

Introduction to Volume II

The Practice of Strategy

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How does strategy occur in the real world, in situations of antagonistic encounters, under pressure, with incomplete information and complexity being rife? As the chapters in this second volume demonstrate, the practice of strategy substantially deviates from our textbook conceptualisations. In our Introduction to Volume I, we summed up the many definitions of strategy to arrive at a succinct version of: ‘a comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of force, in a dialectic of wills’.¹ As in Volume I, we find evidence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for conscious and deliberate attempts to prioritise objectives, aligning them with resources and finding ways to apply them. Nevertheless, there are many other factors that come into play in practising strategy, such as opportunities, precipitous circumstances, path dependencies, expectations, emotions and influences of geography. They form part of the crucial metaphysical influences of historic experiences, constituting part of collective mentalities and culture. The reality of the practice of strategy is thus more complex than the simple model of ends, ways and means would suggest.² In Volume I, we have seen the prevalence of raiding and opportunistic practices, as well as religious, dynastic and ideological motivation, influencing the practising of strategy.

In this second volume, we continue with more recent examples of strategic practices around the globe. Our aim is, again, to investigate the practising of strategy in a diversity of places across time. This is in contrast to the dominance of strategy as being about ideas and theories of how to engage in them. The practical definition we have adopted is that strategy involves

- 1 For a comprehensive list, see Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapter 1.
- 2 See for example, Colonel Dale C. Eikmeier, ‘A logical method for centre of gravity analysis’, *Military Review* (September/October 2007), 62–6.

‘the setting of a state’s objectives and of priorities among those objectives for the allocation of resources and the establishment of priorities in the conduct of a war’.³ Before offering the reader some of our ideas regarding the practice of strategy in the modern period, we first need to justify our choices.

Why Start Around 1800?

Where the story left off in the first volume, we noted a fundamental change in strategy making around the time of the age of revolutions. The Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution are generally seen as the starting points of a new epoch. There is an unmistakable influence of these developments on the practice of strategy that can be observed in our case material. While Volume I covered a rich diversity of polities, the emergence of compact territorial states with defined borders led jurists and political philosophers as well as statesmen, historians and later political scientists to conceptualise warfare and its rules, increasingly in relation to states. Since antiquity, European and then Western political thought had cast states or state-like polities as the only legitimate actors in warfare, but in the nineteenth century this became formally enshrined in instruments of international law: treaties were signed and ratified by states, committing themselves thereby to uphold certain rules and norms. This categorisation of the legitimate actor is by no means unproblematic.⁴ We will return to this issue in our Conclusion.

Around 1800, we note in particular two significant changes in practices: the first change is the mobilisation of larger numbers of people for the conduct of war; the second is the industrialisation of war. We address these briefly in turn.

This was not the very first time that common people had been mobilised in large numbers for the conduct of war. Religion had also mobilised people, especially in the first wave of the Muslim Wars of Conquest, the early crusades, or the confessional wars in Europe. In the French Wars of 1792–1815, however, the motivation was a new form of collective thought: while God or a king or emperor was occasionally still invoked, in Europe it was henceforth ‘the nation’ that would be the rallying point of wars. This ushered in a new era of mass warfare in which whole nations were seen as enemies, simply because they were ‘other’, not even for any creed or deed. It became

3 K. Kagan, ‘Redefining Roman grand strategy’, *Journal of Military History*, 70:2 (2006), 333–64.

4 Beatrice Heuser, *War: A Genealogy of Western Ideas and Practices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 81–106.

a more or less explicitly articulated strategic aim to compete with and defeat the 'other': old family or clan rivalries translated into those among entire millions-strong nations, landgrabs justified no longer by inheritance quarrels.

Apart from the *levée en masse*, a second practical development is the advance in technology. The quantity and quality of developments relating to the shift from agricultural societies to machine-based production took shape in this period, in turn leading to the industrialised mass production of goods in general, but also war materials in particular and a step-change in the speed of technological innovations. Moreover, as a result of the industrialisation of society, war changed fundamentally in appearance. Technological progress acted as a facilitator for war, with trains running on rails transporting increasing numbers of soldiers and equipment over growing distances. Also, the development of advanced weaponry caused ever more devastating effects on their targets, with the role of nuclear weapons as the most extreme. Thus industrialisation had a fundamentally important impact in reshaping the practice of strategy from this point onwards. This does not negate other continuities, which can be found especially in asymmetric warfare where at least one party did not have access to complex weapons systems.

