MILITAIRESPECTATOR

THE NETHERLANDS JOURNAL OF WAR STUDIES

PEER-REVIEWED SPECIAL EDITION

THE FUTURE OF WARFARE

FOTO NAVO

Master Military Strategic Studies Voorlichtingsavond 14 maart

In september 2024 start weer een master-programma Military Strategic Studies aan de Faculteit Militaire Wetenschappen van de Nederlandse Defensie Academie.

Deze Engelstalige wetenschappelijke master-opleiding vindt plaats in deeltijd, duurt twee jaar en biedt jaarlijks plaats aan ongeveer 45 studenten.

Een voorlichtingsavond voor geïnteresseerden vindt plaats op 14 maart op de Kromhout-kazerne in Utrecht (geen online-deelname mogelijk).

De voorlichtingsavond begint om 19.00 uur. Het programma duurt tot circa 20.30 uur en sluit af met een drankje en een hapje, waarbij er gelegenheid is om aanvullende, individuele vragen te stellen. Geïnteresseerden kunnen meer informatie inwinnen of zich aanmelden voor deze voorlichting via het e-mailadres master.mss@mindef.nl.

De breed opgezette strategische master bestudeert de rol van het militaire instrument binnen de context van hedendaagse veiligheids-politiek vanuit een westers perspectief. De master geeft een grondige analyse van moderne strategische (veiligheids)issues.

De masteropleiding is primair bedoeld voor Nederlandse officieren en burgerpersoneel in vaste dienst bij Defensie. Daarnaast is de master toegankelijk voor civiele (niet-Defensie) studenten met een recente en relevante universitaire opleiding; officieren van bond-genoten of partnerlanden; en militairen met een aanstelling bij het reservepersoneel (reservisten en Defensity College-studenten).

Meer informatie over het masterprogramma is te vinden op de website van de NLDA.

Inschrijven voor het studiejaar 2024-2025 (aanvang 30 augustus) kan tot en met 31 mei. ■

The Netherlands Journal of War Studies

Een nieuwe rubriek in de Militaire Spectator

Het vermogen om historische en hedendaagse conflicten te beoordelen, te analyseren en de gelegenheid bieden om daarvan te leren is een kerntaak van de Militaire Spectator. Het tijdschrift, opgericht in 1832, is een gezaghebbend platform voor militairen, wetenschappers en ambtenaren om te publiceren en het debat aan te gaan over krijgswetenschappen, daaraan verwant beleid en de militaire beroepspraktijk. Sinds 1972 geeft de Koninklijke Vereniging ter Beoefening van de Krijgswetenschap, in opdracht van het ministerie van Defensie, de Militaire Spectator uit als wetenschappelijk tijdschrift over krijgswetenschappen.

Maar tijden veranderen! Zeker, de Militaire Spectator blijft *het* platform waar officieren, medewerkers en geïnteresseerden in defensie hun opvattingen en inzichten over het militaire metier kunnen delen. De laatste jaren kreeg de redactie echter steeds vaker te maken met auteurs die hun werk graag willen publiceren onder een in de wetenschap gangbare procedure, namelijk *double-blind peer-reviewed.* Daarom start de Militaire Spectator een nieuwe rubriek en biedt het tijdschrift onderzoekers en wetenschappers nu de mogelijkheid om de resultaten van hun inspanningen te publiceren naar wetenschappelijke maatstaven.

Deze speciale editie van de Militaire Spectator is geheel gevuld met artikelen die de redactie publiceert in de rubriek *The Netherlands Journal of War Studies* (NJWS). De editie bevat vijf artikelen die voldoen aan de wetenschappelijke maatstaven, dat wil zeggen *double-blind peer-reviewed.* Op de website van de Militaire Spectator zijn deze *peer-reviewed* artikelen toegankelijk en herkenbaar via het dossier NJWS. Uiteraard blijft het niet bij deze editie. De redactie is van plan om in de toekomst, naast de artikelen en rubrieken die de lezers gewend zijn, meer NJWS-artikelen uit te brengen.

Deze uitgave is tot stand gekomen door de ijverige en niet aflatende inspanningen van kolonel dr. Peter Pijpers en drie jonge wetenschappers die mede het initiatief namen voor het NJWS: luitenant-kolonel Ivor Wiltenburg MA, luitenant-kolonel dr. Martijn van der Vorm en Kapitein Lysanne Leeuwenburg MA. Ivor overleed helaas in september 2023; deze editie is aan hem opgedragen. ■

PHOTO U.S. NAVY, SAM SHAVERS

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Winning without Fighting in the Indo-Pacific

The Role of Irregular Forces in China's Maritime Strategy

Pieter Zhao

China is effectively developing a three-sea-force with an evolving division of labor, in which the irregular forces gradually assume China's near-seas objectives in order to allow the navy to increasingly focus on its blue-seas missions and capabilities.

PHOTO U.S. ARMY, JAMES NEWSOME

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Essay: Visions on Future War

Frans Osinga

The validity of Western visions on the future of war prior to the start of the war on 24 February 2022 can be interrogated by confronting them with the evolution of that war and shows it contains features of several visions of the future but also paradoxical ones.
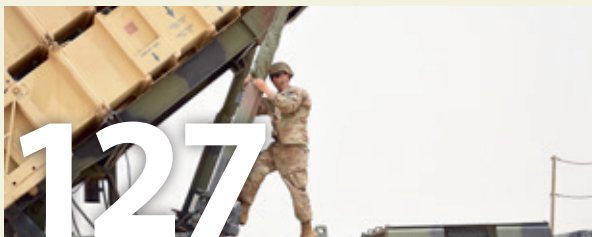
PHOTO U.S. AIR FORCE, DANA CABLE

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The Challenge-Response Dynamic in Military Affairs

Tracing the Origins of Multi-Domain Operations

Frederik Wintermans

Considering the origins of the current American operating concept of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) through three phases of US-Russian concept development, key findings include the necessity to anticipate better adversarial concept development.
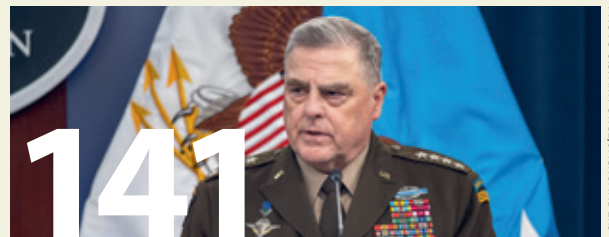
PHOTO U.S. AIR FORCE, JACK SANDERS

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The Milleytary Oath: Speech Act Theory in the American Civil-Military Context

Karishma Chafekar

Chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley stressed that the vertical authority relationship of the state and the armed forces is enforced in the military oath, which is in line with the literature on the military oath of office as a speech act in civil-military relations.

EN VERDER

INTRODUCTION

The future of warfare

War is a duel, a military confrontation between two or more actors. Warfare could then be defined as the activity in which an adversary is coerced to comply with the other party's will in any way necessary – whether that is achieved by using information, diplomacy or military means.

After relishing the peace dividend and adjusting the thinking and organisation of its warfighting capabilities, the Western world has recently been confronted with major shocks – not only in the physical sense but also in its doctrinal thinking. We have come to realise that war and warfare were suspended but not discarded.

On 24 February 2022, interstate warfare returned to the European continent when Russia invaded Ukraine. The Russian coercive actions started with the annexation of Crimea in 2014, or arguably even earlier, with the interferences in the 2004 Ukrainian presidential elections, which led to the Orange Revolution protests. Further afield and more recently, in the Middle East on 7 October 2023, Hamas conducted a large-scale attack on Israel, after a decade of kinetic pin-prick attacks and fierce battles of narrative on social media.

While these conflicts do not herald a change in the nature of war, they pose pertinent questions on developments in the character of war. As Professor Frans Osinga elaborates on this in his essay 'Visions on Future Warfare': do the wars in and near Europe portend profound changes in the future of war and warfare? To what extent do new concepts and technology pose either risks or opportunities to our national security? How do contemporary trends interact with the enduring realities of war? And, ultimately, what can we learn from current conflicts and strategic competitions?

In this special blind-peer-reviewed edition of the *Militaire Spectator* – the Netherlands Journal of War Studies (NJWS) – several themes pertaining to the future of war are explored.

Pieter Zhoa focusses on the strategic developments of China's maritime domain. However, he does not assess the expansion of the grey-hulled People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), but his article centres around the maritime strategy in the grey-zone, occupied by unconventional or irregular maritime forces – China's Coast Guard and the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia. He argues that China is developing a three-sea-force, in which the irregular forces assume China's near-seas objectives, allowing the PLAN to focus on its blue-seas missions and capabilities.

On 23 September 2023, America's most senior military officer, General Mark Milley, stated in his farewell speech that the US armed forces take an oath to the Constitution, not to a wannabe dictator. The military oath, according to Karishma Chafekar, serves as a trust mechanism in the legal framework of democratic civil-military relations to keep the constitutional order intact and working. Did the interpretation of the oath come under pressure in the relationship between General Milley and his then commander-in-chief, President Donald Trump?

Henk de Jong's contribution – in Dutch – contends that military history and military science fiction are far from being opposites. Paradoxically enough, each future image has a foundation in the present. In the well-known novel *Starship Troopers*, the Mobile Infantry fought the Bugs. These insectoid adversaries were modelled on communists and served to convey the author's criticism of Eisenhower's decision to suspend nuclear testing. We must, therefore, be aware that also our present-day research into the future is inherently shaped by our contemporary frames of thought.

Daniël Turk offers an approach to evaluate the sea power of small states in a way that goes beyond the tendency to categorise naval power based on quantifiable military capabilities. The return of peer competitors at sea can be an impetus to forestall future fleet composition based on the role of navies and not on quantity.

Frederik Wintermans argues that the emergence of Multi-Domain Operations can best be understood as a dynamic between tackling a challenge and its response by the opponent, especially in the US-Russian relationship. We therefore need to learn how to anticipate adversarial developments of concepts better but also how to steer its threat perception. ■

Aliens en militaire geschiedenis

Oorlog en oorlogvoering in sciencefiction

Dr. Henk de Jong*
Peer-reviewed artikel

Abstract

Militaire geschiedenis en militaire sciencefiction lijken tegenpolen. Militaire geschiedenis beschrijft wat er daadwerkelijk is gebeurd op slagvelden in het verleden. Of beter gezegd: analyseert en interpreteert wat men denkt dat daar is gebeurd. Militaire sciencefiction daarentegen legt de focus op oorlogvoering in een verre toekomst, met fantasierijk beschreven conflicten in verzonnen werelden op grote afstand van ons in tijd en plaats. Dat lijkt irrelevant voor militaire professionals, maar toch blijkt er bij nadere beschouwing overlap en interactie te bestaan tussen militaire geschiedenis en militaire sciencefiction. Dit artikel gaat in op die overlap en interactie, en op de relevantie daarvan voor contemporaine militaire (trend)analyses. Het blijkt bijvoorbeeld dat (militaire) geschiedenis verrassend genoeg een favoriete bron is waaruit sciencefiction put bij het schetsen van fictieve futuristische oorlogen. De (militaire) toekomst bestaat daarmee voor een belangrijk deel uit (militair)historische bouwstenen. Sciencefiction geeft mede daarom zelden betrouwbare schetsen van de (militaire) toekomst. Het scherpt de verbeeldingskracht en het voorstellingsvermogen wat betreft toekomstige oorlogen en oorlogvoering. Daarnaast stelt militaire sciencefiction tegelijkertijd wel fundamentele (geschied)filosofische thema's centraal en ook hele relevante. Het genre verheldert daardoor uiteindelijk vooral veel over het karakter van toekomstbeelden op zich en over denkbeelden omtrent de relatie tussen heden, verleden en toekomst, via de omweg van gevechten tegen aliens.

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Inleiding

Van 5 tot 7 oktober 2022 vond in Amsterdam de internationale conferentie *The Future of War* plaats. Dit congres werd georganiseerd door het War Studies Research Center (WSRC) van de Nederlandse Defensie Academie (NLDA) en het Changing Character of War Centre (CCW) van de University of Oxford. In 150 papers, verdeeld over drie dagen, deden experts een poging om greep te krijgen op 'de toekomst van oorlog en oorlogvoering'.[1] Natuurlijk werd daarbij benadrukt dat het belangrijk is om (historische) ontwikkelingen die kunnen leiden tot toekomstige conflicten vroeg te identificeren en juist te duiden. Om die reden klonken op het congres meerdere voorstellen om nauwkeuriger dan nu al gebeurt 'patronen' te kunnen vaststellen. Er werd veelvuldig betoogd dat huidige trendanalyses daarom zullen moeten worden verbeterd, door bijvoorbeeld zelfcorrigerende kwantificerende methodes een grotere rol te geven, met als doel om de nabije toekomst beter in beeld te krijgen en zich zo goed te kunnen voorbereiden op mogelijke (toekomst)scenario's.[2] Het is een begrijpelijke en volstrekt legitieme benadering. Overheden en militaire organisaties moeten zich voorbereiden op dat wat komen gaat.

Alleen heeft de toekomst de onhebbelijke neiging zich niet te houden aan scenario's, patronen en modellen. Wie voorzag de aard en het verloop van de Eerste Wereldoorlog, behalve een obscure Poolse bankier? Wie voorspelde de val van de Berlijnse Muur? Wie doorgrondde de militaire consequenties daarvan? Wie realiseerde zich voor februari 2022 wat er stond te gebeuren in Oekraïne? De 'trends' wezen wat betreft die laatste oorlog in de richting van een hybride conflict waarin *airpower* en het cyberdomein dominant zouden zijn. De realiteit bleek een verbluffend traditioneel en slecht uitgevoerd grondoffensief te zijn dat vastliep in loopgravenstelsels.

Uit de mond van een historicus klinkt het aanmatigend, maar de ontnuchterende conclusie moet waarschijnlijk zijn dat de (militaire) toekomst zich uit de aard der zaak *niet* laat voorspellen. De verklaring daarvoor is dat er aangaande de toekomst altijd weer veel ongelijksoortige en (nu nog) onbekende factoren op elkaar zullen gaan inwerken. Op het congres over de toekomstige oorlog dachten een paar sprekers daar net zo over. Florence Gaub en Beatrice Heuser bijvoorbeeld stelden dat de gangbare 'wetenschappelijke' voorspellingsmodellen aanvulling behoeven. Zij suggereerden dat militairen en militaire organisaties zich niet exclusief zouden moeten verlaten op de traditionele vormen van patroonanalyses, aangezien die reductionistisch zijn. Veel wordt immers weggeschreven uit deze 'modellen', zoals al het niet-kwantificeerbare, onverwachte, irrationele, ongerijmde, onvoorstelbare en ironische. Gaub en Heuser stelden daarom voor te overwegen literaire en artistieke werken serieuzer te nemen, aangezien die wel de immense complexiteit van oorlogssituaties in syntheses vangen.[3]

Romans zoals *Oorlog en Vrede* van Lev Tolstoj, of militaire egodocumenten zoals *The Things They Carried* van Tim O'Brien, zijn inderdaad rijker en gelaagder dan veel contemporaine 'modellen'. Die auteurs schetsen wel een totaalbeeld en verdisconteren daarbij de complexe en nauwelijks te kwantificeren relatie tussen het individuele en het collectieve, het rationele en het irrationele, het planmatig handelen en de onbedoelde gevolgen daarvan, die in 'modellen' vaak onderbelicht blijven. Wie zich een beeld wil vormen van toekomstige oorlogen zou zich wellicht dus beter kunnen laten leiden door verbeeldingskracht dan door 'mechanistische' simulaties van patronen en trends. Met andere woorden: er is zeker iets voor te zeggen om

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1 Faculteit Militaire Wetenschappen, *Future of War Conference 2022*, zie: https://faculteitmilitairewetenschappen.nl/cms/view/d4ad93da-a81e-4f97-8711-3d5167ec2026/the-future-of-war-conference-2022. Voor het volledige programma, zie: https://faculteitmilitairewetenschappen.nl/attachment/6be3380f-19c0-4f3f-af8b-c3a1a8a59f0d.

2 Op het congres *The Future of War* besprak het panel 'Predicting the Future. Perils, Promises and Pitfalls' deze thematiek. Deelnemers waren Collin Meisel, 'Forecasting Continuity and Change With Respect to the Future of Warfare' en Lotje Boswinkel en Tim Sweijs, 'Predicting the Unpredictable. Using a Multi-Method Approach to Anticipate Future Conflict'.

3 Zie noot 1.

voorspellingen van (toekomstige) oorlogen in te ruilen voor *voorstellingen* daarvan.[4]

Als er een literair genre is dat zich richt op dit *verbeelden* van de militaire toekomst dan is het wel het genre van de (militaire) sciencefiction.[5] Klassieke auteurs zoals Philip K. Dick, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke schetsten inter-galactische rijken waar slagvloten met ruimte-schepen door het universum snellen om invasies van buitenaardse wezens tegen te gaan, op millennia en lichtjaren afstand.[6] Androids vechten daar met laserwapens tegen cyborgs in exoskeletten en robotica domineert er de wereld(en). Juist vanwege het sterk fictieve en fantasievolle element kan het genre makkelijk worden afgeserveerd als irrelevant. Maar dit zou onterecht zijn. Als men de gedachte serieus neemt dat de toekomst per definitie funda-menteel anders zal zijn dan het heden, dan kunnen deze voorstellingen van een vreemde verre toekomst onverwachte relevantie bezitten. Het is op zijn minst de moeite waard vragen over die relevantie te stellen.

Op het congres *The Future of War* nam onder meer generaal-majoor b.d. Mick Ryan uit Australië als een van de weinigen de handschoen op. Hij stelde in zijn *key reflection* dat het lezen van (militaire) sciencefiction iedereen ten goede kan komen die zich bezighoudt met conflictstudies, vooral omdat het de verbeeldingskracht, inno-vatief en creatief denken, probleemoplossend-vermogen en ontvankelijkheid voor het onver-wachte stimuleert.[7] Om die reden pleit hij ook sterk voor *reading programs* in de opleidingen van militairen en diplomaten waarin militaire sciencefiction een prominente plaats inneemt.[8] 'Reading widely in a professional capacity increases a person's capacity for generating imaginative options to solve complex problems. Reading science fiction provides this in parti-cular', aldus Ryan.'[9]

Het roept de vraag op: is dit inderdaad waar het om draait? Helpt het lezen van sciencefiction militaire problemen op te lossen door het sti-muleren van de creativiteit? Als afgeleide daar-van: wat precies kan (militaire) sciencefiction ons dan leren over de (militaire) toekomst?

4   Er is een tussenweg denkbaar. In dit verband kan worden gewezen op Project Cassandra. Daarbinnen is literatuurstudie gebruikt voor *early crisis detection*. Op het congres *The Future of War* was hieraan een sessie gewijd met de titel: *Using Narrative Foresight to Predict the Future*. De gepresenteerde papers waren: Jürgen Wertheimer, Florian Rogge, 'Project CASSANDRA. Literature and Future Wars'; Leo Blanken, August Cole, and Tom Weis, 'Fabricating Futures. Using Artifacts and Fiction to Explore the Future of War'; Paul Charon, 'The Predictive Power of Fiction'; Guangyu Qiao-Franco, Paolo Franco, 'Insurmountable Enemies or Easy Targets? Military-Themed Videogame 'Translations' of Weaponized Artificial Intelligence.' Zie over Project Cassandra onder meer: https://projekt-cassandra.net/project-cassandra-literature-as-an-early -warning-system/.

5   Het is lastig om scherpe grenzen te trekken tussen sciencefiction en militaire sciencefiction, omdat oorlogen vaak de achtergrond vormen van beide genres. Men zou kunnen beargumenteren dat militaire sciencefiction specifiek oorlogvoering in de toekomst als onderwerp heeft. Hoofdpersonen zijn vaak dienstplichtigen of professionele militairen, die worden geconfronteerd met de uitdagingen en gruwelen van oorlog in de (verre) toekomst, en vechtend en handelend optreden tegen buitenaards gevaar. De handelingen worden meestal beschreven vanuit het perspectief van zo'n militair. Het genre werkt verder thema's uit zoals: militaire technologie, moed, opoffering, plichtsbesef en kameraadschap. Boeiende bloemlezingen erover zijn: Gordon Dickson (red.), *Combat Science Fiction* (1975; Ace Publishers, 1984) en J.E. Pournell (red.), *There Will Be War* (Tor Books, 1986). Zie verder ook: Virgilio Ilari (a cura di), *Future Wars. Storia della Dystopia Militare*. Società Italiana di Storia Militare. Quaderno 2016 (Acies Edizioni Milano 2016); George Edgar Slusser en Eric S. Rabkin (red.), *Fights of Fancy. Armed Conflict in Science Fiction and Fantasy* (University of Georgia, 1993); M.G. Ender, B.J. Reed en J.P. Absalon, 'Popular Culture and the Military', in: A. Sookermany (red.), *Handbook of Military Sciences* (Springer, 2020); Martha Bartter, 'Young Adults, Science Fiction, and War' in Charles W. Sullivan III (red.), *Young Adult Science Fiction* (Greenwood Press, 1999).

6   Over de klassieke sciencefiction zie: Mark Bould e.a. (red.), *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (Taylor & Francis, 2011); Edward James en Farah Mendlesohn (red.), *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Peter J. Bowler, *A History of the Future. Prophets of Progress from H.G. Wells to Isaac Asimov* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

7   Generaal-majoor Mick Ryan is een Australische militair en *officer-scholar* die naast zijn imposante militaire carrière een graad haalde aan *Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies*. Vanaf 2018 was hij hoofd van het *Australian Defence College* in Canberra. Ryan maakt zich al jaren sterk voor het belang van het lezen van fictie en zette daartoe een *professional reading program* op met veel aandacht voor militaire sciencefiction.

8   Zie voor de bijbehorende leeslijsten: https://mwi.usma.edu/war-books-major-general-mick-ryan-2021-reading-list/Mick Ryan. Een bijgewerkte versie ervan is te vinden op: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/10/20/science-fiction-and -the-strategist-30.

9   Idem.

Wellicht kan een tijdreis naar drie toekomstige (fictieve) oorlogen hierop antwoord geven. Drie klassiekers uit de militaire sciencefiction zullen daarom nader worden bestudeerd. Zij zijn geselecteerd omdat zij zowel representatief zijn voor de hoogtijdagen van de sciencefiction als leerzame inzichten bevatten over de *constructie* van de (militaire) toekomst.[10] Het gaat om *Starship Troopers* van Robert A. Heinlein (1959) met de beschrijving van de oorlog van de Terran Foundation tegen de Bugs; *Dune* van Frank Herbert (1965) met de opstand van de Fremen tegen de keizerlijke troepen op de planeet Arrakis; en *The Forever War* van Joe Haldeman (1974) met de raids van de The United Nations Exploratory Force tegen de Taurans.[11]

Militaire sciencefiction: drie klassiekers van het genre

Robert A. Heinleins *Starship Troopers* uit 1959 is een absolute klassieker uit de militaire sciencefiction. Het speelt zich af in een verre toekomst, op minstens 700 jaar van het heden.[12] De menselijke samenleving wordt erin geregeerd door de Terran Federation. Deze federatie is in oorlog met een buitenaardse beschaving van

spinachtigen (Arachnids) die neerbuigend Bugs worden genoemd. De Bugs zijn technologisch geavanceerd, maar georganiseerd op de manier van termieten. Rico, de hoofdpersoon in de roman, is lid van de 'Mobiele Infanterie'. Hij voert na een veeleisende training met zijn peloton aanvallen uit op planetaire kolonies die in handen zijn van de Bugs. De Bug War evolueert gedurende de roman van kleinschalige confrontatie naar een grootschalig militair conflict. Rico ontwikkelt zich hierbij van rekruut tot officier en van puber tot volwassene.

In deze oorlog (b)lijkt de inzet van moderne techniek cruciaal. Rico's eenheid maakt gebruik van *faster-than-light travel* en *armoured suits* tegen de insectachtige aliens. Vooral de gepantserde gevechtskleding (een vorm van *human enhancement*) sprak en spreekt erg tot de verbeelding. *Starship Troopers* heeft om die reden sterke invloed uitgeoefend op latere sciencefiction en op daadwerkelijke militaire organisaties. Heinlein zelf echter was veel meer geïnteresseerd in de relatie tussen oorlog, individu en samenleving, dan in techniek. De verfilming uit 1997 van *Starship Troopers* door Paul Verhoeven legt de nadruk sterk op de *Bug-shoots* en de futuristische wapens die daarbij horen. Maar dat is misleidend. Het boek waarop de film is gebaseerd doet dat opmerkelijk veel minder. *Starship Troopers* in zijn originele vorm bestaat vooral uit lange flashbacks van Rico naar de lessen 'geschiedenis en moraalfilosofie' die hem hebben gevormd.[13]

In Frank Herberts roman *Dune* uit 1965 staat oorlog ook centraal. Opnieuw ligt het accent verrassend genoeg nIet op toekomstige militaire techniek.[14] *Dune* beschrijft de lotgevallen van een feodale samenleving, waarin verschillende adellijke huizen uit een intergalactisch keizerrijk (*the empire*) met elkaar strijden. Het is eveneens een *coming-of-age*-verhaal. In dit geval gaat het om de jonge Paul Atreides. Hij is met zijn familie en entourage naar de planeet Arrakis gekomen, omdat zijn vader er is aangesteld als bestuurder. Arrakis blijkt een dunbevolkte woestijnplaneet te zijn. Het is ook de enige bron van *melange*. Die *spice* versterkt mentale vermogens. Het stimuleert een multi-

10 Uiteraard was het ook interessant geweest om literaire sciencefiction uit de decennia na 1970 bij het onderzoek te betrekken, en zeker ook die uit de periode na het verdwijnen van de bipolaire wereldorde van de Koude Oorlog. Tevens zou het betrekken van films, games en comic-strips veel kunnen opleveren. Om dit artikel een scherpe focus te geven moest hier echter van worden afgezien. In vervolgonderzoek zal hier nader op worden ingegaan.

11 Over Amerikaanse sciencefiction in het algemeen, zie: Thomas D. Clareson, *Science Fiction. Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction. The Formative Period, 1926-1970* (University of South Carolina Press, 1992) en Darren Harris-Fain, *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction. The Age of Maturity, 1970-2000* (University of South Carolina Press, 2005).

12 Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (1959).

13 Er wordt wel eens onderscheid gemaakt tussen 'harde' en 'softe' militaire sciencefiction. 'Harde' militaire sciencefiction zou zich vooral concentreren op de technologie en wapens van de toekomst. Het zou de nadruk leggen op het karakter, de ontwikkeling en de effecten van *futuristic weaponry*. 'Softe' militaire sciencefiction zou meer gaan over de vraag hoe individuen en maatschappijen reageren op toekomstige *space warfare* en zich daaraan aanpassen op psychologisch, sociaal en politiek niveau. Isaac Asimovs *Foundation*-series is daarvan een klassiek voorbeeld. Ook het werk van Arthur C. Clarke en Philip K. Dick kan misschien als soft worden bestempeld. Maar de drie bestudeerde werken tonen vooral aan dat zo'n indeling veel te zwart-wit is. *Starship Troopers*, *Dune* en *The Forever War* hebben kenmerken van zowel softe als harde sciencefiction.

14 Frank Herbert, *Dune* (1965).

dimensionaal bewustzijn, geeft op magische wijze een vooruitziende blik en is noodzakelijk voor veilig interstellair reizen. Het goedje wordt in de woestijn gewonnen. Daar leven eveneens immense zandwormen. Bovendien is het de verblijfplaats van de lokale bevolking van Arrakis, de Fremen. De verhaallijn van *Dune* draait uiteindelijk om de strijd om Arrakis onder controle te krijgen vanwege de zeldzame en krachtige spice. Het vijandige Huis van Har-konnen maakt zich gedurende de strijd op verraderlijke wijze meester van Arrakis. Pauls vader wordt daarbij gedood en Paul en zijn moeder vluchten hierna naar de Fremen. De Fremen zien Paul als hun Messias, waarover hun profetiën spraken. Hij leidt vervolgens hun opstand. Dit zorgt voor tegenaanvallen en escalatie tot een grootschalige oorlog. Op het einde van de roman trachten vijandelijke vloten van ruimteschepen en 'ornithopters', samen met vijandelijke legers van Sardaukar-soldaten de Fremen te verslaan. Die operatie mislukt. Paul plaatst op tijd een tegenoffensief en start de beslissende aanval op de hoofdstad. Rijdend op gigantische zandwormen verslaan de Fremen de Sardaukar en Paul Atreides neemt de controle over het kosmische rijk over.

The Forever War uit 1974 is een militaire science-fictionroman van de Amerikaanse auteur Joe Haldeman.[15] Het vertelt het verhaal van William Mandella die als dienstplichtige onderdeel uitmaakt van de elite-taskforce in de United Nations Exploratory Force. Zij voeren een interstellaire oorlog tegen de Taurans, buiten-aardse wezens die ooit een van hun ruimte-schepen aanvielen. De soldaten gebruiken daarbij zogeheten *collapsors,* ruimteschepen die in een fractie van een seconde duizenden lichtjaren kunnen afleggen. Bij hun eerste ontmoeting met Taurans jagen zij de buiten-aardse tegenstanders massaal over de kling. In de gevechten daarna komt Mandella echter juist tegenover gevechtsgeharde en ervaren Taurans te staan, die zijn uitgerust met geavanceerde wapens. De vijand heeft duidelijk bijgeleerd. Zij hebben zich aangepast aan de agressie van Mandella's leger. De oorlog gaat zich daarna voortslepen en wordt een *Forever War*. Mandella ervaart hierbij zijn eigen leger steeds meer als

een zielloos en inefficiënt construct. Hij ontdekt ook dat de oorlog is begonnen door een mis-verstand; hij blijkt verstrikt te zijn geraakt in een zinloze oorlog. Dit inzicht zorgt ervoor dat Mandella compleet vervreemd raakt van de samenleving waarvoor hij heeft gevochten. Het omgekeerde is ook het geval.

Deze drie fictieve en vrij bizarre toekomst-visioenen staan op het eerste gezicht ver af van welke militaire werkelijkheid dan ook. Als pure fantasie lijken zij weinig relevantie te bezitten voor hedendaags denken over oorlog en oorlog-voering. Men dient zich echter wel te realiseren dat de toekomst hier fungeert als een projectie-scherm. De projecties daarop hebben ons daarom indirect wel degelijk veel te zeggen, juist omdat de toekomstbeelden bij nadere beschouwing sterk plaats- en tijdgebonden zijn. Dit geldt ongetwijfeld in zijn algemeenheid voor alle toekomstvisies. De ondertitel *A History* van Lawrence Freedmans boek *The Future of War* is wat dit betreft goed gekozen.[16] Elk tijdperk heeft zijn eigen toekomst, zo impliceert Freedman daarmee. Men hoeft inderdaad geen expert te zijn om te beseffen dat dit zeker opgaat voor Heinlein, Herbert en Haldeman.

Militaire sciencefiction als product van de tijd van ontstaan

Nauwgezette lezing van de drie klassiekers uit de jaren vijftig, zestig en zeventig van de twintigste eeuw bevestigt dat toekomstvisies altijd wortelen in de tijd van ontstaan. De oorlogvoering daaruit is niet 100 procent fictie, maar kan steeds worden gerelateerd aan de historische context waaruit zij voortkwam.

15   Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War* (1974).
16   Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War. A history* (New York, 2017).

Robert Heinlein staat met zijn *Starship Troopers* uit 1959 bijvoorbeeld overduidelijk in de traditie van sciencefiction uit het tijdperk van de vroege Koude Oorlog.[17] De angst voor communistische invasies en een nucleaire *doomsday* doortrok ook talloze andere boeken, zoals *Commando Cody* (1955), *On the Beach* (1957), *Red Alert* (1958), *Fail Safe* (1962) en *Mars Attacks* (1962).[18] De angst voor communisten vertaalde zich toentertijd veelvuldig in invasies door marsmannetjes van de rode planeet. Insectachtige wezens kwamen in zwermen de vrije wereld vernietigen. *Body snatchers* hadden het voorzien op weerloze westerse vrouwen. Uiteraard moest die vijand worden vernietigd. Vanuit dat perspectief moeten wij *Starship Troopers* lezen. De Bugs uit die roman willen de menselijke beschaving vernietigen. Zij handelen collectief en kunnen niet voor zichzelf denken. Zij volgen slaafs een opperinsect. Overduidelijk nam Heinlein hiermee de communisten op de korrel.[19]

Typisch voor de vroege Koude Oorlog is ook dat Heinlein de communistenfobie en de bijbehorende conservatieve politieke standpunten combineert met technologisch optimisme. De gevechten tegen de Bugs in *Starship Troopers* worden uitgevoerd met ultramoderne *spacecraft*, (laser)wapens, vlammenwerpers en met soldaten in armoured suits. Het is vooral de combinatie van de juiste anticommunistische ideologie met moderne techniek die uiteindelijk de beschaving redt.

Er is zelfs een historische gebeurtenis uit de vroege Koude Oorlog aan te wijzen die de conceptie van Heinleins boek uitlokte. *Starship Troopers* is geschreven in reactie op President Dwight Eisenhowers beslissing om de nucleaire tests van de VS tijdelijk op te schorten.[20] Robert

Heinlein was hierover erg verontwaardigd, want hij wenste een harder antwoord tegenover de Russen. Hij reageerde met een roman waarin Bugs (communisten) worden bevochten in een verre toekomst. Zo bekritiseerde hij expliciet het communisme en impliciet ook de eigen samenleving. Dit verklaart voor een belangrijk deel de plotstructuur en strekking van *Starship Troopers*. Rico bevecht twee gevaren: de termietachtige Bug en zijn eigen zwakheid. Die eigen zwakte had volgens *Starship Troopers* al eens geleid tot de totale ineenstorting van een veilige en ordelijke maatschappij. Pas nadat een sterk gemilitariseerde samenleving ongebreidelde criminaliteit een halt had toegeroepen keerde de zaak zich ten goede. *Starship Troopers* staat daarom vol pleidooien voor sterk militaristisch overheidsgezag als een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor veiligheid en vrijheid. Rico leert in *Starship Troopers* inzien dat samenlevingen waarin militaire veteranen de politieke macht hebben de voorkeur verdienen, omdat zij alleen de bereidheid bezitten zich op te offeren voor het algemeen belang. Keer op keer mondt dit in *Starship Troopers* uit in filosofische reflecties op politieke, maatschappelijke en morele kwesties, via de omweg van lange terugblikken op de lessen moraalleer en geschiedenis die Rico ooit kreeg op school. De strekking is steeds weer dat opofferingsbereidheid en discipline de enige echt effectieve wapens zijn tegen de criminele en maatschappij-ontwrichtende (communistische) ideologie.

In Franks Herberts *Dune*, gepubliceerd in 1965, werkt de Koude Oorlog op een heel andere wijze door. In *Dune* is de metafoor van *The Good War* heel sterk. De strijd tegen het communisme wordt hier verweven met reminiscenties aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog. In *Dune* bevecht men een *evil empire*, een rijk onder leiding van een keizer die een leger SS-achtige Sardaukar tot zijn beschikking heeft. *Dune* draait om de ondergang van een totalitair, decadent en machtswellustig keizerrijk. Het hoofdthema van *Dune* is uiteindelijk vrijheid. De centrale verhaallijn is de opstand van Fremen (nomen est omen) tegen onderdrukking, waaraan de innerlijke bevrijding wordt gekoppeld van de hoofdpersoon Paul Atreides.

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17 David Seed, *American Science Fiction and the Cold War. Literature and Film* (Chicago, 1999).

18 Zie ook: *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951); *On the Beach* (1957); Gordon Dickson, *Dorsai* (1959/60); O.S. Card, *Ender's Game* (1977) en latere *space opera's* zoals *Startrek*, *Starwars* and *Batllestar Gallactica*.

19 Ook xenofobe, racistische anti-Aziatische sentimenten klinken erin door, onder invloed van Heinleins oorlogservaringen in de Pacific.

20 Heinlein schreef hierover onder meer in *Expanded Universe* (1980).

Deze bevrijdingsmetafoor past natuurlijk goed bij de jaren zestig, de tijd waarin *Dune* ontstond. *Dune* is eigenlijk volkomen onbegrijpelijk zonder referentie aan de *Sixties*, net zoals *Starship Troopers* typisch was voor de *Fifties*. De schets van de planeet Arrakis in *Dune* is illustratief: het is een *wasteland*. Dit kan zonder enige twijfel worden gekoppeld aan de inmiddels veel sterker geworden angst voor een nucleair Armageddon. In een post-apocalyptisch dystopisch woestijn-landschap hebben de Fremen aan alles gebrek en in het bijzonder aan water. Zij hebben daarom een samenleving ingericht die volledig draait om hergebruik van middelen. Zij hebben ook toegang tot spice, het geestverruimende middel dat wordt ingezet voor contact met hogere en innerlijke krachten, wat visionaire wijsheid mogelijk maakt. Dit is natuurlijk ook typisch voor de jaren zesti. Herbert experimenteerde zelf met drugs en kweekte hallucinogene padden-stoelen. In eenzelfde richting gaan de vele verwijzingen in *Dune* naar oerreligies, inclusief Zen, en talloze andere alternatieven voor rationaliteit. *Dune* is al met al een mengelmoes van alternatieve godsdiensten, drugsgebruik, post-apocalyptisch doemdenken, milieubewust-zijn, messianisme en het strijden voor de vrijheid. Dat kan alleen goed worden begrepen door dergelijke factoren uit de jaren zestig te verdisconteren.

Vietnam vormde weer een heel andere context, die logischerwijze tot een heel andere toekomst leidde. Joe Haldemans *The Forever War* is illustratief voor de sciencefiction waartoe dat leidde. Haldeman was zelf Vietnamveteraan.[21] Hij werd gedecoreerd met het *Purple Heart*. Na de oorlog zette hij zijn oorlogservaringen om in sciencefiction. Het hoeft niet te verbazen dat hierbij geen sprake meer was van de metafoor van *The Good War*. Haldeman beschrijft de intergalactische oorlog tegen de Taurans in *The Forever War* niet als avontuurlijk, opwindend of nobel. Hij ondermijnt juist militaire clichés, zoals die van de heroïsche krijger en het dankbare thuisfront. De roman heeft bij vlagen zelfs een bijna antimilitaristische strekking. De gevechten blijken geregeld nutteloos en betekenisloos. Haldeman werkte zijn desillusie over de Vietnamoorlog om tot een sombere

toekomstschets. Hij gaf daarmee een antwoord op het onverbloemde militarisme uit Heinleins *Starship Troopers*, net zoals *Dune* dat was. Haldeman respecteerde Heinlein als schrijver. Hij werd door hem beïnvloed, wat blijkt uit de weergave van de gevechten in powered armour, die ook in *The Forever War* voorkomen. Maar Haldeman stond wat betreft visie op oorlog-voering, maatschappijbeeld en ideologie mijlenver van Heinlein af. Vietnam was hiervan de oorzaak.[22]

Het valt al met al dus inderdaad goed te verde-digen dat het karakter van militaire science-fiction allereerst sterk wordt beïnvloed door de tijd en context van ontstaan.[23] De ironische schets van de training, gevechten en het trauma van de thuiskomst van Mandella maakt van *The Forever War* vooral een antwoord op de eigen tijd. Dit gaat ook op voor *Starship Troopers* en *Dune*. Men kan zich zelfs de vraag stellen of toekomst-beelden wel kunnen loskomen van de tijd van ontstaan. Het antwoord op die vraag is waar-schijnlijk: nee.

