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MILITAIRE SPECTATOR

CLAUSEWITZ AND SUN TZU

- Reflexive Control in the Russo-Ukraine war
- The war in Ukraine: Altering the norm of state sovereignty?
- Tussen Zeitenwende en Generation Smartphone

U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD, DAVID EICHAKER



Generaal David Perkins, een van de belangrijke denkers over MDO

In *Militaire Spectator* 10-2023 verschijnt onder meer: ‘MDO in perspectief. Samen sterker, sneller en slimmer’, van Carlina Grispen, Joël Postma en Pieter Grijpstra.

De basis van het denken over MDO vormt het Pamphlet 525-3-1: *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* van het U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) uit 2018. Het kwam tot stand onder leiding van een van de denkers op dit gebied, generaal David Perkins. Naast de Amerikaanse denken ook andere westerse krijgsmachten, waaronder de Britse en Nederlandse, in MDO een concept te hebben gevonden om steeds complexere dreigingen,

onder meer door de militarisering van de nieuwe domeinen cyber en space, het hoofd te kunnen bieden. Ook voor de NAVO heeft MDO intussen een hoge prioriteit.

De *Nederlandse Defensie Doctrine* pleitte in 2019 voor een ‘multi-domein benadering van het militaire optreden’, terwijl de *Defensievisie 2035. Vechten voor een veilige toekomst* zelfs aangeeft dat multi-domein en geïntegreerd optreden één van de inrichtingsprincipes is voor de toekomstige krijgsmacht. Een nadere beschouwing laat zien wat MDO specifiek voor de Nederlandse krijgsmacht betekent. ■

Schrijft u een gastcolumn in de *Militaire Spectator*?

De redactie van de *Militaire Spectator* biedt lezers de mogelijkheid een gastcolumn te schrijven van maximaal duizend woorden. Het thema is vrij, maar moet passen in de formule van het tijdschrift. Een gastcolumn bevat een relevante boodschap voor de lezers, een gefundeerde eigen mening en juiste en verifieerbare feiten in een logisch opgebouwd betoog.

U kunt uw gastcolumn sturen naar de bureauredactie (zie colofon) of aanbieden via de website. De redactie wacht uw bijdrage met belangstelling af.

De hoofdredacteur



Welkom

Dit welkom geldt niet alleen voor alle lezers die (grotendeels) zijn teruggekeerd van een welverdiende zomervakantie, maar zeker ook voor twee nieuwe, belangrijke bestuurders van het ministerie van Defensie. Maarten Schurink, aantredend secretaris-generaal, is eind augustus voortvarend met allerlei werkbezoeken binnen het ministerie van start gegaan. Koen Davidse, toekomstig directeur-generaal Beleid, treedt in november aan en is waarschijnlijk nu zijn verhuizing aan het voorbereiden vanuit Washington, waar hij bewindvoerder is bij de Wereldbank.

Heren Schurink en Davidse, er staat u een belangrijke, nieuwe taak te wachten. Binnen Defensie spreken we dan graag over uitdaging, en dat is in dit geval ook terecht. Er is veel te doen, want de geopolitieke ontwikkelingen vragen om een sterke krijgsmacht, die er helaas door jarenlange bezuinigingen niet meer is. Generaal Onno Eichelsheim, Commandant der Strijdkrachten, sprak tijdens de eerste werkdag van de nieuwe secretaris-generaal op de defensiewebsite zelfs van een pittige opdracht. Het ministerie moet wendbaarder en sterker worden, liever gisteren dan vandaag.

De defensiewebsite beschreef uw beider indrukwekkende loopbanen. Zo was te lezen dat u allebei weliswaar nog niet eerder bij Defensie heeft gewerkt, maar wel in aanpalende werkvelden, zoals respectievelijk binnenlandse aangelegenheden en de VN. Hier past ook een waarschuwing, want deze werkvelden dichten weliswaar hoofdtak 2 (internationale rechtsorde) en hoofdtak 3 (ondersteuning nationale autoriteiten) mooi af, maar niet hoofdtak 1 (verdediging eigen en bondgenootschappelijk grondgebied). En juist de internationale situatie vereist dat de aandacht de komende tijd gericht moet zijn op hoofdtak 1, waarbij de krijgsmacht ook nog steeds in staat moet zijn om operaties in het kader van de twee andere hoofdtaken uit te voeren.

Heren Schurink en Davidse, hoewel Defensie niet nadrukkelijk een beleidsministerie is, wordt van u wel goed beleid verwacht. De zeven krijgsmachtonderdelen moeten weer in staat zijn om hoofdtak 1 uit te voeren. Nederland dient over een geloofwaardige krijgsmacht te beschikken. Dat komt in 'beleidsland' kortweg neer op adequate gevechtskracht, een solide gereedstellingsproces en goed personeelsbeleid. Bij adequate gevechtskracht moet u denken aan operationele eenheden met voldoende slagkracht om gevechtsoperaties uit te voeren. Bovendien moet de instelling van de militairen, en zeker van uw beleidsambtenaren, veranderen. Vechten is immers niet langer een beladen woord. Geef het de aandacht die het verdient! Bij een solide gereedstellingsproces valt te denken aan goed en voldoende personeel en materieel dat inzetbaar is met afdoende voorraden. Het personeel dient zorgvuldig opgeleid en getraind te zijn om hoofdtak 1 aan te kunnen. En dat is een mooi opstapje naar goed personeelsbeleid, want dat is noodzakelijk als je veel van je mensen vergt. Doe nu niet zoals velen die nieuw aantreden en die om het hardst schreeuwen dat personeel voor hen het allerbelangrijkste is en er daarna geen gevolg aan geven. Nee, uw belangrijkste taak is gewoon goed beleid te formuleren, gericht op een vlotte werving en aanstelling van nieuwe collega's en natuurlijk op het behoud van het personeel; dit geldt zowel voor actief-dienende militairen, reservisten als burgerpersoneel.

Heren Schurink en Davidse, nogmaals welkom, en veel succes met deze uitdagingen. ■

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Reflexive Control in the Russo-Ukraine war

Jelmar de Kievit

The failure of Russian Reflexive Control in the 2022 invasion of Ukraine
does not mean that the theory as a whole should be dismissed.

Tussen Zeitenwende en Generation Smartphone

Frans van Nijnatten

Tijdens de Petersberger Gespräche zur Sicherheit gingen experts in op de
Zeitenwende, het Sondervermögen en nieuwe kansen voor de Bundeswehr.

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Clausewitz and Sun Tzu

Andreas Herberg-Rothe

Sun Tzu seemed to have the upper hand after the Cold War, but since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 Clausewitz is coming back to the fore.

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The war in Ukraine: Altering the norm of state sovereignty?

Kas van der Horst

The Ukraine war proves that Russia tries to make the norm of state sovereignty conditional on certain factors and much less universal.

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Reflexive Control in the Russo-Ukraine war

How Russia applied Soviet military theory to try and win a quick victory in 2022

Jelmar de Kievit*

How and to what extent did the Russian authorities use the Soviet-era concept of Reflexive Control against Ukraine? This article examines the theory of Reflexive Control and its role in Russian strategy.

Every war or conflict has its own characteristics and Russia's recent conflicts are no exceptions. In 2014, to everyone's surprise, 'little green men' suddenly appeared in Crimea and annexed the peninsula. Then, for eight years, Russian units fought intermittently in Ukraine's Donbas region in support of separatists seeking affiliation with Russia while Russian President Vladimir Putin continued to deny any involvement. According to experts, the fighting in the Donbas was a typical example of a frozen conflict between two independent states, in which there was a kind of stalemate between the parties for long periods of time while the fighting flared up from time to time increasing considerably in intensity. That the conflict was frozen did not mean that Russia was not preparing for full-scale war and, as Lawrence Freedman put it, 'A state determined on war

with another state would seek to maximise the military impact of the first move'.¹

At first glance Russia's war strategy in Ukraine in 2022 seemed to lack such an element capable of delivering a knockout blow to its adversary. How different that was from the almost bloodless annexation of Crimea in 2014, when the conquest of Ukrainian territory was over before most observers had even noticed. In articles in this journal and others the successes of the 2014 campaign are in part attributed to Russian military theory called Reflexive Control (RC). Three Dutch officers have published in recent years on the application of RC during the Russo-Georgian armed conflict in 2008 and during the earlier mentioned annexation of

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¹ Lawrence Freedman, *The Future of War: A History* (Penguin Books, 2017) 66.

Russian helicopters participate in exercise Zapad-2021. Using the guise of operational training to prepare for combat operations is a classic Reflexive Control technique



Mechanisms of Reflexive Control and their effects	
Deception	Forcing the opponent to reallocate forces to a threatened region during the preparatory phases of combat operations.
Disruption	Destroying or disrupting the opponent's decision-making support systems at inopportune moments during conflict, to force predetermined actions disadvantageous to the opponent.
Deterrence	Creating the perception of insurmountable superiority.
Distraction	Creating the real or imaginary threat to one of the opponent's most vital locations during the preparatory phases of combat operations, thereby forcing him to reflect on the wisdom of his decisions to operate along a certain axis.
Division	Convincing the opponent that he must operate in opposition to coalition interests.
Exhaustion	Compelling the opponent to carry out useless operations, thereby joining combat with reduced resources.
Overload	Frequently sending the opponent a large amount of conflicting data.
Pacification	Leading the opponent to believe that pre-planned operational training is ongoing, rather than offensive preparations, and therefore reducing his attentiveness.
Paralysis	Creating the perception of a specific threat to a vital interest or a weak spot.
Pressure	Offering information that disgraces the government of the opponent in the eyes of its population.
Provocation	Force the opponent into a mode of taking action, which is advantageous for the provocateurs side.
Suggestion	Offering information that affects the opponent legally, morally, ideological, or in other modest areas.

Figure 1 The twelve mechanisms of Reflexive Control based on Komov and Leonenko

Crimea. In 2016 LtCol Tony Selhorst wrote an article for the *Militaire Spectator* on the use of this theory during the annexation of Crimea, followed by Major Christian Kamphuis in 2018 and Colonel Han Bouwmeester in 2021. This raises the question whether Russia's military strategy for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 also comprised the theory of Reflexive Control to maximise the military impact of the first move.

This article shows that Russia certainly had an extensive campaign plan in place at the outset of the war with Ukraine. A major part of that plan was based on the Soviet military theory of Reflexive Control to prepare and execute the invasion. It was designed to assist in quickly achieving the campaign's objectives in support of the conventional military force deployed by the Russian authorities. This article consists of three parts; a short history and definition of RC,

followed by a broad overview of Russia's campaign plan in Ukraine and its RC uses, and finally the implications of Russia's use of RC for the future and the West's understanding of Russian warfare.²

Reflexive Control

Before an analysis of RC in the Russo-Ukraine war can be fully understood a short introduction to the theory is required. This part addresses the history of the theory, the mechanisms through which it is applied, its effects and the target audiences of the actions in which RC is applied. In a separate paragraph the role of the theory in modern Russian strategy is discussed.

In 1965, mathematician and psychologist Vladimir Lefebvre first came up with the term Reflexive Control. He developed a theory that could influence persons in such a way 'that inclines them to make decisions predetermined by the controlling party'.³ The potential of this theory for military strategy was recognized by

² This article is based on a military art bachelor thesis written at the Netherlands Defence Academy.

³ Vladimir Lefebvre, *Lectures on the Reflexive Games Theory* (New York, Macmillan Publishers, 2010) 82.

the Red Army and Soviet intelligence agencies, whose officers started writing about it and further developed it for military application. In 1995, Major General M.D. Ionov redefined RC for the military as a method 'to manipulate an opponent's decision-making process in such a way that he voluntarily takes actions that lead to his own defeat.'⁴ This can be done through all sorts of actions, both military and non-military, such as show of force, a feint, spreading disinformation, decoys or false-flag operations. In 1997, Colonel S.A. Komov compiled all these actions into eleven mechanisms through which Reflexive Control can be applied and he described the effects they were meant to have on an enemy.⁵

As the digital age was emerging in the nineties another Russian officer, Colonel S. Leonenko, also wrote about RC. With computers and the internet now also being used in the military, he argued that RC should also be applied against computers and what he called 'technical reconnaissance assets.'⁶ To account for RC against those digital systems a twelfth mechanism called 'disruption' has been added by the author of this article to the existing eleven described by Komov. The added twelfth mechanism of RC based on the remarks by Leonenko requires extra attention and therefore four examples from the Russo-Ukraine war are given in part two of this article to showcase the practical application of disruption. The effects of the eleven RC mechanisms together with disruption are summarized in Figure 1. Furthermore, it should be explained that the target audiences whose decision-making process is influenced can be subdivided into five types, namely 1. the population of the adversary, 2. the adversary's political brass, 3. its military leadership, 4. its military forces, and 5. the international community supporting that adversary. As RC can be applied against Russia's own population as well, this list also includes a domestic target audience.⁷

Reflexive Control in modern Russian strategy
RC has gained renewed attention since Russia's war against Georgia, the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Syria. Observers from the

West have described these activities as the application of RC operations to achieve effects against Russia's opponents, both regionally and internationally, with varying degrees of success.⁸ Moreover, two high-ranking Russian officers have given speeches hinting at the use of RC. Firstly, Chief of the Russian General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, de facto Russia's chief military planner, while addressing a Russian military academy, said that in conflict non-military and military measures should be used in a ratio of four-to-one.⁹ Timothy Thomas, an American expert on RC, noted that large parts of those non-military measures were used to achieve the mechanisms and effects from Figure 1.

Secondly, in 2015 at the same academy, Colonel General Andrey Kartapolov, at the time Director of Operations of the Russian General Staff, spoke about Russia's New Type Warfare that closely resembled certain elements of RC.¹⁰ His slides showed methods, such as putting pressure on the enemy, spreading division among the population, deceiving and distracting the enemy's political and military leadership, and exhausting an adversary through cyber and special operations.¹¹ The contents of the speeches held by these high-ranking Russian

- 4 Timothy Thomas, 'Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17 (2004) (2) 242. See: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040490450529>.
- 5 Sergei Komov, 'About Methods and Forms Conducting Information Warfare', *Voennaya Mysl (Military Thought)* (1997) 18-22; Thomas, 'Russia's Reflexive Control', 247-249.
- 6 Thomas, 'Russia's Reflexive Control', 247.
- 7 Keir Giles, James Sherr, and Anthony Seaboyer, 'Russian Reflexive Control', ResearchGate (Defence Research and Development Canada, October 2018) 7. See: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328562833_Russian_Reflexive_Control.
- 8 Han Bouwmeester, 'The Art of Deception Revisited (Part 2): The Unexpected Annexation of Crimea in 2014', *Militaire Spectator* 190 (2021) (10) 498-507. See: https://www.militairespectator.nl/sites/default/files/teksten/bestanden/militaire_spectator_10_2021_bouwmeester.pdf; Frederick Kagan and Kimberly Kagan, 'Putin Ushers in a New Era of Global Geopolitics', Institute for the Study of War, September 28, 2015, 5. See: <https://www.aei.org/articles/putin-ushers-in-a-new-era-of-global-geopolitics/>.
- 9 Dmitry Adamsky, 'Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy', Institut Français Des Relations Internationales, November 2015, 23.
- 10 Ronald Sprang, 'Russian Operational Art, New Type Warfare, and Reflexive Control', *Small Wars Journal*, April 9, 2018. See: <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russian-operational-art-new-type-warfare-and-reflexive-control>.
- 11 Timothy Thomas, 'The Evolving Nature of Russia's Way of War', *Military Review* July-August 2017 (2017) 37.

officers, as well as the use of RC in past operations, indicate that the Russian authorities still rely on that theory to plan and execute military operations.

Reflexive Control in the Russo-Ukraine War

During his presidential campaign in 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky made the Ukrainian population two promises: 1. to end the frozen conflict in the Donbas, and 2. to halt the corruption plaguing Ukraine. Both promises were made to prepare Ukraine for joining NATO and the EU. Authorities in Russia were concerned about losing Ukraine from its sphere of influence, considering Ukraine as a buffer state against the Western world, and losing it was unacceptable to them. Therefore, Russia started planning a campaign that provided for regime change to bring Ukraine back into Russia's sphere of influence. The following text describes Russia's Reflexive Control activities in two time periods. The first is the 'pre-war' period, ranging from the start of 2021 up to the invasion; the second is the 'war' period, confined to the first month of the invasion. In this article, four different objectives were found, for which the Russian authorities used different mechanisms of RC. These objectives, called 'Concentrations of Effort' (COEs), were equally divided over the two periods. The four COEs are:

1. Shaping the cognitive dimension of the Ukrainian population (pre-war);
2. shaping the physical dimension of the Ukrainian military (pre-war);
3. reducing combat effectiveness by disruption (war);
4. limiting the conventional warfighting phase (war).

Each COE will be explained further in the following paragraphs, supported by a review of the corresponding RC actions.

COE 1: Shaping the cognitive dimension

The Russian authorities used the RC mechanisms of suggestion, division, deterrence and pressure in preparation of the invasion on 24 February 2022 to shape the cognitive dimension of Ukraine. The activities were directed at altering the individual and collective knowledge, perceptions and understanding of the situation.¹² They focussed on creating a welcoming attitude towards Russian troops and weakening support for the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF). The paragraphs below explain how the Russian authorities used the mechanisms of Reflexive Control to assist this first COE.

Suggestion: Throughout 2021 Russian state media targeted the Ukrainian population by spreading incorrect information about Zelensky and the government in Kyiv. Some of the observed narratives centred on Zelensky as being a Nazi, often referring to him with German slurs associated with the Second World War, or portraying him as a drug addict and a US puppet who came to power illegally. Another narrative that was spread claimed that Zelensky and his government planned the genocide of Russian minorities living in Ukraine.¹³ To back up this claim, statements were added about chemical weapons provided by the US.¹⁴ These four narratives were all spread between April 2021 and the start of the invasion in February the following year. Discrediting the political leadership of an opponent in this manner fits the suggestion mechanism of RC. The narratives aimed to create hatred of the government in Kyiv, especially in the south of Ukraine where the population is largely Russian-speaking. When Ukraine was eventually invaded, the resistance by the UAF and local civilians in Kherson and Mykolaiv showed that the hatred of the government did not exist and that a welcoming attitude towards Russian troops was not achieved, even in Southern Ukraine, by the suggestion mechanism. Ordinary citizens collectively dug trenches, built defences and

12 Peter Pijpers and Paul Ducheine, 'Influence Operations in Cyberspace – How They Really Work', University of Amsterdam Digital Academic Repository (UvA, September 24, 2020) 5. See: https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/55821459/20210201_Pijpers_Ducheine_Influence_operations_in_cyberspace.pdf.

13 RIA Novosti, 'В Раде заявили о подготовке Зеленского к 'резне русских' (Rada says Zelensky preparing to 'massacre Russians')', February 13, 2022 (translated through DeepL.com). See: <https://ria.ru/20220213/reznya-1772524724.html>.

14 Ian Smith, 'The Disinformation War: The Falsehoods about the Ukraine Invasion and How to Stop Them Spreading', *Euronews*, March 8, 2022.



When Ukraine was invaded, the resistance by the UAF and local civilians showed that the hatred of the government did not exist: the RC 'suggestion mechanism' failed

PHOTO TEUN VOETEN

monitored Russian troop movements to keep the invaders out.¹⁵

Division: To support the suggestion mechanism and bolster pro-Russian sentiment, in July 2021 Putin released an essay on the Kremlin website, in Russian and Ukrainian, entitled 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians'. In the essay Putin reminded Ukrainians of their history as part of Russia and how they were 'brotherly people' sharing the same culture and language.¹⁶ This essay attempted to sow doubt among Ukrainians about supporting the pro-Western course the country had taken. Moreover, it dissuaded ordinary Ukrainians from volunteering for the UAF or the Territorial Defence Forces. Thus, with the essay Putin and his inner circle tried to convince the population of Ukraine to act against their national interest of defending the country from invasion, which fits the division mechanism of Reflexive Control. However, it did not achieve its RC effect as the UAF was not lacking in volunteers; it even

had to turn away citizens due to a shortage of weapons.¹⁷

Deterrence: On 14 January 2022, Ukraine's government websites were defaced by a cyberattack accompanied by the warning 'to be afraid and [to] wait for the worst'.¹⁸ Again, this message targeted the Ukrainian population whose country was becoming increasingly surrounded by an estimated 190,000 Russian troops along its borders.¹⁹ Faced with these odds

- 15 By Abduljalil Abdurasulov, 'Ukraine War: How Russia Took the South - and Then Got Stuck', *BBC News*, February 27, 2023. See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64718740>.
- 16 Vladimir Putin, 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians', July 12, 2021. See: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.
- 17 Tyler O'Neil, 'Ukraine Military Turns Volunteers Away as 140k Ukrainians Come Home to Fight Russia', *Fox News*, March 7, 2022.
- 18 Katharina Krebs, 'Cyberattack Hits Ukraine Government Websites', *CNN*, January 14, 2022. See: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/14/europe/ukraine-cyber-attack-government-intl/index.html>.
- 19 David Brown, 'Ukraine Conflict: Where Are Russia's Troops?', *BBC News*, February 23, 2022. See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60158694>.

and this ominous warning, for young Ukrainians volunteering for the Territorial Defence Forces or the UAF became an unappealing choice. Furthermore, the message targeted the UAF's fielded military standing face-to-face with the Russian troops just across the border. For both targeted audiences the message was meant to weaken morale and resistance to a possible invasion by creating a sense of overpowering superiority, thus fitting the deterrence mechanism.

