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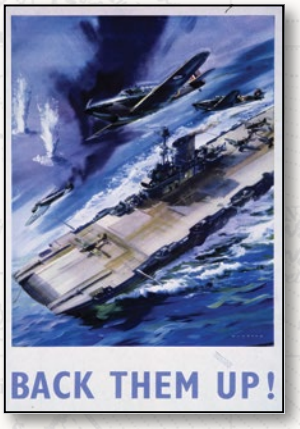
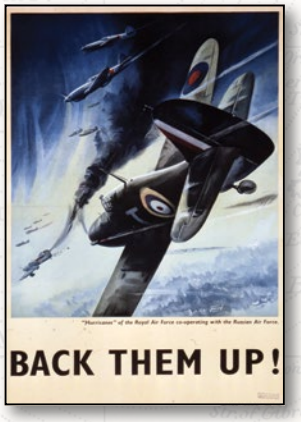
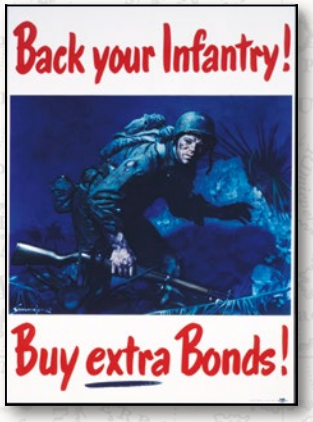
STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT







Are Carrier Groups, Traditional Fighter Wings, and Infantry Divisions Anachronistic or Will They Remain Timeless Assets in Both Conventional and Unconventional Warfare of the Future?

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About the Posters in This Issue

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.

Straying away from Strength in Numbers

Thomas Donnelly

"God is on the side of the big battalions."

The historical record is opaque about whether it was Napoleon, Turenne, Voltaire, or indeed any identifiable Frenchman who made that statement, but, in this age of supposedly post-industrial warfare, He has apparently changed His mind. Equipped with an iPhone and GPS-guided munitions, God has broken the phalanx, emptied the battlefield, and super-empowered the individual. Mass—particularly the large military formations of the modern era: infantry divisions and corps, aircraft carrier battle groups, tactical air wings—has gone out of style.

Ironically, the United States, which became history's "sole superpower" by crushing Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan and outlasting the Soviet Union, has become the leading exponent of strategic "agility" and operational "mobility"—or, anything except durability. The impulse has reached the level of farce in the campaign to roll back the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. President Obama has repeatedly lamented the inability to formulate a "complete strategy" for the war, complaining that while ISIS forces are "nimble and they're aggressive and they're opportunistic," his cumbersome coalition of US advisers, the vanishing Iraqi army, and Iranian-backed Shi'a militias is not.

While the main source of Obama's ISIS problems is his own compromised commitment to the fight, he found a natural partner in the form of the modern US military. Since the inception of the "all-volunteer" force after Vietnam, the purpose of American military professionals has been to remake themselves from Joe Frazier-style brawlers into Muhammad Ali-style boxers. In the context of the Cold War face-off, that made sense; the Red Army was a living testament to Stalin's maxim that "quantity has a quality all its own," so the Reagan buildup was premised on the idea that Western quality could give Eastern quantity a run for its money. And because NATO's operational goal was first of all defensive—stop a Soviet blitzkrieg across the central German plain—technological and tactical improvements were guided by clear objectives.

But if this capability-over-capacity preference grew from the particular operational problems of the late 1970s and early 1980s, it now reflects a deeper sensibility about the nature of war, one that resonates very strongly with a small, professional force. It should

