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Editorial

In this first issue of the year, you will also see a new Editor. I am MAJ Lucy Chua and I took over from Ms Mary Chacko as Editor *POINTER* in Jan 2001. After two years with *POINTER*, Ms Chacko has moved on to CNEO. We wish her the best in her new appointment and I look forward to bringing you, our readers, articles which you will find interesting and stimulating.

In this issue, we have brought you a good mix of articles, grouped under the broad headings of War Studies and Strategic Studies. We kick off the issue with the article *A Good General is a Moral Man* by MAJ Edmund Tin Chee Juang which discusses what constitutes morality and the realities of such conduct under war time conditions.

Air Power in the Gulf War and the Kosovo Conflict by a MAJ Lim Tian Sing examines the theories on air power of Douhet and Mitchell and whether the theories were validated during the two conflicts. LTC Richard Pereira in his article *Kosovo: Air Power - the Decisive Factor* acknowledges that other roles may have contributed to the Serbian defeat in Kosovo but emphasises that these roles were subordinate to air power.

MAJ Irvin Lim's article *Hype or Hyper War?* discusses the impact of the revolution in military affairs and the effect it will have on military-strategic affairs, warfare and strategy.

MAJ Tang Mun Kwong's *The Relevance of Diplomacy and Deterrence in the 21st Century* examines the complementary roles of diplomacy and deterrence which ensure the security of nation states. *The Influence of Environmental, Humanitarian and Governance Norms on State Sovereignty and Their Impact on the Region* by MAJ Anselm Morais examines the trend in environmental, humanitarian and governance norms and their influence on state sovereignty.

In the last article of this issue *A Weak or Strong China: Which is Better for the Asia Pacific Region?*, MAJ Liow Boon Chuang posits that the world should not fear a strong China but that the growth of Chinese power may instead bring about a positive outcome for the region.

On behalf of *POINTER* we would like to thank all those of you who submitted your entries for the 14th Chief of Defence Force Essay Competition. We will bring you the top ten winning essays in the next issue of *POINTER*, so do look out for them. The 15th CDF Essay Competition is once again open for entries and closing date is 31 December 2001.

On a final note, we wish to inform our readers that *POINTER* is conducting a readership survey to find out how well read the journal is, what are the areas of interest of its readers and whether there are any improvements we could make in the journal's presentation, selection of articles and language. To help us to benchmark, we also want to know whether our readers read other military journals, and if so, what they are and why they are chosen. Your feedback is important and will help us to improve the journal, so if you receive the cyber survey form, please do take a few moments to complete it.

Editor, *POINTER*

"A Good General is a Moral Man"

by MAJ Edmund Tin Chee Kuang

No one will disagree that every man deserves the right to live, provided that he does not commit terrible crimes against his fellow man. This is reinforced in many religions and notably in Christianity where one of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not kill"¹. This moral law is echoed in many other religions and that is why taking another person's life and denying him the right to live is viewed as an ultimate immoral act and a very serious crime, and in many countries a crime punishable by death.

There is no greater loss of lives than in war where people die by hundreds if not thousands; and yet the irony is in that the price of peace is war. War is described as 'a contention between two or more States through their armed forces, for the purpose of overpowering each other and imposing such conditions of peace as the victor pleases'.² It is an accepted means of defending a state's own interests and it is violent, bloody, brutal, and brings untold sorrows and sufferings to those involved. The international society has come to accept war as a means of resolving conflicts between states simply because it realises that there is no way to outlaw war. Hence, every state endeavours to build a strong armed force to defend its own interests. From these armed forces arise the generals who command the armies and instruments of war, which have the capabilities to bring devastation to the neighbouring states.

In his book "Just and Unjust Wars : A Moral Argument With Historical Illustrations", Michael Walzer agreed with Henry Sidgwick that a good general is a moral man.³ Although his view appears to be a paradox, where the general who ultimately plans to kill and destroy the opposing army should be a moral man, it is not. It is important that the general who has thousands of soldiers and war instruments at his disposal, and can bring about devastation and death at a command, should also be one who has morals. Although agreeing with the statement, I encounter problems in that there are differing views on the issue of morality. If so, how can one determine whether the general who has fought a war is really a good general? The moral standard in war is not definite, as Michael Walzer himself stressed:⁴

"...the moral reality of war is not fixed by the actual activities of soldiers but the opinions of mankind"

The aim of this essay is to examine the moral expectations of a good general and to discuss its reality in war. The essay will also discuss the duty of a general vis-à-vis the requirement to fight morally. Lastly, the essay also expresses the writer's view on morality as quality of a good general.

Moral or Immoral

In examining the moral expectation of a general in the light of *jus in bello*, it is not complete without considering *jus ad bellum*, or the justification for one state to wage a war. If the aggressor state invades another state, will the aggressor state's general be considered a good general if he conducts his battles morally? Assuming the victim state is threatened with annihilation, will its general be considered evil if he does not conduct his battles morally in fighting for the state's right to exist? These are areas where philosophers and war theorists have differing views, and issues we want to examine later when we look at some of the generals who belong to the victim and aggressor states.

Just Conduct of War

In the light of *jus in bello*, the two central principles governing the just conduct of war are essentially the principle of discrimination and proportionality. In the first principle, it expects the general to give due consideration to limit even unintended civilian deaths during the development of the campaign plan. He is to do this by exercising command and control over his troops, ensuring military discipline within the camps and punishing those who violate his instructions and orders. He must ensure his troops are prepared and ready

for battle and must keep them in check so that they do not run *amok* among the civilians in the heat of battle.⁵ He must train and discipline his troops in observing the conventions of war and possess the moral courage to punish his officers and men when they kill or injure innocent people.

In the second principle on proportionality, he must aim to win the campaign as quickly as possible with the least cost. Winning the campaign as early as possible will result in lesser casualties. To do this, he is required to calculate the risks and cost, and make sure that they are proportional to the military benefits he expects to gain. Should he derive that the cost in executing the plan is disproportionate to the benefits gained, he shall be morally wrong to commit his troops to battle in that he views life so cheaply.

Having defined the basis for discussion, I would like to illustrate my difficulties with the statement by looking at some of the great generals in war and consider the moral issues involved.

Air Marshall Arthur Harris

In World War II, Hitler's ambition for expansionism seemed unstoppable. In the later part of 1940, in a bid to halt the advancing German armies and ensure the liberty of Great Britain, the British leaders decided to use strategic bombings to halt them. Air Marshall Arthur Harris, Chief of Bomber Command, felt that in the use of air power, bombers should not be employed to provide tactical air support for ground forces. He felt that that would not stop Hitler, but that strategic bombings would. So began the bombing of German cities, where British bombers bombed Germany's military installations and industrial plants. The objective then was to disrupt Hitler's operational bases and industrial capabilities to wage war. Although a directive was issued by Bomber Command to identify and aim only specified targets⁶, the bomber technology at that time lacked precision targeting. The British bombers could not reasonably aim at targets which were smaller than a fairly large city. Although the British tried to differentiate themselves from Hitler in that they had no desire to kill civilians, it was clear that the probability of doing so was extremely high. The plan was approved out of desperation and the British tried to protect their honour by believing a lie that civilian casualties would not be high.

As the situation deteriorated further with the German armies still unstoppable, Harris felt that his objective to incapacitate the German armies had failed and decided to change his strategy. This time, he decided, he would bomb the population with the aim to cause the "destruction of civilian morale".⁷ This strategy, he hoped would demoralise the German leadership and break their will to fight. Although these indiscriminate bombings were roundly condemned, Winston Churchill nevertheless endorsed it. At the end of the war, this terror bombing resulted in some 300,000 Germans killed, mostly civilians, and another 780,000 seriously injured.

Here is a classic case where an aggressor state, Germany, was threatening the existence of a victim state, Britain. While the British had just cause to go to war, its conduct had not been discriminate. Michael Walzer argued that given the evil of Nazism, and there being no other way than to breach the principle of discrimination to ensure the survival of the nation, he personally would also be in a dilemma.⁸ Under such circumstances, he must accept the "burdens of criminality" if he was to give Britain a chance of survival. Though Harris did what his leader felt was necessary and right at that point in time, and was described by historian Noble Frankland⁹ as one who "will perhaps go down in history as a giant among the leaders of men", for "he gave Bomber Command the courage to surmount its ordeals...", he was not honoured after the war.¹⁰ Churchill understood that though the indiscriminate bombings were done out of necessity, it was nevertheless ugly and a criminal activity, and once the imminent threat had passed, this action was deemed morally indefensible.

Field Marshall Erwin (Johannes Eugen) Rommel

Field Marshall Erwin Rommel was one of Hitler's famous generals. He is most well known for leading the 7th Panzer Division to the English Channel during the Battle of France, 1940, and for throwing the British back to Egypt in 1942 during the African campaigns (although he was eventually forced to evacuate Africa). As the Commander of the 7th Panzer Division, he presented himself as an unconventional military leader with

unique methods of command. He understood the tactics of *Blitzkrieg* and used tricks to deceive his enemies thus achieving surprises that helped him to not only win battles, but to win them quickly. In battle, he commanded his units from the frontline, as he firmly believed that it was important for the commander to always be near his men. He was always with the reconnaissance troops and he sometimes cut communication with the High Command because he did not want to be disturbed. Realising that the High Command did not know about tank warfare, he chose simply to cut communication during critical moments and explained everything later. Although he exasperated his staff officers, he was "worshipped" by his troops, as Liddell Hart described.¹¹

Besides being famous for his good grasp of operational tactics and command ability, he was described by many as an honourable man who did not commit any war crimes. "While many of his colleagues and peers in the German Army surrendered their honor by collusion with the iniquities of Nazism, Rommel was never defiled."¹² He maintained his professionalism as a soldier and observed the rules of war even as he fought. Michael Walzer commented that not only did Rommel fight the war well militarily, he also fought it morally. When Hitler issued the Commando Order on 28 October 1942, which instructed all enemy soldiers encountered behind the German line to be killed at once, it was Rommel who burnt that order. While his colleagues would have complied with that order and taken no prisoners, Rommel had the moral courage to disobey that order and treated all prisoners of war in accordance with the rules of war. He was highly respected by his enemies and not without reason. During the North African Campaign, Rommel often cut the water rations of his troops, so that the prisoners of war could survive.¹³ He was tasked to defend the area stretching from Holland to Bordeaux to prevent an Allied invasion in 1943. When the Allies landed in June of 1944, he realised that the war was lost and condoning Hitler's senseless continuation of it would be an irresponsible act resulting in unnecessary deaths.¹⁴

Here, we may say that Rommel is a fine example of a good general based on just conduct of war alone. However, he fought for Hitler whose unjust war caused millions of deaths and whose armies committed atrocities against the people they conquered, and to the prisoners of war. So great was this feeling of evil that Dwight Eisenhower refused to allow visits by captured German generals as part of a tradition for the reaffirmation of the military code.¹⁵ While Eisenhower saw the German generals as criminals fighting a war they should not have fought, Michael Walzer viewed them as moral equals and servants of the German state. A moral dilemma thus ensued in that while one can agree that Rommel has met all expectations of a good general, one hesitates to call him so because he acted on behalf of a criminal state.

Controversy Based on *Jus in Bello*

Having presented two examples of famous generals, we will call Harris a bad general and a murderer as his 'terror bombing' had taken many innocent lives with indiscriminate bombings, even though he was fighting for a just cause. We will call Rommel a good general as he conducted himself morally in war even though his nation state was the aggressor waging an unjust war. While this is true based strictly on the rule of *jus in bello*, they pose controversies amongst the moralists and philosophers of war. If morality is an important quality of a good general, the judgement of a general must take into cognizance both *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum*.

The moral courage of Rommel in disobeying Hitler's *Commando* Order and his humane treatment of his prisoners of war is to be admired but I stand with the rest of the world that he should not have fought for an unjust cause. Having said this, we will also have to consider his duty to serve his nation. In every army, the officers and men take an oath to defend and serve their country with their lives. There is nowhere in the constitution that says they will not discharge this duty if they deemed the nation to be fighting for a wrong cause. The question of just or unjust cause is left to their political leaders.

I am inclined to agree with British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's view ¹⁶ when he wrote in 1932 about the dangers of terror bombings. He said that "if a man has a potential weapon and has his back to the wall and is going to be killed, he will use that weapon, whatever it is and whatever undertaking he has given to it". The land battle for Britain was over with the fall of France in 1940 and with British troops managing to escape the German entrapment and retreating across the channel back to Britain. The Germans began

preparing to cross the channel and Britain was then in great peril. The only effective weapons the British had were its fighters and bombers. Under such circumstances, the fighters alone were not effective to stop the German armies. The only solution was to break the will of Germans to fight and the only effective way was to attack where it would hurt them most -- their population. The only hope was to cause problems in Germany's backyard and demoralise the nation into halting its advance. However, this strategy is morally wrong and poses a dilemma. Will the military fight morally and lose its sovereignty or fight immorally but preserve it? The latter was chosen. Though Harris may be hated by the Germans, he should be remembered for his conduct of a mission to save Britain.

Ideals and Reality

In peace time, we debate about morality in war and subscribe to the notion that a good general is a moral man. But is morality really an important quality of a good general in a state emergency? When a man is appointed to generalship, what does his nation expect of him? Suppose a nation comes face to face with a more powerful aggressor nation which is all out to annex it, what kind of general would the victim nation want? Would they forgive him if he allows the enemy to win because he did not want to fight the war immorally, when he could have stopped them if he did? I am inclined to believe that everyone in the victim nation will want a general who knows how to use all the available war assets to beat the aggressor off, regardless of the cost and the manner in which he conducts it.

Should the principle of discrimination be absolute? Even some Westerners, who are champions of human rights, do not think so. They can agree with "the principle of discrimination as a general proposition, that is, that ordinary enemy civilians should not be targeted under ordinary circumstances".¹⁷ However, they opined that "ordinary civilians may be targeted if doing so promises to save a greater number of lives, or at least an overwhelming greater number of lives".¹⁸ This was the justification used by the United States¹⁹ for dropping the atomic bombs on Japanese civilian at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II. It is apparent that the conditions set by the doctrine of double effects²⁰ were not met, and reinforces the idea that the moral reality of war is fixed by the opinions of mankind. Although the use of such weapons of mass destruction is not discriminate and would cause great number of casualties, I strongly believe countries such as the United States, for example, will not hesitate to unleash its nuclear arsenal on its adversary should its very own population be attacked by such weapons. The people will demand the use of a similar reprisal. This means that a nation's C-in-C who has a high regard for morality will face the dilemma of infringing it should the day come.

Generalship According to Sun Tzu

"The general is the supporting pillar of the state. If his talents are all-encompassing, the state will invariably be strong. If the supporting pillar is marked by fissures, the state will invariably grow weak."

Sun Tzu²¹

I believe Sun Tzu has the answer to what a good general is. While most professional strategists focus on the principles of war and operational doctrines, Sun Tzu's writings on the art of war²² encompass moral concerns.

On commanders, he emphasised the qualities of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and strictness. A general must be wise so that all his actions in the use of force are sound and aimed at achieving victory in the shortest possible time, with the least possible cost in lives and effort, and causing as few casualties on the enemy as possible. He must be sincere so that his leaders and his subordinates can trust him. He must be benevolent so that he does not plan mischief or evil. He must have the courage in battle so that he can lead his men to victory. He must be strict so that military discipline of his troops is maintained all the time. In these, we find the moral concerns addressed by Sun Tzu.

"Now the general who wins a battle makes many calculations in his temple ere the battle is fought."

Sun Tzu requires the general to carefully calculate the risks and makes his plan more robust before sending in his troops. A general who does this will make sure that troops are committed wisely and proportionately. He will suffer lesser casualties in battle and is more likely to win.

Therefore, a good general must surely be the one who can subdue the enemy without fighting. In this, Sun Tzu emphasised pre-war preparations. A successful general must be able to use diplomacy to make alliances with friendly forces against a common enemy, and be able to disrupt the enemy's alliance as a practical strategy. If a general can do this, he has met the highest moral requirement in that he has averted bloodshed.

A Good General

I agree with Michael Walzer and Henry Sidgwick that a good general is a moral man but his generalship cannot be vetoed by morality alone. The reason is that the quality, 'good', can be viewed in the light of morality or professionalism. The reality is that in war, a general is bound by oath to defend his people and he will use whatever means to do that, when circumstance presents itself as either extinction or crossing the line of morality. If the general has powerful weapons such as a nuclear arsenal, he will practise restraint at first. However, if he were forced into a corner, as Stanley Baldwin said, he will choose to use it although it is morally wrong.

With the world population today, we will find people at nearly every corner of the globe. It is unlikely there will be a war without civilian casualties. As William V. O'Brien argues, the principle of discrimination is "obsolete in the context of modern war" and that "modern war necessarily involves the death of civilians".²³ Despite this, we must not discard the idea of discrimination as this rule ensures those in military command must always include civilian or non-combatant immunity as part of their considerations when they have to fight a war. Perhaps the emerging technology on precision weapons will also facilitate discrimination in his conduct of battle against his enemy.

In my opinion, a good general must therefore be one who will do his utmost to prevent the occurrence of war while he prepares his armed forces for such an eventuality. Though it is his profession to fight and win a war, he must understand the sorrows it will bring to ordinary civilians and must abhor war. In essence, he must 'love peace and hate war'. He does not fight to bring fame to himself but rather to bring about a quick end to fighting so that ordinary people can resume their way of life. He must possess the moral courage to right a wrong in war and ensure that his values are imparted to his armed forces in peacetime. In such a general, there is no concern for the lack of morality.

Conclusion

While I recognise morality as a desirable virtue in a general, I must qualify that whether a general is good (according to morality) is subject to the circumstances under which he fights the war. It is important that the distinction between professionalism and morality be viewed separately when we appraise a general. At the same time, *jus in bello* alone is insufficient without *jus ad bellum*. Both will be needed in the appraisal. But suffice to say that all good generals must endeavour to conduct war as morally as they can, not because of fear of post-war punishment but for the love of humanity.

Endnotes

1. In Exodus 20:13 of the *Holy Bible*, this is the seventh commandment of the Ten Commandments. It is widely regarded as God's moral standard for Man.

2. Oppenheim, *International Law*, vol. II, Longmans, 1956, 7th edn, p. 202.

3. Walzer, Michael. *Just and unjust wars : a moral argument with historical illustrations*, p. 130.

4. Ibid., p. 15.
5. Ibid., p. 130. Henry Sidgwick's twofold rules.
6. Ibid., p.255
7. Ibid., p.256
8. Ibid., p.260
9. Frankland. *Bomber Offensive*, p. 159.
10. Walzer, op. cit., p. 323.
11. Roskolenko, Harry. *Great Battles and Their Great Generals* (Chicago, Playboy Press, 1974), p. 190.
12. Walzer, op. cit., p. 38-39.
13. Parada, George (1996-2000). *Achtung Panzer*, [online]. Available : <http://www.achtungpanzer.com/gen1.htm> [2000, July 27].
14. Ibid. Injured in a strafing air attack on July 17th of 1944, Rommel could not personally participate in the attempt to overthrow Hitler three days later (July 20, 1944), but he was gravely implicated. He was later executed on October 14, 1944, by taking poison in the hospital at Ulm.
15. Walzer, op. cit., p. 37.
16. Ibid., p, 252.
17. Regan, Richard J. *Just War: Principles and Cases*. (Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press 1996) p. 91.
18. Ibid.
19. Henry L. Stimson. "The Decision to Use the Atom Bomb." *Harper's Magazine* 94 (February 1947). P. 100-101, 106-7.
20. Under Double Effect, an act of force is morally justified when it meets four conditions: the intended effects of an act are moral, the positive effects of the act outweigh the evil effects, the evil effects are unintended, and the evil effects are not a means to an end.
21. Sawyer, Ralph D. *The Complete Art of War : Sun Tzu, Sun Pin*. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, c1996) p. 51.
22. Giles, Lionel. M.A. (1910). *Sun-tzu On the Art of War: The Oldest Military Treatise in the World*, [Online]. Available: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/taoism/suntext.htm#LAYPLANS> [2000, June 18].
23. Regan, op. cit., p. 93.

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3. Johnson, James Turner and George Weigel. *Just War and the Gulf War* Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1991

4. Parada, George (1996-2000). *Achtung Panzer*, [online]. Available : <http://www.achtungpanzer.com/gen1.htm> [2000, July 27]. Regan, Richard J. *Just War: Principles and Cases* Washington, D.C. : Catholic University of America Press 1996

5. Roberts, Adam. *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict* edited by Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane London: MacMillan, 1994

6. Roskolenko, Harry. *Great Battles and Their Great Generals* Chicago, Playboy Press, 1974

7. Rowe, Peter J. *Defence: The Legal Implications: Military Law and the Laws of War* London; Washington: Brassey's Defence Publisher, 1987

8. Sawyer, Ralph D. with the collaboration of Mei-chun Lee Sawyer. *The Complete Art of War : Sun Tzu, Sun Pin* Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, c1996

9. Spencer, Rainier H. *A Just War Primer* Military Review, Vol. LXXIII, No. 2 (Feb 1993), pg 20-25.

10. Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars : A moral argument with historical illustrations* New York: Basic Books, c1977



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Air Power in the Gulf War and Kosovo Conflict

by MAJ Lim Tian Sing

In the early 1920s, Giulio Douhet, an Italian and William Mitchell, an American were among the first theorists to realize the full implications of air power. Both theorists viewed that the use of air power would provide a significant edge in winning future wars. They shared the vision of using long-range strategic bombers to strike deep into enemy territory so as to destroy both the enemy's means and will to resist.¹ The theorists had, however, differing views on the conceptual deployment of air power. These are mainly in the areas of whether air power should be employed jointly with other services, the type of targets, the type of bombing (aerial versus pinpoint), the perceived types and roles of the combat aircraft.