Pressure: Pressure is the final Reflexive Control mechanism used by the Russian authorities before the invasion to shape the cognitive dimension. Between 18 and 22 February 2022 the separatists in the Donbas spread footage of supposed attacks by the UAF on Russian minorities living there.²⁰ This supported the false narrative of genocide of Russian minorities already circulating in the months before portraying the UAF as an aggressor. With this footage, the separatists tried to justify an incursion by Russian forces under the pretext of peacekeeping in an attempt to weaken support for the government in Kyiv. Disgracing the government with these faked videos fits the pressure mechanism of Reflexive Control. That the goal of these actions was to portray Ukraine as the aggressor is supported by the statements on 'protecting people facing humiliation and genocide by the Kiev regime', made by Putin while announcing the Special Military Operation.

COE 2: Shaping the physical dimension

In addition to shaping the cognitive dimension, the Russian authorities also attempted to shape the battlefield by applying Reflexive Control against Ukraine's military leadership during the

preparation of the invasion. The intent of this second COE was to focus the military's attention on the Donbas and thereby weaken defences in other areas, mainly around Kyiv. To achieve effects supporting this COE the mechanisms of pacification and distraction were used on multiple occasions.

Pacification: From April 2021 until the start of the invasion, Russia built up its troop strength around Ukraine in two phases. At the end of the first phase in April 2021 Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu explained the build-up as military exercises and during the second phase a further build-up in November could be discovered. Again, the Russian authorities used the explanation for another exercise as a cover for their ongoing troop build-up.²¹ While a return of the Russian troops to their home bases was announced, their equipment such as self-propelled artillery and armoured vehicles remained in theatre allowing for rapid deployment to the border if needed.²² Using the guise of operational training to prepare for combat operations is a classic RC technique and Ukraine's military leadership has repeatedly been the target of this mechanism. During the annexation of Crimea and other tensions between the countries since, it was Russia that held large troop exercises near Ukraine's borders. Thus the scenario of a smaller incursion into Ukrainian territory by Russian troops, with the majority remaining on the Russian side of the border as a deterrent, moulded the minds of the UAF's leadership. The most likely location for such a move would be the Donbas region and so the scenario of the annexation of that region emerged using the pacification mechanism.

Distraction: To emphasize the threat to the Donbas the Russian authorities used the distraction mechanism as well during two separate actions. The first is the already-discussed essay by Putin, in which he mentions the Donbas region six times. Moreover, he stated that Ukraine did not need the Donbas as it did not need Crimea.²³ Mentioning this link between the Donbas and the annexed Crimea further supported the created scenario, thus focusing the UAF's leadership on the Donbas.

20 Bellingcat Investigation Team, 'Documenting and Debunking Dubious Footage from Ukraine's Frontlines', *Bellingcat*, February 23, 2022.

21 BBC News, 'Russia to Pull Troops Back from near Ukraine', April 22, 2021; Alexander Marrow, 'In Russia-Ukraine Faceoff, Both Sides Stage Combat Drills', *Reuters*, November 25, 2021.

22 Zahra Ullah, Anna Chernova, and Eliza Mackintosh, 'Russia Pulls Back Troops after Massive Buildup near Ukraine Border', *CNN*, April 23, 2021. See: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/22/europe/russia-military-ukraine-border-exercises-intl/index.html>.

23 Putin, 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians'.

As the threat of war was growing at the start of 2022, Russian amphibious warships moved from the Baltic Sea towards the Black Sea. These ships were observed moving through the English Channel, the Strait of Gibraltar and the Bosphorus and they clearly showed signs of carrying a large quantity of sailors, soldiers and materiel. Some experts concluded that it would have made more military sense to move the amphibious troops over land to Crimea and embark them there more covertly.²⁴ On the other hand, overtly and intentionally moving these prepared warships through NATO-controlled waters was obviously intended as a distraction. The Russian authorities knew that NATO partners would share the intelligence about the ships with the Ukrainian military leadership, for whom the movement of these ships only further supported the scenario of an incursion into the South-East of Ukraine, now also from the sea. In this way, the Russian authorities attempted to use two RC mechanisms to shape the battlefield before the invasion. It is interesting to note that these mechanisms seem to have had a beneficial effect for the Russian authorities. As Ukraine's best units were stationed near the Donbas, it became known that Russian troops outnumbered their opponents in the Kyiv region by twelve to one.²⁵

COE 3: Reducing combat effectiveness by disruption

While Putin announced the start of Russia's Special Military Operation against Ukraine to 'demilitarize' and 'de-Nazify' the country, Russian troops were moving across the border. Meanwhile, hacker groups, long affiliated with Russia's military security service known as the GRU, had already penetrated Ukrainian cyberspace carrying out two cyber-attacks, one aimed at Ukrainian military communications and another at their computer systems. The two attacks will be discussed below, in addition to two other actions by the Russian authorities which applied RC to support this third COE.

The Viasat attack: During the opening minutes of the invasion, hackers attacked the ground station of the KA-SAT satellite owned by the American company Viasat, disrupting internet connections throughout Ukraine.²⁶ More

PHOTO SUPPORT FORCES OF UKRAINE COMMAND



A Ukrainian soldier installs a Starlink internet terminal. Access to the Starlink satellite network mitigated the effects of Russia's attack against Ukrainian satellite communications

importantly, this satellite was also in use by the UAF for their military communications, which were now severely hampered. A senior official of the Ukrainian State Services of Special Communication and Information Protection later commented on the interruption saying that it was 'a really huge loss in communications at the very beginning of the war.'²⁷ By attacking the satellite the Russian authorities achieved a disruptive effect, which prevented the UAF from communicating and sharing up-to-date battlefield intelligence. This in turn forced Ukraine's fielded military to take actions based on incomplete information and without proper coordination against the invading Russian forces. However, the effects of this attack were mitigated by Elon Musk providing Ukraine with his Starlink satellite network within two days.²⁸

24 John Barranco et al., 'Will Russia Make a Military Move against Ukraine? Follow These Clues', Atlantic Council, January 20, 2022.

25 Isobel Koshiw and Dan Sabbagh, 'The Battle for Kyiv Revisited: The Litany of Mistakes That Cost Russia a Quick Win', *The Guardian*, December 28, 2022.

26 Matt Burgess, 'Viasat Satellite Hack Spills Beyond Russia-Ukraine War', *WIRED*, March 23, 2022. See: <https://www.wired.com/story/viasat-internet-hack-ukraine-russia/>.

27 Burgess, 'Viasat Satellite Hack'.

28 BBC News, 'Elon Musk's Starlink Arrives in Ukraine but What Next?', March 1, 2022. See: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60561162>.

OMON's presence among front-line military units goes to show that the Russian authorities did not expect the resistance their troops were encountering

The HermeticWiper attack: The second cyberattack is known as 'HermeticWiper' or 'FoxBlade', depending on which internet security company's reports were reviewed. This attack used data-destroying malware, which infected Ukrainian government computer systems using Microsoft Windows and rendered them inoperable.²⁹ Among the government agencies operating Microsoft Windows was Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, including the UAF. This disruption is disastrous enough when coming under attack from another state but the implications went further than just the inability to access the computers. Complicated cyber-attacks take a lot of time to prepare and often hackers intrude into targeted systems through backdoors, or hidden digital access points, long before the actual attack happens. Therefore, the UAF had to assume that the data about their plans, positions and strength on those computers were also accessible to the attackers and were therefore known to Russian intelligence. This forced the military leadership to adopt an 'ad hoc' strategy, which is more challenging than a pre-planned strategy. In doing so-the Russian authorities achieved an RC effect by using the disruption mechanism against the computer systems of the Ukrainian military.

Decoys and jamming: The two other ways used by the Russian authorities to achieve the disruption effect of RC were by deploying aerial decoys and using Electronic Warfare (EW) systems. Russian EW systems jammed Ukrainian air defences in the initial phase of the invasion to such an extent that the Ukrainian Air Force was forced to assume full air defence duties during the first days of the war.³⁰ Committing the Ukrainian Air Force to this task was highly disadvantageous for the UAF, since the Russian Air Force (VKS) already outmatched its opponent in quality and quantity, at least on paper. It meant fewer threats from the ground to the VKS, less close-air support for UAF ground troops and overall more strain on the Ukrainian Air Force. The effect of the disruption is illustrated by a quote from a Ukrainian lieutenant, saying: 'How can you contain their offensive when we have no air defence?'.³¹

In addition, the Russian military deployed aerial decoys over Ukrainian airspace to draw fire from still-operational air defences. While compelling these systems to engage decoys, thus wasting ammunition, is the exhaustion mechanism of Reflexive Control, it had a second effect as well. The disruption caused by the decoys to the Ukrainian computer systems trying to detect enemy aircraft led to those air defences exposing themselves to the VKS. This is exactly what the Russian authorities had planned for as the VKS flew up to 140 sorties per day in the first days of the war to strike these still functioning air defences.³²

COE 4: Limiting the conventional warfighting phase

The fourth COE was to limit the timespan Russian forces would need to engage in conventional warfighting against the UAF. The Russian authorities attempted to achieve this through RC's division, deterrence, provocation and pressure mechanisms. A silent but gruesome witness to the conviction among Russian planners that RC would achieve this COE is a bloodied OMON-trooper vest, found in Bucha.³³ OMON is a riot-police unit, part of Russia's National Guard, the so-called *Rossguardia*, which was meant to suppress riots in Kyiv after it had

29 Brad Smith, 'Digital Technology and the War in Ukraine', *Microsoft on the Issues*, February 28, 2022. See: <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2022/02/28/ukraine-russia-digital-war-cyberattacks/>.

30 Justin Bronk, Nick Reynold, and Jack Watling, 'The Russian Air War and Ukrainian Requirements for Air Defence', *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, November 7, 2022, 7. See: <https://static.rusi.org/SR-Russian-Air-War-Ukraine-web-final.pdf>.

31 Abdurasulov, 'Ukraine War: How Russia Took the South - and Then Got Stuck'.

32 Bronk, Reynold, and Watling, 'The Russian Air War'.

33 Carl Schreck, "'Sent As Cannon Fodder': Locals Confront Russian Governor Over "Deceived" Soldiers In Ukraine', *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, March 6, 2022. See: <https://www.rferl.org/a/russian-soldiers-ukraine-cannon-fodder-governor/31739187.html>.

been captured. OMON's presence among front-line military units goes to show that the Russian authorities did not expect the resistance their troops were encountering. Moreover, the logistical failure of the poorly defended Russian column nearing Kyiv after a week of fighting unveils the lack of preparation for a full-scale conventional war against their adversary.³⁴

The next few paragraphs explain the RC mechanisms used by the Russian authorities and how they supported the COE which should have resulted in a walk-over for Russian forces.

Division: In the final days of February 2022, Russian authorities tempted the UAF leadership in three separate actions to overthrow the government in Kyiv or at least not resist the invading forces. Putin made a personal appeal to the UAF in a video broadcast, while Russian generals contacted their Ukrainian counterparts directly and 'bot farms' spread the message via text to lower-ranking Ukrainian officers.³⁵ The behaviour the Russian authorities hoped to provoke with these messages was to incite the overthrow of the government in Kyiv by the military, also known as a *coup d'état*. Trying to convince an opponent that he must operate in opposition to coalition interests fits the division mechanism of RC. Moreover, this action nurtured distrust among Ukrainian officers. The possibility that some officers might have accepted Russian deals potentially created suspicion and affected decision-making by slowing it down or by altering the choices made. However, resilience and cohesion within the UAF actually mitigated the effects of such efforts by the Russian authorities.³⁶

Division was also spread across the UAF's fielded military through deceiving statements by Russian state media. After the Snake Island incident Russian news outlet TASS reported that the garrison there surrendered and that together with other Ukrainian forces who had given up they would be returned to their families after disarmament.³⁷ The Russian authorities made it seem that surrendering to Russia was an acceptable option as they were of the opinion that Ukrainian soldiers facing an

overwhelming opponent would surrender more easily if there were no negative consequences of such an action for them. Therefore, this message was meant to spread division amongst the UAF and reduce its will to fight. It is also interesting to note that the Ukrainian government might have tried to counteract these statements by falsely stating that all troops stationed on Snake Island had heroically perished while defying Russia, setting an example for other Ukrainian troops.³⁸

Deterrence: On 28 February TASS again spread incorrect information about the conflict by stating that the VKS had achieved air superiority in Ukrainian airspace, while this was actually not the case. However, sending this message served another purpose. After the initial loss of internet communications in Ukraine, the country regained normal internet access on 27 February, according to internet monitoring organisation NetBlocks.³⁹ This meant that the claim of air superiority could be spread among Ukrainian troops through social media platform Telegram, which was and still is at the heart of the propaganda battle, according to Ian Garner, an expert on Russian propaganda.⁴⁰ In short,

- 34 Jack Watling, Oleksandr Danylyuk, and Nick Reynolds, 'Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo- Ukrainian War, February 2022–February 2023', *RUSI*, March 29, 2023, 4. See: <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/special-resources/preliminary-lessons-russias-unconventional-operations-during-russo-ukrainian-war-february-2022>.
- 35 Mykhaylo Zabrodskiy et al., 'Preliminary Lessons in Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: February-July 2022', Royal United Services Institute, November 30, 2022, 25; Julie Coleman, 'Russian Operatives Sent 5,000 Text Messages in a Failed Attempt to Incite Ukrainians to Attack Their Own Capitol', *Business Insider*, April 1, 2022.
- 36 Kalev Stoicescu et al., 'How Russia Went to War: The Kremlin's Preparations for Its Aggression Against Ukraine', International Center for Defence and Security, April 25, 2023, 20. See: <https://icds.ee/en/how-russia-went-to-war-the-kremlins-preparations-for-its-aggression-against-ukraine/>.
- 37 TASS, 'Ukrainian Garrison at Snake Island Surrenders to Russian Armed Forces', February 25, 2022. See: <https://tass.com/politics/1410761>.
- 38 Tim Lister and Josh Pennington, 'Audio Emerges Appearing to Be of Ukrainian Fighters Defending Island from Russian Warship', *CNN*, February 25, 2022. See: https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-news-02-24-22-intl/h_2e17e59214679efefede60d5fb481432.
- 39 James Pearson and Raphael Satter, 'Internet in Ukraine Disrupted as Russian Troops Advance', *Reuters*, February 27, 2022. See: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/internet-ukraine-disrupted-russian-troops-advance-2022-02-26/>.
- 40 Vera Bergengruen, 'How Telegram Became the Digital Battlefield in the Russia-Ukraine War', *Time*, March 21, 2022. See: <https://time.com/6158437/telegram-russia-ukraine-information-war/>.

the Russian authorities tried to demoralize Ukrainian troops by creating the sense that Russia had a far superior military force and that without sufficient air support Ukraine's fight would be over. Demoralizing, and forcing the surrender of, the UAF would remove the need to defeat them on the battlefield and so assist the mentioned COE.

Provocation: Throughout March 2022, Russian forces systematically destroyed the southern city of Mariupol. Although this seems to fit Russian military doctrine on urban warfare, looking at the state Russian forces left Grozny and Aleppo in,⁴¹ it also sent a clear message to Ukraine's political and military leadership. After Ukraine rejected the ultimatum to surrender the city to Russian forces, the destruction continued, reducing the city to rubble. Through this action, the Russian military tried to entice Ukraine's political and military leaders into yielding other surrounded cities, thus preventing the destruction of what they were trying to protect. Forcing an opponent to voluntarily take action advantageous to the controller like this fits the provocation mechanism of RC. It can be concluded that the Russian authorities attempted to avoid costly urban warfare and protracted sieges of other cities, thus supporting the fourth COE. It is interesting to note that in June the major city of Sievierodonetsk was almost surrounded by Russian forces and also given an ultimatum.⁴² Again, Ukrainian authorities rejected the demand to surrender, although a week later UAF troops were ordered to withdraw,⁴³ showing the possible

effect the provocation mechanism had on the Ukrainian authorities' decision-making.

Pressure: The final action used the pressure mechanism of RC to support the COE. It attempted to get Ukrainians to surrender by spreading utterly faked footage of Zelensky surrendering to Russia. The video appeared on the website of Ukraine 24 TV, while a written message that Zelensky had fled Kyiv was displayed on the Ukraine 24 TV channel's news ticker.⁴⁴ Hackers had infiltrated these systems and used them to spread false information that disgraced Zelensky in the eyes of the Ukrainian population and military, thus fitting the pressure mechanism of RC. The purpose was to incite Ukrainian forces to surrender, had it not been for the poor quality of the deep fake and the debunking video by Zelensky himself, released almost immediately after the incident.

Conclusions and implications

It is clear that just as with the 2014 annexation of Crimea the Russian authorities have used the theory of RC to plan and execute the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The nine mechanisms of RC observed as having been used prior to and during the first months of the 2022 war in Ukraine were suggestion, division, deterrence, pressure, pacification, distraction, disruption, exhaustion and provocation. However, whereas in 2014 RC had been very successful, in 2022 it mostly failed to produce the effects of the four 'Concentrations of Efforts' (COEs) discussed above which were aimed at maximising the impact of Russia's first move. Ukrainians did not welcome Russian troops as liberators and were very determined to stand their ground, which turned out to be a failure on Russia's part in shaping the cognitive dimension of the Ukrainian population. Although Ukraine's best military units were stationed near the Donbas due to the shaping of the physical dimension, they still managed to mount the adequate defence of Kyiv and in the North-Eastern part of Ukraine. At the very start of the conflict combat effectiveness was reduced due to the disruption caused by COE 3. However, the failure to actually

41 Brian Glyn Williams, 'Grozny and Aleppo: A Look at the Historical Parallels', *The National*, November 24, 2016. See: <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts/grozny-and-aleppo-a-look-at-the-historical-parallels-1.211868>.

42 Pjotr Sauer, 'Ukraine Ignores Russian Ultimatum to Surrender Sievierodonetsk', *The Guardian*, June 15, 2022. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/15/ukraine-ignores-russian-ultimatum-to-surrender-sieverodonetsk>.


43 Peter Beaumont and Pjotr Sauer, 'Last Ukrainian Forces in Sievierodonetsk Ordered to Withdraw', *The Guardian*, June 24, 2022.

44 Digital Forensic Research Lab and Roman Osadchuk, 'Russian War Report: Hacked News Program and Deepfake Video Spread False Zelenskyy Claims', Atlantic Council, March 16, 2022. See: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russian-war-report-hacked-news-program-and-deepfake-video-spread-false-zelenskyy-claims/>.

destroy all Ukrainian air defences and Elon Musk providing the UAF with his Starlink internet network mitigated the effects of this COE. Finally, Ukrainian troops, inspired by their brave president, stood firm in the face of adversity, not allowing incorrect or unconfirmed information to demoralize them. Therefore, Russian troops were forced to defeat them on the battlefield, despite all the actions focussed on limiting the need for an extended period of warfighting or COE 4.

There is a possibility that, on the one hand, the success of RC during the annexation of Crimea convinced the Russian authorities of the use of RC for the campaign plan in 2022 but that, on

the other, Ukrainians were more alert to manipulation and influencing operations by Russian authorities. Consequently, the failure of RC in this campaign does not mean that the theory as a whole should be dismissed. It is plausible to assume that Russian authorities will try to learn from their mistakes and adjust the application of RC. Their actions will become more sophisticated and more dangerous to the targets they will be trying to manipulate and control. Therefore, as war becomes increasingly dependent on computers and other technical systems such as radars, the addition of the 'disruption' mechanism to RC theory is essential to detect and counteract the appliance of RC by Russia in the future. ■



Through destruction of cities, the Russian military tried to entice Ukraine's political and military leaders into yielding other surrounded cities

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Clausewitz and Sun Tzu

Paradigms of warfare in the 21st century

Andreas Herberg-Rothe*

Despite ideal-typical theoretical constructions, every war is characterized by a combination of irreconcilable opposites. Consequently, the question is neither about an 'either-or' nor about a pure 'both-and,' but involves the question which strategy is the appropriate one in a concrete situation. In order to avoid the continuous invention of new ways of warfare, it is necessary to reflect on the approaches of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. The foundational nature of their works invites us to focus on fundamental and enduring trends. Sun Tzu seemed to have the upper hand after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, but since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 Clausewitz is coming back to the fore. This raises the question which of the two, Clausewitz or Sun Tzu, will be referred to more in the strategic debates of the future. In my view this depends on the role that 'thought' and the 'soul' will play in comparison to material realities in a globalized world.