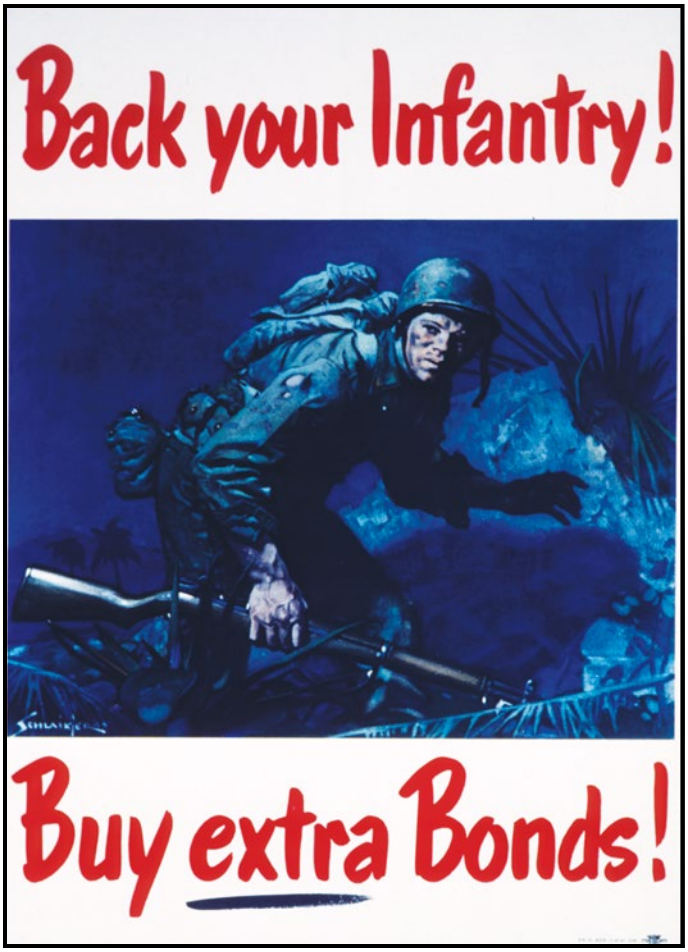
come as no surprise that our staff colleges venerate Lee before Grant, and Guderian before Rotmistrov. The "lesson" of Operation Desert Storm was not that a global great power had overwhelmed a tin-pot dictator, but that well-equipped and trained regulars had bested, bloodlessly, an Arab imitation of the conscript masses of the world wars. General Norman Schwarzkopf concluded his memoir, despite "feel[ing] that retired general officers should never miss an opportunity to remain silent," with at least one prediction: "I am quite confident that in the foreseeable future armed conflict will not take the form of huge land armies facing each other across extended battle lines."

And so, through the 1990s, as the US military found itself caught between continuing worldwide missions—the planet had not gotten any smaller nor humanity less unruly—and shrinking defense budgets, it began to break itself into smaller and smaller pieces. Air fleets were counted by squadrons rather than wings, and the number of aircraft per squadron reduced. Naval battle groups contained fewer ships and were more frequently organized just around surface combatants rather than carriers. The Marine Corps shaved a little closer, but it was the US Army, facing a kind of existential crisis, that went the farthest down the smaller-is-better path.

Leading that charge was Douglas Macgregor, who had served as the operations chief in the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Desert Storm. That unit was the first to make contact with the Republican Guard, the elite of Saddam Hussein's army; the resulting "Battle of 73 Easting"—named for the north-south grid line on service maps in the otherwise featureless desert— rapidly became the centerpiece in the army's narrative of its virtues. Macgregor's book *Breaking the Phalanx: A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century* was a paean to the role information technologies would play in a "revolution in military affairs" that would reward speed and rapid decision-making. It was also, when published in 1997, a bold criticism of an army leadership viewed as not just too slow to adapt to changing battlefield realities, but also institutionally incapable of innovation. Macgregor argued that the army's divisional structure was too ponderous. Instead, the service should be organized into more nimble and operationally independent "combat groups" of about 5,000 soldiers that would, thanks to technological advances, have command-and-control capabilities surpassing those of older division and brigade headquarters while also fitting more seamlessly into joint-service formations.

The man found his moment in the spring of 1999 during the Kosovo crisis. The palsied NATO air campaign had failed to have the desired effect on the Serbian forces of Slobodan Milosevic, who were continuing their "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovars. Unable to convince President Clinton and European leaders to commit ground formations, NATO commander Gen. Wesley Clark got permission to employ several dozen Army Apache attack helicopters to better support the "Kosovo Liberation Army." This so-called "Task

Force Hawk" took 30 days to wheeze its way from Germany to bases in Albania, and even then the army demanded that a mechanized infantry battalion be subsequently deployed to guard the airfields. The result was, as Andrew Krepinevich of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and another advocate of defense "transformation" put it, that "more and more people in Congress, even people in the Pentagon, began to ask if the Army is strategically relevant. Can the army get to one of these unpredictable trouble spots in a hurry?"



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When, that summer, Gen. Eric Shinseki was promoted from commander of US Army Europe—where he had witnessed the troubles of Task Force Hawk at painfully short range—to become Army chief of staff, he immediately unveiled a plan for a medium-weight "Objective Army" wherein information technologies would allow for the lethality of traditional tank units but with a smaller "future combat system"; the knowledge of a "transparent" battlefield would provide the protection of heavy armor. The FCS would be a family of vehicles with a common chassis for the entire army—and it would be small and light enough to fit in a C-130 transport plane.

It fell to Shinseki's successor, Gen. Peter Schoomaker, to complete the redesign of the army away from larger divisions and corps into "brigade combat teams" of 3,500—even smaller units than those imagined by Macgregor. Schoomaker, whose career was primarily in special operations forces and who was one of the original leaders of the army's elite "Delta Force," had been brought out of retirement by an impatient Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, himself recruited to a second term in the Pentagon by new President George Bush. Rumsfeld was to be the "secretary of transformation," bringing a troglodytic "industrial age" military into the information age. The new army unit designs not only made for smaller maneuver units but also chopped logistics, fire support,

intelligence, and other forms of support from the divisional structure. The army was to replace its traditional hierarchy with something "flat," and thus presumably more nimble.

