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Contents

Editorial	169
Introduction to the Prime Minister's address	172
Launch of the <i>2020 Defence Strategic Update</i> <i>The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia</i>	173
The contending domestic and international imperatives of Indonesia's China challenge <i>Greta Nabbs-Keller</i>	189
A strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness: General Matthew Ridgway and the revival of the US Eighth Army in the Korean War <i>Jeffrey W Meiser</i>	215
Commentary	
The power of GEOINT: intelligence, operations and capability in the 2020s and beyond <i>Scott Dewar</i>	239
What is in a name: discarding the grand strategy debate and seeking a new approach <i>Jason Thomas</i>	247
Westmoreland's dream and Perrow's nightmare: two perspectives on the future of military command and control <i>Shane Halton</i>	259
Reviews	
Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare <i>Thomas Rid reviewed by Zac Rogers</i>	270
History's Fools: The Pursuit of Idealism and the Revenge of Politics <i>David Martin Jones reviewed by Mark Beeson</i>	274
Civil–Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness Across Regimes <i>Thomas C Bruneau and Aurel Croissant (eds) reviewed by Michael Evans</i>	278
The Battles for Kokoda Plateau <i>David W Cameron reviewed by Kate Tollenaar</i>	283
Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War <i>Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds) reviewed by Imogen Mathew</i>	286

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Editorial

We go to print as 2020 is coming to a close, and one could be forgiven for never wanting to experience what this year has brought again. Natural disasters, pandemics, domestic and international elections, failing economies, a surge in great power competition have all captured our attention and affected our lives, and not all for the better. But, not wanting to dwell on the negatives, we have also witnessed great acts of kindness, resilience, and adaptation to circumstances never felt by many in our community. All of this has brought change. Change comes in many forms, good as well as bad. Change allows us to examine our priorities; it allows us to re-evaluate how we do things and whether we can do them better. And, Australia's national defence and security plans have certainly not gone untouched.

While enduring a global pandemic and shoring up our alliances, in a time of upheaval both domestically and internationally, the Australian Government has reviewed what changes are needed for the greater good of our national security. It is an acknowledgment that we are living through challenging times. We are not immune from external threats, and these warrant an evolution of our defence and collective security posture.

In this issue we have Prime Minister Scott Morrison's address, delivered at the Australian Defence Force Academy, to launch the *2020 Defence Strategic Update* and *2020 Force Structure Plan* and introduced by Major General Mick Ryan, chair of the AJDSS editorial board. The speech outlined a significant defence policy reset to strengthen our force posture and sharpen Australia's focus on our immediate region. It was an important speech heralding Australia's more insistent stance in response to a global security environment where we face greater threats and uncertainty.

Given this refocus on our neighbours and region, in ‘The contending domestic and international imperatives of Indonesia’s China challenge’, Greta Nabbs-Keller highlights for us the tensions facing Indonesia to balance complex domestic political sensitivities and international pressures in its relations with China. These tensions may well be exacerbated by the continuing economic disruption caused by COVID-19.

Jeffery Meiser follows, seeking to bring greater clarity to the concept of strategic leadership and its practical importance to our professional literature. For Meiser, strategic leadership is less a set of relatively unfocused characteristics to embody and more a practical skill set that should connect competencies of strategy and leadership. To examine his strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness, he presents an exploratory case study of General Matthew B Ridgway’s revival of the Eighth Army during the Korea War.

In our Commentary section, Scott Dewar draws our focus to the transformations underway in the realm of geospatial intelligence (GEOINT). More than imagery analysis, today’s GEOINT can provide a decisive edge but it takes more than keeping up with technological change to take full advantage of the innovations currently revolutionising the sector. Dewar reminds us that data and a highly trained GEOINT workforce are as vital as fuel in today’s military. We must therefore encourage the utilisation of GEOINT and its practitioners across the intelligence and operational communities and as part of the capability life cycle.

In ‘What is in a name: discarding the grand strategy debate and seeking a new approach,’ Jason Thomas asks, ‘Apart from the benefits of education and promoting necessary dialogue, what is the further benefit of defining an additional level of strategy as “grand”?’ He argues that attempts to define grand strategy provide little service to the creation of effective strategies.

As noted above, we are living in a time of rapid change, both positive and unsettling. In Shane Halton’s commentary he notes that the military technologies coming fully online in the 2020s (hypersonics, cyber and electromagnetic warfare) will be so fast that in many cases human operators will not be able to operate ‘in the loop.’ Instead they will have to be reliant to some extent on machine-learning technologies and automation. The effect this will have on traditional command and control structures is unknown. Will the 2020 battlespace be a military technopia where command staffs are relieved of the grunt work of running a war, suggestive of the technological positivism dreamt of by General Westmoreland? Or, does such an interactively complex and increasingly tightly coupled system mean the question is not if but when a dramatic failure will occur, as Dr Charles Perrow feared?

To add to your summer reading list, Zac Rogers gives his review of Thomas Rid's *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* examining disinformation, fake news and a heavily manipulated internet. Mark Beeson reflects on how he has benefited over the years from reading David Martin Jones's work, even if his blood pressure hasn't, in his review of *History's Fools: The Pursuit of Idealism and the Revenge of Politics*. Michael Evans provides an insightful overview of *Civil–Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness Across Regimes*, edited by Thomas C Bruneau and Aurel Croissant. Then, the myths and personal stories of Kokoda are explored in Kate Tollenaar's review of David W Cameron's *The Battles for Kokoda Plateau*. Finally, Imogen Matthew reflects on the purpose, process and personal benefits writing can have for military professionals in her review of *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, edited by Randy Brown and Steve Leonard.

While it is hard to not look towards 2021 as a turning point, this year has shown that strategic challenges defy timetables and the plans we seek to impose on them. Instead, to meet these dynamic issues we need leaders and policymakers with the advanced skills in strategy and leadership who can develop and implement appropriate, flexible responses to change. To this end, the AJDSS will continue to play its role in fostering original thinking, scholarship and challenging debate of strategic issues and concerns to allow leaders to meet challenges that, like 2020, redefine the status quo.

As we reflect on this year and ponder what next year may bring, it is important that we not lose faith in our collective ability to face whatever the future may hold. Summertime in Australia and the region brings great joy to many, but we cannot forget it is also a testing time for ADF members who are always at the ready to respond if called upon. If this year has taught us anything about change, it is that Defence members are agile, resilient and willing to contribute.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a safe and happy summer. Enjoy. Relax. Read.

Dr Cathy Moloney

Editor

Introduction to the Prime Minister's address

The Indo-Pacific region is at the nexus of global geopolitical shifts not seen since the Second World War. These shifts are likely to dominate the 21st century, just as ideological divisions and great power competition effected the 20th century. This will have significant implications for the rules-based global order that has underpinned our peace and prosperity for so long. Increasing militarisation, rapid technological change and emerging grey zone threats are just some of the many challenges facing our region. Indeed, the now common term Indo-Pacific itself represents a paradigm shift in thinking about traditional geographical and political boundaries.

For the foreseeable future, how we respond to this changing environment will be an overarching concern of Australian Governments. The *2016 White Paper* and the *Integrated Investment Program* that accompanied it flagged the Australian Government's long-term strategy and articulated the investment in capabilities and planning required to execute it. However, it has been widely acknowledged that the global security environment has already altered more than predicted.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's address at the launch of *2020 Defence Strategic Update* in July this year, four years after the last Defence White Paper, is a significant milestone. This *Update* presents a detailed response to the circumstances described in the speech and how we will continue to adapt and respond into the future.

I strongly encourage every student of strategy who seeks to apply theory to the current Australian context to read this speech.

MAJGEN Mick Ryan

Chair, Australian Journal of Defence and Strategic Studies
Commander, Australian Defence College

Launch of the 2020 Defence Strategic Update

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

*Address transcript*¹

Australian Defence Force Academy,
Canberra
Wednesday 1 July 2020

Thank you all for joining us here today.

Can I particularly commence by acknowledging the Ngunnawal people, their elders past and present, and of course leaders emerging for the future.

And, as is always my practice, and particularly on occasions such as today, can I acknowledge any veterans who are here in the room with us today and serving members of our Defence Forces, of which there are many, and to simply say on behalf of an incredibly grateful nation, once again, thank you for your service.

Can I also, of course, acknowledge my many ministerial and parliamentary colleagues who are here with us today, and I will speak of Linda in just a moment.

But to Ministers Hawke and Price, who are here with us, doing such a tremendous job in critical areas of our defence operations and in defence engagement, both in the building of that capability through Minister Price and rolling out the enormous commitments and the industry capability that is essential to achieve what we're speaking of today.

But also to Minister Hawke, who has been leading our approach in the Pacific Step-up, bringing together not just the defence components of that, but the international development components of that and bringing that into one strategic initiative that has seen our standing amongst our Pacific family rise to whole new levels that is so essential to what I am setting out today.

¹ This is an edited transcript of the Prime Minister's address as approved by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The original transcript is available at <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/address-launch-2020-defence-strategic-update>

Senator Molan is here, of course, who has been a long-time friend and a consigliere on many matters regarding defence, border protection and many other things – Jim – and it's good to see you here today and thank you for being here.

Can I also acknowledge the Chief of Defence Force, General Campbell, and Secretary Moriarty and all of the Defence leadership that is here today. Your skill, your experience, your integrity is so written into these documents and gives Minister Reynolds and I, and the entire Cabinet and the National Security Committee of Cabinet, great confidence in the advice that we receive, and that when we make decisions we are making them on the best possible advice and experience. And the leadership that you're showing across the services, together with your service chiefs represented here today, is exemplary. It really is a strong period for our Defence Forces under your leadership.

That, of course, leads me to Minister Reynolds. Not only a serving reservist herself with deep engagement in matters of defence over her professional life, but she has brought a clarity to this portfolio. She has brought an accountability to this portfolio, which is absolutely essential.

As Linda and I just this morning, or last night, again reflecting on the depth of what is in these documents—there is, of course, the many more apparent elements of the strategy that we're outlining today – the hardware, the equipment, all of these sorts of things – and, of course, that draws significant public attention—but, at the end of the day, that's not what makes it work. What makes it work are the people who drive it and the accountabilities that are placed upon the plans that we see here today.

And that is what Linda, in particular, has driven so far in her time as minister. There is an accountability to these plans that she insists on – as I know the service chiefs and others are very well aware of, and the Secretary – and that gives me a lot of confidence because the investments we're making here today and for the longer term require the accountability of implementation. It's significant. And so, I commend you, Linda, for the terrific job you have had in bringing this all together, as part of my team. And, I also thank the many members of the National Security Committee of Cabinet as well, who have been integrally involved in the development of this.

And it goes without saying that we all pass on our thanks to the Finance Minister and the Treasurer, who have had a keen interest in what we have been working on for now for some time.

So, it is an honour to be here today. It is a pivotal day for Australia and for our Defence Forces.

It is an honour to be here at ADFA to launch the Australian Government's *2020 Defence Strategic Update* and the *2020 Force Structure Plan*, these two very important documents that will guide our nation through one of the most challenging times we have known since the 1930s and the early 1940s.

A plan for Australia's future in the most important area of a federal government's responsibility.

The cadets of the Australian Defence Force Academy, who would normally sit in this lecture theatre today, will be asked to confront many of the challenges that are set out here throughout the course of their careers but more than that, to live up to the ideals and traditions of the ADF serving and protecting Australia. And at times, that work will be in accordance with plans already developed and it will be also, at other times, responding quickly to the unexpected. Our times are a testament to that challenge.

This year, the ADF has provided crucial support to Australians during our Black Summer bushfires and now a response to a once-in-a-century pandemic.

Senator Seselja, who is also here with us today, has been very familiar seeing that support here in his own home territory, here in the ACT and so often in his other responsibilities.

At the height of the operation Bushfire Assist, led by Major General Justin – Jake, as he's known – Elwood, 6,500 ADF personnel provided support to state and territory fire and emergency services across our nation.

It was a proud time for our Defence Forces, and in particular the unprecedented compulsory callout of 3,000 ADF Reservists, who are proud at the best of times, but to be able to be serving as reservists in their own country at a time of great need, so many of them that I was able to meet around the country felt a great pride in being able to deliver that service.

And I thank their employers, once again, for supporting them in their efforts.

Then we went through, when we thought life was going to return to normal as the fires receded, of course, it didn't – the COVID-19 pandemic hit. And, once again, the ADF has responded, with Operation COVID-19 Assist. At its peak, it has involved around 2,200 personnel across Australia.

In April, there was an outbreak of coronavirus in the north-west regional hospital in Burnie, an outbreak that included staff across the hospital. The ADF responded with a 50-person deployment to assist the hospital. For two weeks, the ADF's medical professionals treated and supported more than 400 locals

who entered the hospital's doors. This support was not just practical, but it was a great confidence-booster at a time of great anxiety in north-western Tasmania.

Premier Gutwein, to this day, continues to offer his thanks to the tremendous support provided by the ADF.

Meanwhile, in Shepparton, engineer and maintenance specialists from the Army Logistical Training Centre and the Joint Logistics Unit worked on lifting vital PPE capacity at the Med-Con plant and thanks to them, Med-Con surgical face mask production has an output capacity of 200 million masks per year.

From contract tracing to quarantine support and isolation checking, the ADF has demonstrated again its capability, professionalism and adaptability.

Lieutenant General John Frewen and the COVID-19 Task Force, I want to thank you very much for your calm and methodical way of getting the job done, yet again.

And the jobs continue with more than 200 personnel right now in Victoria, and others standing by ready if needed to go and assist with the current outbreak.

And if we need reminding, 2020 has demonstrated in no uncertain terms that the challenges and threats we face as a nation are constantly evolving.

The enduring responsibility of government, though, is timeless: to protect Australia's national interest, our sovereignty, our values and the security of the Australian people. This responsibility requires sustained commitment, focus, application. It requires strong economic management to support the necessary investment and it demands tough and difficult choices.

As the Australian Strategic Policy Institute noted in the 2012–13 Defence Budget Brief, just prior to our government's 2013 election, the Defence budget had fallen to 1.56 per cent of GDP.

That was the lowest level since 1938.

Now, to illustrate the real-world implications of this, there were no major domestic naval shipbuilding projects commissioned in the six years that followed the end of the Howard government in 2007 and the decisions they made to acquire the Hobart class Air Warfare Destroyers and the Canberra class LHDs.²

I want to assure the men and women of the ADF, who inherit a proud tradition and carry it, that our government – my government – will not repeat those mistakes of the past.

2 Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD)

We will ensure, together, that you are always properly supported as you face the challenges of today tomorrow, and you carry out the decisions that we make, that you undertake on our behalf, and on behalf of the Australian people.

Despite the many pressures on the Budget – and, of course, during this COVID-19 recession, they have only accelerated – I reaffirm today that our government’s commitment is to properly fund Defence with the certainty of a new 10-year funding model that goes beyond our achievement of reaching 2 per cent of our economy of GDP this year.

This simple truth is this: even as we stare down the COVID pandemic at home, we need to also prepare for a post-COVID world that is poorer, that is more dangerous and that is more disorderly.

We have been a favoured isle with many natural advantages for many decades, but we have not seen the conflation of global, economic and strategic uncertainty now being experienced here in Australia, in our region, since the existential threat we faced when the global and regional order collapsed in the 1930s and 1940s.

That is a sobering thought and it’s something I have reflected on quite a lot lately, as we’ve considered the dire economic circumstances we face.

That period of the 1930s has been something I have been revisiting on a very regular basis, and when you connect both the economic challenges and the global uncertainty, it can be very haunting.

But not overwhelming. It requires a response.

Now, we must face that reality, understanding that we have moved into a new and less benign strategic era, one in which the institutions of patterns of cooperation that have benefited our prosperity and security for decades, are now under increasing – and I would suggest almost irreversible – strain.

The Indo-Pacific is the epicentre of rising strategic competition. Our region will not only shape our future, increasingly though, it is the focus of the dominant global contest of our age. This is the setting for it. Tensions over territorial claims are rising across the Indo-Pacific region, as we have seen recently on the disputed border between India and China, and the South China Sea, and the East China Sea. The risk of miscalculation and even conflict is heightening.

Regional military modernisation is occurring at an unprecedented rate. Capabilities and reach are expanding. Previous assumptions of enduring advantage and technological edge are no longer constants and cannot be relied upon. Coercive activities are rife. Disinformation and foreign interference have been enabled

and accelerated by new and emerging technologies. And, of course, terrorism hasn't gone away and the evil ideologies that underpin it and they remain a tenacious threat.

State sovereignty is under pressure, as are rules and norms and the stability that these provide. Relations between China and the United States are fractious at best, as they compete for political, economic and technological supremacy. But it's important to acknowledge that they are not the only actors of consequence.

The rest of the world, and Australia, are not just bystanders to this. It's not just China and the United States that will determine whether our region stays on path for free and open trade, investment and cooperation that has underpinned stability and prosperity, the people-to-people relationships that bind our region together. Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, the countries of South-East Asia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Pacific all have agency, choices to make, parts to play, and, of course, so does Australia.

There is a new dynamic of strategic competition and the largely benign security environment, as I've noted, that Australia has enjoyed, basically from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Global Financial Crisis, that's gone.

Since the government's *2016 Defence White Paper* was released, we have witnessed an acceleration of the strategic trends that were already underway.

The pandemic has accelerated and accentuated many of those trends, and that is why today I'm launching the *2020 Defence Strategic Update*.

It represents a significant pivot.

It outlines the shifts and challenges I've foreshadowed and mentioned.

It makes clear the strategic environment we face, and this clarity will guide Australia's actions.

The update sees an evolution of strategic defence objectives in accord with our new strategic environment. The objectives outlined in the *2016 Defence White Paper* saw an equal weighting across the three areas of Australia and its northern approach, South-East Asia and the Pacific and operations in support of the rules-based global order. In this *Update*, the government has directed Defence to prioritise, to make choices, ADF's geographical focus on our immediate region, the area ranging from the north-east Indian Ocean through maritime and mainland South-East Asia to Papua New Guinea and the south-west Pacific.

The government has set three new strategic objectives to guide all Defence planning, including force structure, force generation, international engagement and operations.

They are these:

- shape Australia's strategic environment
- deter actions against Australia's interests
- respond with credible military force, when required.

We must be alert to the full range of current and future threats, including ones in which Australia's sovereignty and security may be tested.

These new policies will require force structure and capability adjustments.

These must be able to hold potential adversaries' forces and infrastructure at risk from greater distance, and therefore influence their calculus of costs involved in threatening Australia's interests.

This includes developing capabilities in areas such as longer-range strike weapons, cyber capabilities, area denial systems. And at the same time, our actions must be true to who we are as a nation, a people, what we value for ourselves, our friends, for our neighbours.

Soon after becoming Prime Minister, I said that our decisions as a nation are a reflection of our character and our values, and so are these decisions today. What we believe in and if need be, what we will defend.

As one of the world's oldest liberal democracies, we know who we are, we know what we believe, we know what we're about, we know what we stand for, and we know what we'll defend. We're about having the freedom to live our lives as we choose in an open and democratic liberal society without coercion, without fear. We're about the rule of law.

We're about being good neighbours, pulling our weight, lending a hand and not leaving the heavy lifting and hard tasks to others. We don't seek to entangle or intimidate or silence our neighbours. We respect their sovereignty. We champion it. And we expect others to respect ours.

Sovereignty means self-respect, freedom to be who we are, ourselves, independent, free-thinking.

We will never surrender this: never ever.

Everything my government does is designed to build our national resilience and protect our sovereignty, our freedom, our values and our independence. This is our great trust.

Australia's defence and capability planning has been updated accordingly and is detailed in the *2020 Force Structure Plan*, which I am also launching today.

And the good news is that we're already pointed in the right direction. This journey didn't start today. It's been happening for some time. The government made a commitment to deliver a more potent, capable and agile ADF in the *2016 White Paper*, and we went further than that. We've backed it up with the investments, something that is often peculiar for white papers.

We are undertaking the biggest regeneration of our Navy since the Second World War and have charted the transition to a fifth-generation Air Force.

This includes the F-35A Lightning Joint Strike Fighter, the most advanced Strike Fighter in the world. The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) will strengthen our high-tech industrial defence capability as well. Minister Price and I have been out there seeing it being built in south-western Sydney, parts of it.

Over 50 Australian companies are already sharing more than \$1.7 billion in contracts as part of the global JSF program, truly exciting.

Greater mobility, protection and strike power also for our Army. New infrastructure to enhance the delivery of our warfighting capabilities from logistics and intelligence to bases, which also brings benefits for many local and regional communities, including Indigenous communities.

And to implement the *Defence Strategic Update*, my government is making a further commitment to better position Defence to respond to rapid changes in the environment that I've noted. We're again providing long-term funding certainty for Defence and defence industry that enables them to plan with confidence.

An updated 10-year funding model that will enable Defence to deliver the strategy and the complex capabilities it requires to keep us safe. This will see capability investment grow to \$270 billion over the next decade. Now, that's up from \$195 billion we committed in the decade following the *2016 Defence White Paper*.

So what will this deliver?

It will expand our plans to acquire sophisticated maritime long-range missiles, air-launched strike and anti-ship weapons, as well as additional land-based weapons.

That's right. That's what we're going to do.

We will also invest in more highly integrated and automated sensors and weapons, including potential development of hypersonic weapons systems. And, this investment will see us build on Defence's collaboration with Australian industry, which is already at a new level.

In 2016, the government released the *Defence Industry Policy Statement*. In 2018, we launched the *Defence Industrial Capability Plan*. As I said, we're not starting here today. We've been long at this task. This was followed by the release of the *Defence Policy for Industry Participation* last year. These steps have all been about making sure we have a robust, resilient and innovative defence industrial base, a base that maximises Australian participation and supports highly skilled Australian jobs and local investment, whether it's the small arms and ammunition being designed and manufactured at Force Ordnance in South Australia, or new capabilities such as Boeing Australia's autonomous Loyal Wingman, designed and produced in Brisbane and Melbourne.

We're on track with the delivery of our Boxer Combat Reconnaissance Vehicles that we've just seen outside here today, an example of which we've got for you to see.