The conduct of the 1991 Gulf War and the 1999 Kosovo conflicts saw air power being deployed extensively. Both conflicts saw some relevance and contrasts in the theories as expounded by Douhet and Mitchell. The Gulf War, for example, very much employed the joint operations concept while the battle in Kosovo employed solely air power. The aim of this essay is to look at whether the theories expounded by Douhet and Mitchell had been validated during the Gulf War and the Kosovo Conflict. We shall first look at the major concepts raised by both theorists.

Douhet's Theory of Air Power

Douhet believed that the airplane, with "complete freedom of action and direction", had revolutionized warfare and that airplanes would win wars quickly and decisively without first defeating enemy surface forces.² Douhet stated that the Army and Navy performed essentially defensive roles in war and the only weapon suitable for the offensive was the aircraft. As such, he advocated an independent air force and saw no requirement in conducting joint operations with other services.

Douhet viewed that the first priority in air operations was to gain command of the air. In fact, to Douhet, command of the air was essential to attaining victory in war. With command of the air, one's own air force would be free to operate whenever and wherever it desired, while the enemy's air arm was rendered permanently helpless. Surprise could be achieved easily as the enemy would have little early warning and there would be little ground resistance against the attacking force. It must be noted that during Douhet's time, the perceived enemy had no effective defence against any ensuing air attacks. Radar had yet to be invented and the air defence systems, including surface-to-air weapons and air defence fighter aircraft, were not effective in targeting air threats.

Douhet advocated that air superiority or supremacy could be achieved by the continual mass employment of an air force to destroy the enemy air force on the ground, by attacking airfields and aircraft factories. The air force must be a standing force ready to fight at the onset of hostilities. It should take the initiative and strike first. It must hit hard and often, until command of the air is achieved and continue to exert firepower even after air superiority has been achieved. Having achieved command of the air, the pilots would then use their battle plane fleet to destroy the enemy's will and capacity to resist by conducting aerial bombing on his cities, industrial centres and, primarily by targeting the civilian population. Civilians (Douhet believed) were not prepared for the effects of war and the bombing of population centres would create psychological dislocation among the people. People would then apply pressure on the government to negotiate for peace.³

Douhet believed the destruction of enemy strategic targets in the rear could be achieved through aerial bombing. The only type of airplane to conduct such strategic aerial bombing, according to Douhet, was the *battle plane*. The *battle plane* was defined as an armed and armored bomber or strike aircraft that could fight its way to and from the target.⁴ As such, Douhet advocated the *battle plane* design. He believed that this *battle plane* could be used for all purposes. He did not see the need for different types of aircraft for different missions, although he did recommend a small number of fighters to protect the bombers.

Mitchell's Theory of Air Power

Like Douhet, Mitchell also believed in the capability of the airplane. In 1930, Mitchell wrote:

*The advent of air power that can go to the vital centers of gravity and entirely neutralize or destroy them has put a completely new complexion on the old systems of war. It is now realized that the hostile main army in the field is a false objective and the real objectives are the vital centers. The old theory that victory meant the destruction of the hostile main army is untenable. Armies themselves can be disregarded by air power if a rapid strike is made against the opposing centers.*⁵

As such, rather than concentrating air attacks on population centres (Douhet's theory) or the main army, airplanes should be used as strategic weapons to strike deep into the enemy's territory, focusing on the inner cities, military related industries and other vital areas. Unlike Douhet's concept of aerial bombing, Mitchell's concept was to more pinpoint and bomb specific targets.

Mitchell also advocated that combat aircraft should be used in collaboration with or to support the land and sea forces, i.e. joint operations. Air power could provide offensive actions against ground and naval forces that could include close air support, anti-surface ships and anti-submarine warfare.

Mitchell advocated that different aircraft types were necessary for different types of mission. An innovative Mitchell felt that there should be troop-carrying aircraft, long-range bombers, and even in his time, he encouraged the development of ski-equipped aircraft, bombsights for more accurate bomb delivery, engine superchargers and aerial torpedoes. If Mitchell had lived longer, technologies like stealth, long-range precision weapons and other high-end niche technological weapons and systems would probably have been developed much earlier. The following paragraphs will examine the applications of the two theories on both the Gulf War and the Kosovo Conflict.

Applying Douhet's and Mitchell's Theories to the 1991 Gulf War

On 2 August 1990, Iraqi military forces, on orders from President Saddam Hussein, invaded and occupied the small country of Kuwait. The Persian Gulf War of 1991, which took place from 16 January to 28 February 1991, was fought to expel Iraq and restore Kuwaiti independence. This was the first major military clash of the post-Cold War era. For 43 days, the armed forces of the United States and a multi-national coalition fought a successful military campaign to expel Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait. Although the Iraqi armed forces had extensive experience in warfare, the successful employment and integration of air power by the US and the multi-national coalition won the war.

• Joint Operations

The decisive factor in the war with Iraq was the air campaign, but ground forces were necessary to eject the Iraqis from Kuwait. The US Army and Marine forces skillfully executed an ingenious ground campaign. The Marine force posed the threat of an amphibious landing in Kuwait and was successful in pinning down at least six Iraqi infantry divisions.⁶ The concept of joint warfare validated Mitchell's theory. This was because the air campaign was successful in blinding the detection capability of the Iraqi military and eliminated its ability to detect movement and massing of coalition ground forces. The air campaign served either to fix the Iraqi military troops or to prepare the battlefield for US and coalition ground forces. This allowed coalition ground force commanders to cloak the massive movement of over two corps of troops, equipment and supplies to setup the "Left Hook" manoeuvre that proved so successful. The "Left Hook" was a massive movement of ground forces westward to avoid Iraqi defences. Finally, the air campaign drastically wore down the ability and the will of the Iraqi Army to fight. Iraqi ground forces were so devastated and demoralized by the time the ground war started that they lacked the conviction to fight for their own soil, much less Kuwait. One senior US Army division commander said, "The Iraqi soldier's lack of will to fight was due very much to the [air campaign's] preparation of the battlefield. When we got on his flanks and

his rear, he surrendered. The defeat of the Iraqi Army was the result of the synergism between our air and ground forces."⁷ Ground campaign ultimately forced the Iraqi military out of Kuwait. As predicted by Mitchell, the strategic use of airplanes would significantly augment the ground forces and demoralize the soldiers, leading to a decisive victory in war.

- **Command of the Air**

As advocated by Douhet, the key to attaining early air superiority was for the air campaign to be initiated during the onset of war, and for the offensive air campaign to be conducted continuously with mass concentration of firepower onto the enemy targets. The Gulf War began with simultaneous air strikes against all elements of the Iraqi military and its support structure. Bombing then continued around-the-clock every day. During the initial phase of the war, the relentlessness, massiveness and precision of the attacks induced systemic shock and paralysis from which the Iraqi political and military leadership never recovered. The air campaign, at the war's onset, had successfully stopped most of the Iraqi logistics support and ground movement in selected areas. The early attainment of air supremacy enabled allied forces to isolate the battlefield by interdicting enemy supply lines, denying Iraqi commanders the intelligence they needed from aerial reconnaissance, and degrading command and control links. Air supremacy also allowed coalition forces to conduct cross-border reconnaissance, aggressive deception and flanking of ground forces with virtual impunity. The early attainment of air superiority through continual mass attacks had validated Douhet's theory.

- **Enemy Air Defence**

However, contrary to what Douhet had predicted about the enemy having little early warning and no effective air defence systems against the impending air attacks, the Iraqi air defence system was not to be underestimated. The aircrew and aircraft attrition rates on the coalition forces would have been high if not for the use (or discovery) of air defence suppression, stealth technology (the use of F-117 stealth bombers), pilot-less and long range stand-off weapons. Although Iraq's air defence system was strong, the employment of advanced modern day technology has enhanced survivability of both human ware and hardware.

- **Role-related Aircraft**

In line with Mitchell's thinking, different aircraft types had to be used for different missions and roles. In fact, Douhet's view on the use of only the *battle plane* type of aircraft and limited fighters to portray air power would not be operationally feasible nor effective during the Gulf War. To mount a genuine and credible air assault on Iraq, the Allied coalition had to deploy several different types of aircraft like the F-117A stealth bombers, electronic warfare airplanes like EF-111A and EA-6B, F-4G SEAD aircraft, strike aircraft like the F-15E, F/A-18, F-111F, B-52, A-6E and Tornado GR1, and air superiority fighters like F-15A/C, F-14A, F-16 and Tornado F3. ⁸ The air superiority aircraft were used extensively for sweep, escort and combat air patrol missions. In the theater of air operations, there would also be tanker aircraft, and airborne early warning, command and control aircraft like the E-3B AWACS and E-2C. As such, modern day wars like the Gulf War would employ a variety of aircraft types with different configurations, each accomplishing its own mission. For future wars, although certain advanced aircraft type could fulfill more than one role (e.g. sweep and strike concurrently), it is unlikely that a specified aircraft would be used to accomplish a majority of the missions. Therefore, Mitchell's theory of using different aircraft type for different missions matches quite closely to the conduct of the Gulf War and probably the conduct of future wars.

- **Aerial versus Pinpoint Bombing**

Precise weapon delivery was the trademark of the *Operation Desert Storm* air campaign. Its effect had incurred much psychological dislocation to the Iraqi troops and its commanders. The precise

nature of the air campaign made it possible to pursue strategic objectives with less likelihood of inflicting collateral damage and civilian casualties. This was demonstrated by the destruction of roughly 50 military targets in Baghdad without significantly harming the other 500,000 buildings and structures in the city. It was crucial for the coalition forces to avoid collateral damage and civilian casualties as these would be capitalized on by Saddam Hussein to seek international support and sympathy. The concept of delivering bombs onto pinpoint or well-defined targets is in line with Mitchell's belief.

- **Type of Targets**

Throughout the war, the coalition forces did not target the civilian population. In fact, military strategists for the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflicts had tried very hard to avert civilian casualties and collateral damage. This is contrary to Douhet's theory. The strategic strikes on Iraqi's main vital centres targeted included Iraqi's C 3 facilities, nuclear and chemical warfare capabilities, electrical power and oil-refining capacity. At first glance, it may seem that the targets selected had validated Mitchell's theory. However, it was the fall of the Iraqi Republican Guard and the Iraqi army in Kuwait that led them to concede defeat. As such, the type of targets attacked did not validate Mitchell's theory either.

Applying Douhet's and Mitchell's Theories to the 1999

Kosovo Conflict

The NATO air campaign in Kosovo began on 24 March 1999. It employed combat aircraft from 14 different countries. During the course of the 78-day campaign, NATO became locked in a war of attrition with Serbia in which NATO air power was pitted against Serbian air and ground forces. Serbia ultimately had to concede defeat because of the enormous damage done by NATO's air power. The NATO air force was able to attack any Serbian target with little or no loss. Another demoralizing factor for the Serbian force was that its ground troops were also unable to defeat the Kosovo Liberation Army without exposing its own forces to the devastating air attacks by the NATO forces.

- **Independent Air Force**

Unlike the Gulf War, NATO forces in Kosovo employed only air power to achieve its objectives of ending the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs. No ground forces were employed although there were growing prospects that NATO would pursue a ground option if its air power did not achieve decisive results. At the onset of war, command of the air was achieved and the NATO forces were able to attack the Serbian targets at will. This was very much in line with Douhet's theory that air power alone could win a war and that attaining command of the air was essential in victory. However, the lack of support from the ground forces in terms of real-time non-combatants had resulted in much collateral damage and caused almost 2,000 civilian casualties, compared to the loss of only a few hundred Serbian militants. Similar to Mitchell's theory of joint concept of operation, air power yields better results when conducted in collaboration with other services.

- **Role-related Aircraft and Form of Bombing**

NATO reported in early July 1999 that it had flown approximately 37,500 sorties, of which 3,200 were suppression of air defence (SEAD) sorties, and around 10,800 were dedicated strike sorties. Various aircraft conducted the different types of missions. The type of ordnance used also changed over time. In the early days of the air and missile war, more than 90 percent of the bombs and missiles used were precision-guided munitions. Better weather and the gradual attrition of Serbia's air defences allowed NATO to use an increasing number of unguided weapons.¹⁰ While the multi-aircraft types concept favours Mitchell's theory, the mixed use of precision (pinpoint) and unguided

(aerial) weapons favours both Mitchell's and Douhet's theories, respectively. The use of unguided weapons coupled with poor target information had induced significant collateral damages and civilian casualties. This had been widely criticized by the international community and Serbia's political leaders had capitalized on these issues to garner international support and sympathy. To avoid such embarrassment, international condemnation and violation of international laws, future military strategists need to consider joint operations, the requirements for accurate target information and targeting. The concepts of using different aircraft types and pinpoint targeting are in line with Mitchell's theory.

- **Lack of Momentum**

Contrary to what Douhet had theorised in terms of maintaining the offensive actions with mass concentration of firepower even after achieving air superiority, the NATO forces did not seek to use air power decisively to force an end to ethnic cleansing. It gave the Serbs de facto strategic sanctuaries, and its slow pattern of escalation in some ways taught the Serbs to accept the damage done by air and missile power where a sudden, massive use of air power might have led to far more immediate results. Gradual escalation tends to fail, where shock and decisive force can sometimes produce far more prompt results. Limiting military action in the short term can extend the overall length and intensity of war, increase casualties, and create conditions which make it more difficult to reach a stable outcome and a lasting peace.⁹ NATO had originally planned to conduct a 2- week war in Kosovo. However, it lasted more than 11 weeks. The piecemeal attacks conducted by the NATO forces were not consistent with Douhet's concept of continual mass projection of air power.

- **Enemy Air Defence**

The enemy (Serbian) air defence could not be easily undermined. In fact, during the initial stage of the conflict, NATO's top priority was to deploy SEAD aircraft to attack and destroy Serbia's air defence systems. In spite of the SEAD effort, NATO lost an F-117 stealth bomber, which was shot down by Serbian's SA-3 surface air missiles. This was due to the lack of electronic jamming support and the fact that the stealth bombers had been using the same ingress and egress routes. Contrary to Douhet's theory, the lethality and importance of modern day air defence systems must be treated with due respect, even if the mission was to be conducted by a high-end stealth technology aircraft like the F-117.

- **Advanced Technology and Its Restraints**

Both Douhet and Mitchell had been accused of projecting too much ahead of military technology advancement during their times. In fact, it can be argued that had Mitchell been around longer or born later, he may have changed his theory slightly or even accelerated the revolution in aviation warfare. However, the rapid advance in military technology over the past 60 years was too overwhelming to be predicted by both strategists. There is no doubt that the success of the air campaigns in the Gulf War and the Kosovo Conflict has proven the effectiveness and lethality of air power, but most importantly, it had proven the rapid advance in military technology. There is also no doubt that steady and important advances are taking place in targeting and intelligence, battle management, all-weather offensive combat, weapon lethality and accuracy, long-range attack capability, beyond-visual-range air combat, air defence, air defence suppression, and stealth and penetration capability. These capabilities in modern wars have validated the importance of technology in reshaping the nature of war.¹¹ However, even with the availability of high-end technology, its effectiveness cannot be fully exploited if there are political or strategic restraints. One example is the adoption of "minimal casualties" concept in the Kosovo conflict whereby NATO was not willing to risk the lives of her own combatants. This led to the pilots dropping bombs above 15,000 feet altitude, resulting in collateral damage and loss of civilian lives. Additionally, most real-time targeting plans in Serbia took a long time to be approved, as it had to be agreed upon by a coalition of 19 countries. This resulted in piecemeal attacks and allowed time for the Serbian forces to consolidate their defences. These political or strategic restraints are also not emphasized in both

Douhet's and Mitchell's theories. As such, while most military strategists may prefer continual mass attacks, the political restraints they faced may have an adverse effect on the decision making process.

• Conflict "Termination"

Beyond what Douhet and Mitchell had advocated, even with successful air campaigns, the end results of both wars were not conclusive in terms of achieving the political and grand strategic objectives. The air and missile war ended with a Serbian agreement to withdraw all military and police forces from Kosovo and to allow NATO peacekeeping forces to occupy Kosovo. However, the peace agreement did not fully define the future government of Kosovo, deal with the issue of independence, or describe the future role of the Kosovo Liberation Army or the Serbian forces in Kosovo. Like the Coalition's victory in the Gulf War, there was no doubt about the scale of the immediate military victory; however there was great doubt about the future strategic consequences of that victory.

One can argue that while major countries like the US and Britain have changed their political leaders, Saddam Hussein is still the President of Iraq. The air campaign did not force Saddam to withdraw and despite its military effectiveness, did not lead to his overthrow. There is also a possibility that the Iraqi military force may one day return. Consequently, valid questions remain about the limits of air power to achieve largely political goals. However, the increasing use of precise air power permitted the pursuit of specific military objectives such as disabling targets rather than destroying them while seeking to minimize collateral damage.

Conclusion

A close analysis of the theories expounded by Douhet and Mitchell has reviewed some relevance to the conduct of air campaigns in the Gulf War and Kosovo conflicts. It can be seen that the conduct of Gulf War was more in line with Mitchell's theories and these are in terms of joint operations with other services, employment of role-related aircraft and the use of precision weapons for pinpoint targeting. However, contrary to Mitchell's theory, it was the fall of the Iraqi Republican Guard and the Iraqi army in Kuwait that led them to concede defeat. The air campaign in Kosovo employed only air power to achieve its objectives and this is very much in line with Douhet's theory that air power alone could win war. However, contrary to Douhet's belief, NATO forces lacked the momentum of attack, employed role-related aircraft and faced strong enemy air defences.

Military strategists in both the Gulf War and Kosovo conflicts had strived very hard to limit the war's impact on civilians. It was perceived that future wars would continue to be conducted this way, thus invalidating Douhet's theory. Future military strategists will also attempt to employ the advent of technology to the fullest to shape the air war. Such secret- edge weapons will not be revealed until the onset of war. They will thus align themselves more towards Mitchell's theory of joint operations, requirement for accurate targeting and the use of role-related aircraft and innovative technology during the conduct of future air campaigns.

Endnotes

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HYPE or Hyper War? Contextualising the Revolution in Military Affairs in Relation to the Revolution in Strategic Affairs After the Gulf War

by MAJ Irvin Lim Fang Jau

"History progresses at the speed of its weapons systems... The RMA begins with the application of the speed of light.. . This means that history is now rushing headlong into the wall of time...the speed of light does not merely transform the world. It becomes the world".

Paul Virilio¹

"House-to-house fighting is out; cruise missiles are in. Green berets are out; UN Blue helmets are in. "

Thomas L. Friedman²

On the Wings of a Revolution

Following the Gulf War in 1991, the contested notion of Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) has generated considerable debate³ on the exact nature and implications of its effects on contemporary and future conflicts. Some ten years on, the debate remains germane. To maintain that the current revolution is little more than an evolution in conventional military technical capability is to miss the bigger picture about the deeper impact and holistic nature of the on-going RMA. The latest revolution in military affairs should not be seen in purely technological terms even though much of the latest military gadgetry and gizmo make for spectacular commentary. For clearly, not by technology alone, does a revolution make. Having said that, neither should the current RMA be trivialized nor confused by generalisations about "old concepts applied with new technology".⁴ Rather than being simply a superfluous academic quibble over semantics, the recognition of the term 'Revolution' in RMA is "a policy issue of the highest order"⁵, as its implementation will entail costly, largely irreversible and radical reforms in military organisation, doctrine and even culture. Towards that end, the contextualization of the current RMA, as I shall attempt to show in this paper, is especially pertinent when it comes to

- explicating the changes taking place in contemporary military strategic affairs, and
- accounting for their effects on the future nature of warfare and strategy iteration.

Originally dubbed as a Military-Technical Revolution (MTR) in the mid 1980's by Soviet Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, the latest RMA as re-appropriated under a broader American military definition extends beyond the mere interaction between technology and the nature of warfare.⁶ As has been suggested by a 1993 study commissioned by the U.S. Centre for Strategic and International Studies: "A Revolution in Military Affairs represents a fundamental advance in technology, doctrine or organisation that renders existing methods of conducting warfare obsolete."⁷ On hindsight, such triumphal claims about the wholesale obsolescence of existing methods of conducting warfare may have overstated the case, and unwittingly mired debates over whether it is evolutionary or revolutionary change warfare is really undergoing. To move the debate forward, it would be more accurate and useful to define a RMA as a *non-linear change*⁸ in the ways wars are fought. This definition of a RMA removes the red-herring of 'wholesale abandonment of existing methods of warfare', for obvious problems of hyperbole and falsifiability, and allows us to focus back on the real changes taking place in the arena of mortal combat. It is also equally important to note that such a non-linear change need not be a one-off occurrence. A RMA is often a disparate *long-haul process* marked by frequent disjunctures and breakthroughs. Therefore, a Revolution in Military Affairs could take decades for its full potential to be realized. Understood in this way, revolutionary/non-linear changes in warfare, can be assessed more for their profound resonating impact on military strategy and policies, rather than being construed as simply

another pyrotechnic moment of high-tech weaponry and wizardry foisted onto the popular *imaginaire* of violent conflict, where little has fundamentally changed. There is no contradiction in this temporal qualification as the conventional understanding of a revolution as a 'one-off break' does not quite fully capture the complex interaction between systemic forces of technology, strategy and politics when one talks about a RMA in relation to historical time.