Let us now briefly summarise commonalities and differences of sources, actors, adversaries, causes and objectives, means and prioritisation that emerge from our chapters, with an emphasis on variations around the globe.

Sources

Our contributors in the first volume drew upon a great diversity of sources, ranging from archaeology, excavation, inscription, architecture, clay and papyrus tablets, paper sources to oral history. Many of these posed considerable challenges of understanding and interpretation. As we get closer to the present, at least in the Western democracies with their emphasis on accountability and thus on record-keeping, the sources become more abundant, more easily accessible and also closer to the phenomenon we are interested in. Written sources, as the main type of source, shift from dynastic chronicles and religious tracts to official histories and ego-documents of direct participants. Still, challenges of interpretation remain. Not only do we need to do justice to meaning within its own context, but also the overall social and political contexts in which the events occurred deserve careful attention.

Despite the wealth of sources for more recent cases of practising strategy, important shortcomings and challenges need to be noted. There is still much that we do not know. We come up against language barriers as well as problems

of sources, not only where these have been destroyed or never existed but also where they do not tell us what we are interested in – the reasoning and debates behind strategic decisions. Very few sources tell us about this with regard to non-state actors, such as guerrilleros, insurgents and terrorists. Only the state, international organisations or other long-standing resource-rich institutions had and continue to have the resources to record and then preserve the records over long periods of time. We find this in particular in the chapters below on the non-state actors, such as guerrilla movements in the nineteenth century (Chapter 2), the rebel groups practising revolutionary people's war (Chapter 14) or the terrorist groups conducting national or global campaigns (Chapter 21). As will be argued in more detail below, there is clear evidence that these actors practise strategy, but our source base is mostly meagre. Furthermore, the dominance of scholarly literature in English and the abundance of sources in the USA, Britain, Canada and a handful of other Anglophone countries has led to an abundance of writing about their experiences; closed, disorganised or non-existent archives have led to an under-representation of the corresponding histories of other nations. Moreover, many parts of the world, notably sub-Saharan Africa, provide us with a challenge by the scarcity or even complete absence of written sources. We continue to rely on the sources produced by visitors from other countries, in the absence of written sources detailing their own experiences; nor can oral traditions substitute, if the comparison between European oral traditions and historical or archaeological records are anything to go by. Language barriers exacerbate this imbalance, as in the case of the Boer War and the exclusion of sources in Afrikaans. Also, in the case of the Arab–Israeli wars, there is very little in regards to source material or even secondary literature concerning the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hamas and Hezbollah to offer a comprehensive picture.

We invite readers to take these limitations into consideration. Apart from continuing awareness of source limitations, the case material and historiography have also been subject to diverging levels of historiographical debate. While this is lively in some areas, testifying that the discipline is still bearing rich fruit, it is not evenly spread, as some cases have been debated far more than others, and much research is yet to be done.⁵

5 Max Hastings, 'American universities declare war on military history', Bloomberg (31 January 2021), www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-01-31/max-hastings-u-s-universities-declare-war-on-military-history. And the ensuing debate: William Hitchcock and Meghan Herwig, 'There is more war in the classroom than you think', War on the Rocks (21 September 2021), <https://warontherocks.com/2021/09/there-is-more-war-in-the-classroom-than-you-think/>.

Actors, Agency and Adversaries

Who had agency in setting the objectives for strategy making? In Volume I, we identified a wide variety of strategy-making agents, but most came from small elites within their respective societies. Politics ranged from being organised around individuals, tribes and ethnic groups to city states ruled by oligarchies or patricians, *mandala* politics revolving around a capital without a clearly demarcated territory, quasi-states and vast empires spanning entire continents. In Volume II we see the start of the dominance of the state-based norm and the consolidation of the international system based on the central idea of the state. In the course of the nineteenth century, a movement occurred to divide and claim the world's territory, at its apogee the Berlin Conference in 1885 carving up Africa. Initially, these territories were demarcated and claimed, notably by imperial powers. Subsequently, in Europe and later in other parts of the world, the expectation emerged and was reinforced that the state and especially the nation state would be the model for others to emulate. In Latin America this began in the nineteenth century with the decolonisation of territories from the Spanish Empire, such as Argentina, Mexico and Chile. After the dissolution of the multi-ethnic empires of the Ottomans and the Austro-Hungarians in the aftermath of the First World War, this pattern continued. In the course of the twentieth century, in often violent processes involving the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese empires, the ideal of the ethnically homogeneous or the politically sovereign nation state became the dominant paradigm.

