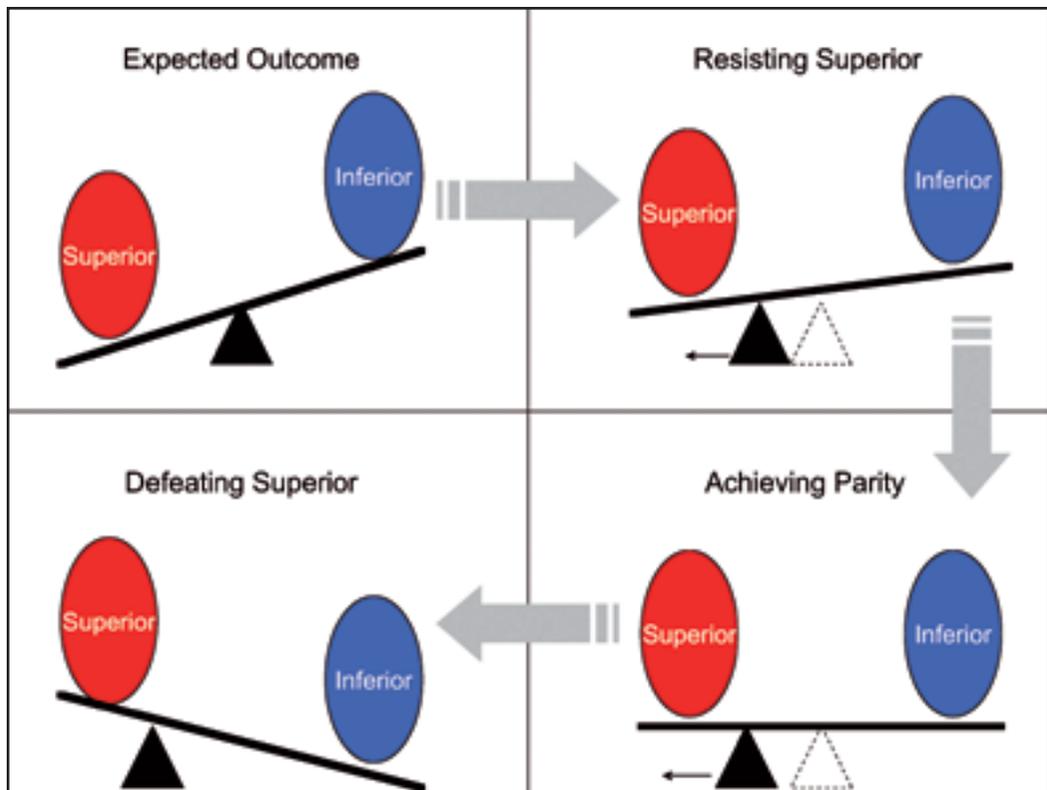


Figure 1. The Process of Inferior Defeating the Superior

factors in favour of the inferior (See Figure 1). The inferior actor moves from a position of inferiority to parity to superiority¹², by **resisting** the superior, achieving **parity** with the superior and finally, **defeating** the superior. The inferior actor can revert to a previous phase or remain in a particular phase for a protracted period of time if it is unable to achieve its intentions to transit to the next phase.

- **Start State** (Sequence 1). All other things being equal, the expected outcome of a conflict involving a superior actor against an inferior actor is that the superior actor would be victorious.
- **Resisting the Superior** (Sequence 2). In this phase, the inferior actor would resist the superior through limited offensive to erode the latter's strengths. The inferior actor's intent is not to decisively engage the superior, in order to preserve and consolidate its forces. The inferior actor would also attempt to jostle for or improve its positional/geographical advantage from which it could negotiate and, if necessary, fight. This process of erosion-preservation-consolidation in the resistance phase continues till a state of parity is achieved.
- **Parity with the Superior** (Sequence 3). This is the tipping point of the process which would determine victory or defeat for the inferior actor. Paradoxically, achieving parity with the superior actor also makes the inferior actor more vulnerable as his power infrastructure need to

become more developed to sustain the momentum of the military actions and preparations to transit to the offensive. These power infrastructures become more difficult to conceal and become possible targets when detected by the superior actor. Even though parity has been achieved, the inferior actor would continue to strengthen itself but conceal its growing strength; and at the same time stealthily improve its positional or geographical advantage.

- **Defeating the Superior** (Sequence 4). The inferior actor is now ready to go on the offensive but instead of a direct confrontation, he would create opportunities to lure the superior actor into disadvantageous positions where the superior actor's strengths cannot be brought to bear and then defeat the superior actor at a place and time of the inferior actor's choosing. The inferior actor could also entice the superior actor into unwittingly adopting a strategy that will lead to defeat.¹³ Preparedness is critical in this phase in order to generate local superiority to defeat the superior actor by surprise.¹⁴

The Dynamics of Shifting the Balance

Shifting the balance of advantages in favour of the inferior actor is the essence behind the strategy of "inferior defeating the superior". This occurs through the interactions of one's own strategy with environmental factors as well as the adversary's strategy. These environment factors include what Sunzi



Sunzi

referred to as the five factors and seven elements¹⁵ that determine victory or defeat: moral influence, weather, terrain, generalship, and doctrine and law.¹⁶ When Sunzi's five factors are reframed in a modern context, one can easily associate them to: just cause (which translates to mean a moral high ground, mass support and favourable opinion), weather, battlespace (land, air, sea, space, electromagnetic and cyberspace environment), leadership, and doctrine and concepts.¹⁷

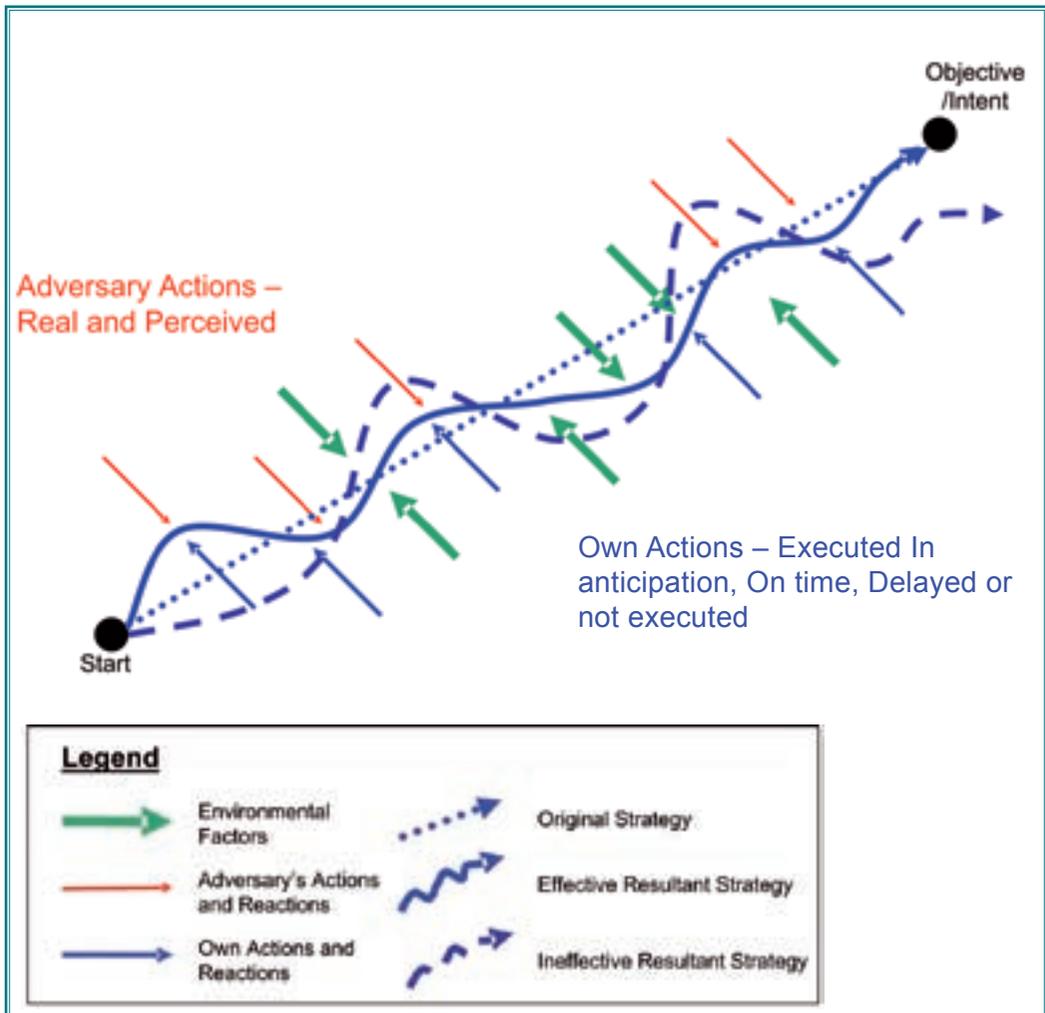


Figure 2. Interactions with Environmental Factors and the Adversary's Strategy (Adversary's strategy depicted as a series of actions and reactions)

Coupled with the interactions of the adversary's strategy, these factors act as forces that pull and push the strategy away or towards the attainment of the intended objectives (See Figure 2). Strategy is essentially a plan of action sequences to achieve an objective or intent, utilising available power resources.¹⁸ In the absence of any reaction from the adversary, the strategy will unfold accordingly and the intent will be achieved easily. When the strategies of two adaptive opponents interact, the series of opposing action sequences interact as action-reaction pairs. The effect of these action-reactions is that the unfolding strategy is shifted off-track or on-track. Even before the previous action-reaction interactions are completed and their effects fully felt, it is possible that the next sets of action-reaction interactions have begun, nullifying the previous sets of interactions or strengthening them. The action-reaction pairs may be real actions, reactions and inactions as well as perceived actions, reactions and inactions. Perceived actions, reactions and inactions arise from the anticipation of the adversary's courses of actions and/or incorrect understanding of the prevailing situation. The effect of these actions and reactions is Clausewitzian friction and fog, producing either an effective resultant strategy that achieves the objective/intent or an ineffective resultant strategy that does not achieve the objective/intent.

Each of these actions or a set of actions can have inter-linked objectives that collectively lead to the achievement of the overall intent. Each action or a set of actions can be viewed as a series of operational actions with operational

objectives, which when executed in concert achieves the strategic intent. Likewise, each operational action is essentially a series of tactical actions with tactical objectives, which when executed in concert achieves the operational objective. This lattice-like structure of nested actions and objectives explain why the outcomes of a series of tactical actions can have strategic implications in a theatre of operations¹⁹, and the disruption of certain actions at the lower levels can cause the failure of the larger action and even the overall strategy.

Ways to Shift the Balance

The purpose of strategy is to achieve own intent or objectives while denying the adversary from achieving his intent or objectives. This can be best achieved by "attacking the adversary's strategy" and "disrupting his alliances".²⁰

- Attacking the adversary's strategy is to defeat him at every stage of his plans to produce a sense of hopelessness and the futility of further contest. This is executed through strategies to "exploit the enemy's vulnerabilities, erode the enemy's capabilities, achieve relative superiority, and capitalize on the element of surprise and unpredictability".²¹ By doing so, it breaks the adversary's planned sequence of actions and prevents him from achieving his intent. The inferior actor can use his pockets of relative strengths to attack the superior actors' vulnerabilities. For example, these concepts are embodied in the Chinese concept of Unrestricted Warfare which proposes the employment of asymmetric means by an inferior actor to compensate for military

inferiority against a superior actor.²² Key to the concept is the correct understanding and employment of the principle of asymmetry which would allow the PLA to always find and exploit an enemy's weak spot.²³ The underpinning idea of Unrestricted Warfare is that there are no rules and that the nature of warfare has widened to include all power infrastructures such as political, economic, cultural and social systems. It advocates attacking the superior actor's well-developed power infrastructures, as well as vulnerable but highly symbolic targets, to demonstrate the superior actors' vulnerabilities. These can be pre-emptive or retaliatory attacks with "Assassin Mace" or trump card weapons.²⁴ The possession of such weapons would also deter a superior actor from taking pre-emptive

actions for the fear of retaliation. Additionally, the inferior actor can also adopt a system-of-systems approach in organising his own power infrastructures to enhance resiliency and survivability.

- Disrupting his alliances includes diplomatic initiatives and sowing of discord amongst the adversary's allies; to weaken his external support, reduce his international support and opinion, dislodge him from his moral high ground and isolate the adversary in the eyes of the international community. The inferior actor can exploit information and the media to shape public opinions. Conversely, the inferior actor can also forge strategic alliances with other stronger actors to deter aggression from a hostile superior actor.



Examples of trump card weapons

Interaction of Strategies

Strategy must be adjusted to remain relevant or a new strategy must be adopted as the situation changes and as the balance of relative advantages swings between the two opponents, a result of the interaction of the opponents' strategies. This interaction of strategies is essentially Arreguin-Toft's strategic interaction which holds the view that superior actors will lose asymmetric conflicts when they use the wrong strategy *vis-à-vis* their opponents' strategy.²⁵ Arreguin-Toft classified all strategies into two ideal strategic approaches: direct and indirect. Direct approaches target the adversary's military force in order to destroy his capacity to fight. Indirect approaches seek to destroy the adversary's will to fight.

Arreguin-Toft concluded that same approach interactions (direct-direct or indirect-indirect) imply defeat for the inferior actor as the inferior actor has no capabilities to erode the superior actor's strengths or render them irrelevant. Same approach interactions tend to be decisive and short in duration.²⁶ However, from the above discussion on the process of "inferior defeating the superior", one can conclude that this is true for the resistance phase only when the inferior actor is relatively weak and is focused on force preservation and force consolidation.

Arreguin-Toft also concluded that opposite interactions (direct-indirect or indirect-direct) imply victory for the inferior actors as the superior actor's strengths are rendered irrelevant.

However, this conclusion is again partially correct as adopting a direct approach is guaranteed defeat for the inferior actor as it simply cannot match the superior actor's capacity to fight. Indirect-direct interactions tend to be protracted as time favours the inferior actor. The lack of a rapid and decisive victory over an inferior actor produces frustration, leading to increased use of force or greater risk of dwindling domestic support and increasing pressure to end the conflict. Hence, the longer the conflict, the greater the chance that the superior actor will abandon the war effort.²⁷

In the phase when parity is achieved, same approach interactions may not end in defeat for the inferior actor. With both sides evenly matched and having no advantages over the other, the outcome can be either defeat or victory. Victory or defeat depends on which side is better at exploiting the environment, better trained and better led. This is, in essence, Sunzi's five factors and seven elements for predicting victory or defeat.²⁸ Additionally, the side that adopts the indirect approach has a better chance to secure victory than the side who adopts a direct approach, as the indirect approach avoids the opponent's strengths and attacks his weaknesses.

When the inferior actor is ready to defeat the superior actor, it is likely that he will engage in indirect approaches to secure victory. The inferior actor will only engage in the same approach interactions where and when the superior actor's strengths cannot be brought to bear, in order to increase his chance of success.

Same approach interactions are, thus, transformed into indirect approach interactions, ensuring certain victory for the inferior actor.

The series of interactions at various phases are summarised in Table 2. In the resistance phase, the inferior actor can defeat the superior actor, as long as the inferior actor adopts opposite interaction and indirect approach. When the inferior actor has achieved parity with the superior actor, the indirect approach offers better probability of victory while the same approach interactions favour both opponents equally. When the inferior actor has achieved a position of strength and is ready for a final

outcome, indirect approaches offer best probability of victory. In spite of the relative advantages that the inferior actor holds over the superior actor, the inferior actor will seek to transform same approach interactions into opposite approach interactions to ensure victory.

Conclusion

The strategy of “inferior defeating the superior” arises from Chinese military thinking that saw practice in past wars and conflicts in China. It has become part of the Chinese strategic thinking mindset, continues to be relevant and remains part of the present-day

Phase	Inferior’s Intent	Strategic Interactions (Inferior vs Superior)	Possible Outcome for Inferior
Resisting the Superior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent annihilation of forces. Consolidation of own forces. Jostle and improve position for negotiation, and if necessary, fighting. 	Indirect vs Direct	Victory
		Indirect vs Indirect	Defeat
		Direct vs Direct	Defeat
		Direct vs Indirect	Defeat
Achieving Parity with the Superior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to strengthen but conceal growing strength. Improve positional advantage but continue to present weaknesses. 	Indirect vs Direct	Victory
		Indirect vs Indirect	Either outcomes
		Direct vs Direct	
		Direct vs Indirect	Defeat
Defeating the Superior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities to lure superior into positions to render his strengths irrelevant. To defeat superior actor at a place and time of the inferior actor’s choosing. 	Indirect vs Direct	Victory
		Indirect vs Indirect	Victory
		Direct vs Direct	Victory
		Direct vs Indirect	Defeat

Table 2. Outcomes of Strategic Interactions in Various Phases

Chinese military thinking, concepts and doctrines. However, the concept is equally appealing to the non-Chinese too as many examples dotting the history of conflicts have shown.

The nature of being superior or inferior is never absolute as the superiority that one enjoys depends on the relative strengths and advantages one can bring to bear at a particular point of time and place. It also depends on the ability of the inferior actor to conceal relative weaknesses and disadvantages from his opponents. Therefore, in superiority exists pockets of inferiority and in inferiority, there are pockets of superiority. If the inferior actor wants some chance of success in a conflict with a superior opponent, he has to identify the superior actor's weaknesses and use his pockets of superiority to strike at the superior actor's pockets of inferiority while avoiding his strengths.