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21   *Hammer's Slammers* (1979) van David Drake is een ander voorbeeld. Ook Drake schreef over de gruwelijkheden van toekomstige oorlogvoering onder invloed van zijn eigen oorlogservaringen in Vietnam. In dit verband is Ursula K. Le Guin ook interessant. In *The Word for World is Forest* (1972) ontrafelt zij subtiel, maar uiterst kritisch, de ironische dynamiek van een opstand van relatief primitieve oerwoudbewoners tegen een externe moderne grootmacht door die op de verre toekomst te projecteren. Ongetwijfeld had zij daarbij Vietnam in het achterhoofd.

22   Het zou interessant zijn om de militaire sciencefiction over Vietnam (Haldeman, Drake, Le Guin, e.a.) te vergelijken met autobiografisch werk over Vietnam (Caputo, Herr, O'Brien, e.a.). Waarschijnlijk laten de genres overeenkomsten zien. Veel Vietnambeschrijvingen lijken immers te gaan over *outer space*. Het is wellicht vergelijkbaar met *Slaughterhouse 5* van Kurt Vonnegut, waar ook egodocument, roman en sciencefiction door elkaar lopen.

23   Dit gaat bijvoorbeeld ook op voor Lois McMaster Bujold, *The Vorkosigan Saga* (1986); *The Honorverse* (1990), *Waterworld* (1995), *Independance Day* (1996) en *Old Man's War* (2005).

Militaire sciencefiction: het verleden als goudmijn

Terwijl sciencefiction dus sterker wortelt in de eigen tijd dan men vaak meent – terwijl het de toekomst als onderwerp heeft – blijkt het ook nog eens de (militaire) geschiedenis te gebruiken als een soort goudmijn om die toekomst overtuigend te kunnen schetsen. Verbijsterend genoeg gebruikt sciencefiction voortdurend en op een bijna eclectische wijze feiten, gebeurtenissen, wapens en oorlogen uit het verleden om toekomstbeelden te creëren. De futuristische visioenen uit de militaire sciencefiction worden grotendeels samengesteld uit materiaal dat afkomstig is uit de steengroeve van de militaire geschiedenis.

Het tijdperk van de vroege middeleeuwen, in een geromantiseerde variant, is wat dit betreft de hofleverancier van de militaire sciencefiction, net zoals het dat is voor de *fantasy*.[24] In een verre toekomst, op lichtjaren hier vandaan, in een wereld vol ruimteschepen met laserwapens en *dogfights*, eindigen conflicten in de kosmos opmerkelijk vaak in heldhaftige individuele gevechten met zwaard en schild, in een sociale omgeving die als feodaal en ridderlijk kan worden omschreven. Post-apocalyptische werelden, na een nucleaire holocaust of grote milieuramp, lijken verrassend vaak op de (vroege) middeleeuwen, of iets dat men zich erbij voorstelt. Militaire sciencefiction zit ook vol met heldentypes die rechtstreeks afkomstig zijn uit Noordse sagen en Arthurlegendes. Monsters lijken zo uit de *Beowulf* weggelopen. Een obsessie met schilden, harnassen, zwaardgevechten en belegeringen springt voortdurend in het oog.

Dit laat onverlet – en dat maakt het uitermate interessant – dat andere tijdperken daarmee vrij moeiteloos kunnen worden gecombineerd. Reminiscenties aan de klassieken (*Ilias* en *Odyssee*) zijn eveneens talrijk. In de Amerikaanse militaire sciencefiction vallen verder de talloze referenties op aan zeeslagen en gevechten uit de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Interstellaire toekomstige oorlogen worden daar opmerkelijk vaak gemodelleerd naar oorlogvoering op zee. Gigantische 'vloten' met ruimteschepen doorkruisen het universum, beladen met jagers en zogeheten *dropships*. Zij lijken op de vliegdekschepen en amfibische landingsschepen uit de oorlog in de Pacific. Ook verwijzingen naar oudere maritieme conflicten klinken veel door in militaire sciencefiction. In *Star Trek* duikt bijvoorbeeld The Federation Starfleet op, die als vlaggenschip de USS Enterprise heeft. In *Star Wars* draait het om de Imperial Navy. Deze *space navies* kennen klassieke 'scheepsklassen' zoals fregatten of jagers en zij worden op de 'brug' aangestuurd door officieren die opvallend veel gelijkenis vertonen met marineofficieren uit de maritieme geschiedenis, tot hun rangstructuur in marinestijl aan toe. Het is begrijpelijk, gezien de immense afstanden en leegtes in de intergalactische ruimte en op zee. De vergelijking tussen optreden in de ruimte in de toekomst en maritiem optreden uit het verleden ligt best voor de hand. Maar het fascinerende is hier dat dit alles voortdurend in combinatie voorkomt, met elementen die zijn ontleend aan alle tijden. Het is volkomen gangbaar in sciencefiction dat een soldaat uit een futuristisch ruimteschip of een piloot na een dogfight in een ver sterrenstelsel overgaat op een zwaardgevecht, of dat een intergalactische aanval eindigt in een belegering. Toekomst en verleden lopen er vaak dwars door elkaar. Sciencefiction gebruikt het verleden als pandjeshuis.

In *Starship Troopers* van Robert Heinlein is dit direct evident. Raids op vijandelijke planeten worden in die roman uitgevoerd vanaf de dropships door een mengelmoes van (historisch verankerde) parachutisten, luchtmobiele infanterie en mariniers. De militairen verplaatsen zich in 'schepen' en vechten feitelijk als 'mariniers'. Dat is goed te verklaren, want Heinlein diende na zijn afstuderen aan de Naval Academy bij de Amerikaanse marine. Het maritieme en amfibische (recente) verleden was hem dus goed bekend. Hij zette de maritieme geschiedenis (met name gevechten in de Pacific)

vervolgens in om zijn toekomstbeeld geloofwaardiger te maken.[25]

Ook Frank Herbert leende voor *Dune* radicaal uit de geschiedenis. De naam Paul Atreides roept direct historische reminiscenties op. De val van het Romeinse Rijk (the empire) is ook nooit ver weg. Herbert (her)gebruikte in *Dune* verder tal van premoderne mythische en mystieke werelden en verwijzingen naar de vroege wereldreligies. De woestijnomgeving van *Dune* is meer dan decor, wat dit betreft.[26] Volgens Herbert ontstonden joodse, christelijke, islamitische en oosterse religies, inclusief messianisme en feodalisme, ooit 'uit het zand'. Hij was ervan overtuigd dat de grote wereldreligies waren voortgebracht door woestijnomgevingen. Herbert verplaatste die vervolgens 'woestijndenkbeelden' naar de toekomst. Het verhaal van Paul Atreides, als Messias van de Fremen, werd via het thema van 'de woestijn' verweven met allerlei verhalen over de bedoeïenenstammen uit het vroege Arabië. In zijn beschrijvingen van de Fremen gebruikte Herbert allerlei authentieke (en verzonnen) Arabische en Perzische woorden. De Mahdi-profetiën uit de roman zijn op hun beurt weer afkomstig uit de islamitische eschatologie. De woestijncontext maakte zelfs verwijzingen mogelijk naar de opstanden in het Midden-Oosten in de Eerste Wereldoorlog. De opstand van de Fremen onder Paul Atreides heeft ook veel weg van de Saoedische opstand onder leiding van Lawrence of Arabia. Onmiskenbaar werd Herbert dus eveneens beïnvloed door *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* van T.E. Lawrence.[27] Historische associaties en reminiscenties buitelen in *Dune* over elkaar heen; men zou de toekomst in *Dune* kunnen karakteriseren als een historische potpourri.

Joe Haldemans *The Forever War* leende op het eerste gezicht minder uit het verleden. Maar dat is schijn. In de verre toekomst neemt ook Mandella zijn toevlucht tot middeleeuwse wapens, zoals schilden en messen. Ook bij Haldeman zijn de gevechten en veldslagen geregeld opmerkelijk traditioneel of premodern, ondanks het geavanceerde technologisch arsenaal. Haldeman verklaart het doordat

'stasis-velden' en 'beschermende coatings' in de toekomst alles wat elektromagnetisch wordt aangestuurd zullen kunnen 'neutraliseren'. Soldaten in de toekomst moeten daarom op sleutelmomenten wel terugvallen op traditionele fysieke manieren van vechten.[28] Vervolgens maakt dit premoderne vechten in een futuristische omgeving de oorlogservaring voor de militair bizar en vervreemdend. Haldeman plaatste zich ironisch tegenover de traditie van het genre sciencefiction, dat maar niet loskwam van historiserende beeldspraak, door zelf die historiserende beeldspraak parodiërend te gebruiken.

Dit alles levert een fascinerende paradox op. De soldaat van de toekomst is in militaire science-fiction aan de ene kant vaak technologisch zeer geavanceerd. Op individueel en tactisch niveau beschikt de militair van de toekomst over armoured suits (ook powered armour genoemd), diverse soorten straalwapens en de loyale hulp van allerlei robots en androïden met kunstmatige intelligentie. 'Jagers' ondersteunen hem, uitgerust met lasergeweren en kernwapens, en vloten van slagschepen die regelmatig relativistische wormgaten doorkruisen. Drones, cyborgs, *doomsday machines*, *death stars*, cyberaanvallen en autonome wapens worden ook tegen buitenaardse vijanden ingezet. Hersenspoeling, transplantaten, conditionering en biologische oorlogvoering vinden in de verre toekomst eveneens veelvuldig plaats. Maar keer op keer eindigt het gewapende conflict in militaire sciencefiction toch in avontuurlijke raids,

25 Over Heinlein, zie: William H. Patterson Jr., *Robert A. Heinlein in Dialogue With His Century, 1907-1948: Learning Curve. An Authorized Biography,* Volume I (Tom Doherty Associates, 2010; Idem, *Robert A. Heinlein in Dialogue With His Century, 1948-1988: The Man Who Learned Better. An Authorized Biography,* Volume II (Tom Doherty Associates, 2014); William H. Patterson Jr., 'Robert Heinlein—A biographical sketch', in: *The Heinlein Journal* 1999 (5) 7-36; Robert A. Heinlein, *For Us, the Living* (Scribner, 2014).

26 Het lijkt erop dat de inspiratie voor dit desolate duinenlandschap voortkwam uit een bezoek van Herbert aan de Oregon Sand Dunes. Hij zag er *moving dunes* hele dorpen verzwelgen, maar ook dat het Department of Agriculture probeerde met grassen het zand te stabiliseren en leven en water terug te brengen. Dit spanningsveld fascineerde Herbert.

27 Kara Kennedy, 'Lawrence of Arabia, Paul Atreides, and the Roots of Frank Herber's Dune'. PDF-publicatie op: www.tor.com (juni 2021).

28 Het is fascinerend om te constateren dat ook in *Dune* bepaalde wapensystemen 'verboden' zijn.

spectaculaire commandoacties en heroïsche man-tot-man-gevechten, of man-tot-alien-gevechten, waarin vaak zwaarden, steekwapens, simpele handvuurwapens, schilden, harnassen en belegeringen domineren. Historische oorlogvoering domineert de verre toekomst. Of anders gezegd: gemeenplaatsen en clichés over het militaire verleden domineren die toekomst.

Een verklaring voor dit opmerkelijke verschijnsel ligt in de genretheorie.[29] Daarin wordt naar voren gebracht dat sciencefiction een genre is dat sterk wortelt in traditionele epische dichtwerken, verhalen over superhelden, fantasy, westerns en comic-strips. Ook is de invloed uit actiefilms, verhalen over religieuze zoektochten, coming-of-age stories, *space westerns*, space opera's en *cyberpunk* evident. Militaire sciencefiction neemt om die reden graag de plotstructuren, dominante codes en hoofdpersonen uit die aanpalende genres over. Dit wordt waarschijnlijk nog versterkt doordat sciencefiction een genre is met vaak grote commerciële belangen. Vooral ook omdat er geld moet worden verdiend aan de toekomstschetsen volgen zij de thema's en stijlfiguren van de traditionele epiek, de regels van de pulpliteratuur en de codes van Hollywood.[30]

Er is echter ongetwijfeld meer aan de hand. De (valse) nostalgie en neoromantiek die aanwezig blijkt bij sciencefictionschrijvers en de lezers van sciencefiction mag niet onderschat worden. Het lijkt er verrassend genoeg op dat sciencefiction-adepten keihard futurisme en meedogenloos modernisme juist als iets onwenselijks of zelfs als iets onvoorstelbaars ervaren. Nucleaire bombardementen vanuit ruimte-

schepen, massale drone-aanvallen, giftige groene wolken, dodelijke virussen, androids, en autonome wapens die elektronische golven afvuren: het wordt geregeld weggeschreven. Kenmerkend is het veelvuldige gebruik van 'schilden' in militaire sciencefiction die het onmogelijk maken ultramoderne wapens in te zetten, zoals bijvoorbeeld in *The Forever War*. Soms zijn ook hele categorieën wapens 'verboden', zoals het nucleaire wapen in *Dune*. De reden hiervoor zou heel goed kunnen zijn dat tot de uiterste consequentie doordachte ultramoderne oorlogvoering de klassieke held uitwist. Die held is al sinds eeuwen het rolmodel voor de westerse krijger en mag blijkbaar niet verloren gaan. Heimwee naar deze *old school*-held die met zijn zwaard stormaanvallen afweert van (buitenaardse) vijanden doortrekt het genre sciencefiction. Militaire sciencefiction is een nostalgischer genre dan men zou verwachten. Er schuilt iets anti-futuristisch in sciencefiction.

Militaire sciencefiction: oorlog en (geschied)filosofie

Helemaal boeiend is dat (goede) militaire sciencefiction uiteindelijk veel vaker (geschied)filosofische en maatschappijkritische vraagstellingen aankaart dan men zou denken. Juist hierdoor worden verleden, heden en toekomst op elkaar betrokken, op een even verrassende als relevante wijze. Het genre lijkt oppervlakkig bezien natuurlijk te draaien om de schetsen van oorlogvoering in een futuristische setting met hypermoderne militaire techniek. Maar goede militaire sciencefiction valt ook te karakteriseren als denkexercitie over de vraag wat 'de mens' eigenlijk is in een verre toekomst, tegen de achtergrond van interstellaire oorlogen en een werkelijkheid waarin mens en machine in elkaar overlopen. Wie het genre alleen oppervlakkig leest blijft hangen op het niveau van oorlogvoering door space navies en helden met lichtzwaarden. Wie daarentegen tussen de regels doorleest ziet geregeld de vraag opdoemen wat vrijheid en het menselijke bewustzijn nog kunnen zijn in een technologische omgeving waar robots en androïden heersen. Ook komt het probleem voortdurend aan de orde hoe

29 Zie onder meer: Gary Westfahl (red.), *Space and Beyond. The Frontier Theme in Science Fiction* (Greenwood Press, 2017); Paul Green, *Encyclopedia of Weird Westerns. Supernatural and Science Fiction Elements in Novels, Pulps, Comics, Films, Television and Games* (McFarland, 2009); David Pringle, 'What Is This Thing Called Space Opera?', in: Gary Westfahl, *Space and Beyond*, 40-41; Andy Sawyer, 'Space Opera' in: *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (Taylor & Francis, 2009) 505-509. Voor referenties naar cyberpunk, zie 'Cyberpunk' op: www.en.m.wikipedia.org.

30 Nader onderzoek is wel nodig om de vraag te kunnen beantwoorden of hierbij onderscheid zou moeten worden gemaakt tussen literaire sciencefiction en sciencefictionfilms; bij films spelen uiteraard investeringen van filmmaatschappijen en studio's een grote rol.

menselijke samenlevingen en oorlogvoering in samenhang evolueren, en wat de betekenis hiervan is, als die er al is.[31]

De oudere militaire sciencefiction (1890-1940) zag wat dit alles betreft technologie nog als de drijvende en bevrijdende kracht. In de vroegste sciencefiction uit de late negentiende eeuw en de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw zijn de hoofdpersonen vaak technici of (militaire) ingenieurs. Soms creëren zij monsters. Meestal corrigeren de vertegenwoordigers van de moderne wetenschap dit zelf weer. De moderne techniek wint.[32] Dit optimisme verdween in de loop van de twintigste eeuw. Zeker in de sciencefiction uit de afgelopen decennia geldt technologie veel meer als een (potentiële) bedreiging voor de mensheid. Technologie vernietigt vooral, wordt gemanipuleerd, raakt beschadigd of faalt. Moderne robots en autonome wapens blijken menselijk leiderschap en autonomie te ondermijnen. Oorlogvoering komt in handen van cyborgs, superintelligente computers en implantaten, die de mens zelf heeft ontwikkeld, maar waarover hij de controle verliest. Philip K. Dick, Isaac Asimov, Fred Saberhagen en Keith Laumer hebben dergelijke thematiek briljant uitgewerkt.[33] Nergens is het scherper gedaan dan in Stanley Kubricks film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Wanneer boordcomputer Hal 9000 in die film zegt: 'I'm sorry Dave. I'm afraid I can't do that', is niet alleen het ruimteschip in problemen, maar staat de mensheid oog in oog met een nieuwe variant van zijn grootste vriend en vijand: de techniek die hij zelf heeft ontwikkeld, maar niet meer in de hand heeft.[34]

Sciencefiction raakt daarmee achterliggende mens-, wereld- en geschiedbeelden. Die kunnen zoals gezegd optimistisch van aard zijn. In de utopische denkrichting uit de vroege sciencefiction draaide toekomstige oorlog in de ruimte meestal om een strijd tussen agressieve samenlevingen op verre planeten en de 'liberale' aardse alternatieven, waarbij heldhaftige individuen de liberale waarden verdedigden met behulp van moderne technieken.[35] In producties als *Star Trek* en *Star Wars* werkte dat door, waarbij het uitmondde in de bevrijding van 'een kwade

kracht'.[36] Tegenwoordig domineren de meer pessimistische dystopische en post-apocalyptische schetsen. De mens wordt gezien als een onvrije speler in een krachtenveld dat hij niet kan begrijpen of beheersen. Thomas Hobbes kijkt hier grimlachend om de hoek.[37]

Starship Troopers, *Dune* en *The Forever War* draaien om dergelijke reflecties op de meest fundamentele krachten en machten in de kosmos. In *Starship Troopers* nemen de beschrijvingen van daadwerkelijke gevechten tegen buitenaardse wezens een verrassend bescheiden plaats in. Het boek gaat helemaal niet over Bug-shooting. De cursussen 'geschiedenis en moraalfilosofie' die Rico vormen krijgen veel meer aandacht. Rico's leraar, van wie aan het einde van de roman duidelijk wordt dat hij een oorlogsveteraan is, blijft vragen stellen over de menselijke geschiedenis en de structuur van de samenleving. Hij komt te spreken over de relatie tussen burgerdeugd, discipline en oorlog. Zonder discipline is de mens geneigd tot luxe, zo is de suggestie. Dit heeft ooit al geleid tot de ineenstorting van de beschaafde orde. Daarom juist zijn strijd en discipline zulke cruciale positieve waarden. Rico leert het gelijk hiervan inzien. *Bootcamp*, officiersopleiding en de gevechten zijn stadia op

31 Zie Peter J. Bowler, *A History of the Future. Prophets of Progress from H.G. Wells to Isaac Asimov* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

32 Klassieke voorbeelden uit de periode van voor 1900 zijn: *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), *War of the Worlds* (1898) en *The Great War Syndicate* (1889). Over vroege (militaire) sciencefiction in zijn algemeenheid: Everett F. Bleiler en Richard J. Bleiler, *Science-fiction, the Early Years* (Kent State University Press, 1990); I.F. Clarke, 'Future-war Fiction. The First Main Phase, 1871-1900', in: *Science Fiction Studies* 24 (74) (november 1997); Landon Brooks, *Science Fiction after 1900. From the Steam Man to the Stars* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

33 Zie: Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) en de film *Blade Runner* die erop is gebaseerd. Verder: Fred Saberhagen, *The Berserker series* (1967), waarin *robotic self-replicating machines* trachten alle leven te beëindigen. In *The Bolo Universe* van Keith Laumer (1960) komen *self-aware automatons* voor (Bolo's).

34 Zie: Virgilio Ilari (a cura di), *Future Wars. Storia della Dystopia Militare*. Società Italiana di Storia Militare. Quaderno 2016 (Acies Edizioni Milano, 2016).

35 Voor literatuur: zie voetnoot 30.

36 Michael Okuda en Denise Okuda, *Star Trek Encyclopedia. A Reference Guide to the Future* (2nd revised edition; first edition 1997).

37 Zie hierover onder meer: John Joseph Adams, *Wastelands. Stories of the Apocalyps* (Londen, 2015); Virgilio Ilari (a cura di), *Future Wars. Storia della Dystopia Militare*. Società Italiana di Storia Militare. Quaderno 2016 (Acies Edizioni Milano, 2016); de cyclus *Mad Max*, vanaf 1975, levert er een mooi voorbeeld van, net zoals *Bladerunner* uit 1982 en *The Day After* uit 1983.

zijn weg tot inzicht en inkeer. Rico begint langzamerhand te onderschrijven dat de ideale regeringsvorm een heerschappij van militaire veteranen is. Hij leert begrijpen dat de meest fundamentele waarden slechts met geweld kunnen worden veiliggesteld. Hij erkent uiteindelijk dat alle fundamentele conflicten zullen moeten worden opgelost door geweld, of het dreigen daarmee.

Juist deze filosofische insteek maakt *Starship Troopers* tot een controversieel boek. *Starship Troopers* gaat veel verder dan de simpele escapistische verheerlijking van het avontuurlijke leven van de infanterie in een fictieve toekomst. Het geeft de lezer een rechtvaardiging van de militarisering van de samenleving. Om deze reden wordt *Starship Troopers* wel fascistoïde genoemd.[38] Het boek zit inderdaad vol onwelriekende stereotyperingen, zoals die van de vijand als insect. Het bevat zeker een politiek-ideologische boodschap die de *open society* afserveert. Toch was Heinlein niet fascistoïde. Het is beter om termen als militaristisch, autocratisch, reactionair en sociaal-darwinistisch te gebruiken om *Starship Troopers* te karakteriseren. Heinlein verdedigt in zijn boek in feite de idee dat samenlevingen, ook die in de toekomst, altijd zullen moeten strijden om te overleven, waardoor militaire kracht zich moet vertalen in politieke macht. *Starship Troopers* projecteert de politieke ordening en ideologie van het klassieke Sparta op de toekomst, in de geest van Plato.

Ook in Frank Herberts *Dune* ligt het hoofdaccent níet op de gevechten, noch op de techniek van toekomstige oorlogvoering. *Dune* focust vooral op de oorzaken van oorlogen en de manier waarop individuen en samenlevingen daarop reageren. Het leidt tot een andere visie op mens en maatschappij dan bij Heinlein. Cruciaal is

hierbij opnieuw de onleefbare woestijnomgeving van Arrakis. De woestijn toont vooral de kwetsbaarheid en onderlinge wederzijdse afhankelijkheid van het 'web' van zand, steen, water, dieren, planten en mensen. *Dune* beeldt de planeet bijna af als een levend wezen, waarbij alle onderdelen op elkaar ingrijpen. Het boek getuigt van een holistische levensfilosofie, met pantheïstische trekken. Frank Herbert koppelde daaraan een geschiedfilosofie die ronduit fascinerend is. De suggestie in *Dune* is dat 'de woestijn' weer vruchtbaar kan worden gemaakt. Het boek suggereert dat de voorwaarde hiervoor de ondergang is van the empire. Dit kosmische keizerrijk bevat in *Dune* kenmerken van het late Romeinse Rijk. Het decadente en hypocriete rijk is in *Dune* in feite ten dode opgeschreven. *Dune* volgt ermee de strekking van *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* van Edward Gibbon.[39] De onvermijdelijke en noodzakelijke ondergang vormt vervolgens de basis voor een revolutie die vernieuwing brengt. Het proces culmineert in de jihad onder leiding van Paul Atreides en de succesvolle revolte van de Fremen, waarna de woestijn weer langzaam tot leven kan komen.

Herbert suggereert vervolgens – en dit maakt *Dune* tot een meesterwerk – dat het proces van verval en wederopstanding niet slechts de opkomst en ondergang van grote rijken voorbeschikt, maar dat dit ook geldt voor de opstand van Paul Atreides en hemzelf. Atreides realiseert zich terdege dat hij is 'voorbestemd' om te overwinnen en vrijheid te brengen, maar dat gaat samen met het schokkende besef dat zijn leiderschap en directe contact met de krachten in het universum uiteindelijk ook verschrikkelijke gevolgen zal hebben. Paul ziet in dat hij de Fremen niet zal kunnen stoppen en zichzelf evenmin. Hij zal de overwinning brengen, maar de krachten die hij zelf ontketent zal hij niet kunnen beheersen. De superheld en Messias die hij zelf is, vormt het nieuwe probleem. Hij zal dictator worden en de Fremen zullen onvrijheid brengen. Herbert neigt zo naar een cyclisch geschiedenisconcept, zoals dat van Ibn Khaldun, die in de roman dan ook wordt aangehaald. *Dune* heeft daarmee ook veel van een klassieke tragedie. Paul Atreides moet buigen voor machten die groter zijn dan hijzelf.

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38 Voor een overzicht van de kritiek op Heinlein zie de lemma 'Starship Troopers' en 'Robert A. Heinlein' op: www.en.m.wikipedia.org.

39 Lorenzo DiTommaso, 'History and Historical Effect in Frank Herbert's Dune', *Science Fiction Studies* No. 58, Vol. 19 3 (november 1992). Zie: www.depauw.edu.

In *The Forever War* van Joe Haldeman zijn het ook onderliggende (geschied)filosofische vragen die het belangrijkst blijken te zijn en niet zozeer de gevechten met laserwapens. Mandella kan niet ontsnappen uit de *forever war*, zelfs niet als die interstellaire oorlog voorbij is. Mandella beseft dat hij alleen in het leger tot zijn recht komt. Maar hij haat dat leger tegelijkertijd. De vervreemding wordt nog versterkt doordat reizen met de snelheid van het licht effecten van tijd-ruimte-verschuiving veroorzaakt, als gevolg van Einsteins relativiteitswetten. Het resulteert erin dat soldaten die terugkeren naar de aarde jonger zijn dan de leden van de samenleving waarvoor zij vechten. De veteranen keren dus terug naar een planeet die zij niet meer goed kunnen bevatten. De samenleving begrijpt om dezelfde reden de veteranen verkeerd. Het onbegrip is wederzijds, onvermijdelijk en onoplosbaar. Dit moet uiteraard worden gelezen als een metafoor voor de ontvangst van Amerikaanse troepen die naar hun vaderland terugkeerden vanuit Vietnam. Het slot van de roman is wat dit betreft veelbetekenend. Na de (zinloze) intergalactische oorlog gaat Mandella wonen in een stadje met de naam Middle Finger. Daarmee draait ook *The Forever War* uiteindelijk niet zozeer om een schets van oorlogvoering in de toekomst, maar om de filosofische en maatschappelijke vraagstukken die schuilgaan achter oorlogvoering op zich.

Slotbeschouwing: oorlog en oorlogvoering in (militaire) sciencefiction

Zoals in de inleiding is aangegeven heeft generaal Mick Ryan vooral de nadruk gelegd op het ontwikkelen van *innovative thinking* en het openstaan voor *potentially positive and negative futures*, door kennis te nemen van fictieve werelden in de toekomst.[40] Die conclusie kan overeind blijven staan. Het lezen van (militaire) sciencefiction kan de blik scherpen voor dat wat buiten de contemporaine doctrinaire waarheden valt en kan nuttig zijn voor professionals die werken in de wereld van de veiligheidsproblematiek, als literair alternatief voor gangbare militaire trendanalyses en modelmatige toekomstvoorspellingen.

Dit blijkt ook wel uit de sterke doorwerking van het genre militaire sciencefiction op het militaire domein.[41] De invloed van het werk van H.G. Wells levert er een bekend voorbeeld van. Wells' werken hadden visionaire kracht en werden invloedrijk.[42] Hij voorspelde tanks, luchtoorlogvoering, gasaanvallen, atoombommen en massavernietigingswapens ver voordat die werden uitgevonden. Hij schreef rond 1903 alin het korte verhaal *The Land Ironclads* over gepantserde oorlogvoering. Wells schetste in 1907 luchtoorlogvoering in *The War in the Air*, toen dat nog niet bestond. In romans zoals *The World Set Free* uit 1914 voorzag hij een gasoorlog en zelfs een atoomoorlog. In *The War of the Worlds* uit 1898 gebruikten buitenaardse wezens al hittestraalwapens. Het had allemaal een onmiskenbaar effect op het militaire denken in het Verenigd Koninkrijk.[43] Het is moeilijk om de invloed precies vast te stellen, maar het staat buiten kijf dat Wells' toekomstvisioenen werden opgepikt.[44]

Dit geldt eveneens voor de impact van futuristen als Filippo Marinetti. Het is zeer aannemelijk dat luchtmachtdenkers als Giulio Douhet, die pleitten voor strategische bombardementen, sterk zijn beïnvloed door het futuristische

40   Ryan schrijft onder meer: 'Reading science fiction nurtures hope that there is a better future. Uplifting stories of positive futures—or of hope and agency in the face of dystopian futures—fill national security professionals with optimism that we can drive our services to make positive possibilities happen. … Reading science fiction also allows us to consider a variety of negative potential futures. Science fiction has always dealt with futures where society breaks down or must deal with a far more pessimistic view of the possible. It is beneficial for military officers to read such descriptions of alternate futures; it is the first step in ensuring that they do not come to pass. Zie: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/10/20/science-fiction-and-the-strategist-30.

41   Brian Stableford, *Science Fact and Science Fiction. An Encyclopedia* (CRC Press, 2006); Robert W. Bly, *The Science in Science Fiction. 83 SF Predictions That Became Scientific Reality* (BenBella Books, 2005).

42   Het is fascinerend om op te merken dat Wells de toekomst beter lijkt te hebben voorspeld in zijn romans dan in zijn serieuze artikelen en boeken over *things to come*.

43   Literatuur over H.G. Wells vult boekenplanken. Een goed startpunt om te beginnen is Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War. A history* (New York, 2017) 1-70.

44   Ibidem.

culturele klimaat van hun tijd.[45] Talloze andere voorbeelden dringen zich op. Generaal Pete Quesada, die als hoofd van IX Tactical Air Command verantwoordelijk was voor de ontwikkeling van tactische luchtsteun in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, gaf ooit aan dat zijn opvattingen over toekomstige luchtoorlog-voering sterk waren beïnvloed door de science-fictionstrips die hij las in zijn jeugd.[46] Toen hij zag dat zijn jachtbommenwerpers boven gepantserde vijandelijke colonnes hingen, schreef Quasada aan zijn moeder: 'My fondness for Buck Rogers devices is beginning to pay off'.[47]

Heinleins klassieke *Starship Troopers*, met de gevechten in armoured suits, had ook invloed op militaire professionals. Voormalig minister van Defensie van de VS generaal Jim Mattis heeft gezegd dat de beschrijving van bootcamp en training van officieren in *Starship Troopers* hem ervan heeft overtuigd dat Marine Infantry Training 'realistischer' moest worden.[48] De roman blijkt nog steeds gelezen te worden op de opleidingsscholen van het US Marine Corps en de United States Air Force.[49] Men bestudeert er ook de mogelijkheid om mariniers vanuit een ruimtevlucht direct in te zetten tegen doelen op aarde, ook in de geest van Heinlein.[50] Het lijkt er tevens op dat de beschrijvingen van exoskeletten door Heinlein en Haldeman experimenten met militaire robotisering en human enhancement hebben gestimuleerd.[51]

Op vergelijkbare wijze heeft sciencefiction zonder enige twijfel ook de ontwikkeling en het testen van alternatieven voor reguliere vuurwapens gestimuleerd. Te denken valt aan wapens met *directed energy*, straalwapens en lasergeweren.[52] Er worden op dit moment zelfs plannen ontwikkeld om bewapende drones, geautomatiseerde wapensystemen en mini-drones en cyborgachtige insecten in te zetten, al dan niet voorzien van wapens. De invloed van sciencefiction op deze ontwikkelingen wordt erkend door alle betrokkenen. In 2007 werd Thomas Easton uitgenodigd om les te geven aan ingenieurs van het DARPA-programma,[53] die bewapende cyborginsecten ontwikkelden, zoals Easton al had voorzien in zijn sciencefiction-roman *Sparrowhawk*.[54] Ook de fascinatie voor *shields* van auteurs uit de hoek van de militaire sciencefiction vindt navolging. Er is misschien geen aantoonbare directe link tussen science-fiction en president Ronald Reagans SDI-programma (Strategic Defence Initiative), maar het is zeker zo dat het idee van een ruimteschild al decennia gangbaar was in de futuristische literatuur voordat werd getracht het in de praktijk te brengen.[55] Sciencefictionschrijvers werden in de jaren tachtig niet voor niets onderdeel van de propagandacampagne ten gunste van SDI.[56] Het is verder geen toeval dat het SDI-programma de bijnaam *star wars* kreeg.[57] Woorden die worden gebruikt in de context van hedendaagse cyberoorlogen, zoals *worms* en *shutdown orders*, blijken ook gemunt te zijn in sciencefiction (de cyberpunk-variant, om precies te zijn).[58]

45 Over de (culturele) invloed van het futurisme in het algemeen en Marinetti in het bijzonder op militairen, zie: Adrian Lesenciuc, 'Migration of Idea's perlocutionary effect. How Marinetti bombed Hiroshima' in: *International Conference RCIC'17 Redefining Community in Intercultural Context* (Bari 2017) 255-262. Zie over de link tussen futurisme en Douhet ook: Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought* (Oxford 2001).

46 T.A. Hughes, *Overlord, General Pete Quesada and the Triumph of Tactical Airpower* (New York, 2010).

47 Ibidem.

48 Zie: www.Task&Purpose.com/news/starship-troopers-jimmattis-marine-corps-infantry-training/.

49 Generaal Mick Ryan schrijft hierover: 'The U.S. Marine Corps' Destination Unknown series and the U.S. Army's Future Warfare Writing Program have used science fiction, graphic novels, and short stories to solicit ideas about future conflict and competition'. Zie: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/10/20/science-fiction-and-the-strategist-30.

50 Project SUSTAIN (Small Unit Space Transport and INsertion). Zie ook: Project Hot Eagle en de experimenten met 'Space Ship One'.

51 John Jansen, e.a., *Exoskeleton for Soldier Enhancement Systems Feasibility Study* (Oak Ridge National Laboratory, september 2000).

52 Zie onder meer: Paul Rincon, 'Record power for military laser', *BBC News*, 22 februari 2007; 'Army Moves Ahead With Mobile Laser Cannon', *Wired*, 19 augustus 2008; 'US military sets laser PHASRs to stun', *New Scientist*, 7 november 2005.

53 DARPA: Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in de VS.

54 Zie: 'Darpa hatches plan for insect cyborgs to fly reconnaissance', *EEtimes*, februari 2009. Zie ook: Brian Stableford, *Science Fact and Science Fiction. An Encyclopedia* (CRC Press, 2006) 563-565; A. Bowdoin Van Riper, *Science in Popular Culture. A Reference Guide* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002) 45.

55 H. Bruce Franklin, *War Stars. The Superweapon and the American Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 1990).

56 Ben Bova, *Privateers* (Mass Market, 1985).

57 Vgl.: Franklin, *Star Wars*.

58 Voor literatuur over cyberpunk, zie 'Cyberpunk' op: www.en.m.wikipedia.org.

Militaire sciencefiction kan dus concrete invloed uitoefenen op militair denken en doen. In die zin kan sciencefiction absoluut nuttig zijn als aanjager van innovatieve ontwikkelingen. Maar dit raakt vooral het technische vlak. De stelling die in dit artikel wordt verdedigd is dat daar waarschijnlijk echter niet de grootste kracht van het genre sciencefiction ligt, hoe belangrijk en invloedrijk dit thema ook is. Bestudering van *Starship Troopers*, *Dune* en *The Forever War* maakt vooral duidelijk dat (militaire) techniek minder centraal staat in sciencefiction dan vaak wordt gedacht. Na de bestudering van drie klassieke werken uit het genre blijkt de conclusie te moeten zijn dat het belangrijkste leereffect van het lezen van militaire sciencefiction bestaat uit het verdiepen van het inzicht in wat 'de toekomst' karakteriseert, als een 'geestelijke constructie'.[59]

Ten eerste viel immers op dat de tijd van ontstaan zich steeds weer opvallend manifesteert in de romans waarin toekomstige oorlogen worden geschetst. Militaire sciencefiction lijkt niet over de eigen tijd te gaan; het genre gaat schijnbaar over denkbeeldige toekomstige manieren van oorlogvoering tegen buitenaardse wezens. Het is daarmee 'fantastisch' in de zin van fantasievol. Maar juist dit verbindt het sterk met de historische context waarin het ontstaat. De eerste les zou moeten zijn dat toekomst-visioenen meer onthullen over de samenleving waaruit zij voortkomen dan over de toekomst.[60]

De tweede conclusie die kan worden getrokken is dat sciencefiction ook weer niet alleen het kind is van de eigen tijd. De toekomst in militaire sciencefiction wortelt zeker in het heden, maar het ontleent ook op eclectische wijze verrassend veel aan het verleden. Toe-komstbeelden worden erin voor een groot deel opgebouwd uit denkbeelden over en motieven uit de geschiedenis. Militaire sciencefiction combineert robotica, drones, gepantserde gevechtspakken, *death-stars*, *doomsday-machines* en nucleaire granaten met een voorliefde voor zwaarden en schilden, man-tegen-man-gevech-ten, middeleeuwse belegeringen en individuele heldenmoed. Ondanks de futuristische wapens is militaire sciencefiction sterk geworteld in een

geïdealiseerd en geromantiseerd militair verleden. Het is hypermodern en vertoont tekenen van nostalgie. De toekomst blijkt de militaire geschiedenis nodig te hebben.