Rumsfeld was in a hurry to bring his smaller-lighter-fast-better approach to bear, and he saw the post-9/11 invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as opportunities to force the pace of change. The striking successes of both campaigns confirmed Rumsfeld in his presumptions; as his senior military commander, Gen. Tommy Franks, declared, "Speed kills." Military transformation became a goal of the Bush administration's formal national security strategy, and defining a "capabilities-based approach"—in lieu of an assessment of overall capacity—became the purpose of the Pentagon's force-planning review. From 1945 to 2001, US military planners asked, "How much is enough?" Now they asked, "What kind?"

The problems with this approach became almost immediately apparent in Iraq, where the "small footprint" of US forces, combined with the administration's antipathy toward "nation building," opened the door to multiple insurgencies and, by 2006, a sectarian civil war. The failure to establish security in Iraq also cost the Republican Party its congressional majority and Rumsfeld his job. To his credit, President Bush committed to a "surge" of forces in Iraq, a counterinsurgency, and—the least noticed change in policy—an expansion of the army that eventually added about 150,000 soldiers to its active-duty end strength. The skeletal brigade combat teams were expanded with "enablers" that brought their strength back to 5,000 soldiers and more. And the service has now formally returned to a more traditional brigade design, even under the fiscal constraints imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011, the ongoing threat of sequestration, and previous reductions. In other words, the present army will be much smaller in total, but its pieces will be larger than they have been for the past two decades.

Finally, if the American purpose in the world is to sustain a favorable global balance of power across Eurasia—the traditional US strategy again affirmed by the recent National Defense Panel—then "agility" and "nimbleness" must not be the primary characteristics of its military posture. It is more important to deter adversaries and reassure allies by being constantly present, and, when in conflict, strike repeated heavy blows. Those capacities come from large, robust formations, which can bring additional resources to bear to reinforce in case of setbacks or exploit successes. To anyone outside the White House, the futility of trying to employ strike-and-raid methods against quicksilver enemies like ISIS or al-Qaeda is apparent. The way to destroy ISIS's military power is not to out-box them but to pound them.

What has proved true in irregular war is likely to be true in the high-technology conventional realm as well. Alas, the "transformational" mindset is now so deeply rooted—it has itself become the entrenched orthodoxy—that it is distorting how the Pentagon

views the growth of Chinese military power: "Air-Sea Battle" and its doctrinal progeny are, in sum, an attempt to apply strike-and-raid strike methods to a rising continental power of more than 1 billion people. In this, of all "strategic competitions," numbers matter. Compelling China to do our will—that is, accommodate itself to the existing liberal order—is possible, but only if Beijing perceives that the cost for overturning that order is too high. Cruise missiles and Seal Team 6 may annoy the Chinese, but cannot instill much fear. What might do the trick is a large American-led coalition with the capacity to sustain a long, twilight struggle and to deliver painful punishment—to bring the effects of massed military power to bear.

In the Pacific as in the Middle East, the United States needs to get right with Napoleon's God.

Thomas Donnelly, a defense and security policy analyst, is the codirector of the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies at the American Enterprise Institute. From 1995 to 1999, he was policy group director for the House Committee on Armed Services. Donnelly also served as a member of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. He is the author, coauthor, and editor of numerous articles, essays, and books, including *Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Strategic Assessment* (AEI Press, 2004) and *Lessons For A Long War: How America Can Win On New Battlefields* (AEI Press, 2010). He is currently at work on *Empire of Liberty: The Origins of American Strategic Culture.*

Even with Technological Change, Some Things Never Change

Max Boot

The world's militaries—and especially the most advanced military in the world, that of the United States—are now caught in the vortex of technological change.

This is not a new phenomenon. Ever since the Industrial Revolution began in the late eighteenth century, the pace of transformation has been accelerating. The horse gave way to the railroad and then the tank and truck. The sailing line-of-battle ship gave way to the steam-driven battleship and eventually to the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. The muzzle-loading musket gave way to the breach-loading repeating rifle and the machine gun. Smoothbore cannons firing solid shot gave way to rifled artillery firing high-explosive shells and then to rockets. Aircraft added an entirely new dimension to warfare, rapidly advancing from the primitive wood-and-canvas biplanes of World War I to the jet-powered fighters and bombers of the post–World War II era and eventually to the stealth aircraft of the 1980s and beyond. Their munitions advanced from inaccurate "dumb" bombs to highly accurate "smart" bombs and missiles. First the telegraph and then the radio and now digital communications networks supplanted the horse-borne messenger and the heliograph for purposes of command and control. Scouting out enemy formations, once the job of skirmishers and spies, became a task for aircraft, satellites, and eventually drones. And looming over everything has been the scepter of the superweapon—the atomic bomb—which has not been used since 1945.