The process of "inferior defeating the superior" occurs through clever application of strategies that sees the inferior actor moving from a position of inferior to parity and finally being able to defeat the superior actor to gain superiority. The inferior actor employs stealth, deception and indirect approaches in the various stages of resisting the superior, achieving parity with the superior and even for the final phase when it attempts to defeat the superior actor. This is best achieved by attacking the adversary's strategy and disrupting his alliances. These twin approaches aim to defeat him at every stage of his plans through strategies to "exploit the enemy's vulnerabilities, erode the enemy's capabilities, achieve relative superiority,

and capitalize on the element of surprise and unpredictability", and to weaken his external support, reduce his international support and opinion, dislodge him from his moral high ground and isolate the adversary in the eyes of the international community.

The key to enable an inferior actor to defeat a superior actor is the application of the appropriate type of strategies in the right phase of the conflict. In the resistance phase, the inferior actor can defeat the superior actor, as long as the inferior actor adopts an opposite interactions approach. When the inferior actor has achieved parity with the superiority, indirect approaches offer better probability of victory while same approach interactions equally favour both opponents, but the inferior actor can tilt the outcome in his favour through the employment of crafty strategies. When the inferior actor has achieved a position of strength and is ready for a final outcome, same approach interactions and indirect approaches offer best probability of victory. Nevertheless, the inferior actor would continue to employ strategies to render irrelevant the superior actor's remaining pockets of strengths to be certain of victory. Thus, strategy is the creative employment of power and will continue to matter more than power to achieve victory. 

Endnotes

- ¹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, (New York: Knopf, 1967), p196.
- ² The term international relations theory refers to a simplified version of realist theory with three key elements: (1) there is no authority above states that is capable of regulating their interactions; (2) all states have some power to harm other states; and (3) states therefore seek to increase their relative power, which can deter other states from launching attacks, intimidate them into making concessions, or defeat them in war.

- ³ Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, (Cambridge and New York: The Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- ⁴ The former actor is deemed to be the superior actor while the latter, the inferior actor.
- ⁵ Mao Tsetung, *Selected Military Writing of Mao Tsetung*, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).
- ⁶ *The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Volume II (1975-1982), Speech at a Plenary Meeting of the Military Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC, December 28, 1977. See <http://english.people.com.cn/dengxp/>
- ⁷ *Chinese Military Encyclopedia*, Volume 3, (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 1997), p699.
- ⁸ Peng Guangqian and Yao Youzhi (eds.), *The Science of Military Strategy*, (Military Science Publishing House, Academy of Military Science, 2005), p30.
- ⁹ Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi – The Art of War: A Chinese English Bilingual Reader*, Chapter 6 – Weakness and Strengths, (Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 1993), pp41-42.
- ¹⁰ Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini*, (London; Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass 1992), p39.
- ¹¹ Peng and Yao (eds.), *Science of Military Strategy*, pp62-72.
- ¹² Mao Tsetung, *On Protracted War*, *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Volume II, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), pp136-143.
- ¹³ Li Bingyan, “Applying Military Strategy in the Age of the New Revolution in Military Affairs”, in *The Chinese Revolution in Military Affairs*, ed. Shen Weiguang, (New China Press, 2004).
- ¹⁴ Mao Tsetung, *On Protracted War*, pp165-166.
- ¹⁵ The seven elements are: (1) Which sovereign possesses greater moral influence? (2) Which commander is more capable? (3) Which side holds more favourable conditions in weather and terrain? (4) On which sides are decrees better implemented? (5) Which side is superior in arms? (6) On which side are officers and men better trained? (7) Which side is stricter and more impartial in meting out rewards and punishments?
- ¹⁶ Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi – The Art of War*, Chapter 1 – Strategic Assessment, pp1-3.
- ¹⁷ Time and duration are components of the strategy. It is interpreted as a means to be combined with ways (methods) to achieve the intent or objectives. Hence, depending on the desired effects, actions can be either decisive or protracted ones.
- ¹⁸ Ong Yulin, “In Search of An Ideal Victory: Attacking the Enemy’s Strategy in the Malayan Campaign”, *The Bellona Quarterly*, 1/2008, pp66-72.
- ¹⁹ V.K. Triandafilov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, (Portland: Frank Cass & Co, 1994).
- ²⁰ Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi – The Art of War*, Chapter 3 – Attack by Stratagem, pp15-16.
- ²¹ Wee Chou-Hou, *Sun Zi Art of War, An Illustrated Translation with Asian Perspectives and Insights*, (Pearson, Prentice Hall, 2003), p35.
- ²² Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), Translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Washington, DC.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p211, (pp223-240 in original).
- ²⁴ Examples are anti-satellite and space weapons, Special Forces operations against enemy C2, precision-guided missiles, including anti-radiation missiles, electromagnetic pulse weapons, lasers weapons, computer viruses and computer hackers, etc.
- ²⁵ Arreguin-Toft, Ivan.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ Andrew J.R. Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict”, *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (January 1975), pp175–200.
- ²⁸ Pan Jianbin and Liu Ruixiang, *Sunzi - The Art of War*, Chapter 1 – Strategic Assessment, pp3-4.



COL Ong Yu Lin is currently the Deputy Chief Guards Officer. He is a Guards Officer by training and has attended the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, U.K., the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, the Australian Command and Staff College, and the Chinese PLA National Defence University. He has previously held command appointments in the battalion and brigade levels. He holds a BSc in Physics from the National University of Singapore, a Master of Management in Defence Studies from the University of Canberra, Australia and an MBA from the Nanyang Fellows Programme in Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University.

War As an Instrument of Politics

by COL(NS) Goh Teck Seng



Introduction

To assert that “war is an instrument of politics” is to make explicit what is implicit: that war possesses an unspoken *raison d’etre* which defines its instrumentality. War, in this sense, does not constitute a breakdown of politics, but is in fact “the continuation of policy with the admixture of other means”.¹ This classic formulation of war as politics by other means is attributable to Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), a Prussian military theorist who distilled his theory of war not only by reflecting upon Napoleonic warfare but by participating in it himself. Clausewitz’s reflection on war was therefore no shallow intellectual

discourse by some armchair strategist but an informed introspection enriched by experience. This makes his assertion of “war as an instrument of politics” worthy of an in-depth discussion.

Any discussion of war as a political instrument needs to be made with



Karl von Clausewitz

reference to war in theory and war in practice. For only an analysis of war in the abstract and war as waged in reality will provide the richness with which to examine the relevance and implications of the Clausewitzian paradigm of war.

This essay first reviews war as theorised by Clausewitz; it then assesses the validity and implications of Clausewitz’s treatise

on war against the empirical record and asks if war as an instrument of politics continues to be relevant given the evolving socio-political contexts governing the use of force.

War as Theorised

In Book VIII of Clausewitz's *magnum opus*, *vom Kriege* (On War)², Clausewitz expounded on a specific dimension of the nature of war: namely, the political character of war and the relationship between strategy and politics. Clausewitz contended that war was nothing more than "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will".³ In this, war is the means and the imposition of one's will, the end. The end (which provides the rationale for the use of force) itself springs from a political purpose without which war becomes "pointless and devoid of sense".⁴ Hence Clausewitz's assertion that war is nothing but the continuation of politics with the admixture of other means. War should not, under any circumstances, be removed from its political context, for as Clausewitz pointed out,

*"... war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different. In essence, that intercourse continues, irrespective of the means it employs... How could it be otherwise?... Is not war just another expression of government's thoughts? Its grammar, indeed may be its own, but not its logic."*⁵

The statement that war has "its own grammar, but not its own logic" underlies the primacy of politics over the use of force: war is to be subordinated to politics with politics always in command

and providing the higher rationality. As the singular "guiding intelligence", politics should determine the object and course of strategy and by implication, the scale and proportionality of force to be applied.⁶ As Clausewitz argued,

*"No one starts a war ... without being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and make its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail."*⁷

If war is violence based on rationality, it is also "an act of force ... (the application of which knows)... no logical limit".⁸ Therefore, "absolute war", or total war, can theoretically result from the unconstrained interaction between the offence and the defence – "the collision of two living forces"⁹ – by virtue of its escalatory dynamics.

Clausewitz's "absolute war" is a Platonic ideal, to which "real war" only approximates.¹⁰ "Real war" is always limited, never reaching its absoluteness because of extraneous constraints and the "friction of war".¹¹ "Friction" derives from the unpredictability of combat performance as fatigue and battle trauma take their toll; and from uncertainty, or the "fog of war" due to imperfect intelligence.

If war is a political instrument, it succeeds only if it rests on a stable trinitarian balance as defined by the interplay between "primordial violence, hatred and enmity; political purpose and effect; as well as the play of chance and

probability”.¹² Clausewitz consequently suggested the need for political and military leaders to work co-operatively; for public opinion to be managed; and for military commanders to display genius to overcome “friction” and chance in war.

War as It Ought Not to Be

Clausewitz’s formulation of war as a means-end relationship tied to a state’s policy, namely its national interests, endows war with a higher rationality. More pointedly, it clothes war in the garb of acceptability and gives it a face of legitimacy. The Clausewitzian paradigm sees war therefore not only as an instrument of politics but also a legitimate one at that. This opens the way for states to employ force against other states as they see fit based on their cost-benefit calculus. If the end-game is survival and the preservation of a society’s value system, such an approach to inter-state relations – what Michael Howard terms “the strategic approach”¹³ – would result in continual conflict; for it would introduce an escalatory action-reaction dynamic as each state seeks to better secure itself by attaining a military advantage. But more security for one state would paradoxically result in less security for all states as other states respond in kind. This is the classic security dilemma which condemns all states to a destiny of collective insecurity even as states strive separately for greater security.

Equally disconcertingly, Clausewitz’s exposition on war as an instrument of politics is in fact an assertion that “might is right”. The former Bush

administration, with its doctrine of prevention and pre-emption, could have found no higher intellectual justification of its policy stance than Clausewitz. What is *Operation Iraqi Freedom* if not “the continuation of politics with the admixture of other means”? Given the uneven global distribution of military power, adherence to the Clausewitzian paradigm would imply a world governed by the laws of the jungle where the mighty would do what they will, and the weak have to simply accept what they must. International society as we know it will then unravel; there will be no order, much less justice, and life will be “nasty and brutish” in the Hobbesian sense. A domestic analogy is here instructive: can we imagine the turbulence in domestic society if duels can be a legitimate extension of debate? The upshot of Clausewitz’s dictum that war is an instrument of politics is to hold peace perpetually to ransom.

War as It Has Been and as It Will (or Will Not) Be

Does Clausewitz’s theory of war match war in practice? This question cannot be satisfactorily answered without first elucidating the key assumptions underpinning the Clausewitzian paradigm. As in any study of war, the socio-political context matters. Clausewitz was an interpreter of Napoleonic warfare. Central to Napoleonic warfare was the clash of mass armies in a contest of wills within the context of nation-states. Clausewitz’s theory of war was in essence an exposition of inter-state warfare waged by conventional forces, which though massed for battle, nevertheless fought wars not of total



Clausewitz's theory of war was in essence an exposition of inter-state warfare waged by conventional forces, which though massed for battle, nevertheless fought wars not of total annihilation but of destruction

annihilation but of destruction. For Clausewitz, inter-state wars, no matter how destructive, were never total or absolute.

Wars since 1648 have clearly been waged by nation-states. But have these wars always been rational, with the political ends justifying the force employed? While it is true that war is almost always a deliberate and carefully calculated act, it does not follow that the political logic can remain in command through a war. Was it not Clausewitz himself who observed that war was “a collision of two living forces” with its inherent explosive dynamic? If so, even as it is desirable that the political end should limit the force applied, the expectation must also be that the political logic itself can transform as a war escalates. Did the US not enter the Vietnam War to contain communism only to concede the very cause that it fought for because of adverse public opinion? Or was Clausewitz in fact right in that he had advocated that the trinity of “government, military and public opinion” in any war should be prudently managed, and the Vietnam War was a negative example of all that went wrong with the trinitarian balance? If public opinion alone was a sufficient condition for US rethinking

on Vietnam, Clausewitz would have been right; but geostrategic calculations of the centrality of Vietnam to the Cold War and US economic overstretch were important explanatory factors.

In short, the political logic for why the US entered the Vietnam War had evolved with the progress of the war, raising questions about how war can be guided by a singular, unchanging logic if the politics itself is variable over time. As Tolstoy so poignantly observed of war in the concluding part of *War and Peace*, “(l)eadership, calculation, control over events – these are merely the illusion of statesmen... The passions of men and the momentum of events often take over and propel war in novel and unexpected directions”.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the US took the lessons of Vietnam to heart and formulated the Weinberger¹⁵ and then the Powell Doctrines for the two most significant wars it fought post-Vietnam. Gulf Wars I and II were classic textbook applications of Clausewitz's dictum on how strategy should be guided by political objectives. In the two wars against Iraq, the political objective was clearly defined, and the military then worked co-operatively with the civilian authorities both to effect the war plans and to shape public



The absolute war that Clausewitz considered an impossibility has materialised with nuclear weaponry.

opinion. In contrast, the Vietnam War was notable for its lack of a singular political focus, a breakdown in civil-military relationships and inattention to public opinion.

The successes of Gulf Wars I and II, while they do not detract from Clausewitz's teachings, do not necessarily reaffirm them; for implicit in Clausewitz's "war as a political instrument" is the presupposition that statesmen can make "means-end" cost-benefit calculations with clarity and precision. If so, would Hitler have gone to war if he had calculated that it would lead to the Third Reich being vanquished? Would Iraq have invaded Kuwait in 1990 had Saddam foreseen his own downfall? Or would the Triple Alliance in World War One have clashed with the Triple Entente had the member-states known that the end would be a life-and-death titanic struggle? Cost-benefit calculations of the outcomes of wars invariably involve imponderables and the randomness of chance. Miscalculations are conceivable either because of misperceptions or information gaps, even if a state's "means-end" calculation is internally

consistent and logical; flawed premises can only feed into flawed conclusions.

What about Clausewitz's view, given the nuclear context, that war could never be absolute? Nuclear weapons have both invalidated and reaffirmed Clausewitz's thinking. The absolute war that Clausewitz considered an impossibility has materialised with nuclear weaponry. Consequently, no wars may be fought with nuclear weapons for any meaningful ends based on the premise that war can be an instrument of politics.

Nevertheless, Clausewitz's theory remains valid as a framework for evaluating strategy for the nuclear age. The concepts of nuclear deterrence and limited war (particularly Robert Osgood's treatment of the subject in his book *Limited War*) are grounded in Clausewitzian theorising about the rationality of war.¹⁶ Nuclear weapons have meant only an inversion of the Clausewitzian logic in that the fear of nuclear war now defines and subordinates the play of politics but not repudiate it.

But has war always been fought for political reasons? Both Martin van Creveld¹⁷ and John Keegan¹⁸ have argued against such a postulation. They point to wars pre-dating the Westphalian system of nation-states that were waged for reasons other than politics, and being associated with the cultural disposition of aggressiveness or religious or just causes. As Keegan put it, "... war embraced more than politics, ... it is always an expression of culture, *in some societies culture itself*".¹⁹ And as van Creveld avered, "... war was a continuation of justice, not of politics; and (it was) the point where human reason came to an end or, at any rate, where it had not yet triumphed".²⁰

More significantly, are we headed for a post-Clausewitzian paradigm with the emerging view of the obsolescence of war? Paul Hirst observed that the industrialised West had forsworn Clausewitzian war as a means of resolving conflicts of interest.²¹ John Mueller justified his thesis of the obsolescence of war on two grounds: that war has become psychologically unacceptable because it is "repulsive, immoral and uncivilised"; and that the cost of war has become prohibitive because of the potential destructiveness it can wreak with modern weaponry.²²

While it may be premature to pronounce the demise of war as the long peace in the industrialised West is somewhat over-determined, war is to some extent going out of fashion. War has become unfashionable both because of the higher costs it imposes and the diminishing utility it offers. Globalisation with its underlying economic dynamic allows states to now seek their welfare gains through trade rather than territorial conquest.

Assuming a high degree of integration, globalisation interlocks destinies, thus restraining conflictual tendencies. The politics of economics driving the globalisation process and unadulterated with nationalism is arguably less volatile and threatening than the politics of politics alone, absent globalisation.²³

Whither Clausewitz? Whither War?

The Clausewitzian paradigm espousing war as an instrument of politics remains valid for as long as the world is constituted of nation-states. The system of nation-states is both a strength and a defect; a strength because it treats all states, irrespective of size or national power, as juridically equal; and a defect because it leaves the option of war at the indiscretion of states. Nation-states would choose war as an instrument to secure their national interests if this was perceived to hold out better prospects of success.