Het derde punt dat moet worden gemaakt is dat goede militaire sciencefiction vooral reflecteert op dat wat zich schuilhoudt achter toekomstige oorlogvoering. *Starship Troopers*, *Dune* en *The Forever War* gaan met name over vragen naar de relatie tussen oorlog en maatschappij, individu en maatschappij, vrijheid en determinisme, mens en machine, de ontwikkeling van toe-komstige geschiedenis en naar de betekenis en bestemming van de mensheid in de kosmos; de romans gaan niet zozeer over toekomstige oorlogvoering op zich.

Susan Sontag schreef over dit derde punt ooit een briljant en invloedrijk essay.[61] Zij betoogde dat (militaire) sciencefiction in essentie gaat om het bezweren van 'de angst voor een ramp'. Volgens Sontag tracht sciencefiction vooral monsters en een post-apocalyptische dag des oordeels op afstand te houden. Dit zou worden vertaald in het verplaatsen van al wat men vreest naar het rijk van de fantasie, op planeten hier ver vandaan in een verre toekomst. Susan Sontags boodschap is met andere woorden dat sciencefiction vooral de *alien* in onszelf bevecht en niet zozeer lessen te bieden heeft over de toekomst.

59 Ryan lijkt deze conclusie trouwens soms wel te delen en zegt: 'Finally, science fiction reminds us of the enduring nature of war. Some of the finest science fiction novels explore this. These stories remind us that the clash of wills, the fear, interests, and honor integral to human warfare, are enduring. Notwithstanding the technological marvels of science fiction novels, war ultimately remains a human endeavor. Zie: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/10/20/science-fiction-and-the -strategist-30.

60 Generaal Ryan hierover: '… recent scholarship by eminent historians and strategic thinkers like Lawrence Freedman and Antulio Echevarria shows us how military theorists and planners in the past were shaped by the ideas of their own day, which impacted decisions as they prepared for future warfare'. Om daar vervolgens een opmerkelijk positieve draai aan te geven: 'Reading and considering contemporary science fiction can provide military leaders and national security professionals the raw material that the millworks of imagination break up, grind down, and combine anew'. Zie: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/10/20/science-fiction-and -the-strategist-30.

61 Susan Sontag, 'The Imagination of Disaster' in: Susan Sontag, *Essays of the 1960s and 70s* (New York, 2013) 199-214.

Sontag heeft ongetwijfeld gelijk. Maar er lijkt ook meer aan de hand. Militaire sciencefiction gaat niet alleen om het temmen van angst voor een onvoorstelbare oorlog via het projecteren van die angstvisioenen op de toekomst. Het zijn vooral (spectaculaire) verhalen waarin de relatie wordt geanalyseerd tussen het individu en zijn samenleving binnen de context van een oorlogssituatie in de verre toekomst.

In *Starship Troopers* leidt dit tot de verontrustende boodschap dat militaire macht en kracht het morele en maatschappelijke fundament vormen. Heinlein beweert uiteindelijk dat plichtsbetrachting en opofferingsbereidheid vrijheid garanderen en politieke macht rechtvaardigen. In *Dune* wordt door een mengeling van visionair leiderschap, collectieve weerzin tegen onderdrukking én drugsgebruik een succesvolle *insurgency* tot stand gebracht op de desolate planeet Arrakis. Het gaat samen met het tragische besef dat de zegevierende held de krachten die hij zelf ontketent niet zal kunnen beheersen. In *The Forever War* is de boodschap dat oorlogen zijn gebaseerd op communicatiefouten en misverstanden en soldaten zullen vervreemden van de personen voor wie zij vechten.

Er is veel voor te zeggen dat dit het lezen van militaire sciencefiction relevant maakt. Militaire sciencefiction biedt een podium voor filosofische 'experimenten', waarbij verleden, heden en toekomst in een veel complexere verhouding blijken te staan dan vaak wordt gedacht. De Duitse filosoof Jörn Rüsen betoogde in dit verband ooit dat iedereen wat betreft de relatie tussen verleden, heden en toekomst te maken heeft met drie tijdslagen, waarbij geen enkele tijdslaag belangrijker is dan de ander.[62] Het verleden beïnvloedt het heden. Het vormt zo ook de basis voor ideeën over de toekomst. Toekomstvisies functioneren op hun beurt als de oriëntatiekaders en richtsnoeren voor het heden. Zij beïnvloeden daarmee ook onze opvattingen over de geschiedenis. Maar de positie in het heden kleurt vervolgens weer het verleden en ook de toekomst. De drie tijdslagen bepalen elkaar wederzijds, en in wisselwerking. Er is geen heldere causale diachrone ontwikkelingslijn; het gaat om een spanningsveld tussen drie polen. Het bestuderen van oorlogvoering in sciencefiction toont het gelijk van Jörn Rüsen aan. Hoewel militaire sciencefiction oorlogen in de verre toekomst situeert, put het uit het verleden. Tegelijkertijd zegt de toekomstschets vooral veel over het heden, omdat het daarin is geworteld.

Zeker, militaire sciencefiction schetst *strange new worlds*, net zoals de geschiedenis en literaire romans dat doen. Daarmee is het lezen ervan belangrijk voor het openbreken van het eigen denkraam en voor het ontwikkelen van creatieve alternatieve denkvormen.[63] Belangrijker is nog wel dat sciencefiction al te simplistische gedachten over de noties 'heden, verleden en toekomst' kan doen kantelen.[64] Het lezen van *Starship Troopers*, *Dune* en *The Forever War* maakt vooral duidelijk dat de grens tussen verleden, heden en toekomst fluïde is en de toekomst een collage. ■

62 Jörn Rüsen, *Historische Orientierung. Über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewusstseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden* (Keulen, 1994); Idem, *Kann Gestern besser werden?* (Berlijn, 2002); Idem, *Kultur macht Sinn. Orientierung zwischen Gestern und Morgen* (Weimar, 2006); Idem, *Zeit und Sinn. Strategien historischen Denkens* (Frankfurt, 1990).

63 Het doel in *Startrek* was: …'to boldly go where no man has gone before! … and look for new life, new civilizations and strange new worlds. Okuda en Okuda, *Star Trek Encyclopedia.* Fascinerend genoeg is het beschrijven van strange worlds volgens velen ook de essentie van de bestudering van het verleden. Zie: David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

64 Sterk over de relatie tussen verleden, heden en toekomst: Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*; Idem, *The Heritage Crusade* (Cambridge, 1997); Peter Rietbergen, *Clio's stiefzusters. Verledenverbeeldingen voorbij de geschiedwetenschap* (Nijmegen, 2015); Harry Jansen, *Triptiek van de tijd. Geschiedenis in drievoud* (Nijmegen, 2010).

Winning without Fighting in the Indo-Pacific

The Role of Irregular Forces in China's Maritime Strategy

Pieter W.G. Zhao*
Peer-reviewed article

Abstract

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in scholarly and media attention to the strategic developments surrounding China's maritime domain. Within this trend, most analysts and scholars focus on China's rapidly expanding conventional forces, especially in relation to the rapid modernization and expansion of the grey-hulled People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), which transformed from a minor coastal defence force in the 1990s into the largest naval fleet in the world by 2020. However, while this growth has admittedly been extraordinary, the current focus on China's navy overlooks the development of China's considerable unconventional or irregular maritime forces. In reality, most of the observable maritime actions 'on the ground' in relation to the implementation of China's maritime strategy occur in the so-called 'grey-zone,' and can be attributed to the vessels of the recently-centralized China Coast Guard (CCG) and the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM). Accordingly, this paper analyzes the role of China's irregular forces in the implementation of China's broader maritime strategy and Indo-Pacific outlook. It finds that China is effectively developing a three-sea-force with an evolving division of labor, in which the irregular forces gradually assume China's near-seas objectives in order to allow the PLAN to increasingly focus on its blue-seas missions and capabilities.

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'To fight and conquer in all our battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting' – Sun Tzu

Introduction

In March 2021, the Philippines complained to China about a large fleet of around 220 Chinese vessels moored near Whitsun Reef in the disputed waters of the South China Sea, as their 'swarming and threatening presence' created an atmosphere of instability. After requesting the Chinese government to direct the vessels to leave the disputed waters, which the Philippines considers part of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), China protested by arguing that they were merely fishing boats sheltering from sea conditions.[1] This incident is one example of several similar maritime incidents in the South and East China Seas, where the Chinese leadership has increasingly employed irregular forces to further its geostrategic objectives. Indeed, following Sun Tzu's opening quote, this pattern reflects a longer strategic tradition in China that emphasizes the pursuit of strategic goals without resorting to conventional forces. Nevertheless, when analyzing Chinese maritime developments and strategy, most scholarly and media attention focuses on China's grey-hulled conventional forces, specifically in relation to the rapid modernization and expansion of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). Yet, while the PLAN's growth has admittedly been impressive, this approach overlooks China's considerable unconventional or irregular forces. In reality, most of the observable maritime developments 'on the ground' – or at sea, as it were – in relation to the implementation of China's maritime strategy take place in the so-called 'grey-zone,' and can be attributed to China's rapidly expanding white-hulled Coast Guard (CCG) and blue-hulled maritime militia – the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM).

Considering the possibility of a potential future confrontation in the regional waters that China views as its near seas, following the increasing geopolitical tensions between the United States and China, it is worthwhile to consider the level of integration of China's irregular forces in its maritime strategy. Accordingly, this paper analyzes the role of these irregular forces in implementing China's increasingly global maritime strategy, specifically in relation to China's progressively assertive stance in its regional waters, including the South and East China Seas. In doing so, the paper utilizes the 'Four-Way Typology of Assertiveness in Maritime and Territorial Disputes,' developed by Andrew Chubb, in a qualitative methodological analysis.[2] After first considering China's maritime strategy in the context of the broader Asia/Indo-Pacific region and China's grand strategic goals, the paper will zoom in on the role played by China's coast guard and maritime militia to achieve its geostrategic goals in the near seas.

China's Maritime Interests and Strategy: Offshore Defence & Open Seas Protection

Since the arrival of Xi Jinping as China's paramount leader in 2012, the grand strategic goal of the 'great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' has frequently been mentioned in official documents and public statements.[3] Accordingly, China's grand strategy constitutes a pursuit of political, economic, social, and military modernity to expand China's national

1   Reuters Staff, 'Philippines Protests 'threatening Presence' of Chinese Vessels in Disputed Waters, *Reuters*, March 23, 2021, sec. Emerging Markets, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-china-southchinasea-prote-idUSKBN2BF0IA.

2   Andrew Chubb, 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970–2015,' *International Security* 45, No. 3 (January 1, 2021): 79-121, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00400.

3   National People's Congress, Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, May 17, 2020, http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/xjptgoc/xjptgoc.shtml.

power, improve its governance, and amend the international order in support of Beijing's national interests.[4] Within this grand strategy, a strong emphasis is placed on the modernization of China's military, as an essential element of the country's rejuvenation. The 20th Party Congress report,[5] therefore, focused on intensifying and accelerating the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) modernization goals, including improving its 'system of strategic deterrence.'[6] Within this military modernization project, the PLAN has attracted considerable attention and resources over the other service branches, as it expanded from a minor coastal defense force in the mid-1990s to the world's largest navy in the number of battleships by 2020, with a battlefleet of approximately 340 platforms.[7] Hence, in order to explain China's rapid naval expansion, it is essential to consider China's maritime interests.

In November 2012, China's former President Hu Jintao publicly stated that China should become a 'great maritime power.' This announcement cemented a long-awaited strategic shift within Chinese military-strategic circles that had gradually developed over the previous two decades, since China had traditionally been considered a continental or land-based power.[8] This maritime shift can largely be attributed to China's growing maritime interests combined with its broader Indo-Pacific outlook, which is intertwined with the grand strategic goal of national rejuvenation. During the past two decades, China's geostrategic situation has changed dramatically. China's globally expanding economic and security interests, combined with unresolved sovereignty issues regarding Taiwanese reunification and the control of land features in the South and East China Seas, have demanded a focus on the maritime domain. Some of China's economic interests and motivations include exploiting marine resources, safeguarding shipping routes essential to China's economic growth and energy security, and protecting Chinese overseas communities.[9] In line with these interests, China's Academy of Military Sciences states: 'Our country's national interests are expanding mainly in the sea, national security is threatened

mainly from the sea, the focal point of military struggle is mainly in the sea…'[10] As a result, in his rhetoric, Xi Jinping has integrated the maritime domain within his vision of the 'Chinese Dream.' Public statements and official documents therefore increasingly characterize the goal of becoming a maritime power as a fundamental part of China's national strategy, to the people's well-being, to the protection of national sovereignty, and to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.[11]

China's current maritime strategy focuses on 'Offshore Defence' and 'Open Seas Protection,' and aims to expand the geographic and mission scope of its operations.[12] In 2015, China published its 10th Defence White Paper, which announced a shift in China's maritime strategy as it stated that China's navy would 'gradually shift its focus from Offshore Defence to a combination of Offshore Defence and Open Seas Protection to develop a modern maritime force

4   U.S. Department of Defense, 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022' (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Defense, November 2022), III, https://www.defense.gov/CMPR/.

5   Jinping Xi, 'Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 16, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/t20221025_10791908.html.

6   CGTN, 'Xi Jinping Says Modernized Army Key to National Rejuvenation,' October 23, 2020, https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-10-23/Xi-Jinping-modernized-army-key-to-national-rejuvenation--UOHd54iBQ4/index.html; U.S. Department of Defense, 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022,' III.

7   Congressional Research Service, 'China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress,' CRS Report (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, December 2022), https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/RL/RL33153/265.

8   Michael McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream' (Arlington: CNA: Analysis & Solutions, June 2016), iii, https://www.cna.org/news/events/china-and-maritime-power.

9   McDevitt, 10-14.

10   PLA Academy of Military Science Military Strategy Dept., *Science of Military Strategy*, trans. China Aerospace Studies Institute, In Their Own Words (Montgomery, Alabama: China Aerospace Studies Institute, 2021), 209, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CASI/Display/Article/2485204/plas-science-of-military-strategy-2013/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.airuniversity.af.edu%2FCASI%2FArticles%2FArticle-Display%2FArticle%2F2485204%2Fplas-science-of-military-strategy-2013%2F.

11   McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 10.

12   Jennifer Rice and Erik Robb, 'China Maritime Report No. 13: The Origins of 'Near Seas Defense and Fa' by Jennifer Rice and Erik Robb,' China Maritime Report (Newport, Rhode Island: China Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, February 2021), 1, https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/13/.

capable of defending national security and global interests.'[13] Open Seas Protection corresponds with China's outward vision for the Indo-Pacific region, for which it uses the term 'two-oceans region.'[14] According to this strategic concept, over the long term, the PLAN should be able to 'protect the security of strategic sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and overseas interests and participate in international maritime cooperation.'[15] This shift was primarily underpinned by China's expanding global interests beyond China's 'offshore waters' or 'near seas,' the bodies of water between China's coast and the first island-chain.[16] In contrast, the 'open' or 'far seas' refer to the bodies of water between the first and second island-chains in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean region beyond the Malacca Strait.[17] These far seas are essential to China's national security, as they include important SLOCs that sustain the Chinese economy.

To effectively protect the security of China's SLOCs, the PLAN needs to invest in blue-water capabilities with vessels that are both multi-

mission capable and large enough to sustain far-seas operations. Currently, however, the PLAN's primary focus remains fixed on the near seas, where China faces multiple sovereignty issues regarding the various contested islands and associated maritime rights.[18] As a result, it is essential for China's long-term maritime strategy to consolidate control over its regional waters because its far-seas ambitions first require a solid geostrategic position in China's near seas, i.e. the three East Asian littorals of the Yellow Sea, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea. Securing China's regional waters can therefore be considered a vital first step in the pursuit of China's broader maritime strategy, which is confirmed by Chinese statements regarding the three objectives necessary to become a maritime power: 1) the first objective is to control the waters where China's 'maritime rights and interests' are involved; 2) the second objective is being able to enforce these maritime rights and interests; and 3) the third objective revolves around the ability to deter or defeat attempts at maritime containment, which is related to Open Seas Protection.[19] By maritime rights and interests, Chinese commentators primarily refer to the sovereign rights that China claims over its regional waters.[20] Thus, the emphasis on controlling China's near seas can be considered a vital precondition to China's global maritime strategy, illustrated by the intensification of Chinese assertiveness in the East and South China Seas in recent decades.

Chinese Near-Seas Assertiveness: Measuring Change and Continuity

Following the end of the Second World War, the Chinese Kuomintang-led government first demarcated its territorial claims in the South China Sea with an eleven-dash line on a map. The claim included most of the area, including the various islands and reefs such as the Paracel, Spratly, and Pratas islands, as well as the Macclesfield Bank, which China regained from Japan. In 1953, the Chinese Communist Party-led government removed the portion encompassing the Gulf of Tonkin, creating the nine-dash line

13 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 'White Paper: China's Military Strategy,' Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, May 2015, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Database/WhitePapers/.

14 PLA Academy of Military Science Military Strategy Dept., *Science of Military Strategy*, 245-46.

15 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 'China's Military Strategy'; Rice and Robb, 'China Maritime Report No. 13: The Origins of 'Near Seas Defense and Fa' by Jennifer Rice and Erik Robb,' 4.

16 The first island-chain refers to the first chain of major archipelagos from China's coast, extending from the Kuril Islands in the North, through the Japanese Archipelago, Taiwan, the Northern Philippines and Borneo, to eventually the Malay Peninsula – essentially encompassing the Yellow, East, and South China Seas.

17 Zhengyu Wu, 'Towards Naval Normalcy: 'open Seas Protection' and Sino-US Maritime Relations,' *The Pacific Review* 32, No. 4 (July 4, 2019): 668, https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2018.1553890.

18 ONI, 'The PLAN Navy: New Capabilities and Missions in the 21st Century' (Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval Intelligence, 2015) 8, https://www.oni.navy.mil/ONI-Reports/Foreign-Naval-Capabilities/China/.

19 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 130-32.

20 Alan Burns, 'Laying a Foundation for Ambition at Sea: The Role of the PLA (N) in China's Goal of Becoming a Maritime Power' (China as a Maritime Power Conference, Arlington: Center for Naval Analyses, 2015), 6, https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/laying-foundation.pdf.

21 'Timeline: China's Maritime Disputes,' Council on Foreign Relations, 2020, ttps://www.cfr.org/timeline/chinas-maritime-disputes.

China still invokes for its conflicting territorial claims today.[21] In the East China Sea, similar maritime disputes exist over the extent of the respective EEZs of the littoral states, as well as a dispute over the ownership of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands between China and Japan.[22]

The Maritime Assertiveness Time Series (MATS) dataset, designed by Andrew Chubb at the National Bureau of Asian Research, provides the most extensive collection of empirical data available on assertiveness in the region, despite some important limitations regarding its inevitable incompleteness as states have incentives to keep incidents in disputed areas secret. The dataset illustrates that Chinese assertiveness constitutes a basic continuity in the South China Sea.[23] In contrast to the assumption that China became more assertive since Xi Jinping took power, Chinese assertiveness in its regional waters dates back to at least 1970. Thus, following its public statements, China's intent to consolidate its claims and control over the South China Sea's maritime spaces has been long-standing and relatively continuous over nearly five decades, preceding China's economic and military rise. Nevertheless, a pivotal change in China's behavior occurred in 2007, which marked the beginning of a significant intensification of Chinese assertiveness through a sustained buildup of demonstrative and coercive actions, including increased patrolling and land-reclamation efforts.[24] However, due to this intensification, significant tensions emerged between consolidating China's maritime claims, on the one hand, and avoiding military escalation, on the other, which would be detrimental to Chinese interests. China's leadership, therefore, recognized this tension by consistently referring to the 'unity of rights defence and stability maintenance' in its maritime policy. For example, in 2013, during a Politburo study session on maritime disputes, Xi Jinping vowed never to compromise and called for 'coordinated planning of the two overall situations of rights defense and stability maintenance.'[25] In other words, this policy requires that Chinese actions in its regional waters remain below the threshold of warfare or military conflict – in the so-called grey-zone.

When analyzing the intensification of Chinese assertiveness in its regional waters, it becomes evident how Chinese irregular forces come to play a dominant role in implementing the first two objectives of China's maritime strategy, regarding its proclaimed maritime rights and interests. In this context, 'assertiveness' can be interpreted as statements and behaviors that strengthen a state's position in a dispute. This breaks assertiveness down into observable events – statements and behaviors – that can be identified without needing subjective judgments about an actor's state of mind.[26] However, assertive behavior can vary widely in its implications for international stability. Chubb has therefore developed a typology that identifies four types of assertive actions in maritime and territorial disputes based on their consequences for the positions of rival claimants. These types of actions can be characterized as follows: 1) *Declarative* actions, verbal assertions via non-coercive statements, diplomatic notes, domestic legislation and administrative measures, international legal cases; 2) *Demonstrative* actions, unilateral administration of disputed possessions that does not involve confrontation with rival claimants: patrols, surveys, resource development, construction of infrastructure, state-sanctioned tourism or activism, domestic judicial procedures, and cooperative agreements with third parties; 3) *Coercive* actions, threat or imposition of punishment: may be verbal, diplomatic or administrative, economic punishment, warning shots, physical interference with foreign activities in disputed

22 Alessio Patalano, 'What Is China's Strategy in the Senkaku Islands?,' War on the Rocks, September 10, 2020, https://warontherocks.com/2020/09/what-is-chinas-strategy-in-the-senkaku-islands/.

23 The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR), 'Maritime Assertiveness Visualization Dashboard (MAVD) v1.2,' MATS Dataset, 2022, https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/679733cea527406bb0aa1b936aa37b90/.

24 Andrew Chubb, 'Dynamics of Assertiveness in the South China Sea: China, the Philippines, and Vietnam, 1970-2015,' NBR Special Report (Washington, D.C.: The National Bureau of Asian Research, May 2022) 12, https://www.nbr.org/publication/dynamics-of-assertiveness-in-the-south-china-sea-china-the-philippines-and-vietnam-1970-2015/.

25 Andrew Chubb, 'Xi Jinping and China's Maritime Policy,' *Brookings* (blog), January 22, 2019, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/xi-jinping-and-chinas-maritime-policy/.

26 Chubb, 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea,' 84.

area; and 4) *Use of Force* actions, application of military force or seizure and occupation of disputed possession.[27]

When applying this typology to the MATS dataset – which details assertive actions in the South China Sea between 1970 and 2015 – Chubb clearly illustrates that Chinese assertiveness predominantly consists of declarative, demonstrative, and coercive actions, short of military force.[28] Within these actions, the PLAN has been relatively absent. This corresponds with China's long-term maritime strategy, in which the navy should ideally be focused on increasingly far-seas operations. In contrast, the increasingly frequent coercive actions since 2007 – involving the threat or use of punishment – can largely be attributed to China's irregular forces, demanding a closer analysis of China's unconventional approach.

Strategy Implementation: Grey-Zone Operations and Irregular Forces

Considering China's proclaimed strategic maritime objectives, the assertion and defence of China's maritime claims and interests in its regional waters have been integrated as important grand strategic goals. To achieve these objectives, while also balancing the 'unity of rights defense and stability maintenance,' China has implemented a so-called 'salami-slicing' strategy. This strategy focuses on a series of incremental actions, none of which by itself would be considered a *casus belli*, to gradually shift the status quo in China's favor.[29] In doing so, China pursues repetitive but limited *fait accomplis* – unilateral gains at an adversary's expense on the calculated risk that the adversary chooses to relent rather than escalate in retaliation – to incrementally expand its foothold within a local context.[30] This basic notion (gaining ground slice-by-slice instead of all at once) characterizes the implementation of China's maritime strategy in the near seas.[31] China's prominent land-reclamation activities at contested sites near the Paracel and Spratly Islands are prime examples of this approach, as such projects have unilaterally changed the day-to-day realities in the South China Sea in China's favor.[32]

This unconventional Chinese approach can be characterized by the concept of grey-zone operations – i.e. operations that reside in the grey zone between peace/diplomacy and war – which reflect both China's current strategic directives and its traditional strategic legacy.[33] The concept of grey-zone operations corresponds with Xi Jinping's emphasis on 'holistic national security,' which China's 2015 Defence White Paper described as follows: 'A holistic approach will be taken to balance war preparation and war prevention, rights protection and stability maintenance, deterrence and warfighting, and operations in wartime and employment of military forces in peacetime. They will lay stress of farsighted planning and management to create a favorable posture.'[34] Moreover, in contrast to the Western strategic tradition, China's strategic legacy has a long tradition of

27   Chubb, 'Dynamics of Assertiveness in the South China Sea: China, the Philippines, and Vietnam, 1970-2015,' 6.

28   Chubb, 11.

29   Ronald O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' Background and Issues for Congress (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 2023) 10, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/details?prodcode=R42784.

30   Dan Altman, 'By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries,' *International Studies Quarterly* 61, No. 4 (December 1, 2017): 881–91, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqx049.

31   Richard W. Maass, 'Salami Tactics: Faits Accomplis and International Expansion in the Shadow of Major War,' *Texas National Security Review* 5, No. 1 (2022): 34, https://doi.org/10.26153/tsw/21615.

32   Maass, 36.

33   O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 10.

34   The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 'China's Military Strategy'; Katja Drinhausen and Helena Legarda, 'Confident Paranoia: Xi's Comprehensive National Security Framework Shapes China's Behavior at Home and Abroad,' China Monitor (Berlin: Mercator Institute for China Studies, September 15, 2022), https://www.merics.org/en/report/comprehensive-national-security-unleashed-how-xis-approach-shapes-chinas-policies-home-and; Research Institute of Party History and Documentation of the CPC Central Committee, *Xi Jinping on the Holistic Approach to National Security* (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2018).

blurring the lines between peace and war, dating back to the writings of Sun Tzu and Mao Zedong.[35] Accordingly, in the maritime domain, Chinese strategic circles emphasize how maritime power encompasses more than merely naval power. It includes factors such as a world-class merchant marine, fishing fleet, shipbuilding capacity, ability to harvest or extract economically significant maritime resources, and a large and effective coast guard.[36] This final factor correlates with one of the most commonly used tactics in grey-zone operations, namely the use of ambiguous or irregular forces.[37] These irregular forces include China's considerable coast guard and maritime militia, allowing it to keep the PLAN in the background in order to limit the escalation potential of maritime confrontations.[38]

The China Coast Guard (CCG)
China boasts the largest white-hulled maritime law-enforcement (MLE) fleet in the world, with an estimated force of at least 140 regional and oceangoing vessels (more than 1.000 tons displacement), 120 regional patrol combatants (500 to 999 tons), and an additional 450 coastal patrol craft (100 to 499 tons).[39] This results from a massive expansion and modernization program aimed at strengthening China's various MLE agencies that started with a national-level decision taken by China's leadership in 1999. In contrast (and similar to the PLAN) before the turn of the century, China's MLE fleet consisted of a limited number of outdated dual-use patrol and research ships, most of which were relatively small and confined to China's coastal areas.[40] By 2013, China consolidated four of its previously independent MLE agencies into a newly-established agency called the China Coast Guard or CCG.[41] Before the merger, each agency had its own command structure and control system, leading to poor coordination with services often working at cross purposes. The reform, therefore, significantly improved the command structure and coordination of China's MLE forces, with a central CCG Command Center set-up sometime in early 2014.[42] The consolidation within the CCG allows China to deploy its MLE forces more flexibly in response

to sovereignty challenges and more easily maintain its presence in regional hotspots.[43]

While the CCG is responsible for various maritime security missions, including fisheries enforcement, combating smuggling, terrorism, international cooperation, and environmental crimes, Chinese authoritative texts emphasize the CCG's role as the 'primary instrument of rights protection in peacetime.'[44] Thus, the CCG's primary mission is to 'safeguard maritime rights and interests.'[45] This echoes China's maritime strategy and stated objectives, as the head of the State Oceanic Administration's (SOA) East China Sea Bureau, Liu Kefu, argued that rights protection is a vital 'precondition' for becoming a maritime power. In other words, China cannot pursue its global maritime ambitions until it has first consolidated control within its regional waters, illustrating the vital role of the CCG in implementing China's broader

35 Fumio Ota, 'Sun Tzu in Contemporary Chinese Strategy,' *Joint Force Quarterly* 73 (April 1, 2014), https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/577507/sun-tzu-in-contemporary-chinese-strategy/https%3A%2F%2Fndupress.ndu.edu%2FMedia%2FNews%2FNews-Article-View%2FArticle%2F577507%2Fsun-tzu-in-contemporary-chinese-strategy%2F; Mao Zedong, *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

36 Kai Cao, 'Building China into Maritime Power Essential for Future Development,' People's Daily Online, November 14, 2012, http://en.people.cn/90785/8018709.html; McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' iii.

37 John Schaus, 'Zone Defense: Countering Competition in the Space between War and Peace,' Report of the 2018 Global Security Forum Experts Workshop (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, November 27, 2018) https://www.csis.org/analysis/zone-defense.

38 ONI, 'The PLAN Navy: New Capabilities and Missions in the 21st Century,' 46.

39 U.S. Department of Defense, 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022,' 78.

40 Andrew Erickson, Joshua Hickey, and Henry Holst, 'Surging Second Sea Force: China's Maritime Law-nforcement Forces, Capabilities, and Future in the Gray Zone and Beyond,' *Naval War College Review* 72, No. 2 (March 28, 2019): 14, https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol72/iss2/4.

41 These agencies were the State Oceanic Administration's China Marine Surveillance (CMS); the Department of Agriculture's China Fisheries Law Enforcement (FLEC); the Ministry of Public Security's Border Defense Coast Guard; and the Maritime Anti-Smuggling Police of the General Administration of Customs. See McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 53-54.

42 McDevitt, 55-56.

43 ONI, 'The PLAN Navy: New Capabilities and Missions in the 21st Century,' 45.

44 PLA Academy of Military Science Military Strategy Dept., *Science of Military Strategy*, 426.

45 Ryan D. Martinson, 'From Words to Actions: The Creation of the China Coast Guard' (China as a 'Maritime Power' Conference, Arlington: Center for Naval Analyses, 2015) 4, https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/creation-china-coast-guard.pdf.

maritime strategy.[46] Correspondingly, in recent years, international observers have noted reduced participation of the PLAN in regional patrols, EEZ enforcement, and territorial claim issues, as the CCG has increasingly assumed these operations.[47]

Official and semi-official Chinese documents identify 'administrative control' as the desired goal of these so-called 'rights protection operations.' This could be interpreted as a wish to impose a Chinese legal order over the regional waters of the South and East China Seas.[48] To achieve this, China has since 2013 commissioned various new oceangoing 'rights protection' cutters,[49] displacing at least 500 metric tons. In addition, the CCG has acquired various larger vessels to boost the average displacement across the fleet. Larger ships are more capable of handling rough seas and allow for better endurance. This enables CCG forces to remain on station much longer, while simultaneously carrying the ability to intimidate vessels of other disputants.[50] Some of these newer and larger vessels are equipped with helicopter facilities, high-capacity water cannons, sirens, interceptor boats, and guns ranging from 20 to 76 milli-meters, providing China with not only the

largest but also one of the most advanced MLE fleets in the world.[51] The considerable and well-equipped white-hulled fleet, therefore, provides a tangible reflection of China's intention to pursue its maritime ambitions, including the ability to enforce China's rights in its claimed sovereign waters. In doing so, the CCG allows the PLAN to focus on its envisioned naval roles beyond the first island-chain, which is in line with China's broader maritime strategy.[52]

As an implementation instrument, the developments and actions involving the CCG can largely be characterized as *demonstrative* in the context of the Typology of Assertiveness. Demonstrative moves are unilateral admi-nistrative behaviors, i.e. actions that manifest a state's presence or jurisdiction in a disputed area, but without directly confronting adversaries.[53] Examples of Chinese demon-strative moves include verbal and legislative actions. For instance, the Director of the SOA, Liu Cigui, stated in 2012 that the goal of maritime power is explicitly linked to the authority of Chinese law enforcement systems, leading to the establishment of the CCG.[54] In March 2018, China went a step further by publicly transferring control of the CCG from the civilian SOA to the Central Military Commission, the highest national defense organization in the country.[55] A further demonstrative action took place in January 2021, when China passed the new Coast Guard Law – which regulates the duties of the CCG. The new law explicitly allows the use of force against foreign vessels while applying those duties to the seas under China's claimed jurisdiction.[56] This demonstrative action therefore sparked severe concerns among regional states. Most of the demonstrative actions performed by the CCG are the so-called 'rights protection missions,' which range from a mere presence in disputed waters to actual efforts to impose Chinese law on foreign vessels.[57] An analysis of ship transponder data from commercial provider MarineTraffic illustrates that CCG vessels maintained near-daily patrols at critical features across the South China Sea in 2022, including the Second Thomas

46 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 54.
47 ONI, 'The PLAN Navy: New Capabilities and Missions in the 21st Century,' 45-46.
48 Martinson, 'From Words to Actions: The Creation of the China Coast Guard,' 8.
49 The term 'cutter' refers to a coast guard vessel more than 20 meters long (65 feet) with accommodations for a crew to live aboard and not classified as an auxiliary vessel.
    Department of Homeland Security (DHS), 'Cutters,' United States Coast Guard, June 12, 2018, https://www.uscg.mil/datasheet/display/Article/1547943/cutters/https%3A%2F%2Fwww.uscg.mil%2Fdev%2FgovD-test%2FArticle%2F1547943%2Fcutters%2F.
50 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 56-57.
51 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 97.
52 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 58; Erickson, Hickey, and Holst, 'Surging Second Sea Force,' 19-20.
53 Chubb, 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea,' 89.
54 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 53.
55 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 98.
56 U.S. Department of Defense, 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022,' 78.
57 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 59.

Shoal, Luconia Shoals, Scarborough Shoal, Vanguard Bank, and Thitu Island.[58] Similar actions occurred in the East China Sea after tensions rose over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in 2012, resulting in a regular CCG presence near the contested islands.[59] These moves are intended to demonstrate China's effective administration of the claimed area, compromising the position of other states in the dispute. As a result, such demonstrative actions can constitute stepping-stones to further acquisitions by *fait accompli*, as was frequently the case in China's island-building campaign. Nevertheless, these demonstrative actions do not involve discernable threats or punishment of other parties. Such actions would be characterized as *coercion*.[60]

The CCG has been involved in some actions that could be considered *coercive* according to the Typology of Assertiveness – such as confrontations between CCG vessels and the Philippine Navy. But these have been less frequent due to the official character of the CCG in combination with China's wish to limit the escalation potential of maritime confrontations.[61] As a result, the more coercive actions are performed by even more ambiguous forces that allow for greater plausible deniability, which are addressed in the following section.

The People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM)
China's blue-hulled maritime militia – officially labeled the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM) by the U.S. Department of Defense – forms a unique third component within China's maritime forces, augmenting the PLAN and the CCG. China operates the world's largest fleet of civilian fishing vessels and trawlers. A portion of these vessels, and the thousands of people who work on them and in related marine industries, are registered in the maritime militia.[62] However, no official Chinese definition of the maritime militia exists. In late 2012, the Zhoushan regional garrison commander, Zeng Pengxiang, described it as follows: 'The Maritime Militia is an irreplaceable mass armed organization not released from production and a component of China's ocean

defence armed forces [that enjoys] low sensitivity and great leeway in maritime rights protection actions.'[63] Hence, the PAFMM is essentially a subset of China's national militia, an armed reserve force of civilians that acts as an auxiliary to China's uniformed maritime services, while being ultimately subordinate to the Central Military Commission as well through the National Defence Mobilization Department.[64] The maritime militia originated following the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949 when China's leadership sought to defend the PRC's coastline from Nationalist forces that had retreated to Taiwan. Establishing an organized maritime militia to address this threat provided a simple solution to this legitimate problem.[65]

Currently, the militia's roles have expanded significantly to support China's strategic objectives in various functions. Maritime militia vessels train with and support the PLAN and the CCG in surveillance and reconnaissance, fisheries protection, search and rescue, logistics support, and ultimately safeguarding China's maritime claims and interests.[66] Following China's increasing efforts to achieve its strategic goal of becoming a maritime power, the maritime militia's role has received top-level leadership attention, including from Xi Jinping, who personally visited a maritime militia force

58 CSIS, 'Flooding the Zone: China Coast Guard Patrols in 2022,' Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, January 20, 2023, https://amti.csis.org/flooding-the-zone-china-coast-guard-patrols-in-2022/; 'Global Ship Tracking Intelligence | AIS Marine Traffic,' MarineTraffic, accessed April 15, 2023, https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/home/centerx:-12.0/centery:25.0/zoom:4.

59 ONI, 'The PLAN Navy: New Capabilities and Missions in the 21st Century,' 46.

60 Chubb, 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea,' 89.

61 'Philippine President Summons China Envoy over Sea Confrontation,' *Al Jazeera*, February 15, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/15/philippine-president-summons-china-envoy-over-sea-confrontation.

62 Conor Kennedy and Andrew Erickson, 'China's Third Sea Force, The People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia: Tethered to the PLA,' China Maritime Report (Newport, Rhode Island: China Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, March 1, 2017), 2, https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/1.

63 McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 62.

64 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 101; Kennedy and Erickson, 'China Maritime Report' No. 1, 2.

65 Derek Grossman and Logan Ma, 'A Short History of China's Fishing Militia and What It May Tell Us,' The RAND Corporation, April 6, 2020, https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/04/a-short-history-of-chinas-fishing-militia-and-what.html.

66 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 101.

in Hainan Province in 2013.[67] Accordingly, China's fishing industry, along with the militia units built within, have increasingly been mobilized as political and geostrategic tools to consolidate China's maritime claims. According to He Zhixiang, Director of the Guangdong Military Region, the maritime militia comprises an important force for normalizing China's administrative control over the near seas, since it already finds itself on the frontlines of the rights protection efforts.[68] As a result, rights protection missions have become one of the primary responsibilities of the PAFMM. These missions are aimed at displaying presence, manifesting sovereignty, and coordinating with the needs of national political and diplomatic objectives, often in coordination with the PLAN and the CCG. In doing so, the maritime militia is being assigned a special role within the so-called 'Maritime Rights Protection Force System,' in which the CCG also plays a central role.[69] Following this increased responsibility, the maritime militia is explicitly integrated into China's strategic management of the near seas and the country's overall maritime strategy. Accordingly, this somewhat unique Chinese practice of civil-military integration – often rhetorically framed as the 'People's War at Sea' – is considered central in China's pursuit of maritime power.[70] Additionally, mobilizing China's mariner population into the militia also allows the PLAN to increasingly focus on its assigned naval roles in the far seas.