In an attempt to entangle such complex interactions, Cheang had recently proposed a useful heuristic formula for identifying RMAs in history.⁹ However, based on a partial and somewhat parsimonious application of the formula, he concludes perhaps prematurely that the Gulf War did not represent an emergent RMA but merely marked the evolution of conventional warfare. The irony is that an application of the same formula could also just as easily derive a contradistinctive conclusion in the affirmative about the validity of an ongoing RMA. In fact, it can be argued that the latest RMA has demonstrated its potential to 'win a war' that promises to alter the course of strategic history by fundamentally-not just marginally altering the character and conduct of conflict. Already, the profound impact of such a revolution-in-progress has made its mark felt in some mid-intensity conflicts in the Gulf and Balkans over the last decade of the 20th century. Taking the Gulf War as the point of departure, a re-application of Cheang's formula is provided below, which arguably validates, *willy nilly*, the case for the RMA currently in progress:

- **Change in Tools**

Advent of the tactical cruise-missile age; wide-ranging employment of C4I and precision-targeting technologies premised on speed, stealth and seamless synchronicity - enjoining all the fighting and support arms of the military services across the continuum of the multi-dimensional battlefield.

- **Change in Nature of Warfare**

Exponential increase in speed and accuracy of near real-time decision-making in solving the quintessential warfare problematic of detection, identification and targeting; seamless simultaneity and synchronisation of effort, large-scale stand-off, deep-strike doctrinal development; drastic minimisation of own force casualties and collateral damage; emergence of new forms of asymmetric challenges like cyber-warfare etc.

- **Change in Socio-political Behaviour of State**

Conduct of military operations through a 'Strategy of Limited and Other Aims' subordinated to restraining policy directives that panders to the *moralpolitik* of keeping own force casualty rates and civilian collateral damage low; the increasingly pervasive *CNN effect* of the international broadcast media with profound impact on popular domestic and international opinion - becoming another significant pressure-point for policy-decision making and accountability.

To be sure, new military operating concepts are developing in tandem with new technological breakthroughs on many fronts. And establishing the indivisible link between radical technological changes in military affairs with that of equally salient changes in politico-strategic affairs, as I shall elaborate, should address any concern over the ostensible "lack of inter-relation"¹⁰ between the current RMA and wider societal changes. The empirical evidence for an on-going RMA has to be appreciated objectively and acknowledged for the defining moment that it is and not be discounted or treated desultorily. This is important if one is to avoid temptation to tautology by defining the formula to safeguard the proposition, or trivialisation by specious historical analogy.

Rather, the missing link in the conceptual framework for an understanding of the current RMA may well require a more nuanced and sophisticated contextualisation of history, as has been proposed by Williamson Murray. He provides us with a useful conceptual framework by collating a *tentative historical record*, as re-adapted in Table II. Murray, quite rightly, surmises that technology is *only one key variable* amongst others influencing the development of many other possible RMAs throughout history. If there is a general consensus that *there is something going on* in the realm of military affairs, perhaps the more pertinent

question one should be asking, following Ellen's ¹¹ rhetorical musing, is this: "Is there really a Revolution in Military Affairs going on at the moment, or several?" To answer just such a question, Murray's proposal that RMAs should be properly understood as discrete moments in a historical continuum, which together form the subset of wider historical phenomena denoted by Military Revolutions, seems to me to be particularly useful. As he puts it, "If military revolutions are comparable to 'earthquakes', then revolutions in military affairs represent the preshocks and aftershocks of the great events"¹² (Table II). RMAs, he argues, have two distinct features, Firstly, RMAs take a *considerable amount of time to develop* - sometimes even decades to emerge - in peacetime and even in wartime. Secondly, there is the *matter of perspective* - what is apparent to us today through the benefit of hindsight may not always be readily apparent to those who fought through a period heralding the dawn of a new RMA. For example, the German commanders who had fought in World War I may have considered the doctrines and capabilities that destroyed the Allied armies in the Battle of France to be evolutionary.¹³ But the French and the British officers would have considered the lightning German attack (Blitzkrieg¹⁴) on the banks of the Meuse to be revolutionary. Historicising potential RMAs and understanding the role of conflicting perceptions in this way can help us to better discern between the seismic tremors and glacial movements taking place on the contemporary terrain of military conflict and strategy development. This will help ensure that ground-breaking shifts in military affairs marking revolutionary changes in warfare are not misread or missed out on.

The Chronostrategy of Speed

The case for an on-going RMA can perhaps be best seen in the context of key trends or twists¹⁵ in contemporary strategy development which promise to profoundly shape the conduct of future wars. Specifically, this can be done by looking more holistically at how on-going changes in the operational art of warfighting and the hard sciences of military technology have become deeply inter-twined with the political helix of strategy development. Historically, the pursuit of decisive victory had focused on three approaches. They are the *direct annihilation* of the enemy in decisive battle, *attritional destruction* by eroding enemy's capacity to wage war, or on a more *manoeuvre-based indirect approach* that targets efforts on shattering the adversary's will with lightning attacks on his weak-links and decision-cycle. Not surprisingly, some have argued¹⁶ that the latter approach enabled by 'Speed of Command' is now holding greater moral and political credence in current western military thinking. Indeed, through a deadly combination of speed, stealth and synchronicity, precision strike warfare brings the strategy of the indirect approach many notches closer to its ideal manifestation. US Airforce planners have referred to this as *hyperwar*.¹⁷ *Hyperwar* is marked by the high speed tempo of unprecedented destructive intensity, through good C⁴I capabilities that can summon into simultaneous action the full spectrum of offense and defense capabilities to bear overwhelmingly on the increasingly complex *five dimensional* nature (Land, Sea, Air, Space and Infosphere) of the threat of the environment As had been observed:

*In past conflicts, the enemy could always find a lull in the conflict to regroup and recover. During Desert Storm, the Iraqis never got a chance to catch their breath. While allied aircraft made use of the cover of darkness, cruise missiles rained down on Baghdad during the daylight hours. Approximately 80 percent of cruise missile attacks occurred in daylight. Once a C³ asset or airfield was damaged it stayed damaged. Constant pressure on the enemy made repairs impossible, or at least very difficult. No Iraqi asset was too well defended to attack. Coalition commanders could launch a cruise missile with confidence that a fixed or semi-fixed target would be damaged or destroyed... **What was truly revolutionary, rather than merely evolutionary**, about hyperwar, was the commander's ability to coordinate such a wide range of disparate assets in real-time. A great deal of this ability was derived from making use of space based assets which provided Coalition commanders with a view of the battlefield that exceeded anything previously experienced.*¹⁸

Under such hyper conditions of warfare, the radical gearshift, as Paul Virilio would argue, is towards a *chronostrategy of speed* that exponentially accelerates the pace of deadly powerplay underpinning chessboard geopolitics and textbook geostrategy - "The RMA begins with the application of the speed of light."¹⁹ Or as US Colonel Anthony Corrales puts it:

*"Speed is the condition of the future. The dilemma is how do we get something with enough punch somewhere?"*²⁰

And particularly in the fast-paced era of globalisation, there is an urgent need to account for both the new political economy *and* military power of speed. The *chronostrategy of speed* in *hyperwar* has been well-articulated by Colin Powell's doctrine which asserts that if war is to be fought, it should begin only when such a decisive force is amassed that the fighting will be *quickly* successful. In many respects, the rapidly unfolding battlespace of space-time compression potentially enjoins combatants of not just *third wave* warfare (information age), but also combatants schooled and equipped for *second wave* (industrial age) and *first wave* (agrarian age) warfare.²¹ For many, the great 'digital divide' of technological asymmetry of force amongst combatants of the three waves of warfare, would seem to tip the scales towards the technologically-superior (first wave) force, even if actual war outcomes can be ambivalent and not always politically-decisive. Herein lies some of the rub - *strategies of the weak* have also progressed in tandem to cope with such asymmetry; as I shall caution in my penultimate section below. Before that, I shall now dwell on another two key trends of the present RMA-- *Strategies of Limited and Other Aims* followed by *Strategies of the Infinite-Reach and the Safe Strike*.

Strategies of Limited and Other Aims

The Gulf War marked a key-defining moment in the revolution in military affairs. Lawrence Freedman has even argued that "the Gulf War launched RMA" by showcasing the advanced technologies which helped to secure a swift and 'decisive' political conclusion to "an essentially classical conventional campaign."²² It was an unequivocal moment of transformation, and a powerful demonstration of the destructive possibilities of Air-Land Battle (ALB) type theories originally developed for the Cold War European theatre. ALB continues to be a model for any conflict the US might fight against a well-armed enemy, and was the strategic doctrine of choice for Operation Desert Storm.²³ However, the pendulum of the ALB strategy was not allowed to sway to its destructive extremes in the Gulf. Not unlike the Korean War, the brakes of policy necessitated that political aims reined in the full momentum of military action. The war was not pursued to its logical conclusion of decisive total victory with complete destruction of the enemy forces. UN mandate, Coalition cohesion and US *realpolitik*²⁴ considerations sanctioned merely the ejection of the Iraqi invasion force from Kuwait with selective degradation of the enemy's key war-fighting capabilities, without in the end decapitating the political head of the enemy's body politic. It was therefore a 'limited war' of a kind, which Chris Hables Gray has chosen to describe as a "postmodern war." In an ironic inversion of the Clausewitzian antithesis that 'war is the extension of politics by other means', he quotes Foucault in averring that politics is "war continued by other means."²⁵ By this, Gray's contention, *contra* Freedman, is that the end of the Gulf War *did not* bring about *decisive* political resolution or definitive conflict denouement. It brought about instead "the new politics of conflict" in which winning the peace proved much harder than winning the war. As months after the liberation of Kuwait till today, US forces continue to enforce 'no-fly' zones in Northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees. Things are very much the same some ten years after the 'end' of the 'unfinished' war. Saddam is still recalcitrant in power and Kuwait is being ruled as autocratically as before. Clearly in this regard, the Gulf War outcome, as intended through the *strategy of limited aims*, altered little of the domestic and geopolitical *status quo*. A more recent example of limited war aims and political strategy pursued through the employment of high-tech weaponry is the intensive air-bombing campaign against Serbian forces during the Kosovo conflict. The one major strategic *faux pas* was for the US leaders to announce an *exit strategy* at the onset of the airwar, by revealing that the political will to send in Allied ground troops into Kosovo, in the event of conflict escalation, was weak. The policy revelation arguably contributed to the emboldening of Milosevic's Serbian forces, and inadvertently encouraged the prolonging of the Kosovo war then would otherwise have been the case. Notwithstanding this, the limited means of the air-bombing campaign did ultimately help to achieve²⁶ the limited aims of forcing Serbian capitulation; despite the great humanitarian costs to the Kosovar Albanian refugees, who were forcibly evicted from their homeland by Serbian forces. In both the Gulf and the Balkans, the *strategy of limited aims* meant that war termination was not definitive by intent. In the sense that it did not necessarily lead to any immediate or substantive transformation in the defeated state's domestic political regime - of the archetype historically seen in the titanic struggle of *Total War* strategy employed in WWII. In fact, it can even be argued that it was (mis)calculated to produce the opposite effect of entrenching and preserving the recalcitrant regime's security; albeit in the medium term at least. What this means is that the political saga of conflict continues interminably with the prospect of further sabre-rattling tolerated and locking of horns postponed indefinitely. Decisive response may not always lead to unambiguously decisive victories.

As an omnibus term, postmodern warfare also aptly encapsulates what Lawrence Freedman had observed to be radical changes taking place in the field of strategic affairs. As he argues, "if there is a revolution, it is one in strategic affairs, and is the result of significant changes in both the objectives in pursuit of which governments might want to use armed forces, and in the means that they might be employed".²⁷ On the one hand, the Gulf War - even more striking than the Korean War - showed how the major powers and their coalition allies could huddle quickly to wage war under the banner of the UN to uphold basic international norms of sovereignty, and to achieve limited aims without being tempted to conquer the enemy and occupy his territory outright.²⁸ This was in many ways a rare moment in international politico-strategic affairs - a salutary occasion of multilateral military cooperation in the name of collective security. On the other hand, the Kosovo conflict showed how war is now waged under new controversial norms of humanitarian intervention, despite the absence of a clear UN mandate and at the risk of international criticism.

To be sure, another important facet of postmodern warfare in relation to the revolution in strategic affairs, is the increasing military preoccupation with operations other than war (OOTW) like non-combatant evacuation, humanitarian relief and peacekeeping/ enforcement operations, or what the US military has come to euphemistically redefine as stability and sustainment operations (SSOs). *Other* political aims rather than traditional military aims of seeking out the enemy and overcoming them in decisive battle, have also come to be the new *raison d'être* for military forces involved in humanitarian operations or small wars; albeit not just large-scale conventional wars. The increasingly multilateral and problematic nature of such operations will mean that "the demands of coalition-building, with negotiations over objectives, rules of engagement and burden-sharing"²⁹ will come to preoccupy the efforts of military strategists and policy makers. It will no doubt challenge them in the formulation and fulfillment of the *strategy of other aims*; which are often ambiguous, ambivalent and not always strictly military in nature. How to achieve these *other* aims will require bold organisational initiatives and strategies involving investment in additional resources and new force-structures. This will entail the systematic build up of new paramilitary expertise and flexible rapid reaction capabilities over the long term to handle small wars and non-traditional military tasks ranging from peacekeeping, peace enforcement and even peace-building. In fact, the recent trend by western armies like the US Army to opt for wheeled light armor vehicles over tracked versions marks an important shift in thinking towards equipping more responsive and mobile forces to better meet the unconventional contingencies of the post-Cold War era. In addition to this, the European Union's on-going formation of a 60,000 strong rapid reaction force (EUROMIL), for humanitarian assignments beyond the European theatre to hotbeds around the world, is causing new polemical waves in not just military affairs, but strategic affairs. On a much more modest and less intrusive scale, ASEAN militaries have also been urged to boost military links in order to strengthen the region's security and disaster response capabilities.³⁰ In the wake of her involvement in East Timor, Australia has also announced on 6 December 2000, her defense policy decision to spend S\$ 22 billion over the next ten years to enhance the ADF's defence *and* international peacekeeping capabilities.³¹ In sum, such radical departures reflect the seriousness and determination with which the changing mission of traditional military forces, to 'not just win wars but be a force for peace', are being addressed. To the extent that contemporary soldiering has become Janus-faced, it is now incumbent upon military personnel to learn new soft skills for peacekeeping besides maintaining the traditional hard tack to wage wars. Perhaps an important intimation here is that typical Clausewitzian wisdom may commend military leaders to be subordinated to political leaders. But political leaders will need to be astute in ensuring that the military instrument is not used in areas where it is not well-suited. Also, *hot peace* missions must not be allowed to erode combat readiness³² and morale. These are particularly critical considerations in managing contemporary civil-military relations and policy-making, given the overwhelming popular pressures of normative *idealpolitik* or prevailing *moralpolitik* to do otherwise.

Strategies of the Infinite-reach and the Safe-strike

The Gulf War also signaled the birth of a new age of 'stand-off' warfare on a scale never seen before. The coming-of-age of deadly-accurate cruise missiles was again confirmed when they were fired in anger at terrorists like Osama bin Laden on 28 August 1998³³, and more recently on a wider scale, during the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Former US President Reagan's famous warning to anti-American terrorists that 'You can run but you can't hide' seems to have been prophetic, when individuals and their interests can now be targeted with deadly precision munitions despite the separation of vast distances, and more importantly, with extreme prejudice *at will*. As Thomas Friedman had exclaimed with mock incredulity: "the US Air Force had

to launch a cruise missile attack on him as though he were another nation-state. We fired cruise missiles at an individual !"³⁴ The room for rest and sanctuary has all but disappeared as safe havens become overexposed through omnipresent satellite surveillance and precision targeting. Indeed, cruise missiles have become "to some extent the paradigmatic weapon of the RMA".³⁵ As a paradigmatic weapon, the cruise missile is no longer an American/Western RMA weapon of privilege. Determined and resourceful countries like Israel have also made substantial inroads in the area of cruise missile technology by independently modifying sub-launched *Harpoons* with land attack capability as well as indigenously producing cruise missiles.³⁶ All said, the cruise missile is merely one weapon of choice amongst the arsenal of other deep-strike capability options like Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS) as well as attack helicopters which are becoming increasingly available in the international arms market. Hitherto, it has been argued that the significant limitation of such deep strikes/battles is that it merely assists close or "contact battle by disrupting or degrading the enemy's position; it is not wholly intended to replace it".³⁷ Notwithstanding this, the rules on the ground are changing, and, such deep strikes whether by default or design, have shown that they are potentially capable of independently achieving higher policy aims during the initial phase of a deep-battle engagement *ala Kosovo*.

During the Gulf War, the free-fire zones of Vietnam were further refined into the operational art of 'Cartesian War' as 'killing boxes' were established for unlimited air-strikes with precision munitions.³⁸ The battlefield doctrine of Air-Land Battle employed in the Gulf War, originally prepared for the Cold War European theatre of operations, held that the air and ground dimensions of the battle were *equally* crucial in securing victory. It may sound like an old concept, but in practice, the force multiplier role of the US Navy by joining-in the Air-Land Battle offensive has drastically increased the destructive potential of the ALB doctrine. The role of the US navy was definitely much more than pedestrian. Even though some like Colin McInnes (in the context of British Joint Military Doctrinal development) may want to argue that the contribution of the navy in the land/air battle is "*nice to have* rather than *essential*"³⁹, the changing tide in the relationship between land and sea battles suggests that the navy's contribution to conventional deep-strike operations in the post-cold war era is no longer secondary or solely a US military prerogative. Rather, the world's navies are beginning to realise the potential of naval force projection in influencing the outcome of land battles. By operating or pre-positioning 'in-theatre' well before any land/air action, the navy's littoral experience, local area expertise, and suite of sensor and combat capabilities, provide policy-makers and strategists with a flexible strategic response option to sway the land campaign by opening up another front of attack. Furthermore, by working steadily towards an evolving 'ring of fire' and 'cooperative engagement' concepts in enhancing future naval fire support capabilities (NFS) - besides the traditional role of carrier-launched air bombing raids and threatening amphibious landings from the sea - modern navies like the USN in particular are poised to play an even bigger role in power projection from the sea right onto the traditional seat of power on land. To better meet the challenges ahead, a revival of Corbettian emphasis on relating naval strategy to land strategy is seen in "the post-Cold War shifts in planning towards littoral warfare and the projection of power from the sea".⁴⁰ Such a strategic policy shift from the pelagic commons to the peripheral littorals would further ballast erstwhile grandiose geopolitical ambitions of Mahanian 'Command of the Sea' doctrine based on the offensive annihilation of a blue water threat with a battle fleet. It has been rightly noted that "at the level of maritime strategy in terms of theory . . . little has changed fundamentally . . . [and] the crucial percepts of naval strategy as elaborated by Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett fit effortlessly into the post Cold War strategic environment".⁴¹ To be sure, NFS operations and operational manoeuvre from the sea (OMFTS) doctrines may be little more than revitalized antecedent operational concepts, but their incipient revolutionary impact in the broader context of an emergent Land/ Air/Sea *strategy of infinite-reach* is profound, and should be duly recognised as such. Already, the new Bush administration is currently sanctioning an internal Pentagon study to formulate a new military strategy to achieve a dramatic reduction in US troops deployed overseas while increasing the use of technology that can monitor and strike adversaries from long distances.⁴² Such a historic shift it is argued would reduce the vulnerability of US forces to attack and lower the global profile of its seemingly "imperial" presence.

On the issue of the vulnerability, Gulf War also marked a harbinger for we have come to see as a general sea change in the political culture of strategic affairs when waging war. Unlike the limited wars in Korea and Vietnam, which traditionally resulted in high casualty rates, the Gulf War and Kosovo conflict saw a drastic reduction in casualty rates.⁴³ With a painful antecedent in the disastrous Vietnam War, US policy makers, aided by advances in military targeting technology, are ever mindful of the need to adhere as closely as possible to what I would call the *strategy of the safe-strike*. The changing parameters of war conduct, as the

expression of changing societal norms of popular aversion to high casualty rates, has come to characterize much of the western world's concern with the avoidance of putting lives unnecessarily at risk in harm's way. As Lawrence Freedman had observed:

*"Military commanders must devise strategies that not only keep their own casualties levels low, but also respect the expectation - bordering on moral presumption - that fire will be directed with precision and only against targets of evident military value".*⁴³

The use of stand-off weapons and a more limited role for ground forces has made it possible for prosecuting war which seeks to achieve a sharp distinction between combatants and non combatants. The severe constraints placed on coalition warfighters during the Gulf War was most vivid in the Allied fear of damaging holy sites, and loss of innocent civilian lives, with a high regard for public opinion. This notable trend in operationalising the principles of necessity, reciprocity and proportionality as enshrined in traditional Just War doctrine persists into the Kosovo conflict, causing Edward Luttwak to lament that the new malaise of casualty intolerance and risk aversion has resulted in the first *post-heroic* age of warfare.⁴⁴ In such an age there is the heavy reliance on the use of air-power as the preferred weapon-of-choice and first resort when prosecuting war. We have seen the deadly accuracy and destructive potential of airpower in the Gulf and in the Balkans. Even if at times, suspect in tactical efficacy in view of the notorious examples of disastrous errors in targeting precision⁴⁵, in the final analysis, strategic strikes⁴⁶ of both Iraqi and Serbian *schwerpunkt* or key centres of gravity, did ultimately force political capitulation in the two relatively short⁴⁷ air war campaigns. Therefore, on-going debates⁴⁸ about the primacy or myth of airpower, should not obscure the salient point that in terms of cost and benefit calculus, strategic strikes have become a politically attractive and acceptable instrument of contemporary strategic war policy. This is particularly salient when it minimizes collateral damage, civilian casualties and protects against own loss of lives than would otherwise have been the case with large-scale military offensives on land. In the future, unmanned aerial combat vehicles⁴⁹ as well as land and sea and sub-sea variants, employed in attacking roles, will take the *strategy of the safe-strike* one step further when the technology matures.

