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Review of *Force without War: U. S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* and Implications for future Doctrine and Education.

“Our traditional approach is either we’re at peace or in conflict, and I think that’s insufficient to deal with the actors that actually seek to advance their interest while avoiding our strengths...as an aside, I don’t find the current phasing construct for operational plans particularly useful right now.... if you think about it, we bin authorities and capabilities according to where we think we are in a phase...and our adversaries, potential adversaries, or our competitors they don’t actually... don’t find themselves limited by that construct... same framework....”

GEN Joseph F. Dunford

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

“Meeting Today’s Global Security Challenges”

Center for Strategic and International Studies

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Introduction

We traditionally see ourselves at either peace or war, with war being an undesirable exception. In reaction to the exceptions, we are pre-disposed to rapidly respond, seek a conclusive end, and return to normalcy. Although this description is certainly preferable to most, it is not our historical experience. At times, military establishments exhibit an incomplete understanding of the conflicts that are just over the horizon as well as the wars they can neither win nor leave. Furthermore, military establishments repeatedly find that war’s aftermath comes with its own set of unique and lasting consequences for both the victor and vanquished as clear conclusion and finality are elusive. (As per Thucydides and Clausewitz) ^{1,2} Still, we have created and maintained a framework to our liking. Going a step further, we have institutionalized an aspirational view of conflict as a function of how we would like it to unfold, but not one reflecting reality.

Within some defense circles, this has led to a narrow conception and flawed philosophy, models, and processes of campaigning and an inelastic interpretation of operational art. These tools and interpretations; designed with the idea of “winning quickly,” have created gaps in our intellectual framework for creating effective uses of force. Therefore, preventing the clear thinking needed to organize around and against the abstract problems that appear in clear view. As such, foreign powers are avoiding our strengths and employing measures to achieve their political objectives in ways not easily countered by the armed forces current concepts and doctrines and other instruments of national power.³ (Grygiel and Mitchell). In fact, joint doctrine is relatively void in its description and intellectual framework for describing campaigning in these circumstances. In contrast, the emerging ideas of integrated campaigning seek a more relevant and broader interpretation of operational practice, clear articulation of principles to successfully campaign across the continuum of conflict and competition, and logic to translate that success into sustainable outcomes. Effective adaptation begins with recognizing that current constructs

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may match the ideal, but not a pragmatic assessment of what may be required in the future. Integrated campaigning provides an expanded intellectual framework for campaigning. Integrated campaigning's construct aligns with the known patterns of international politics; therefore, enabling a more informed logic and effective application of the joint force in the contemporary and anticipated operating environment.

Use of Force - Without War

Specific to the space between peace and war, the United States has a rich history of confronting antagonists and cooperating with and reinforcing allies and partners in conditions beyond armed conflict. In 1978, Barry Blechman and Stephen Kaplan published the results of landmark study titled, Force without War: U. S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument. Their study chronicled and analyzed over 200 cases occurring since World War II where the US employed forces to reinforce or modify foreign actors' behaviors. Their criteria for success was whether or not the targeted actor(s) behaved in the manner desired by the policy's aim. Blechman and Kaplan analyzed the rate of realization of antagonists' and protagonists' behavior sought by the U.S. in instances where force was employed as an aspect of the policy shift, both in the short term (6 months) and longer term (3 years).⁴ Table I is a summary of analysis of 33 substantive case studies. Although published in 1978, the study's context and analysis may be worth consideration as military institutions adapt to the contemporary environment unfolding across Asia and Europe. Regarding the military dimension's role in countering these malign alternative approaches, Blechman and Kaplan's effort may offer insights as to optimal and most effective applications of force.

In Force without War, Blechman and Kaplan examine three general categories of the US' use of force short of armed conflict. The first regards countering an antagonist's use or threatened use of force against another protagonist or neutral actor. The second regards an actor's support to an antagonistic third party, while the third centers on enabling support to state/regime to exercise authority over its sovereign territory. In terms of the approach of the US commitment of force regarding an incident, the authors describe two primary modes. First, the US force was seeking to reinforce existing behavior; to deter the antagonist from behaving in a manner detrimental to US interests; and to assure potential protagonists so that they will continue or abstain from a behavior relative to US interests. The second is to modify or change a behavior; to compel antagonists (short of armed conflict) to either act in a manner aligned with the US or to stop behavior running counter to US interests.; and to induce a potential protagonist to initiate beneficial or cease harmful actions.⁵