'No principle in the world is always right, and no thing is always wrong. What was used yesterday may be rejected today, what is rejected now may be used later on. This use or disuse has no fixed right or wrong. To avail yourself of opportunities at just the right time, responding to events without being set in your ways is in the domain of wisdom. If your wisdom is insufficient (...) you'll come to an impasse wherever you go.' – Taoistic text¹

were transformed into intervention forces against non-state actors while, with the current war in Ukraine, state-to-state war has returned and may determine the next thirty years.

To cope with these developments, we need to reflect on the approaches of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. Clausewitz experienced a renaissance with the Iraq War in 1991, was laid to rest again after that war in 2003 and replaced by Sun Tzu's concepts, and with the war in Ukraine, Clausewitz is coming back to the fore. The foundational nature of their works invites us to focus on fundamental and enduring trends. The

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1 Thomas Cleary, quoting a Taoist story, in: Sun Tzu, *The Art of War. Spirituality for Conflict* (Woodstock, 2008) p. XVI.

In times of accelerated change in warfare it is necessary to reflect on the fundamentals, otherwise with every new development a new kind of warfare will be invented (New Wars, RMA, hybrid warfare, 4th and 5th generation warfare, the OODA loop). A striking example could be that after the Cold War most armies



American military trainers in Ukraine, 2016: After the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 Clausewitz has come back to the fore

PHOTO US ARMY, ADRIANA M. DIAZ-BROWN

fact that they were written in ignorance of current technological and social conditions can help us to see them in their true proportions. Clausewitz, in particular, recognized that the conduct of war is deeply rooted in immediate (but ever-changing) circumstances. He would have been the last to argue that such things did not matter. But he also recognized that they were not the only factors that matter. Striking a balance is a central challenge of strategic theory at all times, including ours.²

This is perhaps the crucial difference with more recent approaches, which run the risk of absolutizing a limited development. Both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, on the other hand, were convinced that war consists of paradoxical, contradictory tendencies (Clausewitz, for one, believed in the 'wondrous trinity'). This creates a dilemma between the 'grammar' of war and its definition as an instrument of politics. Clausewitz clearly states, on the one hand, that war consists of violence, to be regarded as a blind natural force, and, on the other hand, that war is subordinate to pure reason. This is the decisive conflict in any war and creates a dilemma of action. Ethical theory tells us how to deal with dilemmas. One way is to impose a hierarchy between the conflicting tendencies, as has been attempted in the concept of trinitarian warfare by Harry G. Summers and Martin van Creveld, which is not identical with Clausewitz's 'wondrous trinity' but even contradicts it.³ The other approach is to draw a line between e.g. non-state wars and wars between states – one principle would apply to non-state wars (e.g. Robert Kaplan, John Keegan, van Creveld), the other to wars between states. Yet another

approach would be a kind of functional differentiation, which typifies all modern armies and is best characterized by the function of the organs of a body. There is also an holistic approach in which it is not political leadership but an overarching political purpose that determines all concrete actions. We find such a concept especially in partisan warfare, network-centric warfare; to sum up, networks are bound together by such an holistic approach. Finally, Clausewitz's concept of a floating and evolving balance of opposites, as well as Sun Tzu's consideration of paradoxes, must be taken into account when dealing with dilemmas of action.

The discursive abandonment of state war and its replacement by concepts of 'new wars'⁴ or non-state wars⁵ in the 1990s was not superficially wrong, but it obscured the view of longer-term developments. This creates a paradox. On the one hand, the impression that there would only be wars of intervention had become established in the political discourse; on the other hand, the newer approaches to warfare and the new technological possibilities gave the impression that there would be purely military solutions to political problems – with fatal consequences in Afghanistan and Iraq, for example. We should not dogmatically decide which of the two is better suited to deal with war and violence in a world of hybrid globalization characterized by revolutionary technological developments and the 'rise of the other'.⁶ What remains completely open is the relationship between influencing the mind of the enemy and the role of material conditions in future warfare. Here, Clausewitz and Sun Tzu may serve as cautionary tales against absolutizing either side.

In the first part of this article, the development of the discourse on Clausewitz and Sun Tzu since the end of the Cold War is explained. It then discusses some of Sun Tzu's principles and problems, especially his famous dictum that war is won by those who do not have to fight. This statement may perhaps serve as the best description of the goal of hybrid warfare. Clausewitz's concept of the floating balance of opposites in warfare will then be explained in

2 Andres Herberg-Rothe, 'Clausewitz's Concept of Strategy. Balancing Purpose, Aims and Means', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Volume 37, 6-7 (2014) pp. 903-925. See: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01402390.2013.853175>.

3 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle. The Political Theory of War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007).

4 Mary Kaldor, *Neue und alte Kriege. Organisierte Gewalt im Zeitalter der Globalisierung* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2000); Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 2002).

5 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York, The Free Press, 1991); Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics* (New York, Vintage Books, 2002).

6 Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York, W.W. Norton, 2012).



detail and some applications will be made. I will then argue that, although Clausewitz and Sun Tzu advocate diametrically opposed principles, we must be aware that their positions are integrated into a field of polar opposites between which we must find a balance.

The discourse about Clausewitz and Sun Tzu

Every war has its own strategy and also its own theorist. In fact, there are only two great theorists of war and warfare, the Prussian ‘philosopher of war’ Carl von Clausewitz and the ancient Chinese theorist of the ‘art of war’, Sun Tzu. Nevertheless, there is no single strategy, neither Clausewitz’s nor Sun Tzu’s, that applies equally to all cases. Often an explanation for success or failure is sought in the strategies used only in retrospect. For example, Harry G. Summers attributed the defeat of the United States in the Vietnam War to the failure to take into account the unity of people, army and government, Clausewitz’s ‘wondrous trinity.’⁷ In contrast, after the successful campaign against Iraq in 1991, the then Chief-of-Staff of the U.S. Army, Colin Powell, appeared at a press gathering with Clausewitz’s *Book of War* as if to show what was learned from the mistakes of the Vietnam War and that the Iraq War was won relying on Clausewitz.⁸ Similarly, after World War I, there was a discourse that amounted to the afterthought that if the German generals had read Clausewitz correctly, the war would not have been lost. This position referred to the victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and the assessment of the then Chief of the

General Staff, Helmut von Moltke, that he was able to fight this war successfully by having studied Clausewitz’s *On War*. Since then, Clausewitz’s book has been perused for finding reasons for victory or defeat.⁹

If Clausewitz’s status seemed unchallenged after the Iraq War in 1991, it was gradually questioned and often replaced by Sun Tzu. Two reasons played a role here. On the one hand, there were the new forms of non-state violence and, on the other, the new technological possibilities and the revolution in military affairs (RMA), which is far from being completed. That applies in particular to robotic and hybrid warfare, as well as the incorporation of artificial intelligence, that of space, and the development of quantum computers. The trigger for the change from Clausewitz to Sun Tzu was a seemingly new type of war, the so-called New Wars, which, strictly speaking, were not new at all, but were civil wars or those of non-state groups. In the view of the epoch-making theorists of the New Wars, such as Kaldor and, much more differentiated, Münkler, interstate wars were replaced by non-state wars, which were characterized by singular cruelty of the belligerents.¹⁰ These weapon bearers, seemingly a throwback to the past, appeared as child soldiers, warlords, drug barons, archaic fighters, terrorists, and common criminals styled as freedom fighters.¹¹

Since Sun Tzu lived in a time of perpetual civil wars in China, his ‘art of war’ seemed more applicable to intrastate war,¹² while Clausewitz’s conception was attributed to interstate war. In combating these new weapons carriers and the ‘markets of violence,’ civil war economies, or ‘spaces open to violence’ associated with them, Napoleon’s guiding principle was applied: ‘Only partisans help against partisans’.¹³ Accordingly, conceptions of warfare were developed by John Keegan and Martin van Creveld, for example, that amounted to an archaic warrior with state-of-the-art technologies.¹⁴ On the military level, the transformation of parts of the Western armed forces, including the Bundeswehr, from a defensive army to an intervention army took place. However, in contrast to the United States,

7 Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy. A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York, Novato, 1982).

8 Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz’s Puzzle*.

9 Idem.

10 Mary Kaldor, *Neue und alte Kriege*; Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*.

11 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Der Krieg. Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Second reworked and enlarged edition (Frankfurt, Campus, 2017).

12 Mark McNeilly, *Sun Tzu and the Art of Modern War* (Oxford: Oxford, University Press, 2001).

13 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Der Krieg*.

14 John Keegan, *Die Kultur des Krieges* (Berlin, Rowohlt, 1995); van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*.

the Bundeswehr placed greater emphasis on pacifying civil society in these civil war economies, and ideally the soldier became a social worker in uniform.¹⁵

Consequently battles were fought by highly professional special forces in complex conflict areas. The initial success of the U.S. Army in Afghanistan can be attributed to the use of such special forces, which, as a result of modern communications capabilities, were able to engage superior U.S. airpower at any time. Because interstate warfare has returned to the forefront with the Ukraine war, Clausewitz may regain relevance in the coming years, unless the controversial concepts of hybrid warfare, John Boyd's OODA loop, or NATO's comprehensive approach gain further influence. With non-state warfare by states at their core, they thus enable a revival of Sun Tzu.

However, the paradigm shift from Clausewitz to Sun Tzu became even clearer in the second Iraq war in 2003. From the perspective of one commentator, this campaign was won in just a few weeks' time because the U.S. army was guided by Sun Tzu's principles, while Saddam Hussein's Russian advisors adhered to Clausewitz and Moscow's defence against Napoleon.¹⁶ Before the fall of Afghanistan, former U.S. Secretary of Defence James Mattis brought up the Clausewitz/Sun Tzu distinction anew. 'The Army was always big on Clausewitz, the Prussian; the Navy on Alfred Thayer Mahan, the American; and the Air Force on Giulio Douhet, the Italian. But the Marine Corps has always been more Eastern-oriented. I am much more comfortable with Sun-Tzu and his approach to warfare.'¹⁷

Without wholly following this distinction, it gives us hints that we cannot find absolutely valid approaches in Clausewitz's and Sun Tzu's conceptions, but differentiations in warfare. Simplifying the difference between the two we may observe that Clausewitz's approach is more comparable to wrestling,¹⁸ while Sun Tzu's is comparable to jiu-jitsu. The difference between the two becomes even clearer when comparing Clausewitz's conception to a boxing match. The

goal is to render the opponent incapable of fighting¹⁹ by striking his body, as Clausewitz himself points out, thereby forcing him to make peace. In contrast, Sun Tzu's goal is to unbalance his opponent so that even a light blow will force him to the ground because he will be brought down by his own efforts. Of course, these two aspects play a major role in both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, but Clausewitz's strategy relates more to the body, the material means available to the war opponents, whereas Sun Tzu's strategy relates more to the mind, the will to fight. Both strategies have also often been conceptualized as the antithesis of direct and indirect strategy. In direct strategy, two more or less similar opponents fight on a delineated battlefield with roughly equal weapons and 'measure their strengths'; in indirect strategy, on the other hand, attempts are made, for example, to disrupt the enemy's supply of food and weapons or to break the will of the enemy population to continue supporting the war. The tank battles in World War II would be examples of symmetric warfare and the bombing of German cities and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki examples of asymmetric warfare. Non-state warfare is also asymmetrically structured in nearly all cases as it is primarily directed against the enemy civilian population.²⁰ Perhaps asymmetric warfare was most evident in the Yom Kippur War between the Israeli and the Egyptian armies. Egypt had indeed surprised Israel and managed to overrun Israeli positions along the Suez Canal. However, instead of giving the Egyptian army a tank battle in the Sinai, a relatively small group of tanks crossed the Suez Canal and attacked the rear of the Egyptian

- 15 Wilfried von Bredow, 'Kämpfer und Sozialarbeiter – Soldatische Selbstbilder im Spannungsfeld herkömmlicher und neuer Einsatzmissionen', in: S.B. Gareis and P. Klein, (eds.), *Handbuch Militär und Sozialwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006).
- 16 Marwaan Macan-Marker, 'Sun Tzu: The Real Father of Shock and Awe,' *Asia Times*, 2, April 2003; Ralph Peters, 'A New Age of War,' *New York Post*, 10 April 2003.
- 17 Thomas E. Ricks, 'Quote of the day: Gen. Mattis' reading list, and why he looks more to the East,' *Foreign Policy*, 8 June 2015. See: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/08/quote-of-the-day-gen-mattis-reading-list-and-why-he-looks-more-to-the-east/>.
- 18 Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege* (Bonn, Dümmler, 1991) 191.
- 19 Ibidem.
- 20 Felix Wassermann, *Asymmetrische Kriege. Eine politiktheoretische Untersuchung zur Kriegführung im 21. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, Campus, 2015).



James Mattis, second from the right as a Marine Corps General and very knowledgeable about military history, preferred Sun-Tzu's approach to warfare

army, cutting it off from its water supply and forcing it to surrender within a few days.²¹

This distinction between Clausewitz and Sun Tzu can be contradicted insofar as Clausewitz begins with a 'definition' of war in which the will of the attacker plays a major role and which states that war is an act of violence to force the opponent to comply with the former's will.²² But how is the opponent forced to do this in Clausewitz's conception? Clausewitz claims that that is done by destroying the opponent's forces. By this concept of annihilation, however, he does not understand a physical destruction in the narrowest sense, but to put the armed forces of the opponent in such a position that they can no longer continue the fight.²³

Sun Tzu

Sun Tzu's approach relates more directly to the enemy's thinking: 'The greatest achievement is to break the enemy's resistance without a fight.'²⁴ Or, accordingly, as Basil Liddell Hart later formulated it, 'Paralyzing the enemy's nervous system is a more economical form of operation than blows to the enemy's body.'²⁵ Sun Tzu's methodical thinking aims at a dispassionate assessment of the strategic situation and thus at achieving inner distance from events as a form of objectivity. This approach is rooted in Taoism, and in it the presentation of paradoxes is elevated to a method. Although *The Art of War* contains a number of seemingly unambiguous doctrines and rules of thumb, they cannot be combined into a consistent body of thought.

In this way, Sun Tzu confronts his readers (who are also his students) with thinking tasks that must be solved. Often these tasks take the form of the paradoxical. This becomes quite obvious in the following central paradox: 'To fight and

21 Herberg-Rothe, *Der Krieg*.

22 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 191.

23 Idem, 215.

24 Sunzi, *Die Kunst des Krieges* (published with a foreword by James Clavell, München 1988) 35.

25 Basil Liddell Hart, *Strategie* (translated into German by Horst Jordan) (Wiesbaden, Rheinische Verlags-Anstalt, 1955) 281.

win all your battles is not the greatest achievement. The greatest achievement is to break the enemy's resistance without a fight.²⁶ In clear contradiction to the rest of the book, which deals with warfare, Sun Tzu here formulates the ideal of victory without a battle, and thus comes very close to the ideal of hybrid warfare, in which actual battle is only one of several options.

Obviously, he wants to urge his readers to carefully consider whether a war should be waged and, if so, under what conditions. It is consistent with this that Sun Tzu repeatedly reflects on the economy of war, on its economic and social costs, and at the same time refers to the less expensive means of warfare such as cunning, deception, forgery, and the use of spies. Victory without combat is thus the paradox with which Sun Tzu seeks to minimize the costs of an unavoidable conflict, to limit senseless violence and destruction, and to point to the unintended effects.

The form of the paradox is used several times in Sun Tzu's book, for example when he recommends to perform deceptive maneuvers whenever possible; this contradicts his statement that information about the opponent can be obtained accurately but is of limited use at least when the opponent is also skilled in deceptive maneuvers or is also able to see through the deceptions of his opponent. This contradiction stands out particularly glaringly when one considers that Sun Tzu repeatedly emphasizes the importance of knowledge, for example when he says, 'If you know the enemy and yourself, there is no doubt about your victory; if you know heaven and earth, then your victory will be complete.'²⁷ In a situation in which one must assume that the other person also strives to know as much as possible, this sentence can only be understood as a normative demand, as an ideal: knowledge becomes power when it represents a knowledge advantage, as Michel Foucault has emphasized in more recent times. To him knowledge is power. Cunning, deception and the flow of information, even when they are not absolutely necessary, are, however, in danger of becoming ends in themselves because they alone guarantee

an advantage in knowledge. Information, then, is the gold and oil of the 21st century.

The presentation of paradoxes is not an inadequacy for Sun Tzu but the procedure by which he instructs his readers/students. In contrast to the theoretical designs of many Western schools of thought, Sun Tzu relies here on non-directive learning: the paradox demands active participation from the reader, mirrors to him his structure of thinking and makes him question the suitability of his own point of view in thinking through the position of the opponent. Sun Tzu thereby forces his recipients to constantly examine the current situation and to frequently reflect. By repetitively thinking through paradoxical contradictions, the actor gains the inner distance and detachment from the conflict that are necessary for an impersonal, objectifying view of events. By being confronted with paradoxes, the reader learns to simultaneously adopt very different points of view, to play through the given variants, to form an understanding of the contradictions of real situations and, at the same time, make decisions as rationally as possible. In this way, the text encourages people not to rely on the doctrines it formulates as positive knowledge about conflict strategies but to practise repeated and ever new thinking through as a method. Sun Tzu's approach is thus characterized by highlighting paradoxes of warfare by designing strategies of action through reflection aimed at influencing the thinking of the opponent.

Elective affinities with Mao Zedong

The conception of the 'People's War' of the Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong is a further development of that of Sun Tzu's and the dialectical thinking of Marx and Engels. At the same time, in these paradoxes he tries to provide an assessment and analysis of the situation that is as objective-scientific as possible, linking it to subjective experience: 'Therefore, the objects of

²⁶ Sunzi, *Die Kunst des Kriegs*.

²⁷ Idem, 211.



Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong repeatedly demonstrates thinking in interdependent opposites and is sometimes in complete agreement with Clausewitz

study and cognition include both the enemy's situation and our own situation, these two sides must be considered as objects of investigation, while only our brain (thought) is the investigating object.²⁸

The comprehensive analyses that Mao prefaces each of his treatises with have two purposes: On the one hand, they serve as sober, objective investigations before and during the clashes,

which are intended to ensure rational predictions of what will happen and are based on reliable information and the most precise planning. On the other hand, Mao uses them to achieve the highest level of persuasion and to mobilize his followers through politicization. It is not for nothing that terms like 'explain,' 'persuade,' 'discuss,' and 'convince' are constantly repeated in his writings since the people's war he propagates requires unconditional loyalty and high morale.

Mao repeatedly demonstrates thinking in interdependent opposites, which can be understood as a military adaptation of the Chinese concept of Yin and Yang. His precise analyses demonstrate dialectical reversals; thus he can show that weakness is hidden in strength and strength in weakness. According to this mode of thinking, advantage can be found in every disadvantage, and in every disadvantage there is an advantage. An example of this is his explanation of the dispersion of forces: while conventional strategies proclaim the concentration of forces (as does Clausewitz),²⁹ Mao relies on dispersion. This approach confuses the one opponent and creates the illusion of the omnipresence of the other.

Mao understands confrontations as reciprocal interactions and, from this perspective, is able to weigh the relationship between concentration and dispersion differently: 'Performing a mock maneuver in the East, but undertaking the attack in the West'³⁰ means to bind the attention of the opponent but at the same time to become active where the opponent least expects it. Mao's method of dialectically seeking out weakness in strength and strength in weakness leads him to the flexibility that is indispensable for confronting a stronger opponent.

Finally, it is the ruthless analysis of one's own mistakes that brings Mao to his guiding principles. From a series of sensitive defeats, he concluded, 'The aim of war consists of nothing other than 'self-preservation and the destruction of the enemy' (to destroy the enemy means to disarm him or 'deprive him of his power of resistance,' but not to physically destroy him to

28 Mao Tse-tung, *Sechs Militärische Schriften* (Beijing, Verlag für fremdsprachige Literatur, 1970) 26.

29 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 468.

30 Mao Tse-tung, *Sechs Militärische Schriften*, 372.

the last man).³¹ On this point, Mao Zedong is in complete agreement with Clausewitz. Mao also clarifies this core proposition by defining the concept of self-preservation dialectically, namely as an amalgamation of opposites: ‘Sacrifice and self-preservation are opposites that condition each other. For such sacrifices are not only necessary in order to preserve one’s own forces. A partial and temporary failure to preserve oneself (the sacrifice or payment of the price) is indispensable if the whole is to be preserved for the long run.’³²

Sun Tzu’s problems

Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War* as well as the theorists of network centric warfare and 4th and 5th generation warfare focus on military success but miss the political dimension with regard to the post-war situation. They underestimate the process of transforming military success into real victory.³³ The three core elements of Sun Tzu’s strategy could not easily be applied in our time: Deceiving the opponent in general risks deceiving one’s own population as well, which would be problematic for any democracy. An indirect strategy in general would weaken deterrence against an adversary who can act quickly and decisively. Focusing on influencing the will and mind of the adversary may enable him to avoid a fight and merely resume it at a later time under more favourable conditions.