Strategies of the Weak But Cunning

In an era where the preponderance of high-tech military power seems to favour the strong, *strategies of the weak* for subverting superior tech power, can be employed with military genius and cunning to frustrate, deny decisive victory or even snatch victory from the strong. The Vietnam War remains a *locus classicus* for 'David and Goliath' type of armed confrontations. American failure may have had much to do with the arrogance and naivete of American ahistoricism⁵⁰ in persisting with a limited war strategy against an enemy fighting an unlimited political war of national unification and anti-colonialism. In making his case for the continued predominance and preponderance of low intensity conflicts (LICs) that is "by far the most important form of armed conflict in our time", Creveld tots up an ignominious historical record of failures confounding superior forces in taming the shrew of LIC. He argues that "the notion that superior weaponry in itself can prevail is misleading". During the Vietnam War, "every weapon in arsenal was tried out, often unnecessarily and always to no avail".⁵¹ This is certainly well worth remembering when either pursuing any LIC course of action or dealing with the LIC threat.

In the present milieu following the Gulf War, very much has changed yet very much remains the same. What do I mean by this? Well, for one, despite the radical changes in the way war can be waged, the insidious and tenacious nature of LIC is still very much alive and kicking in all corners of the world.⁵² Creveld, rightly or wrongly⁵³, argues that Clausewitz's trinitarian conception of war involving the "remarkable trinity" of 'the people, the military and the government' is too narrow as it only identifies war-making as inter-state affairs, with states as central actors. Based on his reading of Clausewitz, Creveld charges that the luminary's thinking on strategy, discounts the equally explosive roles played by other sub/ non-state actors like guerilla freedom fighters, insurgents and terrorists as seen throughout history, and particularly in modern times. He therefore contends that the Clausewitzian Universe is outdated in providing us with a proper framework for understanding war in its full spectrum of manifestation; particularly LICs. Present day armed conflict in the form of LICs "does not distinguish between governments, armies and peoples".⁵⁴ The Kosovo Conflict and the gulf War may have been short-lived mid-intensity wars. But protracted wars like LICs pose a fundamental challenge to conventional military strategy premised on swift and decisive victory.⁵⁵ It can also

potentially limit the scope, efficacy and extent of the RMA in dealing with such threats. In the end, any hard-fought victories over LIC threats tend to be more pyrrhic than decisive.

The attritional and surreptitious nature of LIC compounds other problematics like - Where is the enemy? Who is the real enemy? How can you target him if you do not know who he or she is and where they are?⁵⁶ The Somali debacle as a recent failure of US military intervention must have brought back fleeting nightmares of Vietnam, and reminds us of the painful consequences when there is a fatal mismatch between clear policy aims, compatible military missions and circumspect exit strategies. It also reveals the difficulty of a conventionally powerful force when faced with a determined and shadowy enemy. In such scenarios, "protracted conflict without prospects for clear and final victory are assuredly likelihoods".⁵⁷

Also, while military technology has advanced by leaps and bounds, it is now no longer a closed preserve of the rich and developed. With a thriving arms market and rapidly 'informating' world, access to the latest military technology and the media is no longer one-sided. Crevelled reminds us that LICs may yet be the same age-old wave of irregular warfare rolling back into the future; albeit in novel permutations. When one contemplates the options available for LIC protagonists today, the precise nature of the beast can be difficult to fathom. With the tenacity of the mythical *Hydra*, such irrepressible threats can range from rudimentary sabotage, hostage-taking and terrorist bombings, to higher-end cyber-hacking and electronic warfare exploits; which *in toto* are near impossible to decapitate completely. Through adopting innovative short-cuts, strategies of asymmetric/irregular warfare and leveraging on information warfare tactics, LICs (and Total Defence) take on a whole new meaning in the age of postmodern warfare. For example, tit-for-tat cyber-attacks shut down and defaced the Israeli government's and Hezbollah/Hamas websites last year. The cyberwar or '*e-Jihad*' as the Palestinians called it, began just as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exploded in October 2000.⁵⁸ The tools are surely changing in the new balance of terror. Their impact on conventional notions of defensive and offensive military strategies are no longer confined to the battlefield, but penetrate right through cyber-firewalls into the very heart of overexposed communication motherboards and computer databases making up a modern nation's vital informational infrastructure. Much to the chagrin of intelligence agencies, terrorism has gone e-global. Terrorists are now even using seemingly innocuous internet pictures and text to relay coded messages and hide secret attack plans.⁵⁹ Clearly, the multitude of asymmetric threats pose a greater challenge for forces dependent on technical supremacy. Technology may seek dominant situation awareness, but it is an illusory quest for it can never completely alleviate the fog and friction of conflict. It is also not quite clear how successful high intensity retaliations and a liquidation policy of extrajudicial key-personnel targeting (assassinations) can be against the perpetrators of low-intensity conflict. The historical record is not sanguine. As Luttwak had well noted, the 'paradoxical logic of strategy' dictates that an effective weapon or war-form will eventually be countered.⁶⁰ New strategies encourage new counter-strategies, making decisive victory a constantly moving target.

Another key aspect of information warfare, is also the age-old tussle over regimes of truth in the area of psyops and propaganda. With the impact of the media explosion of the late 20th century reverberating deep into the hearts and minds of international audiences, *perception management*, as I have argued elsewhere⁶¹, has also become serious military doctrine. The military's public relations imperative is all about spinning the truth and targeting popular opinion both at the home front and on the world scene. Thanks to the news compression cycle of the CNN-effect, the media spot-light has invariably created the phenomenon of the 'strategic soldier'⁶², in which images of soldiers in distress on the battlefield can no longer be ignored, but has instead come to prompt urgent policy-military (re)action in the face of intense public opinion pressure. To be sure, when war is prosecuted with one eye on the media watch-dogs and the other eye on adhering to *a strategy of the safe strike*, *hyperwar* takes on new meaning as war strategies become increasingly focused on TV Images. US General Spiering's candid admission in a recent press interview is relevant in reiterating and rounding-up my earlier points above:

*"Modern societies don't want to see body bags. They don't want to see enemy casualties. In fact they don't want to see casualties at all. Commanders will therefore, seek to repel an enemy not by taking him on directly but by encircling and flanking manoeuvres and by the increased use of stand-off and precision-guided munitions....[during a wargame], I was told about key military targets near hospitals. But there was a risk of collateral damage. I took the targets off the list. I knew the first picture I'll see on CNN would be that of maimed children."*⁶³

Such developments in military/strategic affairs demand closer scrutiny and careful strategizing; especially when militarily weaker opponent can now leverage on the compensatory power of information operations for political capital and strategic mileage; which can even prove to be decisive.

At the other end of the conflict spectrum, crude weapons of mass terror like chemical and biological agents provide readily accessible, easily concealed and potentially cost-effective means of waging low-intensity conflicts and mid-intensity wars, compared to conventional armed struggle or perilous nuclear terrorism. Of course, the latter remains a long-term worry in an era of nuclear proliferation. In sum, the revolution in strategic affairs cuts both ways. It complicates and continues to confound those rattling up against protagonists employing both rudimentary and revolutionary counter-strategies of the weak but cunning.

Conclusion

The Revolution in Military Affairs and the corollary Revolution in Strategic Affairs clearly signpost the way ahead for understanding and waging wars to come. It has been said that the nature of war will not change so long as human nature does not change. War for all its gore and glitz technology, remains very much a test of will and faith as Clausewitz would remind us, and we should not lose sight of that reality. Be that as it may, another principle is equally certain - the nature of warfare can and will change as long as human *techné* changes according to the prevailing *zeitgeist*. In which case, defense policy and military strategy iteration will be continually challenged to stay abreast of the new forms of warfare, changing societal norms of inter/intra-state conflict and more revolutionary technological breakthroughs, which will surely come.

More significantly, at the 'thick' level of doctrinal development, the current Revolution in Military Affairs has already engendered widespread re-alignment of traditional conceptions of military strategy. Strategies involving *concentration of force, defense-in-depth, pre-emptive offense and manoeuvre warfare*, are being reshaped by the incipient operationalization of new concepts like *dominant situation awareness, full-dimension protection, focused logistics, precision engagement and network-centric warfare*.

Limited or otherwise, the issue of '(in)decisive' victory will remain very much bounded by the actual pursuit of policy ends in relation to the expanding range of strategic means available for employment. Both the latest revolutions in military and strategic affairs are coming of age and it would be incumbent upon us not to understate or ignore their deep policy impact as well as wider socio-political ramifications on contemporary and future battlefields. So far, what's past is but prologue. To conclude the point more sharply, the *hype* should neither diminish nor distract one from the real revolutions ushering in the era of *hyperwar*.

Endnotes

1. 'Interview with Paul Vinlio: The Kosovo War Took Place in Orbital Space', in *CTHEORY - Theory, Technology and Culture*, Vol. 23, No.3 (18 Oct 2000), Article 89 at <http://ctheory@concordia.ca>.

2. See Thomas L. Friedman, 'A Manifesto for the Fast World' in *The New York Times Magazine*, (March 28, 1999).

3. See Thomas, K. Adams, 'The Real Military Revolution' in *Parameters*, (Autumn, 2000), pp. 54-65; Kapil Kak, 'Revolution in Military Affairs: An Appraisal' in *Strategic Analysis*, (April 2000); James R. Baker. 'Revolution(s) in Military Affairs: Why the Critique?', in *National Security Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1999); Ryan Henry & Edward Peartree, 'Military Theory and Information Warfare', in *Parameters*, Autumn, 1998), pp. 121-35; Eliot Cohen, 'A Revolution in Warfare', in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Mar-Apr 1996); Jeffrey McKittrick, et al. *From Battlefield of the Future: 21st Century Warfare Issues* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, September 1995); James R. Baker. 'Revolution(s) in Military Affairs: Why the Critique?', in *National Security Studies Quarterly* (Winter 1999); Theodor W. Galdi, 'Revolution in Military Affairs?' (December 11, 1995) at <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/95-1170.html>.

4. See Cheang Kai Hien, *Defining Revolution in Military Affairs: Change in Tool + Change in Nature of Warfare + Change in Sociopolitical Behaviour of State*, (Singapore: IDSS, 1999/2000), unpublished Masters thesis, for his account of the historical record on RMAs and his argument against the validity of the current RMA.

5. See Jeremy Shapiro 'Information and War: Is it a Revolution' in his *The Changing Role of Information in Warfare*. (Santa Monica: Rand, 1999); Cindy Williams and Jennifer M. Lind, 'Can We Afford a Revolution in Military Affairs?' in *Breakthroughs* (Spring, 1999), pp. 3-8.

6. See Stephane Lefebvre, Michael Fortmann & Thierry Congora, 'The Revolution in Military Affairs: Its Implications for Doctrine and Force Development Within the US Army', in B.J.C. McKercher & Michael A. Henessy (eds.) *The Operational Art: Development on the Theories of War*, (London: Praeger, 1996), pp. 173-192.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

8. Maj-Gen(Ret) Dipankar Banerjee, 'Revolution in Military Affairs' in *Asian Defence Journal*, (9/1997), pp. 17-19.

9. Cheang, *op. cit.*

10. Cheang, *op. cit.*

11. See MAJ TA Ellen RA, 'Is There Really A Revolution in Military Affairs Going on at the Moment, or Several?' in *The British Army Review*, No. 124 (2000), pp.30-35; See also Christopher Gunther, 'You Call This a Revolution? High Technology May Be Launching More than One Revolution in Military Affairs' in *Foreign Service Journal*(September 1998).

12. Williamson Murray (ed.), *The Emerging Strategic Environment: Challenges of the 21st Century*, (London: Praeger, 1999).

13. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. xxx-xxxi.

14. Some military strategy historians like Michael Lawrence Smith have pointed to the fact that the term Blitzkrieg was actually coined by the American William L. Shirer, who wrote *BeHin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934- 1941*, (New York: Ghalahad Books, 1941). Smith argues that the term was subsequently used after the Fall of France by the British and the French to rationalise their defeat, when the swift German mechanized assault across the River Meuse was actually more opportunistic than pre-planned - "It looked more impressive than it actually was". (from Lecture given at IDSS on 17 Aug 2000).

15. See Steven Metz, 'TheNextTwist oftheRMA' in *Parameters*, (Autumn, 2000), pp.40-53.

16. See Timothy Kilvert-Jones, 'Decisive Victory in the InformationAge' in Williamson Murray (ed.), *op. cit.*, 239-257.

17. See Erich H. Arnett 'Welcome to Hyperwar' at <http://www.bullatomsci.org/fissues/1992/s92/s92.arnett.html>.

18. See 'Hyperwar: TheLegacy of Desert Storm' at <http://fas.org/spp/aircraft/partO&htm> (Author unknown).

19. 'Interview with Paul Virilio', *Op Cit.*

20. Cited in report - 'Tanks? No Thanks', in *The Straits Times*, (17 Jan 2001), p. 6.

21. See Alvin & Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, (Boston, MA, Little Brown & Co., 1993).

22. Lawrence Freedman, *The Revolution in StrategicAffairs*, Adelphi paper 318, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 30-32.

23. Chris Hables Gray, *Postmodern War: The New Politics of Conflict*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 215.

24. Washington is loath to split Iraq, since it needs Iraq to survive as a regional power in the Gulf to counter the balance against any Iranian resurgence to dominate the region.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

26. One should not forget that the air campaign was not able to deliver an end-game by itself without the combined threats of a ground attack and the negotiating prowess of Russian and Finnish participants. See Timothy L. Thomas, 'Kosovo and the Current Myth of Information Superiority' in *Parameters*, (Spring, 2000), pp.13-29.

27. Freedman, *Op. Cit.* (1998), p. 9.

28. See Lawrence Freedman, 'Weak States and the West: The Future Surveyed' in *The Economist*, (11 September, 1993), pp. 42-4. Though it must be said the Bush administration did successfully achieve its four enunciated objectives of 1) Unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, 2) Restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, 3) Safety of US citizens in the area and 4) reestablishment of stability and security in the Gulf. See Maj-Gen Richard A. Chilcoat, *Strategic Art: The New Discipline for 21st Century Leaders*, (US Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), p. 14.

29. *Ibid*, p. 74.

30. See *The Straits Times*, (22 Nov 2000), p. A12.

31. See *The Straits Times*, (7 Dec 2000), p. 20.

32. The US Army has reported that its soldiers face a shortage of ammunition, as a lack of funds and the burden of peacekeeping affect the force's combat readiness. See *The Straits Times*, (9 Feb 2000), p. 19.

33. During 'Operation Infinite Reach' against wealthy Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden, US warships fired about 80 Tomahawks at facilities linked to bin Laden, the alleged mastermind behind the 7 Aug 98 US embassy bombings in East Africa. The retaliation was aimed at a paramilitary camp in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in north Khartoum, Sudan. More recently, at the October 2000 Norfolk funeral of 17 dead US sailors from the USS Cole terrorist-bombing - blamed on Osama bin Ladin - a top US. military official eulogised a warning: "Never forget America's memory is long, and its reach, longer!".

34. Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and The Olive Tree*. (London: Halper Collins. 1999), p.12.

35. Freedman, *op. cit.* p. 70.

36. The Israeli indigenously modified Sub-Harpoons for land attack have a range of 80 miles. *The London Sunday Times* reported on June 18 2000 that Israel had test-fired domestic-produced cruise missiles from its newly acquired Dolphin-class submarine off Sri Lanka in May 2000. Even back in July 1998, the U.S. National Air Intelligence Center had warned the U.S. Congress that Israel was developing a cruise missile believed to be the Rafael-produced *Popeye Turbo* missile with a range of 215 miles that was expected to be operational by 2002. Although the *Popeye Turbo* is promoted as an air-launched weapon, it may be adapted for submarine launch. See *Stratforcom's Global Intelligence Update* - 26 October 2000.

37. Colin McInnes, 'The Landl Sea Dimension' Andrew Dorman, Mike Lawrence Smith and Matthew R.H. Uttley (eds.) *The Changing Face of Maritime Power*, (London, Macmillan Press, 1999), p. in 145

38. Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

39. McInnes, *op. cit.*, p. 144

40. See Mike Lawrence Smith & Matthew R.H. Uttley, 'Tradition and Innovation in Maritime Thinking' in Dorman et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, p. 5.

41. *Ibid*, p. 185.

42. *Statford.com. Global Intelligence Update*, 2 March 2001.

43. During 11 weeks of fighting in Kosovo, NATO did not sustain a single combat casualty. During some 35 000 sorties only two aircraft were lost in combat and both crews were rescued. Similar exceptionally low loss rates in previous American-led air campaigns in the Middle East and the Balkans in the past ten years are sufficient for us to conclude that this can now be regarded not merely as a trend, but as an expectation. See Alan Stephen 'Kosovo or the Future of War' in Gary Brown, Michael Evans, Alan Stephens, *The Use of Military Force in Kosovo*, Working Paper No.54,(August, 1999) .

44. Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 76-77.

45. See Edward N. Luttwak, 'Give War a Chance' in *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 1999).

46. The most notable in recent memory is the US military's supposedly accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade during the 1999 Kosovo conflict.

47. LTC Goh Teck Seng rightly argues that "*strategic strikes* rather than *strategic bombing* ' is a more appropriate term for the class of operations against depth targets in the heart of an adversary's territory; the first suggests a quality of being clinical and surgical; while the second connotes 'a blunt instrument of offence'." See his reply to editor 'The False Promise of Strategic Bombing and the True Promise of Airpower' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jan-Mar Edition, 1998), pp. 126-128.

48. The air campaigns for *Operations Desert Storm and Allied Force* were, in historical terms, remarkable for their brevity, lasting 40 and 78 days respectively.

49. For a good example of contrasting views over the pre-eminence of airpower, see LTC Goh Teck Seng, 'Air power as the Fulcrum of Modern Conventional Warfare?' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Oct-Dec Edition, 1998), pp.44-63; and LTC Chee Vui Chung, 'Air Power: Now Dominant in Conventional Warfare?' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jan-Mar Edition, 1999), pp. 5-22.

50. See report on 'Prospect for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles: The Lessons of Kosovo' in *IJSS-Strategic Comments*, (Vol 6, Issue 7, 2000).

51. See Williamson Murray (ed.), *The Emerging Strategic Environment: Challenges of the 21st Century*, (London, Praeger, 1999), p. xxi. I would like to add here that Clausewitzian doctrine reminds us that limited wars can only be fought when two armies choose to fight it in a limited way. If your opponent is prepared to up the ante and do the utmost by escalating to achieve his objective, you have little choice but to do the same.

52. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, (New York, The Free Press, 1991), pp. 22-28.

53. For a crisp up-to-date survey of LICs, see MAJ Hong Kian Wah, 'Low Intensity Conflict', in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jul-Sep Edition, 2000), pp. 97- 113.

54. Creveld's partial reading is perhaps questionable, given that Clausewitz actually refers more sophisticatedly to the unpredictable interplay of disparate forces embedded in his trinitarian concept of irrational forces (People - primordial passion, enmity, hatred), non-rational forces (Military - creativity, probability and chance) and rational forces (Government - rational calculations, cost-benefit decisions) - which one can easily extend to cover the role of sub/non-state actors involved in LICs. More pointedly, LTC Goh Teck Seng has argued that Creveld bases his criticism of Clausewitz on a faulty understanding of the remarkable trinity which undermines the latter's criticism. See LTC Goh Teck Seng, 'Clausewitz and his Impact on Strategy' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jan-Mar Edition, 1999), pp 81-87. Christopher Bassford would no doubt agree with Goh's observation of the commonplace misrepresentation of Clausewitz's remarkable trinity. See also his 'Clausewitz and His Works' at <http://www.Clausewitz.com/CWZHOME/CWZSUMM/CWORKHOL.htm#Three%20Competing%20Theorists>.

55. See Creveld, *op. cit.*, p. 57/58,

56. See Wong Chee Wai, 'Concept of 'Victory' in Future Wars' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jan-Mar Edition, 1997), pp. 5-15. The need to target broad economic, social and political development with the order of battle and strategy stressing both military and non-military means for dealing with the LIC challenge has been proposed. See Freedman, *Op. Cit.*, (1998), p. 64; and Hong, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

57. Counter-strategies premised on speed, stealth, surprise and even suicide-bombing -the ultimate asymmetric weapon of resistance and desperation continue to be the order of battle for LIC proponents. In particular, terrorist groups "increasingly recognise that little frustrates the proudly rational, scientific West

more than a foe that cannot easily be measured, quantified and targeted. They often attempt to cover their tracks or muddle their identity" after a sneak attack. See *NewsWeek*, (23 Oct 2000), pp. 36-38.

58. Chilcoat, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

59. See *The New York Post*, (31 Oct 2000).

60. See report on 'X-Rated Terrorists' in *The Straits Times*, (7 Feb 2000), p. 6.

61. Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1987), cited in David, J. Lonsdale, 'Information Power: Strategy, Geopolitics, and the Fifth Dimension' in Colin, S. Gray & Geoffrey Sloan, *Geopolitics: Geography and Strategy*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999), p. 151.

62. For a more detailed exposition, see Irvin Lim, 'Media Barrage! Fighting amidst the Sights and Sound of Fury, the Smoke and Mirrors of Reality' in *Pointer - Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, (Jul-Sep Edition, 2000), pp. 60-81; See also LT CMDR R.A. Float, 'Armed Forces and the Media: Improving the Relationship' in *British Army Review*, No. 125, (Autumn, 2000), pp. 83-95; and Philip Seib 'Politics of the Fourth Estate: The Interplay of Media and Politics in Foreign Policy, in *Harvard International Review* (Fall, 2000), pp. 60-63.