While we are not headed for a post-Clausewitzian era, we are nevertheless seeing a declining utility of war as a political instrument because of an adverse cost-benefit calculus against war. The implication is that war as a political instrument, if employed, will have to be weighed against even stricter success criteria. If war was once a blunt political instrument, it will, presently and foreseeably, be one employed with greater thoughtfulness. But this presupposes that statesmen can make means-end calculations with clairvoyant clarity and the sure-footedness of a punter with perfect hindsight. If war is a recurring pathology in international politics, it is so precisely because of human failings in being able to project outcomes into the future. 🤖

Endnotes

- ¹ Quoted in Michael Howard, *Clausewitz*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p34.
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- ³ H Rothfels, "Clausewitz" in *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military thought from Machiavelli to Hitler*, ed. Edward Mead Earle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p102.
- ⁴ Michael Howard and Peter Paret (ed.), *Karl von Clausewitz: On War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p75.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p605.
- ⁶ Howard, *Clausewitz*, p38.
- ⁷ Howard and Paret (ed), *On War*, p579.
- ⁸ Peter Paret, "Clausewitz" in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p199.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ Howard, *Clausewitz*, p49.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p50.
- ¹² Edward Villacres and Christopher Bassford, "Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity", *Parameters*, Vol XXV, No 3 (Autumn 1995), p13.
- ¹³ Michael Howard, *The Causes of War*, (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1984), p36.
- ¹⁴ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p202.
- ¹⁵ The Weinberger Doctrine, on which the Powell Doctrine is a variation, is the US strategic adaptation of Clausewitzian thought for the post-Vietnam era. It lists six conditions for US participation in any war. Frequently quoted during numerous debates during the first Gulf War, the Doctrine explicitly cites Clausewitz in the third of the six conditions. As Clausewitz wrote, "No one starts a war without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it".
- ¹⁶ Howard, *Clausewitz*, pp60-70. For Clausewitz's impact on nuclear strategy, see Stephen Cimbala, *Clausewitz and Escalation: Classical Perspective on Nuclear Strategy*, (London: Frank Cass, 1991).
- ¹⁷ Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, (NY: The Free Press, 1991), pp124-147.
- ¹⁸ John Keegan, *The History of Warfare*, (NY: Vintage Books, 1993), pp3-6.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p12.
- ²⁰ van Creveld, *Transformation of War*, p124.
- ²¹ Paul Hirst, *War and Power in the 21st Century*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p96.
- ²² John Mueller, "The Obsolescence of War" in *Conflict after the Cold War*, ed. Richard Betts, (Mass: Allyn and Bacon, 1994), pp22-24.
- ²³ A commendable case on how geo-economics has replaced geopolitics with its pacifying effects through the rise of trading states has been made by Richard Rosecrance in *The Rise of the Virtual State*, (NY: Basic Books, 1999), pp3-25.



COL(NS) Goh Teck Seng is currently the Director of Corporate Development in the Ministry of Transport. COL(NS) Goh served in the Singapore Armed Forces for 22 years before his retirement in Oct 2005. He has previously held senior command and staff appointments in the SAF, including Deputy Commandant, Singapore Command and Staff College, Deputy Head, Air Intelligence and Commander, Divisional Air Defence Brigade. He holds a Bachelor of Social Science (2nd Class Upper Honours) from the National University of Singapore, a Master in Strategic Studies (with high distinction) from the Australian National University and a Master in International Relations from Cambridge University,

Leadership Development in the SAF: Planting the Seeds for Our Future

by LTC Adrian Chan



“I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.”

- Ralph Nader

Introduction

One of the functions of leadership is to develop leadership in oneself and in others. The “why” is not in question, but the “how” can benefit from more illumination. As leaders, how we develop others is influenced by the ideas of leadership we hold. In this regard, a prominent leadership scholar once remarked that there are as many leadership definitions and theories as there are leadership scholars.¹ In the

SAF, much has also been written about leadership.² Accordingly, one should not be surprised if there are as many ideas of leadership as there are leaders in the SAF.³ Given the plethora of leadership manifested in the SAF, how can we be systematic about developing our future leaders? Given that Leadership Development (LD) is a long-term investment, how do we plant wisely to grow a harvest adequate for an uncertain future?

This article is about how we can help leaders develop leaders. In this article, we first make the case that being an effective leader is distinctly different from being an effective developer of

leadership. The typical SAF leader is trained to achieve mission success, to lead well, but not necessarily to develop others to become leaders. To develop others, the SAF leader has to go against his training as a performance-oriented “deliverer of results” to become one who is more learning-oriented; one whose focus is on the development of his subordinates rather than on maximising the utility of his subordinates for mission accomplishment. The analogy we introduce to facilitate this mindset switch is that of the leader as a nurturing cultivator or gardener. Next, in tracing the historical contribution of SAF Centre of Leadership Development (CLD), we explore emerging new capabilities that the SAF needs to invest in so as to ensure that LD is facilitated.

Leadership Development as Nurturing, Cultivating and Gardening



We must develop our leaders to not only execute today’s mission but also be able to fight tomorrow’s war

LD is a long-term investment. We must develop our leaders to not only execute today’s mission but also be able to fight tomorrow’s war. Because the future is never certain, the safe course is to allow for diversity in leadership. In fact, this

is probably already the de facto practice in the SAF. For example, if we take rank attainment as a yardstick of leadership success and interview all Colonels and Master Warrant Officers in the SAF, asking their peers and subordinates to characterise their leadership, we are likely to find that each one of them is as unique as another in his/her leadership. Like flowers in a garden, each bloom, though collectively floral, is unique and different from the other.⁴

Effective leadership in the SAF context is characterised by mission accomplishment and performance. Such leadership can be attained at through uniquely different paths of development. Yet, being effective as a performance and mission-oriented leader is very different from developing effective leadership in others. Ironically, such leaders may not necessarily be as effective when it comes to developing leadership in others.⁵ This is because both the orientation and motivation associated with developing others are different. An effective developer of leaders is oriented to learning and potential realisation. Instead of creating a culture focusing on performance, effective developers create and sustain a culture that facilitates learning and learning as a pathway to performance. Mission-oriented leaders manage the optimal use of resources, including people for mission accomplishment. Effective developers expend organisational resources to unleash the full potential in people. Performance-oriented leaders expect to reap success, whereas effective developers sow in hope and often do not see the fruit of their labour because LD is a long-term investment.



Instead of creating a culture focusing on performance, effective developers create and sustain a culture that facilitates learning and learning as a pathway to performance.

Given how SAF commanders are trained to perform as performance-oriented leaders, it is perhaps useful to introduce a different analogy to help shift the mindset from performing to developing. The analogy used here will be that of the leader as a cultivator, nurturer and gardener.

1. Gardeners tend to the soil upon which the seeds are to flourish. Likewise, to develop others, leaders need to create a nurturing environment and prepare the hearts and minds of followers so that LD can flourish. This in itself is not a new practice for leaders today, except that the purpose for leaders as cultural change agents is not just to shape individuals for performance, but also for the latter's development.
2. Gardeners are knowledgeable about gardening. Cultivation is a deliberate process. Cultivators know when to place guides to allow the shoot to grow

straight and are deliberate in using only the best soil to facilitate growth. Cultivators are ruthless pruners as well, always looking out for disease and sickness in their crop. Likewise, to develop others, leaders need to be knowledgeable about LD theories, intervention pedagogies, methods of tracking and verifying development, quantifying return on investment (ROI), and most importantly, they need to know intimately the raw materials they are dealing with. Again, this in itself is not new to leaders today. The purpose for knowing one's men intimately is in both instances for regulation and control. However, in the case of the leader as cultivator, it is for staying the course on development instead of merely achieving immediate performance.

3. Cultivators can never know for certain the timing and nature of the fruit of their labour. They sow to the best of their knowledge and skill, and protect their crop to their utmost against disease and destruction. But ultimately, they cannot command the crop to harvest. If the crop fails, they can only learn and adjust for the next harvest. Likewise, leaders can only cultivate, not force LD to happen. They need to create the conditions, time, space and freedom for individuals to grow to become unique leaders. Yet unlike full-time gardeners, the SAF leader typically does not stay in a cultivator role long enough to adjust and grow as a cultivator. What he/she learns about nurturing from the experience of one crop does not get built on subsequently due to rapid job rotation.



Only by being good nurturers/cultivators/gardeners can we then help to nurture our next generation of leaders for the SAF.

Hence, to be an effective developer of leaders, one has to adapt a training pedagogy acronym from OCS, to ‘(T)hink and (A)ct (L)ike (A) (G)ardener’, or TALAG⁶. Only by being good nurturers/cultivators/gardeners can we then help to nurture our next generation of leaders for the SAF.

What is Leadership Development?

The heart of LD is about creating growth (i.e. enduring change) in leaders for effective performance. To achieve this, not only must the “right” stuff be taught and caught, and progress tracked, the leader must also be made “ready” to embrace the change, as well as be supported at all levels to demonstrate change.⁷

Leadership Development in the Schoolhouse

Unlike the topic of leadership, writings on LD in the SAF are surprisingly scant, especially given the importance of the topic. I will briefly summarise two articles that deal specifically with LD. The first article deals with development at the individual level. COL Ong and

LTC Lim discussed how individual cadets can be trained to think like expert commanders using the Think and Act Like A Commander (TALAC) pedagogy.⁸ The second article deals with a systems approach to development with emphasis on the training school. In *POINTER* Monograph No 4, a model of LD was proposed, comprising facilitating a learning climate (i.e. instructor as coach), improving curriculum design, providing developmental tools, facilitating team learning and encouraging individual motivation to learn and lead.⁹ Together, these two articles illustrate to us that which we already know implicitly, that LD is a multilevel, multifaceted phenomenon for which the types of developmental interventions we introduce need to be measurable, sustainable and sensitive to context and trainee/trainer profile.

The second observation from these two articles is that LD cannot happen only in the schoolhouse environment. Firstly, time is a constraint. A conservative estimate is that on average each leader spends less than 20% of his/her SAF career at schoolhouses. Of this time, there are many vocational learning

requirements to be achieved. Often, when curriculum time is to be rationalised, LD is invariably amongst the first to be sacrificed. We need to identify the non-negotiable “baseline” leadership content in the schoolhouse environment and stay committed to that. To help us determine this baseline, we need to know what LD initiatives in schoolhouses actually work and which ones deliver the best returns for the training time invested *vis-à-vis* the opportunity costs.

Secondly, schoolhouse training realism and transfer is challenging for LD. For instance, given that the “subordinates” of these trainee-leaders are themselves trainees, how “real” is the leadership training environment within the schoolhouse environment? Also, leadership is, at times, more caught than taught. What type of leadership are we trying to get our trainees to “catch” when the leadership demonstrated by instructors in a schoolhouse environment may be different from the leadership that is demonstrated by commanders in an operational environment? As a result, the transfer of leadership lessons from the schoolhouse to the operational environment is very difficult. We need to be precise about what is “doable” with regard to LD in the schoolhouse environment. To do this, we need to know the types of LD initiatives which are best suited for the schoolhouse environment and in turn, we need to know what is available “out there”, what has been done by others successfully and what our own requirements are. Of the latter, we need to identify elements which the operational environment cannot afford to provide real-time training for, and leverage on the safe-house environment that schoolhouses can provide.

To be systematic about LD, we must pursue holistic LD both within and outside of the schoolhouse environment. We must maximise all LD opportunities available to the individual. We must also recognise that LD is best undertaken by leaders themselves, supported by the organisation. By considering LD from the perspectives of the environment, the person and the organisation, we can then better identify the SAF-level capabilities needed to support the growth and development of leaders.

Leadership Development Capabilities for the SAF

For the SAF, the “business” of systematic LD can be approximated to the “mass customisation” approach in manufacturing. Mass customisation refers to the ability to efficiently mass-produce individually different products to suit different customer needs.¹⁰ In the context of LD, this means that we can efficiently develop leaders of all types to suit the full operational spectrum that the SAF will encounter. The capability to mass customise LD is an important 3rd Generation capability the SAF must have because, if we do not have the right blend of leaders in place, no technology or hardware will help the SAF execute its mission in the 3rd Generation environment.

To support the business of mass customising LD, we need the twin pillars of having the “right” content concerning LD and having systems-readiness for LD insertion and support. This comprises two enduring systems-level capabilities: (1) the capability to continually review and dovetail relevant state-of-the-art leadership content into

SAF human resources (HR), training and operational processes/systems, and (2) the capability to responsively up-level the HR, training and operational processes/systems to support the pace of LD implementation across all levels in the SAF. Before elaborating further on these capabilities, let us trace the organisational thinking that led to ideas of these capabilities.

A Brief History of SAF CLD as SAF’s Gardener for Leadership Development

LD in the SAF is synonymous with CLD. Since its inception, it has in many ways served as the SAF’s gardener/cultivator/nurturer for LD. Hence, it makes sense to trace its contributions to LD in the SAF so as to help us identify future LD capabilities that the SAF needs to further invest in.

Creating a Common Language for describing Leadership

Prior to the establishment of CLD in 2003, LD in the SAF is best described as ad hoc, eclectic and unsynchronised across the SAF (see bottom left quadrant of Figure 1). There was a lack of a common language to describe the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of LD. LD was a function of exposure to different leadership positions by job rotation, augmented by each individual commander’s on-the-job training guided by the varied mental models of the leadership of ground commanders. The 1994 KAQ leadership framework attempted to formalise what constitutes the knowledge, abilities and qualities of the SAF leader at the level of the platoon commander. However, its development was idiosyncratic to OCS’s training

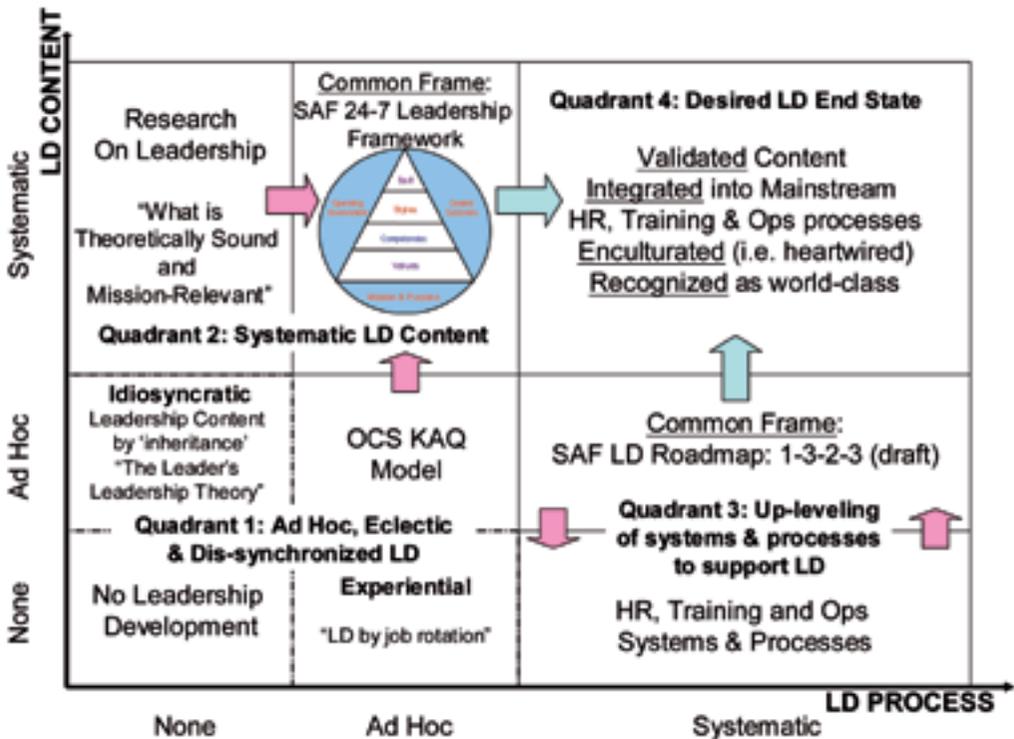


Figure 1. Systematic LD in the SAF: Content and Process

constraints and requirements then. Its adoption in other leadership schools and in the ground units was left uncoordinated and largely unguided.

In an effort to be more systematic about LD for the SAF, then-CDF LG Lim Chuan Poh directed the formation of a centre of leadership development to serve as the focal point of LD in the SAF. A key priority was to develop a common frame and language that will guide LD in the SAF. In developing this common frame, particular care was given to extract the best practices from leading leadership institutions, tap on the latest leadership research relevant to the SAF, plug into leadership lessons learnt from the history of the SAF, as well as to engage the current SAF leadership and stakeholders in continual leadership dialogues to ensure collective ownership and voice in the creation of the framework. The end result of this two-year collaborative effort was the adoption of the SAF 24-7 Leadership framework by the SAF in 2002 (see top left quadrant of Figure 1). With this model, a way of thinking about leadership in the SAF was born.

Creating a Common Language for LD Implementation

Complementing the systematic development of leadership content, corollary efforts to build up LD capacity and accelerate leadership learning for the SAF were also undertaken by CLD. These include the Leadership and Organisational Development (L&OD) initiatives to effect workplace culture change, the introduction of action-based learning and reflection to complement operational learning, the identification

and training of ex-SAF regular coaches to complement commander-led coaching, the continued support from CLD to level up the LD capabilities of instructors in schoolhouses and also CLD partnership with the Services to integrate the pen-picture and individual development plans as key records for leaders' transition from schoolhouse to the workplace.

The above efforts were attempts by CLD to place LD into SAF HR, training and operational systems/processes. Just as the SAF Leadership Framework provided a common language for talking about the “what and how” of LD, it quickly became clear that there was a similar need to provide a common frame for talking about the “what and how” of levelling up HR, training and operational processes/systems in support of LD. Hence, in an effort to create a common language for LD implementation, CLD recently proposed an SAF LD implementation roadmap which outlined one core individual development process supported by three emphases on instructor training, commander training and action learning process (ALP), maintaining two key records (individual development action plan and the pen-picture) and levelling up three key individual competencies of reflection, coaching and facilitation (refer to bottom right quadrant of Figure 1).

Communicating LD successes

LD must be systematically communicated. Part of this entails benchmarking our efforts against international standards. CLD has contributed to making the voice of the SAF heard in international leadership

forums. This includes participating in and organising international conferences, successfully showcasing and winning recognition for SAF LD initiatives in these forums, as well as taking leadership roles in engaging the international community of military leadership schoolhouses. Internally, CLD keeps SAF leadership at all levels engaged through seminars and workshops, providing regular feature articles on leadership and producing leadership-related products for mass dissemination.