These new armoured vehicles will provide better protection, firepower and mobility to the men and women on the ground, and they will be built right here in Australia. And, it's a similar story for our naval shipbuilding industry.

The *Naval Shipbuilding Plan* in 2017 set out a long-term vision for a strong, sustainable and innovative naval shipbuilding industry here in Australia. Three years on, we are delivering on that vision. Continuous naval shipbuilding in South Australia and Western Australia is now underway. The Arafura Class Offshore Patrol Vessels are in production.

The Guardian Class Pacific patrol boats are being delivered to our Pacific families, which I know Minister Hawke has been on a number of those deliveries; and they couldn't be more pleased, really couldn't.

The Hunter Class frigates and Attack Class submarines are now both on contract and progressing well, and we will cut steel on the first Hunter prototypes at our new Osborne Shipyard in Adelaide later this year. These naval shipbuilding programs are on track, and they are on budget.

The *2020 Force Structure Plan* now includes plans for the acquisition or upgrade of up to 23 different classes of Navy and Army vessels, representing a total investment of almost \$183 billion, up to that.

This program is delivering thousands of jobs, even more important as we come out of the COVID-19 recession, and this will grow over the coming years.

Minister Price has ensured we have been bringing forward elements of our defence procurement and investment, as part of our activity to support the JobMaker program more broadly in response to the corona recession.

Laying the foundation, though, more broadly, in all of these areas of shipbuilding, for advanced shipbuilding for generations to come, so Australia can be in a strong position.

Now, these actions that we've taken since 2016, and those that I'm announcing today, will deliver the cutting-edge capabilities necessary to achieve what we have set out as our objectives.

Shape Australia's strategic environment

The first objective is to shape Australia's strategic environment. The Indo-Pacific is where we live and we want an open, sovereign Indo-Pacific, free from coercion and hegemony. We want a region where all countries, large and small, can engage freely with each other and guided by international rules and norms. These are not unreasonable objectives or ambitions or requests, where countries can pursue their own interests peacefully and without external interference because this means Australia can pursue our interests too.

The Indo-Pacific is where Australia has our greatest influence and can make the most meaningful impact and contribution, and we intend to. And it is also where our need is most pressing. Before the pandemic, the ADF was participating in almost 50 bilateral, minilateral and multilateral exercises in our region each year with great success. We have deepened defence and security cooperation with partners new and old, including the United States, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.

And we are working more closely than ever with our Pacific family.

As part of the Pacific Step-up – which I launched at Lavarack Barracks on, I remember, a very warm day up there in November 2018 in Townsville – we're working in partnership with Pacific countries to grow economies, build resilience and enhance regional stability.

And, the transformation of Blackrock in Fiji has been part of this. As I said when I visited there last year, it's so much more than the bricks and mortar. It symbolises an enduring commitment to a stable, secure and sovereign region. It speaks of a deep relationship, a commitment we've made to all members of our Pacific family: our *vuvale*, our *whanau*.

They've stepped up in return, particularly in the bushfires this year, when PNG and Fiji provided military assistance, and so many of our Pacific neighbours donated so generously. It was wonderful to see Linda's posts of them singing in mess halls around the country, and just their enthusiasm.

My good friend James Marape, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, would be calling me saying they're on their way. And he was keen to understand how they were going each and every day and I'd share the stories; and when he smiles that's a lot of brightness coming back at you. He was so excited.

That's how friends and family deal with each other, and the same was true of Prime Minister Bainimarama as well, so proud that they could be there for us, as we have been there for them on so many occasions and always will.

So, Australia's commitment to the region will only intensify.

Our sharpened focus will see Defence forming even deeper links and trust with regional armed forces and a further expansion in our defence diplomacy cooperation, capability and capacity building.

Our new strategic settings will also make us a better and more efficient ally. It means a lot to us. We've always pulled our weight. We want to continue to do so as challenges increase.

We remain prepared to make military contributions outside of our immediate region, where it is in our national interests to do so – underscored – including in support of US-led coalitions and where it matches the capability we have to offer, a capability built – as Minister Reynolds often reminds me - a capability built to deal with our objectives and where that can be applied in other theatres for other purposes, then of course, we show up.

But we cannot allow such consideration of contingencies to drive our force structure to the detriment of ensuring we have credible capability to respond to any challenge in our immediate region.

Our first job is always our first job. And it is in our region we must be most capable, and the military contributions we make to partnerships and to our ever-closer alliance with the United States, which is the foundation of our defence policy.

The security assurances, intelligence sharing and technological industrial cooperation we enjoy with the United States are, and will remain, critical to our national security.

They are enduring.

But, if we are to be a better and more effective ally, we must be prepared to invest in our own security.

Part of this means improving our awareness of what's happening in the region, and this will include expanding our world-leading Jindalee over-the-horizon

Radar Network to provide wide-area surveillance for Australia's eastern approaches, complementing the existing surveillance of our north and west.

We will also increase our investment in intelligence under-sea surveillance and cyber capabilities to enhance our situational awareness.

Deter actions against Australia's interests

Improving situational awareness provides the foundation for the second of our objectives, which is deterring actions against Australia's interests.

Now, Australia has a highly effective, deployable and integrated military force, of which we are so proud.

But maintaining what is a highly capable but largely defensive force will not equip us to deter attacks against Australia or our sovereign interests in the challenging strategic environment we face.

The ADF now needs stronger deterrence capabilities that can hold potential adversaries, their forces and critical infrastructure at risk from a distance, thereby deterring an attack on Australia and helping to prevent war.

Of course, we can't match all the capabilities in our region. That's not the point of what we're announcing today. That is why we need to ensure our deterrence capabilities play to our strengths.

Australia will invest in longer-range strike weapons, cyber capabilities and area denial.

As mentioned, we are expanding our plans to acquire long-range maritime and land strike capabilities and to invest in more highly integrated sensors and weapons.

We will increase the Australian Defence Force's ability to influence and deny operations directed against our interests below the threshold of traditional armed conflict in what experts call the grey zone, which is becoming ever present and ever expanding.

This will involve boosting Defence's special operations, intelligence and offensive cyber capabilities, as well as its present operations, capacity-building efforts and engagement activities.

\$15 billion investment in cyber and information warfare capabilities says a lot about where the world is at and where the threats are coming from, and it will range across all key touch points of capability: people, platforms, technology, research.

Our investments in these capabilities will enable Defence to more effectively counter cyber attacks on Australia, on Defence and our deployed forces.

And this will be part of my government's broader investment in Australia's cyber defences, resources and capabilities.

It's no secret – nor have we sought to make it one – that the cyber threat landscape is evolving rapidly and soon we will announce, as a government, our new *Cyber Security Strategy*, building on our 2016 strategy and its \$230 million investment in incorporating our \$156 million cybersecurity commitment from last year.

It will include funding of \$1.35 billion over the next decade to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities and assistance provided to Australians through the Australian Signals Directorate, represented here today, and of course also the Australian Cyber Security Centre.

The focus will extend well beyond defence capabilities with for example, over \$31 million devoted to enhancing the ability of the ASD to disrupt cybercrime offshore – taking the fight to foreign criminals that seek to target Australians – and providing assistance to federal, state and territory law enforcement agencies.

Over \$12 million will go to new strategic mitigation and disruption options, enabling ASD and Australia's major telecommunications providers to prevent malicious cyber activity from reaching millions of Australians.

And, I want to thank Australian industry, Australian businesses, for the response to my statement of several weeks ago, where we alerted them to the increasing nature of cyber activity in Australia and I'm advised by ASD the response from the business community has been extremely strong, as well as from state and territory and local governments.

We appreciate that. We'd encourage you to continue to engage. You are joined in this great effort with us.

Respond with credible military force

Now, the third objective, our *Defence Strategy Update* is ensuring Australia can respond to threats with credible military force when required.

The strategic environment and the heightened risk of miscalculation in the region makes this a necessity. There's much more tension in the world these days.

We need an ADF that is ready now but is also future-ready. And, this means streamlining our capability development acquisition processes as well as bolstering supply chain security – heightened by what we've seen during the COVID-19

pandemic – because responding credibly to threats doesn't simply come down to the ADF.

It's about the system that surrounds it, supports it – the ecosystem that it is a part of. And, this is the hard bit, it's about the supports and structures that has to do with the job. We learned that with the health system during the pandemic. It's equally true for our defence capability. It's about Australia having what we need when we need it and the ability to provide it.

And to achieve these aims, the government will invest accordingly in resilience and the ADF's ability to respond to an array of challenges at the same time.

That includes investment in the logistics systems that will improve the ADF's ability to deploy globally and support our allies where it is in Australia's interests.

And over time, we will significantly expand the ADF's guided weapons and explosive ordinance stockholdings.

We will modernise and reform the ADF supply system, including expansion of its fuel holdings and deployable fuel and water systems.

We will prioritise our investment in critical military infrastructure, such as the \$1.6 billion upgrade to RAAF Base Tindall, where I was recently, just before the pandemic really took hold.

Furthermore, the government will significantly increase investment in defence space capabilities – a whole new theatre – including a network of satellites so we have an independent communications network. And, we're going to invest some \$7 billion in those space capabilities over the coming decade, working closely with industry and other government agencies including the Australian Space Agency headquartered in Adelaide, where I was there to open that agency not that long ago.

Working with key partners and allies, we will take advantage of Australia's unique geographical position to better contribute to collective space domain awareness and we will look to enhance the ADF's ability to counter emerging threats in the space domain and ensure our continued access to space-based intelligence and reconnaissance.

And we'll increase our investment in Australia's technology and innovation programs, partnering with defence industry, research institutions and education providers, while also rethinking how Defence can better support during natural disasters.

The defence of Australia is a big team effort and it goes well beyond those who wear uniforms.

It really reaches almost into every aspect of our community and Australian life.

And that's important because we all have a stake in it.

We all have a part to play, always to hold dear what we value most.

Ladies and gentlemen, the strategic challenges of today and tomorrow call Australia in many ways, as we've been called before at difficult times, to play our part in a region where peace, stability and prosperity cannot be taken for granted.

Twenty-twenty has demonstrated once again the multiple challenges and radical uncertainty we face, eerily haunted by similar times many years ago in the 1930s.

Today, with the Indo-Pacific experiencing fundamental shifts and increased threats, our commitment will only deepen.

Our Defence Force will need to be prepared for any future, no matter how unlikely and hopefully not needed in the worst of circumstances.

And I'm very confident, very confident, in both the leadership and the plans of our Defence Forces, their resources, the people, whether from those in command to those following commands, there is a great culture, a tremendous culture, that will build even stronger in the future under the leadership that I know is in place from Minister Reynolds and the Chief of Defence Force, General Campbell and Secretary Moriarty.

It has the budget certainty, our defence effort, of the government's 10-year funding model and our sustained record of taking defence and national security seriously.

I acknowledged Jim Molan before. It was Jim who convinced our government before we came to government of the strategic need to make the big commitment to have the budget to do the things that Australia needed to defend itself.

We're putting into action all of this, with the *Defence Strategic Update* and *Force Structure Plan*. We're stepping up, once again, for Australia – to protect our sovereignty, to preserve peace, which we value, to help our region meet the challenges of the 21st century together – because that is how we will keep Australians safe.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.³

³ The *2020 Defence Strategic Update* and *2020 Force Structure Plan* are available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/StrategicUpdate-2020/>

The contending domestic and international imperatives of Indonesia's China challenge

Greta Nabbs-Keller

Introduction

As Australia's economic enmeshment with China has constrained Canberra's foreign policy manoeuvre, so it has been the case for Australia's neighbours in South-East Asia. A consequential state for Australia and its partners in the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia is economically reliant on China but shares aspects of Australia's strategic distrust. In contrast with Australia, however, which is just beginning to feel the divisive effects of Beijing's coercive power in its body politic, the domestic political determinants of Indonesia's China policy have an unusual salience. Indonesian governments must balance complex domestic political imperatives with international pressures in relations with China;¹ imperatives which lie not only in the material but also in the ideational realm.

This article seeks to highlight the inherent tensions in Indonesia's contemporary China policy posed by the executive's requirement to mediate international and domestic political imperatives. Such mediation is difficult for all states to manage in policy terms, but in the case of Indonesia–China relations, the entanglement of domestic politics with foreign policy considerations is especially pronounced. With an analytical focus on presidential executive agency, the article contends

1 The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of two anonymous reviewers who provided valuable and constructive comment.

Theoretical frameworks, which elucidate the influence of domestic political variables on foreign policy, provide a valuable tool for understanding contending policy drivers. Such tools can be found in the scholarship focused on the nexus between international relations and domestic politics, most notably Robert Putnam's 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of the Two Level Game' (1988). Putnam's two-level approach recognised that central decision-makers strive to reconcile domestic and international imperatives (the 'intermestic') simultaneously. In this predicament, they face distinctive strategic opportunities and strategic dilemmas. Robert Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of the Two Level Game', *International Organization*, 1988, 42(3):427–460.

that President Joko (Jokowi) Widodo's prioritisation of economic development goals in Indonesia's relationship with China, without due regard to negative domestic political sentiment and strategic concerns, has inserted greater volatility into current policy settings. Through rich empirical analysis, the article builds on the extant literature on Indonesia–China relations to explore the interplay between recent economic, strategic and domestic political developments as they relate to Jakarta's complex and multidimensional relationship with Beijing.² The manifestation of institutional and ministerial differences on China within the Indonesian government, the article reveals, can be understood by the absence of a coherent whole-of-government policy approach and a propensity by sections of Indonesia's politico-military elites to leverage anti-Chinese sentiment for personal political gain. As COVID-19 economic hardship intensifies, domestic political variables represented in hardline Islamic and protectionist sentiment will form a powerful driver of policy change.

The article commences by examining Jokowi's economic development priorities, which align with Beijing's geo-economic objectives in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It illustrates how Jokowi's policy mandate has facilitated increased Chinese aid, trade and investment, increasing the visible manifestations of China's economic penetration in infrastructure and extractives projects. These developments have alienated domestic constituencies over issues associated with Chinese labour, environmental protection and quality standards and also had the effect of spurring general unease over the nation's economic dependence on China.

The analysis continues by examining Indonesia's policy response to Beijing's increasing maritime assertiveness in Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around the Natuna island chain. It contends that Jokowi-led governments have prioritised national economic imperatives over pressing strategic and foreign policy concerns, which has increased national security pressures for Jakarta and diminished its leadership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

2 Despite the country's growing economic convergence and expansion in people-to-people exchange, foreign policy scholars noted a 'persistent ambiguity' or 'ambivalence' remained on Indonesia's part. See Rizal Sukma, 'Indonesian Perceptions of China: The Domestic Bases of Persistent Ambiguity', in Herbert Yee and Ian Storey (eds), *China Threat: Perceptions, Myths and Reality*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2002, pp183–207; Evan Laksmana, 'Dimensions of Ambivalence in Indonesia–China Relations', *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, 2011, 13(1):24–31; See chapter 9 in Ian Storey, *Southeast Asia and the Rise of China: The Search for Security*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2013. More recent scholarship identified a more negative shift in Indonesian public perceptions of China, attributed to key developments during Jokowi's presidency. See Siwage Dharma Negara and Leo Suryadinata, 'Indonesia and China's Belt and Road Initiatives: Perspectives, Issues and Prospects', *Trends in Southeast Asia*, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018 (no.11); Evi Fitriani, 'Indonesian perceptions of the rise of China: dare you, dare you not', *The Pacific Review*, 2018, 31(3):391–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2018.1428677>; and Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'Indonesia–China Relations: Coming Full Circle?' in Daljit Singh & Malcolm Cook (eds.), *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2019, pp 145–162, ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute. https://muse.jhu.edu/issue/40251#info_wrap

The third section of the article unpacks the entanglement of domestic politics and foreign policy in the case of Indonesia's China policy. It explores how negative public sentiment about economic and strategic variables has intersected with shifts in Indonesia's domestic polity, which has seen the mobilisation of opposition to Jokowi around a multidimensional Chinese threat. The final section of the article considers the economic, strategic and domestic political effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It highlights Indonesia's receptiveness to China's generous economic assistance and vaccine diplomacy but argues this has been balanced by ongoing hedging and opportunity gains in Indonesia's foreign policy response. The article argues that as the effects of the pandemic increase economic hardship in Indonesia, they risk exacerbating existing social cleavages with an attendant rise in anti-Chinese sentiment.

Economic penetration

Many Indonesians believe China represents the future, in that Indonesia's economic fortunes will be inevitably and increasingly tied to China.

*Calvin Neonardi Director of Indonesia China Business Council*³

Indigenous Indonesian threat perceptions of the Chinese are complex, multi-dimensional and schismatic. They are based on a complex mix of historical, sociocultural, economic and political determinants that conflate mainland China and Chinese Indonesians (*Tionghoa*) in the minds of indigenous (*pribumi*) Indonesians. At the domestic level, anti-Chinese sentiment manifests itself in racial stereotyping, online vilification, physical violence and economic resentment. At the international political level, Indonesia's distrust of the Chinese state stems back to the mid-60s when Beijing-backed communist subversive movements across South-East Asia.

In 1965, General Suharto, who would become Indonesia's second president, led a military counter coup against elements of the Beijing-backed Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The subsequent campaign of military-led violence and intimidation resulted in the deaths of approximately 500,000 alleged PKI supporters and the eradication of the political left from the bureaucracy and politics. In 1967, the Chinese embassy was razed in Jakarta and the New Order regime suspended diplomatic relations with China for 23 years. Such dramatic political events in Indonesia cemented the nexus between Indonesian regime legitimacy

³ Calvin Neonardi, Director of the Indonesia China Business Council and Vice-Secretary General of Indonesia Guangdong Association Federation quoted in Randy Mulyanto, 'After 70 years of ties, China and Indonesia have a fruitful, complicated relationship', *South China Morning Post*, 12 April 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3079446/after-70-years-ties-china-and-indonesia-have-fruitful>

and the defeat of Chinese-backed communist subversion in the nation's political consciousness. It also left residual doubts about the loyalty of *Tionghoa* to the Indonesian state. Although diplomatic relations were officially normalised in 1990, a range of restrictions on engagement with Beijing and discriminatory measures against Indonesia's Chinese community remained until Indonesia's democratic transition in 1998. Political liberalisation expedited Indonesia's re-engagement with China but it failed to eradicate latent resentments, particularly about the perceived economic dominance of the ethnic Chinese.⁴

Under the three presidents who immediately preceded Jokowi – Abdurrahman Wahid (1999–2001), Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001–2004) and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004–2014) – China's rising international economic significance and willingness to assist Indonesia's economic recovery following the Asian financial crisis and natural disasters was not lost on political leaders. Relations strengthened with an increasing frequency of government-to-government meetings, expansion of economic and sociocultural exchange, and the extension of bilateral engagement into the previously sensitive areas of defence and security.⁵ A Strategic Partnership agreement, signed in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's first term in office, was upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2013. In the same year, China eclipsed Japan as Indonesia's largest trading partner and emerged as an important financier of national infrastructure projects.⁶ It was in the context of an increasingly close and constructive government-to-government relationship between Jakarta and Beijing that Jokowi was elected in July 2014 with an ambitious mandate to develop infrastructure and connectivity (I&C) across Indonesia's expansive archipelago.

Jokowi's election manifesto committed to: developing Indonesia as a Global Maritime Fulcrum (*Poros Maritim Dunia*); reforming the nation's moral character (*Revolusi Mental*); and mobilising strategic sectors of the domestic economy for national development and competitiveness, the latter contained in his Nine Principles policy mandate (*Nawacita*). For the new president, foreign policy would be harnessed to power Indonesia's growth and support national economic

4 Specialist on the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, Charles Coppel, wrote that 'it is commonly and loosely said that ethnic Chinese control 70 per cent (or more) of the Indonesian economy. A less extreme formulation is that they "control 70 per cent of the private, corporate domestic capital (rather than the economy more broadly)". See 'Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia After Soeharto' in Leo Suryadinata (ed), *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia*, ISEAS, Singapore, 2008, p 132.

5 For analysis on China's increasing defence engagement with Indonesia see Ian Storey, 'China's Bilateral Defense Diplomacy in Southeast Asia', *Asian Security*, 2012, 8(3):287–310, <https://doi:10.1080/14799855.2012.723928>

6 Riski Raisa Putra, 'Quick strategies needed to shift dependency on China', *The Jakarta Post*, 14 February 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/02/14/quick-strategies-needed-to-shift-dependency-on-china.html#:~:text=Since%202013%2C%20China%20has%20replaced,and%20%2432.58%20billion%20in%20imports>

reform. Prior to his election, Jokowi indicated that diplomacy would be more down to earth (*diplomasi yang membumi*) and more people-centred (*diplomasi pro-rakyat*). In contrast to his predecessor, who had overseen a strategic democratisation agenda in ASEAN and higher profile for Indonesia in international fora, Jokowi viewed foreign policy in more practical, cost–benefit terms. He, reportedly, had little understanding of normative-based diplomacy or balance of power politics, and directed Indonesia's overseas missions to prioritise 'TTI' (Trade, Tourism and Investment) concerns.⁷

Upon election, Jokowi directed his key economic and planning ministries to achieve ambitious targets for both the construction of new, and renovation of existing, infrastructure across the world's largest archipelagic state. His administration declared it would boost infrastructure investment by USD323 billion over the 2015–2022 period to enable the construction of 3,650 kilometres of roads, 3,258 kilometres of railway, 24 new seaports, 15 new airports, as well as power plants with a total capacity of 35 gigawatts.⁸ Cognisant that state budget funds were insufficient to support such an expansive infrastructure drive, the Indonesian government sought to make up the shortfall through external loans and Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements between Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (SoEs) and mainly foreign investors.⁹

Although plans for some of the large Chinese infrastructure projects had preceded Jokowi, they gathered in pace and number under the new government's pursuit of 7 per cent GDP growth rates and multitude of I&C plans. As Jokowi's first term proceeded, analysts noted that Indonesia exhibited an increasing preference for Chinese aid, mainly in the form of grants and soft loans. As Australian National University (ANU) expert Pierre van der Eng noted, these were 'overwhelming directed towards infrastructure development projects – all designed and constructed by Chinese firms.'¹⁰

7 For an idea of Jokowi's foreign policy approach see Aaron Connelly, 'Sovereignty and the Sea: President Joko Widodo's Foreign Policy Challenges', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 2015, 37(1):5–6; and Ben Bland, *Man of Contradictions: Joko Widodo and the struggle to remake Indonesia*, A Lowy Institute Paper, Penguin Books, Sydney, 2020.