Additionally, Force without War analyzes the US military experience and

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success rate in both direct and indirect involvement. The authors also highlight circumstances of using force to alter behaviors in both interstate and intrastate conflicts. Finally, Blechman and Kaplan examine excursions in how the Soviet Union’s involvement in many of the cases alters the US attainment of positive outcomes.⁶

The Context and Findings of Force without War

The authors’ research points out that effective uses of force outside of armed conflict are circumstantial, difficult, and complex. Although, “in the short term, a large proportion (73%) of the outcomes related to US objectives in the thirty-three incidents were favorable.”⁷ Of the three principal categories of objectives, positive outcomes were most frequent when armed forces were aimed at objectives related to regime/state authority, less frequent when they were aimed at the use of force by another actor, and least frequent when they were aimed at an actor supporting a third party.”⁸

Table I – Percentage of Positive Outcomes by OBJ, Mode, and Style of Use of Force

Objectives	%Percentage of Positive Outcomes	
	After 6 Months	After 3 years
Use of Force	75	30.6
Contain Use of Force	71.4	14.3
Prevent Initial Use	70	50
Initiate Use of Force	100	**
Prevent Further use	87.5	75
Perm Cessation of use	71.4	0
Regime/State Authority	87.5	62.5
Give up	66.7	66.7
Maintain	100	60
Seize	66.7	66.7
Third Party Support	45.8	29.6
Curtail Support	50	9.1
Do not Initiate	50	50
Initiate Support	33.6	33.6
Other	88.9	92.3
<u>Mode of Use of Force</u>		
Assure	94.7	61.1
Deter	85	66.7
Compel	67.9	17.9
Induce	33.3	22.2
<u>Style of Use of Force</u>		
Direct	79.4	44.1
Indirect	53.8	28.6
Latent	67.9	52
<u>Total</u>	73.1	43.9

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“Over the longer term, the frequency of favorable outcomes declined substantially with regard to all three of these major categories.”⁹ Specific to the longer term, the US found difficulty in modifying behaviors associated with containing and ending uses of force, curtailing support to a third party, influencing protagonists to initiate support to a third party, and saw little success using an indirect application of force.

“Favorable outcomes occurred far more frequently when the objective was to reinforce behavior (assure and deter) than when it was to modify behavior (compel and induce), both in the short and long term.”¹⁰ “Even when greater levels of force were used, positive outcomes occurred more often when the objective was to compel an adversary than when the objective was to induce a friend.”¹¹ However, in some cases positive outcomes in the short term were often associated with the engagement of forces exercising clearly visible manifest activities – even when the concern focused the difficult mode of modifying behavior. As time passed along with the incidents criticality, the frequency of positive outcomes declined dramatically.¹² Finally, the US’ experience in this space highlights that within the universe of international relations, aspects of finality and clear conclusions are elusive, contrary to current doctrine. Moreover, Force without War finds that consolidating and building upon any success is essential, if not the success can have a short half-life.

“In the short term, positive outcomes occurred more frequently when US armed forces previously had been used in the region. Favorable outcomes occurred much less often in regions where US force had been used infrequently.”¹³ The authors speculate that a “demonstrated willingness to engage in major conflict in a region before an incident heightened the regions’ actors’ sensitivity to US signals of resolve...” “So, a demonstrated willingness to act may be especially effective. Conversely, in regions where the US armed forces were used infrequently in the past years, actors may have been more prone not to take a US threat seriously.”¹⁴

“Positive outcomes did occur proportionally more frequently in the short term when a treaty existed, or a senior US officials led with a narrative easily interpreted as a commitment or supportive of a desired outcome relative to the unfolding incident. Lessor numbers of outcomes are associated with narratives that trailed the commitment of force or communicated by more junior US leadership.”¹⁵

In the short term, outcomes were more frequent when US force numbers fluctuated in the time period before the incident, as compared to a static or non-existent presence.¹⁶

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Table II - Outcomes and the Structure of the Situation		
%PCT of Positive outcomes		
<u>Type of Situation</u>	<u>6 Months</u>	<u>3 Years</u>
Interstate: US involved indirectly	58.8	37.5
Interstate: US involved directly	76.5	58.3
Intrastate: US support	81.1	44.4

One critical factor is the situation or context that the armed forces faced. “Outcomes were more favorable when the US used forces to support existing governments, the outcomes were more favorable when those governments had to deal with principally internal rather than external antagonists.”¹⁷ “In interstate incidents in which the US was involved directly, the operational objective was more often to modify than to reinforce behavior; again, the more difficult mode. Less frequent were positive outcomes when the US was involved indirectly.”¹⁸ Table II relates to the structure of the situation.