LD Thermometer

To date, CLD has targeted the dual fronts of the systematic development of LD content as well as helped the SAF achieve a more systematic levelling up of HR, training and operational systems/processes in support of LD. These efforts notwithstanding, the danger of slipping back into ad hoc LD remains clear and present, and must be vigilantly monitored and guarded against.

Top Leadership Guidance and Support

Finally, systematic LD cannot occur without leadership guidance and support at all levels. The formulation of systematic LD must be strategised with clear guidance and support from top leadership. The execution of LD initiatives is the collective responsibility of leadership at all levels. The “face” of LD, i.e. the leader in constant pursuit of individual development through participation and responsibility for formal and informal LD initiatives, must be carried through and manifested in every leader.

Future Leadership Development Capabilities for the SAF

Following from the above analysis of CLD’s contributions to LD, four future strategic capabilities needed by the SAF to support LD are proposed (see Figure 2). These capabilities map directly onto the quadrants described previously in Figure 1. The four proposed capabilities are:

- a. Content-interface. The first capability that the SAF needs to build is the ability to credibly interface with LD content experts outside of the SAF. To facilitate credible content interface with external Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), the SAF also needs to groom internal SMEs. This means that leaders with a predisposition and talent for LD should be groomed to receive post-graduate education. For example, the PhD-trained Brigade Commander should not be the exception but should be actively groomed. In return, they should be retained in service longer to leverage on their training. They should also be provided with resources commensurate with that of knowledge-based workers, such as research sabbaticals and research funds for presenting at conferences and hosting top researchers.

These internal SMEs are then expected to translate existing best-of-class practices to applications in the SAF. For example, in the cognitive psychology domain, how can the latest simulation and augmented cognition technologies be employed to develop leaders?¹¹ In the social psychology domain, how can the

latest wave of research interest in cross-cultural intelligence inform us of how we should develop our leaders to operate in a multi-agency, multinational context?¹² In the quantitative psychology domain, how can the latest in statistical modelling inform us about how we can create realistic developmental road-maps for our leaders?¹³ In the business domain, how can ethical decision-making research inform us about values and our values inculcation efforts? These domains are actively researched with regularly updated content. Yet, their applications to the SAF are lagging, partly due to a lack of talented military leaders who are conversant with both the language of the academia as well as the ground-level needs of commanders.



SAF leader operating in a multinational environment

LD content exploration must always stay one bound ahead of LD implementation in the SAF. Yet in today's knowledge-based economy, the search for relevant knowledge to apply in service of LD is no longer a monopoly of any single entity. Rather, the scanners must be cast far and wide, and the monitors must reflect a collated picture from sensors across Service and SMEs.

- b. Coordination on process & system upgrade. To support LD, SAF HR, training and operational systems/processes must be upgraded in pace with the requirements of LD. The responsibility of up-levelling these systems and processes lies in the hands of the systems/process owners. These owners need to recognise that they play a critical role in ensuring that their systems support the leaders. Like massing and coordinating fires for maximum effect, the ability to coordinate the up-levelling of HR, training and operational systems/process to support LD in concert is another capability that the SAF needs to develop. The question is: How?

For example, LD can be facilitated by better job assignment and rotation. HR systems can be upgraded to better match organisational needs with individual's LD requirements. LD can also be better infused into existing training systems with better training for trainers. For example, given the emphasis on behavioural observations in evaluating unit proficiency, training evaluation centres (e.g. ATEC) can easily be skill- and content-upgraded to also make assessments of leadership. In the domain of operations, operational processes can be adjusted to accommodate action learning, so that commanders not only perform during operations, but also learn better and faster to lead better before the operation is over.

Shared and coordinated execution of LD across the domains of HR, training and operations is not a

dream, especially in today's context of O.N.E. SAF. But to ensure that HR, training and operations systems/processes serve LD in a coordinated and holistic manner, we need a central coordinating agency to play this role.

- c. Leadership thermometer. To ensure that the SAF does not atrophy into a state of ad hoc, eclectic and unsynchronised LD, there needs to be regular monitoring of the state of LD health in the SAF. At the moment, this capability is not fully realised. Existing sources of monitoring and new monitoring efforts need to be coordinated to ensure triangulation and adequate coverage of the LD picture.¹⁴ When done properly, it can serve as a source of input for setting and adjusting directions on

the development of LD content and up-levelling of systems/processes in support of LD.

- d. Learning through communications and benchmarking. The SAF has come a long way as a learning organisation. Yet, it is premature for us to claim learning as a strategic capability. Great leaders need no marketing to sell. But great LD practices somehow still remain rather localised and less frequently retold. What are our success stories? How do these stories benchmark against others?

With a shorter military career, with leaders constantly being job-rotated, we need to become better at LD knowledge management and

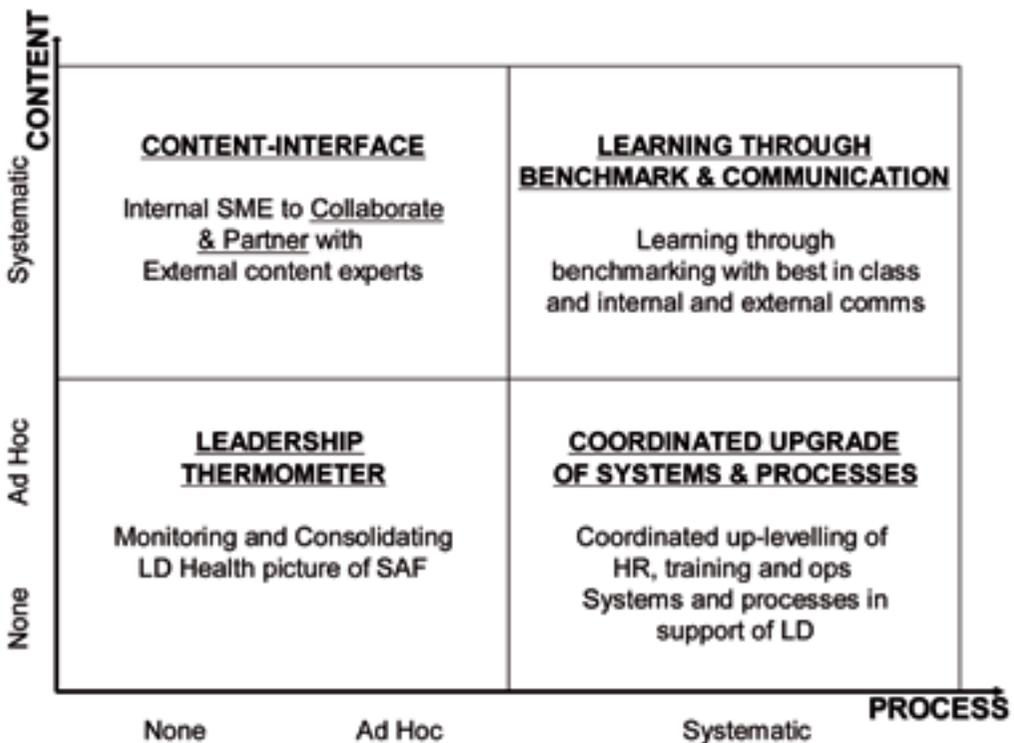


Figure 2. Four Strategic Capabilities to be built in service of systematic LD in the SAF

LD knowledge transfer, in which historical archiving is not effective. LD knowledge is not archival knowledge and cannot remain in silos. Rather, the organisation that is knowledgeable about LD is constantly keeping such knowledge in circulation. Benchmarking SAF LD stories and practices against the best in class not only communicates our LD success to external audiences, but also provides a reality check (and morale boost) to our internal audiences. In doing so, best practices get shared internally, and this promotes a net inflow of new LD content from both internal and external audiences.

Conclusion

This article began with the premise that LD in the SAF can be compared to the process of gardening. Strategic capabilities that the SAF may need were then identified through the contributions of CLD. These capabilities will create the conditions for which individual cultivators/nurturers/gardeners, that every SAF leader can and should be, will be better served and supported in their endeavours to develop leadership in others. ☺

Endnotes

- ¹ This remark is credited to Fred Fiedler (1971)
- ² A selected list of writings published in *POINTER* include the following:
 - a. BG Lee Hsien Loong, "Professionalism in the SAF", *POINTER* Supplement (Oct 84).
 - b. LG Winston Choo, "The Challenge of Leadership in the Military Profession", *POINTER*, V18 N1.

- c. BG Lim Neo Chian, "Developing an SAF Value System: A Personal Perspective", *POINTER*, V19 N3
- d. BG Desmond Kuek, "Rising to Army 21: Adding Value, Holding Values", *POINTER*, V25 N3 (Jul 99).
- e. *Spirit and System: Leadership Development for a Third Generation SAF*, *POINTER* Monograph 4.
- ³ At the last count, there are 18 major streams of leadership research, each generating a dominant leadership theory with variants within. It will be interesting to compare ideas of leadership in the SAF against these established streams of leadership research.
- ⁴ In fact, a CLD project is already underway to gradually introduce the gathering of multi-source feedback for Officers and Warrant Officers.
- ⁵ There is evidence that whether one is predominantly performance- or learning-oriented is biologically determined.
- ⁶ The acronym TALAC (Think and Act Like A Commander) refers to a training pedagogy used in OCS to train Officer Cadets to be expert decision-makers. See COL Ong Yu Lin and LTC Lim Beng Chong, "Training Expert Decision Makers", *POINTER*, Vol 31 N 2 (2005).
- ⁷ A formal definition is provided by Maurer, who defines development as a series of ongoing changes that occur through multiple learning experiences. Learning within the context of leadership development, according to Maurer (2002), is an increase or change in knowledge or skill as a result of experiencing something.
- ⁸ See COL Ong and LTC Lim, "Training Expert Decision Makers".
- ⁹ *Spirit and System: Leadership Development for a Third Generation SAF*, *POINTER* Monograph 4, Appendix iv. An expanded version can be found in Chan and Lew, which won "Best Paper Presentation" at the 40th International Applied Military Psychology Symposium in Oslo, Norway.
- ¹⁰ Mass Customisation is the customisation and personalisation of products and services for individual customers at a mass production price. The concept was first conceived by Stan Davis in *Future Perfect*. It was then further developed by Joseph Pine in his book *Mass Customisation – The New Frontier in Business Competition*.
- ¹¹ For an example of leadership simulators used in the business context, see the *vLeadership* software (www.simulearn.net).
- ¹² For example, cultural intelligence is recently included as a measure to be included in the design of the multi-source feedback system.
- ¹³ Applications of growth modelling statistics

such as latent growth modelling can change the way we plan for milestones and ROA courses for our leaders. It can help us create more homogeneous syndicates and be more timely in our developmental interventions during training courses.

¹⁴ Potential sources of LD health indicators include unit climate surveys, end-of-course training reports by the respective schoolhouses and statistics from HR communities on timeliness of postings and matching of posting preferences.



LTC Adrian Chan is presently a Branch Head in the SAF Centre of Leadership Development, SAFTI Military Institute. An Infantry Officer by training, he was formerly a Branch Head in Applied Behavioural Sciences Department. LTC Chan was awarded the SAF Merit Scholarship to pursue his Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Psychology from the University of London, U.K. He was also awarded the SAF Postgraduate Studies Award to pursue his MA in Management. He is currently completing his PhD in Management, specialising in Leadership Development with the Gallup Leadership Institute, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The IDF and the Second Lebanon War

by CPT(NS) Samuel Chan



Introduction

From 12 July to 14 August 2006, Israel and Hizbollah fought the Second Lebanon War which killed more than 1,000 Lebanese, mainly civilians, and claimed the lives of 116 Israeli Defense Force (IDF) personnel and 43 civilians.¹ Israel's incursion into Lebanon broke a six-year hiatus since its unilateral withdrawal in May 2000 after a two-decade long operation/occupation. More importantly, the stalemate which followed came without Israel accomplishing its primary objectives: the release of two kidnapped soldiers and the destruction of Hizbollah.² With the cardinal maxim of irregular warfare one where "the guerilla wins if he does

not lose [and] the conventional army loses if it does not win", Hizbollah trumpeted its 'victory', and left many wondering how this was possible, given the mythical, and once invincible, status of the IDF.³ This article argues that what transpired in 2006 was a combination of ineffective IDF strategies in dealing with Hizbollah from 1982-2000 and a trichotomy of endemic civil-military crisis that were painfully exposed during the 33-day war.

Hizbollah

From its "humble" beginning as a revolutionary movement in the early 1980s, Hizbollah's metamorphosis to its contemporary well-funded,

paramilitary, politically and socially influential form is comparable to the evolution of a small local business to a *Fortune* 500 multinational company. Indeed so well-organised and widely supported is Hizbollah that in 2003 former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage referred to Hizbollah as the “A-Team of Terrorists and *al-Qaeda* [maybe] the B-Team”.⁴ Hizbollah's potency was also evident in research conducted by the US Army War College which concluded that the group was “more effective than that of any Arab army that confronted Israel in the Jewish state's history, and [its operatives] wounded more Israelis per fighter than any previous Arab effort”.⁵ Tracing its roots to Imam Musa Sadr's *Harekat al-Mahrumin* (“Movement of the Deprived”), then evolving into *Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnania* (“Legions of Lebanese Resistance”), before forming Hizbollah, the group's *raison d'être* is to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon based on the fundamental teachings of the *Qur'an*; to destroy Israel; and to resist the intrusion of Western influence into the Middle East.⁶ Based on Hizbollah ideology and interpretation, the world is divided into two camps – the oppressor and the oppressed. Israel and the United States represent the forces of oppression while the Shi'ites of Lebanon and all Muslims are the oppressed and have the obligation to “fight the oppressor with every weapon available”.⁷

A common misconception is that Hizbollah is Iranian; it is not. Strategically, Iran's leaders “consider Hizbollah as an extension of itself in the Middle East”, but the bona fide Lebanese outfit still pursues its own agenda, and at times has clashed with Tehran.⁸ It was

Hizbollah that revealed the Iran-Contra Affair to the world in 1986; Hizbollah's spiritual leader Sheikh Fadlallah has criticised Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini's doctrinal basis of Iran's theocracy, and considers himself theologically superior to Iran's current “supreme leader” Ayatollah Khamenei.⁹ Operationally, Hizbollah's hallmark suicide bomb attacks create no illusion about the expertise possessed, as depicted by nefarious attacks on the US Embassy in Beirut (1983); the US Marine Barracks and French Paratrooper Barracks, which led to the withdrawal of the Multinational Force from Lebanon (1983); and their design of the truck bomb used in the attack on the Khobar Towers which housed US airmen in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1996).¹⁰ The group has also leveraged on mass communication and technology to bring balance to the asymmetric struggle with Israel and spread its message among supporting constituents, while waging psychological warfare on Israel by harnessing the power of mass communications. Through the throngs of websites on the internet, *al-Manar* TV (“the Lighthouse”), *al-Nour* (“the light”) radio, and *Qubth Ut Alla* (“The Fist of God”) magazine, Hizbollah has successfully entered the living rooms of Israeli household and entrenched itself firmly in the minds of its audience.¹¹

IDF Strategies (1982–2000)

The combination of unsuccessful IDF ground operations and Hizbollah psychological operations played a significant role in Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. Countermeasures employed against Hizbollah had short-term success as measured by IDF “kill

metrics” and frequency of attacks; however, this simply served to delay the inevitable follow-up waves of attacks and bombings. The Israelis in Lebanon suffered a similar fate as the United States in Vietnam. Indeed Henry Kissinger could have been describing the Israelis when he said “We fought a military war; our opponents fought a political one. We sought physical attrition; our opponents aimed for our psychological exhaustion.”¹² Hizbollah’s survival against each successive IDF onslaught significantly strengthened the party’s standing among the Arab world as the “unrivaled protector of Lebanese sovereignty against Israeli occupation”.¹³ Over time, a political war Hizbollah did fight and psychological exhaustion it did achieve – using the whole spectrum of mass communication to garner support from sympathisers and to chip away at the morale of ordinary Israelis – one that was weary of casualties, especially from conscripts. While the IDF was winning on the battlefield, this had short-term impact on Hizbollah which simply recruited, re-trained and re-organised. Hizbollah was winning the battle for public opinion through long-term attrition and a “Get out and we’ll stop” message.