63. A term attributed to LTC Dennis Murphy for pointing out how "a Marine platoon leader involved in a firefight in Haiti, a dead Ranger dragged through the streets of Mogadishu and a pilot downed over Bosnia has spurred US National Command Authority action". See Freedman, *Op. Cit.*, (1998), p. 62. We saw again another stark example of the catalytic role played by the 'strategic soldier', when the brutal killing of 2 Israeli soldiers by an angry Palestinian mob drew swift Israeli military retaliation during the recent outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian violence on 12 Oct 2000.

64. Alexander Nicoll, 'War Strategies Now Focus on TV Images' in *The Straits Times*, (21 Nov. 2000), p. 19.



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Kosovo: Air Power - The Decisive Factor?

by LTC Richard Pereira

*"We must stop an authoritarian regime from repressing its people in Europe at the end of the 20th century. We have a moral duty to do so. The responsibility is on our shoulders and we will fulfill it. All efforts to achieve a negotiated, political solution to the Kosovo crisis having failed, no alternative is open but to take military action. "*¹

Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General

Brussels, Belgium, 23 Mar 1999

The 78 days of relentless bombing by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forced Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, to the negotiating table on 9 June, 1999. Lt Gen. Michael Short, who orchestrated the bombing campaign summed up the victory when he said "NATO got every one of the terms it had stipulated in Rambouillet² and beyond Rambouillet, and I credit this as a victory for air power. "³ Defense Secretary William S. Cohen called NATO 's air campaign against Yugoslavia "the most precise application of air power in history, " but insisted the operation should not be taken as a sign that the United States was likely to rely more on warplanes to win future conflicts.⁴ These were a sample of the many accolades that were credited to the role of air power in ensuring a NATO victory without any loss of NATO lives in Operation Allied Force towards a resolution of the Kosovo crisis.

Is the optimistic, sometimes overly inflated, rhetoric about air power justified ? This essay argues that air power indeed played a decisive role for NATO in shaping the battle in such a way to effect the capitulation of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. The argument does not commit that air power alone was responsible for securing a NATO victory. The essay acknowledges the roles that other factors may have played towards the Serbian defeat, but that these factors were subordinate to the decisive role of air power in resolving the Kosovo conflict.

Interpretation of Success

The determination of whether air power played a decisive role rests on determining whether the objectives as spelled out by NATO were successfully achieved, through its employment and not otherwise. It is arguable whether all of these goals need to be attained to determine if the NATO mission can be classified a success. However, at the political and strategic level, there is general acknowledgement that the Serbian surrender qualifies the Kosovo campaign a success. There was much rhetoric about the tactical wisdom of employing only air power without the use of ground forces, its limitations and the protracted nature of the conflict. While tactical level issues are not unimportant, this essay will focus on the strategic level objectives and the role that air power played in securing those objectives. More importantly, the influential contributions, if any, made by the other factors towards the overall campaign success will be analysed to arrive at a reasonable conclusion as to which factor might have best effected Milosevic's unconditional surrender.

NATO's Objectives

The objectives articulated by NATO⁵ in the released statement stipulated rather clearly what was expected of the Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, who must:

- ensure a verifiable stop to all military action and the immediate ending of violence and repression;
- ensure the withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police and paramilitary forces;

- agree to the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence;
- agree to the unconditional and safe return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access to them by humanitarian aid organisations;
- provide credible assurance of his willingness to work on the basis of the Rambouillet Accords in the establishment of a political framework agreement for Kosovo in conformity with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Only the first objective appears to be contentious and a potential area for intense scrutiny and debate, but will be addressed in the following arguments. The goals spelled out by President Clinton at the outset of NATO's action were: "to demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's opposition to aggression", to deter Milosevic's "continuing and escalating" attacks in Kosovo and "to damage Serbia's capacity to wage war in the future".⁶ It is interesting that there was congruency in the articulations by both NATO and President Clinton except in the statement by the President who wanted "to damage Serbia's capacity to wage war in the future". In all the statements issued by NATO, demolition of Serbia's capacity to wage war was never articulated as an objective. From the military standpoint, this objective, in all probability, would not have been achievable for two reasons. Firstly, it is not as clear-cut as a Milosevic surrender and the cessation of aggression. A thorough analysis of the Serbian force level would have to be conducted to determine if its capacity to wage war was crippled. It is conceivable that much time would be required for such analysis and to make such real-time assessments during the course of the military action can at best yield a crude indicator for decision making.⁷ Secondly, beyond an adversary's surrender, further military action would have been untenable even if it had been assessed that the enemy's force levels remained intact. It is reasonable therefore for this essay not to focus on this aspect of the objectives as articulated by President Clinton. It could also be argued therefore that a Serbian surrender would constitute a Serbian desire to abide by all five conditions and not just a part of it.

NATO's Air Campaign Achievements

NATO's air campaign mirrored the approach that had now been made famous through the Gulf War.⁸ The bulk of the air power was unleashed on a wide range of strategic targets in Serbia. According to Lt. Gen. Michael C. Short, NATO's joint force air component commander for the Balkan operation, the attacks were concentrated on "Serbian centers of gravity, not the destruction of Serbian tanks and troops in Kosovo". There was less focus on attacking the 3rd Serb Army in Kosovo.⁹ These included among others, police headquarters airfields, highway bridges, ammunition depots and army barracks in various parts of Yugoslavia.¹⁰ Targets in Belgrade were also attacked such as the headquarters of Milosevic's Socialist Party, radio and television broadcasting facilities and the national power grid. With 24 hour operations, the air campaign was able to apply the pressure over a wider area of operations. This, together with the wide spectrum of targets, was calculated to weaken the Serbian resolve, resistance and create dislocation in the Serbian forces. In doing so, NATO's air power was able to inflict heavy losses on Serbia from which escape was always going to be difficult. These attacks converged to produce devastating effect on the normal flow of the civilian economy. Belgrade was without electrical power; civilian radio networks were damaged disrupting communications flow; petroleum industries, a lifeline of the economy, were damaged, and other industrial targets fell victim to the heavy onslaught. The gravity of these sustained operations over a 78 day period inflicted heavy losses on Milosevic and weakened his resolve considerably, forcing him to surrender and accept all NATO conditions.¹¹

But the critics claimed that air power did not resolve the ethnic cleansing issue as dictated by the first objective of NATO to effect the "verifiable stop to all military action and the immediate ending of violence and repression". In attempting to secure the NATO objectives, the NATO air commander conceded that they never felt they were going to be able to stop ethnic cleansing, let alone immediately. In fact, this was contentious as it was widely reported that by the third week of the campaign, repression had forced a mass Albanian exodus (about one million) from Kosovo to nearby safe havens (mainly Macedonia and Albania) threatening the stability of the entire region. However, this may be countered in that a fair amount of the damage may already have been done prior to the air campaign, assuming the data about the exodus¹² is correct. Prior to the air campaign, international observers were evacuated allowing the Serbian forces to fill the vacuum and perpetrate aggression, thereby forcing the exodus. NATO was fully aware of the consequences of their strategy but the evacuation was deemed necessary to sanitise the "battlefield". It is

therefore a harsh verdict to attribute the Albanian exodus to the failure of air power. The validity of the NATO strategy to evacuate observers is certainly contentious but falls within the margins of this air power argument. Having said that, it has to be acknowledged that the "immediate" cessation of aggression as a NATO objective was indeed too vague for it to be usefully interpreted in determining if that objective had been achieved. The ambiguity, though not assuring, is understandable, as defining a specific time frame would then be binding on NATO, a potential precursor to more problems. It may also be argued that Milosevic did end his brutal campaign after 78 days. The issue then would be whether that constituted an "immediate" cessation of hostilities. Who is to know what might have been? Could it have been much longer if air power was not present? However, it was mainly the air war that "brought home the pain to Milosevic and his people, while the effort against the Serbian forces pinned them down and constrained their ability to continue with ethnic cleansing."¹³ Faced with these problems, Milosevic conceded defeat.

Threat of a Ground Invasion

The proposition that it was the threat of a NATO ground campaign that caused the decisive capitulation of Milosevic has to be weighed against the strong evidence which suggested that NATO was not fully committed to a ground campaign and that this fact was known to Milosevic. Firstly, the public statements on the Allied Force's position on the employment of ground forces undermined its use as an option if warranted. One of the many errors in Operation *Allied Force's* planning was to "rule out the use of ground forces at the start of the war"¹⁴, effectively telling Milosevic that he did not have to worry about a ground offensive. At the outset of the campaign, President Clinton ruled out the possibility of a ground campaign. From a big picture perspective, President Clinton and his aides may have committed a strategic error by playing their cards prematurely. President Clinton further backed up his intention by reiterating that the presence of *Apache* helicopters and other ground assets were meant only as a threat and would never be used. France and Germany openly opposed any employment of the ground forces. Public knowledge of such information is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it may have been a calculated psychological or deception tool to fool and confuse Milosevic. On the other hand, that knowledge may have reinforced Milosevic's defiance and resolve to confront NATO, knowing well in advance NATO's position on the use of ground forces. Secondly, these statements would have confirmed a shrewd Milosevic's suspicions about Allied concern for the preservation of lives. A ground campaign raised the probability of more lost lives. The potential casualties from an immediate ground assault would have been intolerable, both to the invading force and to the Kosovars caught in the firepower of the battlefield. The Persian Gulf War is a good indication of how a four day ground war accounted for 38% of the lives lost in the forty-three day campaign.¹⁵ Thirdly, the force disposition in support of the operations was also proof of NATO's seriousness about avoiding a ground campaign. Despite this, there was little doubt that NATO prepared for a possible role for its ground forces in the area of operations. The United States moved elements of the 82nd Airborne Division and a limited number of ground combat troops to the region. The forces from France, Britain and Germany numbered 9,500.¹⁶ NATO in total deployed some 25,000 troops to Albania and Macedonia. The small force size of 25,000 troops was a strong indication of a peace-keeping role rather than a war-fighting mission. The peace-keeping role meant that the troops operated on the basis of consent between the warring parties. War-fighting would have meant taking sides, employing force and consequently an escalation of troop involvement.¹⁷ Given the Serbian forces (presumably at least 40,000¹⁸), Western officials had said that a review indicated that about 200,000 troops would have been required to invade Kosovo but that the "public would never support such a move".¹⁹ It may therefore be argued that the evidence before Milosevic strongly suggested that NATO was predominantly focused on an air campaign and that at best, NATO's ground option would be reluctantly exercised as a last resort.

The combination of these factors would in all probability have given the Serbian forces a psychological boost in handling a ground campaign, if it materialised. This confidence was echoed by a Yugoslav commander in Kosovo when he said that the army was ready to fulfil all "peace initiatives" of President Slobodan Milosevic but warned that NATO soldiers would face "hell" if they mounted a ground offensive.²⁰ It is therefore questionable whether this knowledge would have threatened Milosevic to the extent of forcing decisively, his eventual surrender to NATO. More likely, given the evidence, it would have increased the Serbian confidence levels and increased their resolve to resist the NATO air onslaught in the hope that it would force a ground campaign. In the Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein employed a similar strategy of forcing the allied forces to commit to a ground war through a combination of arrogant defiance, propaganda and provocation.²¹ For

the Iraqi forces then, the strategy was to prolong the war, indulge in a conflict of attrition at the ground level and force an escalation of coalition casualties that would have eventually tilted the advantage decidedly in Iraq's favour. But the coalition air power pounded the Iraqi resolve and morale to such an extent that the much anticipated ground campaign ended with a whimper. It was conceivable that Milosevic was prepared to employ a similar strategy, having been in power at the time of the Gulf War and perpetrating similar violence in Bosnia.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) Threat

The proposition that it was the KLA that dealt the decisive blow in forcing the capitulation of Milosevic may find some appeal with the air power opponents. However, to analyse this proposition, there is a need to trace the KLA's historical performance and postulate whether they would have been a decisive piece in the Kosovo puzzle. The KLA's anti-Serbian clashes really started in the post-Dayton accord²² of Bosnia in 1996. The expectation that the Dayton Accord would translate to a positive outcome for the Kosovo Albanians did not materialise, infuriating the Kosovo Albanians. Parallel to this, the Dayton Accord implied that without any war to fight in Bosnia, the Serbian forces could now re-focus their attention on Kosovo, perpetrating aggression, which was rightly denounced by Human Rights groups and the United Nations. The confrontation finally escalated into a full-scale war in 1998.²³ The conflict severely weakened the KLA, which subsequently lost a significant stronghold, Junik which fell into Serbian hands and consequently the KLA "lost territory."²⁴ Given this status of the KLA near the end of 1998, it is debatable whether the KLA had sufficient resources, and more importantly, the capability to have decisively influenced the course of the conflict when NATO entered the theatre. Nearly two years of fighting against the Serbs yielded little results. In fact, by August 1998, about 300,00 to 500,000 Albanians (out of a population of 2.5 million)²⁵ had already been displaced, rendering the KLA cause a dismal failure. There was no doubt that the KLA contributed towards the application of coercive²⁶ pressure on the Serbian forces in the later stages of the campaign. Their open confrontation forced the Serbian forces out of their secure confines, facilitating NATO bombing. However, beyond this minimal role, the weight of evidence strongly suggests that Serbian forces were reeling under the pressure sustained by logistical problems, loss of communications and bombing of their headquarters in Belgrade. The KLA had no capability to inflict such pressure in an intense and sustained manner to force a Serbian surrender.²⁷ They were "woefully underarmed, particularly in anti-tank weaponry".²⁸ To counter the earlier claim that air power took 70 days to end the Serbian terror which did not justify using the term "immediate", how much quicker would the KLA, without airpower, have achieved the same decisive outcome (if at all). proven that their campaign had begun 2 years earlier?

Conclusion

There is ample evidence to suggest that air power, the threat of ground force (however small) and the KLA have played a role in exerting pressure on President Slobodan Milosevic during the NATO intervention. However the disposition of the NATO ground forces and the ineffectiveness of the KLA, as seen in their earlier struggles against the Serbian forces in the post-Bosnia Dayton Accord period, clearly suggest that their roles have been contributory at best. The weight of evidence strongly points to NATO's effective use of air power as having played a decisive role in securing NATO's objectives by forcing the capitulation of Slobodan Milosevic.

Endnotes

1. Javier Solana iterated these words when addressing the media after the decision to take military action was taken at the NATO meeting. The decision to take military action was unanimously supported by the 19 member nations of NATO.

2. The Rambouillet Accords are a 3-year interim agreement that will provide democratic self-government, peace, and security for everyone living in Kosovo. Democratic self- government will include all matters of daily importance to people in Kosovo, including education, health care, and economic development. Kosovo will have a President, an Assembly, its own courts, strong local government, and national community institutions with the authority needed to protect each community's identity. Security will be guaranteed by international troops deployed on the ground throughout Kosovo. Local police, representative of all national communities in

Kosovo, will provide routine law enforcement. Federal and Republic security forces will leave Kosovo, except for a limited border protection presence. Mechanism for final settlement - An international meeting will be convened after 3 years to determine a mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo. The will of the people will be an important factor at the international meeting.

3. Craig R. Whitney, "Air Wars Won't Stay Risk Free, General Says," *New York Times*, June 18, 1999, p. A8.

4. Bradley Graham, "COHEN: AIR POWER WAS 'EFFECTIVE,' 'SUCCESSFUL'; NEED FOR NATO COHESION LIMITED OPTIONS", *Washington Post*, 11 June, 1999, p. A28.

5. Statement issued Statement Issued at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, on 12 April 1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-051e.htm> (accessed on 9 Aug 2000).

6. Daniel L. Byman, Mathew C. Waxman, "Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate", *International Security*, Vol 24, No 4 (Spring 2000), p. 14.

7. Serbia's ability to wage war in the future cannot be ascertained as of this writing as much analysis is still ongoing. It is conceivable for such data to be made available only a long time after the event, given the complexity of obtaining and analysing them.

8. Col. John Warden's (USAF) concept of strategic paralysis entailed targeting 5 main centres of gravity. The details can be found in Tom Clancy, *Fighter Wing*, London, HarperCollins Publishers, 1996, pp. 39-44.

9. James A. Kitfield, "Another Look At The Air War That Was", *AIRFORCE: Magazine*, Oct 1999, Vol 82, No. 10, <http://www.afa.org/magazine/1099eaker.html> (accessed on 21 August 2000).

10. *Straits Times* (Singapore), 31 May 99, p. 9.

11. Rebecca Grant, "Airpower Made It Work", *Airforce Magazine*, November 1999, pp. 30-37.

12. Sean Kay, "After Kosovo: NATO's Credibility Dilemma", *Security Dialogue*, Vol 31, No. 1, March 2000, p. 74 quotes one million. This has to be compared with another source, *Kosovo* by Julie A. Mertus, which says that about 300 to 500 thousand had already fled Kosovo by August of 1998. The number "500 thousand" as of mid 1998 was quoted in *Current History*, April 1999, p 161. In "Why are we in Kosovo?" by Jean Kirkpatrick, *New York Post*, March 1999, she reports that about 400 thousand have been displaced and these were displaced days before the NATO attacks.

13. John A. Tirpak, "The NATO Way", *AIRFORCE Magazine*, December 1999, p. 24.

14. Richard J. Newman, "The Bombs That Failed in Kosovo", *U.S. News*, 20 September 1999 (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/990503/balkans.htm> (accessed on 10 Sep 2000)).

15. Gary Waters, *Gulf Lesson One - The Value of Air Power*, Canberra: Air Power Studies Centre, 1992, p. 100.

16. Roger Cohen, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE STRATEGY; Elite Forces Standing By If Air Power Won't Work", *New York Times*, 3 April 1999.

17. Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars - Organised Violence In A Global Era*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999, p. 59.

18. James B. Steinberg, "A Perfect Polemic - Blind to Reality on Kosovo", *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 1999, p. 129.

19. Roger Cohen, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE STRATEGY; Elite Forces Standing By If Air Power Won't Work", *New York Times*, 3 April 1999.

20. "Milosevic showing signs of giving in, says Nato", *Straits Times* (Singapore), 31 May 1999, p. 9.

21. Gary Waters, *Gulf Lesson One - The Value of AirPower*, Canberra: Air Power Studies Centre, 1992, pp. 59-60.
22. The Dayton Accord was the peace treaty signed in Bosnia in 1995.
23. Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, pp. 6-7.
24. Ibid., pp. 308-309.
25. Ibid. See also "After Kosovo: NATO's Credibility Dilemma" by Sean Kay in *Security Dialogue*, Vol 31, No. 1, March 2000, p. 74 which quotes "one million".
26. Daniel L. Byman and Mathew C. Waxman, "Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate", *International Security*, Vol 24, No. 4, Spring 2000, pp. 5-38. I find the term "coercive pressure" very appropriate in the context of an attack. The writers essentially argued that the various forms of offensive were really aimed at directing coercive pressure on the Serbian forces to effect a surrender.
27. Ibid., p. 30.
28. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "To Stop The Serbs", *Washington Post*, 7 April 1999.

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3. *US News*, 20 Sep 1999.
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6. Daniel L. Byman, Mathew C. Waxman, "Kosovo and the Great Air Power Debate", *International Security*, Vol 24, No 4, Spring 2000.
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9. James B. Steinberg, "A Perfect Polemic - Blind to Reality on Kosovo", *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999.
10. James Hooper, "Kosovo: America's Balkan Problem", *Current History*, April 1999.
11. Javier Solana, "NATO's Success in Kosovo", *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 1999.
12. John A. Tirpak, "The NATO Way", *AIRFORCE Magazine*, December 1999.
13. Julie A. Mertus, *Kosovo*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999
14. Maroof Raza, "NATO's BOMBING OF SERBIA- An Indian Perspective", *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 14 (2), Apr-Jun 1999.
15. Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars - Organised Violence In A Global Era*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999.

16. Peter W. Rodman, "The Fallout from Kosovo", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 1999.
17. Rebecca Grant, "Air Power Made It Work", *Air Force Magazine*, November 1999.
18. Roger Cohen, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE STRATEGY; Elite Forces Standing By If Air Power Won't Work", *New York Times*, April 3 1999.
19. Sean Kay, "After Kosovo: NATO's Credibility Dilemma," *Security Dialogue*, Vol 31, No. 1, March 2000.
20. Tom Clancy, *Fighter Wing*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1996.
21. Warren Zimmerman, "The Demons of Kosovo", *The National Interest*, Summer 1998.
22. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "To Stop The Serbs", *Washington Post*, 7 April 1999.



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The Roles of Diplomacy and Deterrence in the 21st Century

by MAJ Tang Mun Kwong

The modern state system came about after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 in Europe. An international society emerged comprising of states that were sovereign and answerable to no higher authority than themselves. As there was an absence of government in the international society, there was anarchy¹, with potential for chaos and lawlessness.

During the Cold War, the realist view of international relations was the dominant school of thought. Realists viewed the state as the most important actor on the world stage and conflicts were seen as perennial features in inter-state relations². Nation states needed to ensure their survival in a hostile and competitive environment and the most important principle was self-help. Deterrence was the dominating factor determining security relationships which shaped the bipolar world where strategic nuclear weapons were the weapons of choice in the stand-off between the U.S and the former USSR.