8 Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal [Indonesian Investment Coordinating Board], 'Government to Offer Investment Opportunities', 20 September 2018. <https://www9.bkpm.go.id/en/publication/detail/news/government-to-offer-investment-opportunities>

9 *Visi 2045* [Vision 2045] stipulates that infrastructure finance sources will be comprised of 25% from PPPs, 25% from SOEs, 35% from Government and 15% from Private capital. See Bappenas Paparan MPPN [National Development Planning Ministry Description of MPPN], *VisiIndonesia-2045*. <https://luk.staff.ugm.ac.id/atatur/BahanPaparanMPPN-VisiIndonesia2045-25September2017.pdf>

10 In contrast to China, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries and multilateral entities also disburse aid funding for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty alleviation and capacity building. See Pierre van der Eng, 'Why does Indonesia seem to prefer foreign aid from China?'. *East Asia Forum*, 22 December 2017. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/12/02/why-does-indonesia-seem-to-prefer-foreign-aid-from-china/>

The steady flow of private and state-backed Chinese capital during Jokowi's first term was reflected in Indonesia's Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) figures. BKPM reported that Chinese investment in Indonesia doubled to USD1.6 billion in January to September 2016, up from around USD600 million in 2015.¹¹ In 2019, China surpassed Japan as the second largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) at USD4.74 billion with 2,130 projects in Indonesia.¹² This represented a twofold increase during 2019 and 23.1% of total foreign investment, according to BKPM.¹³ Indonesia's trade figures further revealed China's significance to Indonesia's economy. The value of imports from China in 2020 represented 26.3% of Indonesia's total at USD44.9 billion, whilst non-oil and gas exports represented the largest proportion of Indonesia's exports at 16.7% or USD27.9 billion. Indonesia was, in addition, also heavily dependent on raw materials – like steel, iron and electrical components – from China for its manufacturing sector.¹⁴

In a bid to replicate Bali's tourism success and develop Indonesia's outer islands, in 2017 the President announced plans for 'Ten New Balis' and sought an increase in Chinese tourists from 2 to 10 million per annum.¹⁵ Chinese investment extended well beyond tourism and physical infrastructure, however, to joint ventures in food and beverages, extractives, electronics and plantations.¹⁶ Indeed, the pillars of Indonesia's national Vision 2045 (*Visi 2045*),¹⁷ with its priorities for developing Indonesia's science and technology, manufacturing, creative economy, infrastructure and tourism sectors, highlighted the complementarities between Jokowi's economic priorities and the technical skills and liquidity proffered by mainland Chinese development banks, SoEs and commercial partners. Interestingly, despite assumptions that large mainland Chinese companies would seek ethnic Chinese companies as Joint Venture (JV) partners, academic

11 'China deepens economic ties with Indonesia as investment doubles', *Business Times*, 1 November 2016. <https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/china-deepens-economic-ties-with-indonesia-as-investment-doubles>

12 'Kepala BKPM Sebut Virus Korona Bisa Turunkan Investasi China ke Indonesia' [BKPM Head Says Coronavirus Could Reduce Chinese Investment in Indonesia], *Okezone*, 29 Januari 2020. <https://economy.okezone.com/read/2020/01/29/20/2160140/kepala-bkpm-sebut-virus-korona-bisa-turunkan-investasi-china-ke-indonesia>

13 'Kepala BKPM Sebut Virus Korona Bisa Turunkan Investasi China ke Indonesia'.

14 Agus Herta Sumarto, 'Covid-19 dan Momentum Mengubah Struktur Ekonomi' [Covid-19 and the Momentum to Change the Structure of the Economy], *Kompas*, 17 April 2020. <https://bebas.kompas.id/baca/opini/2020/04/17/covid-19-dan-momentum-mengubah-struktur-ekonomi/>

15 Siwaga Dharma Negara and Leo Suryadinata, 'Indonesia and China's Belt and Road Initiatives', p 27; Francis Chan, 'Jokowi plans to replicate Bali's success in 10 other Indonesian spots', *Straits Times*, 10 October 2017. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/jokowi-plans-to-replicate-balis-success-in-10-other-indonesian-spots>

16 Negara and Suryadinata, 'Indonesia and China's Belt and Road Initiatives', pp 20–21.

17 Bappenas, *Visi 2045*.

experts, Negara and Suryadinata, were only able to identify a few JVs owned by Chinese Indonesians.¹⁸

In the year preceding Jokowi's ascension to the presidency, China's new and immensely powerful leader, Xi Jinping had announced the One Belt One Road (OBOR), a global I&C agenda unprecedented in scale and ambition. In the same year, Beijing led the establishment of a new Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB)¹⁹, to rival the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) founded by the US and Japan. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as OBOR was subsequently abbreviated to, included both overland and Maritime Silk Road components. For Beijing, Indonesia's geographic location, straddling major sea lines of communication between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea enhanced its strategic significance for the Maritime Silk Road component, through which China aimed to boost regional maritime economic development and connectivity, enhance its energy and food security, and its access to Middle East and European markets. However, for many strategic analysts, the BRI's undeclared geopolitical objectives may be far less magnanimous. Development of a chain of regional port facilities could enhance both the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLA-N) ability to operate further into the Indian Ocean and provide an opportunity for China to seize vital strategic assets from debt distressed states. Critics of China have labelled this strategy 'debt diplomacy'.²⁰

In fact, Jakarta was not unaware of the risks in the BRI or, indeed in Xi's 'China Dream,' which envisioned China's rejuvenation as a global superpower.²¹ After Jakarta's initially cautious approach to the BRI, in 2019 the Indonesian government invited Beijing to invest in 30 BRI projects, worth around USD91 billion.²² Mindful of domestic sensitivities, Jakarta had been reluctant to label pre-Xi Jinping Chinese projects 'BRI', as Beijing was inclined to do. In order

18 BRI projects are mega projects requiring massive capital and thus China's partners are usually Indonesian SoEs rather than ethnic Chinese companies, stated Suryadinata. See Negara and Suryadinata, 'Indonesia and China's Belt and Road Initiatives', p 21.

19 The AIIB subsequently co-funded urban infrastructure, tourism and irrigation projects with the Government of Indonesia and the World Bank. See AIIB, Approved Projects, *Indonesia*, <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/approved/index.html> See Table 2 AIIB Infrastructure Projects in Kyle Springer, 'Building Bridges: Indonesia's Infrastructure Choices', *Economics of the Indo-Pacific Series*, Perth USAsia Centre, 5, July 2019, p 25. <https://perthusasia.edu.au/our-work/building-bridges-navigating-indonesias>

20 Mark Green, 'China's Debt Diplomacy', Argument, *Foreign Policy*, 25 April 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/04/25/chinas-debt-diplomacy/>

21 Ref. R H McMaster. How China Sees the World, *The Atlantic*, May 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/05/mcmaster-china-strategy/609088/>; Michael A Peters, 'The Chinese Dream: Xi Jinping thought on Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2017, 49(14): 1299–1304. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131857.2017.1407578>

22 Wilda Asmarini and Maikel Jefriando, 'Indonesia asks China for special fund under Belt and Road: ministers', *Reuters*, 13 July 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-china-beltandroad/indonesia-asks-china-for-special-fund-under-belt-and-road-ministers-idUSKCN1TY1DU>

to shield the government from default risk, the Ministry of Finance (Kemkeu) also requested a special fund be raised for low interest loans on a strictly business-to-business basis.²³ Indonesia's future BRI projects are focused on four key economic corridors located in North Sumatra, North Kalimantan, North Sulawesi and Bali. These lie outside Indonesia's cultural and political heartland of Java, where Chinese projects have become more contentious.

Indeed, China's growing economic clout in Indonesia has not been without controversy. In the minds of many Indonesians, the manifestations of Chinese capital have become synonymous with Jokowi's economic agenda. Jokowi's 'new developmentalism', as ANU scholar Eve Warburton characterised it, focused 'almost exclusively...on a narrow set of pragmatic economic programs specifically, where infrastructure, deregulation, and de-bureaucratisation' attracted increasing criticism domestically.²⁴ Others highlight the government's 'obsession' with physical infrastructure at the expense of addressing non-physical constraints manifest in sound market regulations, supportive bureaucracies and political institutions,²⁵ while international economic analysts have increasingly sounded the alarm on the growing debt exposure of Indonesia's SoEs.²⁶ Jokowi's high profile Jakarta-Bandung High Speed Rail (HSR) project came under particular criticism domestically over land acquisition challenges, lack of transparency and project delays.²⁷ Although in reality much of the fault lay at the Indonesian end, the HSR project proved a ready target for anti-China critics.

Resentments were also expressed about the negative impacts of Chinese tourism and infrastructure projects on local economies, environments and communities. Chinese infrastructure projects, in contrast to other key partners such as Japan and Korea, became synonymous with poor quality, lack of environmental safeguards and lack of local cultural sensitivities. For example, in 2017 a fake video in which a Chinese foreman refused to allow Indonesian workers

23 China's counter proposal did not seek Indonesian state funds, and its project would be a wholly private business deal, led by a consortium of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in both countries. See Wilmar Salim and Siwage Dharma Negara, 'Why is the High-Speed Rail Project so Important to Indonesia', *Perspective*, ISEAS, 2016, 16, 7 April 2016.

24 Eve Warburton, 'Jokowi and the New Developmentalism', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 2017, 52(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00074918.2016.1249262>

25 Trissia Wijaya and Samuel Nursamsu, 'The Trouble With Indonesia's Infrastructure Obsession', *The Diplomat*, 9 January 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/the-trouble-with-indonesias-infrastructure-obsession/>

26 'Rising debt at Indonesian SOEs poses indirect fiscal risks: OECD', *Reuters*, 10 October 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-imf-worldbank-oecd-indonesia/rising-debt-at-indonesian-soes-poses-indirect-fiscal-risks-oecd-idUSKCN1MK06Q>

27 Siswaga Dharma Negara and Leo Suryadinata, 'Jakarta-Bandung High Speed Rail Project: Little Progress, Many Challenges', *Perspective*, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2018, 2, 4 January 2018.

to perform their Friday prayers went viral.²⁸ In Sumatra, environmentalists raised concerns about a Chinese hydropower project which threatened the highly endangered Tapanuli orangutan sub-species and in Bali, Chinese 'zero dollar' tourism, where the profits were channelled solely to China-based tour operators, attracted closer scrutiny from authorities.²⁹

But it was the issue of legal and illegal Chinese workers brought in to work as labourers, technicians and managers on Chinese-funded infrastructure projects in Indonesia that became a lightning rod issue for the Jokowi administration. A preference by Chinese companies to bring their own workers in for infrastructure projects compounded both deep-seated protectionist and xenophobic sentiment in Indonesia. Official statistics supported perceptions that the number of Chinese workers in Indonesia had risen. *Katadata*, an Indonesia-based media company focusing on economics and business, determined that numbers rose by 22.9% over the 2017–2018 period. Meanwhile, the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) revealed that the number of Chinese workers had risen 'dramatically' after a new mining law was passed in 2009.³⁰ This, the IPAC report argued, caused 'local resentment over pay differentials, perceived preferential hiring of foreigners over locals, culture clashes, pollution and corruption.'³¹ In September 2019, Indonesia's manpower ministry confirmed there were 32,209 mainland Chinese workers in Indonesia.³² This represented the largest number after Japan and South Korea,³³ but did not include a figure for illegal Chinese workers – the numbers of which were prone to exaggeration and politicisation.³⁴

In summary, Jokowi's ambitious I&C agenda created strategic economic opportunities for the Widodo government in its alignment with Beijing's geo-economic

28 Anwar, 'Coming Full Circle', p 157; Kementerian Komunikasi and Informatika (Kominfo), Kategori:Hoax, '[DISINFORMASI] Orang Islam Dilarang Shalat Jum'at Oleh China di Morowali' [Ministry of Communications and Information, Category: Hoax, Disinformation, Muslims Forbidden from Praying by Chinese in Morowali], 22 March 2019. https://www.kominfo.go.id/content/detail/17397/disinformasi-orang-islam-dilarang-shalat-jumat-oleh-china-di-morowali/0/laporan_isu_hoaks

29 Emma Connors, 'Bali cracks down on 'zero-dollar' package tourism from China', *Australian Financial Review*, 5 December 2019. <https://www.afr.com/world/asia/bali-cracks-down-on-zero-dollar-package-tourism-from-china-20191203-p53gfx>

30 Institute of Policy Analysis and Conflict (IPAC), 'COVID-19 and ISIS in Indonesia', *IPAC Short Briefing* No.1, 2 April 2020. <http://www.understandingconflict.org/en/conflict/read/89/IPAC-Short-Briefing-No1-COVID-19-AND-ISIS-IN-INDONESIA>

31 IPAC, 'COVID-19 and ISIS in Indonesia'.

32 IPAC, 'COVID-19 and ISIS in Indonesia'.

33 Trio Hamdani, 'Tenaga Kerja China Paling Banyak di RI, Ada 32.209 Orang' [At the Most, There are 32, 209 Chinese Workers in Indonesia], *Detik.com*, 27 February 2019. <https://finance.detik.com/berita-ekonomi-bisnis/d-4445835/tenaga-kerja-china-paling-banyak-di-ri-ada-32209-orang>

34 Hill and Negara have described the number of foreign workers in Indonesia compared to Indonesian migrant workers overseas as 'miniscule' at a fraction of less than 1% of total employment in 2018. Hal Hill and Siwage Dharma Negara (eds), *The Indonesian Economy in Transition: Policy Challenges in the Jokowi Era and Beyond*, ISEAS, Singapore, 2019, p 311.

ambitions, but also had the effect of alienating domestic constituencies concerned both about economic over-reliance and specific issue-areas associated with China's economic penetration. Whilst Jokowi's economic development priorities converged neatly with the geo-economic objectives of the BRI and the capital flows it underpinned, other aspects of Beijing's strategic ambitions were far less palatable. As Xi consolidated power and pursued his 'China Dream', Indonesia began to increasingly feel the pressure of China's growing maritime assertiveness at both the national and regional level. Jokowi's prioritisation of economic policy goals over pressing strategic and foreign policy imperatives had the effect of further undermining ASEAN unity and constraining Indonesia's leadership within it.

Strategic spectre

Indonesia will never recognise nine dash lines or unilateral claims made by China that do not have legal reasons recognised by international law.

*Foreign Minister, Retno Marsudi*³⁵

The 'Natuna issue', as many Indonesian foreign policy scholars characterise it simply, has been a concern to the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) since the early 1990s. TNI and its New Order predecessor, ABRI, had conducted a series of large scale joint exercises (Latgab) around Indonesia's South China Sea-located Natuna island chain (located in Riau Island's Province), following Beijing's seizure of Mischief Reef from the Philippines in 1994. More broadly, uncertainties over China's intentions in Indonesia's EEZ had been the catalyst for a number of TNI force disposition, defence industry and procurement decisions, the boosting of TNI's outer island presence, as well as its joint warfare, amphibious, surface and submarine capabilities.³⁶

In contrast, Indonesia's foreign ministry (Kemlu) had long played an honest broker role between ASEAN claimant states – Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines and Vietnam – in their rival territorial claims with China. This was motivated both by Jakarta's sense of entitlement in South-East Asian affairs and guided by its independent and active (*bebas-aktif*) foreign policy doctrine.³⁷ Indonesia, formally

35 Retno Marsudi quoted in 'Indonesia will not negotiate its sovereignty in South China Sea', *Straits Times*, 8 January 2020. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/indonesia-will-not-negotiate-its-sovereignty-in-south-china-sea>

36 See Shang-su Wu, 'What Indonesia's Submarine Purchase Tells Us About its Strategic Priorities', *Australian Outlook*, Australian Institute of International Affairs, 3 June 2019. <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/indonesias-submarine-purchase/>; Derek Grossman, 'Military Build-Up in the South China Sea' in Leszek Buszynski and Do Thanh Hai Eds., *The South China Sea: From a Regional Maritime Dispute to Geo-Strategic Competition*, Routledge, London, 2020, pp182–200. <https://doi:10.4324/9780429331480>

37 Michael Leifer, *Indonesia's foreign policy*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1983.

a non-aligned state, had long sought an equilibrium in the regional distribution of power that would preserve South-East Asia's strategic autonomy. Through a hedging strategy against major power influence, including that of China, Indonesia had pursued a deliberate diversification strategy in its foreign partnerships, ranging from defence procurement to health cooperation and investment.

For Jakarta, officially a non-claimant state, the South China Sea issue had important bilateral as well as multilateral dimensions. Indonesia had staked its regional diplomatic leadership on mediating the dispute since 1990, when it commenced leading a series of informal workshops on 'Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea'. Moreover, Indonesian diplomats had played a key role in drafting the 'Declaration of Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea', which was supposed to precede a binding Code of Conduct. Negotiations around both of these documents proved highly protracted, however, and neither were fully implemented or accepted by all parties to the dispute. As ASEAN sought to bind China to maritime codes of conduct governing behaviour, Beijing continued to boost its strategic presence in the South China Sea through the acceleration of land reclamation activities, militarisation of islets and reefs, as well as a suite of quasi-legal measures.³⁸

In fact, Indonesia's 'awkward' non-claimant position had become increasingly difficult as China grew in military capability and strategic assertiveness.³⁹ Indonesia had long rejected China's Nine Dash Line claim, which intersected with Indonesia's Natuna islands-generated EEZ, with a position that any acknowledgement of a territorial dispute with Beijing would only serve to legitimatise that claim. Moreover, Indonesian diplomats had played a key role in formulating the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which recognised Indonesia's maritime territorial boundaries under international law. As the world's largest archipelagic state, Indonesia had much to lose in any erosion of UNCLOS principles. But China's militarisation of islets and reefs in the Spratly island chain had the effect of enabling Chinese paramilitary vessels to operate in or in close proximity to the Indonesian archipelago for extended periods of time.

Although there had been earlier reported incidents involving Indonesian Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) vessels with China Coast Guard (CCG) and Chinese fishing vessels, events reached a climax in successive maritime clashes in 2016. Under Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister, Susi Pudjiastuti, Indonesia had

38 See generally Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), *Analysis*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington. <https://amti.csis.org/analysis/>

39 Laksmana attributed Indonesia's 'lacklustre' response to Indonesia's historical ambivalence toward China, non-claimant position, and chaotic maritime security governance. Evan Laksmana, 'The Domestic Politics of Indonesia's Approach to the Tribunal Ruling and the South China Sea', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, December 2016, 38(3):383.

implemented a tougher approach to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing as part of its GMF doctrine. Susi was an outspoken, self-made fisheries and aviation entrepreneur, who became a highly popular minister for her uncompromising approach to the protection of Indonesia's sovereign marine resources. In March 2016, a CCG vessel rammed one of its own fishing vessels that had been seized by the KKP out of Indonesia's waters. This incident was followed in May by the visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) of a Chinese fishing vessel conducted by an Indonesian Naval Corvette, which saw the Corvette fire warning shots and detain the Chinese crew, some of whom were reportedly injured. In response, Susi summoned the Chinese ambassador, usually the prerogative of the foreign minister, and publicly condemned Chinese actions. The tit for tat between Indonesian and Chinese officials played out dramatically in Indonesia's media but also increased tensions in cabinet. After Jokowi reportedly implored Susi to preserve harmonious relations with China, she retorted that 'a good relationship should be maintained but stealing fish is not part of that good relationship!'⁴⁰

Beijing's new claim to 'traditional fishing grounds' and 'historic rights' demanded some form of publicly visible policy response. Jokowi subsequently led a limited cabinet meeting – 'a symbolic show of force' as Indonesian strategic analyst Evan Laksmana characterised it – aboard the Corvette involved in the earlier VBSS as a sign of Indonesia's resolve to use military assets to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁴¹ The government also announced it would accelerate economic development in Natuna in partnership with Japan, whilst Kemlu set about arranging for the formal re-badging of the maritime area as the 'North Natuna Sea' (*Laut Natuna Utara*).⁴² In defence terms, Indonesia proceeded with the establishment of the first of five joint regional defence commands (Kogabwilhan), strategically positioned for access to the South China Sea and the Malacca Strait.⁴³

40 Susi' stated in Indonesian: "Hubungan baik harus dijaga, tapi pencurian ikan bukan termasuk hubungan baik yang perlu dijaga", 'Soal Insiden Laut Cina Selatan, Menteri Susi: Kami Geram' [Issue of the South China Sea Incident, Minister Susi: We are Furious], *Tempo.co*, 20 June 2016. <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/781612/soal-insiden-laut-cina-selatan-menteri-susi-kami-geram>

41 Laksmana, 'The Domestic Politics of Indonesia's Approach to the Tribunal Ruling', p 383.

42 Aaron L Connelly, 'Indonesia's new North Natuna Sea: What's in a name?' *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute for International Policy, 19 July 2017. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/indonesia-s-new-north-natuna-sea-what-s-name>

43 The first Kogabwilhan was established at Tanjung Pinang, Bintan in Riau Islands Province. Although the Kogabwilhan's were also designed to provide command positions for Indonesia's swollen senior officer corps, in the period following the 2016 incidents, the Indonesian government fortified its defence presence on main island Natuna Besar. TNI-Army has deployed an army composite battalion comprising combat engineers, air defence artillery and field artillery units. The Navy has deployed a composite marine company and built facilities to support its warships operating in the waters surrounding Natuna. The Air Force has built a runway and integrated hangar facilities to support its UAV squadron and any fighters deployed to Natuna Besar.