As it duelled with Hizbollah, the IDF employed both active and passive countermeasures. During the 1st International Conference on Low Intensity Conflict Warfare in 2004, then IDF *Ramatkal* (Chief of General Staff) Lieutenant-General (LTG) Moshe Ya’alon reminded participants that even though the IDF’s war with terrorists is often perceived as asymmetric, it is definitely not unbalanced. The conference highlighted that “for the

terrorist any target is legitimate, whereas the military force is very selective in selecting the targets for its activities; and where the military force has high visibility, the terrorist quickly fades into his environment and even outside of it.”¹⁴ As such, two countermeasures were adopted – intelligence dominance and targeted killings – both of which proved counter-productive.¹⁵

Intelligence was an intricate component considering the strength of Hizbollah’s support and chameleon-like presence in southern Lebanon, and its patience to wage a perpetual war. LTG Ya’alon stressed the importance of intelligence as a critical factor for managing and dominating the low intensity conflict. Combating terrorism conducted from a civilian environment increased the necessity of hard, precise and qualitative intelligence from various sources to provide the ability to choose the targets without inflicting collateral damage.¹⁶ In the case of the IDF in Lebanon, various sources tasked with gathering intelligence like the Lebanon Liaison Unit may have actually helped Hizbollah receive early warning of impending IDF operations.¹⁷ Evidence of such practices was made public in December 2000, when the Israeli newspapers and military sources reported the disbandment of the IDF Lebanon Liaison Unit due to corruption and alleged involvement in aiding Hizbollah.¹⁸

Whilst some commentators have questioned the legitimacy and moral implications of targeted killings, LTG Ya’alon reasoned that the tactic is a proactive countermeasure – “The idea that you have to hunt down the

terrorist, and catch or kill them before they can take action, is the essence of preemption; the policy of targeted killings for example, has become a tactic requiring no explanation.”¹⁹ Yet, how productive are targeted killings? Former chief of CIA counter-terrorism operations Vincent Cannistraro argued that targeted killings are “ineffective in achieving their stated objective of deterring terrorism and ... inevitably the conditions for more terrorism and suicide bombings, with the attendant killing of innocents, are created. The other side believes a ‘blood debt’ has been incurred that obligates a revenge response.”²⁰ Providing an example of what terrorism expert Boaz Ganor terms the “Boomerang Effect”, Cannistraro points to the 16 February 1992 killing of then Hizbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Abbas Mussawi, who was quickly, and ably, replaced by Sheikh Hussain Nasrallah. This event he argues did not weaken Hizbollah and that the assassination spurred revenge attacks in the form of suicide and car bombings carried out against the AIMA building in Argentina and the Israeli Embassies in Argentina and the United Kingdom.²¹

Proponents of targeted killings point instead to the “success” that this countermeasure has had on other “terrorist” organisations. A cited example would be the assassinations of successive Hamas leaders Sheik Ahmed Yassin (22 March 2004) and Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi (17 April 2004). This confidence sapping countermeasure supposedly curbed Hamas aggression during the *al-Aqsa intifada* (uprising), but “short term, it [was] certain that Hamas [would] exact a price that Israelis will pay [for] with their lives. The only uncertainty [was]

when, where and who”.²² So the cycle of violence is perpetuated – Hamas exacted revenge for its slain leaders on 31 August 2004 via a double suicide bombing in Beersheba, leading to an IDF ground assault into the Gaza strip to overcome Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli towns.²³

Based on attrition, the losses which numbered “tens of dead and many dozens of wounded every year were extremely hard on the families whose sons fell [in Lebanon], and the cumulative effect of the losses affected [Israel’s] determination to maintain a military presence there. Hizbollah [also] made every effort to [record] their attacks on IDF positions in south Lebanon and [made] sure that the tapes reached the broadcast media in Israel so that the public would see its sons defending themselves against the Hizbollah fighters”.²⁴ Withdrawal from Lebanon came on 20 May 2000 amidst claims that it would remove Hizbollah’s motivation for fighting Israel; give Israel greater international legitimacy; made tactical sense since defending the Galilee would be better accomplished from the Israeli side of the border; and that it would set in motion a stabilisation process in Southern Lebanon. Opponents, however, decried the withdrawal as it would provide the perception that Hizbollah was “victorious” without dialogue; and that Israel had abandoned its allies in Lebanon (e.g. the South Lebanon Army) making it an arduous task to find other allies in the region in the future.²⁵ To Hizbollah, the withdrawal was evident that “the IDF can be engaged in a protracted no-win warfare, and real damage can be inflicted on its

soldiers and hardware”, while the lack of strategic stamina also proved that the IDF was “designed for sprint wars, and not for marathon wars”.²⁶

The War

The trigger point of the Second Lebanon War occurred on 12 July 2006 when a brazen Hizbollah ambush on a patrol from the IDF’s Brigade 130 (the unit responsible for the western section of Israel’s northern border with Lebanon) killed Sergeant-Major Eyal Benin (then 22 years old), Sergeant-Major Shani Turgeman (24), Staff-Sergeant Wassim Nazal (27); and led to the abduction of Master Sergeant Ehud Goldwasser (31), and First Sergeant Eldad Regev (26).²⁷ Israel held the Lebanese government accountable as the terrorist act was launched from Lebanese soil and threatened to “turn Lebanon back 20 years by striking its vital infrastructure” if Goldwasser and Regev “were not returned in good condition”.²⁸

That Hizbollah should adopt kidnapping as a strategy hinged on past successes. On 7 October 2000, Hizbollah operatives disguised as UN staff seized Staff Sergeants Binyamin Abraham (21), Adi Avitan (22) and Omar Sawaed (27), all of whom were later executed or died of wounds suffered as they were taken.²⁹ Subsequently, under a controversial German-mediated swap in 2004, Israel released 435 Arab prisoners (400 Palestinians, 23 Lebanese and 12 nationals of other countries) and returned the bodies of 59 Lebanese militants in exchange for the bodies of the three soldiers and Elhanan Tannenbaum, an Israeli businessman

and army reserve Colonel who tried “to conduct an illicit business deal with Hizbollah” at the time of his abduction in Dubai.³⁰ The lopsided swap proved that “wielding pressure tactics proved beneficial in targeting [Israel’s] weak points and forcing it to pay dearly no matter how high the price” wrote Hizbollah’s Deputy Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem.³¹ The event also allowed the party to “increase its circle of concern and include the resistance fighters and civilians of Palestine, [which in turn elevated] Hizbollah’s standing both in Lebanon and the region”.³² Israeli ministers who voted against the German-mediated exchange argued prophetically that the swap would strengthen Hizbollah’s reputation and encourage the militants to kidnap more Israelis.³³

Hizbollah’s view of Israeli society also precipitated the kidnapping and assumed that civilians were Israel’s Achilles’ heel. In his “victory speech” celebrating Israel’s 2000 withdrawal, Nasrallah proclaimed that Israel suffered from the “Spider Web” syndrome, whereby “Israel’s reverence for human life and the hedonistic nature of Israeli society [made] it weak and unable to sustain continued war and bloodshed”, even if it possessed “a nuclear weapon and the strongest air force in the region”.³⁴ Under such circumstances, Hizbollah’s leaders assumed that any Israeli course of action would come in kinetic form leveraging on IDF technological advantages (i.e. heavy air and artillery strikes) and perhaps *sayarot* (“reconnaissance units”, commonly called special forces) but not a massive ground invasion. Under such assumptions, Hizbollah scattered thousands of Katyusha launchers and

rockets across Lebanon in order to enhance survivability and ensure its ability to sustain firepower (an average of over 100 Katyusha rockets hit Israel during the conflict); mobile launchers were also utilised to allow Hizbollah operatives to fire and hide before the IDF could initiate counter-fire (a method which reportedly failed as the Israeli Air Force (IAF) supposedly destroyed almost any mid-range launcher that fired into Israel); an elaborate ground and logistics infrastructure was also prepared in view of a long campaign and served to protect Hizbollah assets (e.g. fighters, equipment) from air and surface attacks.³⁵ The intimidation of Israeli civilians through indiscriminate rocket fire was deliberate. Through persistent terror and disruption of the daily life, Hizbollah assumed that everyday citizens will convert “grievances into political pressure [against the Israeli] leaderships [and] change the political agendas”.³⁶ Indeed, over three quarters of the nearly 4,000 Katyushas fired landed in open fields and caused little damage; however, those that hit urban areas paralysed the critical infrastructure of northern Israel and internally displaced over a million Israelis.³⁷



Ehud Olmert – Prime Minister of Israel during the Second Lebanon War

Politically, Israel was led by a rather inexperienced team. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Defence Minister Amir Peretz were career politicians with almost no military experience, while LTG Dan Halutz, the first IAF pilot to serve as *Ramatkal*, had no ground combat experience.³⁸ To make matters worse, Olmert and Peretz obtained cabinet support for war based on ambiguous goals and modes of operation “so that ministers with different or even contradictory attitudes [supported] it, without understanding and knowing its nature and implications”.³⁹ Militarily, immediate military action was hastily authorised and leaders “failed to adapt the military way of operation and its goals to the reality on the ground”.⁴⁰ Even as IAF fighters prepared to bomb Lebanon, the Research Department of *Aman* (IDF intelligence) concluded “that the heavy bombing campaign and small ground offensive [would not] win the release of the two Israeli soldiers in Hizbollah’s hands nor reduce the militia’s rocket attacks on Israel to fewer than 100 a day”.⁴¹ The years of neglect and containment also contributed to intelligence “misevaluation” of Hizbollah’s combat capabilities including the location, quantity and type of weapons; the number of fighters in theatre; and the defensive positions and obstacles created (resulting in units making non-realistic rehearsals before entering southern Lebanon).⁴² How and why did this happen?

Crisis in the IDF

The IDF is a technologically advanced force that consists of 20,000 career soldiers and 105,000 conscripts; with full mobilisation it could reach 625,000.⁴³

Shrouded in a mythical past peppered with spectacular victories against overwhelming odds, the highly vaunted IDF now suffered from a trichotomy of crisis before the war, namely a crisis of purpose, a crisis in relations between the IDF and its political masters, and a crisis in relations between the IDF and Israeli Society.⁴⁴

The crisis of purpose began at the conclusion of the last major war in 1982. Subsequently, the IDF's mission of defending against external state actors shifted to irregular warfare against various non-state actors in southern Lebanon, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Correspondingly, training focus shifted from large scale exercises to "small scale tactics and policing duties" and during actual operations, IDF troops found themselves looking "upon mostly empty-handed Palestinian men, women, and children as if they were in fact a serious military threat".⁴⁵ This resulted in warfighting atrophy to the extent where "among the commanders, the great majority can barely remember when they trained for and engaged in anything more dangerous than police-type operations ... in the entire IDF there is now hardly an officer left who has commanded so much as a brigade in a *real war*".⁴⁶ Within the ranks of regular soldiers, patriotism – once the mainstay of servitude in the IDF – was overshadowed by careerism, partly fuelled by the erosion of IDF wages over the last two decades, the nascent manifestation of which threatens the very foundation of the IDF.⁴⁷ Speaking to graduates of the IDF Staff and Command College, its former commander Brigadier-General (BG) Yitzchaki Chen warned that "the plague of careerism has begun to spread

among us. Fewer of us ask themselves what we might give to the army and country. Instead, we check to see what we have received, and what more we might get".⁴⁸

Warfighting atrophy was not lost on IDF reservist soldiers who had expected much more from their military leadership. Veterans of the July-August War marched on Olmert's residence in Jerusalem to complain that a lack of supplies and clear military directions put their lives in danger. "The training was lacking, the logistic was lacking, everything lacking mostly, except for the spirit of the soldiers" highlighted one reservist.⁴⁹ In a meeting with LTG Dan Halutz, reservists from the Alexandroni Brigade conveyed their lack of confidence in senior IDF officers, as a result of repeated mission cancellations that "led to prolonged stays in hostile territory without an operational purpose".⁵⁰ High-level criticisms also came from BG Yossi Hyman, then commander of the Infantry Corps and Paratroops, who reflected that "despite heroic fighting by the soldiers and commanders, especially at the company and battalion level, we all feel a certain sense of failure and missed opportunity".⁵¹ The vociferous flag officer also admitted being "guilty of the sin of arrogance" and feeling "no relief whatsoever in the face of the array of excuses".⁵²

The crisis in relations between the IDF and its political masters that had the greatest impact on the Second Lebanon War occurred between the withdrawal from Lebanon until the July 2006 kidnappings. During this period, Israel's policy was one of "restraint and moderation, even [when Hizbollah]

initiated the aggression”.⁵³ Hindsight reasons that Israel should have followed a policy of retaliation and not restraint when soldiers were kidnapped in 2000.⁵⁴ Leaving Hizbollah alone was never going to secure peace, not when the group’s reason for existence was the destruction of Israel. However, the proposal for an appropriate response by then *Ramatkal*, LTG Shaul Mofaz, to the October 2000 kidnappings was rejected by the civilian leadership, resulting in “several insignificant and ineffective aerial attacks [marking] the beginning of the policy of restraint and containment, moderation and a low-key response” as opposed to the concepts of deterrence, namely “retaliation, preemption, seizure of the initiative, and surprise”.⁵⁵ This defensive stance allowed Hizbollah to establish complete control over a swath of territory for which to conduct operations against Israel; and build up an impressive military arsenal which included thousands of rockets that placed the whole of northern Israel within range.⁵⁶

The after-effect resulted in an IDF that was weakened operationally due to a host of other measures such as the replacement of regular army units with reservists along Israel’s northern border (2002); restrictions to act on credible intelligence which allowed Hizbollah to make a kidnap attempt and pour heavy fire into Israel (2005); elimination of forward positions; decreased training budget for reserve units by US\$800 million (since 2001); reduction in the size of tank formations; discontinued production of the top-line *Merkava* tank; the decision not to install the *Trophy* anti-missile system on most tanks and not to equip

the IAF with bunker buster bombs.⁵⁷ Strategically, the years out of Lebanon were marked by sour relations between the IDF and the civilian leadership which inhibited “decisiveness, initiative and responsibility” at the top echelons of the IDF and when it was finally called upon, the Israeli war machine failed to conduct preparation for war “more fully, widely and earlier”.⁵⁸

Another cause of friction is the expectation charged on the IDF by civilian society, no doubt exacerbated by conscription and history. In his analysis of the war, Nahum Barnea, a columnist for Israel’s *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper, described it as a “battle over expectations, [one where] the Israeli public expected too much, the cost of the conflict was higher than anticipated and the benefits fewer. [It also] revealed the Israeli public’s intolerance for even the appearance of failure [and expectation of] a rapid victory with few body bags and minimal collateral damage”.⁵⁹ As a symbiotic relation exists between the IDF and Israeli society by virtue of conscription, the wars it fights are under more scrutiny as opposed to a professional army – conscripts joined the army by law, while professionals are volunteers to be in the army. Indeed, polls indicated that public support for the war started to decline after IDF ground forces fought tough engagements at Maroun al-Ras and Bint Jbail; the pivotal moment of which came on 6 August 2006 when Hizbollah rockets killed 12 reservists at Kfar Giladi, turning the tide of public support against the Olmert administration.⁶⁰

The lingering impression of past victories has also shaped CMR in Israel,



Soldiers marching during Six-Day War

with expectations of: a rapid victory (after all, the IDF did defeat four Arab armies in six days in 1967); low IDF and Lebanese civilian casualties (the “price” could not be too high as Israel’s survival was not threatened, unlike past wars); and a clear and total victory (depicted by formal surrender or rendering the opponent combat-ineffective).⁶¹ Predicated upon this mindset, observers have criticised the IDF’s inability to quell the Palestinian *intifadas* and for failing to destroy Hizbollah; oblivious to the fact that Israel as a democratic state is incapable of “defeating counter-revolutionary warfare in occupied territories without violating its own democratic character”.⁶² Christoph Marcinkowski, a scholar in Islamic, Southeast Asian, and Iranian studies wrote “it has to be understood that Hizbollah is an integral part of reality in [southern Lebanon]. A ‘rooting-out’ of Hizbollah from its firmly entrenched *Việt Công* style positions can only be achieved by ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the Shi’ites from the south, which will amount to genocide”.⁶³

The tri-causal factors have taken its toll on the IDF, which today has become “high-tech but soft, bloated, strife-ridden... [whereas] it was once

[a] superb fighting force of a ‘small but brave’ people”.⁶⁴ ‘Small and brave’ groups still exist, exemplified by 142 individuals who were decorated for efforts in the Second Lebanon War (including 6 Medals of Valor and 12 Distinguished Service Medals); all testaments of their dedication and courage despite being thrown into the cauldron of battle “unprepared, untrained and frustrated by ever-changing orders [performing] above all expectations within the ranks of a confused and degenerating army”.⁶⁵

Conclusion

After 34 days of intense bombardment and a lacklustre ground assault, Israel did not fulfill its objectives for going to war with Hizbollah. The IDF soldiers remain kidnapped, while Hizbollah remains firmly entrenched in southern Lebanon. Since 1982, the IDF has tried unsuccessfully to eliminate, and then later to contain, Hizbollah due to counter-productive measures and because the Shi’ite Lebanese outfit is a bona fide movement that is firmly entrenched and supported fervently by its constituencies. As such, this should have indicated that a military solution was not going to solve either objective.

More importantly, the war highlighted the weaknesses in the IDF brought about by tri-causal factors of crisis within the organisation. The crisis of purpose, the crisis in relations between the IDF and its political masters, and the crisis in civil-military relations all contributed to the results of the summer campaign of 2006. It must be remembered that while Hizbollah may not threaten the survival of Israel, a confused and

degenerating army certainly will. As such, it is in Israel's interest to address the root causes of friction that have led to the state of the IDF it is today. Defense minister Peretz and LTG Halutz have been replaced by Ehud Barak, a former *Ramatkal* and the most decorated soldier in IDF history, and LTG Gabi Ashkenazi respectively.⁶⁶ This replacement exercise was expected but much lies ahead to restore the pride and confidence of the IDF and the government in the eyes of the Israeli public, and most importantly the men who will fill the ranks of the IDF. 

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CPT(NS) Samuel Chan was formerly the Jebesen Fellow at the Centre for Conflict and Peace Studies (CAPS) in Kabul, Afghanistan (2006), and an Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore (2007-8). A 2008 British Chevening Scholar, he is currently undertaking Russian and East European Studies at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford. CPT (NS) Chan is currently an NSman serving with HQ Guards.