While the end of the Cold War has reduced the conflict between the major powers, it has also removed some of the restraints that inhibited conflict. Since then, the former USSR has fragmented and there have been numerous intrastate conflicts. The global environment has changed and it is far more complex and fluid than before. The security concerns of the international community have broadened to include 'non-traditional' security issues such as humanitarianism. In this post-Cold War era, there are arguments that an increasingly global economy is rendering conflict less likely and the proliferation of international institutions such as the United Nations, are mechanisms that can be used to achieve international security. It is also argued that deterrence, which has some inherent problems and shortcomings, is an outdated concept.

This essay aims to examine the relevance of diplomacy and deterrence in the 21st century and seeks to argue that diplomacy and deterrence are both necessary and are complementary in ensuring the security of nation-states. The essay will be approached in three parts. The first part looks at how the functions of diplomacy have changed over time and with circumstances. As international politics and relations are constantly changing, it will examine how the practices of diplomacy have adjusted to remain applicable in the post-Cold War security environment. The second part examines the concept of deterrence and its shortcomings and explores the necessity of deterrence in the post-Cold War security environment. The essay concludes by attempting to argue that the best strategy to be used is for diplomacy and deterrence to complement each other. Diplomacy should not and is not able to replace deterrence; these two fundamental instruments should be balanced to harness the strength of each instrument.

The Development of the International System of States

In 1648, after the Peace of Westphalia in Europe, the modern state system was established. Thereafter, European rulers refused to recognize the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, replacing the system of governance by the Church with independent states. Each state became a political community, possessing a government, and asserting sovereignty over certain territory and a particular segment of the human population.³ An international society emerged, comprising of states that were sovereign and answerable to no higher authority. Although these states established common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, there were no binding mechanisms that could control the behavior of states in the international society. The international society did not resemble domestic society on a global level as there was neither a world government nor an international police to enforce international laws. There was thus potential for disorder and lawlessness in the international society. The realist school of thought viewed the state as the key to international politics since it answered to no higher political authority and viewed that states engage in a perpetual struggle for power. In such a hostile environment, diplomacy and deterrence were the two main realist tools by which states ensured their security.

The Evolution of Diplomacy

Diplomacy refers to the conduct of international relations by persons who are official agents of the states. It also refers to the conduct of relations between states and other non-state actors in the international system through peaceful means.⁴ Professional diplomats carry out the conduct of such relations. Diplomacy is an old activity, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. Traditional diplomacy then was a communication process only among recognizably modern states and not between other forms of political organizations such as the Catholic Church. It was organized on a largely bilateral basis and was usually undertaken in secrecy and characterized by distinctive rules and procedures. The agenda was narrow, consisting mainly of the issue of sovereignty and issues of war and peace.⁵

Traditional diplomacy failed to prevent World War I (WWI) and there was criticism that it might have caused the war due to the secrecy with which it was conducted. After WWI, diplomacy evolved to what is known as 'new' diplomacy. In the new diplomacy, states remained the major actors in this diplomatic system and were represented internationally by a well-established network of foreign offices and permanent embassies. However, other actors like international organizations have also engaged in diplomacy. States continued to negotiate bilaterally with each other on a state-to-state basis, but groups of states typically negotiated multi-laterally through the auspices of intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations. The agenda expanded to include economic, social and welfare issues, and has a distinctive emphasis on military security.⁶

During the Cold War, when world politics was dominated by the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, new forms of diplomacy emerged. The diplomatic activity associated with this confrontation focused on avoiding a global nuclear conflict capable of destroying the world. There was nuclear diplomacy which was the interaction among states possessing nuclear weapons, where one or more states would threaten to use them to dissuade an opponent from undertaking an action. There was also crisis diplomacy⁷ in which negotiation was needed to resolve a crisis; a short intense period in which possibility of war is perceived to increase dramatically. During that period, summit diplomacy⁸ was also conducted, a direct form of communication between heads of government or state. The end of the Cold War represented a dramatic change in the international context within which diplomacy is conducted. Diplomacy can now be genuinely global in scope, as the ideological division has disappeared.

Functions of Diplomacy

Diplomacy serves a number of purposes, all of which are concerned with the implementation of a state's policy towards other states or non-state actors. Skilful diplomacy projects a favourable image of a country and in so doing, aids the country in its efforts to achieve its objectives. The essential functions which diplomacy has fulfilled within the modern states system include communication, negotiation of agreements, gathering of intelligence or information, minimization of the effects of friction and symbolizing the existence of the society of states.⁹

Diplomacy facilitates communication between the political leaders of states and other entities in world politics. Without communication, there would not be any international system as there will not be any interaction among states. The negotiation of agreements is important for advancing relationships and achieving mutual benefits. The diplomats have to determine the areas of overlapping interests and through reason and persuasion bring the parties to some arrangements. Information and intelligence gathering is an important contribution to the formulation of a state's coherent and intelligent foreign policy. As policy is not formulated in a vacuum, knowledge and information about the particular state towards which the policy is formulated is essential for peaceful inter-state relations. Diplomacy is important for minimizing friction, which is inevitable in inter-state relationships. Friction is a source of tension and discord that may be unrelated to the true interests of the parties concerned and as such, it must be minimized to avoid hostilities and to maintain peaceful relationships. Diplomacy also functions as a symbolic representation of a society of states. The presence of diplomats in states is a visible manifestation of a certain set of rules to which states and non-state actors in the international system follow, establishing some degree of international order.

All these functions of diplomacy contribute to the security of nation-states and establish some form of international order. Through the functions of communication, negotiation, intelligence; and through its symbolic function and establishment of rules, diplomacy helps states to interact with minimal friction and tension.

The Relevance of Diplomacy in the 21 st Century

From the evolution of diplomacy, it can be seen that diplomacy has been adapting and changing with the requirements of international politics. The functions of diplomacy have constantly found new meaning to the prevailing conditions of the world. It has been argued that since WWI, the conduct of relations between states by professional diplomats has been in decline due to changing circumstances.¹⁰ The role of the resident ambassador and his mission has declined in relation to that of other channels of international business. Heads of government and other ministers, who meet frequently in direct encounters, have bypassed the resident ambassador, as it is sometimes more effective and efficient to discuss matters directly with their counterparts. Due to the increasingly technical nature of key issues in areas such as in the military; and in economic, social, educational, scientific, ecological areas etc., the diplomats do not have such specialized knowledge and need to rely on the respective experts for negotiations. In the 21st century, bilateral diplomacy has also declined in relation to multilateral diplomacy, as a consequence of the proliferation of international organizations. Many important issues are dealt with at least in part in a multilateral context such as diplomatic issues through the United Nations and defence issues in the framework of NATO or ARF.

A decline in the role of professional diplomacy or a change in its character as shown above does not mean that diplomacy has ceased to make a central contribution to international order in the 21 st century.¹¹ The various functions of diplomacy, all of which have contributed greatly to state security, remain important in the 21 st century. In the area of communications, diplomats are specialists in precise and detailed communication. They are able to convey moods, intentions as well as information in messages. Although the negotiation of agreements between states can and does take place without the mediation of diplomats, the latter are still indispensable in this area. The conclusion of agreements by heads of state or foreign ministers is often only the climax of a long process of negotiation by the diplomats. In the gathering of information about foreign countries, diplomats are uniquely skilled in getting information about the views and policies of a country's political leadership. It is the knowledge of personalities which is important, as leaders shape a country's policy. The function of minimising friction in international relations might be carried out without diplomats, as others might be capable of applying intelligence and tact in international exchanges. However, diplomats are the best persons for this role as the diplomatic profession embodies traditions and conventions that equip them for performing the role. Although the function of symbolising the existence of the society of states can be fulfilled not only by organised diplomacy but also by universal international organisations such as the United Nations, the presence in capital cities of a diplomatic corps is a sign of the existence of foreign states.

The contributions that diplomacy makes to the security of nation-states cannot be quantified easily as skilful diplomacy enhances the survival of nation-states. Diplomacy remains a key instrument for peacefully managing problems in the world community, contributing to international order and nation-states' security.

Concept of Deterrence

Gordan A Craig defined deterrence as "deterrence consisting essentially of an effort by one actor to persuade an opponent not to take action of some kind against his interests by convincing the opponent that the costs and risks of doing so will outweigh what he hopes to gain thereby".¹² Deterrence as a strategic concept evolved during the Cold War; during that period, deterrence strategy was aimed mainly at preventing aggression against the US and its close allies by the hostile Communist powers of USSR, China and North Korea. In particular, the strategy was devised to prevent aggression involving a nuclear attack by the USSR or China as strategic nuclear arms were the weapons of choice in the stand-off between the superpowers. As progress in strategic nuclear arms control accelerated, the focus of US military strategists and national security decision-makers returned to conventional deterrence.

Deterrence assumes that a potential aggressor is rational and will compare the expected costs and benefits of alternative courses of action and based on the results of that comparison, will choose one that maximizes benefits or minimizes costs.¹³ Rational deterrence theory recognizes three essential determinants for successful deterrence, namely communication, capability and credibility.¹⁴ Effective deterrence relies on the ability to communicate unmistakably to the potential aggressor what actions are considered unacceptable. Effective deterrence also encompasses the ability to carry out the threat. Deterrence can only be effective if the threat on which it is based is technically capable of execution and the threat is sufficiently large to deter. The amount of force required to provide a sufficiently large deterrent threat will depend on the adversary and the interest being threatened. The military force invoked as part of the deterrence action must be clearly capable of achieving the promised military objectives. Credibility refers to an aggressor's perception of the commitment of the nation to use the force that constitutes the deterrent threat. For deterrence to be effective, the aggressor must be beyond reasonable doubt that the deterrent threat will be carried out. This requires efforts such as demonstrated political will, willingness to sustain economic costs and to endure human casualties, and to take risks in support of the deterrence efforts.

Problems With Deterrence

Deterrence was successful during the Cold War period in containing the two superpowers but the concept of deterrence has certain inherent problems and shortcomings. Firstly, the vagaries of human behavior argue against any certainty that a leader will take rational actions.¹⁵ To assume that the aggressor is rational is too simplistic as it omits crucial variables that may affect the decision-making. Tension, fear, fatigue and other thought-inhibiting processes may distort the decision-making process. In some situations, there might be overwhelming circumstances such as those that revolve around issues of national, racial or religious pride, and hostilities may not be deterred by rational calculations. Secondly, deterrence can be self-defeating, leading to reduced stability as the threats that are issued can provoke as well as restrain.¹⁶ The deterrent capability should not be so great that an adversary sees itself as being threatened; an arms race could be sparked, leading to conflict spirals and heightened tensions. If the adversary feels that his national security is at stake, it might carry out a pre-emptive strike. Thirdly, while conventional deterrence is generally more credible than threats based on nuclear weapons, it is inherently contestable as the costs involved are more bearable and the outcome of any conflict is difficult to predict.¹⁷ As such, conventional deterrence might not be able to raise the stakes in a conflict to levels high enough to forestall the outbreak of hostilities and the enemy might still be tempted to get involved in a limited war.

An examination of historical materials has revealed several primary factors associated with the failure of deterrence and attacks by the weak on substantially stronger states.¹⁸ The weaker state may be highly motivated due in whole or part to a strong commitment to particular values or to a psychopathological leader. The weaker state may have misperceived some aspect of the situation such as it may have perceived a vulnerability on the part of the stronger state that was non-existent, expected no retaliation from the strong state, believed that its allies would come to its aid and underestimated the costs that would be involved in challenging an opponent. In the post-Cold War era, the US has repeatedly experienced great difficulty in making threats that were credible and potent enough to deter adversaries although it possessed overwhelmingly superior military capabilities. In the Persian Gulf crisis, despite an amazing demonstration of US military capabilities and a declared willingness to use force if necessary, Saddam Hussein refused to comply with the demand to remove his troops from Kuwait and had to be expelled by force. While it is difficult to understand Saddam Hussein's mind-set or his calculations, it would appear that he was insufficiently impressed with the credibility or the potency of the US threats of force.

Relevance of Deterrence in the 21st Century

Although the concept of deterrence has some shortcomings, deterrence as a basis for state security still has an important role to play and is not outdated in the 21st century. However, more attention needs to be paid by policy-makers to the way in which deterrence policies may increase the risks of an inadvertent war. The critical task for policy-makers is to find a sensible balance between deterrence and reassurance. Too great a stress on the latter could undermine deterrence where it is needed and thus encourage aggression; too great an emphasis on the former may increase the risk of an inadvertent war. The effectiveness of

deterrence can be increased if parallel strategies of reassurance and positive inducements are also adopted to make the status quo more attractive.

In the 21st century, the only guarantor of state security is still the state itself. It is foolhardy for a state to assume that another country will come to its aid in times of crisis unless some vital interests are involved. In this post-Cold War era, there is reluctance on the part of political leaders to take military action in international conflicts. Few leaders are willing to invest their political capital in risky, controversial international interventions with uncertain outcomes.¹⁹ Unless the major security interests of the leading nations are directly threatened, substantial military involvement by the international community will be rare beyond peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations. The world's current superpower, the United States will not and is unable to intervene in every one of the many crises around the globe. American interests do not require them to do so, and the international community itself is overwhelmed with such crises and cannot respond to all of them. Even when there are U.S. interests involved and the crises do merit some response, the response will tend to be a minimal one taken in the hope of limiting the extent of involvement and costs.²⁰

A state is unwise to depend on any other state for its security in times of crises, as it is not uncommon for policy shifts to occur due to changes in government leaders and the mood of the people. A country's approach towards the security of another country can be one of engagement, isolation, unilateralism or multilateralism, depending on the government and the people of the country. Leaders of countries might change or the people might exert pressures on their governments to change their policies.

Post-Cold War Security Environment

In the 21st century, due to the increasing pace of globalisation and the economic interdependence of nation-states, the security agenda has expanded beyond just military security. The security agenda has expanded to include human, environmental, social and economic security, collectively known as 'non-traditional security issues'. The traditional state-centric security discourse involving sovereignty and territorial integrity is hardly able to capture today's security problems for the bulk of the population in the developing countries. To the millions in the developing countries, they are not interested in state security so long as they are steeped in hunger, malnutrition and violence.²² It has been argued that realism as an approach cannot cope with these new issues adequately because the new security agenda requires co-operation among nation-states and is symptomatic of the erosion of state sovereignty.

Although a proliferation of international organisations, globalization and non-traditional security issues especially human security will force nation-states to give up some of their sovereignty, it is also very clear that the state is still the dominant player in international relations and domestic politics. As international organisations are created by and for states, the prerogatives of the nation-state will not easily yield to them having an equal position in global governance. The sovereign states also retain a near monopoly on the use of coercive force in international politics and they continue to shape the transnational interactions of non-state actors. The most important non-state actor is the United Nations (UN). It is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security but it has not been structured as a war fighting organization. It may authorize the use of multinational military forces in its role to maintain peace but member states have not provided it with the necessary resources to conduct these operations with full effectiveness, nor are they likely to do so in the foreseeable future.

The UN Security Council's rigid adherence to the concept of impartiality has also limited UN options and has circumscribed active intervention by the international community in deadly conflicts. As such, non-state actors have done little to discourage belligerents from hostilities and it is unlikely that interventions from the international community will be prompt in the event of any crisis. Thus, the country still needs to ensure its own security and cannot depend on non-state actors. There is also the argument by neo-liberals that there is less likelihood of conflicts between nation-states due to the increasingly interdependent global economy. However, despite growing global economic interdependence, war remains a common feature of the international landscape, occurring among different national, ethnic, and religious communities unwilling to live together and settle their disputes peacefully. Although the United States and the Soviet Union are no

longer fueling proxy wars in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, new wars are breaking out because the fear of superpower intervention has diminished. The international community today faces some 40 unresolved conflicts.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, although there is increased globalisation, co-operation and a proliferation of international organizations, the nature of the international system basically remains an anarchical society. Although classical realism no longer adequately explains nor describes the real world as nation-states work together to deal with new global problems, the sovereign state is still enduring and will not disintegrate anytime in the near future. For their security, nation-states need to make effective use of the complementary realist tools of deterrence and diplomacy. Due to its shortcomings, deterrence alone is not sufficient to ensure nation-states' security. Deterrence is a fragile thing, resting not only on tangible resources and demonstrated resolve but also on effective communication of capability and intent, filtered through a screen of domestic politics and international sensibilities.²³ Deterrence has a fundamental role, not as the sole basis of a state's security strategy but as a vital element of a complex interaction of military, diplomatic and political activities. To maximize the prospects for stability, parallel strategies of reassurance and cooperation, as well as a range of diplomatic and political measures will be required.

On the other hand, history as well as recent experience have shown that efforts to deal with conflicts between states solely by means of peaceful diplomacy do not always succeed and may result in substantial damage to one's national interests. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States is still committing its armed forces to a wide range of military operations due to a rising tide of instability. American troops are currently deployed in various regions around the world, participating in various missions. The use of force to deal with violence is still necessary, as the international community may not always be able to predict and prevent the outbreak of violence. Nation-states must therefore develop the capability of deterrence to prevent violence.

In the 21st century, diplomacy and deterrence are still necessary instruments of any state's security policies. The security of nation-states is best achieved through a suitable combination of these two instruments.

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The Influence of Environmental, Humanitarian and Governance Norms on State Sovereignty and Their Impact on the Region

by MAJ Anselm Morais

Norms such as humanitarian intervention, and environmental protection are not new to the conduct of international relations. There were at least four instances where Christian nations intervened against the Ottoman Turks in the nineteenth century in retaliation against atrocities committed against Christians under Ottoman rule.¹ During the same period, environmental issues took on an international flavour as countries attempted to regulate the use of common waterways and rivers.² To a large part, however there has been little consistency in the exercise of such norms up to the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War has diverted the energy of the West towards making the world a better place for the future. The end of a threat of nuclear annihilation presents us with a future and in this respect, the need to preserve the environment and the people that inhabit the planet takes centre stage.

The global outlook of this quest has marginalised the realist concept of state sovereignty. States today no longer exercise absolute control over the resources within their national boundaries. Their use and abuse of such resources, be it labour, land or capital resources, are subject to the scrutiny of the world. The declining power of the state to exercise its rights will certainly impact the region. The region in this essay is taken to be South East Asia. The intensity of the clash described above will depend to a large part on the degree of sovereignty the region is willing to trade off for the positive effects of globalisation.

This essay looks at the trends in environmental, humanitarian and governance norms and their influence on state sovereignty. From here, we look at the possible responses to these influences and the impact of such responses.

Environmental Issues and the Region

The health of the world's eco-system has been of concern to countries thanks to many scientists and environmentalists who have been successfully campaigning against the exploitation of the environment. Under the auspices of the UN, four major conventions have been codified to protect the environment³. Most countries in the region are signatories of these conventions. It appears that countries are in concert when it comes to the protection of the environment. Malaysia, which alone accounts for 50% of the world's export of timber⁴, has committed itself to maintaining a 50% forestation level in perpetuity. As Mihaly Simej explains:

"Governments seem much readier to participate in cooperative action that responds to environmental dangers. In the environmental field, the complex nature of many of the task facing the international community are well understood, and interest, values and goals have been articulated clearly."⁵

There is growing concern among environmentalists however, that states' commitments to environmental goals are meaningless unless enforced. In this light the concerns of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like Greenpeace have surfaced to the forefront overshadowing state and supranational attempts to monitor the environment. The timber industry of Malaysia and Indonesia illustrates clearly the influence such organisations have. In 1999, NGOs like The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and Rainforest Action network (RAN) campaigned for the labelling of timber to distinguish it from sustainably managed forest and others.⁶ Both Malaysia and Indonesia condemned the action as an unfair trade practice.

Significantly while Malaysia maintains a 63% level of forestation, non state parties are not impressed by macro level statements and have scrutinised logging practices to derive their own conclusions.⁷ At the heart

of the problem is the fact that while states own the resources that influence the environment, the environment itself is a public resource with no supranational authority. While states are committed to preserving the environment, their first interest is their national well being. Indonesia's attempt to lift a logging ban during the economic crisis to boost the economy, in the face of increasing poverty levels, was met with stiff opposition from environmentalists. Both Indonesia and Malaysia have recently established their own certification programmes to meet FSC norms⁸, clearly confirming the argument proposed, that there is an erosion of a state's sovereignty over its environmental resources.

Human Rights and the Region

"Emerging is an international norm against the violent repression of minorities that will and must take precedence over concerns of sovereignty and the UN Charter should never be a source of comfort or justification for those guilty of..violations of human rights."

Kofi Annan

Address of the Commission on Human Rights,

April 1999

This quote places in perspective the erosion of a state's sovereignty over human rights abuses. The context within which the statement was made represented the most extreme form of human rights abuses -- genocide. Kofi Annan has ushered in a new era in supranational policing of human rights. With the lessons of inaction in Rwanda and Cambodia and failed action in Somalia, the strong mandate given to the UN in support of human rights intervention sends a strong signal to sovereign states on their inherent right to protect their citizens.

The region has experienced external influence in its management of human rights, in the form of the UN action in East Timor. One could argue that the UN action in East Timor cannot be placed within the context of humanitarian intervention, as the UN was invited by the Indonesian government to take action. On the contrary, a sudden reversal of Indonesia's stand on its action in East Timor must give some credit to the changing international setting within which human rights are viewed.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights however, goes beyond the protection of human life. Its articles cover issues of arrest and detention, trade union activities, education, freedom of thought, conscience and religion.⁹ Here a debate prevails on the rights of a state to interpret the contextual application of the convention. There are generally two main academic camps, the universalist and the relativist. The former argues that all human beings are born with the same set of inherent human rights while the latter argues that human rights vary from culture to culture.¹⁰ The relativist debate is especially prevalent within the region and states in the region have resisted constant pressure to adopt the universalist concept. Recent aid sanctions and condemnation against Vietnam and China for imposing death sentences on prisoners display the trend of coercion to accept the universalist concept.¹¹

Good Governance and the Region

Good governance is a term used widely today to describe the framework within which the management of an organisation or state should be carried out. It is generally argued that good governance is fundamental to economic development. In general, the virtues extolled by proponents of good governance are:¹²

- the rule of law
- transparency
- responsiveness
- consensus
- equity

- effectiveness and efficiency
- accountability

The world appears plugged into a large interdependent system, within which any weak element weakens the whole system. Thus there are growing demands for any elements plugged into the global system to exhibit some degree of conformity to business practices that are transparent to all.