Nevertheless, we see many cases of this state-based norm being contested and challenged, in particular by those not successful in attaining their nation state ideal, such as the case of the dissolution of Yugoslavia discussed in Chapter 20 as 'a clash of statehood projects'. Other groups actively challenged the state model by embracing alternatives and echoing patterns from the past, specifically the model of the caliphate.

Apart from the emerging dominance of a specific kind of agency via the state, we see divergences as well as important continuities. There is a strong measure of continuity in decision making when practising strategy. In Volume I, we saw that the idea of a unitary, rationally acting polity was not the dominant picture in the case material. Even in polities where there appeared to be a strong single ruler, decision making would rarely if ever be a solitary affair. Rather, power was diffused, mediated and negotiated, with groups of individuals, such as advisers and courtiers, all claiming a role. Even the Roman emperors, often seen as emblematic models of individual power,

rarely decided matters alone, being surrounded by advisers and family members, including women. This picture is continued in the modern period, across time and place. One notable exception is the case of Saddam Hussein of Iraq. In Chapter 23, it will be argued that Hussein was a dictator with few to no military or political advisers who would offer him alternative options or counterarguments.

A point of divergence is the separation between political decision making and military command, which becomes increasingly visible over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While many previous political leaders were also commanders on the field of battle, this became the exception after Napoleon's time. Moreover, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards and under the influence of the Enlightenment, leaders were increasingly measured by their performance than by their birth. Still, we do see politicians involved in the minutiae of the battlefield, and military men engaging in politics.

Finally, adversaries continued to be both internal and external to the polity. A major distinction can be made between those opponents who were considered equals and those seen as inferior, which could be based on provenance, culture or other factors. Diversity thus continues to mark the image of the adversary.

Causes and Objectives of War

Causes and objectives of war might diverge over time, but both are core elements in the development of strategy. While particular causes are unique to each war and are the product of its specific time and place, common factors and patterns can be observed. In Volume I we saw how important causes played out, such as environmental stress causing migration, opportunity for booty and conquest via raiding, but also how personal ambitions, ideological world views and dynastic succession informed strategic practices.

In this volume, many of these factors reappear. Some exceptions are the dynastic causes, which all but disappeared after the age of revolutions. First, political considerations, borrowing in no small measure from the work of Carl von Clausewitz who wrote his main treatise after experiencing the Napoleonic Wars first-hand, continue to be the dominant lens through which justifications are offered and analysed. On the one hand, politics could be broadly conceptualised and encompass all the grounds already listed above, including opportunistic raiding and power struggles within polities. On the other hand, politics could be seen as a narrower concept consisting of

the power to decide on the distribution of wealth. In this last perspective, we observe a series of notable characteristics of publicly offered justifications and objectives for practising strategy.

The formulation of clear objectives continued to be a challenge. The case studies of the American Civil War, the Russo-Japanese War and, all the way up to the recent past, the engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 onwards, demonstrate the absence of clearly articulated objectives by the belligerents, apart from the broadly perceived opposition to the opponent's actions.

Second, inherited from previous centuries was the aim for imperial aggrandisement that would subject other populations to a ruling class or ethnic group. We still see this central objective in the war being waged by Russia against Ukraine at the time of writing. At the extreme end of this spectrum were the wars of conquest of Nazi Germany, fought in the name of winning living space for the Germanic 'race' but ready to subjugate or even exterminate other populations. Alternatively and increasingly, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries objectives tended to be framed in terms of state interests, now justified in terms of interests of nations rather than of dynasties. But nations were and are constructs, especially if they are ethnically defined, and by promoting the interests of such constructed bodies of populations while ignoring those of ethnically different minorities, wars would revolve around the domination of clearly defined territories to the exclusion of other populations. We see this in Chapter 19, in the case of the emergence of India and its rivalry with Pakistan. Moreover, the search for power and recognition for the nation has been an important objective in many conflicts over the course of modern history. Napoleon sought a global empire rivalling that of Britain; a unified Germany was on a similar quest in the nineteenth century.