Sun Tzu is probably more likely to win battles and even whole campaigns than Clausewitz, but it is difficult to win a war by following the former’s principles. The reason is that Sun Tzu was never interested in shaping after-war political conditions because he lived in a time of seemingly never-ending civil wars. The only imperative for him was to survive while paying the lowest possible price and avoiding fighting because even a successful battle against one enemy could leave one weaker when the moment came to fight the next. As always in history, whenever people want to emphasize the differences between Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, the similarities between the two approaches are neglected. For example, the approach in Sun

In hybrid globalization, there is neither an either-or of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu, nor a similarly simple as-well-as, but a productive tension between the two

Tzu’s chapter on ‘Swift Action to Overcome Resistance’ would be quite similar to the approach advocated by Clausewitz and practised by Napoleon. The main problem, however, is that Sun Tzu neglects the strategic perspective of shaping post-war political-social relations and their impact ‘by calculation’³⁴ on the conduct of the war. As mentioned earlier, this was not a serious issue for Sun Tzu and his contemporaries but it is one of the most important aspects of warfare in our time.³⁵

Finally, one must take into account that Sun Tzu’s strategy is likely to be successful against opponents that have a very weak order of forces or associated community, such as warlord systems and dictatorships, which were common opponents in his time. His book is full of cases where relatively simple actions against the order of the opposing army or its community lead to disorder on the part of the opponent until his armed forces are disbanded or lose their will to fight altogether. Such an approach can obviously be successful with opponents who have weak armed forces and an unstable social foundation

31 Idem, 349.

32 Idem, 175.

33 See: Macan-Marker, ‘Sun Tzu: The Real Father of Shock and Awe,’; Ralph Peters, ‘A New Age of War,’; Antulio Echevarria II, *Fourth-Generation Warfare and Other Myths* (Carlisle, Strategic Studies Institute, 2005).

34 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 196.

35 Echevarria, *Fourth-Generation Warfare and Other Myths*; David Lonsdale, *The Nature of War in the Information Age* (London, Frank Cass, 2004).

but is likely to prove problematic with more entrenched opponents.

Here, the Ukraine war could be a cautionary example. Apparently, the Russian military leadership and the political circle around President Putin were convinced that this war, like the intervention in Crimea, would end quickly because neither the resistance of the Ukrainian population nor that of its army was expected, nor the will of the Western states to support Ukraine militarily. To put it pointedly, one could say that in the second Iraq war Sun Tzu triumphed over Clausewitz but in the Ukraine war Clausewitz triumphed over Sun Tzu. This also shows that while wars in the era of hybrid globalization³⁶ necessarily also take on

a hybrid character, it is much more difficult to successfully conduct hybrid warfare. Such a conflation of opposites is strategically at odds with those writings of Clausewitz's in which he generalizes the principles of Napoleonic warfare, though not with his determination of defence. The Ukraine war can even be seen as evidence of the greater strength of defence, as postulated by Clausewitz.³⁷

And Clausewitz?

At first glance Clausewitz's position is not compatible with that of Sun Tzu's. In his world-famous formula of the continuation of war by other means,³⁸ Clausewitz takes a hierarchical position with politics determining the superior end. Immediately before this formula, however, he writes that politics will pervade the entire warlike act but only insofar as the nature of the forces exploding within it permits.³⁹ With this statement he relativizes the heading of the 24th chapter, which contains the world-famous

36 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, 'The Dissolution of Identities in Liquid Globalization and the Emergence of Violent Uprisings', *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research*, Volume 1. No. 1 (April 2020) 11-32.

37 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle*.

38 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 210.

39 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 210.



Training military personnel from Ukraine during Operation Interflex: one could say that in the Ukraine war Clausewitz triumphed over Sun Tzu

PHOTO FORSVARET, KAREN GJETRANG

formula. In addition, all headings of the first chapter, with the exception of the final conclusion of the first chapter containing the result of the theory, were in the handwriting of Marie von Clausewitz's, while only the actual text was written by Clausewitz (See Herberg-Rothe, on the discovery of the manuscript by Paul Donker).⁴⁰

The tension implicit in the formula becomes even clearer in the wondrous trinity: Clausewitz's 'result of the theory' of war. Here he writes that war is not only a true chameleon because it changes its nature somewhat in each concrete case, but a wondrous trinity. This is composed of the original violence of war, hatred and enmity, which can be seen as a blind natural instinct, the game of probabilities and chance, and war as an instrument of politics, whereby war falls prey to pure reason. Violence, hatred and enmity like blind natural instincts on the one side, and mere reason on the other; this is the decisive contrast in Clausewitz's wondrous trinity. For Clausewitz, all three tendencies of the wondrous trinity are inherent in every war; the difference in their composition is what makes wars different.⁴¹

While Clausewitz formulates a clear hierarchy between the end, aim and means of war in the initial definition and the world-famous formula, the wondrous trinity is characterized by a principled equivalence of the three tendencies of war's violence, the inherent struggle and its instrumentality. At its core, Clausewitz's wondrous trinity is a hybrid determination of war, which is why the term 'paradoxical trinity' is more often used in English versions. In his determination of the three interactions to the extreme, made at the beginning of the book, Clausewitz emphasizes the problematic nature of the escalation of violence in war due to its becoming independent because the use of force develops its own dynamics.⁴² The three interactions have often been misunderstood as mere guides to action but they are more likely to be considered as escalation dynamics in any war. This is particularly evident in escalation sovereignty in war when a side gains an advantage that can outbid the use of force. However, this outbidding of the adversary⁴³ brings with it the

problem of violence becoming an independent element. This creates a dilemma, which Clausewitz expresses in the wondrous trinity.

This dilemma between the danger of violence becoming independent and its rational application gives rise to the problem formulated at the outset, namely that there cannot be a single strategy applicable to all cases but that a balance of opposites is required.⁴⁴ In it, the primacy of politics is emphasized but at the same time this primacy is constructed as only one of three opposites of equal rank. Thus, Clausewitz's conception of the wondrous trinity is also to be understood as paradox, dilemma and hybrid.

As already observed in ethics, there are different ways to deal with such dilemmas.⁴⁵ One is to create a hierarchy between opposites. Here, particular mention should be made of the conception of trinitarian war, which was wrongly attributed to Clausewitz by Harry Summers and Martin van Creveld and was one of the causes of Clausewitz being considered obsolete by Mary Kaldor regarding the New Wars. For in the conception of trinitarian war the balance of three equal tendencies emphasized by Clausewitz is explicitly transformed into a hierarchy of government, army, and people/population. Even if it should be noted that this interpretation was favoured due to a faulty translation in which Clausewitz's notion of 'mere reason' was transformed into the phrase 'belongs to reason alone',⁴⁶ the problem is systematically conditioned. For one possible way of dealing with action dilemmas is such a hierarchization, or what Niklas Luhmann called 'functional differentiati-

40 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, discovery of Clausewitz's first three chapters in his handwriting before publishing. Forthcoming 2024.

41 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 213; Andreas Herberg-Rothe, 'Clausewitz's "Wondrous Trinity" as a Coordinate System of War and Violent Conflict', in: *International Journal of Violence and Conflict* Vol. 3 (2) (2009) 62-77.

42 Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 192-193; Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle*; Herberg-Rothe, *Der Krieg*.

43 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Das Rätsel Clausewitz* (München, Fink, 2001).

44 Herberg-Rothe, 'Clausewitz's Concept of Strategy'.

45 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, 'Ausnahmen bestätigen die Moral', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 16 June 2011.

46 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984).

on'.⁴⁷ We find a corresponding functional differentiation in all modern armies. Clausewitz himself had developed such a differentiation in his conception of the 'Small War', which was not understood as being the opposite of the 'Great War' but as its supporting element. In contrast, Clausewitz developed the contrast to the Great War between states in the 'People's War'.⁴⁸

A second way of dealing with dilemmas of action is to draw a line up to which one principle applies and above which others apply, as different principles would apply to war between states than to people's war, guerrilla warfare, war against terrorists, warlords, and wars of intervention in general. This was, for example, the proposal of Martin van Creveld and Robert Kaplan, who argued that in war against non-state groups the laws of the jungle must apply, not those of 'civilized' state war.⁴⁹ In contrast, there are also approaches that derive the uniformity of war from the ends, aims, means relation, arguing that every war, whether state war or people's war, has these three elements and that wars differ only in what ends are to be realized by which opponents with which means (I assume that this is the position of the Clausewitz-orthodoxy). It must be conceded that Clausewitz is probably inferior to Sun Tzu in practical terms with regard to the 'art of warfare' because in parts of his work he referred to a one-sided absolutization of Napoleon's warfare, while only in the book on defence did he develop a more differentiated strategy.⁵⁰ Perhaps one could say that Sun Tzu is more relevant to tactics whereas Clausewitz is to be preferred concerning strategy.

Summary

If we return to the beginning, Clausewitz is the (practical) philosopher of war,⁵¹ while Sun Tzu focuses on the 'art of warfare.' As is evident in the hybrid war of the present, due to technological developments and the process I have labelled hybrid globalization,⁵² any war can be characterized as hybrid. However, as is currently evident in the Ukraine war, the designation of a war as hybrid is different from successful hybrid warfare. This is because hybrid warfare necessarily combines irreconcilable opposites. This mediation of opposites⁵³ requires political prudence as well as skillful handling of *The Art of War*. The ideal-typical opposition of both is correct in itself, if we add the word 'more' to these opposites in each case, not the exclusive word 'or.'

Clausewitz's conception is 'more' related to politics, one's own material possibilities and those of the opponent, a direct strategy, and that of the late Clausewitz on a relative symmetry of the combatants and the determination of war as an instrument. This can be illustrated with a boxing match in which certain blows are allowed or forbidden (conventions of war), the battlefield and the time of fighting remain limited (declaration of war, conclusion of peace).

Sun Tzu's conception, on the other hand, refers more directly to the military opponent, his thinking and 'nervous system' (Liddell Hart), an indirect strategy (because a direct strategy in his time would have resulted in the weakening of one's own position even if successful), and a relative asymmetry of forms of combat.

Despite this ideal-typical construction, every war is characterized by a combination of these irreconcilable opposites. Consequently, the question is neither about an 'either-or' nor about a pure 'both-and,' but involves the question which strategy is the appropriate one in a concrete situation. To some extent, we must also distinguish in Clausewitz's conception of politics between a purely hierarchical understanding and an holistic construction. To put it simply, the former conception is addressed in

47 Niklas Luhmann and Sean Ward (2000). 'Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft', *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No.2 (2000). Available at JSTOR Scholarly Journal Archive.

48 Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle*.

49 van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*; Kaplan, *Warrior Politics*.

50 Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz's Puzzle*; Herberg-Rothe, 'Clausewitz's Concept of Strategy'.

51 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz as a Practical Philosopher*, Special issue of the Philosophical Journal of Conflict and Violence, guest editor Andreas Herberg-Rothe (Trivent, Budapest, 2022) See: <https://trivent-publishing.eu/home/140-philosophical-journal-of-conflict-and-violence-pjcv-clausewitz-as-a-practical-philosopher.html>.

52 Herberg-Rothe, 'The Dissolution of Identities in Liquid Globalization and the Emergence of Violent Uprisings'.

53 Andreas Herberg-Rothe, *Lyotard und Hegel. Dialektik von Philosophie und Politik* (Wien, Passagen, 2005).



PHOTO U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, EZRA BOLENDER

Robert Kaplan is among scholars who argue that in war against non-state groups the laws of the jungle must apply, not those of 'civilized' state war

the relationship between political and military leadership; in the latter, any violent action by communities is per se a political one.⁵⁴ From a purely hierarchical perspective, it poses no problem to emphasize the primacy of politics in a de-bounded, globalized world with Clausewitz. If, on the other hand, from an holistic perspective all warlike actions are direct expressions of politics, the insoluble problem arises of how limited warfare could be possible in a de-bounded world.

This raises the question which of the two, Clausewitz or Sun Tzu, will be referred to more in the strategic debates of the future. In my view this depends on the role information technologies, quantum computers, artificial intelligence, drones, and the development of autonomous robotic systems will play in the future; in simple terms, the role that 'thought' and the 'soul' will play in comparison to material realities in a

globalized world. The Ukraine war arguably shows an overestimation of the influence of thought and soul (identity) on a community such as Ukraine's. With respect to autocratic states such as Russia and China, this is possibly an underestimation, at least temporarily, of the possibilities of manipulating the population through the new technologies. Regardless of the outcome of the war in Ukraine, the argument about Clausewitz and/or Sun Tzu will continue as an endless story, but this should not proceed as a mere repetition of dogmatic arguments but rather answer the question which is the better approach to take in whatever concrete situation.⁵⁵ ■

54 Echevarria, *Fourth-Generation Warfare and Other Myths*; Herberg-Rothe, 'Clausewitz's "Wondrous Trinity" as a Coordinate System of War and Violent Conflict.'

55 For hints and suggestions I thank Nihal Emeklier, Beatrice Heuser, Dan Moran, Jörg Lehmann, Johann Schmid and William Owen – all the more as we may not all hold the same position.

The war in Ukraine: Altering the norm of state sovereignty?

Kas van der Horst*

Norms play an important role in international relations. Norms shape behaviour and provide a shared understanding of what is acceptable and what is not. One of the pillars of international relations is sovereignty. The norm of state sovereignty encompasses the norm of territorial integrity. Large-scale interstate wars have been exceptional since the end of the Second World War because of the significance placed on state sovereignty and its contribution to the stability of the international system. By invading and even incorporating parts of Ukraine, Russia severely violated Ukraine's sovereignty. This article examines the grounds on which Russian President Vladimir Putin justifies the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. By looking into the mechanisms on how the significance of norms can decrease, an assessment is made on how the war in Ukraine could weaken the norm of state sovereignty. Giving in to Russian demands would broaden the grounds on which state sovereignty can be infringed upon. A weakened norm of state sovereignty could lower the threshold for future infringements of the territorial integrity in other parts of the world as well.

*'How long can this tragedy continue? How much longer can we endure it? Russia has done everything to preserve Ukraine's territorial integrity.'*¹
Vladimir Putin, 21 February 2022

Large scale state-to-state war had been absent on the European continent since the end of the Second World War. Territorial conquest of bordering states became exceptional and international disputes were mostly settled by peaceful means.² Despite warnings from some intelligence services, many decision-makers dismissed the build-up of Russian troops along the Ukrainian border as merely a way to increase pressure. But in February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin did the unexpected and authorized a 'special military operation' against

Ukraine. In September 2022, the Kremlin even incorporated several Ukrainian oblasts into the Russian Federation. Ghosts from the past seemed to be back. States such as Moldova, Poland, and Estonia feared that after Ukraine, they could be next. On the other side of the globe, awareness of the uncomfortable parallels between Ukraine and Taiwan grew.³

Following the Second World War, state sovereignty became a widely accepted norm, which entailed that the territorial integrity of other states needed to be respected.⁴ But the relative importance of norms may change over time. The decade after the end of the Cold War saw the emergence of international stability as a norm that could be used to set aside aspects of a state's sovereignty.⁵ By claiming that historical errors and illegitimate governments can justify



PHOTO: ESTONIAN DEFENCE FORCES

Estonian military exercise, August 2023: after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, states such as Moldova, Poland, and Estonia feared that they could be next

large-scale violations of state sovereignty, Putin attempts to broaden the justifications for infringing state sovereignty even further. Putin even argues that the forceful redrawing of borders should be permissible if this is done in light of the right of self-determination and to rectify historical errors.⁶ In February 2022, Putin put his words into action and initiated Russia's 'special military operation' in Ukraine. Just as the increased importance given to the stability of the international system made it permissible to (forcefully) set aside state sovereignty, the Russo-Ukrainian war has the potential to profoundly change the importance and meaning of state sovereignty in international relations.

This article looks into the role norms, especially sovereignty, have in international relations in order to highlight their influence on war and

peace. It does not cover the legal implications of the war in Ukraine. Instead, it examines the role of norms from an international relations perspective. The first section discusses the way

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- 1 Vladimir Putin, 'Address concerning the situation in Ukraine' (February 21, 2022) (translated).
- 2 Tanisha M. Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?: Why the Future of Global order Hinges on Ukraine', *Foreign Affairs* 101 (2022) (3) 23.
- 3 David Sacks, 'What is China learning from Russia's war in Ukraine? America and Taiwan need to grasp and influence Chinese views on the conflict', *Foreign Affairs* (2022) (online); John Ruwitch, 'Taiwan fears what's happening in Ukraine will happen there with China', *NPR*, March 27, 2022. See: <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/27/1089047808/taiwan-fears-whats-happening-in-ukraine-will-happen-there-with-china>.
- 4 James Gow, 'A Revolution in International Affairs?', *Security Dialogue* 31 (2000) (3) 298; Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 24.
- 5 Gow, 'A Revolution in International affairs?', 296.
- 6 Putin, 'Address concerning the situation in Ukraine' (February 21, 2022).



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Bo Stråth (second from the left) underlines that political ideals, like sovereignty and human rights, are not absolute but rather ambiguous and contested

conflicting norms interact and how the relative importance of norms can change over time. The second section draws a connection between Russian actions in 2022 and the way the significance of a norm can diminish. Since Putin is the decision-maker in Russia, an analysis of his statements is useful to understand Russian reasoning and justifications for violating the norm of sovereignty. By understanding Russian reasoning, and therefore how Putin tries to alter the relative importance of norms, an assessment is made on how the Russo-Ukrainian War can change the significance of the norm of state

sovereignty. Acceptance of Russia's interpretation of the permissibility of infringing state sovereignty makes future violations of the territorial integrity of other states substantially more acceptable.

Norms

State sovereignty is a fundamental norm in international relations.⁷ Norms can be described as 'standards of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity'.⁸ However, the norm of state sovereignty is no absolute which is respected under all circumstances. For example, the US-led invasion of Iraq and the humanitarian intervention in Libya show that state sovereignty

⁷ Gow, 'A Revolution in International affairs?', 297.

⁸ Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 23.

can be set aside. This does not mean that state sovereignty became obsolete, but that other norms were seen as vital enough to infringe upon the principle of state sovereignty. Bo Stråth underlines that political ideals, like sovereignty and human rights, are not absolute but rather ambiguous and contested.⁹ Concepts and ideals like freedom, justice and self-determination can never be fully achieved. These ideals can even clash with each other. The ideal of autonomy may conflict with order, democracy with human rights, and stability with progress.¹⁰ The relative importance of these political ideals is what matters. This relative importance is not a given but can change overtime.

One person who noticed the changing importance of the norm of state sovereignty was James Gow. As the twentieth century had come to an end, Gow argues that a revolution in international affairs had taken place.¹¹ He asserts that international peace and security took precedence over state sovereignty. While the norm of sovereignty remains significant, it does not define international society in the twenty-first century from an international politics point of view. State sovereignty can be infringed upon when international stability is at risk. To support his argument Gow highlights several profound changes in the international order. First of all, the principle of sovereignty lost its sanctity and became conditional on international accountability.¹² The importance of a viable and stable international order may provide a justification for the UN Security Council, or even for states, to intervene in the sovereignty of another state. As the world has become more interconnected and interdependent, the main goal of international society is to maintain the interwoven international order free from disruption, even if those disruptions originate from within states.¹³ Since disruption of the international system is harmful to the states which depend on it, maintaining this international stability has become a justification for interference in a state's sovereignty.

Just three years after the publication of Gow's *A Revolution in International Affairs?* his argument was strengthened by two subsequent US-led

invasions. Although justified under the label of 'self-defence', the invasion of Afghanistan and subsequent toppling of the Taliban regime can be seen as an attempt to bring stability to a region which was harmful to the stability of the international system. The Taliban and its toleration of Al-Qaida caused instability in a lot of (Western) nations around the globe. Two decades of liberal nation-building followed on the assumption that a liberal democracy would be most beneficial for the long-term stability of the international system.¹⁴ This shows that certain elements of state sovereignty can be set aside for longer periods of time for the sake of other norms, such as humanitarian development and stability of the international system.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq is even more supportive of Gow's claim about the importance of the stability of the international system. Whether true or not, claims about Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) were justification enough for the US to violate Iraqi sovereignty. Since a leader like Saddam Hussein with WMDs could seriously disrupt the stability of the international system, an intervention (state-to-state invasion) would be permissible. Gow did not mean to argue that sovereignty lost its significance, only that other norms, such as international stability, could trump the principle of state sovereignty in international relations. Important to note is that these interventions did not aim to seize territory or redraw borders. In the last few decades territorial conquest seemed to be a thing of the past. Only the thwarted annexation of Kuwait by Iraq could be seen as an anomaly in an annexation-free era. The norm of state sovereignty constituted an almost sacred safeguard against territorial conquest.¹⁵ The annexation of Crimea, therefore, took many by surprise.¹⁶

9 Bo Stråth, 'Continuity Rather than Revolution. A Rejoinder', *Security Dialogue*, 31 (2000) (4) 447.

10 Ibid., 447.

11 Gow, 'A Revolution in International Affairs?'

12 Gow, 'A Revolution in International Affairs?', 296.

13 Ibid., 296.

14 In line with the reasoning as written down in: Michael Howard, *The Invention of Peace and the Reinvention of War* (London, Profile Books, 2002) 105. The first edition stems from 2000.