It is easy to conclude, from the past two centuries of metamorphosis, that those militaries which successfully changed the way they did business came out on top while those that stuck to antiquated systems set themselves up for defeat. There is indeed plenty of evidence to support this contention. The most famous example, oft-cited, is that of the German army in the interwar period, which adapted itself to the demands of armored warfare in ways that its enemies, from Poland in the east to France in the west, did not. One could also cite the example of the Japanese navy, which avidly took to the aircraft carrier during the same period while the American and British navies remained wedded to the battleship. Or, more recently, Saddam Hussein's army in the Gulf War of 1991: The Iraqis were preparing for a World War I-style slogging match. They were caught flat-footed by the ability of US tank columns to maneuver in the open desert using a new-fangled technology known as the Global Positioning System which made possible the "left hook" that sent the Iraqi army reeling out of Kuwait.

But for every example of a military that embraced change and was rewarded with victory, at least in the short run, there is a countervailing example of a military that placed too much reliance on new technologies and paid the price. In the 1930s both the

US Air Force and the Royal Air Force were in thrall to heavy bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and the Lancaster; they assumed that the bombers would always get through and wreak such devastating damage that any enemy would capitulate in short order. As a result both the United States and the United Kingdom slighted the need for ground forces. When World War II broke out, however, they soon discovered that bombers were prone to be shot down and that, even when they delivered their ordnance, being bombed only intensified German or Japanese will to fight. Hitler, for his part, poured copious resources into building V-1 and V-2 rockets that did not turn out to be quite the wonder weapons he imagined; he would have been better advised to build more antiaircraft guns to shoot down Allied bombers.

The mistakes did not end in 1945. In the postwar period of Eisenhower's New Look, the US military embraced tactical nuclear weapons while failing to prepare for fighting guerrillas as it would soon do in the jungles of Vietnam. More recently, in the 1990s, the Pentagon invested heavily in "network-centric" warfare, placing its reliance on information systems while reducing the number of soldiers and marines. The United States then became involved in counterinsurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq which largely negated American advantages in high-tech weapons while brutally revealing the shortage of infantrymen needed to pacify such large countries.

What does this contradictory record suggest about the future of carrier groups, traditional fighter wings, and infantry divisions? Are they anachronisms or still relevant?

There is no doubt that new technologies are threatening to make surface ships, tanks, and manned aircraft obsolete. Ships and tanks are increasingly vulnerable to precision-guided missiles, while

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manned aircraft are being increasingly superseded by unmanned aerial vehicles which are cheaper and smaller and can stay aloft longer without risking pilot casualties. But it is too soon to ditch these legacy systems which remain, if nothing else, important symbols of American power projection. A military's job, after all, is not just to win big wars against technologically sophisticated adversaries; it is also to show the flag and to deter conflict from breaking out, and in this regard aircraft carriers, tanks, and jet fighters remain quite useful. Even on a high-intensity battlefield, they still remain useful even if at higher risk than before. But it is now possible to imagine a date in the

future when using—and possibly losing them—will be too risky to contemplate.

What about infantry formations? Ironically, the lowest-tech and oldest form of warfare is also the one that is least susceptible to replacement by advanced machines (at least pending the arrival of true *Terminators*). There are certainly tools, such as better guns, armor, and communications gear that can help infantrymen do their job better. But if you want to decisively defeat and transform an adversary, as we have done with countries such as Germany and Japan, you must still occupy enemy soil—and occupation duty still requires riflemen. Likewise there is no way to quash an insurgency by relying on long-range strike platforms. You still need infantry on patrol, interacting with the populace and gathering intelligence. That is a job that soldiers have been performing since the days of the Roman legions and there is still no substitute in sight. Even amid the bewildering alterations wrought by the Information Age, some things never change.

Max Boot is a leading military historian and foreign policy analyst. Boot holds a bachelor's degree in history, with high honors, from the University of California, Berkeley (1991), and a master's degree in history from Yale University (1992). He was born in Russia, grew up in Los Angeles, and now lives in the New York area. The Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, he is the author of the critically acclaimed *New York Times* best seller *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present.* His earlier books include *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* and *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power.*

Are Carrier Groups, Fighter Wings, and Infantry Divisions Anachronistic in Future Warfare?

Bing West

This question, posed by Hoover's editors, is simply answered: America's military structure does not need a radical revision. Its traditional assets like carriers and divisions are sound in concept. Indeed, the Pentagon adjusts remarkably. Consider that in 1979, alarmed by Russia's invasion of Afghanistan, the Pentagon organized the "Rapid Deployment Force" that morphed into the US Central Command in 1981. Since then, CENTCOM threw Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991, overthrew Saddam in 2001, invaded Afghanistan in 2003, and remains at the center of the war-fighting across the Middle East. Similarly, the Special Operations Command, organized in 1980, for the past six years has been the commander-in-chief's favorite war-waging instrument. And for the past decade, unmanned aerial vehicles have been the weapons of choice for long-range assassinations. In sum, the American military remains its own best critic, constantly debating internally and reinventing itself externally.