Third, the long-standing pattern of irregular warfare was elevated conceptually to be recognised as a distinct strategy, either on the side of the irregulars (insurgents, guerrilleros, rebels etc.) or on that of the state forces attempting to suppress the former. While this was not entirely absent in previous centuries, little had been written about it.⁶ In the twentieth century, groups carrying out a revolutionary people's war aimed to unleash political and economic effects rather than seeking a direct military outcome to attain political effects. A set of objectives focused on attaining indirect effects by using coercive means aimed at direct political change, often decolonisation (by the Bolsheviks in the wars of

6 A rare exception is that of the Welsh-Norman Gerald of Wales (Geraldus Cambrensis) with his works on how to stage a rebellion (the Welsh way of war) and how to suppress it.

the Russian Revolution, for example) or the revolutionary transformation of one's own society (such as the 'progressive' or conservative-regressive aims pursued by Franco's Fascist rebels in the Spanish Civil War).

Means

In conflictual engagement with an opponent, a series of means or instruments can be put to use. We can distinguish not only between kinetic and non-kinetic means but also a large variety of ways in which they could be used. Non-kinetic means of strategy include diplomacy and negotiation, economic pressure and sanctions, the formation of alliances and alliance politics, and the use of soft power instruments and inducements. These non-kinetic means and their use are prominently visible in the case studies in this volume. Conflictual engagements build up over a period of time, and the role of political signalling and exchange are core features of practising strategy. In the case of the Napoleonic Wars in Chapter 1, Napoleon had little time for this process of dialogue and compromise, favouring the use of arms instead. In the assessment, this preference led to his ultimate demise, winning battles but failing to win the peace.

The importance of economic pressure is another continuation from the previous period, such as that exerted on Japan by the USA in the 1930s, and the use of commercial incentives, tribute payments and sanctions. We see such instruments in many places. Alliances with like-minded actors or alliances of convenience continue to form part of the picture in the modern period. Alliances and alliance politics were based on kinship, friendship or common enemies, and eventually were not based on dynastic ties or marriage alliances: the rulers of three of the countries pitted against each other in the First World War were cousins. The Napoleonic Wars gave rise to seven coalitions which opposed French expansion, and inspired a notable balancing act after the termination of these coalitions in the Concert of Europe. Alliances of the First World War, the Entente and the Central Powers, were to some extent alliances not only of ideas but also of convenience, based on a shared perception of threat. This seriously hampered the ability to practise strategy together. During the wars of decolonisation, support for those seeking liberation was forthcoming from the Soviet Union, China and Cuba (in the case of this last state, in the very tangible form of practical advice and fighters). In the context of the Cold War, international sponsorship was informed by the ideological stance of the regime.

Changes we observe in this period include increased connections, which caused wars to have increasingly global repercussions. The Seven Years' War is now widely considered as the first truly global war, with fighting in North America, India as well as central Europe. This global interconnectedness increasingly marked the practice of strategy and war fighting. As means of communication developed, the conduct of armed conflict would spread ever more quickly to the corners of the world. At the same time, information exchange, narratives and propaganda efforts would reach larger and larger parts of the world population. Thus conduct being seen as justified and legitimate formed part of these information efforts. The use of military force without extensive efforts to curry international favour through references to legitimate causes became increasingly counterproductive, engendering opposition where there might have been neutrality or difference. Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese military leadership would all learn this to their cost. But wartime appeals to populations under the enemy's control to cast off their shackles and determine their own fates would also be remembered later, and had to be followed up in practice, as Britain and France would find out after the First World War. This is linked to the exercise of soft power instruments: trying to attract support, imitation and emulation by inspiring attitudes if not via inducement than via shock and awe.

With regard to kinetic means, the raising of a primary fighting force changed significantly over the course of the last two centuries. Previously the generation of fighting agency generally occurred via the three models visible in Volume I, of the peasant-militia, the professional soldier or the conscripted recruit. Now this last model became dominant, based on the allegiance to the nation rather than to a prince (a transition still masked in monarchies by blending the two). Professional military forces fighting for states in which they were not born became the exception.