The PAFMM thus plays a crucial auxiliary role to both the PLAN and the CCG in the claimed regional waters. It has the advantage of recruiting its members and vessels from the world's largest fishing fleet that also regularly operates in the contested waters of the South and East China Seas. Through the National Defense Mobilization Department, China subsidizes various provincial and local marine-industry organizations to operate militia vessels to perform 'official' missions on an *ad hoc* basis besides their regular commercial activities.[71] Accordingly, it is difficult to estimate the exact size of the PAFMM. The only available estimate dates from 1978, which put the number of personnel at 750.000 on approximately 140.000 vessels. In 2010, China's FY2010 white paper on national defence stated that its primary militia consisted of 8 million members, of which the maritime militia forms a subset. Thus, considering that there are reportedly around 9.5 million people active in China's fishing industry, it is safe to say that China possesses a substantial fleet of potential auxiliary forces.[72] Additionally, since 2015, the Sansha City Maritime Militia in the Paracel Islands has developed into a full-time salaried militia force equipped with 84 purpose-built fishing vessels armed with water cannons and reinforced steel hulls designed for ramming, along with a command center in the Paracel Islands, illustrating the militia's evolving capabilities and China's dual-use agenda concerning its fishing fleets.[73]

The 'special role' assigned to the PAFMM translates into both *demonstrative* and the more *coercive* activities – following Chubb's typology – concerning China's rights protection operations. Coercive behaviors are characterized as those involving the threat or use of punishment against an adversary, including physical interference with foreign activities in a disputed area. Such actions pose more severe risks to stability than demonstrative moves because they present a relatively narrow set of choices to other parties: either alter their behavior, or continue and risk punishment.[74] Indeed, in contrast to the PLAN and the CCG, the maritime militia allows China to pursue progressively assertive actions in its claimed regional waters without obviously

67   McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 66; Yamaguchi Shinji, Yatsuzuka Masaaki, and Momma Rira, 'China's Quest for Control of the Cognitive Domain and Gray Zone Situations,' China Security Report (Tokyo: The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, 2023) 55, http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/chinareport/.

68   McDevitt, 'Becoming a Great Maritime Power: A Chinese Dream,' 66.

69   McDevitt, 68.

70   Andrew S. Erickson and Conor M. Kennedy, 'China's Island Builders,' *Foreign Affairs*, April 9, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2015-04-09/chinas-island-builders.

71   O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 102.

72   Shinji, Masaaki, and Rira, 'China's Quest for Control of the Cognitive Domain and Gray Zone Situations,' 56.

73   O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 102.

74   Chubb, 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea,' 89-90.

implicating the Chinese state due to its highly ambiguous nature. As a result, the PAFMM could be considered one of the leading components of China's maritime forces regarding the implementation of the salami-slicing strategy and assertion of maritime claims.[75] As tensions with other littoral states escalate over China's overlapping maritime claims, the maritime militia provides a powerful non-forcible method of coercion to dominate the seascape while avoiding the risk of open conflict.[76]

In practice, China deploys militia vessels to advance its disputed sovereignty claims, often by amassing them in contested areas throughout the South and East China Seas. In doing so, the militia plays a central role in China's coercive activities in pursuing its strategic goals without fighting, echoing China's strategic legacy that considers confrontational operations short of war as the preferred means of achieving strategic objectives.[77] Examples include Chinese harassments of foreign vessels and swarming incidents, which PLA General Zhang Zhaozong described as China's 'cabbage strategy,' in which a contested area is surrounded by so many ships that Chinese forces essentially wrap the disputed feature like layers of cabbage.[78] Such incidents include the mooring of hundreds of militia vessels in Whitsun Reef in the Spratly Islands (2021), standoffs with the Malaysian drill ship West Capella (2020), defence of China's HYSY-981 oil rig in disputed waters with Vietnam (2014), occupation of the Scarborough Shoal (2012), and the harassment of the USNS Impeccable and Howard O. Lorenzen (2009 and 2014).[79] The latter examples illustrate that China dares to take significant risks and seems sufficiently confident that PAFMM harassment of U.S. naval ships remains below the threshold of a forceful and escalatory response.[80] Thus, the maritime militia seems to be primarily deployed concerning coercive actions that could escalate a crisis if undertaken by the CCG or the PLAN. In doing so, Chinese leadership might believe that using militia forces allows for control over the escalation potential of a crisis and avoids military confrontations, while still reigning in the adversary and expanding China's effective control.[81]

Conclusion

While most international attention regarding China's maritime developments remains focused on its rapidly expanding grey-hulled navy, it seems that China's irregular forces, particularly the white-hulled CCG and the blue-hulled PAFMM, perform the most central roles in enabling China's near-seas ambitions and broader maritime strategy. China's publicly stated maritime strategic objectives consider the consolidation of Chinese control over its maritime rights and interests within the first island-chain as an essential precondition to its global maritime ambitions, which are inherently integrated with the grand strategic goal of national rejuvenation. Accordingly, the recently-centralized coast guard is specifically designed to pursue the implementation of China's near-seas objectives, by openly *demonstrating* Chinese resolve in disputed sovereignty claims in the grey-zone between peace and war. At the same time, however, while these maritime law-enforcement vessels afford China increased influence over the regional maritime situation, they are ultimately restrained in their level of assertiveness due to their official status. The more ambiguous nature of China's maritime militia, therefore, provides greater leeway in the implementation of so-called rights protection operations, allowing China to be progressively more *coercive* towards foreign disputants and vessels in the contested waters without risking military escalation.

75 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 100.

76 James Kraska and Michael Monti, 'The Law of Naval Warfare and China's Maritime Militia,' *International Law Studies* 91, No. 1 (July 20, 2015): 454, https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/ils/vol91/iss1/13.

77 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 101.

78 Harry Kazianis, 'China's Expanding Cabbage Strategy,' *The Diplomat*, October 29, 2013, https://thediplomat.com/2013/10/chinas-expanding-cabbage-strategy/; Jeff Himmelman and Ashley Gilbertson, 'A Game of Shark and Minnow,' *The New York Times*, October 24, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/10/27/south-china-sea/index.html.

79 O'Rourke, 'U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas,' 101.

80 Grossman and Ma, 'A Short History of China's Fishing Militia and What It May Tell Us.'

81 Shinji, Masaaki, and Rira, 'China's Quest for Control of the Cognitive Domain and Gray Zone Situations,' 61.

As a result, China has developed an effective three-sea-force with an evolving division of labor, in which the irregular forces gradually assume China's near-seas objectives, allowing the PLAN to eventually focus on its far-seas ambitions. In the regional waters, to avoid military escalation and create a favorable geostrategic posture, China's grey-hulled navy primarily serves as a deterrent force, whilst the CCG and PAFMM simultaneously manage the intensity of the maritime disputes to avoid armed conflict while still exerting constant pressure on the adversaries to gradually advance China's rights and interests, slice-by-slice. Indeed, the decreasing prominence of oil and gas standoffs in the South China Sea in 2022, a frequently recurring feature of the years prior, already suggests some likely successes of China's grey-zone operations. Nevertheless, a lot of work remains to be done in the successful bureaucratic integration of the newly centralized coast guard, as well as in the integration of the three maritime services in an operational and increasingly escalatory context. The recent collisions between Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels off Second Thomas Shoal in October 2023 highlight the heightened risk of accidents potentially turning into further escalation as the US reiterated its alliance and warning to defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack.[82] Still, there is enough reason to believe that these limitations will not be enough to halt China's activities in the regional waters, as it has bound the goal of becoming a maritime power to the dream of national rejuvenation. Thus, it seems like the ball is currently in the court of those states balancing against China's maritime claims to develop a response that effectively prevents China from realizing the 'supreme excellence of winning, without fighting.' ∎

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82 Jim Gomez and Simina Mistreanu, 'US Renews Warning It Will Defend Philippines after Incidents with Chinese Vessels in South China Sea,' *AP News*, October 23, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/south-china-sea-philippines-collision-67aa7e2ca5df4f4e3a7c3bceff46c26f.

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Visions on Future War
The War in Ukraine as Litmus Test

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Introduction

The three relatively peaceful decades following the end of the Cold War have seen a lively debate on the future of war producing many types of often contrasting visions, inspired by recent traumatic strategic experiences, the rise of new types of actors in international politics, emerging threatening or promising technological developments, specific security concerns of a society or the ambitions of a specific service. Several emerged from and focused on the US military, whereas others arose within the European security culture. Most suffered from presentism, emphasising either continuities or disruptive innovations due to the expected impact of new technologies or offering normative arguments. At least five such visions can be distilled: (1) Sophisticated Barbarism; (2) Humanitarian Wars; (3) Immaculate War; (4) Cool War; (5) Major War. The ongoing war in Ukraine has once again inspired analysts to assess what observed features mean for the future of war. This article sketches the main contours of Western visions on the future of war prior to the start of the war on 24 February 2022. Next it interrogates the validity of those visions by confronting them with the evolution of that war and shows it contains features of several visions of the future but also paradoxical ones. If that war, and what happened on the international scene since then, offers any indication, those existing visions serve analytical and policy-making purposes and contain a warning: reducing expectations on the shape of future war to one dominant perspective contains significant political and military. Indeed, currently the West is challenged by the multiple futures simultaneously becoming the present.

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Sophisticated Barbarism

The fist perspective – Sophisticated Barbarism – sees a bleak future with wars conducted primarily by violent non-state actors in an ecosystem of terrorist movements, well-armed criminal organisations, warlords with their militias and insurgents, and private military companies. While identity – religious or ethnic – often superficially serves as a rallying flag and motive for persistent fanatical struggle, they merge with economic profit and raw power politics. Martin van Creveld already described the dynamics of such wars and the threat these posed for liberal democratic western societies in his much praised *The Transformation of War* (1989). Similarly, dynamics of identity-driven conflicts are sketched in Mary Kaldor's 'New Wars' thesis (1999), as well as in the '4th Generation Warfare' concept (1989) and in Frank Hoffman's 'Hybrid Conflict' concept from 2007.[1] All argue that violent non-state actors will increasingly be equipped with easily attainable kinetic (drones, missiles) and non-kinetic tools (cyberattacks), posing a direct threat to Western militaries and societies. They can easily organise themselves s into 'smart mobs' via social media. In the wake of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rise of ISIS, Boko Haram, Hamas and Hezbollah, recently authors, such as Kilcullen and McFate,[2] warn how these groups win wars, not by military victory but by way of terrorizing populations through barbaric massacres, ethnic cleansing, rape, torture, bombing and public hangings, deliberately ignoring the distinction between civilians and combatants. They subsequently gain power over local governments and, as a result, gain a certain measure of support, also in the West. With cities increasingly turning into battlefields, they can deny Western militaries the advantage of their superior technology, saddling Western governments with the prospect of very risky and bloody humanitarian interventions. State supported private military companies, but also regular troops, commit similar atrocities on behalf of authoritarian regimes in efforts to suppress opposition or minorities. There will be a 'durable disorder', according to McFate, repeating Kaplan's 1990s warning against the spread of anarchism in large parts of the world.[3] For Western militaries this vision holds that 'the future is irregular', according to Seth Jones, and they need to be prepared for counterinsurgency operations in the many protracted conflicts in unstable regions, the so-called Arc of Instability.[4]

Humanitarian Wars

The second vision, related to the first one, finds its inspiration exactly in the civil wars in this Arc of Instability. It argues that the West should focus on humanitarian crises and be prepared, militarily and politically, to conduct corresponding humanitarian operations and end the horrors of sophisticated barbarism. As Kaldor stated forcefully, such 'Humanitarian Wars' are and should remain the sole justification for the use of the military instrument by the West. Recently labelling this the 'liberal peace security culture', she basically repeats her influential normative cosmopolitan vision of the end of the 1990s, which played a role in the emergence of the Responsibility to Protect concept and projects a future in which Western nations (now that they are safe) are morally obliged to end wars in failing and fragile states and contain the endemic violence through peacekeeping operations.[5] Because humanitarian values are key, as Christopher Coker observes in his book *Humane Warfare*, in order to maintain political and public support, the Western militaries are obliged to take every possible precaution to limit the risk of own military losses, civilian casualties and collateral damage. The West is humanizing

1 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York, The Free Press, 1991); Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999); Bill Lind et al., 'The Changing Face of War. Into the Fourth Generation', *Marine Corps Gazette* 85, No.11 (1989) 22-26; Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century. The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, The Potomac Institute or Policy Studies, December 2007).

2 David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains. The Coming of Age of the Urban Guerilla* (Oxford University Press, 2013); Sean McFate, *The New Rules of War. Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder* (New York, William Morrow, 2019).

3 See for instance Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy. Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War* (New York, Vintage Books, 2001).

4 Seth Jones, 'The Future of Warfare is Irregular', *The National Interest*, 26 August 2018.

5 Mary Kaldor, *Global Security Cultures* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2018).

warfare and putting the individual human being back once again at the very centre of modern warfare.[6]

Immaculate War

The third vision – Immaculate Warfare – agrees with the previous two, but sees new strategic and operational modes of operation emerging among Western militaries. In the light of the failing stabilization and COIN missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the high risks of incurring casualties in peace and COIN operations, and because of other pressing international security threats, the West will in the future refrain from employing large troop contingents in a conflict zone. Instead they will increasingly resort to employing special forces teams, training of proxy forces and long-endurance reconnaissance drones capable of observing large areas. If required, insurgents or a specific leader of a terrorist group can be neutralized by special forces raids or precision strikes by armed drones. Risk management is the key concept: containing the risk that violent non-state groups may cause regional destabilisation and/or form a direct threat to the West.[7] The Western campaign against ISIS in Iraq is an example of this. Martin Shaw cynically labelled this strategic concept as Risk Transfer Warfare, in which all the inherent risks of war – civilian casualties, collateral damage – will be 'trans-ferred' to the target society. Similarly, other critical authors recently called it 'Surrogate Warfare', in which the West wants to exert influence in conflict areas but is not willing to accept the associated risks and, instead, employs minimal physical presence on the ground and therefore runs minimal political risk.[8] War has become a form of political risk management.

Cool War

The return of great-power competition is the backdrop of the fourth vision: 'Cool War'. Along with similarly oriented concepts, such as 'hybrid threats', 'new total warfare', 'political warfare', 'soft war' and 'gray zone warfare,'[9] Cool War

denotes the wide range of non-military instruments and activities non-Western states exploit to exert influence in various sections of Western society,[10] such as economic espionage, cyberattacks, economic sanctions and financial warfare, bribing and intimidating politicians (and elimination by poisoning, if necessary), and financing and even arming militant anti-European political groups in democratic states.[11] 'Cool' social media facilitate the rapid and widespread dissemination of disinformation and fake news through troll armies, as Peter Singer shows in his *Like Wars*.[12] Indeed, echoing the tenets of the Chinese book *Unrestricted Warfare* of 2002, Galeotti has observed recently, 'everything has become weaponized'. War and peace merge.[13] With open democratic societies inherently vulnerable, societal resilience and a whole-of-society approach is called for as a counter to 'Cool War'.[14]

6   Christopher Coker, *Humane Warfare* (London, Routledge, 2001).
7   Daniel Byman, 'Why States are Turning to Proxy War', *The National Interest*, 26 August 2018.
8   Andreas Krieg and Jean-Marc Rickli, 'Surrogate Warfare: the Art of War in the 21st Century?', *Defence Studies* 18, No.2 (2018) 113-130; Martin Shaw, *The New Western Way of War. Risk-Transfer War and its Crisis in Iraq* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2005).
9   Michael Mazarr et al., *What Deters and Why* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2018); Michael C. McCarthy, Matthew A. Moyer and Brett H. Venable, *Deterring Russia In The Gray Zone* (US Army SSI, March 2019); Gregory F. Treverton, Andrew Thvedt, Alicia R. Chen, Kathy Lee and Madeline McCue, *Addressing Hybrid Threats* (Swedish Defence University, 2018); Alina Polyakova and Spencer P. Boyer, *The Future Of Political Warfare. Russia, The West, and The Coming Age Of Global Digital Competition* (Washington D.C., Brookings Institution, 2017).
10   David Rothkopf, 'The Cool War', *Foreign Policy*, 20 February 2013; Noah Feldman, *Cool War. The Future of Global Competition* (New York, Random House, 2013); Michael Gross and Tamar Meisels (eds.), *Soft War. The Ethics of Unarmed Conflict* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017).
11   Todd C. Helmus et al., *Media Influence Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2018); Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Hostile Social Manipulation Present Realities and Emerging Trends* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2019).
12   Peter Singer, *Like War. The Weaponization of Social Media* (Boston, Eamon Dolan, 2018).
13   Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare. China's Master Plan to Destroy America* (New York, Newsmax.Com, 2002); Mark Galeotti, *The Weaponisation of Everything. A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2023); Elie Perot, 'The Blurring of War and Peace', *Survival* 61, No.2 (2019) 101-110.
14   Sean Monaghan (ed.), *Countering Hybrid Warfare* (Shrivenham, DCDC, 2018); Lyle J. Morris et al., *Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone. Response Options for Coercive Aggression Below the Threshold of Major War* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2019); Linda Robinson et al., *Modern Political Warfare. Current Practices and Possible Responses* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2018); Thomas G. Mahnken, Ross Babbage and Toshi Yoshihara, *Countering Comprehensive Coercion. Competitive Strategies Against Authoritarian Political Warfare* (Washington, D.C., CSBA, 2018); Elizabeth G. Troeder, *A Whole-of-Government Approach To Gray Zone Warfare* (Carlisle Barracks, US Army SSI, 2019).

Major War

In the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea and China's aggressive actions in the South Chinese Sea, Michael Mandelbaum concluded that war between major powers in the classical sense is no longer impossible and less unlikely now than, for example, in 1999.[15] Whereas some foresee war with China,[16] many see US power and Western influence decline in relation to China and the liberal world order under threat, if not already steadily eroding.[17] Iran is manifesting itself as a major regional power and challenger of the West and is joined by other authoritarian powers in seeking to disrupt stability. Within Europe nations are witnessing the rise of nationalist, populist and illiberal political movements, all joined in their anti-internationalist stance. Western liberalism has once again met an ideological competitor in aggressive authoritarianism.[18] Although well-armed with long range missiles and air defence capabilities, Western military

superiority can be eroded and Western retaliation frustrated after being challenged in the form of limited 'probes' threatening Western interests or involving minor incursions into the airspace or territory of Western countries. Such potentially escalating provocations serve as tests of Western willingness to respond. Failing to react properly may undermine credibility and gradually change the status quo.[19]

Challenges and armed clashes will, several analysts predict, increasingly involve swarms of drones, 'killer robots', along with cyberattacks, electro-magnetic pulse systems and hypersonic missiles. Intelligence analysis processes will be aided and expedited with AI, fed with massive data derived from an array of networked commercial and military sensors and satellites. Decisionmaking processes in turn will be advised by or even automated with AI and quantum computing on issues concerning, for example, the right time for a conventional attack, a cyber-offensive, whether to escalate or to launch an anti-satellite weapon.[20] Indeed, for some the synergy resulting from combining these emerging technologies may well result in a new Revolution in Military Affairs.[21] And, unlike the previous precision warfare revolution, in this informatization revolution it is not the West, but China that will outpace its rivals.[22] Drones, cyberweapons and AI may readily proliferate, also among non-state actors, as these technologies are driven by commercial motives and/or are easy to militarize. Apart from challenging Western military dominance, this new arms race may also undermine nuclear deterrence stability.[23]

The War in Ukraine As a Mirror

These scholarly perspectives highlight worrying tendencies and novelties and sometimes their warnings influence policy-making. After the COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the US took heed of the emerging great power rivalry and military build-up in Russia and China, shifting its focus towards the Pacific, and started a programme to capture emerging technologies – the 3rd off-set strategy – and in 2018

15 Michael Mandelbaum, Is Major War Still Obsolete? *Survival*, Vol. 61:5, (2019) 65-71; Michael Mandelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of Peace on Earth* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019).

16 Graham Allison, *Destined for War. Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (New York, Scribe Publications, 2018; Matthew Kroenig, *The Return of Great Power Rivalry. Democracy versus Autocracy from the Ancient World to the U.S. and China* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020).

17 Richard Haass, 'How a World Order Ends. And What Comes in Its Wake', *Foreign Affairs* 98, No.1 (2019) 22-30, 22; Edward Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017);

18 Ronald Inglehart, 'The Age of Insecurity: Can Democracy Save Itself?', *Foreign Affairs* 97, No.3 (2018) 20-28; Cas Mudde, 'Europe's Populist Surge. A Long Time in the Making', *Foreign Affairs* 95, No.6 (2016): 25-30; Hal Brands, 'Democracy vs Authoritarianism. How Ideology Shapes Great-Power Conflict', *Survival* 60, No.5 (2016) 61-114.

19 Michael Mandelbaum, *The Rise and Fall of Peace on Earth* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2019); David Kilcullen, *The Dragons and the Snakes. How the Rest Learned to Fight the West* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2020).

20 Kenneth Payne, *Strategy, Evolution and War. From Apes to Artificial Intelligence* (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2018); Paul Scharre, 'The Real Danger of an AI Arms Race', *Foreign Affairs* 98, No.3 (2019) 135-144.

21 Christian Brose, 'The New Revolution in Military Affairs. War's New Sci-Fi Future', *Foreign Affairs* 98, No.3 (2019) 122-134; Robert Latiffe, *Future War. Preparing for the New Global Battlefield* (New York, Vintage Books, 2017).

22 Michael Raska, 'The Sixth RMA Wave. Disruption in Military Affairs?', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44, No.4 (2021) 456-479, DOI: 10.1080/01402390.2020.1848818.

23 US Army TRADOC, *Multi-Domain Battle. Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century* (Carlisle Barracks, 2018); King Mallory, *New Challenges in Cross-Domain Deterrence* (Santa Monica, RAND, 2018).

published a robust military strategy that squarely addressed the new reality.[24] In 2014, European NATO member states pledged to increase defence spending to 2% and refocus on collective defence and collaborated in setting up the multinational enhanced Forward Presence units. In 2016 the EU published a new vision warning that Europe was facing an existential crisis because of Russia's aggression, a transatlantic relation under tension, uncontrolled migration flows and the rise of right-wing populist movements.[25] Several European states meanwhile joined the US counter insurgency campaign against ISIS in Iraq. Yet Europe's military spending hardly ceased to decline, nations disagreed on strategic priorities and NATO deterrence lacked credibility as a result of military capability shortfalls.[26] Kagan's criticism of 2003 that Europe was convinced it lived in paradise seemed still valid.[27] That lasted until Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Real wars, like the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, are educational events critically exposing the merits of extant theories of future war. At first blush Russia's invasion seems to validate several predictions, albeit not in their pure form or with the dramatic impact analysts anticipated. With its 'special military operation', major war, which NATO in 2010 had dismissed as very unlikely, had returned to Europe. Like the annexation of Crimea, in which hybrid actions were used below the threshold of traditional war, again 'Cool War' methods – a massive prolonged concerted disinformation campaign and cyberattacks – preceded the actual invasion. An easy and speedy victory – regime change and eradication of the Ukrainian identity – seemed within reach. With its vast military and economic resources (the world's 9th economy) Russia would simply steamroll over Ukraine (the 56th economy). The 150,000-190,000 troops gathered along the border might not achieve Russian President Putin's maximalist objective (the complete occupation of Ukraine) but would suffice for a rapid advance, outpacing Ukraine's mobilization of additional troops and the West's ability to agree on and mount a timely and robust response. Russia benefited from a 3-1

superiority in tanks and artillery pieces, 8-1 in combat helicopters and 10-1 in combat aircraft.

Immaculate war seems evident also. Putin asserted his 'special operation' only involved a limited number of highly trained units promising quick success with less risk of own casualties. Putin's use of informal armed groups, such as the Wagner Group and Kadyrov's Chechnyan fighters, is another feature. Third, it seems apparent in the prevalent use of stand-off munitions to attack the opponent while keeping own troops out of range of enemy weapons. The war showed massive Russian strikes with cruise- and ballistic missiles, volleys of long-range rocket artillery as well as swarms of cheap long-range Iranian Shaheed drones, suggesting Putin at least originally intended to bludgeon Ukraine from afar and reduce the political risks for the Kremlin regime.

For the first two-three days of the invasion, Putin's plan seemed to succeed. Massive cyberattacks attempted to paralyze Ukraine's transport and communications infrastructure. Around 1,000 cruise missiles and stand-off weapons were launched at airfields, military headquarters, and air defence positions.[28] Communications and radar systems were disrupted by intensive jamming operations, temporarily neutralizing Ukrainian SAM systems. Ukrainian fighter jets lost against the qualitatively and quantitatively superior Russian air craft, which could use airborne early warning and extended-range air-to-air missiles.

24   Daniel Fiott, 'A Revolution Too Far? US Defence Innovation, Europe and NATO's Military-Technological Gap', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, No.3 (2017) 417-437.

25   *Shared Vision, Common Action, A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Brussels, European Union, 16 June 2016).

26   Sten Rynning, Strategic Culture and the Common Security and Defence Policy – A Classical Realist Assessment and Critique, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 32:3)2011) 535-550, DOI: 10.1080/13523260.2011.623057; Hugo Meijer and Stephen G. Brooks, 'Illusions of Autonomy; Why Europe Cannot Provide for Its Security If the United States Pulls Back', *International Security*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Spring 2021) 7-43, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00405.

27   Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York, Vintage, 2003).

28   This reconstruction draws on Justin Bronk, Nick Reynolds and Jack Watling, *The Russian Air War and Ukraine Requirements for Air Defense* (London, RUSI, November 2022).

Airmobile units landed with helicopters at Hostomel airfield near Kyiv, waiting to connect with the mechanized columns advancing towards Kyiv from the north and northeast, and ready to receive transport planes carrying hundreds of infantrymen and armoured vehicles to Hostomel.

In later stages of the war, Russian drones combined with artillery significantly improved in finding targets, fire accuracy, responsiveness, and counter-battery tactics. As a result, artillery caused the most damage to materiel and led to the most casualties. Small drones provide the infantry with cheap intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and with armed drones also organic short range air power, often with deadly results against dug-in enemy troops. This proliferation of various types of drones crowding the lower layers of the skies over the battlefield combined with the frequent use of hypersonic missile launches in 2023 and 2024 reinforce the perception that predictions of a new revolution in warfare is in the making.

But those predictions also stated that drones, robotics, AI, and cyberattacks proliferate rapidly among smaller powers, as such technologies do not require massive military industries, developments are driven by the private sector, and are easily militarized. As the US CRS report on emerging technologies warned, it may erode the military technological advantage of major powers.[29] Ukraine, with its substantial private ICT sector, benefited from these features. Zelensky won the 'Cool War', smartly exploiting the worldwide reach of social media. He succeeded in unifying his nation and created the moral foundation that energized Western support which materialized in a series of intensifying economic and financial sanctions and military supplies.[30] Operationally, readily available civilian cell phones and tablet apps

boosted the situational awareness of Ukrainian commanders, enabling troops and civilians to spot enemy units and weapon systems and transmit those locations to headquarters using simple target location apps. Those headquarters also exploited the near real time transmission of drone footage through networks that had been provided and supported by commercial companies, such as the Starlink communication satellites. The use of autonomous weapons, such as Swiftblade and Lancet drones, also confirm the increasing impact of emerging technologies on warfare some visions warned about.

Regression and Primitivization?

There is, however, also another potential pointer. The future might well resemble the past but it is in the new modes of operations that we can witness the regression and primitivization. of warfare. No cyber Pearl Harbor has materialised despite massive cyberattacks nor have autonomous weapons systems or hypersonic missiles proven real strategic level gamechangers offering offensive dominance. The dramatic asymmetry in capabilities between the warring parties that Immaculate Warfare presupposes, proved absent. After one week Russia's northern and northeastern advance stalled. Combined arms tactics faltered, logistics were uncoordinated, and Russia omitted to exploit its air power advantage, failing to achieve air superiority, launch intensive air interdiction missions, conduct strategic attacks and provide responsive close air support. Ukraine meanwhile brought artillery fire to bear on Hostomel airfield, shot down several helicopters and eliminated the Russian airborne units. The Russian armoured columns were assaulted by artillery fire and small mobile infantry teams equipped with anti-tank weapons. Ukraine's mobile SAM systems denied Russia the use of airspace, providing much needed freedom of manoeuvre for its ground troops and logistics.

When, on 9 April, Putin declared that his troops would retreat from Kyiv and instead focus on the Donbas, the 'special operation' had clearly failed. Russia reverted to attritional-style

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29 CRS Report, *Emerging Military Technologies. Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, D.C., April 2022).

30 Peter Singer, 'One Year In. What Are the Lessons from Ukraine for the Future of War?', *New American Century*, 13 March 2023, https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/blog/one-year-in-what-are-the-lessons-from-the-war-in-ukraine-for-the-future-of-war/.

warfare, including pre-modern siege warfare, encircling and pulverizing cities with massive artillery barrages. After costly urban combat, and horrific numbers of civilian casualties, cities such as Mariupol, Severodonetsk and Lyshichansk were conquered. While the defence of these cities cost the Ukrainians dearly too, it bought them time to bring Western artillery, howitzers and HIMARS launchers to the front. Ukraine succeeded to liberate Kharkov Oblast in September and the city of Kherson in November.

When winter conditions precluded further manoeuvres, both sides, but Russia in particular, found out that the massive number and variety of drones made it extremely risky to amass troops, artillery and armour near the frontline. Rocket artillery, too, wreaked havoc. US supplied HIMARS systems from summer 2022 onwards took out Russian SAM systems and forced Russia to place command centres and ammunition depots at a greater distance from the front aggravating existing command and logistical challenges. As a RUSI report concluded, 'There is no sanctuary in modern warfare. The enemy can strike throughout operational depth. Survivability depends on dispersing ammunition stocks, command and control (C2), maintenance areas and aircraft'.[31] As a result, well into 2023, along the long almost static frontline barrages of Russian artillery (sometimes firing 30,000 shells a day) and waves of Russian infantry smashed against well-developed Ukrainian defence lines, losing hundreds of soldiers and dozens of tanks, artillery and APCs daily.

Russia's air force, without air superiority, resorted to intensive missile and drone strikes against Ukraine's logistical infrastructure and, in the fall of 2022 and the winter of 2023-2024, against Ukraine's energy sector. While very destructive, these attacks failed to have a strategic impact due to shortages of missile stockpiles, relative inaccuracy of the strikes, increasing intercept rates (aided by supplies of Western air defence systems) and rapid repair capabilities. By Christmas 2023 Russia was estimated to have lost half of its deployed tanks and more than 10,000 armoured vehicles, as well as 360,000 soldiers.[32]

The defence had once again gained dominance over the offence, a reversal after three decades in which, at least in Western warfare, the offence had been dominant. The era of tank warfare seems over, the same seems to hold true for airmobile operations, and aviation near the frontline. The future role of air power, so dominant since Operation Desert Storm, must also be reassessed in the light of the effectiveness of large numbers of mobile air defence systems which had denied both sides the use of offensive air power above and beyond the frontline. The default solution was the use of cruise missiles, drones and hypersonic missiles, but Western air defence systems proved able to reduce their impact with interception rates rising to a stunning 80-90 per cent. Much as it was during the Cold War, the ability to maintain air denial suggests that, once again, in air warfare, if massed in sufficient numbers, air defence is now dominant at least against 4th generation aircraft, drones and missiles. This seems to validate warnings of the A2/AD problem for the West.

The Past Is the Future?

It is unwarranted to use the Russo-Ukrainian war as a touchstone for critically assessing previous visions of future war or to argue for a radical overhaul of existing defence policies and investment priorities. Russia's initial failures have shaped the trajectory of this war. It assumed a divided Ukrainian population, a weak regime, and weak military resistance. Russia overestimated its own military capabilities, the frontline troops received orders far too late, too little coordination had taken place between the armoured units, and between these units and

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31 Mykhaylo Zabrodskyi, Jack Watling, Oleksandr V. Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons in Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. February–July 2022* (London, RUSI, November 2022). See also Mick Ryan, 'A Year of War, Part I', *Substack,* 20 February 2023, at https://mickryan.substack.com/p/a-year-of-war-part-i.

32 @DefenceHQ, 'Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine', *Twitter,* 17 February 2023, 7:45 AM, https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1626472945089486848.

the necessary supporting artillery and air power. Logistics were not in order and the units crossed the border with their tanks and armoured vehicles in non-combat formations, directed by a weak, corrupt, and highly centralized command and control system. Troops lacked discipline and their equipment proved poorly maintained.[33] All this adds up as an explanation of the flaws observed in combined arms tactics and joint operations.

Russia's failures and Ukrainian successes also remind us of the continuity in war. Trenches, minefields, morale, intelligence, quality of command, all these key features are traditional and factors of warfare. While drones of all kinds by now are a new indispensable feature in the ecosystem of the battlefield, we also observe the usual action-reaction dynamics in which new weapon systems or tactics quickly inspire specific countermeasures in tactics, doctrine and defence systems. As a consequence, five to six sorties is the average life span of a drone. Russia's default strategy of attrition, too, harks back to twentieth-century interstate warfare dynamics. The realization that the West must be prepared for industrial warfare reminds us of the importance of what Michael Howard called the 'forgotten' dimensions of strategy.[34] Quantity of weapons systems, ammunition stocks, industrial capacity, spare parts, redundancy, sustainment are all strategic qualities. Also the rediscovery of Russia's

strategic culture of horrific total war originating from the Second World War indicates that the future of war always has deep roots in country's strategic history.

Indeed, in many respects, the war features worrisome paradoxes. It is post-modern as well as modern and sometimes pre-modern. It confirms predictions on major war that warned for the impact of emerging technologies. Land warfare in particular seems affected. The war in Ukraine also includes features of Cool War and Immaculate War. On the other hand, Russia's criminal, indiscriminate, horrific, destructive assaults on the identity of the Ukrainian people echoes tenets of pre-modern and modern style warfare and Sophisticated Barbarism, which involve brutal strategies the West has long discarded. This war, as a result, already ranks among 10 per cent of the bloodiest wars of the past 100 years. Mariupol fell after prolonged, almost mediaeval, siege tactics. City bombings and the long battle in Bakhmut show stark similarities to the battle of Stalingrad. The muddy trenches resemble those of the Somme in World War I. Indeed, as one scholar reflected, instead of high-tech warfare, prolonged massive attrition in interstate war may result in the 'primitivisation' of warfare.[35]

When Multiple Futures Become the Present

Still, while in their pure form none of the five futures discussed in this chapter present 'the future', and will probably be wrong, they nevertheless serve to inspire fruitful analysis and experiments. Indeed, as the recent strategic history of the West suggests, Western militaries, in their obligation to prepare for future war, need to study the range of potential futures and understand the specific political, strategic, and operational dynamics of each scenario they deem likely to present itself in the not-so-distant future. As both Frank Hoffman and Robert Johnson note, the future of war is plural,[36] and presuming the future is singular that the armed forces can focus on exclusively will, as the past three decades have proven, often result in

33   Dara Massicot, 'What Russia Got Wrong. Can Moscow Learn From Its Failures in Ukraine?', *Foreign Affairs* 102, No.3 (2023) 78-93; Rob Johnson, 'Dysfunctional Warfare. The Russian Invasion of Ukraine', *Parameters* 52, No.2 (2022) 5-20, DOI:10.55540/0031-1723.3149.

34   Stephen Covington, *The Culture of Strategic Thought Behind Russia's Modern Approaches to Warfare* (Cambridge, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, 2016); Alex Vershinin, 'The Return of Industrial Warfare', *RUSI,* 17 June 2022, at https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/return-industrial-warfare; Michael Howard, 'The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy', *Foreign Affairs* 57, No.5 (1979) 975-986.

35   Lukas Milevski, 'The Primitivisation of Major Warfare', *Survival*, 65:6 (2023) 119-136, DOI:10.1080/00396338.2023.2285607.

36   Frank Hoffman, 'The Future Is Plural. Multiple Futures for Tomorrow's Joint Force', *JFQ* 88, No. 1 (2018) 4-13; Robert A. Johnson, 'Predicting Future War', *Parameters* 44, No.1 (2014) 65-76.

organisational amnesia; knowledge and expertise concerning other kinds of wars are lost.

At the time of writing another civil war is developing in Sudan, and in Mali Russia's Wagner Group is gaining influence in proxy-warfare style, Chinese fighter aircraft violate Taiwanese airspace on a daily basis, Hamas has drawn Israel in a bloody war in Gaza and Houthi rebels attack commercial shipping in the Red Sea with drones and anti-shipping missiles. Multiple futures simultaneously have become the present. These crises confirm dire predictions contained in visions of future war and push humanitarian wars – Western efforts to limit humanitarian suffering – to the background. Indeed, at the beginning of 2024 Western political and military leaders summoned their populations to be prepared for major war with Russia in the not so distant future, a future European nations and their militaries, although forewarned, had long dismissed as highly unlikely. ∎

Preparing for the future of war

Lieutenant-Colonel Royal Netherlands Army Dr. Martijn van der Vorm
Review essay

Imagining the future of war and warfare has drawn the attention of scholars and soldiers alike. However, works by authors of science fiction have arguably stirred the imagination in a more dramatic fashion. Classical examples of fictional books on future conflict include *Ghost Fleet* by Peter Singer, *Old Men's War* by John Scalzi and, of course, the works by H.G. Wells such as *The War in the Air* and *The War to End All Wars*. The best of these fictional works combine a profound understanding of what war is and explore the impact of potential developments in technology, concepts and society on the conduct of future wars. Apart from being a fascinating pastime, fictional works can contribute to imaging future war by soldiers, policy makers and scholars. Fictional scenarios help to explore possible
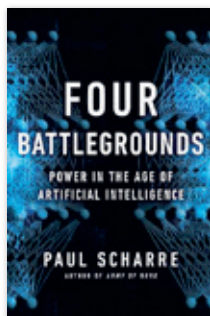
Preparing for the future of war

Four Battlegrounds
Power in the Age of Artificial Intelligence
Paul Scharre
New York (W.W. Norton) 2023
512 pp.
ISBN 9781324074779

War Transformed

The Future of Twenty-First Century Great Power Competition and Conflict
Mick Ryan
Annapolis (Naval Institute Press) 2023
312 pp.
ISBN 9781682477410

scenarios and potentially initiate their mani-festation.[1] In other words, war can imitate art.