Through 2015, America's wealth has enabled a Pentagon budget of ~$600 billion, so large that diverse visions of the future—e.g., deter China and fight Islamists—have not required tradeoffs among force structure. In fact, disparate force elements are expanding. Within American military ranks, there is a widespread consensus to dominate in cyber warfare, where to date Russian and China have stolen with impunity information from American and European corporations. Similarly, American technology has opened up the frontier of unmanned aerial surveillance

POLL: Will the present US military radically change its profile in the next half-century?

- ☐ No. Air, ground, and sea forces are timeless assets; war will still be fought mostly as it is today in all three theaters.
- ☐ Only marginally. Carriers, fighters, and infantry will look the same, albeit with technological updates.
- ☐ Yes and no. The United States will keep vestigial conventional forces for some fights and for others adopt new-age weapons.
- ☐ Yes. Carriers, fighters, and infantry are relics from a bygone era—too costly and ineffective for twenty-first-century warfare.
- ☐ Irrelevant. War between nation-states and uniformed armies is passé, as terrorism and tribal fighting are the new norm.

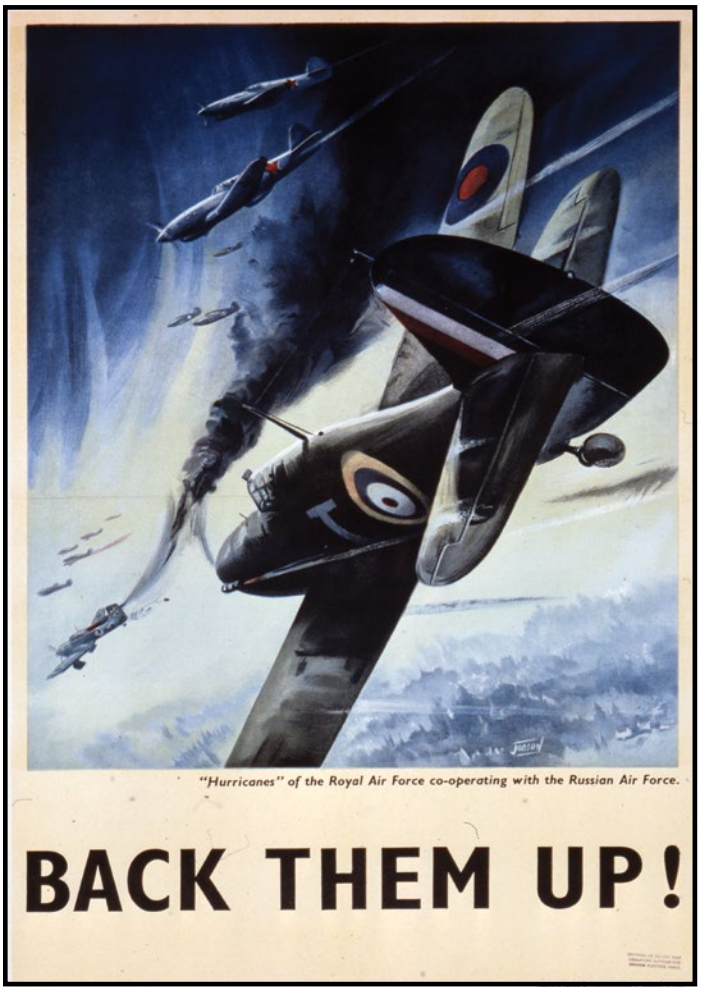
and bombing. Our military is not hidebound; it does try to stay on the cutting edge.

Having thrown a few bouquets, let me now raise two looming challenges: our force structure such as carriers and fighter wings is decreasing at a perilous rate, while our operational command procedures are becoming too centralized.

Here at home, our debt is unsustainable, our economic growth is miniscule, and no politician dares to reduce the transfer payments of Social Security and health care. This means that spending for defense will go down as a percentage of our wealth, year after year. Defense is simply an insurance policy. We have this magnificent house called America. Occasionally, hurricanes called wars will occur. But our children face a dramatic increase in taxation. So we will reduce our insurance policy on our national house for the day when war comes. At the same time, Congress is increasing personnel payments for active and retired military and all veterans. In self-interest, military lobbying organizations argue for more pay. Thus fewer resources are left for maintaining a force of prudent size.

Concerning command during combat operations, the military claims it operates under mission-type orders; that is, the senior commander says my intent is to do so-and-so, and leaves execution to the junior commanders on the battlefield. In theory, the staffs at higher headquarters provide instantaneous information and firepower support to dispersed small units at sea, in the air, or on the ground. The junior commanders of these small units then make the critical decisions at the point of the engagements.