Table III - Outcomes and Degree of Soviet Involvement		
%PCT of Positive outcomes		
<u>Degree of Soviet Involvement</u>	<u>6 Months</u>	<u>3 Years</u>
USSR a participant - used or threatened use force	52.2	37.5
USSR a participant - did not threaten use force	72.4	48.1
USSR not a participant	82.7	44.7

One finding recognizes that the USSR was a capable competitor throughout the period associated with the study. When the USSR employed or communicated the willingness to use force, the US experienced a dramatic decrease in the percentage of positive outcomes relative to when Moscow wasn't involved.

In many cases, the Soviet Union may have not been the central antagonist, but still influenced the situation and affected the US' percentage of positive outcomes. For ease of analysis, the authors divided “the sample incidents into the following groups: 1) incidents in which both the Soviet Union and American allies were participants and the Soviet Union also was a participant; 2) incidents in which both American and Soviet Allies participated but the Soviet Union did not; 3) incidents in which an American ally

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participated but neither the Soviet Union or ally did not.”¹⁹

Table IV - Combinations of Types of Actors in Incidents		
Types of Actors	%PCT of Positive outcomes	
	6 Months	3 Years
US Ally and Soviet Ally; USSR used/threatened force	47.1	22.2
US Ally and Soviet Ally; USSR participant, no force	72.4	48.1
US Ally and Soviet Ally; USSR not a participant	71	34.4
US Ally, but not USSR ally	100	71.4
Other	81.8	83.3
All incidents	73.1	43.9

In the context of Soviet Union involvement, “outcomes were positive in all instances in the short term, and very frequently in the longer term, when policy makers were able to deal with US allies without the presence (even the strictly a political sense) of the Soviet Union or Soviet allies. Secondly, outcomes were much less frequently positive when an American ally faced a Soviet ally, irrespective of whether or not the Soviet Union participated. Finally, outcomes were positive least frequently when an American ally faced a Soviet ally which had the support of the Soviet Union, and when Moscow used or threatened to use its armed forces.”²⁰

Implications for Adaptation, Doctrine, and Education

More than simply recognizing needed change, the ideas of integrated campaigning seek to account for the many aspects of the future security environment that are likely to be different from what models have suggested over the past several decades. As the character of warfare is always changing, competitors and potential adversaries are studying how we currently define and organize for armed conflict and adapting to exploit our vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the antagonists’ adaptive measures are unfolding across multiple regions and contested spaces. To effectively counter these alternative approaches, armed forces should conceptualize, develop, and adopt expanded models and principles for campaigning. As Blechman and Kaplan point out, effective applications of armed force in these conditions are much different than what the current phasing construct implies for armed conflict.

Today’s doctrinal models focus on the notion of decisive operations and “dominating activities” orienting on military victory. On the other hand, America’s actual military actions can be better characterized as adapting as opposed to dominating. However, these models describe an ideal of how we wish conflicts and campaigns would unfold, but don’t reflect the

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preponderance of America's known experiences in what success requires.^{21, 22, 23} (Echevarria, Dubik) However, history offers many examples of adversarial approaches and uses of force that avoid or are even immune to the ideas of rapid, decisive operations and notions of winning quickly. These circumstances are not alien to the Armed Forces of the United States. However, we have a mixed record of success regarding achieving initial success and consolidating gains and sustaining positive outcomes over longer terms. Nonetheless, current doctrine doesn't account for the broad macrocosm of actions and activities described by Blechman and Kaplan. This is clearly a gap in our intellectual framework. The force may well face these alternative and nuanced styles of using force again in the future.