However, pursuing change in itself is not necessarily the objective of students of future war. As Elliot Cohen and John Gooch put it, one main component of military catastrophes is the failure to anticipate.[2] They distinguish foresight needed to anticipate from learning the lessons from (recent) history and the ability to adapt changes in the environment. Within this large and diverse body of literature on future war, the concept of strategic surprise is a central theme. To be caught off-guard by an adversary is of course lamentable and states naturally strive to prevent such surprises. Still, history is replete with examples of an aggressor pulling off a strategic feat of deception, often in spite of available warning signs. Testament to the impact of such bolts from the blue is the widespread familiarity with events like Pearl Harbor, the Yom Kippur War or 9/11.
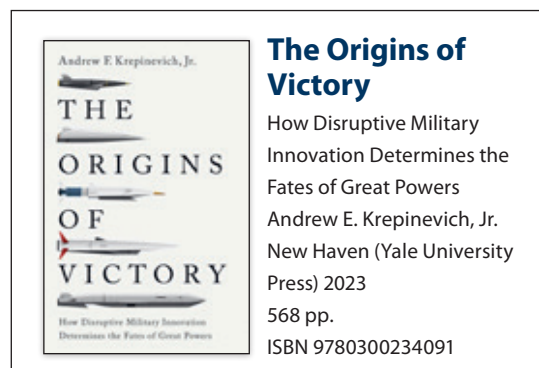
When strategic surprise is coupled with new and unforeseen capabilities of adversaries, the results can be catastrophic. Therefore, armed forces continuously have to prepare for future challenges. Furthermore, they have to anticipate and implement new capabilities. At the same time, professionals on national security must balance the exploration of the future with more mundane iterations of available capabilities for emerging conflicts.[3] Indeed, military institutions can be reluctant to expend too many resources on such explorations of unproven capabilities in order to prevent adverse effects on combat readiness in the short term.[4] Conse-quently, preparing for future war is inherently complicated by contemporary imperatives.

Thus, contemplating future wars remains an important effort to help preparing armed forces for conflicts to come. As such, periodically taking stock of the intellectual state of the art on future war is warranted. Recently, three new works have been published that explore future conflict: Paul Scharre's *Four Battlegrounds*, Mick Ryan's *War Transformed* and Andrew Krepinevich's *The Origins of Victory*. This essay seeks to assess the contribution of these works.

Contribution

Although Paul Scharre's *Four Battlegrounds* is not solely focused on war, his treatise on the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on national security is highly pertinent. The book focuses on how adoption of AI is spurring strategic competition between the United States and China. Scharre contends that winning the quest for gaining the upper hand in successfully implementing AI will confer substantial strategic advantages on states in the pursuit of power. As the title states, this

The Origins of Victory

How Disruptive Military Innovation Determines the Fates of Great Powers
Andrew E. Krepinevich, Jr.
New Haven (Yale University Press) 2023
568 pp.
ISBN 9780300234091

1 See for instance: Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War. A History* (New York: Public Affairs, 2017); Christopher Coker, *Future War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).
2 Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes* (New York: Free Press, 1990) pp. 26-27.
3 Martijn van der Vorm. 2023. *The Crucible of War. Dutch and British military learning processes in and beyond southern Afghanistan* (Leiden: Leiden University (doctoral dissertation 2023) pp. 384-387.
4 Kendrick Kuo, 'Dangerous Changes. When Military Innovation Harms Combat Effectiveness,' *International Security* 47, No. 2 (2022) pp. 48-87

new 'arms race' will be waged in four distinct but interrelated battlegrounds: data collection, computing hardware, (human) talent and institutions. Indeed, Scharre contends that this strive for dominance in AI is already well underway. While, according to Scharre, the U.S. currently holds the edge, China is closing the gap swiftly.[5] Marked advantages of China are its unity of purpose and ability to commit resources to AI. Ominously, Scharre warns that authoritarian states, such as China, are less scrupulous in using AI in strategic competition and to control their own populations. At the same time, the U.S., and by extension the West, is more conducive to innovation and more prone to attract talented personnel.[6] As such, Scharre advocates that the U.S. focuses on attracting human talent and ensure institutional reform of the national security organs to direct, implement and harness developments in AI. Of course, transforming inherently bureaucratic institutions to embrace what Scharre and others hail as the fourth Industrial Revolution is a tall order.

Four Battlegrounds thus provides a sobering assessment of the potential impact of AI on international security and strategic competition. It is accessible to a large audience and explains the developments and implications of AI comprehensively and in-depth. What the book drives home is that national security is contingent on far more factors than military capability. The emergence of AI and its impact on international security is a societal challenge. Scharre succeeds in illustrating these implications. When Scharre focuses on military aspects, he is able to explore the future yet remain grounded in contemporary developments and implications. *Four Battlegrounds* contends that AI

can be used for expedited targeting cycles, automated cyber operations but also more mundane applications, such as predictive maintenance. As such, Scharre argues that AI will not alter the nature of war but that the interaction between humans and machines will change the character of war in a profound way.[7] Ultimately, the technological potential, for better or worse, held by AI for the future of war can only be faced with skilled people working in adaptive institutions.

The emphasis on human and organizational factors for future conflict is even more pertinent to the other two books. In *War Transformed*, retired Australian Major-General Mick Ryan explores technological developments, such as AI, quantum computing, robotics, biotechnology and additive manufacturing. He then synthesizes these advances in technology with geopolitics, climate change, demographics and urbanization – collectively designated as 'disruptors' by Ryan and military trends. For instance, the 'battle for signatures', 'integrated action and thinking', human-machine cooperation and 'new forms of mass' are identified as trends.[8] These trends form a strong element of the book as change is not centred on technology but is viewed far more comprehensively. Ryan argues that war is an inherently human preoccupation and thus the human factor will remain pre-eminent, despite technological advances. Moreover, as the human factor in war remains constant, the nature of war will not be affected by changes. Ryan stresses that, consequently, the enduring realities of war as violence, politics and human emotion will remain at to the centre of conflicts.

Nevertheless, change in the character of war is constant and environmental changes will pose challenges to societies and their military institutions. As such, *War Transforms* contends that these changes should not be ignored but instead approached boldly by organizations and leaders. With this, Ryan emphasizes that 'effectiveness of people, ideas and institutions will […] determine whether military organizations can successfully adapt to meet the demands of the future security environment'.[9] Central to his argument, Ryan stresses the

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5   Paul Scharre, *Four Battlegrounds,* pp. 6-7.
6   Ibidem, pp. 30-31.
7   Ibidem, pp. 23-265.
8   Mick Ryan, *War Transformed*, pp. 82-84.
9   Ibidem, p. 210.

importance of maintaining an intellectual edge over potential adversaries. Therefore, *War Transformed* advocates investment in professional military education to enhance understanding of adversaries, technological literacy, adaptability and creativity. This grounded approach to future war makes this book well-worth reading. Yet, while most readers will sympathize with Ryan's notion that intellectual investments in military personnel will be beneficial to military institutions, the bureaucratic and political realities of armed forces will continue to impede the adaptability of these organizations.

The third book, *Origins of Victory* by Andrew Krepinevich, confronts the reader with the institutional elements of preparing for future war. The book is marbled with anecdotes from his time as analyst in the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment. Tasked with examining current and future trends in war for the U.S. Department of Defense, Krepinevich is well- versed in the institutional dynamics regarding organizational change based on new concepts, technologies and challenges. With this background, Krepinevich explores in his new book how states can acquire military advantage through the adoption of new technologies and concepts.

The first part of *The Origins of Victory* contains an insightful analysis on what Krepinevich identifies as the current military paradigm: the 'Precision-Warfare regime'. In order to overcome this equilibrium, the U.S. and its rivals, China and Russia, will naturally seek to adopt new technologies that are currently emerging. Mirroring Mick Ryan's book, *Origins of Victory* sketches the potential impact of developments, such as AI, robotics, hypersonics and biotechnology. What stands out in this part of the book is the ominous sense that new capabilities can degrade a state's ability to deter its rivals and thereby lower the threshold for military conflict.[10] Of course, this possibility cannot be discounted, yet the determination to prevent such a strategic surprise holds risks in itself. At the same time, Krepinevich states that the first-mover of a capability will not necessarily hold a strategic advantage as rivals can refine it and implement it more effectively.

The second part of the book contains historical cases of adopting 'disruptive innovations' by militaries: the Royal Navy's transformation at the onset of the 20th century, the German Army's pursuit to adopt manoeuvre warfare during the interbellum, the concurrent adoption of aircraft carriers by the U.S. Navy and, finally, the quest towards precision by the U.S. Air Force during the end of the 20th century. In these substantial chapters, Krepinevich tries to identify conditions that shaped the successful adoption of new concepts and technologies. In this part of the book Krepinevich shows that in each case substantial institutional impediments had to be overcome to change the dominant paradigms of the time. Implementing organizational change did not only upset the power balance within the organization, it also held the risk of degrading the readiness for war if the transformation was based on faulty analysis.

Empirically, these cases hold limited new insights for students of military change. Furthermore, while the innovations conferred a military advantage on the military services under study, these were mostly not strategically decisive. A related observation to this is that the case studies refer to services in isolation. As such, they are of limited value to address inter-service rivalry in institutions over resources, capabilities and concepts, in particular, in the light of the emerging prominence of Multi-Domain Operations in NATO.

These critical observations notwithstanding, Krepinevich provides relevant analyses based on the examples. Arguably the most important element is to provide a clear vision of what the main operational challenges might be for a military organization: what are potential operating environments, adversaries and how do we seek to operate in future conflicts. Krepinevich argues that this vision should be as concrete as possible to inform thinking on and build support for organizational change.[11] A

10   Andrew Krepinevich, *The Origins of Victory*, pp. 146-149.
11   Ibidem, pp. 430-433.

second element based on the case studies is that successful adoption of new concepts requires new a measurement of effectiveness. Only by having a clear grasp of whether a concept works can armed forces adapt and overcome operational challenges. The third proposition brought forward in the book is allowing for 'wildcatting', exploring potential new solutions to overcome identified challenges. Inherently, experimentation is difficult for large bureaucratic organizations, as this require resources with potentially limited returns on investment. Yet, this exploration is also crucial in order to adapt to an ever-changing environment with strategic rivals. A fourth and final element worth mentioning here is the role of leadership. In the case studies, Krepinevich stresses the influence of leaders in initiating and embracing organizational change. Invariably, the leaders in the examples held long tenures, often more than six years. This helped them with establishing a clear vision, build organizational support (often by promoting like-minded subordinates), allocation of resources and instilling a form of institutional patience. In other words, organizational change can be catalyzed by institutional continuity.

Conclusion

The three books discussed above are all worthy additions to the field and have considerable merits of their own. *Four Battlegrounds* provides a clear and insightful overview of the impact of AI on national security. *War Transformed* serves as a helpful reminder of the enduring nature of war

and the inherent centrality of humans in conflict. Finally, *The Origins of Victory* explores potential technological developments and draws on history to examine how military institutions seek to translate this to new capabilities. A central theme of the three books is that the future of war will not be shaped solely by technology. Instead, all authors emphasize the interplay between evolving technology, societal developments, humans and institutions. As such, the books are grounded and provide realistic vistas on the future of war. Moreover, the books by Scharre and Mick Ryan cogently illustrate that military prowess alone accounts for little in contemporary, and thus also future, strategic competition. Conversely, Krepinevich focuses more on military institutions and aptly describes the organizational dynamics and challenges of enacting change. Furthermore, he identifies a number of characteristics that can help to successfully adopt new concepts: vision, measurement of effectiveness, experimentation and consistent leadership. While elegant in their simplicity, any soldier or civil servant with practical experience in military organizations will recognize that enhancing these catalysts is challenging enough. Preparing for future challenges will have to compete with the imperative to be ready for any task today. Therefore, balancing between current requirements and future capabilities is a key challenge for any military organization. While the discussed books hold no definite answers, they do provide ample inspiration for further thought on potential future concepts, capabilities and conflicts. ■

The Small Seapower State

A Perspective on Small Naval Power

Daniël Turk[*]
Peer-reviewed article

Abstract

This article aims to offer an approach that evaluates the sea power of small states in a way that goes beyond the tendency to establish hierarchisations of naval power based on quantifiable military capabilities. Building on Jacob Borresen's theory of the 'coastal state', in which not the navy as such but rather the unique characteristics of the coastal state as a (small) maritime nation served as its starting point, I will introduce the notion of the *small seapower state*. The Netherlands will be used as an example throughout the article to substantiate this. While the framework of the coastal state helps to gain a better understanding of small naval power, it does not include all the maritime nations we tend to classify as 'small'. The small seapower state can serve as an alternative framework for the maritime nation whose link with the sea is not defined by the intrinsic value of its coastal waters, but rather because its role as a global maritime hub offers this type of state a larger role in global affairs than its own region affords. The return of peer competitors at sea will only reinforce the inherent differences between these types of maritime nations and should be reflected in the respective roles of their navies and future fleet compositions.

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Academic discourse on small naval power often lacks overarching narratives that go beyond numerical accounts of navies or measuring naval capability data. Holistic approaches that take into account the military aspects of a state's sea power as well as its wider maritime economy help to better understand the nature and character of small naval power. As the historically intricate link between seaborne commerce and the development of sea power may no longer be as straightforward as it used to be, it is nevertheless still there. This is not necessarily the case because of the maritime economy's wartime utility, but because of a strength in and of itself, as complementary to the naval capabilities a state can bring to bear.

A nation's relationship with the sea determines its navy's role and fleet composition. For the past thirty years, due to the absence of peer competitors at sea, the importance of determining this relationship and embedding it in a wider maritime narrative has receded into the background. The failure to embed such a narrative as part of a wider 'vision', or at least a discussion, about the sort of maritime nation a state is or perceives itself to be and, subsequently, to determine the sort of navy that best suits its interests, is part of an affliction that has taken hold of many Western states: 'seablindness'. Out of sight often means out of mind. With the (largely automated) infrastructure of many seaports having expanded away from their old city centres and the sea itself is associated by many with a holiday destination, it is not surprising that the 'seamindedness' of the peoples living in states that are existentially connected to the sea is waning. Even the watershed year of 2022, with images depicting the horrors of the kind of urban and trench warfare we thought we had left behind in the 20th century, it is easy to forget the maritime dimension of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Nonetheless, rising defence budgets across Europe, resulting from this 'wake-up call', are to impact the fleet composition of many European navies. Danger lurks that this sudden surge in defence budgets will result in hastily-made reactive decisions that alleviate (rightful) immediate concerns instead of addressing long-term

strategic challenges. In what is an ever continuous cycle of more expensive and often fewer ships, just replacing, hull for hull, the current fleet composition is a daunting task in itself. Pressure to acquire or upgrade existing assets leaves little leeway to reflect on what type of navy a maritime nation has and how it perceives itself and its role in the world.

Especially the smaller European maritime nations have little room for manoeuvre. 'Wars of choice' and the absence of existential threats to seaborne commerce or territorial waters have for a long time precluded discussions on possible trade-offs between constabulary versus warfighting capabilities or between 'expeditionary' versus retaining 'coastal' naval assets. In fact, contributing to maintaining the 'good order at sea', became the *raison d'être* for many smaller European navies. Otherwise they risked being seen as obsolete. Traditional coastal defence navies, like those of Denmark and Norway, (partially) transformed their fleet composition to enable participation in out-of-area maritime security operations. And those navies that already considered 'all the free world oceans' as their area of operations, like the Dutch navy, only became more expeditionary. The inherent distinctiveness between maritime nations lost its importance during this post-modern or 'post-Mahanian' phase in history. Irrespective of whether one's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) was the size of Belgium's 3,447 square kilometres or the 2,385,178 square kilometres of Norway, the 'global' West had a stake in maintaining the good order at sea. It still does but the 2022 watershed again accentuated some fundamental differences. Metrics, such as geographic location, structure of the maritime economy, level of connectivity, and trade flows will reappear in the geopolitical foreground. Norway's gas production within its enormous EEZ became a European security concern, while the importance of the Dutch port of Rotterdam as a primary energy hub proved its consistently high ranking on many a connectivity index as the first port to welcome a tanker carrying LNG from as far as Australia to help alleviate Europe's energy crisis.

Yet the discourse mostly retains its narrow focus on the naval capabilities needed to participate in the 'high-end' maritime arena. As defence budgets were rapidly increased following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, old wish lists immediately resurfaced. One of the first decisions by the Dutch navy was to equip its frigates with Tomahawk cruise missiles – a plan shelved twenty years earlier in the midst of the 'post-Mahanian' era. Wanting the best hardware is only logical; however, it is beyond the scope of this article to take a normative stance therein. But rather, by building on the expanding body of literature written specifically from the perspective of small naval powers, this paper offers a framework that evaluates sea power in a way that goes beyond the tendency to establish hierarchisations of naval power based on quantifiable military capabilities; one that instead has at its core the small maritime nation's relationship with the sea.

This framework, the *small seapower state*, is based on Andrew Lambert's notion of the *seapower state*, which he understood as an ideal type of maritime nation that is culturally aware of the importance of acquiring strategic sea power and actively nurtures a seapower identity. Strategic sea power is still provided by the United States, but seapower identity 'is shared among a group of second- and third-rank powers'.[1] These states 'are disproportionally engaged with global trade, unusually dependent on imported resources, and culturally attuned to maritime activity', yet unable to develop the naval capabilities of - a 'seapower great power'. Central to Lambert's argument is that 'sea power' has come to be understood in strategic terms and less so as intended by the ancient Greeks when they considered a *thalassokratia* as a state dominated by the sea, not necessarily as one with a large navy.[2] This is the crux of this article. For it is exactly the preoccupation with the military aspects of naval power which, as we will come to see, has influenced the thinking on small navies.

If seapower states can only exist when they have the scale to achieve great power status and consciously create a seapower identity to help attain naval mastery, what then of contempo-

rary maritime states that share many of its characteristics? While they may not consciously create a seapower identity, or even failed to sustain existing maritime identities, the small seapower state is nonetheless 'dominated by the sea' – even though it might need reminding that it is. It lacks the scale to develop strategic sea power but that does not mean it cannot have agency. For possessing a large navy does not necessarily make a state a great naval power, much like having a small navy does not necessarily mean a state is a small maritime power.

Before turning to the concept of the small seapower state, I will first elaborate on how naval literature has skewed our understanding of what constitutes naval power and, secondly, what this tells us more specifically about small navies. I will then explain Jacob Borresen's concept of the *coastal state* as a contrast to the notion of the small seapower state, which will subsequently be introduced as a framework that can help to think about small naval power in a wider perspective.

The Classification of Naval Power

The tendency to hierarchise or classify naval power is as old as history itself. In Herodotus' descriptions of the naval battles at Lade or Salamis he goes to great lengths to explicitly mention the naval contributions down to the level of even the smallest Greek city-state. Irrespective of the accuracy of his *Histories*, what matters is that the ships listed are only the triremes, the purpose-built warships of classical antiquity, even though the pentekontor, as the general-purpose galley of the period, was still operated by many Greek poleis. Thucydides as well, when naming the very few members of the Delian League contributing ships to the Athe-

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1 Andrew Lambert, *Seapower States: Maritime Culture, continental empires and the conflict that made the modern world* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2018) 7.
2 Lambert, *Seapower States*, 7.

nian-led alliance, only mentioned those providing triremes, thereby omitting the smaller League members still using these general-purpose galleys. In the ancient 'indexes' of naval power these vessels did not seem to matter. As the triremes evolved into ever more larger ship types, a 'hierarchisation' took shape resembling the rating system during the age of sail. In the third century BC warships were 'classed' according to the number of files of seated rowers.[3] Thus the quadriremes were 'fours', the quinqueremes 'fives', etc. The largest of these ever used in battle were the deceres ('tens'), but that did not stop the Antigonid ruler Demetrius Poliorcetes from having the Phoenicians build for him gigantic polyremes (up to 'sixteens'). Ptolemy Philopator reportedly even had a 'forty' built, a vessel requiring 4,000 rowers. However, as Plutarch remarked, the beauty of Demetrius' ships 'did not mar their fighting qualities', whilst Ptolemy's behemoth, on the other hand, was meant only for 'exhibition and not for use'.[4]

Basing one's naval estimates on such force comparisons can thus be misleading and potentially dangerous. Many other variables of measuring power at sea are overlooked in such one-sided estimates. Nonetheless, even to this day any comparisons of fleet strength or force-effectiveness, as Edward Luttwak has noted, begins with the available capability data: 'gross tonnage levels, the number of ships by classes, aggregate gun and missile power, and so

on'.[5] Over time the character of such 'capability data' has changed markedly. We have moved on from the number of rowing files to codifying the amount of mounted guns in a rating system during the age of sail. And as the wooden hulls gave way to plated decks in the 19th century, tonnage and gun calibre became the metrics that determined fleet strength. Nowadays it is the amount of vertical launching system (VLS) cells or the sensor and command systems that tend to be the measurable metrics of naval power.

This inclination to hierarchise, then as now, is only natural. As is the use of such quantifiable 'capability data'. There are, of course, more variables at play. But seamanship, maintenance standards or the use of weapons skills under stress are difficult to measure beforehand. Few outside observers would have thought that the Russian cruiser Moskva could be sunk by only two Ukrainian land-based anti-ship missiles. Furthermore, national characteristics of sea power invariably play a role in assessing each other's naval strength. At the end of the 19th century, elder British statesmen who grew up in admiral Nelson's wake of near absolute British naval dominance, saw no need to build capital ships in excess of numerical equality to the next two powers, for they still believed that 'one Englishman was worth two or three foreigners'.[6] As late as 1912, at the height of the Anglo-German naval arms race, Winston Churchill made the assumption that Germany possessing more dreadnoughts than Britain would not necessarily be a problem given the British preponderance in pre-dreadnought ships.[7] Such uncorroborated considerations were nonetheless, as Luttwak wrote, 'commonly the only variables that intrude upon the decisions that, in turn, determine the political effectiveness of naval forces'.[8]

Naval scholars often also understood naval power in similar fashion by providing 'numerical accounts of sea power and measuring naval capabilities'.[9] The strategic value of naval power is derived from the isolated study of ships, navies and their (perceived) capabilities. Literature is awash with examples of naval classifica-

3   Philip A. G. Sabin and Hans van Wees, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman warfare*, Vol. I, Greece, the Hellenistic world and the rise of Rome (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) 357.

4   Plutarch and Bernadotte Perrin (English translation), *Plutarch's Lives*, Vol. 9 (London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1920) Demetrius, 43.

5   Edward N. Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power* (Baltimore, London, John Hopkins University Press, 1974) 39.

6   Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power. A history of British naval policy in the pre-Dreadnought era, 1880-1905* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1940) 107.

7   Philip O'Brien, *British and American naval power: politics and policy, 1900-1936* (Westport, CT, Praeger, 1998) 81.

8   Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, 40.

9   Kevin Blachford, 'Ocean flows and chains: sea power and maritime empires within IR theory', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* (9 November 2022).

tions. Their utility and relevance differ, but all attempt to create some sort of order to emphasize the differences between the world's naval forces.[10] Making sense of the proliferation of navies as such is no unnecessary luxury. Bear in mind that in 1914, *Jane's Fighting Ships* listed only 39 navies, whereas today there are just over 160 states possessing a navy. Few are, however, instruments of true naval power. This is reflected in the many hierarchisations and typologies of the world's navies. These tend to have a narrow focus on the level of warfighting capabilities and a navy's reach, resulting in pyramidical frameworks with at the top only the very few true ocean-going navies.

Unsurprisingly, such studies have strong echoes of the American naval strategist Alfred Mahan. George Modelski and William Thompson calculated naval strength based on a capital ship count to test their long-cycle theory of hegemonic naval power.[11] Brian Crisher and Mark Souva created a dataset covering the period 1865-2011 to measure a state's naval power using the total tonnage of a country's primary warships – defined as platforms that can utilize ship-based weapons to destroy land, sea, or air targets outside of their own littoral waters.[12] But focusing on tonnage and assuming that there is a correlation between the size of a ship and its overall capabilities remains problematic. Keith Patton noted that in this day and age simply counting hulls or using tonnage as a metric tells us little about a fleet's combat power. During the dreadnought age powerful 12-inch naval guns hurling 850 pound shells required a platform the size of these enormous battleships. Nowadays, corvettes operated by small coastal navies have the potential to carry missiles that can be just as lethal as those aboard the largest surface ships. Patton uses the number of Battle Force Missiles (BFM) to measure fleet strength. The result is reminiscent of the rating system pioneered by the English in the 17th century: to classify ships based on the amount of their VLS cells. Those vessels with the capacity to carry over a 100 BFM, like the American Ticonderoga-class cruisers or the Chinese Type 055, would then be ranked as 'first rate' warships. 'Second-rate' warships are those carrying between

90-100 BFM and this continues all the way down to unrated ships with less than six BFM. Ship type becomes less relevant when using the number of BFM as a metric to measure fleet strength.[13] For instance, in an effort to speedily ramp up its combat power, the Dutch navy announced in 2022 its intention to take into use four large, yet cheap (commercial) hulls that are stacked with BFM that can be launched from a nearby high-end frigate that serves as the 'mothership' to this flotilla of so-called TRIFIC ships.[14] While TRIFIC theoretically contributes to missions, such as local air defence or anti-surface warfare, the focus on BFM as such only partially explains a navy's operational reach or its ability to conduct long-range power projection.

An alternative approach to classify navies is one that reflects the ability of a navy to project some form of naval power beyond its own territorial waters. Ken Booth used the term 'ocean-going navy' to distinguish it from a more a more coastal-oriented 'contiguous sea navy'. It is a distinction that reflects the difference in geographical reach, which, according to Booth, is in itself indicative of a navy's role and ambition.[15] Michael Lindberg and Daniel Todd studied the influence of geography on naval force structures, identifying three primary types of navies: power projection navies, coastal (or territorial defence) navies, and constabulary

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10 Michael Lindberg and Daniel Todd, *Brown-, Green-, and Blue-water fleets: the influence of geography on naval warfare, 1861 to the present* (Westport, CN, Praeger, 2002) 196.

11 George Modelski, *Seapower in global politics, 1494-1993*, ed. William R. Thompson (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1988).

12 Brian Benjamin Crisher and Mark Souva, 'Power at Sea: A Naval Power Dataset, 1865-2011', *International Interactions* 40 (2014) 608.

13 Keith Patton, 'Battle Force Missiles: The Measure of a Fleet', *CIMSEC*, 24 April, 2019.

14 TRIFIC stands for: The Rapidly Increased Firepower Capability. Jaime Karremann, 'Marine wil op korte termijn grote zwaarbewapende schepen met enkele bemanningsleden', *Marineschepen.nl*, 23 November, 2022. See: https://marineschepen.nl/nieuws/TRIFIC-nieuw-plan-voor-zwaarbewapende-laag bemande-schepen-231122.html. In the meantime, TRIFIC has been renamed as MICAN.

15 Ken Booth, *Navies and foreign policy* (New York, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979) 120-21.

navies. Geography, or 'operational environment', is broken down into 'blue water' and 'non-blue water', with the latter subdivided in 'green water' and 'brown water' environments. It is, as they write, 'the norm to associate power-projection navies with blue water, coastal navies with either green or brown water, and constabulary navies with green water'.[16] There is thus a correlation between operational environment and naval force structure. Power-projection navies are usually well-fixed in the capital ship domain: aircraft carriers, destroyers, and frigates suited for high-intensity warfare. Whereas the force structure of coastal defence navies usually consists of corvettes and submarines with a limited operational reach, constabulary navies are mainly designed to operate in their own inland waterways.[17] Unsurprisingly, small navies are usually grouped in the latter two categories; equating small maritime nations with being weak and therefore conferring on them coastal defence or commerce raiding roles. The underlying assumption is that only large naval powers have maritime interests to protect that extend beyond their own territorial waters.

Clark Reynolds created a naval typology that reinforces such (simplistic) assumptions on the role and function of smaller naval forces. Reynolds identified three types of states that have used navies: First, the *maritime* nations in which navies are the principal strategic arm for their defence needs. Second, the *continental* powers that use their navy in a defensive role and in support of their armies. And third, the *small* powers, whose limited naval capabilities can merely perform local services and are capable only of confronting similar sized states.[18] But by considering small powers to be a homogenous group, he ignores smaller maritime states with (limited) global aspirations. Their navies may not do so strategically, like the great naval powers, but there are small powers with vital global maritime interests and capable, at least to a degree, of safeguarding them or contribute to their protection in a meaningful way. Instead, Reynolds considers protecting maritime commerce as one of the primary strategic applications of the naval power of the maritime nations, whereas the small powers can best resort to the traditional 'strategies of the weak' (i.e. commerce raiding). Thereby overlooking that small powers can also be maritime nations for which the protection of their maritime interests is equally important, if not existential. They do not possess as much naval 'capability data' as their larger counterparts, but the protection of their, in some cases, outsized maritime interests may still constitute the principal strategic function of their navies.

Small Navies: a Semantic Discord?

Based on the above it is tempting to conclude that small navies are all those that are not large. Eric Grove's often used hierarchisation of naval power takes into account the world's smaller navies (ranging from rank one: 'major global force projection navies', all the way down his ladder to rank nine: 'token navies'), but he still retains the narrow political-naval focus which tells us little about their intended role and context nor is his threshold between what constitutes as a 'small' or 'large' navy exactly clear.[19] In a 2014 revision of his 'ranking', Grove characterised the ranks four to eight as belonging to the small navy category, which includes the medium regional force projection navies, adjacent force projection navies, offshore territorial defence navies, inshore territorial defence navies, and constabulary navies.[20] If anything, such typologies only highlight that 'there exists no single defined state of what a small navy is', but rather that 'there are varying degrees of smallness'.[21]

16 Lindberg and Todd, *Brown-, Green-, and Blue-water fleets*, 196.

17 Ibidem, 197.

18 Clark G. Reynolds, *Command of the Sea: The History and Strategy of Maritime Empires* (New York, William Morrow & Co, 1974) 12-6.

19 Eric Grove, *The Future of Sea Power* (London, Routledge, 1990) 237.

20 Eric Grove, 'The Ranking of Smaller Navies Revisited', in *Small Navies: Strategy and Policy for Small Navies in War and Peace*, ed. Michael Mulqueen, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller (London, New York, Routledge, 2014) 17-18.

21 Grove, 'The Ranking of Smaller Navies Revisited', 36-37.

Jeremy Stöhs underlined this in a 2021 study on Europe's ability to address the high-end challenge in the maritime domain. He categorized European naval forces as being 'large', 'medium-sized', 'small but high performing', and, lastly, as 'small and smallest navies'.[22] Although Stöhs only uses this categorisation for the sake of analytical clarity, it does show the arbitrariness in trying to classify navies based on 'measurable' capability data. Based on its size (55,326 tons), the Danish navy, for instance, is about half the total displacement of the Dutch navy. But when using, for instance, Patton's metric to hierarchize according to the number of VLS cells, the Danish 240 cells exceed the Dutch 192 – and even the German number of 160 cells. Interestingly, a 2023 CSIS report on European navies branded the *Deutsche Marine* as 'world-class', whilst labelling the Danish and Dutch naval forces as 'robust'.[23]

Basil Germond has convincingly deconstructed the hierarchisation of naval forces as an inherently subjective exercise whilst, nevertheless, also showing how the 'ranking' or 'othering' of naval forces have come to be seen as a generally accepted representation even within naval establishments.[24] It is a tendency summed up by Germond as follows:
1) Big navies are powerful whereas small navies are less powerful;
2) It is better to be powerful;
3) So, big navies are better than small navies.

What seemed to count in such a 'naval pecking order' is the position of each navy relative to others, 'rather than each navy's individual capacities judged against their state's needs and defence objectives'.[25] In some ways the 'small navy' discussion is a semantic discord, albeit one rooted in the premise that no navy likes to be labelled as small. The term 'small navy' has been unpopular amongst naval thinkers and the role of the smaller naval powers as well as their specific challenges and the context in which they operate is often overlooked. There is, as Ian Speller noted, an inclination to approach naval power from a perspective built upon an examination of the activities of larger navies, assuming that the resulting concepts and principles

apply in equal measure to the smaller ones.[26] The growing body of work on small navies notwithstanding, there is still no entirely satisfactory definition, other than perhaps Geoffrey Till's suggestion that a small navy is simply one with 'limited means and aspirations'.[27]

Historically, however, labelling smaller navies as 'weak', 'second-rate' or 'inferior' helped to distinguish them from the 'strong' or 'large' navies. But 'second-rate' in which context? And 'inferior' compared with what? For instance, the 'strategy of the weak' par excellence, the French *Jeune École*, was based on the premise of France being the inferior naval power. But when the ideas for this strategy were first conceived in the 1860s, *la Marine* was only secondary to the Royal Navy – and even gained a brief edge over the British in the development of battleships with screw steam-engines.[28] The crushing Russian naval defeat at Tsushima (1905) made Russia, according to Arthur Marder, a 'third-class naval power'.[29] While the loss of fourteen battleships during the Russo-Japanese War would be a severe blow to any naval power, on the eve of the First World War the Russian navy nevertheless still possessed ten pre-dreadnought battleships and had seven dreadnoughts under construction – a force larger than most European maritime nations had at the time.

22 Jeremy Stöhs, *How High? The Future of European Naval Power and the High-End Challenge*, Centre for Military Studies (CMS) (2021), 25.

23 Mathieu Droin, Courtney Stiles Herdt, and Gabriella Bolstad, *Are European Navies Ready to Navigate an Ever More Contested Maritime Domain?*, Center for Strategic & International Studies (2023), 12-13.

24 Basil Germond, 'Small Navies in Perspective: Deconstructing the Hierarchy of Naval Forces', in *Small Navies. Strategy and Policy for Small Navies in War and Peace*, ed. Michael Mulqueen, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller (Abingdon, Oxon, New York, NY, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014) 33-4.

25 Basil Germond, 'Seapower and small navies: A post-modern outlook', in *Europe, small navies and maritime security. Balancing traditional roles and emergent threats in the 21st century*, ed. Robert C. McCabe, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller (London, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020) 27-28.

26 Ian Speller, 'Maritime Strategy and policy for smaller navies', *International Studies Association* (2012) 1.

27 Geoffrey Till, 'Can Small Navies Stay Afloat?', *Jane's Navy International*, no. 6 (2003).

28 C.I. Hamilton, *Anglo-Frenh Naval Rivalry, 1840-1870* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993) 82.

29 Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power*, 441.

It would be easy to attach too much value to a casual remark made by a distinguished naval historian like Marder. Even so, it is a line of thinking that has persisted all the way through the Cold War when to be small was considered an inferior state of being.[30] Reynolds' typology is exemplary for this period. Even in the then scarce academic publications dealing specifically with small navies, they were seen as 'configured to operate in basically defensive modes', because, as Joseph Morgan wrote towards the end of the Cold War, 'none can exert ocean-wide influence'.[31] A few years later, Morgan still defined small navies as 'fleets that do not possess ships capable of force projection in the open seas'.[32] His compatriot Charles Koburger shared the view that 'it is in the narrow seas that the small navies really come into their own'.[33]

Where policy is concerned, the attitude of the Dutch after the loss of New Guinea in 1963 fits neatly in this paradigm. With the loss of this last vestige of Dutch 'empire', the navy stressed the importance of still including global deployments in its sailing schedules 'in order not to slip unnoticed into a too narrow, local navy'.[34] While it initiated a fleet plan that resulted in the Royal Netherlands Navy even becoming for a brief moment one of the largest in the world (ranking fifth on the Crisher and Souva dataset), it was a naval policy that was to a certain extent detached from what NATO required from the Netherlands in terms of capabilities.[35] A Norwegian Fleet Plan, which was realized at about the same time, resulted, on the other hand, in a navy ideal to provide NATO's vulnerable Northern Flank with inshore coastal protection.[36] Denmark also fulfilled an important role within the alliance by guarding the straits between the North and Baltic Seas to prevent the Soviet Baltic Fleet from entering the Atlantic. Like Norway, the Danish navy developed a fleet of small and fast anti-shipping vessels consisting of torpedo boats, submarines, and minelayers that best utilized their unique strategic and geographical characteristics.[37] Ultimately, the Dutch naval establishment found new purpose in NATO after the loss of its 'empire', whilst also remaining committed to a doctrine of out-of-area reach backed up by a relatively large 'harmonious' fleet, which was, in part, the legacy of the Dutch self-perception as a historic maritime nation with global maritime interests.[38] Smaller naval powers are thus not necessarily 'weak', 'inferior' or 'second-rank' when its naval forces are attuned to the requirements of the type of maritime state they serve and the strategic environment in which they operate, irrespective of its fleet size, composition and 'capability data'.

The Coastal State

Finding a comprehensive definition of what constitutes a 'small navy' thus remains difficult. The question is whether it matters. For Till the conceptual differences between large and small navies are 'more a matter of degree than of kind'.[39] John Kearsley also believed that naval forces, large and small, seek to fulfil a wide range of missions. The difference being that small navies have different priorities than their larger counterparts. The former may prefer to operate closer to home or out-of-area as part of a coalition- but small navies will seek to substanti-

30   Robert C. McCabe, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller, 'Introduction. Europe, small navies and maritime security', in *Europe, Small Navies and Maritime Security. Balancing traditional roles and emergent threats in the 21st century*, ed. Robert C. McCabe, Deborah Sanders, and Ian Speller (London, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020) 4.

31   Joseph R Morgan, 'Small Navies', *Ocean Yearbook* 6 (1986) 388.

32   Joseph R Morgan, *Porpoises among the Whales: Small Navies in Asia and the Pacific*, East-West Center (1994) 3.

33   Charles W. Koburger, *Narrow Seas, Small Navies, and Fat Merchantmen. Naval Strategies for the 1990s* (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1990) 58.

34   D.C.L. Schoonoord, *Pugno pro patria: de Koninklijke Marine tijdens de Koude Oorlog* (Franeker, Van Wijnen, 2012) 133.

35   Jan Willem Honig, *Defense policy in the North Atlantic Alliance: the case of the Netherlands* (Westport, CN, [etc.], Praeger, 1993) 202-3.

36   Rolf Tamnes, 'Major Coastal State - Small Naval Power: Norway's Cold War Policy and Strategy', in *Navies in Northern Waters, 1721-2000*, ed. Rolf Hobson and Tom Kristiansen (London, Frank Cass, 2004) 235-36.

37   Timothy Choi, 'Danish naval evolution in the Arctic. Developments through the unipolar moment', in *Navies in multipolar worlds. From the Age of Sail to the Present*, ed. Paul Kennedy and Evan Wilson (London, Routledge, 2021) 185.

38   Anselm J. van der Peet, *Out-of-Area. De Koninklijke Marine en multinationale vlootoperaties, 1945-2001* (Franeker, Uitgeverij Van Wijnen, 2016) 125-6.