Indeed, the US military is keenly aware that many future battles must be conducted without electronic emissions; that is, forward-based units will receive data, but not expose their locations by communicating back to home base. This means allowing junior commanders to make strategic decisions, as Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance did at the decisive Battle of Midway seven decades ago. After mulling his decision for less than one minute, Spruance ordered every plane available in his task force—many with half-empty fuel tanks—to take off, search for, and attack the Japanese fleet. One forty-year-old lieutenant commander ordered his squadron to continue across the red line beyond which there was not enough fuel to return.



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That was seventy-five years ago. Would any rear admiral or squadron commander have that authority today? The answer is no. In practice, our military

has been doing the opposite. Those at the very top—meaning the commander-in-chief and his trusted political staff in the White House—make the critical war-fighting decisions. Even rules of engagement are decided inside the White House, causing two successive secretaries of defense—Gates and Panetta—to voice their frustration.

It's not just civilians who hoard decision-making authority. On September 11, 2012, as the battle at Benghazi raged intermittently for eight hours, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Unified Commander for Africa, both in Washington, retained authority yet issued no orders to assist those under attack. The concept of improvisation, of allowing subordinate commanders to take initiative, was not followed at the four-star level.

For decades, the military has trumpeted the emergence of the "strategic corporal," meaning in theory a squad leader should be able to orchestrate astonishing firepower, while few American troops are placed at physical risk. In practice, the phrase has come to have a pejorative meaning, suggesting that the actions of junior troops—a sniper urinating on an enemy corpse or a single soldier deserting to the enemy—have debilitating and disproportionate political effects upon the overall war effort. Hence in practice, instant communications have resulted in senior commanders becoming too involved.

History illustrates that when budgets decrease and centralized control increases, less innovation occurs. On the other hand, our military is not defensive; it listens to its critics and is open to internal debate, as the lively discussions on the Web illustrate. Our military can self-correct its tendency to overly control. But whether we imprudently decrease our national insurance by hollowing out our military force depends upon our political system. To persist with deficit spending will weaken both our military and the standard of living of the next generation.

Bing West is a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan administration. He is a graduate of Georgetown and Princeton Universities where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and served in the marine infantry in Vietnam. A best-selling author, he has written nine books on military history and travels frequently to war zones. His latest book is entitled *One Million Steps: A Marine Platoon at War* (2014).

How Not to Be Prepared

Frederick W. Kagan

The US Army is on course to an active-duty strength of 420,000 if sequestration returns as scheduled in 2016. This force size, down from 545,000 at the end of the Iraq War, would be the lowest since the Interwar Period. Nothing in the international environment or the nature of modern warfare justifies such a reduction, which is being driven entirely by the budgetary concerns from the worst depths of the recession. This reduction puts the nation at grave risk and seriously compromises the ability of future presidents to respond to foreseeable crises. It must not happen.

The ostensible justification for the reduction in ground forces is that the current administration has decided that the United States will never again commit its military to long-term counterinsurgency operations. The administration also refuses to contemplate the possibility of conventional war and has decided that its preferred military action—targeted air strikes—is the only military action that future presidents should be able to undertake, and it is shaping the military accordingly.

But even President Obama is finding it harder to stay out of Iraq than he had imagined. The limited air strikes he has ordered against ISIS are failing to prevent that group from continuing its advance in either Iraq or Syria. Australia has already ordered Special Forces to Iraq, and it seems certain that the United States will need to do so as well. This president may continue to refuse to accept this reality. His successors are much more likely to adjust to it.

It is one thing for a sitting president to choose not to use particular tools of American power. It is another thing entirely for him to decide to strip those tools from his successors. The first choice may be wise or foolish, depending on the circumstances. The second is a dereliction of the president's responsibility to keep the nation ready even for unpleasant contingencies after he leaves office.

Frederick W. Kagan is the Christopher DeMuth Chair and director of the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). In 2009, he served in Kabul, Afghanistan, as part of General Stanley McChrystal's strategic assessment team; he returned to Afghanistan in 2010, 2011, and 2012 to conduct research for Generals David Petraeus and John Allen. In July 2011, Admiral Mike Mullen awarded him the Distinguished Public Service Award. He was an associate professor of military history at West Point and is the author of the series of AEI reports, including *Choosing Victory,* which recommended and monitored the US military surge in Iraq.

Evolving Our Way to 20YY

Thomas Donnelly

In their January 2014 monograph published by the Center for a New American Security, *20YY: Preparing for War in the Robotic Age,* Robert Work, now deputy secretary of defense, and Shawn Brimley argue—not to put too fine a point on it—that the US military needs to drop what it's doing now and "conceptualize how a maturing guided munitions-battle network regime and advances in technologies driven primarily by the civilian sector may coalesce and combine in ways that could spark a new military-technical revolution." The study in fact has much to recommend it, but the postponement of the much-anticipated transformation of warfare until the nebulous "20YY" contains a deep truth: for the foreseeable future, traditional military platforms and formations will remain important and in many cases dominant.