The economic crisis of 1997 placed the governance of the region under the scrutiny of the IMF and the world media. At the heart of the problem was the unique business relationships of the countries in the region. A contagion effect ensued as investor confidence plummeted in response to the business environment. The high dependence of the region on foreign capital meant little could be done but to comply with IMF guidelines in return for aid; guidelines that removed the states' ability to grapple with socio-economic or political ramifications of these guidelines.

Sovereignty and Globalisation Norms - A Summary

The material above shows with some credence, the growing trend within the realm of globalisation for over- sovereign states to increasingly lose some degree of autonomy over issues that once remained domestic. Edward Luttwak best describes the weapon used in today's context to ensure compliance to global norms:

*If players left in the field by the waning importance of military power were purely economic entities....then only the logic of commerce should govern world affairs.*¹³

In this light, the Asian Development Bank recently stated that aid to Indonesia would be tied to Indonesia's response to the haze problem.¹⁴ Increasingly therefore, as globalisation takes greater effect, the threat of economic sanctions and withdrawal of aid are sufficient to ensure that countries would take some measures to ensure compliance in the interest of survival but at the expense of their ability to exercise sovereign rights.

Given the increasing necessity for states to participate in the global system, Asian states could converge with global norms and accept the decline of its state sovereignty or Asian states could strive to establish a grouping that preserves its own definitions of sovereignty. The two scenarios are examined to highlight possible trends and challenges.

Converging With Global Norms

An indication of this trend could be seen from the case of Vietnam. Since its fight for independence, Vietnam remained unplugged from globalisation. Any attempt to revive its ailing economy would mean the erosion of its control over the domestic economy. This remained the stumbling block of trade talks with the United States. However, after one year of negotiations, Vietnam signed a trade pact with the US, opening up its economy in a deal it rejected only a year ago.¹⁵ Most countries in the region have taken some measures to prepare themselves for globalisation. These have focused on the economic and legal arenas as a direct result of the lessons learnt from the economic crisis of 1997 and the more recent humanitarian crises.¹⁶ As stated by Prof Jayakumar in a keynote address on "Sovereignty in the 21 st Century", *"trends in human rights, trade, international organisations and technology were transforming the concept of state sovereignty"*.¹⁷

What challenges lie ahead for the region in this climate of changing state sovereignty? In particular, what are the security implications?

- **Economic Security**

The first security implication has already surfaced in form as the 1997 economic crisis. Countries of the region must be prepared for economic insecurity in an age where global financial movements could cripple an unprepared economy. The World Bank and the IMF recognise this as a major concern of globalisation and numerous studies are under way to try to minimise its impact.¹⁸

- **The Birth and Decline of States**

With the impending decline in state sovereignty, a greater focus on the rights of the individual and the emergence of economics over security as the main policy driver, present borders may become blurred in a global system where alliances and interest emerge as a result of cultural, ethnic, historical or economic imperatives. This presents three possible scenarios:

- **Secessionism**

Human rights movements have given secessionist movements a new vehicle with a full tank of gas. Extrapolating from the lessons of Indonesia, we can see that regions of countries that have long been exploited or ignored could follow suit. The resurgence of trouble in the Sulu province of the Philippines, one of the poorest provinces of the Philippines, gives us an example. In this light, one could see greater concern by the Federal Government of Malaysia for its eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak.

- **Merger of States**

The contentious views of Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew on the merger of Malaysia and Singapore presents possibilities that states may desire to merge, much as large corporations do, to survive the economic realities of a global economy. Small states like Singapore, Brunei, and even Taiwan, which have common histories with their neighbours may explore the economic sensibilities of economic mergers, in an arena where social and cultural mergers have already been established.

- **Marginalisation of States**

One prospect of a global economy is the growing income inequality within a state and between states. This presents a scenario where states that have successfully plugged into the global system pull away from neighbours that remain isolated. Within this region, the Indochinese states of Cambodia, Laos and especially Myanmar presents the region with a sub-region that is unwilling or unable to respond to global pressures of conformity.

- **Regaining Comparative Advantage**

The crisis has forced some nations to focus on its comparative advantage as opposed to a blind allegiance to industrialisation. An example is Indonesia's decision to focus on increasing its palm oil production while agricultural employment in the country increased by 5.6 million in 1998. The lack of funding for inefficient ventures like Indonesia's aircraft industry would mean that countries would be forced to re-look at their ability to protect and sustain strategic industries, like a defence industry, in the light of stiffening competition and greater scrutiny of financial prudence.

- **ASEAN and the ARF**

In recent times, especially with the economic crisis of 1997, there has been a growing debate of the role of ASEAN in a global economy.¹⁹ As security concerns become eclipsed by economic pragmatism, the relevance of a grouping designed to foster dialogue in a region of differing rates of

growths, economic structures and political fundamentals may erode in favour of a larger grouping that plugs directly into the main engines of growth and capital, the United States and Japan. This posits a greater role for APEC in the future. Economic inequalities are expected to rise as the region embraces globalisation. With this, less developed members of ASEAN can expect to see greater divergence of views with the more developed members. Consensus and non-interference would become increasingly difficult for states to manage in the global economy. A growing role for NGOs surfaces here, but inevitably, there is an undeniable decline in the role of ASEAN in the region's global system.

- **Diaspora Investments - Regional Impact**

One side effect of a global system has been the diasporic nature of investment flows.²⁰ The region contains two of the three most diasporic races, the Chinese and Indians. This trend could exacerbate racial fault lines as wealth inequalities widen along ethnic lines.

Retaining Present Concepts of Sovereignty

The decline of the West²¹ presents us with a scenario where Asian civilisations, especially that of China, surface to dominate the world economy, bringing with it its own definitions of human rights; and individual and state responsibility. Even if one allows the Asian giants of China, India and eventually Indonesia to develop under the umbrella of a Western dominated global system, the sheer mass of its markets would demand a great deal of respect for the interest of these states. How then would states of the region react to develop and sustain its own concept of sovereignty?

- **Reducing Dependence on Western Markets**

Most evident after the economic crisis of 1997 was the desire by states of the region to diversify their economic linkages. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's visit to South America to encourage greater co-operation, between the two regions can be seen as one example. The regions recent engagement between China and India, could be seen as a second example of a growing trend of non-Western states to develop linkages that would allow them to sustain growth and ride the trends of global fluctuations.

- **Strengthening Regional Alliances**

The expansion of ASEAN to 10 members saw the inclusion of new members having disparate economic indicators. This posits the desire of the region to develop an alliance of social and cultural norms that while diverse in itself, are sufficiently diverse from those of the West to allow them to be seen as one. This provides a collective voice for the interest of the region in debates on human rights. Within this context, there seems to be greater relevance to ASEAN as opposed to APEC. In fact, the Malaysian concept of the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), seems to be of greater relevance and may surface as a viable alternative to a potentially fractious APEC under this scenario. This posit is given some credence as the Asean +3 (which looks startlingly similar in form to the EAEC) held its inaugural meeting recently.²² Another example of an attempt to strengthen ASEAN's effectiveness is the Asean Troika²³ plan, which addresses the consensus obstacle to problem solving in the region.

- **Forging New Links**

While strengthening old alliances, one can expect the region to forge new alliances with regions that do not conflict with the region's interpretation of statehood and its rights. M.S. Dobbs-Higginson²⁴ posits the potential for linkages between the region and Asiatic Russia. He notes that

there is an internal body of opinion that supports stronger ties with Asia, especially China and Japan, over Europe.

• **Focus on Regional Economic Fundamentals**

Economic survival of the region hinges on its ability to regain its economic strength and competitiveness. The economic crisis has taught the region some hard lessons and there are signs that the region has experimented and could establish its own brand of macroeconomic policies to allow it to remain plugged into the global economy. These include:

○ **Financial Stability**

Malaysia's success with its currency controls and Thailand's faltering²⁵ after following IMF guidelines have given the region an impetus to experiment with its own remedies for financial security. The Thai Finance Minister proposed a regional currency, while a regional fund and an insurance regime have also been discussed. At a recent "Asean +3" meeting, members discussed a currency swap arrangement to bolster weak currencies in the region.

○ **Renewed Impetus for an Asean Free Trade Area²⁶**

At the 33rd Asean Ministerial Meeting, the call to forge ahead with the formation of AFTA was emphasised to remain competitive as a region. It also called for greater economic assistance for newer Asean members to allow it to integrate with the region.

Conclusion

Nations in the region have come to realise that state sovereignty is a concept that is constantly being redefined in an age of globalisation. A decade after the end of the Cold War, the region has experienced the opposing forces of rapid economic growth and eroding state sovereignty. The region's response has been mixed. Up to the crisis of 1997, globalisation was embraced. The economic crisis of 1997 represented a crisis of state sovereignty as well. During this period, states were compelled to respond to international pressure, often to the detriment of the domestic environment. Since then the region has attempted to shield itself from the ills of globalisation, at times seeking regional solutions. The rapid recovery from the crisis placed these measures on hold, especially since the US economy factored significantly in the recovery.

Today the debate seems to tread along the middle path, as the dialogue within Asean seems to emphasise both regional and global responses. As such, it is unclear at this stage what will be the eventual impact of declining sovereignty. Economic imperatives seem to factor more importantly in the agenda today but this could change as the region finds its place and confidence again.

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A Weak or Strong China: Which Is Better for the Asia Pacific Region?

by MAJ Liow Boon Chuang

Since the end of Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the foundations that underpinned the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region have changed dramatically. Perhaps the most significant development has been China's emergence as a major regional economic and political power. She has become a focus of world attention because of the implications she has for future stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

It will be China's political, economic and military evolution that will largely define the future contours of security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. This is clearly reflected in the inescapable reality of China's size, geographical location, past history and inherent power potential. A booming population, high levels of economic growth and growing anxiety over the military capability of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) have fuelled speculations of resurgent Chinese nationalism within the Asia-Pacific region. Although the growth of China's power is a worrying factor it can be argued that its effect may bring about a positive outcome.

From the Past to the Present

In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gained power under the leadership of Mao Zedong and established the Peoples' Republic of China. The communists transformed the country into a socialist society, using Marxist-Leninist education and theory. The economy was re-structured, farms were organised into agricultural collectives, and private industry was brought under state control. In 1966, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched. This was a period of diplomatic introversion and economic stagnation in China. In 1975, Deng Xiaoping, a rehabilitated victim of the Cultural Revolution, became deputy premier. He was the dominant figure in China throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Since Deng Xiaoping's reforms in 1979, China has undergone a period of remarkable economic growth. For example, the PRC's economy grew at an average annual rate of 9.4% during the 1980s and continues to expand rapidly. China's gross domestic savings stood at a remarkable 39% of its GDP in 1995.¹

Today, there is ample evidence that the CCP under Jiang Zemin's direction is confident enough to continue economic reforms. CCP styles itself as the party that led China out of the "Century of Shame" and has presided over China's recent social, political and economic achievement.²

In the coming 16th Communist Party congress to be held two years from now, Jiang's successor will probably be named.³ It is the economists and engineers who are coming up in the leadership ranks, very different from the earlier generations of leaders. For one thing, there has been a transition in the leadership from the ideologues to the technocrats.⁴ The future of China lies in the hands of young Chinese, especially those with overseas experience, and putting this group into positions of influence will help speed up China's future economic development.⁵

Strong Economy and Its Implications

Within the developing world the impact of globalisation is readily apparent in mainland China. Indeed, the fact that China has facilitated global penetration by 'opening the door' is beyond dispute. What remains in doubt, however, is the path that China will follow. Will China officially forgo her Marxist-Leninist⁶ ideology and embrace democracy, complete with a total market economy? Or will China attempt to stay balanced on a tight wire running between economic modernisation and a communist political framework? A third alternative theorizes China's disintegration and downward spiral into anarchy.⁷ The primary importance of

economic strength is the extent to which it enables China to attain great or potential superpower status. China sees herself as a nation who will regain her status as a world power primarily through economic growth. Deng Xiaoping had said that 'to measure the strength of a nation, one must view it in a total and comprehensive way'. This was reinforced by Jiang Zemin who stated that 'international competition is ultimately a contest of total national strength'. It is undoubtedly a national goal of the Beijing government to achieve big power status by bolstering the nation's strength'.⁸

Deng Xiaoping's 'open door' strategy has been successful, especially economically. The Chinese leaders recognise that the world economy has great potential to both help and harm China.⁹ The return of Hong Kong to the motherland in 1997 and the return of Macau to Chinese control in 1999 have added enormously to her economic strength. China's eventual entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) 'will aid world peace' as China would be linked at "a million points" to the global economy. She will be completely engaged and integrated into the global system and she will be subjected to market discipline and rule-bound by the WTO and other international institutional processes.¹⁰ Without such rules, there would be no basis for trust. Her eagerness to join the WTO shows that China is increasingly willing to become a responsible team player and an 'honest broker' in the region. This would be beneficial to the Asia-Pacific region and more foreign businesses will be attracted to investing in China.

The East Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 was the greatest test of Chinese economic robustness since Deng Xiaoping's reforms. Despite the crisis, China enjoyed a large trade surplus of \$14.7 billion in 1998 which was equivalent to about 3% of its GDP. The Chinese currency reserves were never really threatened. China has stood fast in not devaluing its currency, which fosters stability" and also helped regional economies. China also announced a strong domestic stimulus package to boost public infrastructure spending while seeking to improve tax collection. China's competent response to the East Asian crisis prompted the World Bank to describe a economically strong China as a 'source of stability for the region'.¹²

***"A strong China is normally an expansionist China"*¹³**

Denny Roy seems to agree with the above statement, and has suggested that an economically strong China will allow her to act like a major power: bolder, more demanding, and less likely to co-operate with major powers in the region. 'A strong China will be subjected to the same pressures and temptations to which other economically and military powerful countries of recent history succumbed i.e. Britain, Germany, the Soviet Union and the United States'.¹⁴ Each of these countries had used its superior power to establish a certain amount of hegemony to protect and promote its interests. The rise of China as a major power might trigger a response from Japan, bringing East Asia under the shadow of a new bipolar conflict.

Her increasing economic power will provide the opportunities for her to restore and regain what she sees as her proper place in the international community. She will thus adopt economic and defence policies that will enable her to develop to her full potential, whilst ensuring the hegemony of the CCP. One could suggest that China is aiming to be the strongest power in Asia in the years ahead.¹⁵ China has the potential to be a great power economically and militarily. The concern is that China will may become a regional hegemon. This will be a somewhat bleak and uncertain picture for the countries in the region.

However, to put some balance into the picture, we should not overestimate the threat posed by a strong China. Certainly, China is set to become a great power, but this does not necessarily mean the rise of a regional hegemon as some western scholars have claimed. Jiana Zemin. China's Dresident and party general-secretary, reassuringly told the parliament of South Korea in November 1995: "To allege that a stronger China will pose a threat to other countries is groundless. China will never take part in an arms race, never engage in expansion, never seek hegemony".¹⁶ China has always been inward-looking. Her pro-economic, rational thinking government has not been shown to resort to the use of force unnecessarily.

Mr Xu Kuangdi, Mayor of Shanghai, reinforced this at the forum for International Policy, a round-table discussion on the Future of Asia, at Ritz Calton Hotel in 1997. He said:

"During the 5,000 years of Chinese history, China never engaged in any wars in prosperous times. In the Tang dynasty the Chinese GDP comprised 27 percent of the whole world GDP at the time. This went up to 31 percent during the Ming Dynasty, a percentage relatively higher than the United States right now.

And what did China do during those periods when it was so economically strong compared to the rest of the world? We sent commercial ships to Africa or India to trade. We never sent out any troops to engage in any wars.

On the other hand, when China was poor, for instance during the Yuan Dynasty, we went to Mongolia, or to Manchuria during the Ch'ing Dynasty. Only when China was poor did it engage in any wars. This is quite a clear pattern of our history. The great wars in our history have been about resisting the invasion of others. Culturally, we Chinese think we live in the best place in the world. We don't go anywhere else. The name China means "the centre". A rich China doesn't make war. That is not how we are." ¹⁷

If China becomes as rich in per capita terms as Taiwan, it will be increasingly dependent in the region for its economic growth and prosperity. As Harry Harding suggests, economic modernisation could spill over into political reform and reinforce the diplomatic incentives and constraints that are shaping China's behaviour in world affairs today. By 2010, a rich and powerful China would well be a critical stabilising force and counter balance in the strategic framework of the Asia-Pacific.¹⁸ A richer and strong China is more likely to democratise, with moderating effects on Chinese foreign policy, and to become more economically interdependent with its neighbours. This would obviously be to the benefits of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Strong Military Implications

The Chinese People Liberation Army (PLA) is the largest armed force in the world with 3 million personnel. Many have agreed that an economically strong China will imply an equally powerful (PLA). China is using her new economic power to modernise the PLA, investing in new fighter aircraft and the building of her blue-water capabilities. She aims to turn it into a force capable of supporting her foreign policy objectives; able to defend against threats, actual or imagined, to Chinese sovereignty and integrity.

However, will she unleash the PLA and rule like a hegemon, sweeping the South-China Sea under her carpet, or will the modernisation of the PLA be just an attempt to overcome its poor state and to replace its obsolete equipment?

For some observers, the combination of rapid economic growth and military force modernisation signals China's intention to establish herself as a regional hegemony. This feeling is also shared in the US, that China, when fully armed and fully developed, will seek hegemony. The US Department of Defense notes that "China's rise as a major power presents an array of potential challenges". In the diplomatic language of White Papers, a challenge is a threat. To the US, the "international and regional focus of China's growing military power is worrisome".¹⁹ Beijing's recent actions have caused concern especially within countries in the Asian region. Beijing's belligerent actions regarding Taiwan in late 1995 and early 1996 attracted a considerable amount of attention. China has shown a willingness to use its growing naval power to press territorial claims over the Spratly islands in the South China Sea, which has led to friction with the Philippines, another claimant. The construction of a sizeable airfield on Woody Island in the Paracel chain in the early 1990s, has fuelled speculation that Chinese leaders intend to use the Paracels as a military stepping stone to the Spratly's. Chinese officials have also made inflammatory statements and gestures over territorial disputes with Japan over the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands to the Japanese).²⁰ Many critics have accused the Chinese government of hostility towards the modern values that are thought to promote peace and prosperity. China is unlikely to abandon her support for Pakistan, which she regards as necessary to balance India's military might. This has made the relationship between China and India difficult. A powerful China with the same anachronistic agenda could only undermine the pillars of regional security.

Despite the extensive modernisation programme, it is estimated that it will be at least 10 years before China could be successful in a major offensive war with any of her adversaries and much longer before she could

challenge the US.²¹ What appears certain is that over the next decade China will use her new economic power to strengthen her armed forces. However, as Samuel Kim observes, 'What matters most is not so much the growth of Chinese capability as how Beijing uses its new military strength',²² and what kind of great power China intends to be.

We can summarise that two schools of thought exist on China's intention behind its modernisation programme, viz., China as a threat and China as a benign power. The "China Threat" camp asserts that a strong China is more likely to use force in pursuit of its goals in the region.²³ They argue that the authoritarian and unstable nature of the Chinese government could possibly create war-proneness. Their rationale is that undemocratic government has limited accountability to the mass public, which increases the possibilities that the ruling elite will go to war for its own purposes against the wishes of the majority. This has caused concern among the regional countries, particularly those who still have territorial disputes with China. They are concerned that China might not hesitate to use force to resolve territorial disputes in the South China Sea, especially in view of her uncompromising stand on disputed territories in the South China Sea. Opposing the "China Threat" camp are those who viewed China's military modernisation programmes as non-threatening. They see China's military modernisation as part of a gradual, long-term process to renew its outdated weaponry, rather than a Chinese design to fill a power vacuum in the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific. As David Shambaugh of George Washington University remarks: "The very fact that China has turned to Russia for several advance systems, is an admission of virtually complete failure on the part of their own defence industries to meet the needs of a modern, or even semi-modern, military."²⁴ The other justification is the sheer geographical size of China, her long borders, and her many volatile neighbours. Hence, it would be fundamental for her to maintain a credible military force.

A Weak China and Its Implications

'In the past, a weak China, beset by social disorder, inflation and civil war attracted foreign intervention by the great powers. The result was turbulence and instability inside China and at its borders'. China was invaded twice and suffered from several decades of civil wars and occupation by Japan.²⁵ A loosening of China's political system has already been brought about by economic liberalization, more will follow as communications and education improve with economic growth. Indeed, lessons from Europe and the Soviet Union have taught that a rapid political liberalization unsupported by economic growth can easily lead to social disintegration, which if it divides China, will jeopardize the stability of the whole Asia-Pacific.²⁶ Slow growth of the economy could increase the level of social discontent that would result in political instability. Chinese leaders will attempt to implement the structural reforms necessary to provide a sound framework for sustained future economic growth while minimising political unrest. China's leadership understand that for China to achieve great power status, economic power with a commensurate amount of military power will be the key.