Still, generating a fighting force faced several challenges over the course of time. While fighting forces increased in size, the puzzle became where this human power should be most efficiently put to use, to attain the largest benefit for sustaining the war effort. Human power to work the lands and factories, and to fight on behalf of the nation, became contentious. Additional fighting power came from the colonies and by opening up jobs for women, with the effect of raising calls for decolonisation and the emancipation of women. The emphasis in the use of these armed forces shifted from quantity to quality and towards increasing specialisation.

The size of the armed forces, no longer subject of estimation if not fabulation, became more reliable in modern times. Before 1800 the largest

number active in the field would have been in the tens of thousands, with exceptions in antiquity and central and east Asia. Soldiers fighting in the hundreds of thousands and millions would become normal in the major confrontations of modern times. Moreover, the forces became subject to increased professionalisation and specialisation. While infantry, cavalry, artillery and navy would adapt to technological change and innovation, the air force emerged as a distinct branch. Moreover, special forces, space and most recently cyber forces entered the scene. Counting forces became a major and more exact preoccupation. The reliability of quantitative instruments of measurement led to discussions of force-ratios and their ideal composition. Mass, however, discounted the importance of quality, *esprit de corps* and determination. Ideologies focused on fighting for the nation were powerful recruitment mechanisms as well as motivators for continued engagement.

From the early nineteenth century onwards, major technological innovations fundamentally changed the face of the battlefield and the kinetic aspects of warfare. Human power and animals were slowly replaced by machines: railways, battleships, tanks, aircraft, submarines. Technological innovation occurred at unprecedented speed and with unprecedented effects, with strategies lagging behind. There developed a panoply of methods and ways in which these means could be put to use. This section will take a closer look at the variety of employment and outline the most common features.

Armed force can be used to deter. Deterrence is based on a threat or threatening behaviour to ward off possible or planned actions by a rival. The agent is capable and willing, and has communicated a threat of actions in particular violence to influence an opponent's course of action. Generally two types of deterrence can be distinguished: deterrence by punishment aims at increasing the costs of further resistance by offering a prospect of pain; deterrence by denial focuses on eliminating the means by targeting the possession of these means.

Many interesting examples of deterrence can be found in the chapters of this volume. A primary observation is that deterrence is very often based on the development and possession of a specific type of means. The possession of an ocean-going fleet in the nineteenth century itself acted as a deterrent rather than a practical instrument that could attain clear and direct results. The possession of air power acted in a similar manner in the twentieth century. The ability to bomb potential enemies in concerted strategic bombing campaigns aimed at enemy strong points or interests had a deterrent effect, which will be further elaborated below. Lastly, the possession (or suspected possession) of nuclear weapons seemed to work as a deterrent

even to the conventional war between two nuclear powers, until the Indo-Pakistani War of 1999 showed that even this could occur.

A second observation relates to the ubiquity of deterrence. Deterrent action was used not only against states but also rebel groups. American actions against the rebel Pancho Villa in Mexico in 1916 were aimed at deterring him and his men from further incursions on American territory. The conventional victories of the Israeli armed forces had a deterrent effect on subsequent armed confrontation by Israel's Arab neighbours. By proving that it was willing and able to defend Kashmir against Pakistani encroachments, India had hoped to deter renewed attacks. This eventually proved unsuccessful in this case. After the invasion of Kuwait, the United States placed forces in Saudi Arabia in October 1990 to deter Iraq from developing designs on this country. Violence to deter was also used in the case of Yugoslavia, where the demonstrative use of force was employed to deter the population from resisting.

Armed forces can be used to pre-empt and to surprise, although pre-emption is problematic as an international legal category, with the only legitimate reason for armed action being self-defence after an armed attack or action, called for and authorised by the United Nations' Security Council. An example of using self-defence to justify the pre-emptive use of force is the 1967 war by Israel against Egypt and a coalition of Arab states, which had been amassing forces close to Israel. Strategic surprise is even more difficult to legitimise. Notable examples are the Soviet Army which was taken by surprise when Germany attacked in Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, entering with its full force on Soviet territory and pushing forward with high speed, an option for which the armed forces were ill prepared. Another example from the same period is the surprise attack against Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, so daring that it was not at all expected but led the US to determinedly defeat Japan. The USSR learned from these strategies and passed on the lesson to its client states: masked by large-scale exercises, Soviet forces invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968; Egypt invaded Israel in the Yom Kippur War 1973; Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990; Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and then invaded Ukraine itself in 2022.