But cabinet divisions and a broader lack of interagency coordination continued to hamper Indonesia's ability to develop a more coherent policy response. Separate interventions by the Defence, Foreign Affairs and Maritime Affairs and Fisheries ministers following the Natuna incidents demonstrated an alarming lack of whole-of-government coordination on the issue. Meanwhile, the government's release of an *Indonesian Ocean Policy* in 2017 that aimed to clarify implementation of the GMF and codify respective agency responsibilities highlighted inherent agency overlap and broader maritime governance challenges. Laksmana noted, with regard to the Ocean Policy, that realisation of the GMF's seven pillars was contingent upon '76 programs spread across dozens of ministries and agencies in charge of 425 activities designed to achieve 330 targets.'⁴⁴ For CSIS Jakarta analyst, Christina Tjhin, 'the Indonesian government's incompetence in devising a strategic China policy' was potentially 'a greater threat than the rise of China itself.'⁴⁵

Further developments in 2016, highlighted the absence of Indonesian leadership on foreign policy matters of vital importance to the region involving China. On 12 July, an Arbitral Tribunal established under the registry of the UNCLOS Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) released its ruling on a case brought by the Philippines against China's Nine Dash Line claim. The Tribunal 'ruled in favour of the majority of the Philippines's 15 legal complaints submitted against China and further condemned China's destruction of sensitive coral reef and marine ecosystems.'⁴⁶ It was strong vindication of not only the Philippines's position but also international maritime law as the basis for legal certainty in territorial disputes with Beijing. The Indonesian government's 'bland' 130-word response,⁴⁷ however, dismayed members of Indonesia's foreign policy community who implored Jokowi 'to fully support and mobilise the entire foreign policy establishment to play a more proactive, consistent, and productive leadership in ASEAN's management of the South China Sea issue.'⁴⁸

Indonesia's weak response came in contrast to its leadership on South China Sea issues under earlier administrations. Indonesia's interventions following the

44 Evan Laksmana, 'Indonesian Sea Policy: Accelerating Jokowi's Global Maritime Fulcrum?', *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, 23 March 2017. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e3c9e1d1758e2877e03ba5/t/5c2a922cf950b760dd5fab9f/1546293805070/AMTI_Indonesian_Sea_Policy_Accelerating_Jokow.pdf

45 Christine Tjhin, 'Indonesia's Relations with China: Productive and Pragmatic, but not yet a Strategic Partnership', 2011 *China Report*, 2012, 48(3):303–315, p 312.

46 Evan A Laksmana, 'A statement on the South China Sea ruling', *New Mandala*, 27 July 2016. <https://www.newmandala.org/statement-south-china-sea-ruling/>

47 See Laksmana, 'The Domestic Politics of Indonesia's Approach to the Tribunal Ruling' p 382 for statement. Apparently, the statement was preceded by 'cabinet level debates going back a few weeks', p 386.

48 Laksmana, 'The Domestic Politics of Indonesia's Approach to the Tribunal Ruling'.

Phnom Penh 2012 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in foreign minister Marty Natalegawa's 'shuttle diplomacy' to regional capitals managed to salvage consensus on a joint communique.⁴⁹ At the 2016 Vientiane AMM, Cambodia's objection meant that the joint communique omitted any reference to the PCA ruling issued just 11 days prior. Such divisions revealed China's ability to erode ASEAN consensus through a 'sophisticated coercion and inducement strategy,' as ASPI analyst Huong Le Thu has argued.⁵⁰

Jokowi's reluctance to disrupt positive relations with Beijing over the March 2016 Natuna incidents and the PCA ruling related in part to Indonesia's dependence on China for achievement of its national development goals. Incursions by CCG and fishing vessels re-emerged dramatically over the 2019–2020 New Year period when up to 63 Chinese vessels intruded or remained proximate to Indonesia's EEZ. In response, Kemlu issued twodiplomatic protests rejecting China's 'unilateral claim' and reaffirming Indonesia's territorial sovereignty based on UNCLOS.⁵¹ Meanwhile, TNI launched Operation Combat Alert Natuna Sea 2020, which included the deployment of naval and air assets, and Jokowi travelled to *Natuna Besar* to receive a briefing from the Kogabwilhan I Commander. Despite the government's firm diplomatic and military response coordinated by the foreign minister and TNI commander, a number of ministers, including Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto and powerful Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, both retired Lieutenant Generals, attracted criticism for being 'soft' on China's Natuna provocations.⁵²

Prabowo's response was notable, in particular, given anti-Chinese rhetoric had been a key feature of his political campaigns against Jokowi. His restrained response to the Natuna incursions suggested that the responsibilities of cabinet office may have tempered his provocative rhetoric or that the real value in evoking

49 Yohanes Sulaiman, 'The Silver Lining of a Failed ASEAN Summit', *The Jakarta Globe*, 21 July 2012. <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/commentary/the-silver-lining-of-a-failed-asean-summit/531738>

50 ASPI analyst, Huong Le Thu argued that 'the greatest success of Chinese coercion is, however, the lasting psychological effect on the ASEAN leaders who prefer to exercise self-restraint when selecting regional issues of importance and to a [sic] careful self-censor in their choice of words. See 'China's dual strategy of coercion and inducement towards ASEAN', *The Pacific Review*, 2019, 31(1):20–36.

51 Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 'Indonesia Protes Pelanggaran RRT di ZEE Indonesia' [Indonesia Protests PRC's Violation of EEZ], 30 December 2019. https://kemlu.go.id/portal/id/read/931/siaran_pers/indonesia-protes-pelanggaran-rrt-di-zee-indonesia

52 Ihsannudin, 'Menteri Beda Sikap soal Natuna, Jokowi Akhirnya Angkat Bicara...' [Ministers Differ on Natuna Issue, Jokowi Finally Speaks], *Kompas*, 7 January 2020. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/01/07/08145811/menteri-beda-sikap-soal-natuna-jokowi-akhirnya-angkat-bicara?page=all> The term used was *lembek*. See Bayu Septianu, 'Saat Prabowo & Luhut Lembek Lawan Pencuri Ikan dari Cina di Natuna' [Prabowo & Luhut Soft on China's Stealing of Fish in Natuna], 6 January 2020. <https://tirto.id/saat-prabowo-luhut-lembek-lawan-pencuri-ikan-dari-cina-di-natuna-eqK7> Laksmana argued that Pandjaitan's role in shaping China policy is noteworthy, as officials occasionally noted how his staff would run interference during some of the ASEAN-China diplomatic meetings, see 'The Domestic Politics of Indonesia's Approach to the Tribunal Ruling', p 387.

anti-Chinese sentiment lay more in circumstances where it advanced personal political gain. For Luhut, a powerful but controversial political figure responsible for realising Jokowi's ambitious maritime development and investment agenda, there was little value in public condemnation of China, given Beijing's economic significance. Domestic critics saw causal links between Luhut's policy embrace of Chinese capital, his personal wealth and business ties to the country.⁵³ Others refuted these allegations, defending Luhut's personal integrity and relative policy balance on China.⁵⁴

The Natuna issue, although revealed in 2017 polling to be more of an elite than a general public concern and not nearly as contentious as economic issues,⁵⁵ highlighted the government's vulnerability to public criticism over its China policy. Yet ministers in the Jokowi government were no doubt cognisant that strong public condemnations of Beijing risked evoking domestic anti-Chinese sentiment, which had been on the rise since 2016, potentially undermining the government's economic agenda.⁵⁶ The Natuna threat like the issue of Chinese workers and China's economic influence had internal and external political dimensions. As Laksmana captured it:

The simple reality is that a lot of people ... [including the]... political elite at the local or national level ... are either ignorant of the fact that Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia are separate from China as a government and the Chinese people, or they prefer to politically conflate them.⁵⁷

53 Kornelius Purba, 'Commentary: Gen. Luhut: Jokowi's much hated and loved COVID-19 frontman', *The Jakarta Post*, 21 April 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/04/21/commentary-gen-luhut-jokowi-s-much-hated-and-loved-covid-19-frontman.html>

54 Jusuf Wanandi, 'Luhut Pandjaitan, the man and the officer: Rebuttal to Kornelius Purba', *The Jakarta Post*, 4 April 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/04/24/luhut-pandjaitan-the-man-and-the-officer-rebuttal-to-kornelius-purba.html>

55 Fossati, Fong and Negara's 2017 *Indonesian National Survey* found relatively little awareness of the Natuna issue. Of the respondents who answered the question; 50.6% thought that the incidents were alarming as China was encroaching on Indonesia's territory; 41.6% thought that the incidents were serious but caused by illegal fishing. See (Figure 43) in Diego Fossati, Hui Yew Foong and Siwage Dharma Negara, 'The Indonesian National Survey Project: Economy, Society and Politics', ISEAS, Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017, no.10.

56 Concern about the domestic political, as well as economic ramifications of public criticism of China, is one of the reasons for rhetorical restraint by a number of government ministers. Interview with foreign policy intellectual, CSIS, Jakarta, March 2014. Based on opinion polling. See Herlijanto, 'How the Indonesian Elite Regards Relations with China'; Christine Tamir and Abby Budiman, 'Indonesians optimistic about their country's democracy and economy as elections near', *Pew Research*, 4 April 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/04/indonesians-optimistic-about-their-countrys-democracy-and-economy-as-elections-near/>; and Lembaga Survei Indonesia, *Persepsi Publik Terhadap Negara-Negara Paling Berpengaruh Di Asia*, *Update Temuan Survei Nasional: 10-15 Juli 2019* [Indonesia Survey Institute, Public Perceptions of the Most Influential Countries in Asia, 10-15 July 2019].

57 Laksamana quoted by Mulyanto, 'After 70 years of ties'; Tjhin contended 'one cannot deny that anti-China (or anti-Chinese Indonesian) sentiments are always linked to bilateral relations with mainland China'. See 'Indonesia's Relations with China', p 313.

The need to appease anti-Chinese domestic constituencies and maintain positive relations with Beijing imposed constraints on Indonesia's foreign policy behaviour.

The 'Ethnic Chinese issue'

[it] is more or less a mystery because it involves a set of beliefs about intentions. It is not concrete, but it is felt to be there and because of the lack of definition the Chinese threat is seen to be greater, more urgent and immediate

*CSIS Jakarta intellectual, the late Hadi Soesastro*⁵⁸

Jokowi himself was not immune to anti-Chinese invective. Well ahead in the 2014 presidential election polls, false online rumours that he was at once Chinese, Christian and a communist narrowed his lead in the weeks leading up to the July ballot. Following his victory, racist and religious slurs against Jokowi largely subsided, but Jokowi's political success as provincial mayor and then governor of Indonesia's capital had underlined the significance of the gubernatorial position as a springboard into the presidential palace. Upon Jokowi's election to the presidential palace, his ethnic Chinese and Christian deputy, Basuki Tjahjaja Purnama, known simply as 'Ahok' was automatically elevated into the governor's seat. With the first round of the Jakarta gubernatorial election scheduled for February 2017, the opposition to Ahok in late 2016 intensified. Ahok, who on this occasion ran as an independent, faced former university rector and education minister, Anies Baswedan, backed by the campaign experience and deep pockets of chair of the opposition Greater Indonesia (Gerindra) Party, Prabowo Subianto and his wealthy businessman brother Hashim Djojohadikusumo. The other key candidate was Agus Harimurti, an up and coming army officer and son of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, highlighting the high stakes game amongst Indonesia's competing political oligarchs.

As pressure built to undermine leading contender Ahok, an edited video of him addressing a crowd in Indonesia's Thousand Islands district in September 2016 surfaced on social media. Although Ahok had attracted criticisms over a number of issues – including his demolition of slums in east Jakarta, the controversial Jakarta Bay reclamation project and for his abrasive personality style⁵⁹ – it was his reference to a verse in the *Qur'an* that would be his ultimate political undoing. In his Thousand Island's address, Ahok referenced a Quranic verse (*Al Maidah*

58 Hadi Soesastro quoted in Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN: Foreign Policy and Regionalism*, ISEAS, Singapore, 1994, p 189.

59 Ian Wilson, 'Jakarta: inequality and the poverty of elite pluralism', *New Mandala*, 19 April 2017. <http://www.newmandala.org/jakarta-inequality-poverty-elite-pluralism/>

51) highlighting the fact there was no religious basis forbidding Muslims from voting for non-Muslims. In October, Ahok was reported to the police for blasphemy and the influential but highly conservative Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) issued a fatwa condemning Ahok for religious defamation.

The Gerindra-led opposition coalition that mobilised against Ahok had ironically backed him earlier as Jokowi's deputy in the 2012 Jakarta election race, revealing the shifting allegiances of Indonesia's political elites. As Gerindra and the Islamic Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) and National Mandate Party (PAN) joined forces with hardline Islamic organisations and right-wing nationalists, pressure built in massive protest actions against Ahok, the largest of which were conducted on 4 November and 2 December 2016. These protests were organised by the '212 Movement', a loose coalition of Islamic groups spearheaded by the new National Movement to Safeguard the MUI Fatwa (GNPF-MUI), the Young Ulama and Intellectuals Council of Indonesia (MIUMI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), as well as party political and broader societal elements. This coalition of forces exploited the racism resident in hardline Islamic circles and in negative public perceptions about China and Indonesia's ethnic Chinese community.

Further interventions by politico-military elites inflamed anti-Chinese sentiment, including then Vice President Jusuf Kalla and then serving TNI commander General Gatot Nurmantyo. Kalla, who allegedly supported Ahok's rival in the Jakarta gubernatorial contest, was criticised in the media for a statement in February 2017 implying that most rich people in Indonesia were of Chinese descent and mostly Christian or Confucian, while the poor were Muslim *pribumi*.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, at a November 2016 Jakarta university presentation, Nurmantyo, whose political aspirations were becoming more evident, recounted an earlier conversation he had with the Malaysian defence minister about how to contend with a hypothetical wave of starving, mainland Chinese refugees entering Indonesian waters. His solution was to 'throw freshly slaughtered cows into the water, then open fire on their vessels to sink them so they could be eaten by sharks.'⁶¹ This crude display of anti-Chinese sentiment by Nurmantyo, among a number of other examples as serving TNI commander,⁶² highlighted a key risk for Beijing in its relations with Indonesia. President Xi Jinping's more assertive promotion of overseas ethnic Chinese as part of the broader 'Chinese Nation', as

60 Jusuf Kalla quoted in Charlotte Setjiadi, 'Chinese Indonesians in the Eyes of the Pribumi Public', *Perspective*, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017, 73.

61 Adam Harvey and Julia Colman, 'Panglima TNI Mengancam Pengungsi China [TNI Commander Threatens PRC Refugees]', *Republika*, 6 January 2017. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/internasional/abc-australia-network/17/01/06/ojc233-panglima-tni-mengancam-pengungsi-china> For broader analysis on Nurmantyo and the rise of *pribumi*-ism in Indonesia see Leo Suryadinata, 'General Gatot and the Re-emergence of Pribumi-ism in Indonesia', *Perspective*, ISEAS, 2017, 49.

62 Suryadinata, 'General Gatot and the Re-emergence of Pribumi-ism in Indonesia'.

Suryadinata recognised, tended 'to blur the distinction between Chinese citizens and foreigners of Chinese descent and regard both as "Chinese".⁶³ Beijing's policy, in effect, risked inflaming extant doubts about the loyalty of ethnic Chinese to the Indonesian state and, hence, highlighted the utility of anti-Chinese sentiment to elite political posturing.

After a highly organised campaign of opposition, which included mass protests and cyber armies disseminating racial and religious vitriol,⁶⁴ Ahok, who had won the first round of the Jakarta contest, lost the second poll in April amidst high political tensions. In May 2017, he was convicted for blasphemy and sentenced to a two-year prison term, which evoked a public outcry from supporters. In addition to Ahok's defeat, the political rise of *pribumi*-ism and radical Islam included the establishment of the Pribumi Party and a proposal to preclude non-*pribumi* from running for presidential office in the Constitution.⁶⁵ Although opposition subsided after Ahok's political elimination, the heated election contest had signalled the rise of identity politics in Indonesia with religious intolerance and distrust towards Indonesia's predominately Christian Chinese community at the core of it.

An extensive national survey conducted in the aftermath of the Jakarta election and the Ahok blasphemy case (2017), saw strong evidence of negative perceptions about the economic privilege, exclusivity, influence in politics and national loyalties of Indonesia's Chinese community.⁶⁶ Polling figures released in 2017 revealed that around 47.6% of Indonesians believed that Chinese Indonesians 'may still harbour loyalty to China,' underlining the continuing perception that they were "foreign".⁶⁷ Meanwhile, another 2017 survey of elite opinion revealed that 'despite increasingly close relations between Indonesia and China, Chinese investments and workers, and developments in the South China Sea, continued to worry the Indonesian public.'⁶⁸ The survey noted how concerns were:

63 The Mandarin term is 'Zhonghua Ernu' (中华儿女 sons and daughters of China) wrote Suryadinata in 'Growing Strategic Partnership', p 29. To date, there seems little information on the activities of China's United Front Work Department (UFWD) in Indonesia. The UFWD is the Chinese Communist Party organ invested with influencing Chinese communities abroad. See 'China's Political Influence Operations: Implications for Regional Security', in *Asia Pacific Regional Security Assessment, Key Developments and Trends*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, IISS, 2019, pp 61–75.

64 Sheany, 'Muslim Cyber Army More Harmful than Saracen Says Human Rights Group', 2 March 2018. <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/muslim-cyber-army-more-harmful-than-saracen-human-rights-group-says/>

65 Suryadinata, 'General Gatot and the Re-emergence of Pribumi-ism in Indonesia', p 6.

66 Diego Fossati, Fong and Negara, 'The Indonesian National Survey Project', p 48.

67 Fossati, 'The Indonesian National Survey Project'.

68 Johannes Herlijanto, 'How the Indonesian Elite Regards Relations with China', ISEAS, *Perspective*, 2017, 8.

most apparent among those members of the *pribumi* elite who take an oppositional stance against the Jokowi administration, and those who remained neutral towards the president.⁶⁹

Although, Ahok's blasphemy conviction and political defeat temporarily toned down political temperatures, the dramatic Jakarta election race had acted as a significant distraction for the cabinet and had, reportedly, hampered substantive foreign policy decision-making.⁷⁰ However, spurred by concerns over Australia, the US, India and Japan's reactivation of the 'The Quad' in 2017, espousing its 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' concept, Kemlu, concerned about escalating strategic rivalries and ASEAN's declining relevance, commenced refinement of an alternate Indo-Pacific framework for cooperation in early 2018. The framework was formally endorsed by leaders at the 34th ASEAN Summit as the 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific'. Although it reaffirmed ASEAN centrality and adherence to UNCLOS, the Outlook did not prescribe any concrete measures to mitigate escalating major power tensions nor hamper China's coercive conduct in the South China Sea.⁷¹

As radical Islam became a much more potent political force, Jokowi was forced to make significant political compromises ahead of the 2019 presidential race. For example, he chose former MUI head Mar'uf Amin as his vice presidential candidate, who had played a key role in Ahok's political demise. More profoundly the division and instability associated with Indonesia's heated election contests precipitated a more profound shift in Indonesia's pluralist democracy as the president turned to increasingly authoritarian measures, including criminalisation of political opponents and other legislative measures to suppress criticism and dissent.⁷²

Although the lead-up to the July 2019 election race was on the whole amicable between rival candidates Jokowi and Prabowo, the invocation of a Suharto-era narrative about the triangular threat posed by communism, Chinese Indonesians and mainland China, which gained pace during the Jakarta elections, was conflated with economic and strategic concerns. Pew surveys reported that the share of Indonesians who held favourable views of China had declined over time amid concerns over increasing economic reliance on Beijing. In 2018, 53%

69 Herlijanto, 'How the Indonesian Elite Regards Relations with China'.

70 Personal communication with Indonesian government official, 2017.

71 See text of 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific', https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf

72 Thomas Power, 'Jokowi's Authoritarian Turn and Indonesia's Democratic Decline', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, 2018, 54(3):307–388; Marcus Mietzner, 'Authoritarian innovations in Indonesia: electoral narrowing, identity politics and executive illiberalism', *Democratization*, 2019. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13510347.2019.1704266>

had a favourable view of China, according to Pew, down from 66% in 2014, the year Jokowi was elected. Pew reported that more than four-in-ten Indonesians said China's power and influence was a major threat to their country in the 2018 survey, versus only 27% who stated this in 2013 polls.⁷³

Jokowi's embrace of Chinese finance for infrastructure development had made him more vulnerable to criticism on the government's China policy. For example, in 2018 Jokowi was forced to correct fake news reports that an estimated 10 to 20 million Chinese workers had entered Indonesia and were about to 'dominate the country.'⁷⁴ In the Jakarta election race, a proxy for the 2019 presidential poll, Prabowo had successfully appealed to deeply rooted economic nationalism and socio-economic resentments towards ethnic Chinese in the electorate to criticise Jokowi over his China policies. In the 2019 presidential debates, he accused Jokowi of being 'too soft' on China and permitting thousands of Chinese workers to enter Indonesia to work on Chinese-funded projects. Prabowo indicated that if he was elected president he would review all Chinese projects in Indonesia.⁷⁵ As Warburton contended, 'growth, foreign investment and the China problem; was a major line of critique put forward by Jokowi's political rivals.'⁷⁶

Prabowo's election defeat, confirmed on 21 May 2019 and subsequent Constitutional Court appeal against alleged 'massive voter fraud,' led to serious violence in Central Jakarta as radical opposition supporters gathered outside Indonesia's Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) to protest the result. At the height of riots, thousands of protestors allegedly threw Molotov cocktails, destroyed vehicles and property, and engaged in skirmishes with Indonesian Police Mobile Brigade (Brimob) personnel. Seven protestors died from gunshot wounds, over 200 were injured and approximately 400 arrested.⁷⁷ In a detailed analysis of encrypted messaging platform *Telegram*, ISEAS researcher, Quinton

73 Tamir and Budiman, 'Indonesians optimistic about their country's democracy and economy'; The Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) poll released in 2020 indicated that respondents viewed China as the dominant power in Asia, but they also viewed this development in an increasingly negative light. See 'Indonesians See China as Dominant Power', *The Jakarta Post*, 15 January 2020. https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/01/15/indonesians-see-china-as-dominant-power.html?utm_campaign=newsletter&utm_source=mailchimp&utm_medium=mailchimp-jan&utm_term=china-power

74 Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat and Andry Satrio Nugroho, 'What's driving Indonesian paranoia over Chinese workers?', *South China Morning Post*, 2 June 2018. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3012676/whats-driving-indonesian-paranoia-over-chinese-workers>

75 Karishma Vaswani, 'Pilpres 2019: Peran kompleks China dalam masa depan Indonesia' [2019 Presidential Elections: The Complex Place of China in Indonesia's Future], *BBC News Indonesia*, 13 April 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-47918445>

76 Warburton also listed resource nationalism and food sovereignty; and socio-economic inequality as major critiques, which also have anti-Chinese dimensions. See Eve Warburton, 'Inequality, Nationalism and Electoral Politics in Indonesia' in Daljit Singh and Malcolm Cook (eds), *Southeast Asian Affairs*, ISEAS, Singapore Institute, 2018, p 136.