15 Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 20.

16 Although, there was no use of brute force in the annexation of Crimea.

Which norms could justify the infringement of a state's sovereignty change over time. In the first few years after the Cold War, Western military interventions were intended to end hostilities and establish a peace agreement with better guarantees for fundamental civil and human rights.¹⁷ Over time, elements of sovereign power removal became gradually more acceptable and the deprived elements of sovereignty were placed under the responsibility of the international community. As the interference in state sovereignty became more acceptable, different goals such as regime change and nation-building emerged.¹⁸ Justification for invasion was twofold. On the one hand, it was assumed that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan would prefer a Western-style liberal democracy;¹⁹ on the other, regime change was needed in order to stop Iraq and Afghanistan from destabilizing the international system. Most beneficial for long-term stability of the system would be a liberal democratic state.²⁰ For example, in the short run, the intervention in Libya was intended to stop the violence.²¹ However, even after the immediate threat had passed, Western states continued to support Libyan rebels. The extended rebel support can be attributed to the Western belief that a liberal and democratic Libya would eventually be a stabilizing contributor to the international system.²² The notion that Western interventions are justified by the aim to construct liberal (and preferably democratic) states supports Gow's claim that international stability might be regarded as more important than state sovereignty.²³ If the transformation of troubling



Spanish F-18 fighters refuel in Italy during Operation Odyssey Dawn to protect civilians from the Qadhafi regime in Libya: after the immediate threat had passed, Western states continued to support Libyan rebels

states into liberal states would be beneficial for the international stability, supporting such a transformation would be beneficial for liberal states themselves.

Some argue that a stable international order is a metaphor for a Western-dominated liberal world order. In this kind of criticism, even noble goals such as international stability and humanitarian causes are often used as a pretext to justify Western intervention driven by self-interest. One such critic is Putin. In his speech on the incorporation of several Ukrainian oblasts, Putin accused the so-called Western rule-based order of being hypocritical and without the approval of non-Western states.²⁴ Before looking into Russian criticism of international norms, it is necessary to consider mechanisms that may cause norms to lose their significance.

17 Jan Willem Honig, 'The Wars Militaries Fight for Democracy', in: H. Gärtner, J.W. Honig and H. Akbulut (eds.), *Democracy, Peace and Security* (London, Lexington Books, 2015) 146.

18 Honig, 'The Wars Militaries Fight for Democracy', 146.

19 Ibid., 147.

20 Howard, *The Invention of Peace*, 105.

21 Honig, 'The Wars Militaries Fight for Democracy', 147.

22 Christopher Kutz, *On War and Democracy*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016) 166.

23 Honig, 'The Wars Militaries Fight for Democracy', 147.

24 Vladimir V. Putin, 'Speech on the Incorporation of Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporozhye' (September 30, 2022) (translated).

25 Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 23.



PHOTO US AIR FORCE; BRENDAN STEPHENS

After World War II, establishing a norm against territorial conquest by force was part of a broader project to promote peace.²⁵ Since most pre-Cold War conflicts were fought for possession of land, a norm to prevent territorial conquest could take away a major source of conflict.²⁶ By enshrining the principle of sovereign equality of states and the norm against the use of force against the territorial integrity of states as cornerstones of the UN Charter, the norm against territorial conquest became codified into international relations itself.²⁷

Various reasons can be found for states and their leaders to adhere to norms.²⁸ Some norms, such as those against genocide, follow from humanitarian reasons. However, respecting state sovereignty itself is not done out of humanitarian reasons. A norm can be respected

because a state has no benefit in violating it. A norm might also be internalized to the point that violating it is no longer considered. Others follow norms out of fear of punishment for violation. But it is also possible to obey norms out of self-interest.²⁹ For many states adhering to the stability of the international system is in their own interest. States have an interest in upholding state sovereignty, particularly the taboo against territorial conquest, as it will make the international system far more stable. The assurance that they will not be divided up by more powerful states can be quite beneficial for smaller states.

26 Ibid., 23.

27 Ibid., 23.

28 Ibid., 24.

29 Ibid., 24.

As noted, different norms may conflict and the relative importance given to norms may change. The conflicting character of norms is not necessarily negative. The UN Charter both encompasses the principle of self-determination of peoples and the principle of sovereign equality of states. Self-determination of peoples reinforces the sovereignty of states but when different peoples aim for self-determination, the principle of self-determination can also cause conflict within and around the borders of a state. The inherent conflicting character of norms can cause inconsistent normative pressures, especially since norms can never be fully achieved. A certain level of hypocrisy on which norm to prioritize enables states to take action either way, which allows these conflicts to be mitigated.³⁰

The significance of norms can also decrease by the ‘salami slicing’ of existing norms.³¹ Norms are nourished by enforcement.³² But by just slightly overstepping the norm, it can be weakened step by step. The relatively weak response to the annexation of Crimea weakened the norm of state sovereignty. While the core of state sovereignty remained intact, it became questionable if the whole territory of a state fell under the norm of state sovereignty. The subsequent eight years of Russian involvement in the Donbas region also weakened the norm of state sovereignty. However, Western states contributed to the decline in the relative importance of the norm of state sovereignty as well. The widening of justifications for interven-

tions could also be seen as salami-slicing the norm of state sovereignty.

The Russian perspective

Russia presents itself internationally as a norm-enforcer.³³ This includes efforts to emphasize the importance of respecting international law, the multipolar world and the United Nations.³⁴ In this Russian perspective, the UN Charter adequately provides globally applicable rules and norms, allowing a framework for peaceful cooperation among countries with various political systems.³⁵ In his June 2021 essay *On Law, Rights and Rules*, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov stresses the importance of promoting the United Nations’ inclusive multilateralism. He is highly critical of the emergence of like-minded, typically Western, groups of countries that establish international rules. These groups ignore the United Nations, where other perspectives might be taken into account.³⁶ Lavrov concludes his essay by remarking that Russia persists in promoting a culture of international relations that is based on the supreme values of justice and is rooted in international law.³⁷

In July 2021, Putin offered his interpretation of what state sovereignty entails. In his essay *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, he concludes that Ukraine can only be truly sovereign in partnership with Russia. Putin comes to this conclusion by arguing that the current Ukrainian state is the consequence of some improvident administrative decisions made during the Soviet era. The collapse of the Soviet Union left Russia robbed and people found themselves taken away from their historical motherland.³⁸ Even worse, anti-Russian forces sought to artificially divide Russians and Ukrainians, as had been attempted numerous times in the past. Ukraine became a pawn in a geopolitical game where external Western control turned Ukraine into a springboard against Russia.³⁹ He wrote: ‘In the anti-Russia project, there is no place for a sovereign Ukraine’.⁴⁰ And: ‘I am confident that true sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in

30 Robert Egnell, ‘The organized hypocrisy of international state-building’, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 10 (2010) (4) 470.

31 Stacie Goddard, ‘The Outsiders: How the International System can still check China and Russia’, *Foreign Affairs*, 101 (2022) (3) 35.

32 Fazal, ‘The Return of Conquest?’, 25.

33 Richard Sakwa, ‘Russia’s Identity: Between the ‘Domestic’ and the ‘International’’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 62 (2011) (6) 970.

34 *Ibid.*, 969.

35 Richard Sakwa, ‘Crisis of the International System and International Politics’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 21 (2023) (1).

36 Sergei V. Lavrov, ‘On Law, Rights and Rule’, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 19 (2021) (3) 234.

37 *Ibid.*, 240.

38 Vladimir V. Putin, ‘On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians’, *TheKremlin.ru* (2021) 10. (translated).

39 *Ibid.*, 13.

40 *Ibid.*, 17.



PHOTO US AIR FORCE MADELINE HERZOG

A Ukrainian woman cheers to a military unit marching by during the Independence Day parade at Kyiv, August 24, 2021: according to Putin, sovereignty of Ukraine is possible only in partnership with Russia

partnership with Russia. Our spiritual, human and civilizational ties formed for centuries and have their origins in the same sources, they have been hardened by common trials, achievements and victories. Our kinship has been transmitted from generation to generation. It is in the hearts and the memory of people living in modern Russia and Ukraine, in the blood ties that unite millions of our families. Together we have always been and will be many times stronger and more successful. For we are one people.⁴¹

In essence Putin argues that Ukraine and Russia, and even Ukrainians and Russians, are artificially separated. In his view, Ukraine is being controlled by anti-Russian elites; therefore, Ukraine is not truly sovereign. With

this conclusion, Putin undermines the importance of internationally recognized state borders, and claims that state sovereignty is conditional on the people living there and on a government free from foreign control. Putin not only downplayed Ukraine's sovereignty rhetorically but also put his words into action a mere six months later.

Just three days prior to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Putin gave a speech justifying the use of force. Its foreign-controlled government no longer served the Ukrainian

41 Ibid., 10 of 18.

42 Putin, 'Address concerning the situation in Ukraine', (February 21, 2022).

Putin accuses the West of forcing all states to hand over their sovereignty to the US

cause and consistently pushed Ukraine towards losing its sovereignty.⁴² Ukraine had to be stopped acquiring nuclear weapons and Russia could not tolerate the genocide against four million people in the Donbas region. All Russian attempts were in vain; therefore Putin immediately recognized the independence and sovereignty of the Donetsk and Lugansk Peoples' Republics.

Recognizing break-away republics is not without precedent in relation to the norm of state sovereignty. But unilaterally incorporating territories into one's own territory is in disparity with the prevailing norm regarding state sovereignty, especially if (parts of) these territories are under the control of another state⁴³. In his September 2022 annexation speech, Putin accuses the West of forcing all states to hand over their sovereignty to the United States. Putin calls the rule-based order a Western construct to impose self-approved rules filled with double standards. It was the West that trampled upon the principle of the inviolability of borders and decides, on its own discretion, who has the right to self-determination and who does not.⁴⁴

Putin's words and actions that tie a state's sovereignty and territorial integrity to historical perspectives and the ruling regime have the potential to undermine the importance of the principle of state sovereignty. State sovereignty, as codified in the UN Charter, entails the norm against territorial conquest by force. By annexing large parts of Ukrainian territory, Putin violates the longstanding norm against territorial conquest.⁴⁵ Since norms are nourished by enforcement, the current and future response to this violation is crucial for what the norm of state sovereignty will encompass in the future.⁴⁶

Some Western scholars argue that giving in to certain Russian demands could end the conflict and as such benefit the stability of the international system. According to Robert Wade, a stable peace depends both on Western states and the Ukrainian government to accept a status where Ukraine avoids institutional hostility towards Russia. He claims that the Western notion of sovereignty is deeply hypocritical since the US would never allow the sovereign Mexican government to enter military alliances with Russia or China.⁴⁷ Although, giving in to the Russian demands to end the conflict in Ukraine could benefit the stability of the international system in the short run. On the other hand, giving in would result in a serious inflation of the norm of state sovereignty. Allowing that there might be circumstances that would permit violating a state's sovereignty, even to annex territory, could destabilize the international system profoundly in the long run. Many regions in the world, from the Baltic Sea to East Asia and from the Caucasus to Central Africa, have long-standing and/or ethnic disputes which could justify similar territorial conquest attempts as seen in Ukraine. A weakened norm of state sovereignty could cause the (re)emergence of the possibility of territorial conquest in the international domain.

In his speeches Putin used several competing norms to justify the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. The equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the norm against the spread of WMDs, the humanitarian argument for stopping

43 Eiki Berg and Shpend Kursani, 'Back to the Future: Attempts to Buy, Swap, and Annex Territories in Contemporary Sovereignty Practices', *Global Studies Quarterly* (2023) (3) 4.

44 Putin, 'Speech on the Incorporation of Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporozhye'.

45 Berg and Kursani, 'Back to the Future', 4.

46 Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 5; Since the US has already completed its march West and fully incorporated Native American lands into its own territory, the critique that the norm against territorial conquest is hypocritical and also generally advantageous for the US-led world order is difficult to refute. However, the norm of state sovereignty and the related territorial integrity eliminated a major cause of war, greatly contributing to the stability of the international system: Fazal, 'The Return of Conquest?', 22.

47 Robert Hunter Wade, 'A 'diplomatic solution' to the war in Ukraine', *USApp – American Politics and Policy Blog* (March 2022).



PHOTO UNITED NATIONS, AMANDA VOISARD

While the United Nations is founded on the principle of equality of sovereign states, Putin argued that this is only the case when certain conditions are met

a genocide, and even Western hypocrisy were used to explain why Ukrainian territorial integrity could (and even should) be breached. Although this could be considered as mere rhetoric justifying the invasion, Putin did try to alter the relative value of the norms. While emphasizing the importance of sovereignty, he stated that other norms are important enough to violate Ukrainian sovereignty by force. The self-determination of a people is enough justification to incorporate the territory of another state into Russia. If this reasoning is accepted, the norm of state sovereignty would lose relative importance to other norms.

Conclusion

State sovereignty is, and will be, an important norm in international relations. But different norms may prevail over state sovereignty. The last three decades saw a growing tendency that the stability of the international system could predominate state sovereignty. Besides the relative importance of a norm, the significance

of a norm could also diminish by repeated and/or large unsanctioned violations of the particular norm. Russia uses historic claims and the right of self-determination to justify severe violations of Ukraine's sovereignty. By making sovereignty conditional on certain factors, Russia tries to make the norm of state sovereignty much less universal and important. While the United Nations is founded on the principle of equality of sovereign states, Putin argued that this is only the case when certain conditions are met. The attempt to annex Ukrainian territories by force could cause the norm of state sovereignty to lose a lot of its significance. If these violations are to be accepted by the international community, defying state sovereignty and annexing territories could become more acceptable as well. Historic claims and/or claims of people's self-determination can be made all over the world. Acceptance of Russian territorial claims could stabilize the international system in the short run. However, it is to be expected that giving in to Russian demands would destabilize the international system as a whole in the long run. ■



Tussen Zeitenwende en Generation Smartphone

*De Bundeswehr op missie voor de eigen
wederopbouw*

Frans van Nijnatten



*Een rekrut van 6. Gebirgsjägerbataillon
232 overbrugt een 30 meter brede kloof
op de Reiteralpe*

FOTO BUNDESWEHR, MARCO DOROW

Een saluerende militair met een houten geweer op een speelgoedvoertuig, een papieren vliegtuigje stort neer; voorzien van de cynische titel 'Bereit zum Gefecht. Wie schlimm es um die Bundeswehr wirklich steht' liet een cover van het weekblad *Der Spiegel* eerder dit jaar vermoeden dat het niet goed gesteld is met de Duitse krijgsmacht. Denktanks luidden al veel langer de noodklok, maar pas na de Russische inval in Oekraïne in februari 2022 leek ook de politiek overtuigd van de urgentie om de krimp van de Bundeswehr te stoppen en meer geld uit te trekken voor defensie. De Bondsdag heeft een Sondervedmogen van 100 miljard euro voor de Bundeswehr opzij gezet, terwijl de regering in de recent uitgebrachte Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie zelfs een voortrekkersrol voor de Duitse krijgsmacht in Europa ziet. Tijdens de Petersberger Gespräche zur Sicherheit in Königswinter lieten deskundigen onlangs hun licht schijnen op de staat van de Bundeswehr, de internationale samenwerking en de veiligheidssituatie in Europa. Mag de 'Generation Downsizing' van Bundeswehrofficieren die in hun werk vooral eenheden hebben moeten opheffen nu echt weer gaan opbouwen?

Kolonel b.d. Hans-Joachim Schaprian, moderator van de Petersberger Gespräche, merkte in zijn inleiding tijdens het symposium op dat Duitsland voor grote uitdagingen staat op economisch, militair en klimaatgebied.¹ 'De democratie wordt uitgedaagd en de politiek moet antwoorden vinden, bijvoorbeeld op de vraag of Duitsland een leidende rol moet gaan spelen in Europa.' Voor een deel heeft de regeringscoalitie van SPD, Bündnis 90/die Grünen en FDP de antwoorden al gegeven. Op 27 februari vorig jaar, drie dagen na de Russische invasie van Oekraïne, hield bondskanselier Olaf Scholz een rede in de Bondsdag, waarin hij sprak van een Zeitenwende op het Europese continent: door een oorlog te ontketenen heeft de Russische leider Vladimir Poetin bewust gekozen voor confrontatie en het negeren van het volkenrecht in plaats van samenwerking. Duitsland en zijn bondgenoten mogen niet toestaan dat 'oorlogshitsers als Poetin' Europa terug laten vallen in de tijd van de grootmachten van de 19e eeuw, maar dan moeten zij daar wel sterk genoeg

voor zijn, aldus Scholz.² Hij constateerde dat Duitsland aanzienlijk meer in zijn eigen veiligheid zal moeten investeren om vrijheid en democratie te beschermen, onder meer met een Sondervedmogen voor de Bundeswehr van 100 miljard euro en het optrekken van de defensieuitgaven naar 2% van het bruto binnenlands product voor 2024. Een half jaar later wees Scholz tijdens een toespraak in Praag op de honderden miljoenen euro's aan materiële steun die Europese landen intussen aan Oekraïne hebben geleverd. Tevens zei hij daar dat Duitsland bereid is initiatieven te nemen voor een sterker Europa, maar altijd in samenspraak met andere EU-lidstaten; kant-en-klare oplossingen of voorschriften uit Berlijn moet niemand verwachten.³ Met het leveren van zware wapens aan Oekraïne – waarmee Scholz in de ogen van veel experts te lang heeft gearzeld – heeft Duitsland het taboe doorbroken geen gevechtsmaterieel naar oorlogsgebieden te exporteren.

Onder regie van het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken kwam de regering afgelopen juni met de eerste Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie van de Bondsrepubliek, getiteld: *Integrierte Sicherheit für Deutschland. Wehrhaft. Resilient. Nachhaltig*. Geïntegreerd slaat daarbij op alle takken van de overheid, samenleving en bedrijfsleven. Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Annalena Baerbock schreef dat Duitsland een bijzondere verantwoordelijkheid draagt door zijn geschiedenis,

1 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, '18. Petersberger Gespräche zur Sicherheit. Zeitenwende in der Sicherheitspolitik – Deutschlands Weg in eine neue Ordnung' (Königswinter, 17 juni 2023).

2 Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, *Reden zur Zeitenwende* (Berlijn, Bundesregierung, september 2022) 7-8. Zie: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/992814/2131062/78d39dda6647d7f835bbe76713d30c31/bundeskanzler-olaf-scholz-reden-zur-zeitenwende-download-bpa-data.pdf>.

3 Scholz, *Reden zur Zeitenwende*, 29, 40-41.

economische kracht en diplomatieke invloed en in de toekomst meer zal bijdragen aan de veiligheid van Europa. Baerbock zei dat bij politiek-economische besluiten voortaan scherper naar de nationale veiligheid zal worden gekeken, want de Duitse afhankelijkheid van Russisch aardgas is een flinke les geweest.⁴

De Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie noemt Rusland voorlopig de grootste bedreiging voor vrede en veiligheid in het Eur-Atlantische gebied, terwijl China eveneens een systeemrivaal is, maar tevens partner en concurrent. In juli bracht de regering een aparte China-strategie uit, die onder meer tot doel heeft in de 'complexe betrekkingen' met China de Duitse waarden en belangen beter te kunnen verwezenlijken.⁵ De Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie constateert verder dat Duitsland weerbaarder moet zijn tegen terrorisme, cyberaanvallen en georganiseerde misdaad, terwijl ook de klimaatcrisis en grondstoffentekorten het hoofd moeten worden geboden. Wat betreft defensie noemt de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie het optrekken van de uitgaven tot minstens 2% van het bbp, de gezamenlijke ontwikkeling van wapensystemen met andere EU-landen en handhaving van de nucleaire taken van de Bundeswehr.

Met de nadruk op 'geïntegreerde veiligheid' en steekwoorden als civiele verdediging, internationaal crisismanagement, klimaatbescherming en bestrijding van desinformatie draagt de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie volgens journalist en defensie-expert Wolfgang Labuhn duidelijk het stempel 'van de groene diplomaten op het ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, waarbij de Bundeswehr, in tegenstelling tot de in het verleden uitgebrachte Weißbücher, niet meer centraal staat.' De Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie vermeldt wel dat de Bundeswehr de komende jaren een van de best presterende conventionele krijgsmachten zal worden, 'maar wat dat concreet voor de Bundeswehr betekent, blijft vaag'.