Rethinking Political Supremacy in War:

A Review Essay of Clausewitz and Huntington

by Mr Evan A. Laksmana

“Clausewitz does not say much about civil-military relations in *On War*. Where he does address the subject, [he] is not talking about not politicians or civilians, *per se*.”

Antulio J. Echevarria¹

“Clausewitz did write a lot about civil-military relations. Even in *On War*.”

Peter Paret²

“Clausewitz did NOT write about civil-military relations, and... There is a silence in *On War*, except to tell us that war is the servant and ‘Politik’ is the master.”

Colin S. Gray³

In the realm of modern civil-military relations literature, Samuel P. Huntington, who recently passed away on Christmas Eve 2008, and his book, *The Soldier and The State*⁴ has been said to be the cornerstone of the subject as he advocated military professionalism and “objective” control by civilians.⁵ Huntington however, was influenced by Clausewitz’s work on political supremacy in war as a foundation of his own thesis. He claimed that Clausewitz “contributed the first theoretical justification for civilian control”⁶, hence, giving a special privilege to Clausewitz’s argument that war is the “mere continuation of *politik* by other means”⁷.

This most frequently quoted passage from Clausewitz’s *On War*, however, should be understood within the shadow of the Cold War. The uneasiness of a nuclear threat and major conventional wars had induced scholars to stress the role of policy in limiting war.⁸ Additionally, the liberal-democratic values of Clausewitz’s interpreters had an effect too, as they saw civilian control as a prerequisite to safeguard individual liberties. These notions however indicate that scholars like Huntington might have fallen into the standard mistake of only quoting those chapters or passages to justify their own choices or preferred policies.⁹ Obviously, this is ultimately misleading.

Therefore, this review article is meant to unlock the traditional foundation of civil-military relations, i.e. political supremacy, expressed in Huntington’s work. This would mainly be done by reviewing the thinking of Clausewitz on political supremacy, whom Huntington drew his philosophical foundation from.¹⁰ This article argues that *first*, Clausewitz’s Trinitarian concept of war – hostility, chance, political purpose – does not portray policy as more dominant than the other tendencies; instead, it presents them as equals, stressing only each one’s uniqueness

in relation to the others.¹¹ *Second*, Huntington's misinterpretation of *On War* might have resulted from his use of a 1943 faulty translation of the book, coupled with his political ideology and inclinations to solve the problems facing the US at that time. This article would proceed, *first*, by telling the story about the theoretician themselves, and will focus on their careers and personal lives, and how that provided the context which propelled both men to produce their *magnum opus*. The *second* part would look at the theories that they articulated throughout their work and show how Huntington misinterpreted Clausewitz, while outlining what the latter actually meant. *Finally*, we would look at some conclusions drawn from the discussion.

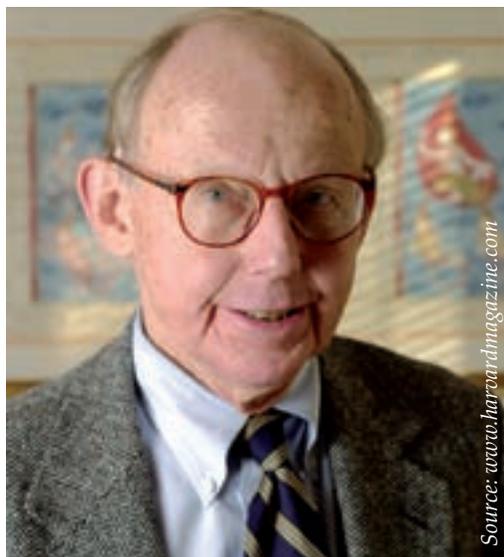
Clausewitz and Huntington: The Men and their Lives



Carl Phillip Gottlieb von Clausewitz

Carl Phillip Gottlieb von Clausewitz was born on 1 June 1780. His father

served in one of Frederick the Great's regiments.¹² Thus, as he was growing up he saw almost nobody but officers, and at the age of 12 he joined the army.¹³ By the age of 21, he entered the War College in Berlin under the direction of General Gerhard Scarnhost, who would later become his mentor and biggest influence.¹⁴ Clausewitz was a typical educated representative of his generation. He attended lectures, read relevant non-professional books and articles, and drew scraps of ideas from his cultural environment.¹⁵



Samuel Phillips Huntington

Such an early career and strong influence from school and family upbringing is similar to Huntington's. Samuel Phillips Huntington was born on 18 April 1927 in New York and grew up among writers: his father was an editor, mother a writer, grandfather a publisher.¹⁶ He graduated with exceptional distinction from Yale College at the age of 18.¹⁷ After a brief stint at the US Army, he went to Chicago University to obtain a Masters degree in 1948. He then moved to Harvard University

where he encountered a faculty of strong intellectuals, but researched and wrote his dissertation in four months.¹⁸ By June 1950 (age 23), he began teaching there.

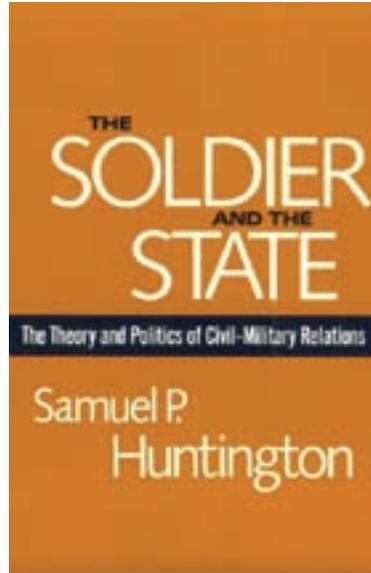
Meanwhile, for Clausewitz, his existence as a soldier, and the driving factor in his career, was determined by his relentless focus on France and Napoleonic warfare.¹⁹ Although much of his Francophobia were influenced by his wife, Marie Countess von Bruhl, his focus on France was not blind hatred, but pushed by his ardent nationalism for Prussia, which saw the full wrath of Napoleon’s army in 1806. Thus, Clausewitz lived in a new age of politics and warfare, leading him to write his first draft of *On War*.²⁰



Clausewitz's *On War*

The same could be said for Huntington who lived through World War II and the ensuing nuclear era. By 1952, developments in national and international politics were reshaping his political and intellectual interests.²¹ As détente soured in the late 1970s, his

research focus began to turn to issues of national security – although thus far he had been focusing on American politics. The rift between Truman and MacArthur drew him into issues of civil-military relations, culminating in his book, *The Soldier and The State*.



Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and The State*

Meanwhile, Clausewitz’s career, although a military professional, was marked by deep reflections and theoretical thinking. His strong interest in military theory dates at least from his days at the War College.²² In 1810-1811 Clausewitz was in charge of lectures on small war, while tutoring the Prussian crown prince. In this context he applied his thinking and began to theorise many of the issues surrounding war which would later form the basis of his work.²³

Huntington was somewhat the opposite. Despite his academic commitment, his career was also filled with his involvement in public affairs. He played an increasingly senior role

in several Democratic Party national campaigns.²⁴ From 1966 to 1969, he chaired the Vietnam sub-committee of the American government's Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, and in 1977-78, he was a senior member and coordinator of security planning in the National Security Council.²⁵

As an individual, Clausewitz was a difficult person; more at ease in a library than in Berlin's vibrant salons or among most of his fellow officers.²⁶ Huntington was also an unusually private person, not given to self-revelation and seemingly more at ease in public debates than in intimate settings.²⁷ Thus, both men, although marked by striking intelligence and intellectual integrity, seem to display complex personalities that defy easy categorisation.

Meanwhile, Clausewitz's work reflected a method of combining history and theory as the basis for the study of critical decision-making intended to educate the mind of the commander.²⁸ For Clausewitz, history and theory were closely linked, and a valid theory of politics and war could be developed only by taking into account the past and the present.²⁹ Thus, historical study became a major component of his pursuit of theory. Huntington also sought to develop a theoretical framework for understanding military institutions in the modern world.³⁰ His emphasis on theory was argued on the basis that abstraction and simplification were essential to clear thinking. Like Clausewitz, he also wrote as a historian: over two-thirds of his book consists of a history of military professionalism and civil-military relations in the United States.

Thus, we can see many similarities in their career and personal life. Both began their career at a young age; both had a profound conviction in theory and history; both had strong nationalist fervour; both felt the need to explain the changes of their time; both were involved in the theoretical and policy realm; and both were private, highly intellectual, and complex people. One fundamental difference set them apart: their studious passion. Clausewitz had been preoccupied with war since he was a kid and never turned away from it, while Huntington was a newcomer to the issue of military affairs since he initially focused on American politics.

Clausewitz and Huntington: Their Theories

Throughout his life, Clausewitz was motivated by the desire to work out a comprehensive view of war.³¹ From the time he first started writing about war, he was convinced that war and policy was related, though the nature of the linkages had to be determined, and was already concerned about the physical and moral realities of war.³² Additionally, as mentioned before, his military career was determined by Napoleonic warfare. This led him to think and write (from 1804-1827) about the "ideal" type of war – the absolute war fought from a purely logical point of view, "unlimited".³³

However, Napoleon's defeat in 1814 and the settlement of 1815 marked a transition to more stable international politics and Clausewitz's life reverted to routine.³⁴ By 1819, he was appointed Superintendent of the War College in Berlin and charged with much

administrative work.³⁵ Although he was not entirely happy with this³⁶, he was in fact beginning to feel free to engage in more inward, intellectual activity.³⁷ Moreover, this gave him time to write *On War*, which he began to write in 1818 and last added to in 1830.



Battle of Waterloo

In this post-Napoleon period, Clausewitz's concern shifted to the problem of securing Prussia's status, strength, and stability within Europe.³⁸ In addition, as a result of Moscow and Waterloo, he came to appreciate the fundamental contrast between limited and unlimited war.³⁹ He then tried to reconcile his understanding of the "unlimited" Napoleonic warfare with his new awareness of the diversity of wars in reality.⁴⁰ However, before having revised *On War* completely, he was called to active duty in 1830, and on 16 November 1831, he died after a mild cholera that precipitated a heart attack.

His unfinished manuscript was subsequently published by his widow in 1832-1834 without any alterations, but a second edition was issued in the 1850s with the text heavily disfigured by editorial changes. Paret argued that these obscured texts changed Clausewitz's argument in favor of civilian supremacy over military leadership in war.⁴¹ The earliest English

translation, the "Graham-Maude" text⁴² was based on a corrupt third edition – as well as the American version edited by O.J. Matthijs Jolles, released after World War II. Significantly, this is the edition that Huntington used for *The Soldier and The State*.⁴³

Nevertheless, Clausewitz's theory of war can be considered from two broad perspectives: his thoughts about the relationship between politics and war, and about the nature of war.⁴⁴ In the former, Clausewitz insists that the only source of war is politics and "the political object, which was the original motive...will determine both the military objective and the amount of effort it requires", hence, "war is an act of policy".⁴⁵ He restated that, "war is the mere continuation of *politik* by other means".⁴⁶ In German, the word *politik* can mean both policy and politics, and in his usage, the term has objective and subjective aspects – the former means the extension of the will of the ruler, the latter means an actual manifestation of politics that can vary from era to era. *Politik* is influenced by, and thus reflects, the "specific characteristics" of a geopolitical position as well as the general "spirit of the age".⁴⁷

However, he warned that "political aim must adapt itself to its chosen means", implying that although politics must always hold sovereign over warfare, "that does not imply that political aim is a tyrant".⁴⁸ Thus, he is arguing that "war in general, and the commander in any specific instance, is entitled to require that the trend and design of policy shall not be inconsistent with these means".⁴⁹ But although "it is no small demand;

however much it may affect political aims in a given case, it will never do more than modify them". Clausewitz suggested that this conundrum is avoidable if senior political leaders have some familiarity with military affairs, although he did not use limited professional expertise (military skills) to limit political influence over the conduct of war. This point, as we shall see later, will differ with Huntington's notion of professionalism.

Many cited this as Clausewitz's "greatest contribution to the study of war"⁵⁰, but as straightforward as it may sound, establishing "political supremacy" is extremely difficult.⁵¹ However, it should be noted that this notion of "political supremacy" is only one of three tendencies within the "remarkable trinity": "primordial violence, hatred, and enmity; the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone".⁵² These three tendencies of equal importance act as a unity – which stems from a religious analytical dimension of Trinity: the idea of one being three, and three being as one.⁵³ In addition, according to the 1827 planned revision, the formula of "political supremacy" cannot be separated from the two types of war (unlimited and limited).⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Huntington, who, as mentioned above, used a corrupt edition of *On War*, finds the theoretical foundations of his thought in Clausewitz's study of war. From the Clausewitzian primacy of politics over war, he derived the ethical and

practical delimitation of the military profession.⁵⁵ Some have suggested however that, some Americans, including Huntington, have a higher opinion of Clausewitz partly because his doctrine can be made to serve their ideological interest.⁵⁶ This is especially true for those looking for a defense of civilian supremacy and limited war in the aftermath of World War II.

Policy control however is not a literal synonym for civilian control.⁵⁷ Clausewitz seems to feel that civilian control over the military is more a matter of empirical historical fact than a normative ideal, while indicating the ideal of "the statesmen and soldier...in one person". Similarly, political control over the use of force was, for Clausewitz, more a matter of subordinating an operational point of view to a strategic or, better, a grand strategic perspective.⁵⁸ What mattered was that the perspective itself was a unifying one and that wartime decisions were made on that basis. Therefore, as Echevarria argues, "does it matter in Clausewitz's approach whether Napoleon is a military man or a civilian? No. What does matter is that Napoleon has the state's interests in mind when he makes military strategy and fights campaigns".⁵⁹

This American simplification of Clausewitz has ideological roots; but their appreciation of him is more than that. Following World War II, America was a superpower in a global contest with nuclear potentials, an unfamiliar condition for Americans. Huntington's usage of Clausewitzian view was seen as an antidote to this confusion as he accepts the inevitability and normality of international conflicts.⁶⁰ *The Soldier*

and *The State* basically outlined that America should expect conflict as a part of life, and should be prepared to use military means in a rational manner to obtain its goals. Meanwhile, the military should embrace an ethos, part of which is the subordination to policy control. Such professionalism would maximise military security.⁶¹

The primary question here is to develop a system of civil-military relations that can maximise military security with minimum sacrifice of other social values.⁶² He also argued that civil-military relations essentially reflect the political relationship between the state and officer corps.⁶³ Moreover, the responsibility of the military profession lies in the fact that managed violence must be used for socially approved purposes: the officer's client is the state and his fundamental responsibility is to the state.⁶⁴

Subsequently, Huntington is focused on determining how civilian control can be effectively exercised, and contended that there are two types of political control: subjective and objective control.⁶⁵ The former is exercised by maximising the power of one or more social groups over the armed forces, while the latter is chiefly based on the recognition of an autonomous military professionalism and on a rigid separation of the latter from the political sphere. His theoretical base, chiefly from Clausewitz, made him lean towards the last one. Once the supremacy of politics is accepted, if the military is an autonomous sector of science and knowledge, the officer must enjoy a professional autonomy of his own.

After *The Soldier and The State*, Huntington published *The Changing Pattern of Military Politics* where he argued that there was a new trend in the 1960s characterised by the recovery of old powers and emergence of new ones, and the rapid pace of economic development in advanced societies and of social change in less developed ones.⁶⁶ Additionally, the principal military arenas in world politics had shifted to the violence and domestic politics of the colonial territories and independent states of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia.⁶⁷ This he believed was a reflection of the prevalence of rapid social and political change. In one sense, this is similar to Clausewitz who postulated that the "transformation in the art of war follows from the transformation of politics and society".

Huntington also continued to use Clausewitzian dictum in explaining the classic theory of intergovernmental wars when he argued that what Clausewitz meant by war as a continuation policy was actually war as a continuation of foreign policy.⁶⁸ Ironically, he also argued that Clausewitz's theory is only partially relevant to the prevailing intra-state wars at that time.⁶⁹ This of course is a misrepresentation of Clausewitz's overall approach to war. He also maintained that Clausewitz's analysis on the relation of military force to politics postulated a system of objective civilian control, although he later conceded that subjective control is more relevant for domestic intra-state wars.⁷⁰

This notion would be further explored in his *Political Order in Changing Societies*, where he argued that one of

the most common features of political modernisation is the intervention of the military in politics.⁷¹ Subsequently, Huntington collaborated with Andrew J. Goodpaster to address the shifting pattern of civil-military relations in the US after the Vietnam War.⁷² Finally, in perhaps one of his last works on civil-military relations, Huntington addressed the issue of civil-military relations in new democracies.⁷³



The shifting pattern of civil-military relations in the US after the Vietnam War.

The legacies of Huntington’s misrepresentation of Clausewitzian dictum on political supremacy have led his subsequent students, and virtually most civil-military relations scholars, to believe in the strict and distinct roles for civilians and military. For example, Peter D. Feaver, a noted scholar of civil-military relations and Huntington’s student, argued that Clausewitzian logic stipulates that operations are the exclusive province of the military.⁷⁴

Conclusion

To conclude, it appears that Huntington never fully understood what Clausewitz meant. His first misinterpretation was on the fact that Clausewitz did not address civilian control *per se* when he stated “war is a

continuation of *politik* with other means”. Clausewitz was merely showing that war does not have a logic of its own, that the political objective determines war’s character, and every war has its *zeitgeist*. His second misinterpretation was that he believed that political supremacy should prevail in wartime and peacetime. In fact, Clausewitz was addressing specifically about issues of war where its grammar and Trinitarian component highlight the unique features of war – which would not be present in peacetime.