77 Quinton Temby, 'Disinformation, Violence, and Anti-Chinese Sentiment in Indonesia's, 2019 Election', *Perspective*, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2019, 67, p 2.

Temby revealed how opposition activists and hardline Islamists utilised *Telegram* and other platforms in a dangerously provocative anti-Chinese disinformation campaign. For example, at the height of the May protests reports circulated that some of the Indonesian Police Mobile Brigade officers were in fact PLA personnel and that thousands of Chinese troops had entered Indonesia and were involved in 'mass kidnappings' and the targeting of mosques.⁷⁸

The ideational dimensions of the amorphous Chinese threat in the Indonesian national psyche made it highly susceptible to manipulation by vested political interests. As the 2016–2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election race morphed into a destabilising proxy for the 2019 presidential elections it marked a key turning point in what had been a positive period in Indonesia's post-authoritarian engagement with China. The rise of populism and identity politics in Indonesia spurred by a highly destabilising opposition and amplified by organised disinformation campaigns and social media commentary, saw the reinvigoration of old tropes about an amorphous Chinese threat. The heated election contests also saw divisions between cabinet ministers and the president over China policy matters and resulted in a government distracted by political instability from addressing adverse strategic developments in South-East Asia.

Impacts of coronavirus pandemic

I appreciate the assistance of the Chinese government in strengthening strategic health cooperation, including the co-production and preparation of a COVID-19 vaccine. I welcome arrangements for a travel corridor as agreed between the two nations on 21 August 2020 in order to facilitate essential business and urgent official visits, in accordance with strict health protocols.

*President Joko Widodo in a telephone call transcript with Xi Jinping, released on 1 September 2020*⁷⁹

For many strategic and foreign policy analysts, the coronavirus pandemic has presented as a classic 'black swan' event – severe, disruptive and unanticipated, at least outside epidemiological circles. Certainly Indonesia, which has experienced a number of zoonotic disease threats over the last two decades, seemed remarkably unprepared for the emerging pandemic threat. The government was slow to completely close its borders, admitted to withholding information from

78 Temby, 'Disinformation, Violence, and Anti-Chinese Sentiment in Indonesia's, 2019 Election', p 3–5.

79 Translated from original in Indonesian. Adhika Prasetya, 'Bicara dengan Xi Jinping, Jokowi Sambut Dukungan China soal Vaksin Corona' [In speaking to Xi Jinping, Jokowi welcomes Chinese assistance on corona vaccine], *DetikNews*, 1 September 2020. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5154689/bicara-dengan-xi-jinping-jokowi-sambut-dukungan-china-soal-vaksin-corona>

the public and delayed the implementation of social distancing measures.⁸⁰ To date, Indonesia has the highest death toll in Asia behind India, compounded by poor public health infrastructure, and the central government has been criticised for its incoherent policy response.⁸¹ As Indonesia contends with the immediate health and economic impacts, which include the weakest growth figures since the 1998 Asian financial crisis and unemployment rising unemployment,⁸² COVID-19 presents as a catalyst for change in Indonesia's China policy.

At the start of the pandemic, resentment over mainland Chinese workers and Chinese-funded infrastructure projects intensified, exacerbated by pandemic fears and economic insecurity. Luhut Pandjaitan attracted renewed criticism over his 'pro-China' positions and for 'accumulating personal wealth by facilitating the Chinese government and investors.'⁸³ The 'Special China Envoy to Indonesia,'⁸⁴ as Luhut was characterised on one conservative Islamic website, was forced to defend the plan of a South-East Sulawesi company, PT Virtue Dragon Nickel Industry – a subsidiary of Jiangsu-based De Long Nickel Co Ltd – to allow in 500 mainland Chinese workers. The plan was delayed following opposition from the local community, national parliament (DPR) and regional officials.⁸⁵

The impact of COVID-19 has in the short-term meant Jokowi's reliance on Chinese finance and technological know-how for his national development agenda has faced significant disruption. Indonesia initially restricted some imports and imposed a ban on all travellers to and from China, moves that irritated Beijing.⁸⁶ There was also an immediate interruption to all Chinese infrastructure projects in Indonesia, including the contentious Jakarta-Bandung HSR

80 Dyaning Pangestika, 'We don't want people to panic': Jokowi says on lack of transparency about COVID cases', *The Jakarta Post*, 14 May 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/13/we-dont-want-people-to-panic-jokowi-says-on-lack-of-transparency-about-covid-cases.html>

81 Marchio Irfan Gorbiano and Ghina Ghalya, 'Turf war undermines COVID-19 fight in Indonesia', *The Jakarta Post*, 1 April 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/04/01/turf-war-undermines-covid-19-fight-indonesia-government-jokowi-anies.html>

82 GDP is expected to shrink 1.5 per cent and the government has indicated it expects an additional 4 million to fall into poverty and 5.5 million additional unemployed. Adrian Wail Akhlas, 'Indonesia's GDP to decline more than thought as virus keeps spreading', *The Jakarta Post*, 14 October 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/10/13/indonesias-gdp-to-decline-more-than-thought-as-virus-keeps-spreading-imf.html>

83 Purba, 'Commentary: Gen. Luhut: Jokowi's much hated and loved COVID-19 frontman'.

84 Nasrudin Joha, 'Luhut Itu Menteri Indonesia atau 'Dubes Khusus' Cina untuk Indonesia?' [Is Luhut an Indonesian Minister or the Special China Envoy to Indonesia?], *Cendekiapos*, 3 January 2020. <https://cendekiapos.com/amp/news/4650>

85 Muhammad Idris, 'Deretan Kontroversi Luhut Selama Corona, Ribut TKA China hingga Mudik' [Series of Luhut Controversies During the Coronavirus, Protests Against Chinese Workers to Ramadan Homecomings], 11 May 2020. <https://money.kompas.com/read/2020/05/11/082220426/deretan-kontroversi-luhut-selama-corona-ribut-tka-china-hingga-mudik>

86 Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat and Dikanaya Tarahita, 'Coronavirus Takes Its Toll on China-Indonesia Relations', *The Diplomat*, 15 February 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/coronavirus-takes-its-toll-on-china-indonesia-relations/>

project due to the cessation of material supply chains and travel restrictions on mainland workers.⁸⁷ Interestingly, Indonesia's Cabinet announced in June that it would ask Japan to join the Indonesia–China High Speed Rail (KCIC) consortium responsible for the Jakarta–Bandung HSR project. This development is significant, as Japan lost out to China on the original 2016 bid highlighting the contested geopolitical dimensions of Indonesia's decisions on major infrastructure projects.

Despite disruptions to Indonesia–Chinese supply chains, commercial and tourism links, China's deep integration with South-East Asian economies saw it quickly on the front foot in presenting itself as an indispensable partner to Indonesia. This was both part of Beijing's widely criticised attempt to recraft a positive narrative on COVID-19,⁸⁸ but was also a legitimate extension of its expansive cooperation with South-East Asian states. At the multilateral level, China in collaboration with the other ASEAN Plus Three (APT), states Japan and Korea, established a new ASEAN–China COVID-19 Response Fund and committed to providing financial and material support through the more established ASEAN–China Cooperation and APT Cooperation Funds.⁸⁹ Beijing also committed to further COVID-19 assistance to 120 countries, including Indonesia, through its reactivated Health Silk Road initiative, an extension of BRI engagement.⁹⁰ Bilaterally, China has provided Indonesia with material assistance in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ventilators, masks and COVID-19 test kits.⁹¹

In a highly significant move, China offered to supply and provide local production and technology licensing to Indonesia for Sinovac's vaccine candidate against

87 Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat, 'Two reasons why China needs to expand its help to Indonesia to deal with COVID-19', *The Conversation*, 17 April 2020. <https://theconversation.com/two-reasons-why-china-needs-to-expand-its-help-to-indonesia-to-deal-with-covid-19-136245>

88 Vivian Wang, 'China's Coronavirus Battle Is Waning. Its Propaganda Fight Is Not', *New York Times*, 8 April 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/world/asia/coronavirus-china-narrative.html>

89 This includes a warehouse of essential medical supplies managed by the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance. See 'China calls on ASEAN Plus Three countries to work for early victory against COVID-19 in East Asia', *Xinhua*, 15 April 2020. http://www.china.org.cn/world/2020-04/15/content_75933851.htm; Ngurah Swajaya, 'Enter 'New normal': Diplomacy post-COVID-19', *The Jakarta Post*, 28 May 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/05/28/enter-new-normal-diplomacy-post-covid-19.html>

90 Anthea Mulakala and Hongbo Ji, 'COVID-19 and China's soft power ambitions', *DevpolicyBlog*, 24 April 2020. https://devpolicy.org/covid-19-and-chinas-soft-power-ambitions-20200424-2/?utm_source=Devpolicy&utm_campaign=32be268821-Devpolicy+News+Dec+15+2017_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_082b498f84-32be268821-312111889

91 James Massola, 'China's face-mask diplomacy could reshape power in south-east Asia', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/china-s-face-mask-diplomacy-could-reshape-power-in-south-east-asia-20200402-p54gkv.html>

COVID-19, CoronaVac.⁹² This collaboration between Chinese state-owned biopharmaceuticals company Sinopharm and Indonesia's PT Bio Farma involved a pledge by China to offer Indonesia 40 million doses of vaccine by March 2021.⁹³ China's offer to open up a travel corridor between Indonesia and China was also welcomed by Jokowi, who in the face of economic recession and criticism over the government's handling of the pandemic, was determined to boost economic activity.

Meanwhile, the rising tensions between the US and China, catalysed by the devastating impact of COVID-19 on America's economy and society, saw the US act to constrain Beijing further on a range of policy concerns including Hong Kong, Taiwan, the South China Sea, Xinjiang, trade, and science and technological exchange. The US also flagged it would lead a renewed commitment to South-East Asia (as part of the Indo-Pacific) in both economic and strategic terms, notwithstanding America's significant domestic political challenges.⁹⁴ Yet President Donald Trump's chaotic approach to the crisis diminished the appeal of US governance models in the eyes of many in the international community, including in Indonesia. The intensification of extant US-Sino strategic rivalry due to the COVID-19 pandemic accompanied by escalating diplomatic rhetoric; reciprocal tit for tat sanctions on companies and individuals by Beijing and Washington; and the increased presence of both US and Chinese military assets in the South China Sea was reflected in Foreign Affairs Minister Marsudi's exhortation at a September 2020 ASEAN-based virtual summit meeting: 'We don't want to get trapped by this rivalry!'⁹⁵

While the coronavirus pandemic has come at considerable economic and social cost to Indonesia, it has also provided opportunities to re-evaluate its economic

92 'Sinovac Signs Agreement with Bio Farma Indonesia for COVID-19 Vaccine Cooperation', *Businesswire*, 21 August 2020. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200825005451/en/Sinovac-Signs-Agreement-with-Bio-Farma-Indonesia-for-COVID-19-Vaccine-Cooperation>; and Peter Hartcher, 'We're in crazytown': Trump's disruptive leadership is doing Xi's job for him', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 October 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/world/north-america/we-re-in-crazytown-trump-s-disruptive-leadership-is-doing-xi-s-job-for-him-20201005-p5621x.html>

93 Ibid.

94 See for example, the *US Strategic Approach to the People's Republic in China* analysed by Graeme Dobell, 'US 'strategic approach' to China: compete, compel and challenge', *The Strategist*, ASPI, 9 June 2020. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/us-strategic-approach-to-china-compete-compel-and-challenge/>; and US Department of State, *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision: Advancing A Shared Vision*, 4 November 2019. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf>

95 Tom Allard and Stanley Widiyanto, 'Indonesia to China, US: Don't trap us in your rivalry', *The Jakarta Post*, 9 September 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/09/indonesia-to-us-china-dont-trap-us-in-your-rivalry.html#:~:text=Indonesia's%20foreign%20minister%20Retno%20Marsudi,get%20trapped%20by%20this%20rivalry.%22&text=Retno%20said%20ASEAN%20must%20remain%20steadfastly%20neutral%20and%20united>

reliance on China and boost Indonesia's economic resilience.⁹⁶ This will depend on the provision of alternatives to China as Indonesia's largest export market and second largest source of FDI. However, it should also be noted that the Indonesian government has actively welcomed multinationals seeking to diversify their supply chains away from China, and with a further view to 'safety and efficacy,' sought to balance vaccine reliance on China through major deals with UK-based AstraZeneca and United Arab Emirates 'Group 42 Healthcare'.⁹⁷

Although in foreign policy terms Jakarta has not welcomed escalating strategic tensions, a greater assertion of US strategic primacy in the South China Sea will, by default, boost Indonesia's defence of the Natuna islands from increasing Chinese maritime incursions. And although Indonesia has been a willing recipient of China's generous offers of economic and health assistance, it has also consciously hedged its vaccine bets and maximised national economic self-interest in the wooing of China-shy multinationals. Despite COVID-19 being a catalyst for increased strategic tensions and cause of global economic contraction, Jokowi's top policy priority for the remainder of his term, which ends in 2024, will be preventing the pandemic's deleterious economic impacts from undermining his nation's political stability.

Conclusion

Analysis of contending domestic and international policy pressures reveal the complex intermestic nature of Indonesia's China challenge. Indonesia's executive under Jokowi, has struggled to reconcile the domestic political imperatives of maintaining positive relations with Beijing to secure vital flows of aid, trade, tourism and investment for its economic development agenda, balanced against public concern about China's violations of Indonesia's territorial waters and its threat to national economic sovereignty. Reconciling this two-level game has been difficult for Indonesia as it is for all states that are heavily dependent on China in economic terms.

Under Jokowi's presidency, a bifurcation of views intensified between negative public sentiment and government policy that embraced Chinese capital and technical expertise as the engine of Indonesia's economic growth. China's expanded reach in new South China Sea military installations and in escalating

96 Riski Raisa Putra, 'Quick strategies needed to shift dependency on China', *The Jakarta Post*, 14 April 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/02/14/quick-strategies-needed-to-shift-dependency-on-china.html>; and Sumarto, 'Covid-19 dan Momentum Mengubah Struktur Ekonomi'.

97 Yunindita Presidya, 'Indonesia to benefit from diversification of global supply chains, DBS says', *The Jakarta Post*. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/07/08/indonesia-to-benefit-from-diversification-of-global-supply-chain-dbs-says.html>; and Dian Septiari, 'Indonesia secures deal to procure 100 million more doses of vaccine', *The Jakarta Post*, 14 October 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/10/14/indonesia-secures-deal-to-procure-100m-more-doses-of-vaccines.html>

interstate rivalries placed greater pressure on Jakarta both from a defence and foreign policy perspective; the latter in Indonesia's ability to maintain ASEAN unity and moderate rivalries through ASEAN-centred multilateral mechanisms. As strategic election contests loomed in 2016, the confluence of the Natuna threat posed by Chinese maritime incursions with domestic political developments provided further ammunition to Jokowi's political foes. The conflation of China with Chinese Indonesians in the minds of Indonesians revealed itself in provocative interventions by military, religious and political elites connecting the economic and strategic threads of distrust in Indonesian society toward China with the suspicion and resentment toward Indonesia's Chinese community.

The immediate economic and sociopolitical effects of the coronavirus pandemic on Indonesia intensified schisms between domestic constituencies and the government over the economic dimensions of Indonesia's China policy. However, this was balanced by Indonesia's receptiveness to a concerted campaign of mask diplomacy by Beijing, which guaranteed Indonesia vital public goods in the joint production of a COVID-19 vaccine and other economic assistance measures. Whilst exogenous forces in increased US-Sino tensions, disruption to global supply chains, and contraction of the international economy will shape the future of Indonesia's China policy, domestic political variables will remain a powerful determinant. The mobilisation and reconstitution of opposition political forces, spurred on by growing economic hardship, carries significant political risk for Jokowi and, by extension, aspects of his administration's China policy.



A strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness: General Matthew Ridgway and the revival of the US Eighth Army in the Korean War

Jeffrey W Meiser

Introduction

Strategic leadership is widely understood to be something militaries need to have, but it is not often well defined. For some, strategic leadership emerges spontaneously along with the promotion to a certain rank (e.g. colonel), with the assumption that rank itself brings a strategic perspective. For others, strategic leadership is a lifelong pursuit that suggests a long list of ethical, emotional, physical, intellectual and social competencies.¹ While the second approach is more compelling, comprehending such an amorphous and multifaceted concept is difficult; actually determining the real-world impact of strategic leadership is even more complex. In an effort to bring increased clarity to the concept of strategic leadership and better understand its practical importance, this essay develops a strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness.

All the core building blocks of this theory – strategy, leadership and military effectiveness – have been thoroughly studied in various academic and professional literatures. Despite the attention paid to these concepts, and the apparent relevance they have to one another, there is relatively little contemporary scholarship

¹ Daniel H McCauley 'Rediscovering the Art of Strategic Thinking: Developing 21st-Century Strategic Leaders,' Joint Forces Quarterly, 2016, 81(2nd Quarter). https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-81/jfq-81_26-33_McCauley.pdf

on the interaction between strategy, leadership and military effectiveness.² In bringing these concepts together this essay makes four contributions. First, by suggesting an analytically useful definition of strategic leadership, this essay suggests a way of clearly articulating and testing the importance of strategic leadership in war. Not only will this approach enhance the power of our strategic analysis, it could also help improve the professional military education (PME) approach to developing strategic leaders by clarifying the concept and linking a specific approach to leadership and strategy with military performance. Second, engaging with both the study of strategy and the study of leadership provides a means for exploring the crucial human element in the creation and implementation of strategy. Strategy is made and implemented by leaders; it is not self-executing. Third, combining the study of leadership, strategy and military performance highlights the need for battlefield commanders to be good strategists, which is sometimes lost when scholarship and doctrine focuses too much on factors like the character and charisma of leaders. Fourth, studies of military effectiveness have not done enough to evaluate strategy or leadership as causal variables and studies by historians and practitioners have not operationalised leadership in a way that can be generalised.

The remainder of this essay is organised into four parts. The first section briefly surveys the current trends in the study of military effectiveness to suggest that leadership and strategy have not gotten the attention they deserve as plausible independent variables. The second section develops a strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness. The third section presents an exploratory case study analysis of the United Nations Command's (UNC) military effectiveness after General Matthew B. Ridgway took over as combatant commander in December 1950. This is an initial test of the plausibility of the hypothesis that strategic leadership affects military effectiveness. Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings of this essay and suggests implications for future research.

2 One recent review of military effectiveness lists six plausible causes of military effectiveness and neither leadership nor strategy is included, Risa A Brooks, 'Introduction: The Impact of Culture, Society, Institutions, and International Forces on Military Effectiveness', in Risa A Brooks and Elizabeth A Stanley (eds), *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto CA, 2007, pp 1–26. Two recent books on counterinsurgency are the best examples of attempts to evaluate these connections, but focus primarily on leadership and effective implementation of counterinsurgency and do not develop general theories of leadership, see Mark Moyar, *A Question of Command: Counterinsurgency from the Civil War to Iraq*, Yale University Press, 2009; Victoria Nolan, *Military Leadership and Counterinsurgency: The British Army and Small War Strategy Since World War II*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2011. A recent article finds a correlation between general officer removal and increased effectiveness in the American and German armies in the Second World War, but does not test for causation in specific cases and does not develop a full theory of strategic leadership, see Dan Reiter and William A Wagstaff, 'Leadership and Military Effectiveness' *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2018(14):490–511. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orx003>

Theories of military effectiveness

Military effectiveness is a way to measure the battlefield performance of a given military force. Millett, Murray and Watman offer a useful definition of military effectiveness and related terms:

Military effectiveness is the process by which armed forces convert resources into fighting power. A fully effective military is one that derives maximum combat power from the resources physically and politically available. Effectiveness thus incorporates some notion of efficiency. Combat power is the ability to inflict damage upon the enemy while limiting the damage that he can inflict in return.³

This description suggests military effectiveness measures the performance of a military organisation in terms of its ability to damage its opponent while limited its own damage. Military effectiveness has emerged as one of the most vibrant areas of research in security studies.

Since the publication of Stephen Biddle's *Military Power*, the scholarship on military effectiveness has turned decisively towards the non-material attributes of armies. Tactical and operational efficiency, labelled as the 'modern system' by Biddle, has become the most popular explanation for military and combat effectiveness. The main trend in military effectiveness scholarship is expanding on and refining Biddle's argument that military forces well-trained in the modern system of military tactics and operations are likely to be highly effective fighting forces.⁴ The emergent more expansive approach is that there are certain best 'military organisational practices' that, when implemented fully and correctly, produce maximally effective fighting forces.⁵ Some countries lack the resources or motivation to implement these best practices and therefore field less effective militaries, regardless of how many troops, tanks and planes they have.⁶ This set of factors can be labelled as the 'skill' determinates of combat effectiveness.⁷

3 Allan R Millett, Williamson Murray and Kenneth H Watman, 'The Effectiveness of Military Organizations,' *International Security*, Summer, 1986, 11(1):37-71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2538875> This definition is echoed in Brooks, 'Introduction,' 9; Caitlin Talmadge, 'The Puzzle of Personalist Performance: Iraqi Battlefield Effectiveness in the Iran-Iraq War,' *Security Studies*, 2013, 22(2):185 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.786911> and Kirstin J. H. Brathwaite, 'Effective in Battle: Conceptualizing Soldiers' Combat Effectiveness,' *Defense Studies*, 2018, 18(1):1-3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2018.1425090>

4 See Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 2015; and Ryan Grauer, *Commanding Military Power: Organizing for Victory and Defeat on the Battlefield*, Cambridge University Press, 2016.