Christina Krause van de Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, het wetenschappelijk bureau van de CDU/CSU, ziet in de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie geen strategie, maar een analyse van de

bestaande situatie. Zij verwijt de regering geen prioriteiten te stellen en geen middelen te noemen waarmee de gewenste 'geïntegreerde veiligheid', die uit moet gaan van alle delen van de samenleving, de overheid en de Bundeswehr, bereikt kan worden.⁶ Hoewel het document de samenleving centraal stelt, heeft de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie niet tot een breed debat onder de Duitse bevolking geleid, zegt voormalig SPD-Bondsdaglid Hans-Peter Bartels: 'Voor de vakexperts is het echter wel een thema: Scholz heeft met zijn Zeitenwenderede hoge verwachtingen gewekt door Duitsland als voortrekker in Europa te positioneren'. Partners als Nederland, die een op regels en waarden gebaseerde wereld nastreven, zien nu wat Bartels een 'Wandel der Tonart' noemt, een breuk met het tijdperk van bondskanselier Merkel (2005-2021), toen andere landen niet zo'n actieve rol van Duitsland verwachtten.

De coalitieregering stelt geen Nationale Veiligheidsraad in, hoewel sommige experts daar al jaren voor pleiten. Een van hen is de politicologe Christina Moritz, die er al sinds 2016 over publiceert en er promotieonderzoek naar doet. Zij vindt dat de huidige Bundessicherheitsrat, een kabinetscommissie die ad hoc bijeenkomt en bijna alleen over wapenexport praat, vervangen moet worden door een permanente Nationale Veiligheidsraad, die zich op dagelijkse basis met veiligheid en strategie bezighoudt. 'De afgelopen jaren hebben we de coronacrisis gehad, overstromingen en de Oekraïne-oorlog. We hadden slagvaardiger kunnen zijn als we een Nationale Veiligheidsraad hadden gehad. In 65 landen, met verschillende regeringsvormen, is er wel zo'n raad', zegt Moritz, die een model voor een Duitse raad heeft ontworpen. De angst dat de deelstaten op veiligheidsgebied minder te zeggen zullen hebben noemt zij ongegrond. 'Als het nodig is zou de Nationale Veiligheidsraad als crisisstaf

4 *Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie: Integrierte Sicherheit für Deutschland. Wehrhaft. Resilient. Nachhaltig* (Berlijn, Auswärtiges Amt, juni 2023) 7.

5 'Deutschland gibt sich erstmals eine umfassende China-Strategie' (Berlijn, Auswärtiges Amt, 2023). Zie: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/asien/china-strategie/2607934>.

6 Christina Catherine Krause, 'Die verpasste Chance: Eine Analyse macht noch keine Strategie', *Monitor Sicherheit* (Berlijn, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 16 juni 2023) 4.

kunnen fungeren, maar dan in tijd begrensd.’ Jasper Wieck, politiek-directeur bij het ministerie van Defensie, zei in Königswinter dat de bestaande overlegorganen ook bij crises voldoen en dat een raad alleen maar een extra belasting zou scheppen. Wolfgang Labuhn denkt dat een uit militairen en civiele experts bestaande raad zinvol zou kunnen zijn om de regering dagelijks van strategisch en actueel advies te kunnen voorzien. Maar zolang de coalitiepartijen SPD en Grünen er niets in zien, zal er geen Nationale Veiligheidsraad komen. Hans-Peter Bartels vindt dat Duitsland zo’n raad ook niet nodig heeft, ‘want we hebben geen regeringssysteem zoals de VS of het Verenigd Koninkrijk.’

De FDP en de oppositionele CDU/CSU in de Bondsdag pleiten juist heel sterk voor een Nationale Veiligheidsraad. CDU/CSU-fractieleader Friedrich Merz toonde zich teleurgesteld dat de raad er niet komt en kritiseerde de hele Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie daarmee als ‘blutleer’ en ‘irrelevant’.⁷ Christina Moritz: ‘Het punt is dat een Nationale Veiligheidsraad precies het orgaan zou zijn om een Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie verder te helpen ontwikkelen; nu doen we verder niets met dat document’.

Van Einsatzarmee terug naar de eerste hoofdtak

In de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie staat dat de regering de Bundeswehr wil versterken als een pijler van de Europese verdediging. Dat niet alle militairen en experts direct vertrouwen hebben in zo’n belofte is niet vreemd. Christine Lambrecht, de voorgangster van de huidige minister van Defensie Boris Pistorius, gaf vorig jaar immers nog toe dat de Duitse krijgsmacht tientallen jaren verwaarloosd is,⁸ terwijl Scholz in zijn voorwoord in de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie schreef dat de regering de Russische invasie van Oekraïne als aanleiding neemt om de

Bundeswehr ‘eindelijk adequaat uit te rusten.’⁹ Blijkbaar was er eerst een grote schok zoals de Russische aanval op Oekraïne nodig om in te zien dat het afbouwen van een krijgsmacht tot het punt waarop de inzetgereedheid niet meer gegarandeerd is onverantwoord is, zowel vanuit veiligheidsoogpunt als tegenover het eigen personeel. Wolfgang Labuhn wijst er op dat de Duitse landstrijdkrachten tot 1990 twaalf volledig uitgeruste en inzetbare divisies omvatten. Van 495.000 militairen kromp de Bundeswehr in naar de huidige 182.000, terwijl er geen enkele compleet uitgeruste en inzetbare divisie meer is. ‘Alleen de Panzergrenadierbrigade 37, die dit jaar de Very High Readiness Joint Task Force van de NAVO leidt, geldt als ‘combat ready’. Weliswaar zou ook de Division Schnelle Kräfte, waartoe ook 11 Luchtmobiele Brigade behoort, snel ingezet kunnen worden, maar alleen voor speciale operaties en niet voor het bestrijden van vijandelijke landlegers.’

In 2025, twee jaar eerder dan oorspronkelijk gepland en versneld door de Russische inval in Oekraïne, moet er weer een compleet uitgeruste en inzetbare divisie zijn, in 2031 moet dat aantal zijn gestegen tot drie. Basis voor deze verdere opbouw en modernisering vormen de capaciteitsprofielen die de Bundeswehr opstelt en waarvan het eerste in 2018 verscheen. ‘Momenteel werkt het ministerie aan ‘Fähigkeitsprofil 2023’, waarin ook de nationale ambitie tot 2035 zal staan’, aldus Labuhn. Uit de hoek van de reservisten kwam vorig jaar al kritiek dat bij de herstructurering van de landstrijdkrachten naar de categorieën Leichte Kräfte, Mittlere Kräfte en Schwere Kräfte gaten open blijven, bijvoorbeeld bij de artillerie. De Bundeswehr heeft maar vier artilleriebataljons en dat worden er negen, maar die komen niet bij de Nederlandse brigades, wat Björn Müller, redacteur van het reservistentijdschrift *Loyal*, onbegrijpelijk noemde gezien de lessen over indirect vuur die uit de oorlog in Oekraïne kunnen worden getrokken.¹⁰

Hans-Peter Bartels omschrijft de inzetgereedheid van de Bundeswehr als ‘precair’. ‘En de toekomst is open: er is geen garantie dat er niet weer een grote bezuinigingsoperatie komt. Het Sondervermogen is prima, maar na 2027 zullen

7 ‘Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie: ‘Blutleer’ und ‘irrelevant’ (Berlijn, CDU/CSU Bundestagsfraktion, 14 juni 2023).

8 Christine Lambrecht, ‘Deutschlands Verantwortung für Europa und die Welt’, in: Ringo Wagner en Hans-Joachim Schaprian (red.), *Zeitenwende in der Sicherheitspolitik – Deutschlands Weg in eine neue Ordnung* (Maagdenburg, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2022) 42.

9 Olaf Scholz, voorwoord in de *Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie*, 5.

10 Björn Müller, ‘Neue Heeresstruktur weist den Weg in die Zukunft’, *Loyal*, 8 augustus 2022.



Oefening Air Defender 2023: Duitsland blijft als transitland een logistieke draaischijf voor NAVO-troepenbewegingen

FOTO BUNDESWEHR, CHRISTIAN TIMMIG

we ook verder moeten.’ Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr (Commandant der Strijdkrachten) Carsten Breuer zei in Königswinter in het Sondervermögen zeker een kans te zien. Zo zou de ‘Generation Downsizing’, officieren die de laatste jaren orders hebben uitgevoerd om eenheden op te heffen of materieel af te stoten, eindelijk weer kunnen gaan opbouwen. Breuer zei dat velen bij de Bundeswehr – militairen en burgermedewerkers – hun mindset zullen moeten aanpassen, ‘zodat uitvoerders beseffen dat ze snel mogen werken’. Volgens Breuer zit dat niet in het dna van de Bundeswehr: ‘Ik was in Oekraïne en zag daar dat de gevechtsstand van de commandant in 90 minuten kon worden afgebroken en opgebouwd. Toegegeven, zij zijn in oorlog, maar dat is geen excuus voor het langzame werken bij ons’. Hij pleitte er voor de term ‘Einsatzbereitschaft’ bij de Bundeswehr te vervangen door het begrip ‘readiness’, ‘want daar zit de dimensie tijd in.’

Breuer verwees naar het Weißbuch over de Bundeswehr dat de regering in 2016 uitgaf en waarin zij, twee jaar na de Russische annexatie van de Krim, wees op de noodzaak om de

krijgsmacht continu te moderniseren.¹¹ ‘De inhoud was goed, maar het is niet gelukt om het Weißbuch in de praktijk om te zetten’, aldus de generaal, die destijds zelf leiding gaf aan de totstandkoming van het document. Wolfgang Labuhn merkt op dat de toenmalige minister van Defensie Ursula von der Leyen met het Weißbuch wel degelijk een ‘Trendwende’ in gang zette op het gebied van materieel, personeel en financiën. ‘Maar dat proces is nog lang niet afgesloten, waardoor de Bundeswehr op dit moment en ook in NAVO-verband niet in staat zou zijn Duitsland tegen een aanval van buiten te verdedigen.’ Breuer wil duidelijk het moment pakken om zowel het vertrouwen als de slagkracht te herstellen: ‘Onze 16.000 militairen bij de VJTF alsook de oefening Air Defender stralen uit dat we weer over deterrence nadenken. En de lessons learned uit Oekraïne vertellen ons dat de nadruk bij technologie als drones moet liggen, niet bij de wapens van gisteren’.

11 *Weißbuch 2016 zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr* (Berlijn, Bundesregierung, 2016).



Minister van Defensie Boris Pistorius (links) vormt zich een beeld van de marine aan boord van het fregat Hessen

FOTO BUNDESWEHR, TOM TWARDY

Toch zal de regering ook moeten proberen de Bundeswehr uit te rusten met de wapens van vandaag, want er zijn tekorten op allerlei vlakken, uiteenlopend van persoonlijke uitrusting en artilleriestukken – deels door de levering van pantserhouwitsers aan Oekraïne – tot communicatieapparatuur. Zich baserend op interne rapporten van het ministerie meldde *Der Spiegel* dat de inzetgereedheid rond de VJTF minder rooskleurig is dan wordt voorgesteld. Het tijdschrift wijst op knelpunten als ‘oeroude, analoge radio’s’, die niet kunnen communiceren met de moderne apparatuur van de Nederlanders, Tsjechen en Noren.¹² En soms zit het ook gewoon tegen, zoals tijdens een oefening met 18 Puma-pantservoertuigen, die alle 18 uitvielen. Naast de landmacht kennen ook de marine en luchtmacht personeels- en materieel-

tekorten. In december 2022 gaf de Bondsdag 13 miljard euro uit het Sondervermogen vrij voor het bekostigen van acht wapensystemen, waaronder 35 F-35A’s voor de Luftwaffe. 13 miljard is overigens ook precies het bedrag dat uit het Sondervermogen, dat zichzelf moet financieren, aan rente verdwijnt, waardoor er onder de streep maar 87 miljard overblijft.¹³ De Deutscher Reservistenverband vindt het allemaal maar een druppel op de gloeiende plaat, want voorzitter Patrick Sensburg denkt dat er minstens 300 miljard euro nodig is om de Bundeswehr structureel te herorganiseren en te versterken.¹⁴ Of is 300 miljard ook niet genoeg en draait het in eerste instantie misschien niet eens om geld? Voormalig Fallschirmjäger Achim Wohlgethan is daar uitgesproken over. In zijn boek *Blackbox Bundeswehr* zegt hij dat met de aftocht van Duitsland uit Afghanistan tijdens de evacuatie van augustus 2021 het vertrouwen van militairen in de politieke leiding verloren is gegaan. Veel militairen denken dat de extra miljarden overwegend bij de bureaucratie zullen blijven hangen. Het verlies van vertrouwen en motivatie is met geld alleen niet goed te maken.¹⁵

12 Matthias Gebauer en Konstantin Hammerstein, ‘Heerjemine!’, *Der Spiegel*, No. 3, 41 januari 2023, 14.

13 Lars Hoffmann en Gerhard Heiming, ‘Zinsen fressen rund 13 Milliarden Euro. Finanzierung der Vorhaben nur schleppend’, *Europäische Sicherheit & Technik*, maart 2023, 27-29.

14 ‘100 Milliarden zusätzlich – und immer noch Fragen offen’, *Loyal*, 9 juni 2022.

15 Achim Wohlgethan met Martin Specht, *Blackbox Bundeswehr. Die 100-Milliarden-Illusion. Was unsere Truppe jetzt wirklich braucht* (Berlin, Econ, 2023) 16-17.

Pistorius trad afgelopen januari aan als vierde minister van Defensie sinds 2019. Die wisselingen hebben de continuïteit op het ministerie geen goed gedaan. ‘Hij heeft zich eerst een beeld moeten vormen, maar heeft in korte tijd veel vertrouwen opgebouwd binnen de Bundeswehr en de NAVO’, zegt Hans-Peter Bartels. Pistorius moet echter ook schipperen binnen de regerings-coalitie. Voor 2024 had hij gepleit voor een verhoging van de defensiebegroting met 10 miljard euro, maar hij moest genoegen nemen met 1,7 miljard, waardoor de totale begroting op 51,8 miljard komt. Om aan de 2%-NAVO-norm te voldoen stuurt de regering nog eens 19,2 miljard uit het Sondervermogen bij.¹⁶ Wolfgang Labuhn zegt dat de Bundeswehr in de materieelnota van afgelopen juni naast de F-35’s, die overigens de nucleaire taak van de Tornado zullen overnemen, onder meer de volgende grote aankopen en projecten noemt: 60 zware transporthelikopters (Chinook CH-47F als vervanging voor de verouderde CH-53G); het Main Ground Combat System (samen met Frankrijk voor de vervanging van Leopard 2 en Leclerc tanks); de Arrow 3 (raketsysteem voor territoriale luchtverdediging); en het pantser-voertuig Boxer. ‘De complete lijst omvat 7 pagina’s’, zegt Labuhn, waarmee de tekorten die de Bundeswehr de afgelopen dertig jaar als Einsatzarmee voor overzeese missies van Afghanistan tot Mali heeft opgelopen, treffend zijn geïllustreerd.

Voor synergie op het gebied van aanschaf, onderhoud, logistiek en onderwijs zet de Bundeswehr verder in op interoperabiliteit en internationale samenwerking, waarmee zij tientallen jaren ervaring heeft. Het 1 German-Netherlands Corps met het hoofdkwartier in Münster, de integratie van drie Nederlandse brigades in de Bundeswehr, de bilaterale samenwerking in grondgebonden lucht- en raketverdediging (Apollo) en de samenwerking tussen het Korps Mariniers en het Seebataillon zijn goede voorbeelden. Labuhn noemt verder ook de in 1989 opgerichte Deutsch-Französische Brigade (6.000 manschappen), het Eurokorps (sinds 1993) en van recenter datum het Duits-Britse Pionierbrückenbataillon 130 (2021) en het European Sky Shield Initiative met voorlopig

15 NAVO-landen (2022). Hans-Peter Bartels kwalificeert Nederland als een ‘ideale partner’ voor samenwerking: ‘De inzetgereedheid die we bijvoorbeeld in de landstrijdkrachten bereiken vormt een model voor de toekomst, waarbij een Nederlandse militair een Duitse meerdere kan hebben en andersom.’ Bartels noemt verder België, Tsjechië en Noorwegen als landen waarmee de Bundeswehr de samenwerking zou kunnen uitbreiden.

Of de defensiebegroting de komende jaren echt structureel verhoogd wordt en hoe het geld uit het Sondervermogen daarbij besteed wordt blijft open. Christina Krause van de Konrad Adenauer Stiftung koestert de nodige twijfel, want het gevaar loert dat de steun voor defensie onder de Duitse bevolking afneemt mocht de oorlog in Oekraïne eindigen. De druk op de politiek zal dan toenemen om de miljarden aan andere knelpunten te besteden.¹⁷

Tijdens Air Defender 2023 in juni liet de Bundeswehr zien dat zij ondanks de bezuinigingen van de afgelopen decennia nog steeds een dergelijke grote oefening kan faciliteren. Vijftwintig landen namen met 250 vliegtuigen en helikopters deel aan de grootste luchtmacht-oefening uit de geschiedenis van de NAVO. Op militair-logistiek gebied blijft Duitsland een van de belangrijkste partners in de alliantie. ‘Duitsland neemt traditioneel een sleutelpositie in, zoals de talrijke Reforger-oefeningen tijdens de Koude Oorlog lieten zien. Sinds de grens van de NAVO naar het oosten opgeschoven is, is Duitsland als transitland een logistieke draaischijf voor troepenbewegingen. Het Logistiek-bataillon 163 is in staat om materieel in twee zeehavens en op vier vliegbases gelijktijdig af te handelen’, zegt Wolfgang Labuhn. ‘Vanwege deze capaciteiten van de Bundeswehr, die op logistiek gebied voldoende is uitgerust met materieel en personeel, heeft de NAVO besloten het nieuwe Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC) in Ulm te vestigen.’

16 Uli Hauck, ‘Warum auch Pistorius rechnen muss’, *Tagesschau.de*, 5 juli 2023. Zie: <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/haushalt-verteidigung-pistorius-100.html>.

17 Krause, ‘Die verpasste Chance’, 6.



Hans-Peter Bartels (rechts) pleitte tijdens de Petersberger Gespräche voor een nieuwe denkwijze bij de verwerving van materieel voor de Bundeswehr

FOTO GSP, REINER WEHNES

Jasper Wieck prees de materiële hulp die tot nu toe aan Oekraïne is geleverd, maar benadrukte dat het een adering voor de Bundeswehr is om dat af te moeten staan.¹⁸ Hans-Peter Bartels pleitte in Königswinter daarom voor een nieuwe denkwijze bij verwerving: ‘We moeten kopen op surplus, zodat we materieel eventueel af kunnen staan aan bedreigde landen zonder dat we zelf meteen in de problemen komen’. Hij drong tevens aan op de snelle aanschaf van systemen, waaronder raketafweer, in plaats van die zelf te ontwikkelen ‘en ze dan tien jaar later en vijf keer duurder pas te hebben’. De Duitse wapenindustrie zal niet graag zien dat er mogelijk meer in het buitenland gekocht wordt, maar staat er wat betreft land- en marinesystemen in ieder geval niet slecht voor, zegt Wolfgang Labuhn: ‘Bedrijven als Rheinmetall, KMS+NEXTER Defense Systems en Flensburger Fahrzeugbau GmbH hebben sinds het begin van de Oekraïne-oorlog bewezen dat zij grote landvoertuigen zoals het pantservoertuig Marder en Leopards van het type 1 en 2 snel inzetgereed kunnen leveren. In de scheepsbouw produceren Naval Vessels Lürssen Group en German Naval

Yards wereldwijd gevraagde korvetten en fregatten. En Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems bouwt de beste niet-nucleaire onderzeeboten ter wereld, die naar talrijke landen geëxporteerd worden’.

Pop-up Karrierelounge

De financiële injectie vanuit Berlijn moet er onder meer toe leiden dat de Bundeswehr de kern kan vormen van de snelle interventiemacht van de EU, die in 2025 inzetgereed moet zijn onder Duitse leiding. Duitsland neemt als lead nation met onder meer Nederland deel aan de enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup van de NAVO in Litouwen en is bereid daar een volledige brigade van vierduizend militairen te stationeren.¹⁹ Maar is voor al die ambities ook personeel te vinden? Is de Bundeswehr anno 2023 wel een aantrekkelijke werkgever? Kolonel André Wüstner, voorzitter van de Deutscher Bundeswehrverband, wierp die vragen in Königswinter op en zei dat er onder jongeren wel interesse is om militair of burgermedewerker bij defensie te worden, maar dat de Bundeswehr moet concurreren met de politie en andere sectoren die behalve met banen ook met opleidingen schermen. ‘Past wat de Bundeswehr aanbiedt nog wel bij de jonge generatie?’, vroeg hij zich af. Het personeelsgebrek oplossen door het heractiveren van de dienstplicht, zoals sommigen voorstellen, is onmogelijk, aldus

18 De lijst met wapensystemen die Duitsland aan Oekraïne heeft geleverd omvat onder meer 14 Leopard 2-tanks, 40 Marder-pantservoertuigen, 14 pantserhouwitsers, 3 Iris-T SLM antiraketssystemen en 16 Biber-bruglegsystemen. Zie: Lars Hoffmann en Gerhard Heiming, ‘Zinsen fressen rund 13 Milliarden Euro’, *Europäische Sicherheit & Technik*, 28.