Civilian leaders have always leveraged the military's control over waters, territory, air space, and people in conditions less than armed conflict to maintain and advance their interests within enduring competitions. Additionally, civilian leaders have depended upon the force in the wake of military victory to determine and enforce a new and preferred international homeostasis. When militaries don't effectively provide this political leverage, abstract but real and powerful forces previously unforeseen, dormant, or sidelined emerge and bring to bear new and expanded political stakes and circumstances.^{24, 25} (Rose, Smith, R.) In these cases, there is no readily apparent finality or conclusion for the military dimension as described by artificial terms such as a military end state; however, the military's continuing contribution is historically essential. Ultimately, campaigning is decisive only in the aggregate and realized when the result is the meaningful change sought by the policy's aims. Any accomplishment or articulation of success other than that, falls short of the mark.²⁶

Integrated campaigning seeks to evolve how the force understands the operational environment and how it will contribute achieving national security objectives. It builds on the lessons of the past and offers what some may regard as a paradigm shift in the way the community traditionally considers how to think about employing military power. Alternatively, integrated campaigning recognizes the enduring nature of war and that it remains a clash of irreconcilable wills, with each aiming to advance their interests - with the most effective ways and means available. Integrated campaigning reinforces that competition and conflict is inherently human, political, and uncertain and state and non-state actors are subject to the right influence and signals of commitment and resolve. As with Force without War highlights, there are many cases peppered across several decades where the effective use of the military dimension within a greater policy doesn't require armed conflict to attain political outcomes. As described previously, joint doctrine does not recognize these are circumstances where the joint force must coherently campaign to advance and protect US interests. In short, current has gaps in its intellectual framework for campaigning.

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With this context in mind, integrated campaigning aims to begin the process of eliminating gaps and mitigating vulnerabilities brought on by the institution's aspirational view. It seeks to alter the way in which the force views campaigning so that the military dimension strives to do more than simply achieve military objectives. Synchronized with inter-organizational and multinational partners, campaigning should ensure military actions and activities orient on our vision and aims for the future. **SLTF/STK**

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Endnotes

Forward quotation. GEN Dunford, Joseph F., Chairman, JCS. Commentary in video at the Center for Strategy and International Studies (CSIS) 29 March, 2016 Washington, DC - begins at the 14:45 min mark <https://www.csis.org/events/meeting-todays-global-security-challenges%C2%A0-general-joseph-f-dunford>. GEN Dunford's comments succinctly and accurately characterize his views, which align many other defense leaders', joint and service staff members', and research institute analysts' conclusions as well.

1. Walling, Karl *Thucydides on Policy, Strategy, and War Termination*. In a 2013 article Walling provides great insight on Thucydides view that the ideas of clear conclusion and ideal finality occurring in the aftermath of war were fleeting and elusive, regardless of how dramatic the military victory or strong the appeal of peace. Waller states: "One thing Thucydides does say, however, needs to be pondered carefully to understand the problem of terminating the Peloponnesian War or any other. The Peace of Nicias—at the end of the so-called Archidamean War, a full decade into the twenty-seven-year war between the Athenian-led Delian League and the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League—cannot, he argues, "rationally be considered a state of peace," despite the efforts of peacemakers like Nicias to turn it into one. Instead, it was a "treacherous armistice" or an unstable truce (5.26).² Although Thucydides never defines "peace," his distinction between peace and a truce indicates that he had some idea of what peace might mean in theory, even if it was difficult, indeed impossible, to establish it between the Athenians and their rivals in the Peloponnesian League." 2013 by Karl Walling *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 2013, Vol. 66, No. 4

<https://www.usnwc.edu/getattachment/6d8349d5-bd58-448d-952e-b1dd835d403b/Thucydides-on-Policy,-Strategy,-and-War-Terminatio.aspx>.

2. Paret and Brodie *Carl Von Clausewitz – on War*. (page 80) In chapter One, Section 9, titled, "In War the Result Is Never Final: Clausewitz declares, "Lastly, even the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final. The defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date." Analysis of the known patterns of international relations highlight that the finality and change sought by adversaries' through armed conflict is elusive. Princeton, N.J.:Princeton Univ. Press, 1984
3. Grygiel, Jakub J.; Mitchell, A. Wess. *The Unquiet Frontier: Rising Rivals, Vulnerable Allies, and the Crisis of American Power* (p. 42-76). Princeton University Press. Kindle Edition. Grygiel and Mitchell describe "probing" throughout Chapter 3. "...we examine this behavior— the probing by revisionist powers. We define probing as a low-intensity and low-risk test aimed at gauging the opposing state's power and will to maintain security and influence over a region. It is a set of actions that studiously avoids a direct military confrontation with the leading power by targeting the outer limits of its commitments and interests. There, along the outer rim of its influence, the hegemon is at the furthest of its commitments and power projection. The perception, or rather the suspicion, of its decline is most consequential along these frontiers of power because the revisionist state senses opportunities in its own neighborhood and searches for confirmation of the rival's weakness. Probing is an opportunistic behavior. It occurs when the revisionist states