One only has to reflect upon the things that have catapulted the forces of the Islamic State to the front of the jihadi parade: large conventional forces, with armored vehicles and artillery, able to take and hold territory. The ISIS forces are not a collection of "super-empowered individuals" but a modestly equipped, medium-weight land force that has accomplished what, by Arab standards, ranks as a blitzkrieg. And by digging themselves into the cities they've taken, they have, as of this writing, established strong points that are proving tough to reduce.

As for the United States, the immediate problems of today's geostrategic collapse far outweigh the possible revolution of tomorrow, and, thanks to budget cuts and program terminations, it has only a handful of systems in which to reinvest. We had better learn to love the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, 'cause there ain't much else. Photon torpedoes haven't hit the laboratory, let alone the field.

Luckily, with intelligent employment, the "wasting assets" of the late twentieth century can be effective for decades to come. The role played by the F-22 in the initial strikes against ISIS is indicative: the Raptor was not used to clear the skies but to locate and relay time-sensitive targeting data—as well as attack itself. Indeed, as the calendar creeps toward 20YY, we are likely to find that both these "fifth generation" aircraft serve as armed scouts, a bridge toward the "maturing guided munitions-battle network regime" that Work and Brimley imagine.

Thomas Donnelly, a defense and security policy analyst, is the codirector of the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies at the American Enterprise Institute. From 1995 to 1999, he was policy group director for the House Committee on Armed Services. Donnelly also served as a member of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission. He is the author, coauthor, and editor of numerous articles, essays, and books, including *Operation Iraqi Freedom: A Strategic Assessment* (AEI Press, 2004) and *Lessons For A Long War: How America Can Win On New Battlefields* (AEI Press, 2010). He is currently at work on *Empire of Liberty: The Origins of American Strategic Culture.*

Possessing Sea and Land

Williamson Murray

Only those who are ignorant of military history and strategy can argue that the changes in technology and the international environment have marginalized conventional capabilities. What those pundits have missed is that only the possession of such conventional forces has allowed the American military to do two essential things: a) project military power from North America to places like Afghanistan and Iraq; and b) provide the shield under which its ground forces, once they had gotten their act together, could conduct effective counterinsurgency operations.

In the Gulf War of 1990–1991, the combination of stealth, precision, and domination of the electronic spectrum allowed Coalition forces to savage Iraq's ground forces deployed throughout the Kuwaiti theater of operations. Without the massive logistical buildup, enabled by America's conventional forces, there would have been no war in the Gulf. Moreover, without the ground campaign's hundred hours that wiped out the Iraqi army, Saddam would have been able to step away from the disaster and proclaim to a susceptible Arab world that he had stood up to America's military power. The same holds true of the second Iraq War of 2003. It is all very well to talk about technological superiority, but boots on the ground matter. And only the projection of conventional capabilities can allow the necessary ground presence either to achieve immediate political aims or to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

Finally, America's ability to project military power from its island base in North America rests on its ability to dominate the world's oceans. Only conventional air and naval power, exemplified by carrier battle groups can achieve that aim. Cyber warfare, drones, and submarines may serve for the denial of the use of sea and air space, but they cannot replace the conventional capabilities that are basic to the projection of military power as well as the ability to occupy and hold ground, which after all is the only reason to fight wars.

Williamson Murray serves as a Minerva Fellow at the Naval War College. He graduated from Yale University in 1963 with honors in history. He then served five years as an officer in the US Air Force, including a tour in Southeast Asia with the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing (C-130s). He returned to Yale University, where he received his PhD in military-diplomatic history under advisers Hans Gatzke and Donald Kagan. He taught two years in the Yale history department before moving on to Ohio State University in fall 1977 as a military and diplomatic historian; in 1987 he received the Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award. He retired from Ohio State in 1995 as a professor emeritus of history.

National Insecurity

Max Boot

It is inevitable that US naval, air, and ground strength will be downsized in the years ahead. The only real question is by how much—by $1 trillion or so from planned spending levels if sequestration remains in effect, or by "only" $500 billion or so if it is repealed. Carrier groups, fighter winters, and especially infantry will be especially hard-hit by these cuts since these are all expensive investments, whether in materiel or personnel. Unless sequestration is repealed, for example, the navy will not have the money to retrofit the USS *George Washington* and the total number of aircraft carriers will fall to 10 even though current requirements call for 12 to 15. Likewise the army, under sequestration, will fall from a wartime high of 570,000 active-duty soldiers to as few as 420,000, even though army leaders have testified that a bare minimum of 450,000 is necessary. The air force, too, will face similar cutbacks; indeed it has already been forced to cut back purchases of both the F-22 and F-35 to considerably below planned levels. It is possible to argue that in the long term, different kinds of ships and aircraft can make up for these losses, especially if we utilize unmanned platforms more heavily, but in the short term (meaning the next decade), there is no real alternative to aircraft carriers and fighter wings for projecting US power. And no technology on the horizon will offer any conceivable alternative to old-fashioned "ground pounders"—infantrymen standing on street corners with rifles will be as necessary to enforce our will on enemies in the future as in the past. By neglecting to preserve our capacity to field such forces, the United States risks being unable to fulfill the bare minimum requirements of its national security strategy.