MacArthur vs Truman

Based on our discussion, there are several possible reasons why Huntington misinterprets Clausewitz. *First*, his usage of a faulty translation of *On War* which was altered to favour, perhaps unevenly, absolute civilian supremacy over the military. *Second*, his usage of certain passages from *On War* driven by his will to justify a theory aimed at answering his concern over the state of national security in America during the Cold War, especially after the Truman-MacArthur episode. In this regard, his intellectual integrity might be compromised to a certain extent by his political ideology and activities. As a final remark, a theory of civil-military relations should distinguish the dynamic relationship between the

political and military leadership during wartime and peacetime. Any theory that tries to encompass both times is bound to fall into a logical fallacy. Understanding Clausewitzian dictum on war is always a good first step in understanding the dynamics in war, including political supremacy. 

Endnotes

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- 48 Clausewitz, *On War*, p735.
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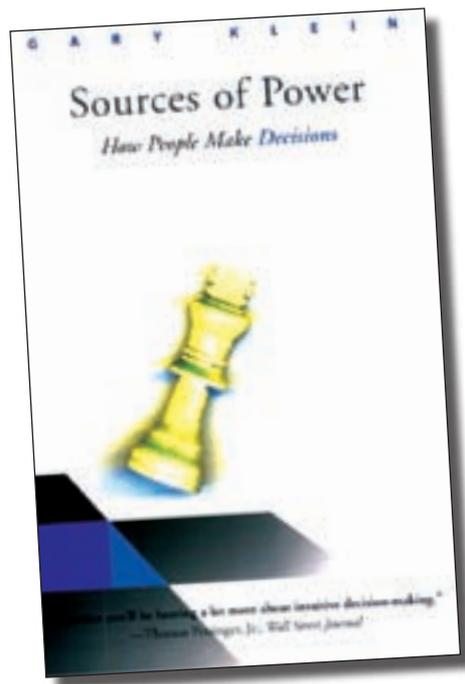


Mr. Evan A. Laksmana is concurrently a research analyst and MSc student in Strategic Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also affiliated as an analyst with the California-based Overseas Think Tank for Indonesia. He graduated Cum Laude with a bachelor's degree in political science from the Department of International Relations, Parahyangan Catholic University, Indonesia, where he served as president of the Students' Study Group for International Affairs. He has also been actively involved in the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations (HPAIR), and has written on strategic theory, civil-military relations, and Indonesian political and military affairs.

BOOK REVIEW

Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions

by Mr Toh Ee Loong



Gary Klein,
Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions

During a seminar hosted by HQ TRADOC, Dr Gary Klein told the SAF audience about how he and his team had been embedded in the higher echelons of a major US Army exercise. They were there to observe, as unobtrusively as possible, what senior planners and staff officers actually did in the course of the exercise. The US Army had introduced a formal Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) to improve

operating tempo but it was found to be “procedural and cumbersome”. In actual practice, MDMP was often “abbreviated” by the end users. “Of course”, he said to laughter from the audience, “I’m sure you guys don’t have that problem.”

The most interesting argument put forward by Klein and his associates was that the staff process still worked

reasonably well; the job still got done. In fact, these “abbreviations” helped rather than hindered planners in their work. Military officers were able to tailor the formal process in a way that allowed them to speedily make effective decisions in a dynamic situation by drawing on their professional experiences and knowledge in an intuitive, rather than process-rational, way. Such intuitive thinking is an enormous source of cognitive power that Klein and his fellow researchers have systematised as Recognition Primed Decision Making (RPDM); *Sources of Power* provides a comprehensive account of the core concepts of RPDM, how they relate to each other and how they can be applied.

Their research on RPDM, published in the US Army Combined Armed Center’s *Military Review*, has provoked a lively debate about how best to move forward on MDMP. The SAF itself is no stranger to RPDM, tapping into and further adapting it to our own needs and circumstances as evidenced by Chen et al’s Integrated Knowledge-based Command and Control (IKC2) for ONE SAF (*POINTER* Monograph No. 5) and Yeo et al’s *POINTER* Vol. 33 No. 4 article, “Making Sense of Sensemaking”.

Klein emphasised that RPDM is not a panacea that can replace formal doctrine and standard operating procedures. It is also not a replacement for rational choice strategies that identifies a range of options, comes up with evaluation criteria, measures each option against each criterion and decides on the basis of the option that has the best evaluation score. In contrast, *Sources of*

Power focuses on the use of RPDM in naturalistic decision-making settings where there is time pressure, high stakes, experienced decision-makers, imperfect information, dynamic conditions and team work – precisely the types of conditions which formal procedures, with their need for clarity, simplicity and time, are least suited to dealing with.

RPDM consists of two interrelated sets of processes. The first is how decision-makers diagnose a situation, followed by how they evaluate courses of actions. Readers familiar with John Boyd’s Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) loop will recognise a family resemblance between the second and third stages with RPDM. RPDM further breaks down diagnosis into pattern-matching (How well does the current situation fit past experiences?) and story-building (Can I construct a coherent narrative of what is going on?). This is followed by four by-products of recognition, namely, goals (What type of goals are plausible?), cues (What are the most relevant things to watch out for?), expectancies (Is the situation developing as diagnosed?) and actions (What would be a typical response in this type of situation?).

The evaluation process consists of quick mental simulations of the proposed course of action, repeatedly modifying a simulated course of action. When there is sufficient confidence that the course of action is congruent with the diagnosis of the situation and it can be imagined with the steps by which this course of action will succeed, the decision-maker then goes ahead with the implementation.

These processes also take place within very short periods of time. The anti-air warfare officer of the HMS Gloucester was able to successfully recognise that a radar blip was an incoming Silkworm missile rather than a returning American A-6 aircraft that routinely travelled at the same speed and approach. Despite insufficient instrumental data and confusing, conflicting cues, he made the recognition within one second and the situation was resolved in less than five minutes. In a negative demonstration, Chapter 6 gives a detailed chronology and analysis of the tragic shoot down of an Iranian civilian airliner by the USS Vincennes where crucial cues were missed and a simple mistake was compounded, leading to the deaths of 290 people; the crucial part of the decision cycle took only 189 seconds.

Sources of Power details how each of the sub-components of diagnosis and evaluation work on their own and then draws it all together again by showing how they work as a process. An important point is that components are inextricably interrelated via numerous feedback loops, and the process is often non-linear and less straightforwardly sequenced as seen in the simplest iteration of the OODA loop. We are also warned of how such processes may mislead us into taking disastrous decisions, thus keeping us alert to possible weaknesses and points of failure.

The concepts and theories of RPDM are vividly illustrated, in the course of the book, through numerous concrete examples based on extensive anthropological field work and case studies from the US Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines as well as from

fire fighters, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nurses, emergency response paramedics and even several self-deprecating anecdotes about Klein and his wife. Klein actively practises what he preaches in Chapter 11 where he explains how stories can serve as both useful repositories and transmission mechanisms of knowledge. The coherent narrative structure, drama, empathy and wisdom in good stories make them easier for us to understand, remember and use the knowledge in them as well as to use them to make sense of other situations through pattern-matching. Using the human urge to tell and re-tell stories to others also serves as an invaluable training pedagogy where experienced practitioners of RPDM can sensitise much less experienced trainees to react more appropriately in situations of high uncertainty, complexity and time pressure. In this respect, Klein's research also has parallels to David Snowden's Organic Knowledge Management, a potential for cross-fertilisation that is being explored by the SAF Centre for Military Experimentation as seen in Snowden et al's 2007 *Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium paper*.

In addition to memorable stories, *Sources of Power* is made even more accessible by being organised into concise chapters that effectively convey RPDM's concepts that often subvert the distinction between common sense and counter-intuitiveness. Tightly written, they are also supplemented by useful mnemonics such as diagrams and flow charts. Each chapter also concludes with pithy sections on how to apply the ideas of RPDM in real life as well as an outline of the main points that caters well to

the needs of those who have to contend with much time pressure in their busy lives, but are nonetheless driven by their professionalism to constantly engage in lifelong learning. *Sources of Power* is a

must-read for those who wish to have a better understanding of sense-making and RPDM, as well as a rich source of material to reflect on key aspects of IKC2. 



Mr Toh Ee Loong is currently pursuing the PhD in International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He also serves on the editorial board of *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. He obtained the BSc(First Class Honours) in International Relations from the LSE, MA in War Studies from King's College, London and MSc in Asian Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He served as the Assistant Editor, *POINTER* for three years, relinquishing the appointment in 2005.

FEATURED AUTHOR

Paul Krugman

The Economist labelled him as “probably the most creative economist of his generation”; *Fortune* magazine claimed that he “writes better than any economist since John Maynard Keynes”; *New York Times Book Review* commented that “Everything Mr Krugman has to say is smart, important and even fun to read... he is one of a handful of very bright, relatively young economists who do everything well”.¹ Even before winning the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science in 2008, Paul Robin Krugman had already been well recognised for his brilliance in the field of Economics and for his prolific writing career. As an economist, he has done extensive work in international trade and economics, receiving the John Bates Clark medal² in 1991, in addition to the Nobel Prize in 2008, for his pioneering work in “new trade theory”. As a writer, he has authored or edited 20 books and more than 200 papers in professional journals and edited volumes.³

Krugman was born into a Jewish family on 28th Feb 1953. His interest in Economics began with Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation* novels, in which the social scientists of the future use “psychohistory” to attempt to save civilisations. As psychohistory does not currently exist, Krugman turned



to Economics which he thought to be the best alternative.⁴ He received his B.A. in Economics from Yale University in 1974 and his PhD. degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1977. From 1982 to 1983, he worked at the Reagan White House as a staff member of the Council of Economic Advisers. Prior to joining Princeton University as professor of Economics and International Affairs in 2000, he taught at Yale University, MIT, UC Berkeley, the London School of Economics (LSE) and Stanford University. Presently, he is a professor at Princeton, the Centenary Professor at LSE and an op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*. His gifted mind was spotted by Bill Clinton’s team

during the latter's ascendancy to the presidency in 1993. However, it was reported that due to his outspokenness, Krugman was not offered a job in the Clinton administration.⁵ Nevertheless, he channelled his talents to a wider audience, receiving acclaim from the public and his peers for his outstanding work in the field of economics.

Gathering a collection of essays published in renowned publications such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Scientific American* and the *Harvard Business Review*, Krugman wrote *Pop Internationalism* (1996). The title of this book comes from a term he coined; "pop internationalism" refers to the trend of people speaking impressively about international trade while ignoring fundamental economics and misusing economic terms.⁶ In his one-man crusade against these misleading rhetoric and ideas, he attempts to correct the fallacies by presenting economic theory and analysis in a clear and readable manner such that people with little or no economic knowledge are able to follow the flow of his arguments. In this book, he covers international trade, emerging economies and technology's role in economics.

A key part of his book deals with the issue of international trade with regards to the US. With his ascendancy to the top seat in the White House, Bill Clinton declared that each nation was "like a big corporation competing in the global marketplace", giving the impression that countries were fighting each other out in a win-lose situation. His team of well-known economic advisers also reinforced his rhetoric

of competitiveness with supporting facts and figures. But Krugman, an expert in this field, questions whether world trade really creates a zero-sum world, as espoused by the White House officials. Bringing up Ricardo's Theory of Comparative Advantage and statistics from the government, he spots the loopholes in the team's data and highlights the inaccuracies in logic. In his analysis, he shows that worker productivity in the US, not global competition, is the key determinant of the nation's living standards. At the same time, he outlines the truths behind world trade with examples and the laws of economics, and warns about the government's use of "competition" to scare the public and implement detrimental or shady policies.⁷

Krugman concludes that "pop internationalism" spawned from the result of basic human instincts: intellectual laziness. It also reflected the decline in influence of the economists as their knowledge and suggestions had not been sought before the officials went around making imprudent comments.⁸ His "stimulating maverick essays", as commented by *Publishers Weekly*, has earned him rave reviews and recognition as one of the country's eminent theorists. *Pop Internationalism* will certainly interest the reader with digestible and insightful economic analysis, proving that economists, contrary to belief, can write well.

Barely three years later, Krugman wrote *The Return of Depression Economics* (1999). This book contained his inner thoughts about the then weakened

global economic position, which bore an eerie resemblance to the Great Depression of the 1930s. In the period of 1997 – 1999, six Asian economies had experienced a slump. Russia, a military powerhouse, had defaulted on its debts and countries halfway around the world were going through their worst patch in economic history.

After witnessing the tragedy unfold, Krugman gives his take on each country's economic problems. He focuses on two regions, beginning with Asia and then Latin America. Countries embroiled in the mess, such as Thailand, Mexico, Japan and Brazil, were discussed. He also includes certain key components of the new globalised markets; currency exchange and hedge funds were all beginning to transform how modern markets work. A key feature of his book is that he never fails to use sound economic analysis to support his stand. Throughout the book, he employs and simplifies important macroeconomic terms such as the liquidity trap⁹, impossible trinity¹⁰ and different discretionary fiscal policies to much effect.

In addition to economic jargon, he also espouses the use of models for easier and better understanding.¹¹ For example, in his case to explain Japan's worrying economy, he uses the fictional story of the "Capitol Hill Baby-sitting Co-op".¹² In this co-op, couples were issued a certain number of coupons which could be exchanged one-for-one for an hour of baby-sitting. Hence, to get their child baby-sat for an hour, couple A would

have to give couple B a coupon. In essence, the coupons were money, and the couple's willingness to baby-sit was supply while the couple's willingness to go out (and let their child be baby-sat) was demand. In Japan's scenario, he explained the situation akin to summer and winter; couples have a lower tendency to go out during winter and a higher tendency to go out in summer (hence, they will save more coupons in winter for summer). Taking this scenario into context, Krugman explains that Japan is going through a period of "winter" because "couples" are not willing to spend, in fact they are hoarding their "coupons", waiting for summer.¹³ This situation does not bode well for the economy because growth arises from the exchange of goods and money (interaction between supply and demand). To resolve this problem, Krugman, with his creative mind, came up with a controversial solution – "managed inflation".¹⁴ By making the "coupons" worth less with time¹⁵, "couples" would be motivated to use them when the opportunity arises.

The success of *The Return of Depression Economics* has resulted in its reprint, albeit with a slightly different title – *The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008* (2008). The second book contains an additional segment on the arrival of depression economics at the shores of America. Krugman analyses the cause of it – the failure of regulation to keep pace with an increasingly out-of-control financial system in the US – and maps out the steps to get the world economy back on its feet.

His latest book, *The Conscience of a Liberal* (2009), has already begun to hit the bookshelves. This “stimulating manifesto” aims to galvanise today’s progressives the way Barry Goldwater’s *The Conscience of a Conservative* did to the right in 1964. His overarching theme is economic equality and the liberal economics that support it. He argues for the policies of the New Deal, which narrowed income equality in America, provided jobs and relief to the people, and aided the recovery of the nation from the Great Depression, to be followed once more in present-day America. He targets the conservative movement, accusing them of distorting reality and distracting the public to advance the interests of the wealthy. Combining economic data with social and political analysis, Krugman strives to produce a “compelling historical defence of liberalism and a clarion call for Americans to take control of their economic destiny”.

As a master in his field, he has raised the alarm on failed economic policies and misleading statements from public figures; he has shared his wealth of knowledge to the greater public with his books and essays, explaining in simpler terms which would otherwise have been incomprehensible to a lay man; he has strived to advance his nation’s and the world economy’s interest; he has made contributions in the field of economics, creating new areas for study and exploration. His

remarkable achievements make him an ideal candidate for this issue’s *Featured Author*.

Endnotes

- 1 Krugman, Paul, *The Return of Depression Economics*, (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999), back cover.
- 2 The biennial John Bates Clark medal is awarded by the American Economic Association to the “American economist under the age of forty who is adjudged to have made a significant contribution to economic thought and knowledge”. It is considered one of the two most prestigious awards in the field of economics, along with the Nobel Prizes. Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bates_Clark_medal. Accessed on 08 Jan 09.
- 3 Taken from <http://www.nytimes.com/ref/opinion/KRUGMAN-BIO.html>. Accessed on 08 Jan 09.
- 4 Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Krugman. Accessed on 08 Jan 09.
- 5 Krugman commented he would not be interested in such a job; he later told *Newsweek* “I’m temperamentally unsuited for that kind of role. You have to be very good at people skills, biting your tongue when people say silly things.” Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Krugman. Accessed on 08 Jan 09.
- 6 Krugman, Paul, *Pop Internationalism*, (MIT Press, 1996), cover.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp1-125.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pix.
- 9 The liquidity trap refers to the situation where a fall in interest rate does not create any increase in investment. Hence aggregate demand shows no sign of increase, *ceteris paribus*. Krugman, *Depression Economics*, pp70-74.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p106.
- 11 “The only way to make sense of any complex system, is to work with models – simplified representations of that system which you hope help you understand how it works.” *Ibid.*, p9.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p8.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p73.
- 14 The deep-seated belief is stable prices are always desirable, and to promote inflation is to create perverse and dangerous incentives. *Ibid.*, pp77-79.
- 15 For example, a coupon which could be exchanged for one hour of baby-sitting in winter will only be worth half an hour in summer.

PERSONALITY PROFILE

World War I – Against the Odds **Kapitän zur See Max Looff**

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of Armistice Day, which ended active operations for World War One, *POINTER* is proud to present a series under the theme of “Against the Odds”, featuring four remarkable commanders who overcame great adversity to achieve victory. In this last instalment of a four-part series, the focus is on *Kapitän zur See* Max Looff.