Wüstner: 'We hebben niet genoeg kazernes meer om die mensen onder te brengen.' Wolfgang Labuhn noemt het voeren van een discussie over de dienstplicht tamelijk zinloos: 'De hele benodigde administratieve infrastructuur is compleet afgeschaft'.

Met campagnes op sociale media en de eigen webkanalen probeert de Bundeswehr jongeren warm te maken voor een carrière bij de krijgsmacht of voor een vrijwillige dienstdienst, die 7 tot 23 maanden kan duren en onder voorwaarden al op 17-jarige leeftijd kan beginnen. Vanaf de algemene voorlichtingspagina is het maar één klik naar de tabel met nettosalarissen. De Bundeswehr werkt ook met Pop-up Karrièrelounges, waarvan de eerste in 2019 verscheen. De nieuwste lounge ging afgelopen augustus open in een winkelcentrum in Koblenz en tot

maart kunnen belangstellenden daar praten met recruiters. Een van de speerpunten bij de werving is lichamelijke en geestelijke fitness, waaraan het op jonge militairen gerichte Bundeswehrmagazine Y recent zelfs een themanummer wijdde.²⁰

Kort na de Duitse hereniging in 1990 en de integratie van de Oost-Duitse Nationale Volksarmee in de Bundeswehr trad de personeelskrimp in, versterkt door het opschorten van de dienstplicht in 2011. Om van het huidige aantal van 182.000 militairen naar het gewenste aantal van 203.000 te komen tegen 2032 zal er het nodige moeten gebeuren. 'Sinds 2011 heeft de

19 Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, *Reden zur Zeitenwende* (Berlijn, Bundesregierung, september 2022) 40.

20 'Fitness', themanummer Y (Berlijn, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, juni 2023).

Jongeren informeren zich afgelopen juni op de open dag van de Bundeswehr in Bückeburg: is de generatie smartphone te werven en te behouden voor de krijgsmacht?

FOTO BUNDESWEHR, TOM TWARDY



Bundeswehr grote rekruteringsproblemen', zegt Wolfgang Labuhn. 'De Bundeswehr biedt veel beroepsmogelijkheden tegen vergelijkbare lonen met het bedrijfsleven, behalve voor specialisten als IT'ers, artsen en ingenieurs, die elders meer kunnen verdienen. De krijgsmacht geldt als een 'gezinsonvriendelijke' werkgever vanwege de onregelmatige diensten, verhuizingen etc. Er wordt nu geprobeerd rekruten te stationeren in de regio waar zij wonen, maar dat project is nog maar net gestart.'

Een enkele Bundeswehrenheid neemt intussen zelf initiatieven om nieuw aangetrokken militairen te behouden en het uitvalspercentage na eerste oefening naar beneden te krijgen. Zo startte 10. Kompanie van Fallschirmjägerregiment 26 een proef met Projekt Null-800, dat rekruten het recht geeft 's morgens om 8.00 uur de dienst te beginnen in plaats van al om 7.00 uur. De leiding speelt daarmee in op de 'abrupte verandering van de levensrealiteit' waarover de rekruten hadden geklaagd.²¹ Een luitenant-kolonel b.d. en voormalig Fallschirmjäger, die benadrukt niet namens de Bundeswehr te spreken, zegt in dat extra uur geen probleem te zien, zolang de opleidingsdoelen uiteindelijk worden gehaald. Maar hij maakt zich wel grote zorgen om de lichamelijke en geestelijke fitheid van rekruten en denkt dat het gevaarlijk is om de lat lager te leggen om te voorkomen dat jongeren uitvallen. 'De generatie smartphone en computerspel verschijnt nu aan de start. Als de situatie tijdens een gevecht onoverzichtelijk en levensgevaarlijk wordt, moet mijn geest zich 100% op het overleven van mijn soldaten kunnen concentreren. Dan moet mijn lichaam getraind zijn en belasting en pijn kunnen verdragen en ik moet over de grens van mijn kunnen gaan. Het opzoeken van die grenzen moet daarom met jonge mensen getraind worden.'

De regeringspartij FDP heeft voorgesteld de Bundeswehr open te stellen voor buitenlanders, waarbij zij na vijf jaar dienst recht zouden

hebben op het Duitse staatsburgerschap. Wolfgang Labuhn vindt dat geen slecht idee, gezien het personeelsgebrek van de krijgsmacht: 'Migranten kunnen daardoor beter in de samenleving integreren en tevens een beroep leren'. Een uitdaging ligt er ook bij het vullen van de reserve. De Bundeswehr heeft nu 34.000 reservisten. Daar ligt een opgave voor de Bundeswehr om samen met werkgevers meer Duitsers te overtuigen van het nut van de reserve, die een sterkte van 60.000 zou moeten hebben. De eerste pool om reservisten uit te werven zijn de 15.000 militairen die jaarlijks uit actieve dienst gaan.²²

Doordat de dienstplicht als 'bindmiddel' tussen de Bundeswehr en de maatschappij verloren is gegaan, is de onwetendheid over de strijdkrachten onder de Duitse bevolking sterk toegenomen, 'ook in de media, waar men bericht over militaire zaken zonder ooit een kazerne van binnen te hebben gezien. Dat leidt vaak tot fouten, zoals de berichtgeving over de Oekraïneoorlog laat zien, waar mortieren met houwitseren verward worden en alle gepantserde voertuigen tanks heten', zegt Wolfgang Labuhn.

360-graden oriëntering

'De Bondsrepubliek moet een voortrekkersrol pakken en in de NAVO leveren als een sterk land', zei SPD-Bondsdaglid Wolfgang Hellmich in Königswinter. 'In de herfst voeren we het begrotingsdebat en 2%-bbp moet de ondergrens zijn', zo verwees hij naar de NAVO-norm voor jaarlijkse defensieuitgaven. Intussen heeft de regering de 2% echter al minder hard gemaakt en een eerdere toezegging, dat de 2% over een gemiddelde van vijf jaar bereikt zal worden, bekrachtigd.²³

Volgens Jasper Wieck moet er hoe dan ook veel geld beschikbaar komen, want hoewel de Bundeswehr zich weer meer zal richten op de collectieve verdediging, is het niet zo dat Duitsland zich helemaal terugtrekt uit internationale crisisoperaties. Wieck noemde ook Afrika en de Indo-Pacific, waar Rusland en China steeds meer invloed krijgen, als aandachtsgebieden. De Bundeswehr vertrekt uiterlijk eind mei 2024 uit Mali, 'maar het terroristische gevaar uit die omgeving zal niet verdwijnen. We

21 'Rekruten bei den Fallschirmjägern dürfen länger schlafen', *Bundeswehr.de*, 10 februari 2023.

22 'Auftrag der Reserve', *Bundeswehr.de*.

23 'Ampel will Zwei-Prozent-Ziel der Nato nicht festschreiben', *Stern.de*, 16 augustus 2023.

moeten een 360-graden oriëntering houden' voor alle soorten dreigingen. Momenteel brengt de Bundeswehr samen met Frankrijk de in Mali opgedane lessons learned in kaart, want mogelijk zijn die te gebruiken bij toekomstige missies, aldus Wieck. Elke Löbel, secretaris-generaal van het ministerie van Economische Samenwerking en Ontwikkeling, zei tijdens de Petersberger Gespräche dat geïntegreerde veiligheid ook veel veldwerk inhoudt. Haar ministerie focust onder meer op het Midden-Oosten, de Hoorn van Afrika en Mali. 'Het steunen van anticorruptie-initiatieven, programma's tegen armoede en de emancipatie van vrouwen kan leiden tot minder geweld in samenlevingen en de aantrekkingskracht van terreurbewegingen doen afnemen. Dat is een kwestie van lange adem en we moeten bereid zijn lang te blijven, ook nadat de Bundeswehr zich heeft teruggetrokken.'

Bondskanselier Scholz ziet in de NAVO de 'garant' van de Europese veiligheid, maar vindt dat EU-landen verder moeten gaan bij het

integreren van hun defensiestructuren, omdat dat tegelijkertijd de alliantie versterkt.²⁴ Duitsland zal zich vol moeten inzetten voor de EU, de NAVO en de versterking van de banden met democratieën wereldwijd, omdat de afgelopen dertig jaar vrijheid anders weleens een uitzondering in de geschiedenis zouden kunnen blijken te zijn.²⁵ Jasper Wieck zei dat de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie er zonder de Russische overval op Oekraïne heel anders uitgezien zou hebben. 'Rusland is de komende tijd de grootste bedreiging voor de Eur-Atlantische regio. We staan nog maar aan het begin van de Zeitenwende en zullen nog verder uit onze comfortzone moeten komen.' Duitsland bevindt zich in zijn ogen in een bijzondere tijd: 'Litouwen legt zijn veiligheid in handen van de Bondsrepubliek. Gezien de geschiedenis is dat een geschenk dat we moeten aannemen'. ■

24 Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, *Reden zur Zeitenwende* (Berlijn, Bundesregierung, september 2022) 38.

25 Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz, *Reden zur Zeitenwende* (Berlijn, Bundesregierung, september 2022) 18.

De Bundeswehr vertrekt in 2024 uit Mali: de Nationale Sicherheitsstrategie zegt nadrukkelijk dat de Duitse veiligheid niet alleen met militaire middelen gegarandeerd kan worden

FOTO BUNDESWEHR



Digitaal orakel in camouflageprint

Jaus Müller

Afgelopen zomer kreeg een Nederlandse overste de lachers op zijn hand toen hij aan het eind van een oefening enkele vertrekkende stafofficieren uit zijn eenheid toesprak. Gekweld door tijdgebrek biechtte de overste op dat hij voor zijn afscheidsgedichten gebruik had gemaakt van ChatGPT, ofwel Artificial Intelligence. Aan de hand van enkele steekwoorden die de overste ChatGPT had gevoerd kon hij de militairen trakteren op de meest hilarische AI-poëzie over hun tijd bij de eenheid.

De ontwikkelingen op het gebied van AI gaan momenteel exponentieel. Overal in de samenleving gaan we hiermee te maken krijgen, en dus ook in ons vakgebied. Een ding valt op: in het publieke domein wordt bijna altijd gefocust op het gevaar dat AI in het militaire vak met zich mee zou brengen.

Het verhaal van de op hol geslagen robot die de mensheid bedreigt is op zich niet nieuw. De eerste – en misschien ook wel meteen de beste – vertolking van een machine met een wel erg sterke eigen wil zien we al terug in Stanley Kubricks *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In deze film uit 1968 leidt boordcomputer HAL 9000 de aanwezige menselijke astronauten

stukje bij beetje om de tuin, om de mensheid vervolgens obsoleet te verklaren en het ruimtevaartuig volledig over te nemen. HAL stond voor ‘Heuristisch-geprogrammeerde ALgoritmische computer’; een ongekend briljante vooruitwijzing vanuit de jaren zestig naar nu en de drempel naar het AI-tijdperk waarop wij nu staan.

Ook in recente populaire media zien we de opkomst van AI vaak door de lens van een ongecontroleerde militaire bedreiging. Afgelopen zomer verscheen op Netflix een op zich zeer sterke documentaire met de titel *Killer Robots*.¹ Wat gebeurt er wanneer een machine beslissingen over leven en dood neemt? De documentaire onderzoekt op niet onverdienstelijke wijze de gevaren rond kunstmatige intelligentie bij militaire toepassingen.

Prachtig zijn de opnames van een van de beste vliegers van de U.S. Air Force die lijdzaam moet toegeven dat hij niet meer kan winnen in een *dogfight* tijdens een computersimulatie.

Een veelgehoord ethisch dilemma hierbij is: wie haalt nu de trekker over? Hoe verhoudt het automatisch vuren van een robot zich tot het



humanitair oorlogsrecht? Stel er is twijfel over disproportionele inzet van geweld; zien we straks niet langer militairen voor de Militaire Kamer in Arnhem, maar de programmeur van het algoritme van de robot?

Toch is het vooral het cliché van de Hollywood killerrobot dat blijft hangen. Met andere woorden: binnen de kaders van het militaire vermogen leggen films en series de nadruk op de fysieke component. Een sluw algoritme stuurt dodelijke machines aan om mensen of andere machines te vernietigen. In werkelijkheid zijn de eerste resultaten van AI vooral behaald op de conceptuele component: als digitale assistenten in de militaire stafruimtes. Dit is een plek waar de Hollywoodcamera's doorgaans niet zo vaak komen, maar waar stafofficieren zich in het zweet werken boven stafkaarten en aan computerschermen om de commandant de gevaarlijkste en meest waarschijnlijke *courses of actions* te presenteren. Uiteindelijk kiest de commandant uit een reeks opties het uit te voeren plan. Deze doctrinaire cyclus van observeren, oriënteren, beslissen en vervolgens uitvoeren draait constant door op de achtergrond van elke militaire operatie. Uit eigen ervaring, werkend als operationeel dagboekschrijver binnen MINUSMA en later bij de Directie Operaties, weet ik hoeveel tijd er in gaat zitten om tot een zorgvuldig besluit te komen: voordat er ergens maar een kogel wordt afgevuurd, zijn stapels inlichtingenproducten, talloze briefings en vele opties de revue gepasseerd.

Dat kan sneller. In april van dit jaar gaf technologiebedrijf Palantir (momenteel actief in Oekraïne) een demonstratie van een soort militaire ChatGPT-software voor *battle management*, genaamd Artificial Intelligence Platform (AIP) for Defense. Het platform koppelt interactieve, op AI-gebaseerde chatfuncties aan informatieverzameling. Dit wordt gecombineerd met mogelijkheden om verschillende terrein- en vijandappreciaties te genereren. Vervolgens schotelt het systeem de commandant meerdere handelingsopties voor (*courses of action*). De commandant, geholpen door zijn staf, neemt de uiteindelijke beslissing. Hier geen wildschieten-de robots, maar kunstmatige intelligentie die de

staf assisteert. Uiteindelijk controleert en beslist een menselijke commandant hoe vervolgens militair op te treden.²

Op het slagveld heerst chaos. De partij die daar als eerste grip op krijgt doorloopt sneller het besluitvormingsproces en is daardoor de vijand telkens nét een stapje voor. In oorlog is alles tijdkritisch. Informatie moet snel worden verstrekt, anders kan het doelwit zich verplaatsen. Dit proces, dat wordt gedefinieerd als een *sensor-to-shooter-cyclus*, behelst het proces van het uitvoeren van een aanval. Het gaat hierbij om het vergaren van Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance en Target Acquisition (ISTAR), de informatieverwerking, de besluitvorming en de inzet van betrokken wapensystemen. Bij al deze fasen kan AI helpen om er snelheid in te krijgen. De oorlog in Oekraïne leert dat snelheid van dit proces essentieel is om de tegenstander de loef af te steken.

In plaats van een Terminator in camouflageprint moeten we meer denken aan een digitaal militair orakel, dat, geholpen door informatie en voorspellingen, de commandant uiteindelijk bijstaat in zijn beslissing. AI is uiteindelijk niet meer dan een hulpmiddel en het verlengstuk van de menselijke geest, want het verbetert de zintuigen en de gedachten. Het helpt de militair om in een steeds complexere wereld zijn werk te doen.

Het is de hoogste tijd om ons te verdiepen in de vele mogelijkheden van AI. Wat de Hollywood-producties ons ook proberen wijs te maken, het zijn mensen die aan de knoppen zitten, begeleid door de intelligentie van machines. Laat het verhaal van onze overste met zijn AI-gedichten een luchtige reminder zijn van de bijzondere tijden waarin we leven.

Alles zal veranderen, inclusief het werk van uw columnist. Of denkt u nog dat ik dit echt allemaal zelf heb getypt? ■

1 Netflix, *Killer Robot*, uitgebracht op 29 juni 2023.

2 Ian Reynolds en Ozan Ahmet Cetin, 'War is messy. AI can't handle it', *The Bulletin*, 14 augustus 2023. Zie: <https://thebulletin.org/2023/08/war-is-messy-ai-cant-handle-it/>.

Multinationale eenheden: een politiek-militair huwelijk

Sergei Boeke

Afgelopen juni, tijdens de Marinedagen in Den Helder, werd op ministerieel niveau een klein feestje gevierd. De (demissionair) minister van Defensie en haar Britse evenknie tekenden een hernieuwd *Memorandum of Understanding* om 50 jaar UK/NL Amphibious Force te vieren en te bestendigen. Het samenwerkingsverband tussen het Korps Mariniers en de Royal Marines werd nieuw leven ingeblazen. Daarnaast werd de intentie uitgesproken om de vervanging van marineschepen gezamenlijk op te lopen. De Britse en Nederlandse mariniers werken al jaren uitstekend samen, en op militair vlak is er een goede culturele match. Beide eenheden delen een liefde voor het verleggen van grenzen (de eigen en die van anderen), en bezitten een stevige dosis humor en zelfspot. In tegenstelling tot sommige andere eenheden van de krijgsmacht hoeven zij niet opnieuw te leren vechten – dat zit vastgebakken in de genen. Op het gebied van professionaliteit, training en interoperabiliteit heeft de samenwerking het Korps Mariniers veel gebracht. Maar in al die jaren is de eenheid nooit gezamenlijk ingezet. Hier zijn zeker wel pogingen toe gedaan; zo hebben de Britten vaker tevergeefs in Den Haag aangeklopt met een verzoek tot ernstinzet. Dat het niet lukte in Irak (2003) is achteraf bezien wellicht geen gemiste kans, maar in Afghanistan, waar de Britten in Helmand zaten en de Nederlanders in buurprovincie Uruzgan, was dat zeker zo. Ondanks de uitstekende militaire match van de maritieme eenheid rijst de vraag of er ook een klik is op politiek niveau.

Er zijn veel vormen en variaties van internationale militaire samenwerking. Elk krijgsmachtdeel heeft zo zijn eigen culturele

voorkeuren. De luchtmacht heeft traditioneel een hechte relatie met de U.S. Air Force, de marine kan het goed vinden met de Royal Navy – al is Admiraal Benelux ook een goed voorbeeld van een geïntegreerd hoofdkwartier. De landmacht is vooral gericht op de Duitse Bundeswehr. Samenwerking is mogelijk bij opleidingen en trainingen, verwerving en instandhouding en natuurlijk met het vormen van gezamenlijke (gevechts)eenheden. De landmacht heeft onlangs een grote stap gezet door nog nauwer samen te werken met Duitsland bij de aanschaf van nieuw materieel. In plaats van zelf allerlei eisen te stellen aan nieuw materieel, voldoet het adagium: als het goed (genoeg) is voor de Bundeswehr, dan is het ook goed voor ons. Dit komt de interoperabiliteit ten goede en zal waarschijnlijk ook veel geld besparen. Op operationeel gebied heeft de landmacht alle drie brigades geïntegreerd in Duitse divisies. Daarnaast is het Eerste Duits-Nederlandse Legerkorps (1GNC) een toonbeeld van internationale samenwerking, en het hoofdkwartier is drie keer in Afghanistan ingezet.

Toch hebben geïntegreerde eenheden ook een keerzijde. De landmacht en de Bundeswehr zijn dusdanig geïntegreerd dat eenheden volledig vervlochten zijn. Als tandwielen werken ze samen; zo kan een Duits peloton ingebed zijn in een Nederlandse compagnie, die op haar beurt weer ingebed is in een Duits bataljon. De inzet van zo'n eenheid is desalniettemin voorwaardelijk aan de politieke besluitvorming in beide landen. Maar de politieke systemen, parlementaire procedures en gebruiken, om maar te zwijgen van de (nationale) cultuur en het publieke



draagvlak, zijn volledig anders. In het verleden zijn Europese landen het vaak oneens geweest over militaire inzet in onder meer Irak, Libië en Afghanistan. Soms deed een land niet mee met een operatie, soms half (met beperkende *rules of engagement* en *caveats* in het mandaat), en een enkel land presteerde het om een missie wel politiek te steunen, maar niet militair. Voor een geïntegreerde eenheid betekent een gebrek aan politieke overeenstemming dat inzet onmogelijk is. Ooit moest een Nederlandse uitwisselings-officier van een Engels vliegdekschip af omdat het schip plotseling op ernstmissie gestuurd werd en hier was geen (Nederlandse) politieke goedkeuring voor. Voor een ingewerkt team is dit een uitdaging: bij een vervlochten eenheid is het een probleem. Onlangs besloot de landmacht om de laatste van de drie brigades eveneens Duits in te bedden, en niet in een Franse divisie (zoals wel was overwogen). Hiermee is alles op één paard gewed. En we weten dat militaire inzet politiek zeer gevoelig ligt in Duitsland. Daarentegen staat vast dat het Nederlandse politieke stelsel wel meer overeenkomsten heeft met het Duitse dan het Franse.