39   Geoffrey Till, 'Preface', in *Navies in Northern Waters, 1721-2000*, ed. Rolf Hobson and Tom Kristiansen (London, Frank Cass, 2004) vii-viii.

ate each mission in some way.[40] Prioritizing is not solely determined by the military means at one's disposal, but just as much by strategic circumstances and, put more broadly, the type of maritime nation a state is or perceives itself to be.

Writing at the end of the Cold War, James Cable remarked that 'few countries are sufficiently confident of the security of their own coasts or have enough important interests beyond their regional sea to afford the luxury of an ocean-going navy' which would provide European governments a larger role in global affairs than their own region affords.[41] Nowadays, with the maritime centre of gravity shifting to the Indo-Pacific, the small seapower state, as I will argue, no longer considers such a force a luxury but perhaps rather a necessity. There is, however, a set of small maritime nations that prioritizes their own region because their economic, political, and historic relationship with the sea is, to a larger degree, determined by their coastal waters. This is encapsulated in the theory of the coastal state by Jacob Borresen.

His 1994 article 'The Seapower of the Coastal State' provides one of the most interesting perspectives on small naval power. Borresen contests the until then prevalent notion that coastal states resort to limited force-projection navies and traditional 'strategies of the weak' solely because of limited means. Instead, complementary to Till's view that small navies 'can be governed by different ideas', Borresen states that the coastal state can either lack the ability or the *will* to maintain a 'blue water' navy. For the coastal state it can be a political choice to limit its naval capabilities to the waters that make up its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which, as for instance the case of Borresen's native Norway shows, can be quite large by itself as well as constituting a major source of its generated wealth. Coastal states do not compete with the global naval powers on the high seas, nor do they wish to do so.[42] 'Coastal navies should not be modelled on the navies of the [global] naval powers', for, as Borresen writes, their sea power has a primarily defensive purpose. The navy of the coastal state is not

necessarily inferior to that of the naval powers that 'rule the high seas' but rather *different*.[43] The fundamental precept of Borresen's theory is that coastal states have access to and control over their own coastal waters. A state cannot be a coastal state if the integrity of its territorial waters depends on the goodwill of others.

Borresen's theory showed a different path for smaller maritime nations to apply their sea power in a way in line with their political and strategic culture, their geography and geopolitical situation, as well as one that best serves their national security and economic interests.[44] His article was published, however, when the 'post-Mahanian' epoch, following the demise of the Soviet Union, was about to start. The essence of the coastal state navy, as one confined to local waters where it can exist as a credible coastal deterrent force, seemed to have lost its relevance. After all, to reverse Cable's remark: once you are sufficiently confident of the security of your own coast you can afford the luxury of an ocean-going navy. Or else risk becoming seen by politicians and taxpayers as a glorified (and expensive) coast guard. Borresen did not rule out the coastal state's participation in 'out-of-area' operations, but when its navy does, for instance to demonstrate the government's willingness to burden-sharing, it remains realistic about what its navy can and cannot do. It was not the projection of power that mattered, but the projection of stability. Such a form of projection beyond one's own coastal waters did not necessarily require 'queens' or 'bishops', but could also be performed by 'pawns'. Prioritizing the order of effect over the order of battle, the latter as the guiding principle in many a naval

40 Harold Kearsley, *Maritime Power and the Twenty First Century* (Dartmouth, Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1992) 108-9.

41 James Cable, *Navies in Violent Peace* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989) 104.

42 Jacob Borresen, 'The seapower of the coastal state', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 17 (1994) (1) 149-50.

43 Borresen, 'The seapower of the coastal state', 174.

44 Jacob Borresen, 'Coastal Power: The Sea Power of the Coastal State and the Management of Maritime Resources', in *Navies in Northern Waters, 1721-2000*, ed. Rolf Hobson and Tom Kristiansen (London, Frank Cass, 2004) 249.

typology, at least allowed smaller navies – including those of the coastal state – to transcend the perception of 'weakness' or 'inferiority' as it has been shaped in decades of naval literature written from the perspective of large naval powers.

The Small Seapower State

Borresen's theory of the coastal state offered a more holistic approach to naval power, something which, with the re-emergence of peer competitors at sea, might become relevant again. But while the notion of the coastal state applies to many small naval powers, not all will fit in this framework. If it was the only one that encapsulates small naval power, we would be back at Reynolds' simplistic typology and overlook the fact that small naval powers can also be maritime nations with global maritime interests exceeding even those of the states we tend to denominate as large naval powers based on their military capabilities.

That is not to say that the maritime interests of the coastal state are confined only to its coastal waters. During the 20th century Norway ranked as an important shipping nation and Maersk-Möller, as one of the world's largest shipping companies, still resides in Denmark. When global trade flows are disrupted, as happened during the Suez Canal obstruction in 2021, the coastal states are naturally also affected. But the first to feel the pain are global trade hubs like Rotterdam. While Oslo and Aarhus are gateways to their respective countries, Rotterdam, however, serves as a gateway to Europe and fulfils a pivotal role in the global economy. To the Netherlands this constitutes an enormous strategic asset. With container ships becoming ever bigger, the number of ports capable of handling them have become less. As a result,

seaborne trade flows are increasingly concentrated.[45] Rotterdam is one of the few European ports to have survived this 'shakeout' and thrived. The dredging of the 'Tweede Maasvlakte' and the expansion of the port further into the North Sea has highlighted as it were the discrepancy between Dutch maritime and naval power, since simultaneously, the number of (operational) naval vessels moored off the Dutch naval port of Den Helder has only decreased even further.

Going back to the original interpretation of a thalassokratia as a state dominated by the sea and not necessarily one with a large navy, then today's small seapower state shares many of its characteristics. It may not deliberately cultivate a seapower identity which, as Lambert has argued, was a defining feature of the past great seapowers, but the small seapower state still collects and combines the trades of several areas at a single concentrated maritime hub, not through (military) control of the sea or by denying its enemies access to them, as hegemonic sea powers have done throughout history, but by utilizing the economic advantages of the sea. For Lambert it is fifth-century BC Athens as the example par excellence for subsequent seapower states – the Athens of Themistocles and Pericles, imperialistic and hegemonic – that serves as the archetypal seapower state. If so, then the small seapower state had its genesis in the Athens that emerged after its defeat by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). Despite the loss of its trireme fleet in the climactic naval battle of the war, the city of Athens retained its wider maritime potential. There was still a commercial class, there were still naval architects, shipbuilders, sailors, rowers, and financiers to help foster a maritime revival during the following century. One not based on the trireme, but as a commercial thalassocracy.

Our interpretation of maritime potential today has, of course, changed markedly. But for centuries the logic was seen as a vicious circle, whereby maritime trade begets maritime resources, which in turn funds greater naval strength, leading to maritime supremacy, which then protects maritime trade.[46] While not the

45 Daniel Coulter, 'Globalization of Maritime Commerce: The Rise of Hub Ports', in *Globalization and Maritime Power*, ed. Sam J. Tangredi (Washington, NDU Press, 2002) 133.

46 Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: a guide for the twenty-first century*, Second edition (London, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009) 34.

first, Mahan is arguably the best-known author to explicate this historically intricate link between seaborne commerce and the development of sea power. Since then, however, the synergetic link has weakened and is today all but broken. Maritime potential no longer automatically translates into naval capabilities. The days when mid-19th century London could purchase naval primacy with an annual budget of some 4 million pounds(!) are gone.[47] Britain's financial and commercial strength compensated for its relative small population and geographic size. And the raw materials it lacked in times of war could be accumulated overseas under the protection of the Royal Navy. Mahan assumed these advantages conferred on sea powers to be unchanging, but failed to foresee the emergence of continent-sized, densely-populated superpowers with the industrial and technological wherewithal that could undermine the historic strategic leverage of sea powers. 'Britain could not again become mistress of the seas', since, as Harford Mackinder wrote, 'much depended on the maintenance of a lead won under earlier conditions'.[48] Lambert's assertion that it is the weakened link between the seapower states and the sea which has enabled continental powers to compete, does not alter the long-term geopolitical (maritime) advantages conferred on these continent-sized powers like the United States and China. Twenty-first century naval power rests on more than access to the proverbial naval stores of timber and hemp or the abundance of sailors to crew men-of-war. State-of-the-art warships are nowadays amongst the most complex weapon systems, the manufacturing of which depends on much more than just a shipbuilding industry. Economic sectors traditionally not regarded as part of a nation's maritime potential have become just as vital in developing naval power. Today, even the world's great powers find it difficult to completely rely on domestic suppliers. No amount of cultivated 'seapower identity' can overcome such deficiencies.

The problem is the tendency to view a state's maritime potential or maritime economy only through the lens of its military utility. Seen that way, there are indeed no longer any 'seapower great powers'. But in the age of geo-economics, a state's maritime economy should be regarded as a source of strategic leverage in and of itself. Granted, the nature of maritime power has become very diffuse, perhaps best exemplified by the world's largest vessel in terms of total tonnage: the Pioneering Spirit. Designed in-house by the Dutch (but Swiss-based) offshore company Allseas, this gargantuan construction vessel capable of installing record-weight subsea pipelines was built almost entirely on the wharf of the South Korean company Daewoo. Once completed in 2015, the Pioneering Spirit was registered in Malta and assumed operations as an asset of an offshore company officially headquartered in land-locked Switzerland. Final assembly did take place in Rotterdam and, as one of the few ports able to accommodate a vessel this size, it still frequently docks at the Dutch port. But to whose 'maritime potential', if at all, does such a ship contribute? In the days of Mahan's writing, when shipping and shipyards were still in the minds of national policy-makers, the answer would have been much more straightforward. Shipping companies and trading firms were still port-bound and integral to a maritime city's identity. Today, Hapag-Lloyd in Hamburg is still one such exception, but like Maersk-Möller, these multinational companies earn their revenue servicing global trade hubs like Rotterdam, not necessarily their own domestic trade nodes. Shell may have moved its headquarters to London (and lost its predicate 'Royal Dutch' in the process), it is still one of the driving forces behind Rotterdam's hydrogen ambitions to help the port retain its position as one of the premier energy hubs. And while some of the world's largest commodity traders have a large physical presence in Rotterdam, they are a far cry from Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. Reports such as 'The Leading Maritime Cities of the World', highlight this diffuse character of

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47 Bernard Brodie, *Sea power in the Machine Age* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1943) 119.

48 Halford Mackinder, *Britain and the British Seas* (Oxford, 1925) 358.

maritime power.[49] For example, even though London's wharves now 'house costly apartments or indifferent restaurants', the City still ranks third, mainly because of its leading position in maritime finance and law.[50] And, notwithstanding the rhetoric of 'Global Britain', Britain has seen its share of global exports of goods dwindle to 2.3% of the world's total in 2021. Well below the 3.8% of the Netherlands and even less than Belgium's share of 2.4% – countries that can arguably make a more rightful claim as global maritime trading nations.[51]

When we translate the understanding of a commercial thalassocracy to what it means to be one in the 21st century, then such a state is still able to concentrate the produce and resources from wide geographic areas in a way that confers this global trade hub economic advantages disproportionate to its demographic and geographic size. The small seapower state, located near high-volume trade nodes, is well positioned to connect itself to new emerging markets and maritime networks. The coastal state does not remain unaffected by what happens outside its waters – hardly any country is entirely self-sufficient – but its role in global trade is not as pivotal as that of the small seapower state, whose hub function may be compared to that of a maritime 'chokepoint'. It will therefore also be disproportionately affected when seaborne commerce is disrupted. In the case of the 2021 obstruction of the Suez Canal, it was coincidentally a Dutch company, Boskalis, that helped free this crucial maritime highway. This too is maritime power.

It does not mean that the small seapower state can solely rely on the commercial aspects of its sea power. Militarily it is, however, much like the coastal state, limited in the naval means it can bring to bear. Like the coastal state, it is also aware of those limitations. They both do not

challenge the naval power(s) that rule(s) the sea. But whereas in the theory of the coastal state the naval presence is basically limited to that of the coastal waters because these are either large or contain resources vital to the state's wealth and security, the small seapower state, on the other hand, has a higher degree of (geopolitical) insularity and feels secure in its coastal waters. It therefore has the luxury to afford itself greater 'surplus' capacity for operations in out-of-area environments, including – and perhaps especially – in a 'Mahanian' security environment. Its insularity ensures that such deployments are not necessarily conditional on the security of its coastal waters. That does not mean those waters are risk-free but the small seapower state should, at least in theory, have an inverse prioritization compared to that of the coastal state and leave the monitoring of its coastal waters preferably to, for instance, its coast guard. Allowing itself greater 'surplus' capacity is a stance in line with the economic, political, cultural, and historic relationship the small seapower state has with the sea. While it cannot do so as a 'seapower great power', it does not mean it lacks agency or that its (global) deployments are inconsequential.

The symbolic discrepancy between the global trade hub Rotterdam and the limited naval capabilities moored off Den Helder is still large, but it is precisely because of the importance as well as vulnerability of the former that the small seapower state should think differently about the nature and role of its sea power.

Conclusion: the Small Seapower State as a Frontier State?

In 2021, the Dutch frigate Zr.Mr. Evertsen was part of a British-led Carrier Strike Group that deployed in the Indo-Pacific, intended, amongst other things, to stress the importance of freedom of navigation in the waters that are the hotbed of renewed navalism. A year later, the Dutch Minister of Defence indicated her intention for a Dutch naval deployment to the Indo-Pacific once every two years to communicate the Dutch intent to contribute in safeguard-

49 *The Leading Maritime Cities of the World 2022*, Menon Economics (2023).

50 Rose George, *Ninety Percent of Everything* (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2013) 5.

51 'Evolution of the world's 25 top trading nations', *UNCTAD*. See: https://unctad.org/topic/trade-analysis/chart-10-may-2021.

ing free shipping.[52] The frigate Zr.Mr. Tromp is to be sent to the Indo-Pacific in 2024. In an indirect way this is the 'flag' following the state's overseas economic interests. When investment values in a region increase and trade volumes become greater, it is logical that such a region is accorded a higher foreign policy priority. Trade is the barometer of a state's strategic interests, perhaps especially so in the case of the small seapower state.[53] And it is the small seapower state's navy that is, albeit in a modest capacity, an instrument of such policy. The fact that it was a Dutch frigate and not a Norwegian or Danish vessel accompanying the Carrier Strike Group, is indicative for how the Netherlands still perceives itself and its wider role in the world. The thinking, as expressed in the 1960s, to avoid slipping 'unnoticed into a too narrow, local navy', is still predominant. Perhaps not as outspoken, but there is still the belief that this provides the Netherlands a larger role in global affairs than its own region affords. The Dutch pivotal hub function in global trade also justifies this role much more than during the years following the loss of its 'empire'.

This intent to deploy on a regular basis to the Indo-Pacific will nevertheless require the utmost of Dutch naval 'surplus' capacity. As Dutch means may not match the stated aspirations, especially so now that we have moved on from the 'post-Mahanian' era including (hybrid) threats to the small seapower state's own coastal waters. This is not new, but unlike during the Cold War period the sea has become more than merely a 'highway'. The industrialization of coastal waters has given territorial seas an intrinsic value unthinkable in the days of Mahan. The development of offshore windfarms, extensive pipeline networks, and seabed telecommunication cables converging on the Dutch coast have made the protection of the North Sea a critical national interest in itself. Whilst these developments reinforce the hub function of the Netherlands as a small seapower state and, moreover, made the economic processes at sea even more vital to its economy, it has also given the Netherlands some characteristics similar to that of the coastal state. This was reinforced when, a little over a year after the stated inten-

tion to regularly deploy naval assets to the Indo-Pacific, the Dutch Minister of Defence announced that the Dutch navy was to gain a permanent task in securing the Dutch part of the North Sea.[54] Russian 'incursions' questioned relying solely on the Coast Guard. A report of the Dutch think tank HCSS on the high value of the North Sea aptly described the Netherlands as a 'front-line state'.[55]

This leaves the Netherlands, as a small seapower state, somewhat in a paradoxical position. On the one hand, its geopolitical insularity has improved substantially. As late as 1989 the possible frontline was on the north German plains; today it has shifted to the Baltic states and, as of 2023, to the Russo-Finnish border. Yet simultaneously, the intrinsic value of its small but economically critical EEZ – almost as an extension of the land – has made the Netherlands a maritime frontier (coastal) state which could in the future hamper Dutch naval 'surplus' capacity to act as a small seapower state. Especially when we consider that only a handful of Russian oceanographic 'spy' ships in the North Sea can theoretically absorb the Dutch 'surplus' naval means. One of the precepts of Borresen's theory of the coastal state is that you cannot be one when the integrity of your territorial waters depends on the goodwill of others. Without diminishing the importance of safeguarding the coastal waters, it is the question whether these Russian 'incursions' constitute enough of a 'breach' of integrity to merit a trade-off in capabilities best suited for the role and maritime interests of the small

52 'Mogelijk vaker marineschip naar Indo-Pacific', *Defensie.nl*, 13 June 2022. See: https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/13/mogelijk-vaker-marineschip-naar-indo-pacific.

53 Michael P. Gerace, 'State Interests, Military Power and International Commerce: Some Cross-national Evidence', *Geopolitics* 5 (2000) (1) 111.

54 'Defensie krijgt grotere rol bij bescherming infrastructuur Noordzee', *Rijksoverheid.nl*, 7 July 2023. See: https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2023/07/07/defensie-krijgt-grotere-rol-bij-bescherming-infrastructuur-noordzee.

55 Frank Bekkers (et al.), *The High Value of the North Sea*, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (The Hague, 2021) 8.

seapower state in exchange for gaining the naval characteristics associated with that of the coastal state.

'Seablindness' has become quite a buzzword, and I for one am also guilty of including it in this article. The fact that threats to the maritime 'frontier' or a state's overseas maritime interests are not as tangible as the amassment of armies along the Ukrainian border in the weeks preceding the Russian invasion, makes it more difficult finding a 'cure' for this 'infliction'. Cato once showed a Tunisian fig in the Roman Senate to underline that the (unsubstantiated) Carthaginian maritime threat was only a few days sailing away. Often mentioned today is the need for narratives to reinforce this lost link between the state and the sea. This is true, but such a narrative should take into account the inherent differences between the types of maritime states. For while small navies share many similar challenges, capacity-driven accounts of sea power do fail, however, in explaining the state's relationship with the sea and how this determines its navy's role and (future) fleet composition. The notion of the small seapower state offers one such narrative. This is important because, as one Dutch historian once warned, the navy could in the future resemble 'greenhouse plants': politically vulnerable because it is no longer rooted in a deep layer of 'maritime humus'.[56] ∎

56   G. Teitler, 'Maritieme Strategie', in *Militaire Strategie*, ed. G. Teitler (Amsterdam, Mets & Schilt, 2002) 109.

The Challenge-Response Dynamic in Military Affairs
Tracing the Origins of Multi-Domain Operations

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Peer-reviewed article

Abstract

This essay contributes to a better understanding of the challenge-response dynamic in military affairs. It suggests that the solution to a state's or alliance's military problem imposes a new problem on an adversary. Highlighting this dynamic, this essay traces the origins of the current American operating concept of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) through three phases of US-Russian concept development and force design. First, the US response to the challenge of Soviet military powers during the Cold War resulted in a force design successfully executing Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Second, in the decades following Operation Desert Storm, Russian war scholars outlined response options for Russian force modernization to better address the challenge of US military power. In essence, this amounted to mirroring the US reconnaissance-strike complex and developing precision-strike munitions. Third, when Western militaries re-oriented from counterinsurgency to large-scale combat operations after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, they considered the challenge of Russian warfare at an increased stand-off distance. A leading response to this challenge is the American military concept of MDO, which many NATO Allies have adopted since its emergence. Key findings of this essay include the necessity to anticipate better adversarial concept development and the responsibility of military leaders to manage adversarial threat perception. Indeed, MDO specifically warrants a revaluation of Bernard Brodie's 1946 observation that 'thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them.'

War scholars studying the future of war have their work cut out for them. On the one hand, they must work diligently to outline the contours of the future battlefield, a task that has not proved easy. Many, for example, wrongly believed in 'the decisive battle narrative', the idea that a decisive battle will lead to victory in future wars.[1] On the other hand, they must also study the history of warfare, looking for ways to prevent the future battlefield from materializing. Indeed, some of the fiercest antagonists' force structure includes nuclear weapons, bringing images of a nightmare scenario with fall-out contaminating the battlefield. In 1946, this same fear compelled Bernard Brodie to wisely note that 'thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on, its chief purpose must be to avert them.'[2]

The war scholar's dilemma of developing military concepts that lead to victory on the battlefield versus concepts that prevent the battlefield from materializing is striking. However, a better understanding of the problem a military concept solves and, more importantly, who imposes a problem on whom and why, helps war scholars outline the future battlefield and better understand the dynamic of the reciprocal fear that partially shapes states' behaviour in security policy.

This essay contributes to a better understanding of the challenge-response dynamic. It suggests that the solution to a state's or alliance's military problem imposes a new problem on an adversary. Highlighting this dynamic, this essay traces the origins of the current American operating concept of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) through three phases of US-Russian concept development and force design.[3] First, the challenge of Soviet military power to the US and its allies during the Cold War resulted in a force design successfully executing Operation Desert Storm in 1991. From the Russian view, the US coalition's overwhelming victory in Iraq brought alarming questions to light.[4] Could the US also muster forces near the Russian border, challenging the Russian homeland as it did with Iraq? If so, could the Russian military defend against the specific way of warfare the US and its coalition showcased? Second, in the decades following Operation Desert Storm, Russian war scholars outlined response options for Russian force modernization to counter the US way of war.[5] One prevalent response furthered the idea of increasing stand-off distance between the Allies and the Russian forces to offset US precision strike capability. Lastly, Western war scholars, re-orienting from counterinsurgency to the Russian force posture and large-scale combat operations (LSCO) shortly after the annexation of Crimea in 2014, considered the implications of Russian warfare at increased stand-off. It imposed a challenge upon the US and its Allies: How do NATO Allies defend themselves in the event of a military conflict with Russia? A leading response to this challenge is the American military concept of MDO, which many NATO Allies have adopted since its emergence. Studying the military ideas fuelling this challenge-response dynamic in military affairs between the US and its Allies on the one hand and Russia on the other, provides insight into the origins of MDO.

The approach for substantiating the thesis of the US-Russian challenge-response dynamic in this essay is qualitative content analysis. It derives from analyzing 1990s reports about how Russian war scholars viewed Operation Desert Storm, Russian military journals, reports on Russian military thought, US war scholars' ideas on MDO, and U.S. Army doctrine publications. Concerning MDO, currently, within Allies military forces, three interpretations of the concept are in vogue.[6] The first views MDO as a

1   The notion is from Lawrence Freedman, in Kori Schake, 'Future of War', *War on the Rocks*, 2018.

2   Bernard Brodie (ed.), *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1946) 76

3   In October 2022 the U.S. Army updated its Field Manuel 3-0 Operations and codified MDO on page 1-2 as 'multidomain operations are the combined arms employment of joint and Army capabilities to create and exploit relative advantages that achieve objectives, defeat enemy forces, and consolidate gains on behalf of joint force commanders.' Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-0 Operations, 2022.

4   Gilberto Villahermosa, 'DESERT STORM: The Soviet View', Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, 2017, Summary, 5.

5   See for several response options Edward J. Felker, 'Oz Revisited: Russian Military Doctrinal Reform in Light of their Analysis of Desert Storm', Air University, June 1994.

6   Gijs Tuinman, 'Het antwoord is Multi-Domain Operations! Maar wat is de vraag die daarbij hoort?' *Carré* (2023) (2) 13.

concept integrating information technologies to augment a faster Observe, Orient, Decide, Act (OODA) loop in the targeting-to-kill process. This view is primarily prevalent in air components of armed forces. The second perspective aims to further integrate the military domains with non-military activities, similar to the comprehensive counterinsurgency approach. NATO doctrine writers largely devote their time to furthering this interpretation. The third departs from the idea that MDO is the operational concept for US and Allies' warfighting, aimed at deterring and defending against a peer competitor. In that sense, it resembles concepts such as the AirLand Battle doctrine from the 1980s. This essay takes the third perspective as a starting point and ignores the first and second. Finally, this essay disregards the Russian operation in Ukraine. Although it impacts the political-military environment significantly, it has limited influence on the origins of the third perspective of MDO outlined above.

The Challenge Imposed by Operation Desert Storm

The objective of tracing the origins of a military concept is doomed to fail from the outset. Indeed, a military concept, defined as a collection of coherent military ideas developed by war scholars, by its nature, has no starting point. Origins imply a starting point, however, so for practical purposes, this essay takes Operation Desert Storm as the starting point for tracing the origins of MDO. This 1991 US and coalition military operation culminated the Second Offset strategy. This strategy aimed to compensate the perceived superior Soviet conventional military with non-nuclear forces by leveraging computer processing and space technology.[7] Desert Storm marked a watershed moment in modern military thinking: the ability of the US to project force and defeat another state with such overwhelming power stunned many war scholars worldwide. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union developed military concepts to solve perceived battlefield problems. But as the era was ending, these concepts were, to a large degree, never tested by battlefield

conditions. Indeed, the theatre of operations primarily existed in the minds of military professionals and war scholars. So, what challenges did Operation Desert Storm impose on Russian concept development?

The Tenets of AirLand Battle
The force design that enabled the execution of Operation Desert Storm had its roots in the 1982 U.S. Army Field Manual No. 100-5: Operations. In this manual, the U.S. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) introduced AirLand Battle, a military concept developed to address the problem of a potential Soviet echeloned advance in Western Europe during the Cold War. It emphasized that the US military 'must retain the initiative and disrupt our opponent's fighting capability in depth with deep attack, effective firepower, and decisive maneuver.'[8] As one of the concepts never tested by battlefield conditions in Europe, its four tenets shaped the US forces operating in Kuwait and Iraq in 1991. Initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization routed the passive, rigid, linear, and incoherent Iraqi forces, armed mainly with Soviet equipment and following Soviet-style doctrine.[9] The short duration and overwhelming coalition victory shocked many observers, with the Chinese and Russian militaries taking a keen interest in the perceived lessons of the conflict.

The depth of the US coalition operations concerned Russian war scholars particularly.[10] There were two components to this: operational reach and tactical depth on the battlefield. Historic experience ingrained fear of an adversary's operational reach, the distance and duration over which a force can employ its military capabilities, in Russian military thought. Twice before, it threatened the very survival of the Russian state. In 1812, Napoleon marched on and seized Moscow, with his operation only culminating in the face of a bitter winter and stubborn Russian resistance. In 1941,

7   Damon V. Coletta, 'Navigating the Third Offset Strategy', *Parameters 47*, (2017) (4) 48.
8   Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, 1982, 1-1.
9   Robert H. Scales, 'Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War', US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994, 25.
10   Felker, *Oz revisited*, 5.

Hitler's Operation Barbarossa penetrated Russian territory once again. It was only on the outskirts of Moscow and in Stalingrad that Russia's staunch resistance turned the tide. The influential strategist Aleksandr Svechin noted that Russia's vast space enabled trading time for space.[11] However, Barbarossa's initial stages overwhelmed Russian defenses and made trading time for space a necessity, not a deliberate strategy.[12] The trading for Russian space also meant the bleeding of its population. Hence, despite the absence of clear US offensive intentions, Russia's historical trauma made the United States' large operational reach showcased in Operation Desert Storm a concern for the Russian military leadership.

Tactical depth on the battlefield involved the US coalition's ability to strike Iraqi political, economic, and military control nodes with relative ease, unhinging the Iraqi ability to wage war. The U.S. Air Force mostly did this unhinging. In a short essay named 'Destruction and Creation' written in 1976, Air Force Colonel John Boyd argued that one does not determine the character of 'an abstract system within itself.'[13] Making sense of the environment one operates in necessitates outward orientation. Indeed, inwardness increases uncertainty, and 'unless some kind of relief is available, we can expect confusion to increase until disorder approaches chaos— death.' This is what seemingly happened to Iraqi forces during Operation Desert Storm. Russian war scholars admired how the coalition air campaign deafened and blinded the Iraqi leadership. Some of Boyd's ideas seemed to have found their way into the

Russian future of war theories. In 'Lessons of Military Conflicts and Prospects for the Development of Resources and Methods of Conducting Them,' Boyd's ideas echo in the former commander of the Western Military District Andrey Kartapolov's 'new-type war,' including methods for 'disorienting the political and military leadership' and the 'simultaneous action against (destruction of) forces and targets to the entire depth of his territory.'[14] During a presentation in 2015, he visualized elements of how a 'new-type war' waged against Russia could disorient the Russian leadership.

Deja-vu for Moscow: Rebalancing the Military Relationship with the US

Conceptually, the four tenets of AirLand Battle merged in what Russian war scholars identified as a new and daunting military threat to the Russian homeland: the reconnaissance-strike complex and conventional precision munitions.[16] They viewed a reconnaissance-strike complex as having three interrelated components: deep-look reconnaissance assets, automated assessment and command and control, and precision-guided long-range attack systems.[17] As early as the 1980s, Chief of the General Staff Marshall Nikolai Ogarkov warned that Western precision-guided munitions would erode Russian strategy.[18] He pointed out that the Soviet leadership faced a similar problem during the 1960s and 70s when the US achieved superiority in the nuclear domain. At the time, a Soviet nuclear modernization and production program re-aligned the US-Soviet nuclear relationship by balancing it better.

During the Moscow Conference of International Security in 2015, Kartapolov presented ways NATO Allies could strike deep into Russian territory using precision-guided munitions.[15]

11   Lester W. Grau, 'Russian Deep Operational Maneuver: From the OMG to the modern maneuver Brigade', *Infantry*, April-June 2017.
12   Russel H. S. Stolfi, 'Barbarossa Revisited: A Critical Reappraisal of the Opening Stages of the Russo-German Campaign (June-December 1941)', *The Journal of Modern History* 54 (1982) (1) 27.
13   John R. Boyd, *Destruction and Creation* (Publisher unknown) 6.
14   Andrey V. Kartapolov's, in Timothy Thomas, 'The Evolving Nature of Russia's Way of War', *Military Review*, July-August 2017, 40.
15   Blog by Dmitry Gorenburg, 'Russian military reform'.
16   Stephan J. Blank, 'The Soviet Military Views Operation Desert Storm: A Preliminary Assessment', Strategic Studies Institute, 1991, 4.
17   Michael J. Sterling, 'Soviet Reactions to NATO's Emerging Technologies for Deep Attack', RAND Corporation, 1985, V.
18   Benjamin S. Lambeth, 'Desert Storm and its Meaning. The View from Moscow', RAND Corporation, 1992, 10.

Ogarkov argued that conventional forces required a similar rebalancing, taking the position that the Soviets should also attain conventional and technological equilibrium with the US. That would require the Soviets to strengthen and modernize their military significantly. Challenging prevailing ideas of his age, Ogarkov pitched the revolutionary idea of the obsolescence of the Soviet tank as early as 1982.[19] Indeed, as many observers of the 1973 Yom Kippur War had also noted, a tank was no match for long-range missiles. In the 1980s, prominent military figures like Marshal Ustinov, Marshal Akhromeyev, and Defence Minister Sokolov echoed Ogarkov's warning by pointing out the Western improvements in their conventional reconnaissance-strike complex.[20] To many Russian war scholars, Desert Storm validated the concept of AirLand Battle, enabled by precision-guided munitions. To some, Ogarkov's warning appeared to be visionary. With the Warsaw Pact crumbling, Russian war scholars evaluating Operation Desert Storm identified several new challenges to retaining territorial integrity in the event of a military conflict with Western forces. Over the next decades, they formulated a response to the overwhelming and audacious global force projection of Western military power.

The Response to Operation Desert Storm: Increasing Stand-off Warfare

Russian war scholars formulating a response to the challenge of a technologically superior Western conventional reconnaissance-strike complex involved three inseparable elements: concept development, force design, and building a regional force posture. In a period of political and societal turmoil after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, Russian war scholars faced a formidable conventional military problem.

Concept development
The idea that the tenets of AirLand Battle fostered a Western force that defeated the Iraqi forces on the battlefield presented Russian war scholars with more issues than just a rebalancing of conventional power. Soviet military doctrine underpinned the Iraqi force design, and the Soviet military-industrial complex mostly provided Iraqi capabilities. The performance of Iraqi forces using Soviet equipment and doctrine led to many questions: How outdated was Soviet military doctrine? Also, could the US perform a decapitating first strike, using conventional precision-guided munitions targeting command and control of the Russian nuclear second-strike capability? Even before Operation Desert Storm, the challenges posed by AirLand Battle and NATO precision strike capability caused significant consternation in Soviet military circles. The Soviet military leadership, in line with Ogarkov's observation of the imbalance in conventional forces, felt compelled in 1987 to declare a defensive military doctrine formally.[21] It called for a force posture to fend off Western military aggression but was insufficient to mount large offensive operations, a realistic measure given the overwhelming strength of Western forces. While the Soviet Army still outnumbered NATO forces regarding personnel and equipment, many perceived the fielding of technologically advanced NATO systems offset the NATO numerical inferiority.

As in any military-political establishment, the ideas that Russian war scholars developed in the 1990s as a response to Operation Desert Storm diverged.[22] Conceptually, however, one can discern the idea of increased stand-off warfare in many Russian writings. An increased ability to strike deep and throw the adversary off balance meant increasing Moscow's strategic depth by pushing Western military power farther from Russian territory. By 2010, Russian war scholars largely concurred on the necessity of mirroring Western developments in the reconnaissance-strike complex.[23] There was also widespread agreement that the US capacity to apply precision munitions on the battlefield coherently

19 Rose E. Gottemoeller, 'Conflict and Consensus in the Soviet Armed Forces', RAND Corporation, 1989, 11.

20 Mary C. FitzGerald, Marshal Ogarkov on Modern War: 1977-1985', Center for Naval Analysis, 1987, 33.

21 Mary F. Fitzgerald, 'Advanced Conventional Munitions and Moscow's Defensive Force Posture', *Defense Analysis* 6 (1990) (2) 167.

22 Lambeth, *Desert Storm*, 89.

23 Clint Reach, Alexis A. Blanc and Edward Geist, 'Russian Military Strategy. Organizing Operations for the Initial Period of War', RAND Corporation, 2022, 6.

was the prime reason for the swift coalition victory over the Iraqi forces. Despite the U.S. Air Force's inability to win the war alone, Russian war scholars considered air power the decisive force element.[24] One war scholar noted that 'the "classic" formula gives the main role to land forces in military operations, and the air force supports them.' During Operation Desert Storm, however, 'the basic blows of strategic, decisive significance were struck by the air forces.'[25] An electronic warfare officer noted that crucial in the air domain, electronic warfare was 'the technical basis for modern combat.'[26] Additionally, Russian war scholars emphasized the destructive nature of the initial phase of military operations, coining concepts such as 'massed missile-aviation strike' (MRAU) and 'integrated massed air strike' (IMVU).[27] Future of war scholar Mikhailov, for example, theorized about the form a Western air strike might come in, suggesting four echelons: (1) a manned-strike echelon with tactical aircraft supported by ISR and electronic warfare, (2) a UAV-echelon, (3) a missile-strike echelon with cruise and ballistic missiles and (4) a hypersonic missile strike echelon. Each echelon of Western strikes had a reaction time for Russian countermeasures, from 50 minutes for the first echelon to 5 minutes for hypersonic weapons.[28] Decoys, electronic warfare, and a 'self-forming adaptive network' supported the potential air strike against Russian targets. A potential target list developed by NATO forces, theorized from the Russian view, featured Russian troop concentrations, air defence assets, aviation, and radars. However, political centres, industrial and power supply facilities, early warning radars, and nuclear weapons also feature on that list, betraying the deeply rooted Russian fear of a decapitating first strike by Western forces. Such a strike would instantly remove the limits on the use of nuclear weapons by the Russian leadership.

The mirroring idea of increasing stand-off distance versus the Allies' deep precision strike munitions features in the train of thought of several Russian war scholars.[29] For example, an expert on future war, Vladimir Slipchenko, in 2005, defined 'remote noncontact warfare as the mechanism of future wars in which Russia may be involved.'[30] He categorized the history of warfare into six generations, each with iconic weapon characteristics: The first generation displayed edged weapons, the second gunpowder weapons, and the third rifled weapons. The fourth, which the Russian military was still rooted in, was characterized by automatic and mechanized weapons. During the Cold War, fifth-generation warfare was nuclear, but Operation Desert Storm iconized the sixth-generation with conventional precision-strike weapons.[31] Slipchenko noted that the US successfully destroyed a fourth-generation military with sixth-generation warfare. He observed that the US could 'strike a target at the intercontinental level, even with interference and unfavorable climatic conditions.'[32] This novel conventional intercontinental capacity to strike compelled Russia to design a force capable of operating at an increased stand-off with the US and its allies.

By 2019, with the gap between the US and Russia in precision-strike munitions still existing, the Chief of the General Staff, Vasily Gerasimov, explained the Russian strategy during a speech at the Russian Academy of Military Science. He explained the idea of 'Active Defense', which 'integrated means for the pre-emptive neutralization of threats to the security of the state.'[33] The concept involved the pre-emptive use of Russian precision-strike cruise and ballistic missiles 'against the decision centers and launch sites that support cruise missile strikes against targets on Russian territory – to answer a threat

24 Lambeth, *Desert Storm*, vii.

25 Lambeth, *Desert Storm*, A quote by TASS journalist Vladimir Chernyshev.

26 Mary C. FitzGerald, 'Russian Views on Electronic and Information Warfare: Volume II', Hudson Institute, 1996, 212.

27 Michael Kofman, Anya Fink, Dmitry Gorenburg, Mary Chesnut, Jeffrey Edmonds, and Julian Waller, 'Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts', CNA, 2021, 21.

28 D.V. Mikhailov, 'Future War: Possible order of a U.S. air attack in the context of a multisphere operation in 2025-2030', *Aerospace-Forces, Theory and practice* 12 (2019) 45.

29 See for example Michael J. Sterling, 'Soviet Reactions to NATO's Emerging Technologies for Deep Attack', RAND Corporation, 1985, 23.

30 Makhmut Gareev and Vladimir Slipchenko, 'Future War', O.G.I., 2005, 48.

31 Gareev and Slipchenko, 'Future War', vii.

32 Ibidem, 17.

33 Dave Johnson, *Review of Speech by General Gerasimov at the Russian Academy of Military Science*, NATO Defense College, Russian Studies Series 4/19, 2019.

by creating a threat.' Gerasimov's concept of Active Defense, rooted in the 1987 Soviet unwanted but necessary defensive doctrine and mirroring the Allies' reconnaissance-strike complex, suggests an overall response to the challenge of forces primarily designed by the AirLand Battle doctrine. Indeed, although defensive in nature, Active Defense incorporates 'active' operations such as counteroffensives to regain the initiative and create favorable battlefield conditions.[34] Indeed, many war scholars debate whether this Russian strategy is offensive or defensive. This debate's conclusion resides in the eye of the beholder. Ironically, its namesake from the U.S. Army, the Active Defense doctrine developed in 1976 and predecessor to AirLand Battle, was the first post-Vietnam US doctrine meant to offset Soviet conventional superiority.