5 Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army*, p 1.

6 Stephen Biddle, *Military Power Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2006; Talmadge, *Dictator's Army*. See also Kenneth Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991*, University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

7 For the distinction between 'skill and will' see Brathwaite, 'Effective in Battle,' p 1.

Military practices are certainly crucial to combat effectiveness, but they do not seem to tell us much about combat motivation, or what Carl von Clausewitz called 'moral strength' and 'moral factors'.⁸ Even if a force is highly capable of employing basic tactics and carrying out complex operations, will they do so with consistent motivation across armies and nations and circumstances? Can a force that is tactically mediocre but highly motivated defeat a force that is well-trained but has low motivation? These questions require shifting attention to the 'will' determinates of combat effectiveness. Will, or motivation to fight, is often viewed through the lens of morale and unit cohesion.⁹

Strategy and leadership do not play a major part in recent scholarship on military effectiveness. To a certain degree, these factors fall in between the existing categories and might be assumed to be important but have not been studied with the depth and rigour of other factors. The remainder of this essay seeks to demonstrate the value of including strategic leadership in the study of military effectiveness alongside other theories of military effectiveness.

Strategy and leadership

This section has three parts. The first two sections define and discuss the scholarship on leadership and strategy. The final part of this section synthesises these concepts to develop a strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness.

Leadership

The connection between leadership and strategy and military effectiveness rests on the assertion that good leadership and good strategy cause good organisational performance. However, this could be seen as a tautological statement. The way leadership scholars address this issue is to study the variance between leadership types and organisational performance. If a scholar can define attributes of leadership and identify them independent of organisational performance, then rigorous analysis is possible. Traditional leadership studies focused on studying transactional leadership based on 'leader-follower exchange relationships,

8 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Michael Howard and Peter Paret trans), Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1984, p 111, p 127, p 184.

9 On morale see Jonathan Fennell, *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein*, Cambridge University Press, 2011. On cohesion, see Robert J MacCoun, Elizabeth Kier, and Aaron Belkin, 'Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat? An Old Question with an Old Answer,' *Armed Forces & Society*, July 2006, 32(4): 646–654; Leonard Wong, 'Combat Motivation in Today's Soldiers,' *Armed Forces & Society*, July 2006, 32(4):659–663; Jasen J. Castillo *Endurance and War: The National Sources of Military Cohesion*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, 2014; Anthony King, 'On Combat Effectiveness in the Infantry Platoon: Beyond the Primary Group Thesis,' *Security Studies*, 2016, 25(4):699–728.

setting goals, providing direction and support and reinforcement behaviours.¹⁰ New leadership studies focus on transformational or charismatic leadership based on 'symbolic leader behaviour; visionary, inspirational messages; emotional feelings; ideological and moral values; individualized attention; and intellectual stimulation.'¹¹ The shift in approach was motivated by the perception that only small improvements were possible through transactional leadership, which fuelled the desire to create more efficacious leadership interventions.¹² This hypothesis has been tested and quantitative studies suggest charismatic/transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on organisational performance.¹³

The leadership literature identifies ways that leaders can shape the behaviours of followers. Two of the central means of affecting behaviour are through shaping values and identity. Leaders can inculcate certain values within an organisation and when these values are internalised, guide behaviour of followers. Leaders can also shape behaviour by activating a certain identity among followers. The goal is to create a collective or organisational identity that followers adopt and internalise.¹⁴ The assumption is that there are a variety of possible collective identities and it is the job of a leader to activate the one consistent with a certain vision of organisational performance. The leader must work within the overlapping space of plausible identities and ideal identities. Furthermore, the theory of 'leader member exchange' suggests that a relationship between the leader and follower that allows for mutual influence increases organisational performance.¹⁵ Studies carried out primarily in the business world support the proposition that charismatic–transformational leadership interventions have a statistically significant effect on the performance of organisations.¹⁶ Applying these leadership tenets to military strategy, a battlefield commander exhibiting

10 Bruce J Avolio, Fred O Walumbwa, and Todd J Weber, 'Leadership: Current Theories, Research, and Future Directions,' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 2009, 60:421–449, p 428.

11 Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 'Leadership', p 428.

12 Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 'Leadership', p 428. See also Victoria Nolan, *Military Leadership and Counterinsurgency: The British Army and Small War Strategy Since World War II*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2011, p 5, p 13; Roger Bennett, *Organisational Behaviour*, Third Edition, Pearson Education Limited, 1997, pp 187–189.

13 Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 'Leadership,' p 428; David A. Waldmana, Mansour Javidanb, and Paul Varella, 'Charismatic Leadership at the Strategic Level: A New Application of Upper Echelons Theory,' *Leadership Quarterly*, 2004, 15(3):355–380. For a critical view of charismatic–transformational leadership see Daan van Knippenberg and Sim B. Sitkin, 'A Critical Assessment of Charismatic–Transformational Leadership Research: Back to the Drawing Board?' *The Academy of Management Annals*, 2013, 7(1):1–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2013.759433>

14 Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 'Leadership,' p 427.

15 Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 'Leadership,' p 433. See also Stanley McChrystal with Tatum Collins, David Silverman, and Chris Fussell, *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*, Portfolio, New York, 2015.

16 Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber, 'Leadership,' p 425.

charismatic–transformational leadership can significantly increase the performance of her/his troops by increasing their motivation to fight. By inculcating values and an identity corresponding to the commander’s vision of organisational performance, a military leader can increase military effectiveness.

This discussion of charismatic–transformational leadership reinforces the importance of motivational leadership, while also suggesting scepticism about the importance of directional leadership, which is equated with the ‘old’ way of understanding leadership. By sidelining directional leadership, the ‘strategic’ part of strategic leadership loses its meaning. To say that providing direction to an organisation is a minor part of leadership or is relatively unimportant is tantamount to saying strategy is relatively unimportant in determining organisational performance. Some leadership scholars have noticed the overemphasis on motivation and mobilisation and subjected the charismatic–transformation model to strong criticism.¹⁷ Other scholars argue that:

[e]ffective organizational leadership is not just about exercising influence on an interpersonal level; effective leadership also depends on leader expertise and on the formulation and implementation of solutions to complex social (and task-oriented) problems.¹⁸

This ‘instrumental leadership’ approach emphasises the leadership task of creating effective solutions to organisational problems, suggesting a need to align leadership and strategy.

Some definitions of leadership do bring together charismatic–transformational and instrumental leadership and suggest links to strategy. For example, the armed forces of the United States, Australia and Great Britain have worked to create holistic definitions of leadership. The US Army defines leadership as ‘the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.’¹⁹ The Australian Army defines leadership as ‘the art of influencing and directing people to achieve

17 Knippenberg and Sitkin, ‘Critical Assessment.’

18 John Antonakis and Robert J. House, ‘Instrumental leadership: Measurement and Extension of Transformational–Transactional Leadership Theory,’ *The Leadership Quarterly*, August 2014, 25(4):747. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.04.005> See also Peter F. Drucker, ‘What Makes an Effective Executive,’ *HBR’s 10 Must Reads on Leadership*, 17 (reprinted from *Harvard Business Review*, June 2004); Peter F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker*, Harper, New York, 2001, pp 269–270; Robert C. Tucker, *Politics as Leadership*, University of Missouri, 1995, p 31.

19 Ron Roberts, *NCO Journal* (May 2018): 1, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/Archives/2018/May/12-Principles-Part1/>; US Army, *Leader Development FM 6-22*, US Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 30 June 2015: 3. http://www.milsci.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.mili.d7/files/sitefiles/fm6_22.pdf

willingly the team or organizational goal.²⁰ Both of these definitions have the elements of providing direction (instrumental leadership) and motivating an organisation (charismatic–transformational), and the US definition includes the useful concepts of providing purpose and improving the organisation (charismatic–transformational). The British Army approach is more in line with charismatic–transformational trends in leadership scholarship, emphasising values as the basis for effective leadership. Instead of a definition the British Army has a ‘leadership code’ describing values and behaviours of effective leaders.²¹ While all these definitions and descriptions are helpful in developing leaders, none of them give us a definition of strategic leadership.

In transitioning from a definition of leadership to one of strategic leadership, it makes sense to bring together the concepts of strategy and leadership. However, this is not how strategic leadership is usually defined. For example, in the US Army War College *Strategic Leadership: Primer for Senior Leaders*, the main concern is explaining how to manage larger organisations in more complex environments.²² However, when the highest echelons of military and civilian leadership call for creative and adaptive strategic leaders, it seems to be a call for more than just better managers. It seems to be a call for developing individuals with the ability to create innovative strategies to help military organisations respond effectively to an international context in flux.²³ Consistent with this way of thinking, there is another way of defining strategic leadership that emphasises strategy and leadership.

Strategy and military strategy

Does strategy matter? Shelves of books on the topic suggest it does; however, few scholars have examined this question through social scientific inquiry. In his seminal 2000 article, Richard Betts subjects the ‘strategy matters’ hypothesis to a series of critiques and concludes that military strategy does matter, at least

20 Australian Army, *Leadership LWD 0-2*, AU: Land Warfare Development Centre, Tobruk Barracks, Puckapunyal, 2002, 1.9. https://131acu.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/lwd_0-2_leadership.pdf

21 ‘What does the Army Leadership Code tell us about what the Army values?’ *Wavell Room*, 7 March 2019, <https://wavellroom.com/2019/03/07/what-does-the-army-leadership-code-tell-us-about-what-the-army-values/>; *The Army Leadership Code: An Introductory Guide*, The Centre for Army Leadership, The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Sandhurst UK, 2015. https://www.army.mod.uk/media/2698/ac72021_the_army_leadership_code_an_introduutory_guide.pdf

22 Thomas P. Galvin and Dale E. Watson (eds), *Strategic Leadership: Primer for Senior Leaders*, 4th Edition, US Army War College, Carlisle PA, 2019; see also Daniel H. McCauley ‘Rediscovering the Art of Strategic Thinking: Developing 21st-Century Strategic Leaders,’ *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 2016, 81(2nd Quarter):26–33. https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-81/jfq-81_26-33_McCauley.pdf

23 *Developing Today’s Joint Officers for Tomorrow’s Ways of War: The Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education and Talent Management*, 2020, Joint Chiefs of Staff, US Department of Defense. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/education/jcs_pme_tm_vision.pdf?ver=2020-05-15-102429-817

under certain conditions.²⁴ As evidence, Betts relies on logic and a series of empirical examples. His brief historical examples are generally convincing, but are nowhere near a systematic evaluation of whether military strategy causes or shapes the effectiveness of military organisations. Betts's conclusions are buttressed by studies that have demonstrated the importance of strategy in specific cases.²⁵

This discussion begs the question: what is strategy? The answer is deceptively simple: 'a strategy is a theory of success.'²⁶ A strategy is a causal explanation of how a given action or set of actions will cause success. Definitions of success will vary and most strategies will include multiple intervening variables and conditions, this gives the definition flexibility and allows broad applicability.²⁷ Defining strategy as a theory of success encourages creative thinking while keeping the strategist rooted in the process of causal analysis; it brings assumptions to light and forces strategists to clarify exactly how they plan to cause the achievement of a goal or set of goals. Furthermore, this definition facilitates the comparison of strategies (Which strategy is the most convincing theory of success?) and allows for rigorous evaluation of a strategy before it is implemented (Is the theory internally consistent? Is it validated by empirical and theoretical knowledge?).²⁸

If a strategy, in the most general sense, is a theory of success, a military strategy is a theory of success in war or a theory of how to achieve the goals defined by political leaders, sometimes referred to as policy. An alternative and generally acceptable definition for military strategy is a theory of victory, though the concept of victory is contested and should be used with the understanding that victory is whatever the political leadership says it is.²⁹ The main point of all strategy is to create a more advantageous position than would otherwise occur.³⁰ In military strategy the point is to create a competitive advantage over your

24 Richard Betts, 'Is Strategy an Illusion?' *International Security*, Fall 2000, 25(2): 5–50.

25 See Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich (eds), *Successful Strategies: Triumphant in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014; Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY 2014; Jeffrey W Meiser, Temmo Cramer, and Ryan Turner-Brady, 'What Good Is Military Strategy?' *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, forthcoming.

26 Jeffrey W Meiser, 'Ends + Ways + Means = (Bad) Strategy,' *Parameters*, Winter 2016–17, 46(4):81–91; Jeffrey W Meiser and Sitara Nath, 'The Strategy Delusion,' *The Strategy Bridge*, August 9, 2018, <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/8/9/the-strategy-delusion>; Frank G Hoffman, 'The Missing Element in Crafting National Strategy: A Theory of Success,' *Joint Forces Quarterly*, April 2020(97):55–64. <https://inss.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2142863/the-missing-element-in-crafting-national-strategy-a-theory-of-success/>

27 For a discussion of theory and intervening variables see Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY, 1997, pp 9–12.

28 See Meiser and Nath, 'The Strategy Delusion,' for an illustration of strategic analysis.

29 See Everett Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age*, Routledge, 2005, chapter 2.

30 Freedman, *Strategy*.

opponent, and thereby achieve success, as defined by policy. This approach to military strategy is preferable to other approaches because it is clear, concise, captures the distinctiveness of the concept, and provides a method of strategic analysis.³¹

A final point worth noting is the significance of emphasising military strategy as a key determinate of outcomes in war. In recent years the study and practice of military strategy had been overtaken by the rise of the operational level of war. For some analysts, military strategy has practically ceased to exist, at least in the United States. Australian scholars Justin Kelly and Michael Brennan, argue that operational art ‘devoured strategy’ as the US military increasingly replaced military strategy with campaign planning, even at the highest level of analysis.³² Alternatively, Thomas Bruscino argues that that strategy devoured military strategy. More specifically, as military strategy morphed into strategy and encompassed more and more domains of life, military strategy was robbed of its fundamental meaning and purpose – ‘how we intend to win in a specific war or theatre of war.’³³ For the purposes of this essay, there is no need to adjudicate between these two positions, but instead to note the relative dormancy of military strategy and the need to reinvigorate the study of military strategy to increase our understanding of why wars are won and lost.

By defining military strategy as a theory of how to cause success in war, it is possible to further develop the causal connection between military strategy and military effectiveness. To do so, one must describe a plausible causal connection between military strategy and battlefield performance. As scholars of strategy have noted repeatedly, good strategy creates power.³⁴ Therefore the purpose of military strategy is to create combat power by realising some source of advantage rooted in discovering a strength in your organisation and/or a weakness in your opponent.³⁵ A military strategy, once proven effective, can have a secondary effect on military effectiveness by increasing the confidence of the troops, which will, in turn, increase their motivation to fight.

31 See Meiser, ‘Ends + Ways + Means’; Meiser and Nath, ‘The Strategy Delusion’; and Hoffman, ‘The Missing Element.’

32 Justin Kelly and Michael Brennan, *Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, Carlisle PA, September 2009. <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2027.pdf>

33 Thomas Bruscino, ‘The Leavenworth Heresy?’ *The War Room*, US Army War College, 23 January 2020. <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/the-leavenworth-heresy/>

34 Richard Rumelt, *Good Strategy/Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters*, Crown Business, New York, 2011, pp 21–32. Lawrence Friedman, *Strategy: A History*, Oxford University Press, 2013, p xii.

35 For a more extended discussion of strategy and combat power see Meiser, Cramer, and Turner-Brady, ‘What Good Is Military Strategy?’ (n 25).

Strategic leadership

Strategic leadership is the process of creating a theory of success for an organisation and mobilising that organisation in the application of that theory. However, having a strategy, or theory of success, is not sufficient to cause increased performance; a leader must have an *accurate* theory of success if one hopes to increase performance. Moreover, a leader cannot be motivational in a general sense, instead, she must motivate followers in the manner required by the chosen strategy. Thus, strategic leadership can be done well or done poorly. Good strategic leadership is the creation of an accurate theory of success and sufficient mobilisation of followers for implementation of strategy. Applied to military strategy, effective strategic leadership causes increased combat power by identifying an accurate theory of success and sufficiently mobilising a military force in the application of that theory.

The scholarship on leadership and strategy suggests the following causal mechanisms linking strategic leadership to military effectiveness.

- First, a good military strategy generates combat power by creating an advantage through the discovery of new sources of relative strength.
- Second, successfully inculcating identity and values consistent with a commander's vision of military performance generates combat power by increasing the morale, motivation and commitment to mission of the military force.
- Third, there are likely to be complementarities between strategy and motivation because a successful strategy can also shape organisational identity and increase confidence and therefore increase motivation.

Increased motivation may also open doors to new strategies or give the strategic leader greater flexibility in elaborating her strategy. Therefore, the primary role of the strategic leader on the battlefield is to develop an effective interlocking strategy–organisational–identity complex that maximises combat power in the commander's military force.

The section below uses General Matthew B. Ridgway's leadership intervention as commander of the US Eighth Army and UNC as a case study for investigating how leadership can create military effectiveness.

US Eighth Army in Korea: How Ridgway turned the tide

Estimate of the situation

On 26 December 1950, General Matthew Ridgway landed at Taegu, South Korea. He was the new commander of the Eighth Army, and de facto commander of the UNC, a force that had gone from the brink of victory to the brink of defeat in less than a month. This was the force that had rescued South Korea from the invading North Korean army (Korean People's Army or KPA) and pushed those North Korean forces out of South Korea and north to the border with China at the Yalu River. But the triumph of victory had been short-lived as the Chinese People's Volunteers Force (CPVF) attacked from across the Yalu River to push the UNC back to South Korea raising fears they could potentially be pushed off the peninsula.

Ridgway took over for General Walton Walker, who died in a traffic accident near Uijeongbu, South Korea. Walker was the commander of US forces in Korea, but General MacArthur was Commander-in-Chief of the UNC, based in Tokyo, Japan. In practice, this meant that General Walker had to gain MacArthur's approval for operations and to a large extent, MacArthur micromanaged the war from Tokyo. However, this would not happen after Ridgway took command of the Eighth Army. In Ridgway's first meeting with MacArthur after taking his new post, MacArthur said, 'The Eighth Army is yours, Matt. Do what you think is best.'³⁶

MacArthur had low hopes for the Eighth Army and consistently and vociferously argued that the Eighth Army could only remain in the fight if it were massively reinforced and air attacks on Chinese territory began immediately. MacArthur did not believe that the Eighth Army could hold its own against the CPVF much less impose enough punishment to bring China to the negotiating table as Truman desired.³⁷

The UNC was at a numerical disadvantage. The CPVF had 400,000 troops, of which 230,000 were considered 'frontline fighters.' The KPA added 75,000 troops in 14 combat-effective divisions. The UNC could count on 270,000 combat troops, about half of which were South Korean.³⁸ But the numerical disadvantage was a minor problem compared to the distinct lack of confidence and absence of fighting spirit among the UNC. Ridgway's first impression could

36 Matthew B Ridgway, *The Korean War*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1967, p 101; Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea 1950-1953*, Doubleday, New York, 1989, p 567.

37 Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp 590-591, pp 625-626; Roy E. Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station TX, 1990, p 92, p 140.

38 Allan R. Millet, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2010, p 381.

hardly have been worse: 'There was a definite air of nervousness, of gloomy foreboding, of uncertainty, a spirit of apprehension as to what the future held. There was much 'looking over the shoulder' as the soldiers say...'39 The commander of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Harold 'Johnny' Johnson recalled, 'It was a...defeated army...a disintegrating army. It was an army not in retreat [but] in flight. It was something bordering on disgrace.'40

Ridgway's Leadership Intervention

Effective strategic leadership causes increased combat power by identifying an accurate strategy (theory of success) and mobilising a military force by inculcating an appropriate organisational identity to carry out that strategy. According to strategic leadership theory, an effective leader must, first, create an accurate theory of success that provides direction and appropriate goals for the organisation. A military leader must create a theory of how to use military force to achieve the goals of policy. Military strategy affects military effectiveness by creating combat power through the process of discovering new sources of power, identifying methods of better utilising known strengths, and identifying and exploiting weaknesses of the opponent. Second, leaders must develop and activate specific identities and values within an organisation that are consistent with the requirements of strategy. By inspiring greater commitment to the mission and increased motivation to fight and win, a leader can increase combat power of a military force.

Ridgway's specific leadership challenge was to (1) develop a military strategy for the UNC that would achieve the political goal of bringing China to the negotiating table while avoiding escalation, and (2) mobilise the Eighth Army to implement that strategy. To make this work Ridgway had to generate increased combat power from approximately the same resources and manpower as his failed predecessor.

Intervention 1: strategy

The primary way a combatant commander provides direction is to develop and implement a military strategy in pursuit of political goals. If we define strategy as a theory of success, then it was Ridgway's job to develop and implement a theory of how to preserve the Eighth Army as an effective fighting force, halt the Chinese advance and bring China to the negotiating table. He did this immediately.

Ridgway's guidance from Washington was to hold the line against the CPVF and do what he could to encourage China to negotiate an end to the conflict. To this end, Ridgway decided to 'shift from static defence to a limited offensive-defensive posture...He would begin with aggressive platoon- or company-sized

39 Ridgway quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 571.

40 Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 571. See also Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 372-373, pp 377-378.

patrols and build to battalion size or larger. In the process, he would commence killing the CCF [Chinese Communist Forces].⁴¹ As noted below, he consistently emphasised the need to impose costs on the Chinese and North Korean forces through limited offensive and defensive manoeuvres. It did not matter much to Ridgway whether his troops were advancing or retreating, as long as they were punishing the enemy at a sustainable cost to themselves.