Op NAVO- en EU-vlak spelen vergelijkbare politiek-militaire uitdagingen. Er wordt al twee decennia gesproken over EU Battlegroups en het nieuwe Strategisch Kompas voorziet een versterking van dit concept. Maar deze battlegroups zijn ook nooit ingezet, mede omdat hun financiering niet goed geregeld is. De NAVO zet een nieuwe Allied Reaction Force (ARF) op en hier is juist het risico dat deze zo multinationalaal wordt dat de militaire effectiviteit eronder gaat lijden. Politiek gezien zullen sowieso 31 (hopelijk binnenkort 32) landen het eens moeten worden over inzet; een hele klus. Tot slot heeft de NAVO, als reactie op de Russische agressie, de enhanced Forward Presence aan de oostflank opgezet en onlangs versterkt. Deze acht battlegroups worden allemaal nationaal aangestuurd en niet door de NAVO. Wanneer en hoe gaan zij over naar NAVO-command en control? Deze vraag is een cruciale, maar nog niet door de hoofdsteden beantwoord.

Kortom, bij internationale militaire samenwerking verdient de politieke besluitvorming

Een gezamenlijke zitting van de Brits-Nederlandse of Duits-Nederlandse parlementaire Commissie van Defensie kan voor de internationale partners een interessante kennismaking met onze Artikel 100-procedure zijn

meer aandacht. Nu richt men zich vooral op de militaire klik. Maar er moet ook, zoals Marcus Houben ooit in de *Militaire Spectator* schreef, een zekere politieke compatibiliteit zijn. De verschillende politieke systemen, processen en culturen moeten inzet wel mogelijk maken. Het gaat immers over soevereiniteit en de inzet van militairen is een van de zwaarste politieke besluiten die een land kan nemen. Waarom wordt bijvoorbeeld geen gezamenlijke zitting van de Brits-Nederlandse of Duits-Nederlandse parlementaire Commissie van Defensie georganiseerd? Zo kunnen ministers en Kamerleden al kennismaken met de besluitvormingsprocedures van bondgenoten. Voor de internationale partners wordt het ongetwijfeld ook een interessante kennismaking met onze Artikel 100-procedure. Uiteindelijk dient nu, in vredetijd, het grootste gedeelte van het afstemmings- en besluitvormingsproces plaats te vinden. Als straks een beroep wordt gedaan op een multinationale eenheid, dan moeten de processen niet alleen bekend, maar ook beoefend zijn. En zo kan, bijna op militaire wijze, de politieke besluitvorming toch voorbereid worden. Zonder succesgarantie overigens, want onvoorspelbaarheid kenmerkt zowel het militaire als het politieke vak. ■

Hoe informeer je bij een luchtalarm?

Kapitein J.A. Heijkoop BSc, Staf CLSK

Eerder dit jaar riep de *Militaire Spectator* op om ideeën over het verbeteren van de weerbaarheid van de bevolking in te sturen. In mijn huidige functie houd ik mij onder andere bezig met omroepinstallaties op vliegbases. Deze zijn verouderd en in een discussie hierover attendeerde een collega mij op een rapport uit december 2022 over de toekomst van het Waarschuwing Alarmerings Systeem (WAS). Dit systeem is achterhaald, maar het Nederlands Instituut Publieke Veiligheid (NIPV) noemde het gebruik van het luchtalarm in oorlogssituaties 'wat vergezocht'. De civiele verdediging krijgt in Nederland weinig aandacht, terwijl naar mijn mening de bevolking juist weerbaarder wordt als ze weet dat er over haar bescherming wordt nagedacht.

Het Waarschuwing- en Alarmeringssysteem heet in de volksmond het luchtalarm.¹ Het ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid is eigenaar van het systeem en is al sinds 2014 van plan om het uit te faseren, maar dat is onder druk van de Tweede Kamer meerdere malen uitgesteld. Aangezien het einde van de levensduur van het WAS nadert, en omdat NL-Alert een groter bereik heeft en burgers bij calamiteiten ook beter kan informeren, adviseert het NIPV het WAS op te heffen. In zijn advies zegt het NIPV terloops dat het WAS gebruikt kan worden als een luchtalarm in oorlogssituaties, maar dat zo'n situatie vooral 'wat vergezocht' is.²

Over het nut van NL-Alert en het WAS in een grootschalig conflict, waarbij de Nederlandse bevolking wordt blootgesteld aan lucht-, raket- of nucleaire aanvallen, kan een diepgaande discussie worden gevoerd. De beslissing voor het verzenden van een NL-Alert en de reikwijdte hiervan ligt bijvoorbeeld bij de veiligheidsregio, maar de telecomproviders bepalen welke GSM-masten worden aangestraald. Een dergelijke procedure lijkt nogal tijdrovend wanneer men slechts enkele minuten responstijd heeft. In landen als Oekraïne en Israël, die frequent met lucht- of raketaanvallen te maken hebben, wordt bijvoorbeeld een combinatie van luchtalarm en mobiele apps toegepast.³

Het rapport van het NIPV raakt echter ook iets diepers. Dat Nederland betrokken raakt bij een oorlog is vergezocht. Deze houding is begrijpelijk. Het overheidsbeleid op het gebied van publieke veiligheid houdt al jaren geen rekening meer met een mogelijke oorlog. In het rapport wordt terecht opgemerkt dat de Nederlandse overheid sinds de jaren tachtig geen schuil- kelderbeleid meer voert. In dezelfde periode werd ook de organisatie Bescherming Bevolking (BB) opgeheven, die was opgericht voor de civiele verdediging in tijden van oorlog.⁴

1 Nederlands Instituut Publieke Veiligheid, *Een toekomst voor het WAS?* (Arnhem, 23 december 2022).

2 Idem, 46.

3 Pariesia Brody, 'Ukraine Siren Alerts: How a new online system updates Ukrainians about air raids', *The Observers/France 24*, 19 april 2022; 'This is how Israel protects its citizens from rocket attacks', *WION*, 19 mei 2021.

4 Lars Kuipers, *Arthur Doctors van Leeuwen. Een spoor van vernieuwing* (Amsterdam, Prometheus, 2020).

5 Zie de website: www.denkvooruit.nl.

6 Militaire Inlichtingen en -Veiligheidsdienst, *Jaarverslag 2022* (Den Haag, ministerie van Defensie, 19 april 2023).

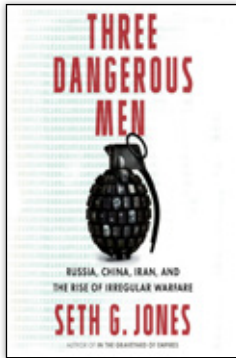
Momenteel noemt alleen de overheidswebsite denkvooruit.nl 'internationale spanning' als een categorie ramp.⁵ Daarentegen hebben we sinds het begin van de oorlog in Oekraïne geen landelijke campagne gezien om burgers bewust te maken van dit type dreiging, of hen actief te stimuleren de noodzakelijke voorbereidingen te treffen.

Nu betoog ik absoluut niet dat de overheid weer schuilkelders moet aanleggen, de BB heroprichten en het WAS behouden. Feit is echter wel dat de MIVD in zijn jaarverslag van

2022 een militair conflict met Rusland 'voorstelbaar' noemt.⁶ Als we de Nederlandse bevolking weerbaar willen maken voor een oorlog met Rusland, moet zij zich bewust zijn dat er een plan bestaat tegen de dreigingen waaraan zij dan wordt blootgesteld. Een civiele verdediging opnieuw inrichten zal langer duren dan de snelheid waarmee de dreiging van een oorlog kan toenemen. De eerste stap is dan ook dat de overheid zich beraadt of er weer actief beleid gevoerd moet worden voor de civiele verdediging van de bevolking in tijden van oorlog. ■

FOTO MCD, EVERT-JAN DANIELS





Three Dangerous Men

Russia, China, Iran and the Rise of Irregular Warfare
 Door Seth G. Jones
 New York (W.W. Norton & Company) 2021
 288 blz.
 ISBN 9781324006206
 € 26,-

In *Three Dangerous Men* Seth G. Jones offers his view on how states operate in the expanding global competition. Jones highlights the modern state's 'tools of irregular warfare' (p. 3). But Jones is not alone in this segment. Another prominent Western scholar, David Kilcullen, recently published *The Dragons and the Snakes* with a similar narrative about how adversaries learned to fight the West.¹ And two decades earlier, two People's Liberation Army (PLA) colonels, Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, introduced this same concept in their book *Un-Restricted Warfare*.² The growing literature on changing military strategy leads to the question of which book to read. It is therefore worthwhile to compare Jones' *Three Dangerous Men* with the two other publications on perspective, terminology, and research. To narrow the scope, this review focuses on Chinese strategic thinking, which each author frames differently. And precisely these nuances form essential considerations when deciding what to read.

Perspective

Jones' overarching and warning message is similar to Kilcullen's. Jones warns that the United States 'needs to significantly alter how it thinks – and engages in – competition' (p. 6). In his book, Jones analyzes how three dangerous men in Russia, Iran, and China challenged the United States with an irregular strategy. In Russia, General Valery Gerasimov 'preached there were no clear boundaries between war and peace' (p. 75). In Iran, General Qassem Soleimani organized effective proxy forces to spread Iranian influence in the region (p. 108). In China, General Zhang Youxia designed a campaign centred around information, disinformation, coercion, cyber, and island building (p. 174). Kilcullen has a similar message. According to Kilcullen, dragons and snakes (meaning state and non-state actors) had studied and adapted to Western superiority. Kilcullen also warns that 'unless we too adapt, our decline is just a matter of time' (p. 6).

Jones and Kilcullen's views on China can be traced back to 1999 when Qiao and Wang published *Un-Restricted Warfare*, a Chinese analysis of future warfare after the US superior military victory in the Gulf War. The authors' main argument was that war would no longer be fought by an 'armed force to compel the enemy' but by 'all means, [...] military and non-military' (pp. xxi-xxii). Qiao and Wang hereby changed and broadened the definition of war 'without boundaries or limits' (p. 5). Future war would include all aspects of society, such as financial, trade, resources, economics, space, drugs, media, psychological, or diplomatic. As unrestricted warfare proliferated in the first two decades of the 20th century, Jones and Kilcullen now shed light on the operationalization of Qiao's and Wang's strategic concepts.

The key differences between the three books relate to perspective and time. Qiao and Wang wrote from a South Asian perspective after the First Gulf War. In contrast, Jones and Kilcullen wrote from a Western viewpoint after the Global War on Terror and at the start of the Great Power Competition. Nevertheless, the dominant theme – the widening of war – is the same.

Terminology

Despite the common theme, all authors offer specific perspectives by introducing their own terminology. Jones reframed the current strategies in strategic competition as irregular warfare, in which states compete for power and influence. Kilcullen introduced conceptual development to point out 'the situation in which an adversary's concept of war becomes so much broader than our own' (p. 175). Qiao and Wang introduced the idea of

1 David Kilcullen, *The Dragons and the Snakes. How the Rest Learned to Fight the West* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2020).

2 Qiao Liang and Xiangsui Wang, *Un-Restricted Warfare* (Brattleboro, Echo Point Books & Media, 2015).

unrestricted warfare in countless forms and categorized war as non-military, trans-military, and military. In essence, Kilcullen and Jones do not provide new insights because Qiao and Wang had already introduced their view in 1999. However, Kilcullen and Jones do offer an excellent framework to identify and monitor ambiguous activities in the current strategic competition. Their concepts are useful to grasp how adversaries undermine democratic values today. A closer examination of the terminology further specifies the authors' perspectives. Jones uses irregular warfare as an overarching strategy for China, Russia, and Iran, each with their own features. Kilcullen clearly contrasts China's conceptual envelopment with Russia's liminal warfare (in which activities stay below the detection threshold). Comparing both perspectives, Kilcullen's approach may lead the reader to a perception that China applies a different strategy or that China does not employ liminal warfare. Jones has a different approach and describes China's, Russia's, and Iran's strategies as irregular warfare, each with other features, but without the limiting conceptual framework that sets them apart.

Research

A final comparison shows a remarkable difference in the research methodology. Examining Kilcullen's China chapter reveals that his research is predominantly based on Qiao's and Wang's work. The chapter contains an extensive introduction, a historical overview, and a strategy examination. However, the last part, i.e. conceptual envelopment, is Kilcullen's main argument. It is precisely this crucial part that is mainly based on Qiao's and Wang's writing, starkly contrasting with Jones' research. Jones' research appears more in-depth and contemporary. According to Jones, it is 'unclear –and perhaps unlikely–that it [*Un-Restricted Warfare*] had much influence on Chinese military strategy' (p. 141). Contrary to Kilcullen, Jones examined a vast range of primary resources, interviewed key officials, and translated Chinese documents. Jones also thoroughly researched prominent Chinese officials, studied their speeches, and examined their positions within the PLA and the Chinese Communist Party. Furthermore, Jones managed to weld the numerous sources together in a cohesive analysis of Chinese strategy, which makes his theory convincing.

Conclusion

Comparing *Three Dangerous Men* with *The Dragons and the Snakes* and *Un-Restricted Warfare*, all three books will unquestionably enhance the military officer's understanding of China's strategy, or, more generally, the widening of war. However, there are some critical considerations in order to determine which book to read. The most evident is the different perspectives, in place and in time, between the Chinese officers Qiao and Wang and the Western scholars Jones and Kilcullen. Still, *Un-Restricted Warfare* is a unique insight into Chinese strategic thinking. Additionally, the Western authors offer a choice: Kilcullen provides a sharp framework to categorize current events. However, if you are looking for a well-researched and composited narrative, then Jones will absolutely meet your expectations. ■

Major Ruud van den Bosch, Royal Netherlands Marine Corps/Naval Postgraduate School student

SCRIPTIEPRIJS VID

De Vereniging Informatici Defensie roept op tot het inzenden van bachelor- of masterscripties of wetenschappelijke artikelen voor de jaarlijkse René Olthuisprijs.

De scripties of artikelen moeten gaan over informatiemanagement, informatievoorziening of informatietechnologie bij of voor Defensie.

Inzenden kan tot 1 oktober via het e-mailadres secretaris.vid@mindef.nl. Alle defensiemedewerkers kunnen deelnemen. Meer informatie is te vinden op de website www.vidonline.nl of op intranet.

‘Alle oorlogvoering is op misleiding gebaseerd’

Camouflage en misleiding van de vijand in het algemeen zijn niet zomaar een kwestie van voertuigen en uniformen aan het juiste kleurtje aanpassen. Onder het adagium van Sun Tzu ‘Alle oorlogvoering is op misleiding gebaseerd’ schetste luitenant-kolonel R.C. Reuhl in 1963 de voorwaarden en het nut van succesvolle misleiding in moderne oorlogvoering.¹

‘Het vermogen om te voorzien wat de waarschijnlijke vijandelijke reactie zal zijn is bepalend voor het succes van versluiering en misleiding’, schrijft Reuhl. Een goede inlichtingenpositie is dus essentieel, en misleiders

moeten ‘in staat zijn zich in de gedachten van de vijand te verplaatsen. Er moet tegen worden gewaakt, dat men, zich verplaatsende in de vijandelijke situatie, van eigen gezichtspunt uit gaat oordelen.’

Technologische vooruitgang biedt weliswaar allerlei nieuwe kansen en problemen voor versluiering en misleiding, zoals het inzetten van nepradars en andere apparatuur om valse signalen af te geven aan de vijand, toch blijft succesvolle misleiding een kwestie van mensenwerk en psychologie, zegt Reuhl. ‘Aangezien de waarschijnlijke vijandelijke reactie culmineert in de persoon van de vijandelijke commandant, is diens waarschijnlijke reactie doorslaggevend.’ En: ‘Eén enkele bekende karaktertrek van de vijandelijke commandant is dikwijls van meer belang dan een volledig overzicht van zijn militaire loopbaan.’

Hoe meer men over de vijandelijke bevelhebbers weet, hoe beter: ‘Sommige commandanten maken zich overdreven zorgen, anderen zijn juist overdreven behoedzaam; het is daarom van belang het karakter van de commandant van de tegenpartij te kennen, en te weten in welke mate hij zijn ondercommandanten vrij laat, welke tijd hij nodig heeft alvorens te reageren en in hoeverre zijn angst voor onbekende situaties zijn reacties beïnvloedt.’

De auteur stelt dat de landmacht tot dan toe te weinig waarde hecht aan versluiering en misleiding, en ‘juist voor naar verhouding zwakkere strijdkrachten kan een succesvolle toepassing van de misleiding van onschatbare waarde zijn, waarbij de gedachten in het bijzonder uitgaan naar de inzet van betrekkelijk goedkoop dummymateriael.’ ■



FOTO BEEIDBANK NIMH

De Camouflageschool bij de Dumoulinkazerne in Soesterberg

¹ R.C. Reuhl, ‘Tactische versluiering en misleiding’, *Militaire Spectator* 132 (1963) (6) 277-283.

SIGNALERINGEN

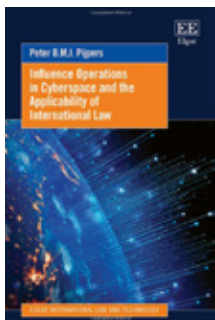


Van oorlog ga je houden

De aantrekkingskracht van leven in de frontlinie

Door Hans Jaap Melissen
Amsterdam (De Geus) 2023
288 blz.
ISBN 9789044542424
€ 22,50

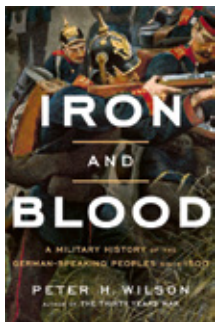
In een persoonlijke terugblik op een journalistiek leven vol gevaren onderzoekt Hans Jaap Melissen de aantrekkingskracht van oorlog. Melissen, momenteel freelancer, maakte het oorlogsgeweld van dichtbij mee in Syrië, Afghanistan, Oekraïne en andere landen. In zijn boek probeert hij antwoord te geven op de vraag waarom mensen besluiten de frontlinie op te zoeken of daar te blijven. Hij schreef zijn eigen gevoelens op en sprak daarnaast met onderzoekers, militieleden en veteranen. Melissen deelde eerder in talrijke media ervaringen over zijn werk, waarbij hij ook inging op veranderingen die de oorlogsjournalistiek de afgelopen jaren heeft doorgemaakt, onder meer door de opkomst van sociale media.



Influence Operations in Cyberspace and the Applicability of International Law

Door Peter B.M.J. Pijpers
Cheltenham (Edward Elgar Publishing) 2023
256 blz.
ISBN 9781035307289
€ 111,-

In dit boek onderzoekt kolonel dr. Peter Pijpers, universitair docent Cyber Operations aan de Nederlandse Defensie Academie, in hoeverre online beïnvloedingsoperaties door buitenlandse actoren een schending van het internationale recht betekenen. Als recente cases neemt hij het Britse EU-referendum (2016), de Amerikaanse presidentsverkiezingen van 2016 en de Franse presidentsverkiezingen van 2017. De auteur gaat telkens in op de kernelementen van interventies, soevereiniteit, territoriale integriteit en politieke onafhankelijkheid om vervolgens conclusies te trekken over eventuele schendingen. Hij reflecteert op de toekomst van beïnvloedingsoperaties in cyberspace en doet aanbevelingen voor het scherper definiëren van schendingen van het internationaal recht.



Iron and Blood

A Military History of the German-Speaking Peoples since 1500
Door Peter H. Wilson
976 blz.
ISBN 9780674987623
€ 36,95

De Duitse militaire geschiedenis gaat bijna altijd over de opkomst van Pruisen, de twee Wereldoorlogen en een *German way of warfare*. Een vergelijking met andere Duitstalige landen wijst echter uit dat het Duitse militarisme of de manier van optreden niet uniek waren, zegt Peter Wilson in *Iron and Blood*. Wilson keek voor zijn boek naar 500 jaar militaire ontwikkeling in het Duitsland van voor en na 1871, Oostenrijk-Hongarije en de Zwitserse Confederatie. Na de oorlog van 1870-1871, waarin Pruisen Frankrijk versloeg, ontstond het beeld van de Duitse gave voor het snelle, hoog-intensieve gevecht. Voor die tijd was Oostenrijk-Hongarije militair het actiefst onder de Duitstalige landen.



Van iedereen en niemand

De helikopter en de Nederlandse krijgsmacht 1945-2020
Door Rolf de Winter
Amsterdam (Boom) 2023
454 blz.
ISBN 9789024459131
€ 39,90

Van iedereen en niemand is de handeseditie van het proefschrift waarop Rolf de Winter, senior wetenschappelijk medewerker van het Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, in juni promoveerde. De Winter schetst een beeld van de ontwikkelingsgeschiedenis van de helikopter in de strijdkrachten en focust daarbij op de positie van bewindslieden, de ambtelijke top en de afzonderlijke krijgsmachtdelen. Ministers, staatssecretarissen, admiraals en generaals stelden steeds hun eigen prioriteiten, concludeert De Winter. Uiteindelijk werd de helikopter toch een hoofdwapensysteem met veelzijdige taken. De auteur gaat uitgebreid in op de aanschafprocessen en de uiteindelijke keuzes en beschrijft tevens de militaire subcultuur die de verschillende helikoptereenheden vormden.