Max Boot is a leading military historian and foreign policy analyst. Boot holds a bachelor's degree in history, with high honors, from the University of California, Berkeley (1991), and a master's degree in history from Yale University (1992). He was born in Russia, grew up in Los Angeles, and now lives in the New York area. The Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow in National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, he is the author of the critically acclaimed *New York Times* best seller *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present.* His earlier books include *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* and *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power.*

The Perils of Downsizing

Mark Moyar

The current downward trends in fighter wings and conventional ground forces are likely to continue, given the ongoing shrinkage of the defense budget, and carrier groups appear to be headed in the same direction. The downsizing certainly could have been avoided had the executive and legislative branches been determined to avoid it. When the slashing of the defense budget began in 2011, proponents contended that the cuts were needed to reduce the long-term federal deficit. Yet defense spending as a percentage of GDP was lower in 2011 than it had been for most of the Cold War, even with a sizable war still in progress in Afghanistan, whereas domestic spending stood at historic highs. Although the Obama administration professed an intent to slash all parts of the federal budget for deficit-reduction purposes, the budget deal it convinced Congress to adopt exempted nondiscretionary domestic spending and put half of the cuts on the Defense Department, which accounted for only 20 percent of the budget.

Supporters of cutting the military contended that Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated the ineffectiveness of American land power. From here on, it has been argued, the United States will be smart enough to avoid getting dragged into another large war. The United States can handle most international threats and crises with diplomacy, economic sanctions, and foreign aid. If force is absolutely necessary, the United States can rely upon allies to provide much of the fighting strength.

History, however, has demonstrated the perils of assuming military strength to be outmoded. The United States slashed its military after World War I, World War II, and the Cold War based on this assumption, only to find itself ill prepared for the next wars, which came much sooner than expected. The numerous conflicts bubbling in today's world give reason to believe that history is liable to repeat itself.

Mark Moyar is a Senior Fellow at the Joint Special Operations University. His books include *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq* (Yale University Press, 2009); *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954–1965* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); and *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam* (Naval Institute Press, 1997; University of Nebraska Press, 2007). He is currently writing a book on national security strategy during the Obama administration as well as a book on foreign human capital development. He holds a BA, summa cum laude, from Harvard and a PhD from Cambridge.

Discussion Questions

Are Carrier Groups, Traditional Fighter Wings, and Infantry Divisions Anachronistic or Will They Remain Timeless Assets in Both Conventional and Unconventional Warfare of the Future?

1. Does history suggest that the ongoing shift to fewer and more expensive weapons is misguided?

2. Why have major Western categories of weapons systems—fighters, bombers, carriers, submarines, infantry divisions—changed little conceptually in the past 70 years?

3. Is Western impotence against terrorists and insurgents largely self-induced through public opinion, jurisprudence, and political infighting?

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today* (Gotham Books, 2006).
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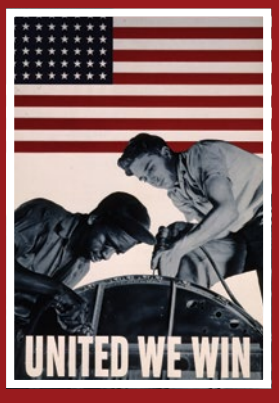
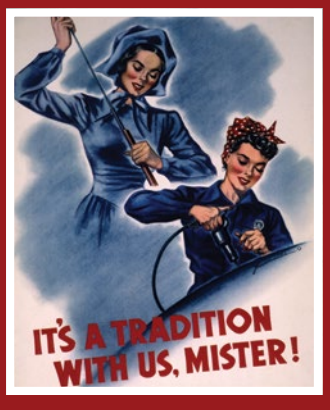
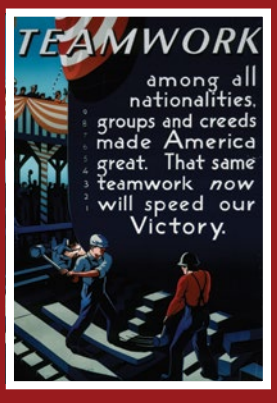
- Patrick M. Cronin, ed., *The Impenetrable Fog of War: Reflections on Modern Warfare and Strategic Surprise* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008).
- Thomas Donnelly and Frederick Kagan, *Ground Truth: The Future of U.S. Land Power* (AEI Press, 2008). http://www.aei.org/publication/ground-truth/print/.

In the Next Issue

Does Political Correctness Pose a Threat to the Military?







Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of "War, Revolution, and Peace." Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: "The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man's endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life." From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the "Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict" has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution's dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.

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