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detect a permissive international situation, namely, when they think that the existing great power is retreating.The reasons are different, but the broad perception is similar: the revisionist states sense an opening left by a distracted and weakening United States. And they probe along the periphery of American influence, from Ukraine to the South China Sea through the Persian Gulf.”

4. Blechman, Barry M. and Kaplan, Stephen, S. (Pages 67-70) *Force Without War: U. S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* The Brookings Institution. Washington, DC 1978
5. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 71-72)
6. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 72-73)
7. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 72-73)
8. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 107)
9. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 107)
10. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 108)
11. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 107)
12. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 110-111)
13. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 110-111)
14. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 110)
15. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 114)
16. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 112)
17. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 129)
18. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 129)
19. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 124)
20. Blechman and Kaplan. (Pages 125)
21. Echevarria, Antullio J II. “Operating in the Gray Zone: An Alternative Paradigm for U.S. Military Strategy.” Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, April 2016. Page 15.

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<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1318> Dr. Echevarria provides sublime and enlightening analysis in characterizing the current notional plan phasing construct as an “ideal.” He’s exactly right. Dr. Echevarria describes this in detail, “...The model’s failure to account for such situations raises two important questions. The first is whether the model itself is flawed, or whether it is simply being misapplied or overused. The second is whether any model is useful or indeed possible given the complexity of the contemporary strategic environment. Put differently, does a model do more harm than good if the inclination of military culture is to seek simple solutions to complex problems? The answer to the first question is, yes: the current planning model is flawed because it does not reflect reality; and, yes, it has been misused. The model represents an **ideal, not a pattern**. An ideal is an aspiration—what a perfect campaign should look like. A pattern is an approximation of what campaigns have looked like. Models should be based on actual practice, not ideals, that is, on approximations rather than aspirations. Otherwise, they lead to cognitive dissonance between expectations and realities. The current planning model suggests the ideal is domination of an opponent. Yet, in practice, domination is neither always possible nor always necessary.

22. Echevarria II, Antulio J.. *Reconsidering the American Way of War* (p. 4, 21, and 174). Georgetown University Press. Kindle Edition. Dr. Echevarria explains, “Another observation supported by an analysis of American military practice is that the anatomy of war— the operational phasing— currently followed by American campaign planners is misleading. It places too much emphasis on the phase referred to as decisive operations. If such operations were truly decisive, there would be little need for studies concerning war termination. And yet such studies abound, caused largely by the need to understand why military victory does not always compel an opponent to act in accordance with our wishes. 10 The American way of war, though manifold in its features and characteristics, is at root a way of battle precisely because it places decisive operations at the core of its conception of war and often expects to win wars by virtue of winning battles. This is not to say that winning or losing battles is trivial or irrelevant. Battles or engagements are often the principal currency in the exchanges that take place among belligerent parties. Nevertheless, the link between victory on the battlefield and overall success is not automatic, as contemporary US doctrine tends to assume.”
23. LTG(R) Dubik, James “Winning The War We’ve Got, Not the One we Want” Army Feb 2016 - <http://www.armymagazine.org/2016/01/12/winning-the-war-weve-got-not-the-one-we-want/>
24. Rose, Gideon. *How Wars End: Why We Always Fight the Last Battle* (pg. 4). Simon & Schuster. Kindle Edition. Dr. Rose’ entire book is dedicated to exploring the ideas the sentence references.
25. Smith, Rupert. *The Utility of Force*. (pp. 19-20). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. GEN(R) Smith provides insight throughout his book in how we shouldn’t expect clarity of initial policy aims and certainty of conclusion in our models of campaigning.
26. Kendrick, Scott T. “Vice Versa? A Critical Appraisal of Joint Doctrine’s Descriptions of Campaigns, Operations, and Objectives” An unpublished ARCIC white paper. Washington, DC 20 May 2017.