Introduction

During World War One (WWI), all German commanders outside Europe fought in isolation against great odds because they were cut off from support by enemy command of the High Seas. Like all commerce-raiders, *Fregattenkapitän* (Navy Commander) Max Looff of the *SGS Königsberg* had orders to stay at large and attack lightly-armed opposition to draw as much *Entente* attention and resources away from the main European theatre as possible. He displayed the strategic sense and tactical finesse necessary to execute his mission and outshone his compatriots because his exploits included difficult and protracted operations on land, activities he and most of his crew were never trained for.¹ He outlasted all other raiders, and even continued fighting as part of Lettow-Vorbeck’s legendary East African Army for three years after his ship was sunk. Max Looff was thus a hero amongst heroes, one who inspired men to the limits of endurance.



Promising Start

British, French and Russian forces far outnumbered their German colonial counterparts in all regions outside Europe on the eve of WWI. In anticipation of a possible blockade of his home port, Dar es Salaam, *Fregattenkapitän* Max Loeff sailed *Königsberg*, the only German man-of-war in East Africa, into open waters on 31st July 1914. He found his ship boxed in by three elderly British cruisers but skillfully lost them by reversing course in a storm, putting a hundred miles between *Königsberg* and its designated watchers. By the time Loeff received the coded message for war on 5th Aug, he was sitting astride the Gulf of Aden undetected, ready to pounce on enemy shipping. The Royal Navy (RN) was forced to order a second cruiser squadron to join the hunt and restrict the movement of commercial shipping and troop transports bound for Europe.² This drew attention away from fellow raider *Emden* and Rear-Admiral von Spee's East Asia Squadron. Without firing a shot, Loeff managed to wrestle the initiative from the RN from the word "go".

Unfortunately, *Königsberg* was soon in need of crucial servicing. While fellow raider *Emden* wreaked havoc on the Asiatic side of the Indian Ocean, *Königsberg* captured only one cargo ship carrying low grade Bombay coal and was forced to use it after burning existing stocks to escape pursuing cruisers and missing a rendezvous with supply ship *Somalia*.³ Unable to return to Dar es Salaam for fear of a British ambush, Loeff made for the Rufiji river delta two hundred miles south of the port with ambitious plans to transport

his fouled boiler overland. The wily commander transmitted messages to a phantom supply ship in the northern Indian Ocean, luring his pursuers away and clearing his passage southwards.

Drawing Fire

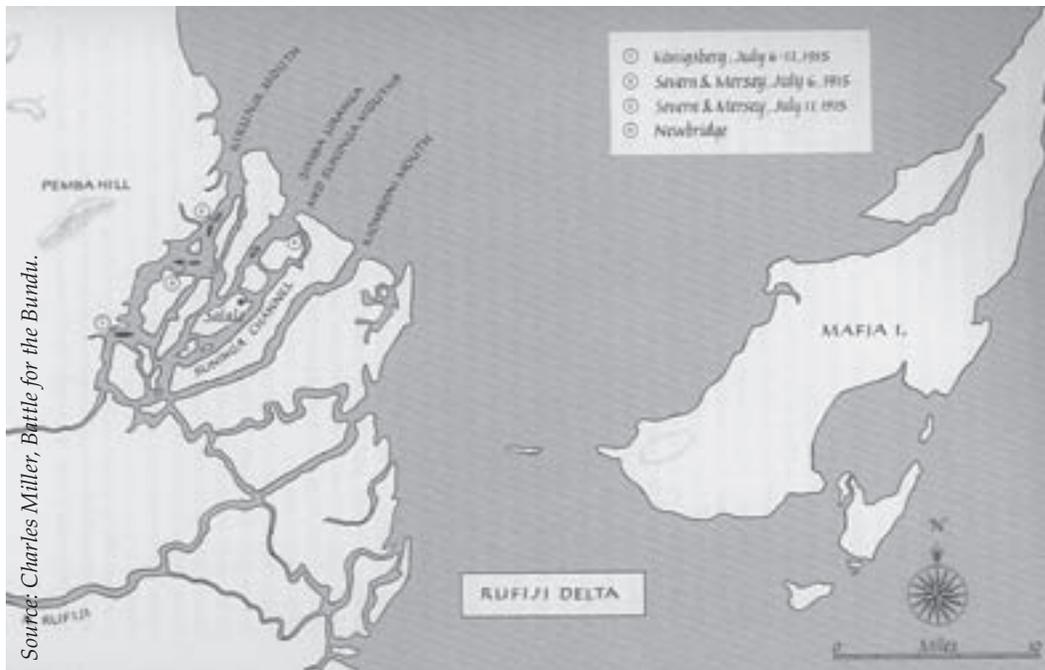
Königsberg's temporary absence caused the RN to lower its guard and redeploy its vessels elsewhere, leaving only the aged cruiser *Pegasus* behind. Loeff needed to persuade his adversaries that he was worth more attention than this. His mission was to sow chaos, not ensure his own safety. Upon receiving information that *Pegasus* was entering into nearby Zanzibar for major refitting, Loeff decided on a bold night attack after some rudimentary repairs. Brushing past two auxiliary patrol boats, *Königsberg* scored more than 200 hits, destroying the out-ranged *Pegasus*. It also sank the captured German patrol vessel *Helmut* and sowed dummy mines on its way out.⁴ The brazen act had its desired effects as three modern British cruisers and a host of smaller craft were hastily diverted from other missions to hunt him down. This greatly assisted *Emden's* rampage, culminating in an even more audacious attack on Penang Harbour which sank a Russian cruiser and a French destroyer.⁵ Though operating separately without consultation, the two heavily outnumbered raiders were sowing confusion and panic throughout the Indian Ocean, seriously challenging Britain's claim to rule the High Seas. Even British newspapers expressed grudging admiration for the German exploits. This was *Kreuzerkrieg* at its best.

Stalemate

Returning to the Rufiji delta on September 20th, Loeff's highly motivated and versatile crew removed *Königsberg's* fouled boiler and hacked its way through a hundred miles of bush as a thousand African porters from neighbouring German-owned plantations dragged it forward on two wooden sledges. The journey to Dar es Salaam took three weeks but repairs and the return journey only ten days. This was an incredible achievement by any standard. Unfortunately, a British cruiser had located the *Königsberg* a day before the boiler returned.⁶

While waiting for the boiler team, Loeff converted part of his crew into an improvised company (Delta Force) armed with 47mm guns detached from *Königsberg*. The commander had chosen his hideout well. Multiple channels and heavy cover allowed

the raider to stay elusive. Delta Force was well hidden and supported by patrols and lookout teams linked by field telephones and communication trenches. Despite their small number, they dominated the passages upriver for more than eight months. British ships powerful enough to duel with *Königsberg's* 105mm main guns could not navigate the Rufiji's relatively shallow waters. Vessels which could clear the sandbank guarding the main channel were too lightly armed and needed to get close to launch torpedoes. The first such attempt was ambushed by Delta Force and beat a hasty retreat. Plans to overwhelm the makeshift company with infantry had to be shelved after Lettow-Vorbeck's hopelessly outnumbered *Schutztruppe* dealt two British armies humiliating defeats further north. Despite the presence of three cruisers which individually outclassed *Königsberg*



and a large number of support craft, British Captain Drury-Lowe could not bring matters to an end. Loeff was trapped and forced to operate in unfamiliar terrain but still fulfilling his mission.⁷

Keeping the British Nervous

Though *Emden* was sunk in early November, Admiral von Spee's squadron sunk an entire British cruiser squadron off South America, creating fears that he might sail across the Atlantic and rescue *Königsberg*. Drury-Lowe sank a block ship in the main river channel. Two Town-class cruisers were redeployed to South Africa in case von Spee came calling. *Königsberg* could not challenge the remaining six-inch armed cruiser, *Chatham*, in open combat. Nonetheless, it could still sneak pass using a secondary channel under cover of darkness if tides were exceptionally favourable. Loeff kept moving his ship around and gave it a new coat of paint to keep up appearances. A British civilian scout plane found it anchored at a confluence of channels and passed on the impression that *Königsberg* had every intention of attempting a breakout. This was a ruse as Loeff believed he could not escape capture with only a week's coal on board. The German was again messing with the enemy's mind.

Defiance Despite Discouragement

Morale took a dive as news of von Spee's defeat reached *Königsberg*. Things got worse when Loeff was ordered to hand over every man he could spare to help Lettow-Vorbeck fight off a massive British Army invasion (Loeff

kept only 220). *Königsberg* was expected to give rather than receive help. Every remaining man was soon infected with malaria, blackwater fever or dysentery while stocks of medicine and food were seriously depleted after Christmas. With all other raiders caught and sunk, *Königsberg* was now the focus of RN attention. Half a dozen cruisers, a seaplane tender, the old battleship *Goliath* and a host of patrol and support vessels were now arrayed against it. The British also captured Mafia Island from Lettow-Vorbeck's *Schutztruppe*, a strategic location at the mouth of the Rufiji. Defeat looked inevitable.⁸

Nonetheless, Loeff remained in a defiant mood. British sailors floated small wooden coffins upriver with the rising tide and *HMS Fox* sent the following wireless greeting: "A Happy New Year. Expect to have pleasure of seeing you soon. British cruiser." Loeff replied, "Many thanks. Same to you. If you want to see us we are always at home. *Königsberg*."⁹ This was no idle boast. Delta Force recaptured the former German tug *Adjutant* and easily repulsed a second British attempt to infiltrate the small craft upriver. It also captured the only (civilian) British pilot available (before military aircraft arrived in February 1915) in a firefight against a strong RN rescue team. *Königsberg* and Delta Force subsequently damaged British scout-bombers which failed to locate, let alone attack the raider before they fell apart in the tropical heat.¹⁰ *Goliath* was recalled for the Gallipoli campaign in May. After a six-month siege, *Königsberg* remained a thorn in Britain's side.¹¹

The Kronborg

In April, Looff received a long-awaited radio message from the clandestine supply ship *Kronborg*, which was only a day away with plenty of ammunition and supplies to help *Königsberg* escape. The 1600 tons of high-grade Westphalian coal *Kronborg* carried allowed for a clean breakaway without the need for quick replenishment. Despite the now dilapidated condition of their ship, Looff's crew was itching for action. They sailed downriver and prepared for a dash but found the British ready and waiting for them in force. This could only mean that the RN had broken the German naval code and intercepted Looff's message to *Kronborg*.¹² The supply ship was cornered, beached, shelled and left to burn. Miraculously, much of the cargo survived. One of Lettow-Vorbeck's detachments drove off a British landing party while *Kronborg*'s crew salvaged what it could. The coal was burnt off but the medicine and food sustained Looff's men for some months.¹³ With no secure means of communications, rescue was clearly unlikely. In such difficult times, morale could either wither or harden. Looff's ability to maintain the fighting spirit of his men was amply displayed in the upcoming final battles.

A Pitched Battle

In June 1915, Drury-Lowe received *Severn* and *Mersey*, two RN monitors with six-inch guns and a shallow draught. Though small and lightly armoured, these vessels were designed for river navigation and easily outgunned *Königsberg*. Legendary South African bushman Pieter Pretorius

successfully charted the channels and tide patterns of the Rufiji channels while disguised as an African fisherman. He also pinpointed *Königsberg*'s position and collected first-hand intelligence on the high combat readiness of its guns and crew.¹⁴ Sturdier aircraft with trained artillery spotters and wireless communications were also available to correct the fall of the monitors' guns. The British therefore possessed both the intelligence and the equipment they needed to finish the fight. Nonetheless, Looff's performance till date gave them no cause for complacency. Both monitor captains, uncertain of survival against such tenacious opposition, handed their code books to Rear-Admiral King-Hall before they sailed upriver on the dawn of July 6th 1915.¹⁵

Delta Force peppered the monitors with their 47mm guns and sniper fire but had trouble penetrating the add-on armour they recently received. British cruisers bombarded the defenders for eleven hours, throwing their aim off. Strong river currents made it difficult for the monitors to swing their hulls into firing position after sailing past Delta Force. Looff took advantage and drew first blood. A great cheer rang out from *Königsberg* as its first salvos straddled *Severn* and tore one of *Mersey*'s two six-inch turrets apart. Looff had sited and trained his near invisible spotters well. *Mersey* was soon hit again, "smoke issuing from bow and amidships...her fire silenced." *Severn* scored direct hits on a *Königsberg* turret and its bridge. *Mersey* rejoined the duel but both failed to score any more hits as the spotter-plane left to refuel. *Königsberg*'s more accurate fire did not last as the British discovered

and destroyed the nearest German spotting-post. The return of British aircraft should have meant disaster for the raider but the two planes and monitors kept getting their messages mixed up.¹⁶ Ten hours after they entered the delta, the monitors were forced to leave by the ebbing tide. Delta Force opened fire and hit the *Mersey*, making clear the Germans intended to fight on. Reconnaissance flights confirmed *Königsberg* was damaged “but still very much a fighting ship.”¹⁷ It would take more than this to finish Loeff and his men.

The Last Stand

The monitors returned for a rematch on 11th July. Delta Force hit the now one-turret *Mersey* twice before it sailed out of range. The wounded monitor surged ahead of *Severn* to act as a decoy but Loeff saw through the ploy and ordered all guns to fire on the undamaged vessel instead. Unfortunately, one of *Severn*'s near misses cut communications with the main German spotting post. A spotter-aircraft now gave the British a decisive advantage. *Königsberg* managed to bring it down but not before well-directed fire destroyed all of its main turrets. Max Loeff stayed on the bridge to rally his men despite serious injuries from two hits. A third cut opened his abdomen and knocked him unconscious. The monitors fired off seventy more salvos, most of which found their mark. Thirty Germans were killed, sixty-five critically wounded, leaving only a hundred fighting fit. Having done everything humanly possible to prolong the hopeless fight, Loeff ordered his crew to scuttle their beloved ship after regaining consciousness.¹⁸

Conclusion: Destroyed but not Defeated

There is no greater testimony to the qualities of a leader than the conduct of his followers under adversity. Max Loeff was not exaggerating when he reported that “SMS *Königsberg* is destroyed but not conquered”.¹⁹ His exhausted but unbroken men gave the Kaiser three resounding cheers as they lowered *Königsberg*'s colours for the last time. Having survived the most prolonged ordeal in naval history (eight-and-a-half months), they formed the *Königsberg*'s company and fought on in the bush under Lettow-Vorbeck for three more gruelling years.²⁰ Loeff was tactically skilled and highly versatile but above all psychologically strong and utterly determined to fulfill his mission to the fullest come what may. Life as a commerce-raider demanded nothing less. While luck and second-rate opposition played their part in his prolonged resistance against great odds, it was clear that newly promoted *Kapitan zur See* Max Loeff and his small crew were the main authors of their own achievements.²¹ 



Source: Major J R Sibley,
Tanganyikan Guerrilla

Königsberg Gun Crew Fighting on Land

Endnotes

- ¹ A number of marines from S.S. *Zieten* joined Loeff's crew. Most of these were probably transferred to the German East African Army early in the campaign. Byron Farwell, *The Great War in Africa 1914-1918* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1987), p131.
- ² Charles Miller, *Battle for the Bundu: The First World War in East Africa*, (NY: Macmillan, 1974), pp32-35. Russia and Germany declared war on 1st August 1914. France declared war on Germany on the 3rd, and Britain, a day later.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp45-48. Farwell, *The Great War*, p131. claimed that Loeff decided against using the Bombay coal. Miller's account is more likely to be correct as Loeff was soon forced to remove a fouled boiler despite the risks of becoming immobile.
- ⁴ Geoffrey Martin Bennet, *Naval Battles of the First World War*, (London: Batsford, 1968), pp131-2.
- ⁵ *Ibid* pp50-67 records the *Emden's* brief but celebrated career in vivid detail.
- ⁶ Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp76-79.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, pp79-81.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp82-84. Bennet, *Naval Battles*, p133.
- ⁹ Farwell, *The Great War*, pp136-7.
- ¹⁰ Four months passed between the first civilian and military success in sighting *Königsberg* from the air.
- ¹¹ Brian Gardner, *German East: The Story of the First World War in East Africa* (London: Cassell, 1963), p62. Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp55-56.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p140. Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp110-1. claims that the British could not break the code but assumed that the strength of the signal indicated an imminent assisted breakout. This is unconvincing especially when Miller also deduced that "as more messages were picked up, it seemed increasingly likely that the relief ship was not a man-of-war." Strength of signals do not divulge such information.
- ¹³ Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, p113. Farwell, *The Great War*, p143. Claims that several tons of Westphalian coal were salvaged from the *Kronborg's* wreck in 1957. However, it seems unlikely that the Germans would have left precious usable material like this behind.
- ¹⁴ Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp105-8.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p118.
- ¹⁶ *Königsberg* might also have interjected with false messages but this was never proven. Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, p121.
- ¹⁷ Farwell, *The Great War*, p154.
- ¹⁸ Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp122-3.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp125-6, Farwell, *The Great War*, p158. Loeff was awarded the Iron Cross (first class). Relations with Lettow-Vorbeck regrettably remained strained throughout the war.
- ²⁰ See *POINTER Journal* Vol.34 No.1 (2008) for an account of Lettow-Vorbeck's amazing campaign in East Africa. The ship's main guns were all successfully salvaged and moved overland by African porters, where they gave the Germans superior artillery for two years.
- ²¹ Miller, *Battle for the Bundu*, pp122-6. Farwell, *The Great War*, pp156-9. Loeff was also awarded the Iron Cross first-class and half his men the Iron Cross second-class.

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