It is commonly asserted that national leaders who are unable to overcome domestic difficulties sometimes pursue an aggressively extroverted foreign policy to distract their people from the problems at home. Samuel S. Kim seems to have this idea in mind when he argues that 'Today the main danger to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region stems more from China's domestic weakness than from its external assertiveness a weak, reactive, insecure and fragmenting China is more unpredictable and dangerous than a strong, confident and cohesive China.'²⁷

There are already signs of unrest and secessionist movements in China, and if China is weak economically and governed by a weak government that does not handle these problems well, an internal break-up could occur and it could precipitate the fall of the country. Controlling the widening income gap between city dwellers and peasants is one pressing problem the Chinese government has to tackle, and keeping the secessionist movement of Muslims in Xinjiang Province and the banned Falungong cult under control are some urgent tasks.

A weak China would have a high unemployment rate. China may have up to 100 million people drifting across the country in search of work. This may have a spill-over effect that would affect the Asia-Pacific region. This floating population is also fertile ground for crime and people without a steady income is a

threat to stability. Presently, the people in the inner provinces are feeling by-passed in their nation's rapid economic development. Widening economic opportunities have led to rampant official corruption, much of it in the countryside. The main concern is the possibility of millions of refugees flooding the region. Another concern is the loss of economic opportunities for the region.

China's Foreign Policy Issues

China's future economic success depends on her ability to attract foreign investment and to maintain and develop her export markets.²⁸ China has become dependent on her trading partners and they, to a certain extent are dependent on her. China's interdependence could have significant implications for security in Asia Pacific region.

The main characteristics of China's foreign policy were spelled out by Premier Li Peng in 1996. He explained:

'China has unswervingly pursued an independent foreign policy of peace. The basic objectives of the policy centre on safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty, and creating an international environment favourable to its reform, opening and modernisation efforts, as well as maintaining world peace and promoting common development'.²⁹

The assurance outlined above contrasts with China's record in the use of force since 1949: e.g. her participation in the Korean War and her war with India in 1962. China also provided military assistance to North Vietnam from 1964 to 1968; she fought border skirmishes with the Soviet Union in 1969; she seized islands from South Vietnam in 1974; she fought a war with unified Vietnam in 1979; had skirmishes in the South China Sea in 1988; and she tested missiles off the coast of Taiwan in 1996.³⁰ The above historical examples clearly show that China reserves her right to use force in pursuit of her *foreign policy of peace*. She may pursue her foreign policy objectives to reunite Taiwan to the motherland and to enforce numerous sovereignty claims relating to islands along her coastline. If Beijing is to be believed, China desires a peaceful resolution to any territorial disputes. However, the possibility of a strong China using military force to strengthen her position in the disputed territories cannot be dismissed.³¹ The use of force in pursuit of her foreign policy objectives could have a destabilizing effect in South and East Asia.³²

Her philosophy for the proper relationship among states is enshrined in the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*. These include the principles that: 'all nations of the world, especially the big powers, should abide by the principle of not interfering in other nations' affairs'; and that 'international conflicts should be fairly resolved through peaceful means, not through threat or use of force'.³³ If her foreign policy is truly guided by these principles then a resurgent China ought to have a positive influence on security in Asia-Pacific region.

Conclusion

An economically developed and prosperous China offers economic opportunity to her neighbours and would enhance regional security and stability, while a China under economic and political chaos and distress could be a source of instability for the region. It would upset regional security by sending out large numbers of Chinese refugees or by tempting other powers to invade China. At the same time, an economically strong China with growing military assertiveness will inevitably cast a long shadow over the region.³⁴

In the foreseeable future, China will continue her march towards great power status, enabled primarily through economic growth but increasingly supported by a more capable military. Notwithstanding any open, robustly independent stance from Taiwan, China will take a supportive rather than a confrontational approach to most of her neighbours. Her drive for hegemony is not a strong possibility because a richer China is more likely to democratise, with moderating effects on Chinese foreign policy, and to become more economically interdependent with its neighbours. Ultimately a strong and powerful China will complement the influence of Asia Pacific region, and will contribute to the security status quo in the region rather than to destabilisation.

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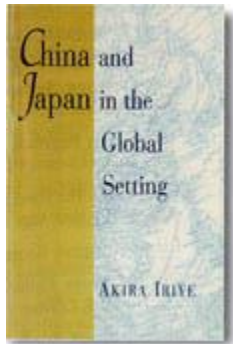


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Book Review:

China and Japan in the Global Setting - by Akira Iriye

Reviewed by DR Khoo How San



Only 156 pages long, Japanese historian Akira Iriye's 1992 work is nevertheless wasabe-spiced food for thought for those of us curious about the past, present and future of Sino-Japanese relations. To stretch the cuisine analogy a little bit more, the ideas are cleverly packaged, there is much to mull about, yet one is left unsure whether one's appetite has been satisfied.

Iriye examines this very important bilateral relationship in the context of three time periods: (1) from the 1880s to the First World War; (2) from the end of that war to the end of the Second World War; and (3) the post-war years till the 1980s. His framework of analysis introduces the cultural dimension to complement the more typical interest-based appraisals focussed on military power and economic interests. As Iriye himself notes, there are many approaches to the study of international affairs. His framework is a three-fold scheme of power, economics and culture, and it deals with activities both within and between countries. Alternatively, as one earlier reviewer noted (in the book's back cover blurb), Iriye's work is a nuanced book which "should lay to rest the historiography of Sino-Japanese relations that assigns historical function solely on the basis of whether one was friend or foe of China".

In Iriye's framework, power is about arms, wars, strategies, security considerations, etc., and the sovereign state (more accurately, the elites that run the state) is naturally the key actor. Economics is about trade, shipping, investments, emigration, etc., and the economic entity becomes the main actor. Finally, culture is about the exchange of individuals, ideas, technology and other "cultural productions", which means that there is now an interplay of actors that include--for want of a better phrase --"people power" (this reviewer's choice of words) which, while often good, is not necessarily a good thing if manifested in its ugly form of stirring the populace with ideas such as Nazism or, for that matter, Japanese militarism.

Having neatly spelt out these three ingredients in his analysis of the modern history of Sino-Japanese relations, Iriye argues that the power factor was decisive in the first period; that in the second period, culture came to acquire a critical importance in the relationship; and that economic interests principally drove the dynamic in the post-1945 years. Now comes the complexity: he cautions that power, economics and culture do in fact overlap (but of course!) but are not necessarily interchangeable factors. As a political scientist, what comes to this reviewer's mind is the notion of non-fungibility, especially with regards to the power factor. Moreover, the culture factor is somewhat elusive as a concept and, indeed, Iriye himself refers to culture in terms of what American political scientist Joseph Nye calls "soft power". To digress for a moment, it has been said that American colonial influence since 1945 is best reflected not in its military might but in the more pervasive "cultural" icons such as Coca Cola and McDonald's. Finally, the culture factor, to be useful, must interweave in the domestic, bilateral and global contexts.

To be sure, Iriye's analysis of the first period (1880s-First World War) captures the salience of power in the bilateral relations in their global setting. Chinese elites, dissatisfied and even ashamed of China's weakness, sought to build up armed forces to cope with the changing world, exemplified by the power of the West. By 1890, China had begun to build up its modern military power. Still, that sense of drive and purpose was lacking among the divisive scholar-gentry which led the way. In contrast, the Meiji leaders of Japan (warrior class background) established a strong, central army. Importantly, they also shared a sense of the external threat facing the country. This external milieu is critical: this period was a time where the Western powers saw their rivalries in terms of the use of military might in pursuit of national interests, and Japan proved a quick imitator. By the turn of the century, Japan's military superiority over China had been obvious. In sum, this first period reflects the traditional concerns of International Relations specialists, in which military balances of power dominate and economic power serves military power. The state dominates. But for culture, the state is no longer the only, or even the most important, framework of analysis.

Iriye then seeks to explain the second period (1918-1945) in terms of power and culture, and to some extent, economics. There was little by way of bilateral economic interdependence in the sense that Japan -- seeking to carve out a slice of China for itself -- sought to exploit China's resources rather than engage in mutually beneficial trade. The power factor remains relatively clearcut: Japan was now a military power while China remained weak. Japan's military power only began to be smashed as the Pacific War progressed. His nuanced argument comes in exploring the cultural aspect of International Relations in this bilateral relationship and raises interesting questions such as: How do "cultural products" affect, transform or come into conflict? The analytical agenda of his cultural framework is an attempt to show that China and Japan do not exist in isolation. Thus, numerous examples are cited of the Japanese acknowledging a cultural debt to the Chinese. More poignantly, Chinese resistance to the Japanese military invasion was manifested through cultural means: mass nationalism, student movements, and educational campaigns, for example.

Nevertheless, military power is not discounted during this period. After all, this period spans the initial war-weariness years, through the hopes of mutual economic benefits to the Great Depression, and finally lurches into the dark clouds of Nazi/fascist nationalism, and ultimately, war again.

In the third, postwar, period, one is treated to the "soft power" cultural confidence of the Americans, contrasted with the hollowed out national and individual identities of the Japanese. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party's victory in China enabled Mao to declare that "the Chinese people have stood up again", and reflected in the re-emergence of Chinese cultural pride.

Against the backdrop of the Cold War (in which the superpowers flexed their military power but learnt to lock horns through proxy wars), China and Japan once again revived their cultural connections and began finally to establish durable economic ties. In fact, Iriye argues that economics was the key feature of the bilateral ties. Also, while Japan allied with the Western camp in the Cold War vis-a-vis the Soviet camp, the cultural ties between Chinese and Japanese were relatively unhampered by the ideological contest (in any case, the Sino-Soviet "camp" broke up by the early 1960s).

On balance, how valid is Iriye's conclusion that the key to better Sino-Japanese ties lies in promoting their civic societies and in forging closer cultural ties? International Relations is still in flux, and the Realist agenda still cannot be dislodged. Geopolitics and balance of power thinking still apply, reflected in a recent Jane's Intelligence Review (December 2000) article, "Japan wary of assertive China". This is in a sense, ironic, for now it is China that is militarily powerful (with a number of its nuclear-armed missiles targeted at Japan). The Japanese, while wary of China, are still burdened by their wartime legacy and divided over the future of their country's military developments.

The promise of economic interdependence has also lost some of its shine in the global setting, and in the Sino-Japanese context too. The Japanese, tired of being asked to apologise for their wartime actions, are increasingly questioning the purpose of their country's massive economic assistance to China.

Finally, the cultural factor has found a modern theoretical framework in the Constructivist agenda, where the power of ideas over material interests is asserted. Again, it is somewhat ironic that the West as an idea

remains relatively intact whereas in East Asia, mutual suspicions among neighbouring states still exist, preventing an East Asian identity from emerging. Sadly, at this juncture, Sino-Japanese relations on all three dimensions are less than rosy.

The abovementioned title is available for borrowing at the [SAFTI MI Library](#). The catalog references are:

China and Japan in the Global Setting

Akira Iriye

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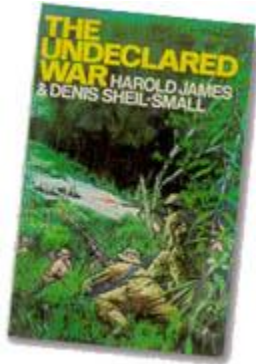


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Book Review:

The Undeclared War: The Story of the Indonesian Confrontation 1962-1966 by Harold James and Denis Sheil-Small

Reviewed by LTA (NS) Toh Boon Ho



The general literature on the Indonesian Confrontation is both vast and varied. At the macro level, one of the best works available is J.A.C. Mackie's *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963-1966* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974). Mackie's work constitutes a study of the causes of the Confrontation in relation to the main protagonists, Malaysia and particularly, Indonesia. In contrast, *The Undeclared War* represents an operational study of conflict, with particular emphasis on how the conflict was fought and the military strategies utilised by both opposing parties.

James and Sheil-Small begin their study with the failed Brunei Revolt in December 1962 when Indonesian-backed rebels tried to take over the Sultanate of Brunei. From April 1963 onwards, in the aftermath of Indonesia's bitter opposition to the formation of Malaysia, Indonesian-backed rebels, known as Indonesian Border Terrorists (IBTs), worked with subversive elements from the mainly Chinese Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO) based in Sarawak, to launch cross-border raids into Sarawak and British North Borneo. These actions began the undeclared war that did not end until Sukarno's fall from power and his replacement by the more moderate and pragmatic Suharto in 1966. This undeclared conflict was to involve some 27,000 Commonwealth servicemen at its peak, which constituted Britain's biggest military deployment since the end of the Korean War. ¹

The authors likened the Indonesian operational strategy to the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Initially, platoon-sized units conducted hit-and-run raids. These raids were largely ineffectual and easily repulsed since these units consisted mainly of pressed-gang volunteers with less than eight weeks of formal military training. Though led and stiffened by Indonesian armed forces regulars, these units performed poorly when fielded against the Commonwealth defenders, comprising mostly of British and Gurkha forces. Subsequently, in later stages as the conflict drew on, company-level and sometimes, battalion levels of Indonesian regulars were deployed in short, sharp pitched battles against the Commonwealth defenders strung out in outposts along the tense and porous border.

To account for the operational success of the Commonwealth forces, the authors attributed credit to Major General Walter Walker's offensive defence, with its emphasis on good intelligence, relentless patrolling, the ambush technique and artillery support, and the extensive use of helicopters for rapid troop deployment and logistics functions. The low-intensity nature of the conflict created a situation that required domination of the jungle to deny it to the enemy. To do so required constant and aggressive patrolling to give the enemy

no respite. In addition, the only way to effectively engage the enemy in such a low-intensity conflict was through the ambush, by deploying forces to ambush known entry and exit routes in the border region.

The authors however, failed to mention a key operational detail: the controlled violation of Indonesian territory by Commonwealth forces. The act was a slow escalation towards bringing the war into the enemy's territory. In what became known as CLARET operations², SAS units were authorised to conduct passive cross-border surveillance as well as decisive military action to harass and destroy the Indonesian military infrastructure like camps, forming up areas and supplies up to 10,000 yards (9 km) into Indonesian territory.³ The closest hint in the book to these operations is the euphemism 'offensive defence' and scattered accounts of the SAS squadron's operations in Borneo. It is understandable that the authors were reluctant to openly admit this episode when the book was published in 1971, barely five years after the end of Confrontation.

The *Undeclared War* constitutes an adequate and detailed tactical study of the Confrontation. Readers keen to find out more about the Confrontation episode can consult the following works with respect to the main players involved.

Australia and New Zealand's involvement are chronicled in the Australian Official History of the Confrontation by P. Dennis and J. Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation: Australian Military Operations in Malaya and Borneo 1950-1966* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1996). The American perspective of the Confrontation is covered in Pamela Sodhy, *The US-Malaysian Nexus: Themes in Superpower-Small State Relations* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia, 1991). A startling revelation of the then-Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman's support of counter-subversion operations to break up Indonesia and incorporate Sumatra into Malaysia is detailed in David Easter's article, "British and Malaysian Covert Support for Rebel Movements in Indonesia during the 'Confrontation', 1963-66".⁴ Singapore's crucial role in sustaining the high tempo of Commonwealth military operations in Peninsula Malaysia and Borneo is documented in Malcolm H. Murfett, John N. Miksic, Brian P. Farrell & Chiang Ming Shun, *Between Two Oceans: A Military History of Singapore From First Settlement to Final British Withdrawal*, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1999).

The Undeclared War: The Story of the Indonesian Confrontation 1962-1966 by Harold James & Denis Sheil-Small is a recommended text on the SAF Professional Reading Programme. It is available at the SAFTI MI Library (Call No. DS 646.3 JAM).

The abovementioned title is available for borrowing at the [SAFTI MI Library](#). The catalog references are:

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Endnotes

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Personality Profile:

Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris

"It is true to say that the heavy bomber did more than any other single weapon to win this war."

- Despatch, para 207 (Official report by Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris on his war operations in World War Two)



Among one of the most controversial commanders in World War II is Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, Marshal of the Royal Air Force and Commander-in-Chief of the RAF Bomber Command from 1942 to 1945. Known as the 'Butcher' or the 'Bomber', he commanded a relentless area-bombing offensive against Germany. This systematic destruction of German cities caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of German civilians, and has been attacked on moral and ethical grounds. Much of the attack is directed against Sir Arthur Harris himself. Should he be lauded as a hero, who played a large part in helping Britain to secure its victory or reviled as a war criminal, a mass murderer?

Arthur Harris was born on 13 Apr 1892, the son of an Indian Civil Service official. Young Harris left school at the age of 16 and traveled across half the world to Rhodesia where he took on a variety of jobs from gold mining to farming. When World War 1 came in 1914, he joined the Rhodesia Regiment in German South-West Africa as a bugler and fought in the campaign. After Africa, he returned to England and joined the Royal Flying Corps. He was posted to France where he served on the Western Front until he returned to England late in 1917. Promoted to major in 1918, he was given command of a home defence squadron (no. 44) where he was well known as a pioneer in night flying. He was granted a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1919.

In post-war RAF, he served in several countries, including India and Iraq where he took command of several bomber squadrons. He returned to Britain at the end of 1924 and assumed command of 58 Squadron. In his command of the squadron from 1925 to 1927, he made many improvements in the squadron's navigational methods and in night bombing. It was around this time that the prominence of air power in future wars began to surface with General Giulio Douhet in Italy, and in the United States, General Billy Mitchell, propounding theories that an enemy could be bombed into submission with little help from the army and the navy.

Between 1930 and 1933 Harris was employed in staff duties in Egypt and took command of 210 Squadron, a flying boat unit based at Pembroke Dock on his return. In 1933, he was appointed as Deputy Director of Operations and Intelligence and was promoted to the rank of Group Captain. In the same year, Hitler came into power in Germany. Germany withdrew from the Geneva Conference and the League of Nations and Britain prepared for the possibility of war in five to eight years' time.

Such was the political situation in England when Harris was appointed as Deputy Director of Plans in the Air Ministry in 1934. In this position, he was able to influence air policy. In the same year, the Air Ministry

Bombing Committee was set up with the role of bomber operations being defined as counter-offensive. However, with Hitler in power and the possibility of war increasing, plans began to be drawn up for the expansion of Britain's bombing force, in part to counter Hitler's claim that the German Luftwaffe could match the air power of the RAF. In 1937, Harris, on being promoted to Air Commodore took command of the newly formed No. 4 Group of Bomber Command. He remained in the post until July of the next year when he was posted overseas to Palestine and Transjordan, tasked with helping the Army keep civil order between the Arabs and the Jews. He returned yet again to England in 1939 on a spell of sick leave.

Britain declared war on Germany on 3 Sep 1939. Harris then had command of the No. 5 Group of the Bomber Command. In Feb 1942, he was chosen to succeed AM Sir Richard Peirse as the Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command. Under Harris' dynamic leadership and single-minded pursuit, the Bomber Command rapidly expanded. He turned around what was a poorly equipped force and poorly trained aircrew with a record of dropping bombs which missed their targets, into a highly efficient force. Harris was convinced that strategic bombing on a large scale would cause the collapse of the German industry and break the morale of the German people and ultimately bring about Germany's defeat. His conviction was given impetus with the Casablanca Directive, drawn up by the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Jan 1943, which gave him the authority to go on a sustained assault on German cities.

Major urban areas such as Hamburg and the industrial cities of Ruhr came under the Bomber's attacks between 1943 and 1945. Night attacks on Hamburg killed more than 41,000 people. In the closing months of the war, Dresden, one of the few remaining large, built up but unbombed city was singled out. It was the attack on this medieval city in Feb 1945 that attracted the most criticism. Dresden was of minor industrial significance but was crammed with refugees. Estimated death toll varies from 35,000 to 135,000. On 16 Apr 1945, with the end of the war in sight, the Chiefs of Staff announced the ending of area bombing. Germany surrendered unconditionally on 7 May 1945.

In the six years of the Bomber Command (three and a half of them under Harris' command), it despatched at least 297,663 sorties by night and 66,851 by day and dropped almost one million tons of bombs. It is estimated that Harris's bombing campaign killed 500,000 German civilians, injured another 1 million and destroyed 3 million homes. Harris argued that the attacks on the German cities were justified as they helped to shorten the war and saved numerous allied lives. This argument did not quell his critics. British civilian victims of German bombs were estimated to be about 60,000 compared with 500,000 German victims of British bombs. Criticism and hostility towards Harris grew with the passage of time. There were critics who were against any bombings of civilians at all and there were those who thought that bombing of German cities was justified in the early part of the war but that it should be switched to precision bombing of selected targets in the later years.

There was yet another group of critics who criticised the operational conduct of the campaign. The Bomber Command also suffered heavy losses - about 55,000 aircrew were killed, most of them officers and NCOs with 40,000 aircrew deaths attributable to the period under Harris's command. Questions have been raised as to whether the results justify the sacrifices made by the aircrew.

On the other hand, those who try to take a more objective stand may well point that the widescale bombing of German cities did not begin with Harris but with the two Commanders-in-Chief who preceded him, ACM Charles Portal and AM Richard Peirse. Although Harris himself had a firm belief in the bombing of German cities, it was those further up the ranks, including the War Cabinet, who gave him the tacit approval, and who should shoulder the blame.

Although Harris was promoted Air Marshal at the end of the war in 1945, he was not made a peer unlike the other high commanders of the war. Politicians, including Churchill did not want to be too closely linked with the Bomber Command. Some felt that he had been made a scapegoat of political expediency. Harris retired from the RAF in 1946 and left for his beloved South Africa where he ran a shipping business until he returned to England in 1953. He was offered a peerage belatedly in 1953 but he accepted only a baronetcy. He died in 1984 at the age of 91.

Adapted from the books:

"The Bomber Command Handbook 1939 --1945"

by Jonathan Falconer

" 'Bomber' Harris and the Strategic Bombing Offensive, 1939 --1945"

by Charles Messenger