Ridgway's main impact was on implementing a new military strategy to achieve the desired political effects and identifying a key advantage for his forces he would use to achieve those effects. In essence, he shifted from a military strategy of annihilation to one of coercion through denial and punishment.⁴² Under Walker/MacArthur the UNC strategy sought to destroy the enemy army in climactic battles of encirclement and when that did not work they retreated into a static defence. If this strategy was the only one available then it made sense for MacArthur to see the cause as lost. However, Ridgway saw another option. The logic of coercion by denial and punishment meant convincing the Chinese forces that victory was impossible by smashing their offensives and systematically decreasing their capacity to fight effectively. Instead of focusing on holding specific territory or seeking to impose an outright defeat on the Chinese forces, Ridgway's goal was to wear down the enemy while preserving his forces on the Korean Peninsula.⁴³ He noted the UNC advantage in firepower and saw that the effective use of firepower would be crucial for killing enemy soldiers using human wave tactics. This shift in goals and reorientation towards a new source of power set the stage for dramatically increased combat performance by the Eighth Army. But without a force willing to stand and fight long enough to bring US firepower to bear, the strategy would fail. This motivational element was the second part of Ridgway's leadership intervention.

Intervention 2: values and identity

When Ridgway arrived, the Eighth Army was defined by a defeatist identity characterised by passivity, uncertainty, nervousness, fear, lack of confidence and avoidance of combat. The new commander had to reactivate the fighting identity of the Eighth Army and instil values of aggression, confidence and determination. Ridgway's main effort was 'putting backbone into Eighth Army.'⁴⁴ He believed the Eighth Army 'needed to have its fighting spirit restored, to have pride in itself,

41 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 571.

42 For a description of different types of military strategy see Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Military Strategy: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

43 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p 108.

44 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 580.

to feel confidence in its leadership, and have faith in its mission.⁴⁵ To achieve this, Ridgway toured the troop positions both to show himself to his troops and take their measure. He was not encouraged by what he saw. He felt they lacked 'spirit,' they were 'a bewildered army, not sure of itself or its leaders, not sure what they were doing there...'⁴⁶

Ridgway did what he could to demonstrate and inculcate an aggressive fighting spirit or warrior spirit. He wanted his troops to 'fight and kill the enemy because that was what real soldiers did. They fought for their comrades and their unit's reputation.'⁴⁷ To inspire the will to fight, Ridgway visited all his battalions and:

made pep talks (his specialty), lectured commanders and their staffs about their need of offensive spirit, and ensured that his army's material condition was as good as his logisticians could manage. His aggressive spirit impressed the reporters that trailed after him, and he fully appreciated that good news could create better morale, along with hot meals and weapons that worked.⁴⁸

Ridgway knew that negative press was bad for morale and therefore requested a public affairs officer to help change the narrative in the press. Lieutenant Colonel James T. Quirk performed this duty well, as he promoted Ridgway and 'helped turn press attention to the Eighth Army's new aggressiveness and heartened the army and the public.'⁴⁹

Ridgway took dramatic action to infuse the Eighth Army with the will to fight. When the I Corps G-3 John R. Jeter gave his first briefing to Ridgway without attack plans, he was relieved on the spot.⁵⁰ Similarly, in a briefing with Oliver P. Smith's 1st Marine Division, Ridgway told Smith's staff to throw away the maps planning the withdrawal of the Eighth Army to Pusan and told them that the time for retreat was over.⁵¹ According to the Marine 1st Division G-3, Ridgway 'brought a new fresh attitude, a new fresh breath of life to the whole Eighth Army.'⁵² He also worked to ensure he had aggressive and energetic leaders at the corps and division levels to reverse the 'defeatist attitude' of the Eighth Army.⁵³ He quickly

45 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p 85.

46 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p 86.

47 Millet, *War for Korea*, p 389.

48 Millet, *War for Korea*, p 389.

49 Millet, *War for Korea*, p 379.

50 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 574.

51 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 579.

52 Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 579.

53 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 571.

relieved four of the six division commanders, replaced one of his corps commanders, and several artillery commanders.⁵⁴

Since half of the strength of the Eighth Army were Korean, and they were in an even worse psychological state than the Americans, it was crucial for Ridgway to do what he could to shore up the Republic of Korea (ROK) battalions. His main effort was to re-establish trust by promising ROK President Syngman Rhee that the Americans would not abandon the ROK forces, and that if it was necessary to evacuate the peninsula the Americans would take the ROK government, army and dependents with them.⁵⁵ He told Rhee that US forces were determined to stay in the fight and he intended to go on the offensive as soon as conditions permitted. Ridgway pledged in writing, 'there is one single common destiny for this combined Allied Army. It will fight together and stay together whatever the future holds.'⁵⁶

Ridgway mobilised his forces by seeking to shift the identity and values of the Eighth Army and UNC through his rhetorical power, change in strategy and choice of subordinate leaders. The warrior identity was consistent with, and crucial for, the implementation of his strategy of coercion. His strategy would also help create a fighting spirit among his soldiers and marines and thereby increase combat power. The shift from attempting to smash the opposing force with major battlefield victories was replaced by the goal of imposing higher relative costs over time. UNC forces did not have to breakthrough and encircle the massive Chinese-North Korean force, it simply had to hold its ground, kill the enemy and complete limited offences when advantageous.

Results 1: hold the line and 'Bleed Red China White'

A week after Ridgway arrived in South Korea, the CPVF began its 'third offensive,' crossing the 38th Parallel into South Korea on New Year's Eve. The response by the Eighth Army suggests Ridgway's initial efforts were only partially effective (he was there for only a week when the offensive began). Most of the ROK forces continued their pattern of panicked retreat in the face of Chinese attack. In particular, the retreat of the ROK First, Sixth, Second, and Fifth Divisions at the centre and east made the whole defensive line of the Eighth Army untenable. The ROK forces disintegrated in an evening assault by six CPVF divisions at the centre and five KPA divisions along the east coast of the peninsula.⁵⁷ The best that can be said for the first engagement of the Eighth Army under Ridgway is that it completed

54 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 581.

55 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 575.

56 Ridgway, *The Korean War*, p 263; see also Millet, *War for Korea*, p 380.

57 Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 383–384.

an organised retrograde operation that moved the entire force 60 miles from 'Line B', north of Seoul, to 'Line D', well to the south of Seoul.⁵⁸

After settling in a Line D, Ridgway worked in earnest to implement his new strategy and revive the fighting spirit of the Eighth Army. This was his opportunity to inspire his soldiers and marines and to restore the confidence of his officers. As soon as the Eighth Army settled in on 'Line D,' Ridgway ordered a reconnaissance in force north to regain contact with the CPVF. The first patrol was made up of the 27th Infantry with tanks from the 89th Tank Battalion and artillery from the 89th Field Artillery Brigade (FAB) and 90th FAB and led by Colonel John M. Michaelis, commander of the 27th Infantry. Ridgway told the task force, 'We're not going back anymore; we're going to advance.'⁵⁹ His order was to 'search out the enemy and inflict maximum punishment on him.'⁶⁰ Michaelis's task force would advance north from the west end of Line D. The force found the CPVF at Suwon and positioned itself just to the south at Osan. The patrol was successful at finding the enemy and holding that force in place. More importantly it was a 'morale builder', putting the Eighth Army on the attack for the first time in a month.⁶¹

In the meantime, Ridgway continued his work to build confidence. His standard order was to delay and degrade the enemy through defensive action and, when possible, employ local counterattacks. '[T]o initiate greater offensive action and bleed Red China white,' the Eighth Army would 'inflict maximum loss to the enemy' and 'achieve maximum delay'.⁶² According to one historian, Ridgway's rhetorical efforts were successful and had an 'electrifying impact' on the soldiers and marines under his command.⁶³ However, as of 11 January, Ridgway was writing to Washington that his 'one overriding problem, dominating all others, is to achieve the spiritual awakening of the latent capabilities of this command.'⁶⁴

Results 2: attack and defend

By 14 January 1950, Ridgway was getting intelligence that the CPVF was beginning to mass to renew its offensive just north of Osan, near the salient held by Michaelis on the west side of the line. Ridgway saw this as an opportunity to destroy the CPVF regiments as they began to concentrate for an attack. I Corps

58 Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp 600–603.

59 Ridgway quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 605.

60 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 606.

61 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 606.

62 Ridgway quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 620.

63 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 620; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, p 148.

64 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 627.

was ordered to organise an armoured attack, Operation Wolfhound, to impose maximum damage on the CPVF and then withdraw to their previous position. Ridgway personally oversaw the planning of the operation and temporarily made his headquarters at I Corps to inspire the soldiers and invigorate the commander, General Frank 'Shrimp' Milburn. The total force would include about 6,000 soldiers, 150 tanks and 3 artillery battalions. It would be a complex combined arms operation with careful coordination and support. After engaging the CPVF concentration at Suwon, it became evident that the 27th Infantry and 89th Tank Battalion were in danger of being cut off and surrounded. Ridgway ordered all units involved in Operation Wolfhound to fall back to their original positions and prepare to defend a CPVF attack. But the attack never came. Despite the failure of Operation Wolfhound to do much damage to the CPVF, it did disrupt the attack and the 'intangible benefits were remarkable,' providing a 'profound psychological uplift.'⁶⁵ The Eighth Army had moved north in force and survived contact without being overrun or losing cohesion. Furthermore, the CPVF declined to counterattack.⁶⁶ This operation contrasts markedly with the operations in north-east Korea in November 1950. Ridgway was cautiously aggressive, willing to attack, but also willing to draw back rather than risk encirclement.

General Joe Collins and Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, General Hoyt Vandenberg arrived in South Korea on 15 January 1950 to evaluate the situation and report back to Washington. This was Collins' fourth trip so he had seen the Eighth Army before Ridgway arrived. He reported on the 'improved spirit Ridgway had already imparted to his men.'⁶⁷ Collins saw a new optimism and confidence taking hold among the soldiers and marines. Both he and Vandenberg agreed that contrary to what MacArthur told them, the Eighth Army had the look and feel of an effective fighting force.⁶⁸ Collins reported to Washington: 'Eighth Army in good shape and improving daily under Ridgway's leadership.'⁶⁹ Furthermore, 'Ridgway alone was responsible' for the improved morale and willingness to fight.⁷⁰

Aggressive probing of CPVF strength and disposition continued through January with most of the action taking place at the centre of the line, defended by X and IX Corps. Wonju changed hands and was recaptured on 19 January after a short but fierce engagement with KPA troops. Soon after, Task Force Johnson was formed around the 8th Cavalry supported by tanks from the 70th Tank

65 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 637; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, pp 149–154.

66 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 637.

67 Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 642.

68 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 645; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 155.

69 Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 646.

70 Quoted in Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 647; see also Millet, *War for Korea*, p 397.

Battalion. It moved north on a line to the west of Wonju and the east of Operation Wolfhound, beginning its mission on 22 January. Task Force Johnson was supported by a feint re-treading the path of Operation Wolfhound. Both the main operation and the feint failed to find any significant concentrations of CPVF or NKPA, but this was useful intelligence and demonstrated that the enemy forces were well north of Line D. More importantly, American regiments had effectively manoeuvred north without being set upon by Chinese forces. Again, Ridgway ordered operations that succeeded in building up the confidence in his soldiers.⁷¹

The preceding operations gave Ridgway the confidence to order I and IX Corps to carry out extensive reconnaissance-in-force operations at the division level on 25 January, codenamed Thunderbolt. On 24 January, Ridgway personally did aerial reconnaissance of the terrain that Americans would soon be moving into to ensure they were not heading into a trap. The 35th Infantry and 89th Tank Battalion of I Corps quickly captured Suwon, facing only light resistance. The Turkish Brigade achieved renown with a bayonet charge that dislodged CPVF from a hill near Suwon, encouraging Ridgway to issue an order for all troops to fix bayonets, symbolising the new fighting spirit and the desire to close with and kill the enemy. The 1st Cavalry Division of IX Corps attacked on a line to the east of I Corps and quickly ran into tough fighting with a CPVF regiment near Inchon. The offensive proceeded well enough for Ridgway to order the remainder of I and IX Corps into the fight. Both corps ran into CPVF regiments and gave battle without being overrun or pushed back.⁷² Operations proceeded so well that the I Corps pushed the CPVF across the Han River, considered a 'notable, even electrifying achievement.'⁷³

Eighth Army tactics and operations showed significant improvement in Operation Thunderbolt: 'CPVF commanders reported that they found it difficult even at night to find vulnerable gaps and salient; the Eighth Army ground forward with massive fire support and halted for the night in tight, firepower-rich defensive positions.'⁷⁴ Ridgway's 'determination to move north had a clear purpose: to kill Chinese and to weld the Eighth Army into a united, skilled and motivated force that could not be forced from Korea by the Chinese – North Korean armies.'⁷⁵

Concurrent with the push to the Han, Ridgway sent a X Corps patrol both as a feint to enable Operation Thunderbolt and to develop intelligence about the disposition of CPVF in the centre of the line. It seemed likely that this would be the

71 Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp 647–648, pp 650–651; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 158–159.

72 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 652, pp 654–664.

73 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 682.

74 Millet, *War for Korea*, p 391.

75 Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 391–392.

area hit by the next Chinese offensive. The patrol, led by Colonel Paul Freeman and battalions from the 23rd Infantry Regiment found strong CPVF presence and their confrontation developed into the Battle of Twin Tunnels. In the day-long engagement, American and French forces held off vigorous Chinese assaults before forcing the CPVF to retreat under the deadly close air support by marine aircraft. The result of the battle was at least 1,200 Chinese dead and up to 5,000 Chinese casualties compared to 225 American casualties.⁷⁶ Blair summarises the importance of this battle: 'For the first time in the war an American Army force had not only repulsed but virtually annihilated a full CCF divisional attack.'⁷⁷ The success at Twin Tunnels demonstrated that UNC forces with adequate ammunition and preparation could hold firm against CPVF attacks long enough for their superior firepower to be fully utilised to defeat even a much larger CPVF force.⁷⁸

The operations of late January showed significant improvement in both the moral and physical status of the Eighth Army. However, Ridgway had yet to experience a full offensive by the CPVF. This occurred on 11 February, with the beginning of the Chinese Fourth Offensive concentrated at the centre of the Eighth Army defensive line held by General Ned Almond's X Corps. The American forces suffered major setbacks before regrouping to hold strongpoints at Chipyeong-ni and Wonju. Both points suffered intense attacks with Chipyeong-ni facing especially difficult fighting after being surrounded by the CPVF. Despite Almond's early miscalculation, X Corps held the strongpoints on the line and with the help of excellent artillery work and close air support turned back the offensive. While Ridgway's plan to bring I Corps across the Han to attack into the rear of advancing CPVF forces failed due to unexpected CPVF resistance and logistical problems, the overall outcome of the Fourth Offensive was a serious mauling of the CPVF, which retreated north of the 38th Parallel.⁷⁹ Appleman views the battle at Chipyeong-ni as the 'turning point in the war' and Ridgway as 'its principle architect.'⁸⁰

The Korean War does not stop here, but the failure of the Fourth Chinese Offensive and the ensuing stalemate shows that the Eighth Army and UNC was able to hold its own against CPVF attacks and stage successful counter attacks. Subsequent UNC operations retook Seoul and pushed the Chinese-North Korean armies

76 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 664-668; Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 400-401.

77 Blair, *Forgotten War*, p 668.

78 Millet, *War for Korea*, p 401.

79 Blair, *Forgotten War*, pp 687-712; Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 403-411.

80 Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 580. Xiaobing Li argues that the real turning point was the defeat of the Fifth Offensive in spring of 1951, see Xiaobing Li, *China's Battle for Korea: The 1951 Spring Offensive*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2014. Regardless, without the victory against the Fourth Offensive, there would likely have been no Eighth Army left to defend against the Fifth Offensive, so Chipyeong-ni remains a crucial point in the war.

back past the 38th Parallel. Both sides would continue to take and lose ground; however, after January of 1951 there was no longer a possibility that American forces could be evicted from the peninsula by force and the UNC won a decisive battle against the Chinese Fifth Offensive in spring 1951.⁸¹ Ridgway's leadership intervention played a major part in the turn-around of the Eighth Army. In fall 1951, army officer and historian Roy E. Appleman surveyed hundreds of officers and soldiers under Ridgway's command. He found:

Almost without exception, all who had any opinion at all (and most of them did) said that Ridgway made the difference in the outcome of the war—that he had prevented the Eighth Army from marching out of Korea, that he had singlehandedly given it a new spirit in two months after he assumed command and had turned it around to face the enemy and then driven the enemy north of South Korea. He led the American troops in retrieving the military honour of the United States.⁸²

Counterarguments

The analytical narrative described above provides considerable evidence in support of the argument that Ridgway's strategic leadership significantly improved the military effectiveness of the Eighth Army in the winter of 1951. However, other factors certainly played a role in the increased success of the Eighth Army and UNC. First, the concepts of 'loss of strength gradient'⁸³ and 'culminating point of victory'⁸⁴ suggest the relative strength of Chinese and UN forces may have shifted over time. As Chinese forces got further from their home territory, their supply lines lengthened, battlefield fatigue increased and morale declined causing their combat power to diminish.⁸⁵ Thus, while the overall balance of forces did not change much, Chinese effectiveness did decrease, giving the Americans and their allies a chance to regroup. While these factors played a role, it is not clear that Chinese forces suffered more from the movement down the Korean Peninsula than the American forces.⁸⁶ For the Americans, they were not moving closer to their home territory and instead were moving closer to a humiliated total retreat from the peninsula.⁸⁷ Supply lines were being shortened but as the UNC

81 Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, p xviii.

82 Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 148.

83 Kenneth E Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1962, p 79.

84 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (n 8) p 570.

85 Li, *China's Battle for Korea*, p 53.

86 Both forces faced considerable difficulties by January 1951 when Ridgway arrived, see Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 377–383.

87 There was a widespread assumption that UN forces would evacuate the peninsula in January 1951, Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 92, p 140.

retreated they lost large amounts of equipment, which could only be replaced slowly, if at all.⁸⁸ The retreat down the peninsula did provide some time to regroup, but prior to Ridgway's presence, the time to regroup was meaningless. Without Ridgway's strategic leadership focusing on changing the identity of the Eighth Army and infusing them with a fighting spirit, it seems unlikely that a decline in Chinese combat power would have made much of a difference.

Second, perhaps it was not Ridgway's strategic leadership that mattered, perhaps it was the operational leadership of Ridgway and his divisional commanders that made the difference. This hypothesis is in line with much of the literature on military effectiveness and there is some evidence to support this position. Much of what happened after Ridgway arrived could be categorised as improved execution of combined arms warfare. For example, Ridgway instructed his subordinate commanders to make better use of artillery and close air support, to go on the offence to the extent possible, and seek opportunities for disruptive attacks on CPVF formations.⁸⁹ Thus, in a sense, perhaps Ridgway provided operational leadership rather than strategic leadership. This argument, while plausible, allows the operational level of war to devour strategy. As described in detail above, Ridgway did far more than instruct his division commanders to get back to the basics of combined arms operations. Furthermore, it is unlikely that simple operation directives would have made a difference. The Eighth Army had embraced an identity of failure and fear and had lost its sense of purpose. Ridgway analysed the political goals defined by the commander-in-chief and developed a theory of success to achieve those goals along with a complementary identity to enable the execution of his military strategy.

Conclusion

This brief case study of Matthew Ridgway's leadership intervention in the Korean War demonstrates the value of the strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness. First, there is congruence between Ridgway's new strategy and motivational efforts and significantly increased battlefield performance by the UNC forces. Second, the causal explanation of strategic leadership theory appears consistent with the facts of the case. Ridgway's new strategy was effective and was tied directly to his efforts to change the identity and values of the UNC. To deny victory to the enemy and compel them to negotiate, Ridgway needed a military force willing to stand and fight with determination and aggression. He needed a force with fighting spirit. Ridgway created that fighting spirit and warrior identity

88 Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 346–347, p 377; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, p 51, p 57, p 150, p 302.

89 Millet, *War for Korea*, pp 379–380; Blair, *Forgotten War*, 1989, p 587, pp 637–638; Appleman, *Ridgway Duels*, pp 120–121, p 140, p 156, pp 175–176, p 179, p 182, p 302.

by explaining the basic purpose of why the US was in Korea and what that meant he needed from his troops. He also implemented his strategy in a way that slowly built the identity and values he needed. He ordered limited engagements that could provide small victories that would build the confidence of his forces. This style of leadership intervention shows that it is not enough to be a good strategist or motivator; a strategic leader must be both.

The Korean War case illustrates and provides support for a strategic leadership theory of military effectiveness. Strategic leadership is the process of creating a theory of success (strategy) for an organisation and mobilising that organisation in the execution of that theory. The concept of strategic leadership combines motivational and directional conceptualisations of leadership into a more comprehensive approach while focusing the fundamental importance of strategy. A strategic leader cannot just have unimpeachable character and exceptional motivational ability; a strategic leader must have the ability to formulate a good strategy that increases organisational effectiveness. In the military domain, a strategic leader must have an effective military strategy, or theory of how to achieve the political goals of the war established by the national leadership, while also infusing their military force with the collective values and identity that will enable successful execution of the military strategy.

There are two main implications of this research. First, the findings of this essay suggest students of military effectiveness may find it beneficial to include strategic leadership in future studies to analyse how military strategy (and even national strategy) affect military effectiveness. It is possible that in some cases, operational excellence is conditioned by, or even caused by, strategic leadership. Second, the concepts, theory and findings of this essay may be useful in PME programs. Strategic leadership is one of the core competencies PME systems are supposed to develop in its senior officers. As noted in the analysis above, strategic leadership is not always defined in a way that truly connects the competencies of strategy and leadership. Too often strategic leadership is seen as a set of relatively unfocused characteristics to embody, rather than as a practical skill set required for battlefield success. According to the theory proposed in this essay, PME programs that focus on teaching officers to develop good theories of battlefield success and educating them in the practice of shaping organisational values and identity will produce better strategic leaders.