Armed force can be used to coerce. Coercive action can be witnessed, for example, in the mobilisation of the Russian forces in 1876 on the eve of the confrontation with the Ottoman Empire to increase the pressure on the Sultan to give in to the Russian demands regarding the rights of the Christian Slav populations in the Empire. While mobilisation in the Russian case was an arduous process, the decision to go to war had not been taken.

This mobilisation was interpreted as coercive and set a process in motion that culminated in the outbreak of war.

Coercive violence can also take the shape of changing the behaviour of opponents or their population. One example is the shelling of populated areas of Croatia and Bosnia–Hercegovina in the wars of the 1990s. This forced people to leave the area, causing large population movements and creating the envisioned ethnically pure areas for the relocation of the Serbian population. Armed resistance can also be used, in the case of independence struggles, to demonstrate political commitment and legitimacy. Attracting attention serves liberation movements by raising the profile of the struggles and commanding support and aid without attempting to defeat the colonisers in open battle. The use of forces in revolutionary people's war never attained the third phase of conventional confrontation, the most notable exception being the Indochina War and the defeat of the French forces at Điện Biên Phủ in 1954.

Armed force can be used to decapitate, to retaliate and to escalate.⁷ Decapitating the political organisation or leadership, punishing perpetrators or their families and attacking valuable targets as retaliation for a prior attack can all be ways of employing the means. A notable case discussed in Chapter 18 is the Israeli policy of retaliation against artillery attacks or incursions, which were followed consistently by retaliatory actions. Escalation occurs when more actors join, heavier weapons are used, tactics change and the geographical scope of the conflict is broadened. These might be wilful actions but they often occur as a spur-of-the-moment response or unwitting effect of prior actions. The use of Spanish irregulars fighting French occupation after 1808 was seen as an escalation, demanding French attention and efforts.

Armed force can be used to oppress and to annihilate. 'Annihilate' changed its meaning over the nineteenth century. As Colmar von der Goltz commented, it originally referred to rendering an army unable to win by wounding or killing a small but significant proportion of its soldiers, but under the influence of Social Darwinism (survival of the fittest) came to mean the massacring of entire populations.⁸ Attritional violence which focused on killing and maiming made the most direct link between effecting pain in order to attain ends. Examples abound in modern history. Attrition occurred in the war in China after the Japanese invasion, with the idea of sacrificing

7 Isabelle Duyvesteyn, *Rebels and Escalation; Explaining the Rise and Decline of Rebel Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

8 Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz, *Das Volk in Waffen* (Berlin: Decker, 1883), 7, 9f. 13.

soldiers 'to bleed dry' the Japanese effort. Attrition by exhausting the opponent was the approach in the American Civil War. Attrition by ways of strategic bombing during the Second World War led to the firebombing raids against Dresden and Tokyo. Attrition through the use of naval battles with destruction as the primary focus occurred in the Battle of Jutland in May 1916 and the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944. Attrition is seen as the hallmark of modern industrialised warfare, where the weight of economic and human resources to outspend the opponent in these realms is seen as the path to attain desired objectives.

Armed force can be used to occupy and to control. There appear two main parameters for control, focused on controlling either territory or people. Obviously these two cannot always be separated, but it is striking that the emphasis changes. Territory can be the prime feature when land is claimed in the name of a nationalist ideal and irridentism comes to the fore. Alternatively, territory can be seen as a key factor in claiming space or resources for the occupying state. Territorial expansion, for example in the course of American history, was about controlling territory. While Napoleon invaded Russia for reasons of opportunity and vengeance, Hitler chose to invade it to gain space and resources for his empire. In the case of Japan, activities beyond their borders from the late nineteenth century onwards were informed by a quest for resources and markets for their products. Iraq wanted to conquer and control Kuwait in 1990; the United States and the Desert Storm coalition wanted to liberate it.