Force Design

Designing the Russian military to operate at increased stand-off distance was a gradual, albeit ongoing, process. However, in 1991, the perceived imbalance in conventional military power required an immediate Russian countermeasure to stabilize the military relationship with the US. The instant countermeasure in Russian defense policy was a non-linear compensation strategy: Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons could threaten the US and its Allies with unacceptable damage, increasing the cost of potential Western offensive precision-strike operations on Moscow.[35] This emergency, short-term solution had drawbacks, including a limited number of (de)escalation options in situations where escalation control is paramount. Considering the drawbacks of nuclear compensation, Russian defence policy pushed for increasing Russian conventional forces. By the 2010s, this policy started to bear fruit.[36]

Despite an overall strengthening of conventional Russian military power over the past three decades, force design focused on several elements to address the threat of conventional precision strikes better. First, the ability to better perform radio-electronic warfare. Former General of the Army and President of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences Makhmut

Gareyev noted during a speech to the Public Council of the Military-Industrial Commission in 2013 that the US accomplishes 'communications, navigation, reconnaissance, and all command and control of strategic nuclear, missile defense, and precision-guided munitions through space. A breakdown of this entire system by electronic and other asymmetric assets can largely reduce this advantage.'[37] Major-General Yuriy Lastochkin, former commander of the radio-electronic forces, emphasized 'methods of disorganizing adversary C2.'[38] In an exclamation of self-assurance, he said that the radio-electronic troops will 'decide the fate of all military operations.' The Russian Military Industrial Complex (MIC) answered the call and, by the 2010s, started producing modern radio-electronic warfare systems such as the 1RL257 Krasukha-4, designed to jam US' surveillance target attack radar systems (JSTARs) aircraft and NATO's airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft.[39]

Supported by electronic warfare, an integrated air defense system proved to be a second priority field. Such a system would be the logical answer to the overwhelming firepower of the U.S. Air Force. Conceptually, 'massed missile-aviation strike' and 'integrated massed air strike' were not limited to aviation. Indeed, the design of the integrated system also had to address other airborne threats, such as cruise missiles and satellites.[40] War scholars noted that in the eventuality of a military conflict with the US and its Allies, it is paramount to 'destroy the enemy's group of satellites in order to deprive him of communications, navigation, and the capability to conduct reconnaissance…in the USSR, for example, tests were conducted during

34 Kofman et al, 'Russian Military Strategy', 19.
35 Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, 'Russian Nuclear Strategy and Conventional Inferiority', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 44 (2021) (1) 26 .
36 Ven Bruusgaard, 'Russian Nuclear Strategy', 23.
37 Timothy Thomas, 'Russian Military Thought: Concepts and Elements', MITRE, 2019, 5-9.
38 Major-General Yuriy Lastochkin in Timothy Thomas, 'Russia's Conduct of War: How and with What Assets', MITRE, 2021, 19.
39 Samuel Cranny-Evans, 'Fields of silence and broken cycles: Russia's electronic warfare', Global Defense, 2022.
40 Defense Intelligence Agency, 'Russia military power', 2017, 33.

which one satellite approached another and exploded, striking the target with fragments.'[41] Additional capabilities for the MIC to produce include the S-500 Prometheus mobile air defense system with a range of 600 kilometres. Its missiles include the 40N6M to intercept aviation and cruise missiles and the 77N6 for intercepting ballistic missiles and low-orbital satellites.[42]

A third priority field was non-domain specific. Force design focused on integrating precision-guided munitions in the force structure of the Ground, Air, and Maritime forces. In service since 2012, the Russian Long Range Aviation Command arms its strategic bombers with the KH-101/102 air-launched cruise missiles with a range of 2,500 to 2,800 kilometres, with the 101 version delivering a conventional and the 102 version a nuclear payload.[43] The Russian Navy is armed with the 3M-14 Kalibr sea-launched cruise missile with a range of around 1,500 to 2,500 kilometres.[44] The 3M22 Tsirkon hypersonic coastal defense missile also provides stand-off versus American carrier strike groups. From the view of some Russian war scholars, increasing stand-off in the maritime domain is necessary. Yevmenov, Puchnin, and Yeshchenko insist that, by 2030, the U.S. Navy will have a stock of up to 6,000 missiles to strike targets inside Russia. Furthermore, they note that 90 per cent of Russian territory is within range of the naval component of the US reconnaissance-strike complex, putting virtually all Russian military and political centres at risk.[45]

Until recently, the Russian Ground Forces took a relative back seat in the force design of increasing stand-off warfare capabilities. Indeed, firing precision-guided munitions depended largely on air and naval platforms operating away from the front lines. Nevertheless, increasing stand-off also took hold on the land domain. Former deputy head of the Military Frunze Academy for Scientific Work Lieutenant-general Sapozhinsky noted in 2008 that because 'most of the armies of developed countries now profess the NATO (more precisely, American) theory of air-ground operations' that, within combined-arms combat, 'even before the direct entry into battle of [opposing] combined-arms formations..., it is possible to influence...important objects in the depth of the operational construction of the enemy group.'[46] The Russian Ground Forces, already leaning to a larger degree on outranging NATO land forces with artillery, operationalized the ground-launched dual-capable 9M729 cruise missiles with a range of roughly 2,500 kilometers just a few years ago.[47] Thus, in all domains - air, land, maritime, space, EW, Russian force design in the past three decades sought to increase stand-off to reduce NATO force projection in the proximity of Russian borders and its precision-strike capabilities for deep attack. By the late 2010s, despite an ongoing favorable balance of conventional forces vis-à-vis Russia, some of these Russian capabilities exceeded those of US forces, compelling US military leadership to respond.

Regional Force Posture
Military concept development and force design resulted in a specific Russian force posture in the regions most vulnerable to Western conventional forces. From the Russian view, the Baltic and the Black Sea regions provided Western forces with geographical proximity to Russian borders. This proximity allowed military power projection and facilitated the reconnaissance-strike complex to strike targets inside Russia. Many reports denote this force posture as anti-access area denial (A2/AD), the strategy to prevent opposing forces from entering a geographical area and degrading their ability to operate in it when they do.[48] However, Romanchuk and Shigin, in a 2023 article in *Military*

41   S. Valchenko, N. Surov, and A. Ramm, 'Russia Sends Inspector into Orbit: Military Test Operations of Maneuvering Identification and Intercept Satellite', Izvestiya Online, 26 October 2017.
42   'S-500 Prometheus,' Missile Threat, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
43   'KH-101/KH-102', Missile Threat, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
44   '3M-14 Kalibr (SS-N-30A)', Missile Threat, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
45   N.A. Yevmenov, V.V. Puchnin, YA.V. Yeshchenko, 'Main Trends in the Changing Nature and Content of Military Threats to the Russian Federation from Oceanic and Naval Directions', *Military Thought* 5 (2023) 23.
46   V.A. Sapozhinsky, 'Modern views on the system of destruction of the enemy in the operation (combined arms combat)', *Military Thought* 1 (2008) 11.
47   '9M729', Missile Threat, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
48   Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, 'A2/AD Strategy for deterring Russia in the Baltics', Centre for Military Studies, 2016 38.

Thought, better formulate the Russian approach when they argue that with 'a shortage of time, forces, and means, the most appropriate form of combat operations to repel the offensive of a high-tech superior enemy…' should include 'inflicting losses on the enemy during his advancement and deployment using a large number of precision-guided munitions' forcing the adversary to bring the main forces into battle in an engagement box, and 'firmly holding defensive and firing lines, delivering a series of fire strikes and counterattacks.'[49] Again, in line with Gerasimov's 'Active Defense', this approach consists of a defensive posture with offensive elements.

In sum, Russian concept development, force design, and the resulting force posture at NATO's eastern flank in the past three decades aimed to restore a balance to conventional military power between Russia and NATO. The mirroring of the reconnaissance-strike complex and the development of precision-guided munitions increased Russia's ability to wage stand-off warfare and required a response from NATO forces.

The US Response to the Russian Challenge: Multi-Domain Operations

After the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, many American war scholars re-oriented from the war on terror and counterinsurgency to large-scale combat operations. Studying the Russian military, how the General Staff designed it in the past decades, and what force posture resulted from it became the object of study. Most notably, they identified a challenge in projecting force to defend Allies bordering Russia. In 2017, former commander of the U.S. Army TRADOC David Perkins concluded that US adversaries 'limit access to critical domains, challenge the ability to maintain superiority in air and maritime domains, and attempt to deny access into the theatre.'[50] Indeed, to some extent, Perkins echoed an emerging consensus among many Western war scholars of a Russian A2/AD posture in the Baltic Sea region. Furthermore, he noted that 'the battlefield is limitless.

From home station to the close area, there is the potential to be engaged instantaneously with long-range fires, cyberspace, space, electronic warfare, and information.' Interestingly, this observation strongly resembles elements of the Russian war scholar's evaluation of Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s.

Multi-Domain Operations: Penetrating to Dislodge Defences

In response to this challenge, the U.S. Army TRADOC in 2018 published its new operating concept MDO. Originating from the U.S. Army, MDO gained clout after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. At the time, China was the center of attention for the U.S. Department of Defense's civilian leadership, leveraging US technology as part of the Third Offset strategy.[51] Then Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, during a 2015 speech at the Army War College after focusing mainly on China himself, urged Army leaders to develop AirLand Battle 2.0 due to the re-emergence of the Russian threat.[52] In the following years, Army and civilian leadership tackled institutional hurdles, allocating resources, convincing non-believers, and overseeing the development and implementation of MDO.

The concept identified the perceived Russian challenge imposed on the US military of 'multiple layers of standoff in all domains' as problematic.[53] As part of the response, the U.S. Army's future force design should 'penetrate and dis-integrate enemy anti-access and area denial systems.'[54] The same year, the U.S. Army started experimenting with a Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF). A Field Artillery Brigade with an

49 A.V. Romanchuk and A.V. Shigin, 'Prospects for Increasing the Effectiveness of Army Defensive Operations', *Military Thought*, April 2023, 26.

50 David Perkins, 'Multi-Domain Battle Driving Change to Win in the Future', *Military Review*, July-August 2017.

51 G. Gentile, M. Shurkin, A. T. Evans, M. Grise, M. Hvizda and R. Jensen, 'A History of the Third Offset', RAND Corporation, 2021, iii.

52 Dwight Philips, 'Multi-Domain Operations: Passing the Torch', RAND Corporation, 2023, 2.

53 U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 'The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, vii'.

54 U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 'The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028', iii.

augmented headquarters practiced delivering 'long-range precision joint strike as well as integrate air and missile defense, electronic warfare, space, cyber, and information operations.' In early 2022, the U.S. Army re-established the divisional echelon as the primary unit of action for tactical operations.[55] The restructuring of the force design, which had been brigade-based since 2003, involved five new types of divisions, including a penetration division.

Interestingly, instead of a full frontal engagement, the penetration division's task 'is the neutralization of the enemy's long-range systems in decisive spaces enabled by Army long-range fires'[56] and setting conditions for the reception, staging, and onward movement of second-echelon forces. Conceptually, the idea of military penetration parallels Liddel Hart's idea of an indirect approach to solving military problems. Where a direct approach, such as a frontal attack, stiffens resistance, an indirect approach achieves the 'dislocation of the enemy's psychological and physical balance' and 'has been the vital prelude to a successful attempt at his overthrow.'[57] One US war scholar noted that penetrating prepared defenses has many historical parallels, but Operation Fall Gelb during World War II had the greatest effect. The 1940 German Army's concept of operations enabled the penetration of a seam north of the defensive French Maginot Line, outmaneuvering the French defenses.[58]

In 2020, the U.S. Air Force followed the Army's lead by underscoring the importance of the Department of Defense Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO) doctrine.[59] A seemingly semantic next step in concept development, JADO's 'operations conducted across multiple domains and contested spaces to overcome an adversary's (or enemy's) strengths' do not differ much from MDO's perspective on executing operations.[60] However, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley in 2020 assigned a line of effort to each US service to develop a functional concept to increase seamless lethality across all domains.[61] The Air Force focuses on command and control, the Navy on Joint Fires, and the Army on logistics in a contested environment. Whereas MDO originated from the Army seeking increased jointness, JADO appears to be a step towards a joint US military that integrates across all domains.

Criticizing MDO: Reactive instead of Dissuasive

Despite its adoption by multiple services in concept, if not in name, MDO is not without its critics. A principal designer of the AirLand Battle doctrine, Huba Wass de Czege criticized MDO for failing to define a sound theory of victory.[62] MDO 'overlooks the very demanding task of defending an ally's territory under armed attack'[63] because it is reactionary in nature. As a result, according to Wass de Czege, a theory of victory must 'deter rather than accelerate crisis escalation.'[64] The penetration of Russian regional defenses occurs after deterrence fails. Indeed, Wass de Czege calls MDO a counter-aggression concept. Instead, he advocates for forces to 'organize a forward stationed and rapidly deployable air, land, sea, space, cyber, and information defense of allied territory.'[65] From this perspective, Wass de Czege's suggestion corresponds to a current debate among Western war scholars, who advocate a military posture of NATO nations transitioning from deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial vis-à-vis Russia.[66] According to some war scholars, attempting to dissuade the Russian political and military leadership from initiating

55   Andrew Feickert, 'The Army's AimPoint and Army 2030 Force Structure Initiatives', Congressional Research Service, January 2022.

56   TRADOC, 'The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations', 37.

57   Basil Liddel Hart, *Strategy: The Indirect Approach* (Faber and Faber, 1967) 5.

58   Nathan A. Jennings, 'Considering the Penetration Division: Implications for Multi-Domain Operations', Association of the United States Army, 2022.

59   David L. Goldstein, 'USAF Role in Joint All-Domain Operations', Airforce doctrine note 1-20.

60   John R. Hoehn and Nishawn S. Smagh, 'Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Design for Great Power Competition', Congressional Research Service, 2020, 9.

61   Theresa Hitchins,'Milley Assigns Service Roles in All-Domain Ops Concept', Breaking Defense, 2020.

62   Huba Wass de Czege, 'Commentary on "The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028"', U.S. Army War College, 2020, xvii.

63   Wass de Czege, 'Commentary', xx.

64   Ibidem, 1.

65   Ibidem, vii.

66   Erica D. Borghard, Benjamin Jensen, and Mark Montgomery, 'Elevating "deterrence by denial" in US defense strategy', Atlantic Council, 2021.

military operations versus NATO nations by making success seem unattainable instead of threatening with punishment better addresses contemporary challenges. Furthermore, Wass de Czege's criticism of MDO parallels Brodie's 1946 observation that the chief purpose of military establishments must be to avert wars. Indeed, averting wars is the essence of deterrence, whether by punishment or denial.

What response will Russians develop to the challenge imposed by MDO? In Russian military journals, war scholars have already launched their initial ideas. Kruglov, Voskresenskiy and Mursametov note that future military conflict will be 'a strategic multi-sphere' operation initiated by the 'aggressive aspirations of the United States and NATO.'[67] According to these war scholars, Russia must think through anticipatory non-standard solutions to counter these aspirations. What these solutions will look like will be up to the Russian concept development process in the coming years. War scholar Ilnitskiy's assessment in the June 2023 edition of *Military Thought* doesn't bode well when he notes that Clausewitz's theorem that war is the continuation of politics with other means is no longer valid. Instead, politics has become war.[68]

Conclusion

The challenge-response dynamic in Russia's and Western nations' military affairs follows a certain evolutionary logic of adaptation and countermeasures. Understanding this logic helps war scholars increase their understanding of the reciprocal fear military challenges and responses evoke among nations. The AirLand Battle doctrine, which shaped Western forces that executed Operation Desert Storm in 1991, shocked the vestiges of Russian military thought. The Allies' reconnaissance-strike complex laid bare a frightening imbalance in conventional military power between Russia and the West. The Russian response over the past three decades involved mirroring technological advances in precision-guided munitions and increasing the stand-off distance to wage a potential war. In response to this Russian

challenge imposed on the US and its Allies, the 2018 US MDO concept suggests designing a force that can penetrate and disintegrate adversarial defense. Indeed, tracing the origins of MDO by looking at the past helps war scholars think better through future warfare.

Two implications of the challenge-response dynamic pertain to military concept development: the ability to better anticipate and the responsibility of managing adversarial threat perception. First, understanding that the solution to one's military problem imposes a challenge on the adversary requires military professionals to anticipate that challenge better. A clear view of this challenge involves empathy to some degree and the ability of military professionals to put themselves in their adversary's shoes. Even if those shoes do not fit well. Indeed, because MDO aims to penetrate and dislodge Russian defenses, Moscow's perception of military threat will likely intensify in the coming years. NATO's conventional force elements will steadily improve their ability to deliver battlefield effects synchronized across domains as NATO develops coalitional abilities to integrate seamless, interoperable combat power through JADO. Consequently, Russia's military concepts must develop fresh ideas to compensate for the perceived reduced effectiveness of their current force posture in the future. Indeed, anticipating these Russian ideas will strengthen the potential execution of Multi-Domain operations on the battlefield.

Second, and perhaps paradoxical to the first, military leaders are responsible for managing adversarial threat perception. As this essay illustrates, threat perception drives ideas for military concepts, and fear presupposes a sense of weakness vis-à-vis an opponent. Indeed, when threatened and cornered, a bear might lash out uncontrollably. Consequently, new military concepts must not increase an already intensely

67   V.V. Kruglov, V.G. Voskresenskiy and V.YA. Mursametov, 'Trends in Development of Armed Struggle in the 21st Century and their Impact on Military Art of Leading Foreign Countries', *Military Thought*, April 2023, 132-133.

68   A.M. Ilnitskiy, 'Strategy of Hegemony Means Strategy of War', *Military Thought*, June 2023, 19.

perceived threat because that carries the risk of escalating existing tensions to the point of military conflict. Despite the reciprocal fear between NATO and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, military concepts largely aimed to compensate for a perceived weakness relative to the other. However, NATO in 2023 does not perceive itself as militarily weak vis-à-vis Russia. Instead, the sense of being outpaced militarily relates much more to China. In that sense, MDO breaks with a Cold War tradition, which risks further increasing an existing imbalance. Indeed, MDO's focus is overly concerned with regaining battlefield superiority *after* the commencement of war. With NATO allies already having an overwhelming military dominance over Russia, the advancement of MDO must balance better battlefield dominance during war and alleviating perceived Russian fears to prevent war from erupting in the first place.

In 1982, David Petraeus, reflecting on the US military experience in Vietnam, reassured that "the military took from Vietnam a new recognition of the limits of military power in solving certain types of problems in world affairs."[69] Although Petraeus referred to the problem of successful counterinsurgency, one hopes that the current US and Russian political and military leadership have a firm grasp of the limits of their military forces when unleashed upon each other. Indeed, military forces can deploy to fight on the battlefield but can sometimes be better employed to deter others from deploying their forces. For one thing, a revaluation in the concept of MDO of Brodie's observation that military power's chief purpose is to avert war is warranted. As for the Russians, a better understanding of the origins of their force design might have convinced them not to invade Ukraine. Military forces designed to defend against a technologically superior adversary at a considerable stand-off distance appear ill-suited for an offensive ground-centric invasion. ∎

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69   David Petraeus, "Lessons of History and Lessons of Vietnam," *Parameters XVI*, no. 3 (Autumn 1986): 45

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The Milleytary Oath: Speech Act Theory in the American Civil-Military Context

Karishma Chafekar*
Peer-reviewed article

Abstract

American General Mark Milley appealed to his military oath of office various times during his term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; particularly, when the civil-military relationship was put to the test during the Trump administration. Speech act theory offers an opportunity to conceptually analyse the military oath as a speech act in civil-military relations. In this approach, the 'magic military-oath formula' serves as a trust mechanism in the legal framework of democratic civil-military relations to keep the constitutional order intact and working. Unlike domination, the military oath implies reciprocity of loyalty in a vertical authority relationship. The main tenet of this paper is to provide an alternative angle on American civil-military relations by studying the military oath through the lens of speech act theory. This research primarily investigates various references to the military oath by General Milley during the last year of the Trump administration. While directly referring to what is sworn in the military oath, he implicitly publicly reprimanded his Commander-in-Chief, President Trump. While some considered Milley's actions honourable, others questioned it. Milley's actions prove, however, the reciprocity of loyalty in military oath taking and civil-military relations.

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Introduction

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

The military oath has shown to be crucial in American civil-military relations. 'We are all trusting you,' said Nancy Pelosi. 'Remember your oath.' The former Speaker of the House allegedly said these words to General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States, the week after the November 2020 elections.[1] President-elect Joe Biden had won the elections while President Trump refused to acknowledge defeat – and continues to do so. In his speech at Fort Belvoir, a few days after Biden was declared winner,[2] General Milley felt the exceptional need to publicly refer to his oath and underline that military professionals take an oath to the Constitution rather than to individuals.

While President Trump publicly labelled the election process as fraudulent,[3] General Milley – while referring to his oath – implicitly stated that President Trump could not automatically rely on the armed forces to retain his presidency. On top of that, the elections were officially not considered falsified. Two months later, after the January 2021 Capitol Hill riots, as an ardently apolitical institution, he and his Joint Chiefs of Staff sent a letter to the US troops. Both veterans as well as active military members had participated in the riots, apparently also appealing to the military oath.[4] The Joint Chiefs, however, openly stated in their letter that the event was 'a direct assault to […] the Constitutional process', which not only goes against the military's 'traditions, values, and *oath*', but is also unlawful. They stated that in line with constitutional processes, President-elect Joe Biden was going to be their next Commander-in-Chief. Basically, the Joint Chiefs had publicly set aside the 45th Commander-in-Chief, President Trump. Currently, the former president has been indicted four times,[5] facing thirteen charges in Georgia for allegedly trying to bend the election 2020 outcome. 'Violation of oath by public officer' is one of the charges.[6]

The events in the US and the role of General Milley were extensively discussed in the media and in various publications in which some provided references to the oath. Some questioned Milley's actions,[7] while others remained in the middle and described events on how Milley tried to balance the civil-military relationship.[8] There were also authors who bluntly claimed that it was Milley's responsibility to remove President Trump by military force if needed.[9] What the authors all do have in common, though, is that they acknowledge that the civil-military relationship has been put to

1   Carl Leonnig and Philip Rucker, *I Alone Can Fix It: Donald J. Trump's Catastrophic Final Year* (London, Bloomsbury, 2021) 364.

2   Stephen Collinson and Maeve Reston, 'Biden defeats Trump in an election he made about character of the nation and the president', *CNN*, November 7, 2020. See: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/11/07/politics/joe-biden-wins-us-presidential-election/index.html.

3   Linda Qiu, 'Fact checking the breadth of Trump's election lies', *The New York Times*, August 17, 2023. See: https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/us/politics/trump-election-lies-fact-check.html.

4   Konstantin Toropin, 'More than 100 troops revealed in oath keepers membership data leak', *Military*, September 7, 2022. See: https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/09/07/over-100-troops-were-oath-keepers-members-months-around-jan-6-analysis-claims.html.

5   Derek Hawkins et al, 'Tracking the Trump investigations and where they stand', *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2023. See: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2023/trump-investigations-indictments/?itid=lk_inline_manual_21.

6   Brandon Drenon, 'What are the charges in Trump's Georgia indictment?', *BBC*, August 25, 2023. See: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66503668.

7   Doyle Hodges, 'A duty to disobey', *Lawfare*, August 19, 2022. See: https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/duty-disobey; Kori Schake and Jim Golby, 'The military won't save us – and you shouldn't want them to', *Defense One*, August 12, 2020. See: https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/08/military-wont-save-us-and-you-shouldnt-want-them/167661/; James Joyner, 'Who decides who is a "domestic enemy"', *Defense One*, August 13, 2020. See: https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/08/who-decides-whos-domestic-enemy/167704/; James Joyner and Butch Bracknell, 'They make you take an oath to the constitution: they don't make you read it', *War on the Rocks*, October 31, 2022.

8   Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *The Divider: Trump in the White House* (New York, Doubleday, 2022).

9   John Nagl and Paul Yingling, '"…All enemies, foreign and domestic": an open letter to Gen. Milley', *Defense One*, August 11, 2020. See: https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/08/all-enemies-foreign-and-domestic-open-letter-gen-milley/167625/.

the test due to a president acting unconventionally. Joyner and Bracknell made an interesting claim that the military's oath of loyalty is 'necessary but not sufficient' to keep the constitutional order intact.[10] They belong to a minority, however, despite the fact that Milley specifically referred to his oath in his public appearances at the time.

This paper builds on existing literature by going back to the basics of the oath and applying speech act theory to the oath as well as to Milley's public references to it during the final stages of the Trump administration. Approaching the military oath of office as a speech act displays that by administering the words, reality is constituted rather than merely described, affirmed or registered. The Milley case illustrates how the significance of the oath works through in practice. My research implies that in the vertical authority relationship between the state and the armed forces, loyalty embedded in the military oath of office is reciprocal. In other words, the civil authority that requires an oath from members of the armed forces cannot only profit from the military's loyalty; it has to put in its share of loyalty as well.

This paper evolves around the question: *Was General Milley loyal to the Constitution as sworn in the military oath of office during the final stages of the Trump administration?* I shall proceed in eight parts and will solely focus on the vertical authority and loyalty relationship between the state, represented by the President who is also the Commander-in-Chief, and the armed forces, represented by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the most senior military officer.[11] First, an overview of the current state of the art of the oath in civil-military relations theory is presented; then the theory of the military oath as a speech act is discussed: what is the American military oath of office through the lens of speech act theory? Subsequently, I will look at the concept of loyalty embedded in the military oath and address General Milley's public apologies for appearing in a picture with his Commander-in-Chief, his references to the oath in his public speech at Fort Belvoir, and the memorandum for the joint force in the final stages of the Trump administration. The article will be concluded with a discussion of my findings.

The Oath in Civil-Military Relations Theory: a Bird's Eye View

Congress, the civil part of civil-military relations and whose members are directly chosen through election, has drawn up the military oath for more than 200 years.[12] In other words, Congress has the final say in what is said in the oath and why. Its members have also codified that the oath of office applies to both federal civil servants and commissioned officers of the uniformed services.[13] The classic paradox in civil-military relations is that the armed forces are created to protect the polity and awarded an immense arsenal of weapons to do that; at the same time, they also have the means to become a threat to the same polity that has asked for their protection.[14] The legal framework is a tool with the function to prevent the latter from happening. The purpose of the oath, derived from civil-military relations theories, is individual subordination to the state. The goal is to guarantee that the primacy of the use of force lies with the state, also known as civilian control.[15]

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10   Joyner and Bracknell, 'They make you take an oath to the constitution'.

11   The oath of enlistment is not part of this research.

12   U.S. Army Center of Military History, 'Oaths of Enlsitment and Oaths of Office'. See: https://history.army.mil/faq/oaths.html.

13   United States Senate, 'About the Senate & U.S. Constitution, Oath of Office'. See: https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/oath-of-office.htm.

14   Peter Feaver, 'The civil-military problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the question of civilian control', *Armed Forces & Society* 23 (1996) (2) 149-178; Peter Feaver, 'Civil-military relations', *Annual Review Political Science* 2 (1999) 214; Robert Atkinson, *The Limits of Military Officers' Duty to Obey Civilian Orders: A Neo-classical Perspective* (Carlisle, U.S. Army War College Press, 2015) 3.

15   Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1957); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York, Free Press, 1960 ed. 2017) 220; Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn, 'Civil-Military Relations in the United States: What Senior Leaders Need to Know (and Usually Don't)', *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 15 (2021) (2) 12-37.

Civilian control lies at the core of military 'Huntingtonian' professionalism, which is monopolised by the state rather than regulated as is the case with some civilian professions.[16] The concept of professionalism comes down to four elements. Firstly, professionals are defined by expert knowledge and skill obtained through academic education. Secondly, professionals operate in a social context and deliver a service to society. They are not so much focused on financial gain as they are on service and good work. Thirdly, professionals are part of a professional body that distinguishes itself from other experts with intellectual skills as they carry a social responsibility. Finally, professions thrive on autonomy: they tend to self-organise and self-regulate.[17] Considering these elements, military professionalism's product in society's productive field is its expertise in the use of force with instruments of violence. It requires trust from society to obtain a certain standard of autonomy to organise their field of work.[18]

Janowitz, however, has elevated civilian control into an integration of the civilian world into the armed forces as a type of reinforced constabulary force at some expense of military professional autonomy.[19]

Civil-military relations theory generally seems to address the 'professional' military oath as a selection of words that are syntactically, phonetically and semantically sound in which a meaningful promise is made. It is usually used as a stepping-stone to address a different element in civil-military relations or merely as an example or a footnote.[20] So far, civil-military relations have been primarily observed through a sociological institutionalist lens.[21] That is mostly also the case for the military oath;[22] however, there are also semantic approaches as well as historical accounts of the military oath.[23] Even though quite a lot of research has been done on oaths and promises in general and civilian professional oaths and oaths of office in specific, not much literature has really addressed what the military oath actually is from a linguistic perspective; in other words, how does the mechanism of the military oath work in civil-military relations, and *why* is it *necessary* to refer to the military oath in a situation in which the relationship between the armed forces and the state has been put to the test? Especially this is puzzling.

Speech Acts: There's Nothing Either Good or Bad, but *Saying* Makes it So[24]

Speech acts not only convey information, but they also perform an act at the same time: saying makes it so.[25] It means that by saying the words, something is done and set in motion. John Austin coined the term in his seminal work *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) and John Searle completed it into a theory in his book *Speech Acts* (1969). Speech acts are mostly observed from the position of the speaker.[26] Military oaths, however, are imposed by the state, which is the oath administrator as well as the hearer. It is thus also interesting to know what it does to the hearer (society, the state) once the words in the oath have been uttered in public and something is done.

16   Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*; Risa Brooks, 'Paradoxes of professionalism: rethinking civil-military relations in the United States', *International Security* 44 (2020) (4) 7-44.

17   Abraham Flexner, 'Is social work a profession?', *Research on Social Work Practice* 11 (2001) (2) 152-165; Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 8-10; Eliot Freidson, *Professionalism: The Third Logic* (Cambridge, Polity, 2001) 180; Marc Loth, *Private Law in Context* (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022) 233; Arie-Jan Kwak, *The Legal Junction* (Alblasserdam, Haveka BV, 2005) 17-19.

18   Don Snider, 'Dissent and strategic leadership of the military professions', *Orbis* 52 (2008) (2) 256-277.

19   Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*.

20   Feaver and Kohn, 'Civil-Military Relations in the United States', 12; Brooks, 'Paradoxes of professionalism: rethinking civil-military relations in the United States', 20; Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 220; Atkinson, *The Limits of Military Officers' Duty to Obey Civilian Orders*, 48; Dayne E. Nix, 'American civil-military relations: Samuel P. Huntington and the Political Dimensions of Military Professionalism', *Naval War College Review* 65 (2012) (2) 103.

21   Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*; Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*; Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003); David J. Wasserstein, Jimmie R. Montgomery & Marybeth P. Ulrich, 'On "The Politics of Oath-Taking"', *Parameters* 51 (2021) (2) 111-116.

22   Marybeth P. Ulrich, 'The Politics of Oath-Taking', *Parameters* 50 (2020) (2) 43-50; Marybeth P. Ulrich, 'The USAF at 75: reviewing our democratic ethos', *Aether* 1 (2022) (1) 71-81.

23   Kenneth Keskel, 'The oath of office: a historical guide to moral leadership', *Air & Space Power Journal* 16 (2002) (4) 47-57; Thomas Reese, 'An officer's oath', *Military Review* 44 (1964) (1) 24-31.

24   This is a play on Shakespeare's Hamlet, 2.2.247-248: "there's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so".

25   John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Hardvard University Press, 1962) 94-108.

Speech acts can roughly be divided into three major categories: assertives (like true or false statements), directives (like requests or commands) and commissives (like oaths, vows and promises).[27] Although there is a vast array of literature on commissives in linguistics,[28] literature on the military oath as a speech act in civil-military relations is scant. This section will first provide a brief context on speech acts. Then it will expound on the distinction between oaths and promises in order to finally address loyalty in the military oath as a speech act.

Speech Acts

In linguistics, speech acts are a phenomenon in the study of pragmatics. Whereas syntax can be considered the mathematical or technical side of language independent of context (for example, sentence construction and grammar), speech acts could be considered the physics of language dependent on context (how does context contribute to meaning?). It displays how our social reality is shaped. A very simple example of a speech act is 'I will call a lawyer.' This sentence can be uttered to convey a promise (a commitment to call the lawyer), a threat (Be careful, or else!) or a prediction (in the future, the act of calling a lawyer will take place). Speech acts have roughly three levels: the locutionary act, which is the actual use of the words, five in the case of the example; the illocutionary act, which concerns the intention *in* the use of the words, like either conveying a promise, a threat, or a future course of action; finally, the perlocutionary act, which completes the speech act in a certain context by creating a certain effect on the hearer; for example, fear in case of a threat, relief in case of a promise and expectation in case of a prediction.[29]

Speech acts have roughly three approaches.[30] The first is the performative approach. John Austin's original approach contained a rather conventional paradigm of performative conditions in which speech acts should satisfy performative conditions and a rules system in order to become felicitous.[31] This means, for example, that various procedures should be lived up to before a promise or an oath or an apology can be considered valid. Barack Obama's

inauguration in 2009 is a good example of performative conditions. Chief Justice John Roberts had obtained the authority to administer the oath and not, for example, Tom Brady. Obama lived up to the conditions of article 2 of the Constitution; for example, he was born on US territory and was at least 35 years old. However, White House law specialists became quite puzzled when Chief Justice Roberts stumbled over administering the words in the oath to Obama, who, as a consequence, made errors in uttering the word formula himself. The deficiency in the oath ceremony apparently contained such a legal concern, i.e., there was no legitimate authority on the legal gravity of the oath, that the next day the whole procedure was repeated behind closed doors at the White House just to be safe.[32]

Secondly, according to Searle's *Speech Acts*, the commitment in a speech act is embedded in the illocutionary force as it relies on the intention of the speaker. In this so-called mentalist approach, a promise is still a promise even when the speaker does not intend to keep her word and an apology is still an apology even though it is not sincere. The commitment is merely made to the *intention* of performing the action of a promise or

26 Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions* (Dordrecht, Foris Publications, 1984) 19.

27 Kent Bach and Robert Harnish, *Linguistic Communication and Speech Acts* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1979); John Searle, *Expression and Meaning* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979); Mikhail Kissine, *From Utterances to Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013), 174; Bart Geurts, 'Communication as commitment sharing: speech acts, implicatures, common ground', *Theoretical Linguistics* 45 (2019) (1-2) 1-30.

28 John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969); John Searle, *A Classification of Illocutionary Acts* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976); William P. Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2015); Mikhail Kissine, 'Speech acts classifications', in *Pragmatics of Speech Actions*, ed. M. Sbisa and K. Turner (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2013) 173-202; Bruno Ambroise, 'Promising', in *Pragmatics of Speech Actions*, ed. M. Sbisa and K. Turner (Berlin De Gruyter, 2013) 523-555.

29 Betty Birner, *Introduction to Pragmatics* (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

30 Kissine, *From Utterances to Speech Acts*.

31 Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 14-15; Marina Sbisa, 'Speech acts in context', *Language & Communication* 22 (2002) 421-436; Ambroise, 'Promising', 503; Kissine, *From Utterances to Speech Acts*, 175-176.

32 Barack Obama, *A Promised Land* (London, Penguin Random House UK, 2020) 230; Mark Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', *Review of Social Economy* 72 (2013) (2) 249-276.

an apology, not the actual action to live up to one's word or *being* regretful.[33] The various statements of regret by the UK on the 1919 Amritsar massacre in India are a good example of formally *expressing* regret but not *being* regretful by publicly apologising for the killing of some 1,000 civilians by the British colonial troops.[34] Aiming for more in formal collective public apologies, like sincerity or substance, is not considered logical as the only objective is to formally recognise transgressions in order to rebuild relationships.[35]

In *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995), though, Searle seems to embrace a third socio-normative approach in speech acts. On the one hand, he claims that the capacity of humans to represent objects, like money or the law, is based on intentionality, which is having the belief or desire that something is the case.[36] At the same time, he considers these representations as commitment-sharing rather than conveying psychological states. 'I am doing something only as part of our doing something.'[37] In other words, every speech act commits the speaker and hearer to act on a propositional content. Searle claims there are, on the one hand, so-called 'brute facts', which exist objectively and independently from human intervention like molecules, the Amazon Forest or the Grand Canyon. Humans have no part in creating them.

Language used on these propositional contents tends to have a descriptive nature as nothing can be said that changes their reality. This language contains a so-called 'word-to-world' direction of fit. On the other hand, Searle argues that our social reality is interconnected. We create institutional facts by subjective human intervention through the use of language; more specifically, speech acts. In essence, our society consists of speech acts creating personas with their own roles, responsibilities and actions that altogether construct our social reality. So, speech acts in the law create personas like policemen, magistrates, suspects, civilians, soldiers, et cetera.[38] According to Joseph Vining, 'The law is a fabric of personifications'.[39] In this so-called socio-normative approach to speech acts, with intentions alone, our society would be unable to function. It is commitments that connect personas (speakers and hearers) with propositional contents.[40] This language contains a so-called 'world-to-word' direction of fit. Without human intervention, there would be no social constructs and no institutional facts like the law, like personas, like money, like apologies, like presidents, like the military. Making a commitment is, therefore, not about *expressing* an intention; it is about *having* the commitment to act. Essentially, social groups and societies are constantly coordinating each other's actions while making commitments to each other: washing and drying the dishes, batting and bowling on the cricket pitch, conducting and attending meetings, defending and prosecuting in court, withdrawing or advancing on the battlefield, et cetera. Commitments are about 'coordinating actions through action coordination'.[41]

Oaths and Promises

According to Thomas Hobbes, an oath is 'a form of speech added to a promise…'.[42] He continues to say that the words in a contract alone are not sufficient to rely on: 'The force of words, being (…) too weak to hold men to the performance of their covenants'.[43] Hobbes seems to imply that intentions are not adequate enough to hold men to their contracts. Interestingly, a contract or covenant is created on the basis of a mutual promise: the law is the common denominator

33   Searle, *Speech Acts*, 62; Grice, 1957, 383-384; Ambroise, 'Promising', 505.

34   Robin McKie, 'UK "deeply regrets" Amritsar massacre – but no official apolog', *The Guardian*, April 13, 2019. See: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/13/uk-deeply-regrets-amritsar-massacre-but-no-official-apology-india.