The desire to control populations is prominent when the focus is on the identity of the population and their ideas of belonging. Atrocity was a core element of the strategy in the Yugoslav War of the 1990s, ethnic cleansing being a means to move and remove populations. Notorious concentration camps, such as Omarska, Trnopolje and the mass killing in Srebrenica in 1995 of 8,000 Muslim men in an act of genocide, were instruments of terror. The preoccupation with the control of territory was intended to control the population.

In order to control and occupy, force can be used to isolate, defend or lay siege. In the chapters below we see many examples. Controlling a blue water naval base was a major motivation for the Russian Empire to occupy Port Arthur. The Japanese determination to control this principal Russian naval base at all costs led to one of the greatest sieges in history in August 1904. In French Algeria, the construction of the Morice Line, a fortified border defence system, cut off the connections of the rebel group seeking independence with their neighbours. It denied the insurgents access to safe havens and

exit of the battle zone. We note here that sieges form an enduring instrument of war, with Ukrainian cities suffering this fate at the hands of Russian forces as we write.

Prioritisation and Practising Strategy

Paraphrasing our definition of strategy, a polity has a series of instruments, means and resources available to work towards objects which have been prioritised; what evidence do we see of this prioritising? The instruments can be used to coax or hurt in order for the opponent to change their course of action. In this introduction, we have already noted several major developments, such societal, economic and technological changes, which informed our choice for starting our discussion of modern war in this volume around 1800. The importance of these developments notwithstanding, older forms of warfare continued to exist throughout the world in the course of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. There was the *razzia* or raid, the uprising and its suppression, the skirmish and the ambush. It is notable that in the course of the nineteenth century, strategy was practised in a highly diverse manner. As the first series of chapters in this volume will show, the idea of strategy was not visible in the writings of Napoleon (Chapter 1); the guerrilla in the nineteenth century was only focused on tactical activity (Chapter 2); and in the American Civil War, strategy was haphazard and possibly not even very conscious (Chapter 4). Also, in the early twentieth century, several contributors to this volume conclude that strategic thinking and practising strategy was haphazard and incoherent if not lacking altogether. For instance, while the Russian Empire reached its largest size in the entirety of its history, any thought devoted on how best to use the limited means at its disposal to serve the interest of this empire was absent (Chapter 3). Pressure to respond to short-term challenges and coming from different parts and neighbours were the main causes of this absence.

In the case of the First World War, not only do we observe an ever-widening (and quite confused) political agenda, but also a mobilisation of all the sources of power to fight this war. While this had surely existed in simpler forms when communities defended themselves against invading Huns or Mongols, it became articulated as a principle from the French Revolution onwards with the famous law for the *levée en masse* passed by the revolutionary Convention in 1793. Léon Daudet, inventor of the term, would later call this ‘total war’.⁹ The state governments involved in the First World War

9 Léon Daudet, *La guerre totale* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie, 1918), 8.

calibrated and prioritised, based on their own state's direct interests, with little regard for those of the other participants. Strategy making was mostly ad hoc and reactive, driven by pressing needs, rather than an overall idea of a shared strategy or strategic vision. In short, in the process of formulating alliance strategy, formal procedures were often absent in wartime, and decisions tended to be responses to unfolding events than following a clear idea of strategy.

Also in the Second World War, Chapter 12 illustrates the lack of clear strategic directions from the Japanese Imperial General headquarters. Among the Allies, the dominance of the USA resolved clashes of interest that would not be forgotten, as in the case of France where the American supreme Allied commander Eisenhower determined that liberated territories would be temporarily evacuated again in order to straighten the front line and prevent the encirclement of American forces by the Wehrmacht.

Moreover, in the ultimate assessment, the American capability to out-produce its rivals in military hardware was the key to victory rather than any skilful application of strategy. Similarly, the Soviet regime lost the Cold War as it was outproduced and economically ruined by the arms race with the West. (It was of course to everybody's ultimate benefit that this global competition was ended peacefully with non-kinetic coercion, and not with a Third World War.) Even in cases that seem to superficially fit the ideal type of strategy making, the reality was often more nuanced, with chance and friction playing into the domain of reasoned planning.

This observation of a very nuanced reality shows there was much continuity to previous centuries. It begs the question of whether the practising of strategy is not more convincingly explained by a model of muddling through and ad hocery rather than far-sighted processes of prioritisation and linking objectives with resources. We will revisit this question in our Conclusion. Yet we do have some evidence of reasoned strategy making from the early nineteenth century onwards. A case in point is that of the Japanese military leadership in the Russo-Japanese War, while the Russians and their commander General Aleksey Kuropatkin lacked a clear strategic action plan; that Japan won should thus not come as a surprise.

The Second World War saw the development of strategic plans and practices from the outset. National-Socialist Germany had an overall vision for Europe and the world upon which its planning and actions were based. The basic idea of its strategy was to bring down one opponent after another. As detailed in Chapter 11, this approach ultimately failed, and Germany was confronted with multiple enemies and unfinished business with each one of

them. Its adversaries reactively developed visions and plans that guided their practices. The eventual formulation of the 'Beat Hitler First' strategy in January 1941 and the stress on unconditional surrender are evidence of this. The prioritising of the defeat of Germany to attain the ultimate defeat of Nazism and the victory of democracy based on the principles formulated in the Atlantic Charter showcase a textbook example of strategic practice according to the ideal type. While coming close to the core principles of our definition, it emerged by trial and error. A combined Chiefs of Staff committee, combining forces of the UK and US, was only created in the winter of 1942, and contact with the other Allies occurred mostly via ad hoc arrangements.

In the Cold War, as several chapters in this volume demonstrate, the United States drew up a strategy to contain the influence of the Soviet Union by resisting and where possible rolling back Soviet expansion wherever it occurred around the globe. The Cold War turned hot in Korea, Vietnam and in intestine wars in other parts of Asia, Latin America and Africa. On the Communist side, Stalin and Mao initially shared the vision and strategy to promote communist takeovers. They agreed to a division of labour, where Mao would focus on Asia in particular.

The Inter-Glacial Period that set in with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and then the end of the USSR produced further examples of complex strategy making. In the Gulf War of 1990/1991, the United States and its coalition partners were successful in liberating and restoring the territorial integrity of Kuwait. The legal reasons for invading Iraq were to redress an infringement of international law, the territorial sovereignty of an independent state. Breaking international law by forcefully changing the regime in Iraq would have undermined the claims to the moral high ground. The self-imposed limitations of this war that aimed only to restore the status quo ante but not to effect regime change in Iraq left unfinished business, a frustrated and humiliated dictator (Saddam Hussein) who would present new challenges, and, it was thought, the development of weapons of mass destruction in the form of chemical weapons. The subsequent Gulf War that began in 2003 was meant to remedy this, this time leading to prolonged coalition engagement in (occupation of) Iraq. Whether this was a case of a limited strategic vision, a mismatch between ends, ways and means, or poor strategy making in Baghdad's Green zone, in Washington, London and other capitals where innumerable vested interests collided, remains an open question.

We also find evidence of the application of strategic thinking among non-state actors. In the case of rebel movements and terrorist groups, the linking

of desired ends to ways and means is visible, as will be argued in more detail in the pages that follow, especially Chapter 14. The independence movements practised strategy in the context of revolutionary people's war. Even though they borrowed heavily from the templates put to paper by revolutionary thinkers, their practices differed substantially from these theories, yet another reason why the focus on practices rather than thinking is so important. Another example is that of Al-Qaeda's struggle against the West and against secular regimes. Its leaders devised a two-pronged approach. First, they would focus on the enemy nearby, those regimes in the Middle East that were co-opted by the West and, from Al-Qaeda's point of view, needed to be purged. The attacks affected the eventual withdrawal of US forces from Saudi Arabia, which had acted as a US base after the 1991 Gulf War. The second focus would be on the faraway enemy itself, the US, which was attacked on 11 September 2001 by civilian airplanes flying into the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon in Washington. Provoked by this, the US went to wage a 'War on Terror', very much against planning and expectations in Washington, and found itself in quagmires in Afghanistan and Iraq for longer than it had been involved in Vietnam; neither did interventions in Libya and Syria turn out according to Western strategic plans.

In the chapters that follow, these and many more features of the application of strategy will be further discussed and dissected.