35   Tavuchis, 1991, 117.

36   Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London, Penguin Books, 1995) 7.

37   Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 23.

38   Arie-Jan Kwak, 'De persoon van Loth', in *Meester in Context*, ed. L.A.B.M. Wijntjes et al (Amsterdam, Boom Juridisch, 2023); John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*; Mark Loth, *Handeling en Aansprakelijkheid in het Recht* (Arnhem, Gouda Quint, 1988); Alston, *Illocutionary Acts and Sentence Meaning*, 54.

39   Joseph Vining, *The Authoritative and the Authoritarian* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1986) 198.

40   Geurts, 'Communication as commitment sharing'; Philippe De Brabanter and Patrick Dendale, 'Commitment: the term and the notions', *Belgian Journal of Linguistics* 22 (2008) (1) 1-14; Kissine, 'Speech acts classifications', 148-165.

41   Geurts, 'Communication as commitment sharing', 3-6.

42   Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 94. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008) 94.

43   Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 94.

for two *equal* parties in a horizontal relationship. However, in order to commit people to living up to their word, Hobbes considers fear and honour of a higher abstract concept to enforce intentions into commitments. Fear of the consequences of bad faith, like the wrath of God, and honour in, for example, a profession may prevent people from violating their oaths. According to Pitt-Rivers, honour is 'the value of a person in his own eyes but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his right to pride'.[44] Oaths, therefore, go beyond contractual relations;[45] they are also concerned with vertical authority relationships.[46]

Even though both promises and oaths fall into the same speech act type of commissives, there are distinctive differences. The literature on professional oaths rejects the concept of oaths as a mentalist approach, in which intentions are conveyed as they demand commitments and actions.[47] Unlike promises, which are 'contractual' in nature and whose unity is at risk of becoming void when circumstances may change, oaths refer to a vertical authority relationship. Any alteration in the circumstances still binds the swearer to the commitment as it is validated by a higher force and comes with consequences when not lived up to.[48] Unlike promises, oaths are uttered publicly and carry greater moral weight. Moreover, an oath not only has a more general and abstract scope in commitments like being faithful to the Constitution, but it is also provided from beyond the influence of the speaker and is therefore 'administered'. Promises tend to be more specific and often constructed by the promiser himself. Violations of oaths, therefore, are possibly more about shame towards the community whose trust in the oath taker has been damaged,[49] whereas the breaking of a promise may concern feelings of guilt towards the person to whom the promise has been made. Furthermore, oath takers put themselves at stake and they mortgage their honour[50] whereas promisors 'merely' their reputation.[51] It is possibly the sense of honour that professionals may refer to when they

choose to solemnly affirm rather than swear the oath: their professional honour and pride prevents them from violating their oath rather than the wrath of a divine force. The commitment in the oath is rather made *for* others and not so much *to* others as is the case with promises. In other words, promises are primarily about intentions and oaths about commitments: one keeps one's promises but is faithful to one's oaths.[52] However, regardless of these differences '…oath and solemn affirmation are conceptually identical as social speech acts' for the law.[53] At the end of the day, oaths are social constructs and not religious ones, according to Rutgers.[54]

Implementing an oath does not automatically imply the right behaviour. In professional oaths, actions should be aligned with what is required from the profession to enter the group of fellow professionals, like the Hippocratic oath.[55] The banker's oath in the Netherlands, for example, has shown that the working culture must first be on par with what is desired from the profession (i.e. if banking is considered a profession) before the effect of an oath pays off.[56] Paradoxically, the banker must swear that despite the fact that a bank is a commercial institution with

44 Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status' in *Honour and Shame: The values of Mediterranean Society,* ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1966) 19-77.

45 Trui P.S. Steen and Mark Rutgers, 'The double-edged sword', *Public Management Review* 13 (2011) (3) 343-361.

46 Mark Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', *The American Review of Public Administration* 40 (2010) (4) 428-444.

47 Daniel Sulmasy, 'What is an oath and why should a physician swear one?', *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 20 (1999) 329-346; Vincent Blok, 'The Power of Speech Acts: Reflections on a Performative Concept of Ethical Oaths in Economics and Business', *Review of Social Economy* 71 (2013) (2) 187-208; Steen & Rutgers, 'The double-edged sword'; Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?'; Tom Loonen and Mark Rutgers, 'Swearing to be a good banker: Perceptions of the obligatory banker's oath in the Netherlands', *Journal of Banking Regulation* 18 (2017) (1) 28-47.

48 Sulmasy, 'What is an oath and why should a physician swear one?', 333; Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', 434.

49 John Rohr, *To run a Constitution: the legitimacy of the administrative state* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas,1986), 189.

50 R. D. Parry, 'On swearing', *The Personalist* 57 (1976) (3) 266-271.

51 Sulmasy, 'What is an oath and why should a physician swear one?', 331-332.

52 Ibidem, 334.

53 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', 434; 2013, 253.

54 Mark Rutgers, 'Belofte of eed, met of zonder God en Allah', *Staatscourant* (2009) 9.

55 Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', 256.

56 Loonen & Rutgers, 'Swearing to be a good banker'.

the principal aim to make a profit, the public interest will be safeguarded.[57] According to Rutgers, oaths concerning the public interest are so-called oaths of office. By saying the words, an individual is 'granted the moral authority of the state to make decision (sic) affecting the lives of other citizens who are not kin, friend, or protegee'.[58] The oath of office combines three elements: loyalty, integrity and professionalism.[59] Rutgers defines the oath of office as 'a social-linguistic act that provides the highest warranty a person can give for promises regarding the acquisition of office, loyalty to the political regime, the use of public authority, and the proper execution of tasks, according to his/her moral convictions and beliefs, that is accepted as such by the social community, and that is accompanied by specific rituals, including specific gestures, and that is recorded.'[60] Oaths of office are, thus, political oaths as they are compulsory by law. However, according to Rohr (1986), the idea of the oath is not to personally isolate the public official but to grant professional autonomy implying that within the discipline, the individual acts accordingly, i.e. 'applying the fundamental principles that support our public order'.[61] Autonomy is about making judgements independently. However, it is not sheer independence as the community, i.e. the professional discipline, supports the context

of independence.[62] What the oath does at the end of the day is uphold political order.[63] The principal purpose of an oath of office is to provide trust and security.[64] Rutgers seems to consider members of the armed forces as plain civil servants in public office.[65] However, they are armed military servants whose character and personas are psychologically, ideologically and professionally developed outside civil society in order to live up to the vertical authority relationship in the military oath of office due to being bearers of arms.[66] Their personas are fundamentally different from those of civil servants as well as those of civilian professionals, as they have the right to kill when appealed to by the state and the duty to put their own lives at risk when necessary. Loyalty is crucial in the military to live up to its duties.

Loyalty

Interestingly, the oath of office is administered to both federal civil servants and commissioned officers in the armed forces. This phenomenon creates an interesting linguistic-philosophical angle. What exactly is done in the oath of office and for whom? The wording may be the same, but that does not mean the outcome of the speech act is as well. As this paper focuses on the military oath of office as a commissive speech act, oaths of office, thus, combine loyalty, integrity and professionalism.[67] Integrity is similar to being loyal to principles and doing the right thing, which may clash with being loyal to a group as that could lead to doing the wrong thing.[68] Moreover, the military oath of office specifically requires loyalty to the civil authority. This is derived from civilian control in civil-military relations theory due to the vast array of instruments of violence that could become a threat to the polity. What exactly is meant by loyalty from an armed forces perspective?

First of all, according to Rutgers, oaths demand loyalty.[69] Loyalty of the armed forces to the authority of the state is fundamental to guard, guarantee and maintain civilian control and avoid the danger of a (violent) military junta.[70] Subsequently, civilian control is the core of military professionalism to guarantee civilian

57 Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', 250.
58 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', 434-435.
59 Ibidem, 2010.
60 Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', 255.
61 Rohr, *To run a Constitution*, 191.
62 Stuart Rosenbaum, *Recovering Integrity: Moral Thought in American Pragmatism* (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2015, 20-21.
63 Steen & Rutgers, 'The double-edged sword', 350.
64 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', 435; Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', 250.
65 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian', 436; Rutgers, 'Will the phoenix fly again?', 255.
66 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*.
67 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian'.
68 Peter Olsthoorn and Blom-Terhell, 'Loyalty: a grey virtue?' in *Ethics and Military Practice*, ed. D. Verweij et al (United States, Brill, 2022) 40-52.
69 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian'.
70 Torbjorn Engelkes et al, 'Predicting Loyalty: Examining the Role of Social Identity and Leadership in an Extreme Operational Environment – A Swedish Case', *Armed Forces & Society* (2023) 1-21; Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*.

authority from 'the guys with the guns'.[71] Even though civil servants are administered the same word formula, the idea of civilian control does not so much apply to civil servants, whose outcome of the oath as a felicitous speech act is different, as they do not have professional access to brute force. Generally, they do not knowingly and willingly risk their lives to support and defend the Constitution. It is the military that does that and their uniform is an outward symbol of their professional identity and persona which sends the signal of trust and integrity.[72] At the same time, loyalty to uphold civil authority due to the threat of having the violent means to overtake the civil authority, integrity to 'faithfully discharge the duties of the office', and military professionalism may sometimes conflict with the subordination to civilian control. On the one hand, military professionals are subjected to the state, but on the other hand, they feel responsible for national security. In their profession, military officers have a public body, which contains role-bound obligations and military values while they also have to deal with personal moral codes in professional ethical dilemmas. According to Luban, these role-bearing conflicts occur when character built by performing the role conflicts with other norms within that role.[73] The military oath, consequently, seems to be a public declaration of loyalty and subordination in a vertical authority relationship with the state.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines loyalty as 'faithful adherence to one's promise, oath, word of honour' and, furthermore, it can mean 'faithful adherence to the sovereign or lawful government'. Interestingly, loyalty in the military has a paradoxical element. In order to activate loyalty in the vertical authority relationship, the armed forces invest heavily in horizontal loyalty: loyalty to the group. In order to actually make soldiers fight and kill leads to constructing a social reality within their group by separating them from their initial social environment and ingrain a new idea of the world in them through loyalty and obedience.[74] It is thus about being faithful to colleagues and the organisation rather than to groups outside theirs.[75] According to Connor, loyalty 'depends

upon reciprocity and the fulfilment of responsibilities to others.'[76] Reciprocity is built on the belief of mutual acknowledgement between people. If loyalty to the state is demanded in the military oath, it cannot be a one-way street. Authority is about reciprocity. Whereas the state ought to be able to rely on loyalty from the armed forces, the military should be able to rely on the state to responsibly deal with the authority entrusted to them.[77]

The Military Oath as a Speech Act
In summary, the military oath of office is a speech act and belongs to two approaches. It firstly has a performative function that requires a correct procedure and specific conditions. Ceremony and protocol for the military, for example, are an essential part of that performative function and are about displaying a hierarchical order.[78] This means that an individual's position in a stately setting is clarified. In other words, it displays how one is related to the state. The hearer, which is the state as well as the society, has decided that the speaker swears allegiance to the Constitution. However, as a speech act – by saying the words, something is done – the speaker becomes a military professional commissioned officer. The sworn-in officer acknowledges that the state (the civil authority) has the primacy of the use of (brute) force and because of that, he also becomes subservient and thus loyal to the state.

71 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*.
72 Richard Holmes, *Acts of War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003).
73 David Luban, *Lawyers and Justice: An Ethical Study* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2018) 108.
74 James Connor, 'Military Loyalty: A Functional Vice?', *Criminal Justice Ethics* 29 (2010) (3) 282.
75 Peter Olsthoorn, *Military Ethics and Virtues* (London, Routledge, 2011) 66-92.
76 James Connor et al, 'Military Loyalty as a Moral Emotion', *Armed Forces & Society* 47 (2021) (3) 533.
77 Hans Lindahl and Bart van Klink, 'Reciprocity and the Normativity of Legal Orders', *Netherlands Journal of Legal Philosophy* 43 (2014) (2) 108-114.
78 G. Monod De Froideville and M. Verheul, *An Expert's Guide to International Protocol* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2016) 184.

Apart from the conventional performative paradigm, the military oath also requires commitment, for which it fits in the socio-normative approach of speech acts. The individual makes a commitment to acknowledge civilian control in the primacy of the use of force, commitment to his profession, commitment to be loyal to the Constitution as well as to the state. The oath as such activates a future course of behaviour on various levels: it converges loyalty, integrity and professionalism. At the same time, the state is not discharged from – or better, has to take – responsibility and accountability in the vertical authority and loyalty relationship with the speaker. In other words, the commitment made in the oath is not a one-way street: it is reciprocal. The same counts for loyalty: the state and its military need to be loyal to each other. Only then are they able to trust each other, which is essential if they come in harm's way. In speech act terms, both speaker (military) and hearer (state) are condemned to each other and need to be able to rely and trust each other. The state should be able to assume that the armed forces are loyal to the polity. In return, the armed forces ought to be able to rely on the civil authority to responsibly deal with the authority entrusted to it. Only then are members of the armed forces able to knowingly and willingly put their lives at risk on missions for the state.

General Milley's Case in the Final Six Months of the Trump Administration

On 11 June 2020, General Milley apologised for creating a 'perception of the military involved in domestic politics'.[79] He appeared in a photograph taken on 1 June while walking alongside his Commander-in-Chief, President Trump, in his combat uniform on Lafayette Square during the peaceful Black Lives Matter-demonstrations in the aftermath of the police's excessive use of force on George Floyd, who as a result died on 25 May. The protesters were forcefully removed to clear the distance towards St. John's Church.[80] Shortly after, President Trump posed for photographers holding up the Bible in his hand.

Milley apologised for being present at the incident on Lafayette Square while addressing an audience of graduates of future military leadership at the National Defense University. He advised them to 'always maintain a keen sense of situational awareness.'[81] He continued to apologise for his error of judgement: 'As senior leaders, everything you do will be closely watched, and I am not immune. As many of you saw the result of the photograph of me at Lafayette Square last week, that sparked a national debate about the role of the military in civil society. I should not have been there. My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military involved in domestic politics. As a commissioned uniformed officer, it was a mistake that I've learned from, and I sincerely hope we all can learn from it.'[82] Milley underlined strongly to 'hold dear the principle of an apolitical military'[83] by considering the rights and values embedded in the Constitution as the military's moral North Star.[84]

Exactly five months later, on 11 November 2020, a few days after the presidential elections, General Milley opened the National Army Museum in Fort Belvoir. He delivered a speech in which he uniquely felt the necessity to publicly refer to his military oath: 'We do not take an oath to a king or queen, a tyrant or dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual. No, we do not take an oath to a country, a tribe, or religion. We take an oath to the Constitution

79   'General Mark Milley Keynote Speech Transcript: Apologizes for Photo Op With Trump', *Rev*, June 11, 2020. See: https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/general-mark-milley-keynote-speech-transcript-apologizes-for-photo-op-with-trump; Ryan Browne et al, 'Top general apologizes for appearing in photo-op with Trump after forceful removal of protesters', *CNN*, June 11, 2020. See: https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/11/politics/milley-trump-appearance-mistake/index.html.

80   Browne, 'Top general apologizes'.

81   'General Mark Milley Keynote Speech Transcript'.

82   Ibidem.

83   Ibidem.

84   Ibidem.

and every soldier that is represented in this museum [Fort Belvoir], every sailor, airman, Marine, Coast Guardsman, each of us will protect and defend that document regardless of personal price.'[85] He continued by quoting Thomas Paine: 'Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered. And from 1775 till today, the United States Army has stood there – has stood on the wall, stood in the breach, and defended the liberty of Americans.'[86]

That particular week in November was quite eventful. The presidential election outcome was not in Trump's favour. According to the State Election Offices, Biden had won with 306 electoral votes while Trump had 232.[87] He disputed the victory and refused to acknowledge his loss. Furthermore, Trump fired his Secretary of Defence, Mark Esper, and also replaced three Pentagon officials with loyalists.[88] Milley's words wielded quite some leverage in this context.

On 6 January 2021, Congress was getting ready to formally acknowledge Biden's election victory. At twelve o'clock in the afternoon, President Trump started his speech near the White House. In his speech to his supporters, in which he referred to the election process as a 'disgrace', Trump claimed 'there's theft involved' in the election outcome and that 'We will stop the steal'. He also promised to 'lay out evidence' that the Republicans had won the election 'by a landslide'.[89] Trump ended his speech by saying that he was after 'election security' due to 'how corrupt our elections were'. He claimed something was very wrong and that 'We fight; fight like hell and if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.' He continued, 'We're going to the Capitol (…) to try and give them the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.'[90]

Trump encouraged Vice-President Mike Pence to reject the election outcome in Congress and send back the votes to the states to recertify.[91] Pence, however, publicly released a letter soon thereafter, on the same day, in which he said that even though he questioned the integrity of the election, his oath constrained him from 'claiming unilateral authority to determine which elec-toral votes should be counted and which should not'.[92] He publicly declined Trump's suggestions to send back votes to the states.

While the pro-Trump protesters gathered at Capitol Hill, Trump himself did not go to the Capitol but returned to the White House. Soon afterwards, at around 13.00hrs, Congress opened the session. Until approximately 18.00hrs, the world witnessed the attack on the Capitol building by the pro-Trump protesters. Five people lost their lives during the riots at Capitol Hill. Amongst the rioters were also actively-serving as well as veteran members of the military. Many appealed to their military oath as they also questioned the election outcome, having supported Trump since 2016. Many of them aligned with the so-called 'Oath Keepers' movement.[93] Eventually, the Capitol Hill area was cleared and Congress was able to certify and formalise the election results that night.

85 'General Mark Milley Address at the Opening of the National Army Museum', *American Rhetoric*, November 11, 2020. See: https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/markmilleynationalarmymuseum.htm.

86 'General Mark Milley Address'.

87 State Elections Offices, 'Official 2020 Presidential General Elections Results', January 28, 2021. See: https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/2020presgeresults.pdf.

88 Lara Seligman, 'The White House is making big changes at the Pentagon – but Biden can reverse them', *Politico*, November 12, 2020. See: https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/11/white-house-trump-changes-pentagon-biden-reverse-444494.

89 Kat Lonsdorf et al, 'Trumps full speech at D.C. Rally on Jan. 6', *NPR*, June 9, 2022, 2.00-5.30. See: https://www.npr.org/2022/01/05/1069977469/a-timeline-of-how-the-jan-6-attack-unfolded-including-who-said-what-and-when.

90 Lonsdorf, 'Trumps full speech', 68.00-end.

91 Ibidem, 5.30-6.30.

92 The Vice President, 'Open letter', January 6, 2021. See: https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/pence-letter-on-vp-and-counting-electoral-votes/9d6f117b6b98d66f/full.pdf.

93 Andrew Lokay, et al, 'The oath keepers', *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict* 14 (2021) (2) 160-178.

On 12 January 2021, almost a week after the Capitol Hill attack, the Joint Chiefs sent a Memorandum for the Joint Force. They (re-)confirmed that 'the U.S. military will obey lawful orders from civilian leadership'. They condemned the events of January 6 by stating that 'The violent riot in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021 was a direct assault on the U.S. Congress, the Capitol building, and our Constitutional process', which not only went against their 'traditions, values and oath' but which was also 'against the law'. They furthermore stated: 'On January 20, 2021, in accordance with the Constitution, confirmed by the states and the courts, and certified by Congress, President-elect Biden will be inaugurated and *will become* our 46th Commander-in-Chief'.[94] The letter was signed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, as well as the seven Service Chiefs.

Discussion

General Milley's public statements during the final six months of the Trump administration were a struggle in balancing loyalty, integrity and professionalism.[95] The reciprocal loyalty as sworn in the military oath had reached boiling point. American democracy, and especially its democratic organs that also constitute the civilian control of the military (including the Commander-in-Chief), was severely put to the test. Speech act theory projected on the military oath of office gives a linguistic insight into the workings of reciprocal loyalty and trust as well as into integrity and military professionalism, the basis of which is laid down in the military oath of office for commissioned officers.

On the one hand, General Milley's public performances are seen by critics as problematic, as only civilian policy makers have the authority to make judgements.[96] They are elected and generals are not. Furthermore, the Goldwater-Nichols Act solely makes Milley, as Chairman, the principal military advisor and not decision maker. If Milley's intention was to prevent President Trump from 'pursuing a particular course of action' then it would be a political act.[97] Moreover, it can be questioned whether civilian policy makers were indeed unwilling or unable to apply checks and balances on presidential powers. If the election results can indeed even be remotely questioned, then it is a duty, also to the President, to review the election process and evidence of possible fraud or corruption should clearly be provided. Furthermore, on January 6 at the end of the day, Vice-President Pence, for example, despite his worries about the integrity of the presidential elections, did not give in to his superior and remained loyal to the Constitution. Finally, the memorandum and its formulation are very interesting from a speech act perspective. The Joint Chiefs stated that, in line with various Constitutional processes, 'President-elect Biden *will become* our 46th Commander-in-Chief'. This could be perceived as a promise, a threat, or a plain future course of action. It is also a matter of debate whether Milley and his Joint Chiefs sent the memorandum exclusively to their subordinates of the armed forces or whether it was also a message to the citizens of the United States, or perhaps both.

On the other hand, the military oath does not *express* an intention; it belongs to the performative and socio-normative type of speech acts. It commits both state (hearer) and armed forces (speaker) to the propositional content of being loyal to the Constitution and to each other to uphold public and political order as well as a commitment to civilian control. Milley's public performances could, therefore, be seen as living up to his share of the propositional content. At the National Defense University, he visualised his struggle with loyalty, integrity and professionalism to an audience of future military leadership. Milley was committed to 'supporting

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94 The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 'Open Letter', January 12, 2021. See: https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/JCS%20Message%20to%20the%20Joint%20Force%20JAN%2012%2021.pdf.

95 Milley summarised this powerfully during his transfer of command in his valedictory address on 29 September 2023, underlining the importance of the military oath several times.

96 Joyner & Bracknell, 'They make you take an oath to the constitution: they don't make you read it'.

97 Hodges, 'A duty to disobey'.

and defending' the Constitution and rectified the politisation of the armed forces by saying he should not have been in that picture on Lafayette Square together with his Commander-in-Chief. Additionally, his speech at the opening ceremony of the army museum at Fort Belvoir on November 11, was given only a week after the presidential elections. Probably not completely coincidentally, that day at Fort Belvoir, it was also Veterans' Day, which coincides with Remembrance Day: at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918, World War One had ended. Milley appeared to have used this symbolism to underline the military oath of office, for which veterans have put their lives at risk and actively-serving military personnel continue to do so. At the time, Trump did not acknowledge or, more precisely, refused to accept the outcome that Joe Biden had won: 'If you count the legal votes, I easily win. If you count the illegal votes, they can try to steal the election from us'.[98] He had publicly called the election process corrupt without providing evidence.[99]

Milley seemed to have anticipated on Trump's allegations that the elections were corrupt. He had sent a clear message by explicitly referring to his oath, but he implied that President Trump, according to the Constitution, could not rely on the armed forces to retain his presidential position. Even when the election commission and the judges had (re-)confirmed Biden as the next president in December that year, Trump continued to label the election process as fraudulent but had still not provided evidence.[100]

As far as the memorandum is concerned, it took the Joint Chiefs nearly a week to formulate the letter. It may indicate they had given a lot of careful thought to constructing the memorandum. By stressing that 'in accordance with the Constitution, confirmed by the states and the courts, and certified by Congress' President Trump would be no longer their Commander-in-Chief from January 20. Milley and his Joint Chiefs stressed the primacy of the civil authority in their message rather than trying to 'trump' it.[101]

Conclusion: the Willing Suspension of Disbelief

This paper started with the following research question: *Was General Milley loyal to the Constitution as sworn in the military oath of office during the final stages of the Trump administration?* I have perceived the military oath of office as a speech act. This is crucial as it serves as a guarantee of the primacy of civilian control over the armed forces. The military oath of office is uttered publicly to increase pressure to commit to the task and the responsibilities as a commissioned officer. A violation of the oath would mean a violation of loyalty, integrity and military professionalism. It would mean a breach of trust to the state and society. It also means that the state (being the administrator as well as the hearer) commits itself to being loyal and trustworthy to the armed forces in return.

Oaths of office are essential as they provide a certain professional autonomy to apply fundamental principles to uphold public and political order. On that note, military professionalism may incidentally conflict with civilian control. Even though Trump represented civilian control as Commander-in-Chief, he still tried to politicise the military. By doing this again and again in the final stages of his presidency, he slowly lost the trust and faith of the armed forces' leadership. For Milley, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, it was, therefore, necessary to apologise to retain trust in and credibility of the armed forces. However, if anyone should have considered apologising, it should have been the civil

98 Miles Parks, 'Trump latches onto conspiracies, as legal battles fail and path to win narrows', *NPR*, November 6, 2020. See: https://www.npr.org/2020/11/06/931888744/trump-latches-on-to-conspiracies-as-legal-battles-fail-and-path-to-win-narrows.

99 Sam Gringlas et al, '"Far from over": Trump refuses to concede as Biden's margin of victory widens', *NPR*, November 7, 2020. See: https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-2020-election-results/2020/11/07/932062684/far-from-over-trump-refuses-to-concede-as-ap-others-call-election-for-biden.

100 National Archives, '2020 Electoral College Results', April, 16, 2021. See: https://www.archives.gov/electoral-college/2020; Mark Sherman, 'Electoral College makes it official: Biden won, Trump lost', *AP*, December 15, 2020. See: https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-270-electoral-college-vote-d429ef97af2bf574d16463384dc7cc1e.

101 Feaver, 'Civil-military relations', 216.

authority; or perhaps even better: the president heading the civil authority. At the end of the day, since the civilian authorities are in control, they ought to carry the responsibility that comes with integrity.[102] Politicising the military brings them in harm's way as they have to ignore what they have sworn in their oath as well as their acknowledgement that the primacy of the use of the armed forces lays with trustworthy civilian authorities that are bound to the Constitution. The military oath of office does not let the civil authority off the hook as it functions as a trust mechanism: loyalty is reciprocal.

General Milley seems to have realised that to uphold the integrity and persona of the armed forces, he had to retain its credibility by using his oath while de facto stressing it is his moral compass – as he also underlined later on in his speech at the Airforce Academy during the 2021 graduation ceremony.[103] He in fact stresses that the vertical authority relationship of the state and the armed forces is enforced in the military oath. This is in line with the literature on the military oath of office as a speech act in civil-military relations.

Authority is about credibility and reciprocity. The oath was the only manual to rely on for Milley while being confronted with a president that acted erratically on a regular basis. According to Rutgers, the oath of office transcends the 'contractual, managerial and legal approach' to public authority.[104] The January 6 riots at Capitol Hill were the climax of the civilian-military leadership – five people lost their lives. Americans for a moment were prepared to trust the system by suspending their disbelief of what they witnessed at Capitol Hill in the media and rely on the ones in office who had committed themselves to upholding public and political order, military or civilian. The military, with General Milley as the supreme representative of the armed forces, enforced trust in the system with the clear message in the memorandum signed by all Joint Chiefs. This message was far from a threat, or a promise or a mere future prediction; it was a guarantee to protect civilian control embedded in the military oath of office, which Milley clearly and publicly lived up to. ∎

102 Alice Friend, 'The civilian and the state: politics and the heart of civil-military relations', *War on the Rocks*, October 17, 2022. See: https://warontherocks.com/2022/10/the-civilian-and-the-state-politics-at-the-heart-of-civil-military-relations/.

103 Ray Bowden, '"Don't wait to be bold": U.S.'s top military officer gives keynote speech at Academy's 2021 graduation ceremony', *USAFA*, May 27, 2021. See: https://www.usafa.af.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2636045/dont-wait-to-be-bold-uss-top-military-officer-gives-keynote-speech-at-academys/.

104 Rutgers, 'The oath of office as Public Value Guardian'.

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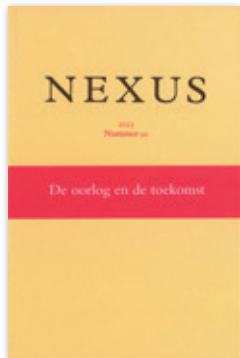
De oorlog en de toekomst

Rob Riemen (ed.)
Amsterdam (Nexus Institute) 2023
(Nexus No. 92)
ISSN 0926-2970
€ 25,-

Thinking about the future of war and warfare has been a subject undergoing intense study. In recent years various publications have been written and conferences organised on how experts and think tanks expect warfare to develop over time.[1] Future wars by way of, for instance, cyberattacks, could affect civil society as was the case during recent Russian and Chinese threats. Forthcoming wars could also lead to innovations, such as unmanned aerial vehicles and submarines infiltrating far behind enemy lines. Additionally, the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may increase in new conflicts. *De oorlog en de toekomst* (War and the future) is one of those publications focusing on possible future wars. To raise a tip of the veil, its authors predominantly chose an abstract, more philosophical, perspective than the examples mentioned above. Due to this perspective, the reader should not expect a collection of essays elaborating on tactical or operational military endeavours that contribute to the future of war.

Autonomous essays

De oorlog en de toekomst is the outcome of the annual Nexus Conference in the Netherlands. The Nexus Institute organised the conference in Amsterdam on November 19, 2022. This institute was founded in 1994 by humanist scholar Rob Riemen and focuses on studying European cultural heritage to shape and provide insight into the cultural-philosophical debate. In 2022, the conference's central topic was 'War and the Future', in which sixteen international speakers sought to answer critical questions, such as 'Why do wars scar our history?' and 'What is necessary to end a war?'.[2] Eleven of these presenters also contributed to the volume *De oorlog en de toekomst*.

The edited volume starts with an extensive paper by Nexus Director Riemen, followed by ten shorter essays. Riemen's paper cannot be considered an introduction, nor does the book contain the conclusion of all contributions. The absence of these two elements essentially results in a volume consisting of eleven autonomous essays, which hampers the book's readability. I will return to this matter in the final section of this review. Given the volume's central topic, one could expect the contributors to have a history in the armed forces. However, only one of the authors has a significant (but brief and civil) background in the military, as far as is traceable through open sources.[3] The other authors came from the social sciences or had a career in politics or diplomacy. These backgrounds could explain the chosen angle in the book that differs – but is not unique – from other publications on war and the future. Ray Monk, emeritus professor in philosophy, was surprised when invited to address the Nexus Conference since he had never done so or written anything on war or the future. However, he published various bibliographies on intellectual greats of the previous century

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1   Recent publications on this topic have, for instance, been *The Future of War. A History* by Lawrence Freedman (2017); *White Sun War. The Campaign for Taiwan* by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Mick Ryan (2023) and the *Routledge Handbook of the Future of Warfare* edited by Artur Gruszczak and Sebastian Kaempf (2023). In October 2022, the War Studies Research Centre (part of the Netherlands Defence Academy) and the Changing Character of War Centre (University of Oxford) organised The Future of War Conference in the Netherlands. The The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies and NATO Headquarters Supreme Allied Command Transformation held a symposium in the Netherlands as well on what the future of warfighting could mean for NATO in September 2023.

2   Website Nexus Instituut.

3   Presenter and author Mary Beth Long has been the Assistant Secretary of Defence in the United States of America. Two other presenters, William Fallon (a retired U.S. four-star admiral) and Radek Sikorski (Polish Minister of Defence between 2005 and 2007) did however not contribute to the edited volume. See Brochure Nexus Conference 2022.

4   'Heeft het Westen de Russische invasie uitgelokt?', *Clingendael Spectator* (September 2022). See: https://spectator.clingendael.org/nl/publicatie/heeft-het-westen-de-russische-invasie-uitgelokt.

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who struggled with the concepts of war and peace, such as J. Robert Oppenheimer.

In his essay, Monk argues that by researching the dilemmas these protagonists experienced, essential lessons can be extracted and applied to contemporary issues. The intellectual and (theoretical) physician Oppenheimer is known as former laboratory director in Los Alamos, where his team of scientists invented and developed two types of atomic bombs, which would later be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After the impact of the bombs became visible, Oppenheimer left Los Alamos to focus on the eventual positive outcome nuclear bombs could have on the world. He believed that the devastating power of atomic bombs could rapidly end a war, but he also feared the nuclear destruction of humankind when such bombs were used irresponsibly. Monk concludes that Oppenheimer teaches us that we cannot neglect our responsibility for human history and that, therefore, we must do whatever lies within our ability to prevent the next war from happening.

Monk's essay touches upon various recurring concepts and topics that feature throughout the Nexus collection: the fear and threat of nuclear weapons, combined with the continuous strife between Russia and the United States since the Cold War. In a worst-case scenario, this could eventually escalate into an apocalyptic end of time. The authors

also mention the new role of the United States (and the West), especially since the U.S. lost its position as the sole superpower. This change in the geopolitical landscape could affect current and future conflicts. In contrast, the position of China regarding war and the future is a less often recurring topic. In their essays, the authors frequently connect the common themes to the Russian-Ukrainian War and whether it initiated a new phase in history. Donatella di Cesare, for instance, states in her essay that the European ideal of a sustainable and stable peace that followed the World Wars and crimes of the twentieth century evaporated with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

According to Di Cesare, NATO was a considerable factor in starting this war. She emphasises the role NATO played in the increasing tensions and eventual war between Russia and Ukraine, as NATO continuously seeks to broaden its border in an eastern direction. This statement is, however, not convincing, as various experts discuss in the *Clingendael Spectator*. Despite the Russian perception expressed during the war, the deployment of NATO troops on its eastern border did not cause an increasing threat to Russia's security. This was also not perceived as being the case in Russia before the invasion. Also, the later Russian course of action and rhetoric showed that the war did not imply causing a conflict with NATO. Instead, there was Russian wishful thinking to incorporate Ukraine into its territo-

ry, which Putin assumes to be 'historical Russia'.[4]

Conclusion

To conclude, the authors of the Nexus volume chose to describe 'war and the future' from a philosophical and humanist perspective while looking through a geopolitical lens. The abstract angle does not make the book very readable to an audience interested in a practical way of looking at the future of war. Therefore, the book shall be more attractive to the general Nexus audience interested in the European humanist tradition rather than to those attracted to the effect of future warfare on the tactical or operational level. As mentioned in an earlier section of this review, it would be worthwhile for the reader to have a beginning and a closing part of the book. Most authors end their essays with a hopeful and comforting message about what they think could help prevent the next war from starting, mainly focusing on concepts such as humanism or democracy. The publication, however, lacks a conclusion that brings together these different messages and combines all essays into a more cohesive contribution to the existing debate. The reader should be aware of the alternative viewpoint and the lack of cohesion, but overall, they do not make the book less worth reading on the unfailingly intriguing topic of war and the future. ∎

*Lysanne Leeuwenburg MA, Netherlands Defence Academy*

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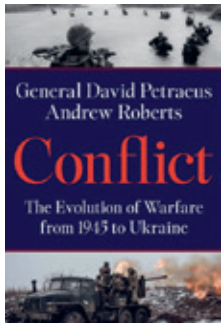
Conflict

The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to
Ukraine
Door David Petraeus en Andrew Roberts
New York (Harper) 2023
544 blz.
ISBN 9780063293137
€ 18,99

In *Conflict* onderzoeken oud-generaal David Petraeus en historicus Andrew Roberts de aard van conflict. Ze gebruiken daarbij de geschiedenis van de afgelopen tachtig jaar tot nu. Onder andere de oorlogen in Korea, Vietnam en Afghanistan passeren de revue, evenals guerrillaconflicten in Afrika en Zuid-Amerika. Het boek sluit af met de Russische invasie van Oekraïne, volgens de auteurs wederom een voorbeeld van hoe politiek leiders de geschiedenis verkeerd interpreteerden. Bovendien gebruiken Petraeus en Roberts de oorlog in Oekraïne als casestudy voor het bestuderen van de aard van toekomstige oorlogvoering.
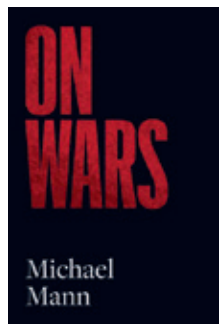
On Wars

Door Michael Mann
New Haven (Yale University Press) 2023
607 blz.
ISBN 9780300266818
€ 36,22

Michael Mann levert met dit boek een overzichtswerk van de geschiedenis van oorlogen, van verschillende tijdperken en in gebieden over de hele wereld. Van het oude Rome tot Oekraïne en van het keizerrijk China tot Latijns-Amerika. Mann onderzoekt de redenen waarom groepen ten strijde trekken, de verschillende verschijningsvormen van oorlog, hoe oorlogvoering is veranderd of wat er juist hetzelfde is gebleven, en de verrassende manier waarop machtige landen soms oorlogen verliezen. Door ideologische, economische, politieke en militaire factoren te combineren biedt Mann nieuwe inzichten in de vele gevolgen van het kiezen voor oorlog.

Welt in Aufruhr

Die Ordnung der Mächte im 21.
Jahrhundert
Door Herfried Münkler
Berlijn (Rowohlt) 2023
528 blz.
ISBN 9783737101608
€ 24,99

Hoe zal de wereld zichzelf herschikken en hoe ziet de wereldorde er uit in de rest van de 21e eeuw? In een geopolitieke analyse laat politicoloog Herfried Münkler zien waar de conflictlijnen in de toekomst zullen lopen. De auteur ziet aanwijzingen voor de opkomst van een nieuw systeem van regionale invloedzones, gedomineerd door vijf grootmachten. Wat zijn de gevaren van deze nieuwe orde, en waar liggen kansen? Hoe moeten Europa en Duitsland zich gedragen in de mogelijke mondiale conflicten?
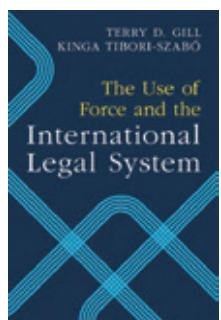
The Use of Force and the International Legal System

Door Terry D. Gill en Kinga Tibori-Szabó
Cambridge (Cambridge University Press)
2023
388 blz.
ISBN 9781009407328
€ 33,-

Dit boek biedt inzicht en analyse over het internationaal recht en de regels en grondbeginselen rondom het gebruik van geweld. Vanuit een interdisciplinair perspectief onderzoeken Terry Gill en Kinga Tibori-Szabó de manier waarop gebruik van geweld functioneert binnen het internationale rechtssysteem. Ook geven zij aandacht aan de interactie met andere relevante rechtsgebieden. Dit gaat dan bijvoorbeeld om wapenbeheersing en mensenrechten. Het boek geeft handvatten voor studenten en de beroepsgroep omtrent het recht en gebruik van geweld.