Commentary

The power of GEOINT: intelligence, operations and capability in the 2020s and beyond

Scott Dewar

Introduction

Anyone with a smart phone is aware of how rapidly the technology to gather, process and share images and data has transformed how we work, interact and perceive the world. And there's no sign that technology is slowing down. If anything these advances are accelerating. Technological innovation has revolutionised the geospatial sector and will continue to have a profound impact on all we do, empowering the delivery of better intelligence insights, underpinning the conduct of operations, and enabling what modern capabilities can deliver for government. Geospatial information and geospatial intelligence (together GEOINT) can provide a decisive edge in national security competition – for strategic leadership through to tactical commanders. But, simply keeping up with the technological changes will not be enough to take full advantage of this revolution.

The goal of the GEOINT enterprise is to deliver assured information and intelligence to Defence users. To do that, we need to develop and nurture the GEOINT expertise across Defence. GEOINT has to be mainstreamed into Defence thinking and processes from the earliest planning stages so it can deliver the right information at the right time to the right decision-makers.

Geospatial data must be considered as vital an ingredient in operations as fuel. We must consider what types of data we need, where it can be collected, and how it can be shared and fed back into a system that supports superior situational awareness and decision-making. GEOINT cannot be an afterthought; it must become a first order consideration when intelligence is being produced,

operations are planned and conducted, and Defence acquisitions are considered and managed.

Defence took a big step towards this goal this year with the release of *Defence GEOINT 2030 – A Strategy for Defence’s GEOINT Capability*. Through the strategy the Defence GEOINT community – led by the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO) – agreed to five strategic goals and committed to working together to achieve them. Integration will be key. As the demand for GEOINT increases, the Defence GEOINT community will need to ensure that the spectrum of data, information, intelligence and services that comprise GEOINT are integrated and service-enabled. Our shared challenges are great, but we also have a real opportunity for the Defence GEOINT community to strengthen its contribution to achieving Defence’s mission.

What is GEOINT?

The term ‘geospatial intelligence’ (GEOINT) refers to the collection, analysis and dissemination of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities in the air, land, maritime and space domains.¹ It is intelligence derived from the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information that informs our understanding of features and events, with reference to space and time.²

Imagery collection and analysis is at the historical heart of GEOINT, but the field goes well beyond that. Other data types such as terrain data, human geography, meteorology, hydrography and many more are brought together to make up GEOINT. It is a scientific pursuit. It relies on inputs of data. It relies on making hypotheses and testing them against what is observed. There can be denial and deception, but imagery analysis and the other disciplines of GEOINT that answer questions about the physical environment are expected to provide truth.

Understanding what happens where underpins all strategic and operational level decisions, in peace, war and times of grey zone conflict. And, describing in detail where things are and where events occur is what GEOINT is all about. Delivering authoritative information and intelligence, at speed, to those who need it is the core mission for GEOINT. When fully exploited, GEOINT can provide a powerful decision-making advantage to a nation.

1 Dept of Defence, *Defence GEOINT 2030: a strategy for Defence’s GEOINT capability*, Department of Defence, Australian Government, 2020. <https://www.defence.gov.au/ago/library/Defence-GEOINT-2030.pdf>

2 Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation (AGO), *Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT)*, (<https://defence.gov.au/ago/geoint.htm>), website, Department of Defence, accessed 6 November 2020.

A short history of GEOINT

Historically, maps have helped people to navigate, to trade, and to define and defend the boundaries of their territory. Once this information was captured in highly abstract maps and charts. Now it is captured in detailed databases to sub-metre accuracy. The capacity to gather intelligence from the air was quickly grasped with the arrival of the aeroplane and the development of aerial reconnaissance in the First and Second World Wars. Then, during the Cold War, with further advances in space-based imagery sensors and satellites, technology not only provided even greater detail of the physical world, it provided the capacity to observe events occurring in inaccessible areas. In the 1970s, a new era of technology emerged, geospatial information systems, as the evolution of computing software ushered in the field of digital geospatial analysis. Now digital geospatial products (maps, imagery and visualisations of data) that provide an ever more sophisticated understanding of the world we inhabit are taken for granted.

Strategic and operational decisions need to be based on the best understanding of the environment. Whoever has the best understanding of the environment has the greatest chance of making the smartest decisions. This is not new. In General Sir John Monash's autobiographical reflection of his preparations for the Battle of Hamel during the First World War, he described how he gathered his commanders together and, with the benefit of maps, went over the plan for his complex coordinated attack of 8 August 1918. The time he invested in bringing his commanders on the journey of preparation is an important demonstration of the importance of communication in the conduct of any complex operation or activity. The way he ensured that all his commanders shared a common view of the physical world and how events would take place in space and time was decades ahead of its time. Today, the modern commander requires more than a map – commanders need GEOINT.

In 2020, the historical drivers of the need for geospatial information remain as relevant as ever. National boundaries need to be delineated and understood. The technology for acquiring data and processing geospatial information into useable products continues to develop at a rapid and even accelerating rate. The volume and sources of data is exploding. Imagery is cheap and readily available. The tools to process data and imagery are accessible and increasingly powerful. But, what use is this information if it is not fully exploited, communicated and shared, and used to inform decision-making?

And, what does this all mean for Defence?

To deliver intelligence insights we must nurture the GEOINT workforce, reach out across disciplines and drive continuous innovation

GEOINT's power to provide intelligence insights comes from two key attributes. First, space-based imagery provides a unique source of information on activities, particularly those within denied target areas. Amassed over time, the observations captured from imagery can provide unrivalled insights into patterns of life and early warning of possible threats.

Second, GEOINT can provide a critical value add to all-source analysis by providing the framework to visualise and situate other intelligence. Together, 20 written reports of observations, some open-source reporting and hand-held imagery may provide insights. But, put all those same sources on a base layer map and the patterns readily emerge. And that gives commanders, who are seeking to synthesise huge amounts of information, the power to make better decisions more quickly.

To provide this value add, GEOINT skills must be nurtured.

GEOINT is not a replacement for all-source analysis. Instead, GEOINT is a profession that requires practitioners of all the sub-disciplines – imagery analysts, data analysts, foundation data producers, human geographers, IT managers and developers – to continually build their subject matter expertise. When they have a strong foundation of skills and expertise, GEOINT practitioners then need to reach out from within their discipline not only to other parts of GEOINT but also across the intelligence and operational communities and offer their expertise to assist the development of the most insightful products possible. Raising, training and sustaining an expert GEOINT workforce is essential for Defence. Because those professionals can bring their expertise to the table and work alongside other intelligence disciplines to help deliver insights that are more powerful than any discipline can deliver in isolation.

One of the most important skillsets for GEOINT professionals in the coming years will be data analytics. Ever since the first geographical information systems were developed in the 1970s, GEOINT has been an inherently digital activity. Now, as data sources grow, the sector will increasingly require automation of processing and analysis. There are simply not enough analysts to manually process all of the imagery, let alone to combine it in meaningful ways with other geospatial data to maximise the potential intelligence insights the data can provide. To offer growing value to the intelligence process, GEOINT will have to continue to evolve its tradecraft through an ongoing analytical modernisation effort. The Defence GEOINT community will need to drive continuous GEOINT innovations.

To facilitate deep understanding of the environment operations must plan their COP needs early

GEOINT is not only about understanding the actions of adversaries. It is also fundamental to our own ability to act. In a modern operation, the common operating picture (the COP) upon which commanders base their decisions rests on a foundation of GEOINT. This geospatially based representation of the status of forces – referencing everything in space and time – presents a commander with a deep understanding of the environment and thereby enables sound decisions.

The COP must be capable of showing numerous things: the commander's own forces; those of their partners and allies; and the disposition of adversaries. In challenging Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) or recovery operations, it is just as important to be able to include inputs from non-government organisations, civil authorities, and, indeed, from the media. In a complex geopolitical environment, this is even more the case. The COP must provide easy access to intelligence reporting and other layers of data and information. Tactical decisions have strategic consequences. Commanders need to be able to bring together a wide range of data to enrich their understanding of the context in which they operate.

All of this must be on a secure, shared, assured and authoritative foundation layer of geospatial data. The system that is built to deliver the COP must be flexible enough to incorporate data from a wide range of sources – appropriately caveated where necessary. The Defence GEOINT community needs to work together to deliver trusted, assured and secure GEOINT.

To be successful and a value add to the operation, time must be invested early on to define the needs from the COP.

From the moment when an initial planning effort is underway for an operation, the commander must set out what sort of COP is required and what data is needed to fill it. GEOINT subject matter experts can then deliver the system and build in the necessary fields and visualisations. This process also requires the nurturing of GEOINT expertise across the organisation so that the COP can be built and amended as required.

Capability acquisition and sustainment must plan for increasing data demand, volume, speed and accessibility

We are far from reaching the point of peak supply of and demand for data. Fifth-generation platforms will require and produce more data by orders of magnitude than the capabilities they replace. Autonomous systems that are likely to come on line in the decades ahead will also require and collect more data. Newer

and longer-range weapon systems will require more data in shorter timeframes. Potential adversaries will be pursuing superiority in data processing to provide insights.

Having GEOINT is not enough; it has to be shared with those who need it. It has to be absorbed, processed and disseminated across systems and platforms for it to deliver on the promise it offers. Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms (ISR), combat platforms and enablers will all need to be able to share their data and access the data they need to operate.

A Joint Strike Fighter without data cannot deliver to its potential. A submarine without data is suboptimal. A soldier without access to the latest GEOINT is not given the best chance to understand the operational environment. Furthermore, if all of these platforms and people do not feed the geospatial information they collect back into the system the opportunity for decision-making superiority may be foregone.

The remedy to this situation is easy to understand but hard to implement. Geospatial data needs must be considered a crucial part of all capability projects and the capability life cycle. To make this happen we need to shift our thinking about geospatial data and Defence capabilities. No project should proceed to acquisition until and unless its data needs are clearly understood, and a plan is in place to provide those inputs. Furthermore, no project should be able to proceed without a clear understanding of how the geospatial data it will collect will be passed back to the centre to be exploited for decision-making advantage. Without sharing of collected data, commanders risk not fighting off the same map.

In addition to formalising the requirement to consider geospatial data needs for all projects, the unique requirements of geospatial data need to be factored into Defence's computer network designs. Analysing imagery and geospatial data requires computer processing power, storage space and bandwidth. The requirements GEOINT puts on information and communications technology (ICT) systems are unique. The answer is not to simply give everyone access to more computing capability, rather the system needs to factor the needs of GEOINT into its design and architecture. Technological innovation will be required in parallel. Processing of data at the collection point so that only relevant data is transferred back along systems will be one element. Automated processing of data – perhaps remotely – will also assist. But there will need to be greater bandwidth and processing power provided to at least a greater number of nodes.

A networked GEOINT system fully integrated with broader Defence systems will deliver its full potential – a stove piped and firewalled system will not. To get the

best results we will need strong partnerships with industry, academia and our international partners.

GEOINT must be seen and trusted

GEOINT must become more visible. The modern origin of GEOINT organisations like the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation is in imagery analysis, military surveying and hydrography. These are all areas that have been seen as niche specialisations or highly secretive. That frame of mind will not deliver the GEOINT we need.

In the civilian sector, geospatial information has been fully democratised. Google Maps has transformed the way citizens engage with geospatial data. Readily available satellite imagery has demystified imagery analysis. Large, leading edge corporations have instituted data-centric models with geospatial information at the core. The Defence GEOINT community must embrace these innovations.

GEOINT organisations have a key role in driving this change, but it will also require a change in processes and thinking across the breadth of Defence. Maybe an army does march on its stomach. But if it wants to know where it is marching to and what the environment will be on the way, it needs GEOINT.

There are different avenues through which this could be achieved. The importance of geospatial data as a fundamental input to capability should be recognised. The capability life cycle should ensure that data needs are fully captured and articulated as part of the acquisition process. Whichever avenue is chosen the end goal should be clear and brook no argument – geospatial data requirements have to be formally considered and agreed as part of the capability life cycle.

Conclusion

If we know where everything is, at all times, we have decision-making advantage. If we have the best understanding of the physical environment we operate in, we have decision-making advantage. If we have a clear understanding of the actions and intentions of an adversary, we have decision-making advantage. GEOINT is fundamental to delivering all of these. But if it works in isolation its contribution is severely limited.

Working with capability programs, other intelligence fields and with decision-makers at all levels, GEOINT can provide a powerful advantage. However, it has to be mainstreamed into deliberations on capabilities, operations and intelligence from the very first discussion in Defence. That is how we can transform Defence GEOINT into an integrated and future-focused capability.³

³ The views in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of Defence. The purpose of this article is to stimulate discussion about the role of GEOINT.

What is in a name: discarding the grand strategy debate and seeking a new approach

Jason Thomas

Introduction

In the 19th century, the Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth Von Moltke wrote ‘Strategy is a system of expedients: it is more than a mere scholarly discipline.’¹ Contemporary attempts to define grand strategy become trapped in the same dilemma as any effort to find a conclusive approach to strategy. Those working in the domain of the military and security do not have a monopoly on the fundamentals of strategic thought. Outside the bounds of these sectors, the meaning of strategy is far more varied,² and hence develops many different approaches.³ Security planners would be wise not to neglect this broader understanding of strategy.

The very nature of the subject resists rigid definition and constantly evolves. For the teaching and understanding of strategy, ‘grand’ or otherwise, the use of maxims – short statements expressing a general truth or rule of conduct – is probably all that is possible. Because, the core need of any strategy is to be flexible, and as maxims are only general truths, it will always be necessary to depart from them in specific situations.⁴ The current grand strategy debate is somewhat opaque as it attempts to seek certainty in a fluid context; therefore, the debate

1 Helmuth Graf Von Moltke, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, Presidio, 1993, p 136.

2 OED, ‘Oxford English Dictionary On-Line’ Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed-com> At least six in current use.

3 HBR, ‘Harvard Business Review’, 2020, <https://hbr.org/> A keyword search will yield hundreds of entries on this site alone.

4 Stephen Bungay, ‘The Road to Mission Command: The Genesis of a Command Philosophy’, *British Army Review*, 2005, 137(22):10.

risks constraining one field of strategic studies into a narrow inflexible discipline of limited utility.

This paper argues that in their pursuit of certainty current attempts to define grand strategy become fragmented due to the very nature of the topic and hence they provide little service to the creation of effective strategies. Therefore, it is necessary to abandon the further development and consideration of a 'grand strategic' epistemology. What is required is a broader and more nuanced approach to security strategy, one that may have to depart from the centrality and primacy of an impending conflict. It will be argued in this paper that good strategy is based on expedients that demand the development of specific solutions framed in contextual, temporal, relational and ethical settings.

Problems of defining grand strategy

Beyond the classic definition of grand strategy, recent attempts have been diffuse and unhelpful. Apart from the benefits of education and promoting necessary dialogue, what is the further benefit of defining an additional level of strategy as 'grand'?

An earlier well-developed attempt by Basil Liddell Hart, and further discussed by Colin Gray and Edward N Luttwak, defined grand strategy in the classical sense. These 'classic' theorists anchor grand strategy to a description centred on the creation of a national security strategy for a potential or current conflict. Liddell Hart proposes that:

the role of grand strategy—higher strategy is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, towards the attainment of the political object of war—the goal defined by fundamental policy.⁵

Even though Gray is accepting of Liddell Hart's definition, he, however, remains wary:

the prime reason why one hesitates to broaden the definition of strategy is that when one discusses grand strategy, the use of all of a security community's assets as instruments of policy, one is apt to lose sight of the issues distinctive to military power amidst the total items in the crowd of somewhat competing policy instruments.⁶

5 B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy: The Indirect Approach*, Faber and Faber, London, 1967, p 335.

6 Colin S. Gray, *Fighting Talk*, Potomac Books Inc., Washington DC, 2007, p 48.

Luttwak also points out that achieving such coordination across ‘the highly diversified bureaucratic apparatus of modern states is difficult.’⁷ Hence, like Liddell Hart, Luttwak equates a coordinated national security strategy centred on conflict, with the concept of being ‘grand’.

Williamson Murray views grand strategy as the domain of great states.⁸ While being a more restrictive definition, this approach does not resolve the issue of which state is ‘great’ (exceptions to the rule are raised).⁹ His definition does, however, lead to some valuable but not necessarily unique ‘grand’ insights. For example, Murray lists characteristics deemed necessary to be successful in the design and execution of grand strategy as: acting beyond the demands of the present;¹⁰ and ‘... recognition of and ability to react to the ever-shifting environments of war and peace.’¹¹ While Murray, like Gray, Liddell Hart and Luttwak, remains anchored to a conflict-centric view of strategy,¹² all of these theorists provide invaluable insights for the teaching of military strategy and add to the strategic discourse.

So the classic view provides us with three characteristics of grand strategy. First, the need to coordinate all relevant elements of national power to the strategic challenge. Second, grand strategy encompasses both peace and war, and whatever current fashion says lies in between (i.e. grey zone, hybrid warfare). Finally, it possesses ‘grand’ objectives which to most classic theorists means that it remains in the domain of great powers. However, Norrin Ripsman warns that even these simple definitions do not have universal acceptance:

Grand strategy is an imprecisely used term in international relations. Scholars who use it mean anything from a state’s overall strategy in a war to a long-term blueprint for the state’s foreign relations. Some view grand strategy (GS) as solely encompassing military considerations and means, whereas others incorporate economic and ideological considerations as elements of GS. Furthermore, GS has typically been studied in a strictly national context, with scholars focusing on the GSs of great powers. The few attempts to study states’ strategic behaviour in a comparative context have

7 Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, revised edition, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 2001, p 260.

8 Murray Williamson, ‘Thoughts on Grand Strategy’, in Murray Williamson, Richard Hart Sinnreich, James Lacey (eds), *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy and War*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2011, p 1. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511974182>

9 Williamson, ‘Thoughts on Grand Strategy’, see footnotes, p 2.

10 Williamson, ‘Thoughts on Grand Strategy’, p 2.

11 Williamson, ‘Thoughts on Grand Strategy’, p 3.

12 Williamson, ‘Thoughts on Grand Strategy’, p 2.

been useful, but may have suffered from a lack of in-depth contextual knowledge of all of the cases.¹³

Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich further define a grand strategy's purpose to be 'the shaping of the global system.'¹⁴ Ironically, this suggests that recent fragmentation and undermining of global institutions by major powers, or anarchic deconstruction, might therefore be viewed as 'grand' acts. The question then remains, what of this definition when the global system no longer exists? Moreover, what level of impact is required for a shaping action to be considered global? For example, while China's Belt and Road program embodies mercantile initiatives as distinct from its military action in the South China Sea, which initiative has greater global shaping effect? The fixed frame of this definition becomes problematic, for example, when dealing with the emerging issue of control and the use of outer space. Grand strategy could no longer then be described as 'supra-national' but rather 'supra-global.' In essence, the shaping of the global system as a definition would no longer apply universally.

Balzacq and co-authors develop a comparative framework for grand strategy,¹⁵ which deserves closer inspection. The framework defines a club of major powers and 'pivot' powers that are the players of grand strategy. A cursory inspection of the application of the framework underplays, for example, the effect of the 1956 Suez Crisis on the hegemony of the United Kingdom and France; appears to ignore US influence in Central and South America; and the underpinning of certain 'pivot' powers by US, Chinese or Russian support. These are systemic weaknesses in the framework. There are some notable exemptions in the framework: African states, Turkey, Germany, Japan. These gaps are more likely a limitation of written space and the finding of suitable authors but does show that attempts to bring an ordered understanding of the global security system are demanding. Azar Gat reminds us that all strategic paradigms are contextual;¹⁶ to develop an all-encompassing framework is therefore incredibly challenging.

Nina Silove's commendable contribution to the debate is that grand strategy has evolved into three 'distinct meanings': grand principles, grand plans and grand

13 Norrin M. Ripsman, 'The Emerging Sub-Field of Comparative Grand Strategy' in Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich (eds), *Comparative Grand Strategy: A Framework and Cases*, Oxford Scholarship Online, July 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198840848.003.0013>

14 Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich, 'Comparing Grand Strategies in the Modern World' in Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski and Simon Reich (eds), *Comparative Grand Strategy: A Framework and Case*, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2019, p 5. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198840848.003.0001>

15 Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, 'Comparing Grand Strategies in the Modern World'.

16 Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p 516.

behaviours.¹⁷ If such meanings are present, Silove accepts that small nations can implement grand strategy, an approach which is analogous to Luttwak's need for coordination in grand strategy. The trouble with such an approach is that it gives little credence to the importance of context. It assumes adherence to meanings as a gateway to 'grand' outcomes, thereby running the risk of entering the dangerous ground of strategic self-delusion. While the meanings are well-grounded in grand strategic writing, they are not in themselves independent of sound strategy in general. The Australian strategist Peter Layton adopts a similar paradigm to Silove in his attempt to have Australia develop an independent and less alliance-dependent approach to emerging regional threats.¹⁸ While commendable, and offering important benefits, both theories of grand strategy fall short of proffering an alternative to the classic definition or resolving Ripsman's concern.

Several writers have identified problems with the grand strategy debate. Andrew Carr, for one, has developed a temporal approach to assist in understanding strategy. Carr posits that the duration of a strategy becomes a key consideration. Considering the time (the duration/life) of a strategy would enable any strategic planner to look past the myopia of the military-inspired end-state,¹⁹ perhaps helping to avoid the post-invasion question, 'What do we do next?' Carr's contribution to strategy is of great merit and worthy of further investigation. It is highly notable that Carr, for the sake of developing his ideas and for clarity, explicitly excludes the consideration of grand strategy in his paper.²⁰

The label of 'grand' risks turning a strategy into what Richard Rumelt terms 'fluff',²¹ further concealing it with a mask of unfamiliar definitions and terms, which so often abound in epistemology; something that Silove attempts to contain. In addition, grand strategic debate and definitions further the likelihood of it becoming cloistered: of being protected from scrutiny. The use of exclusive language would lead to a lack of criticism and problems in translation and understanding.

17 Nina Silove, 'Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of "Grand Strategy"', *Security Studies*, 2018, 27(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1360073>

18 Peter Layton, 'A grand strategy Plan A for Australia', *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 1 November 2018. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/a-grand-strategy-plan-a-for-australia/>

19 Andrew Carr, 'It's about Time: Strategy and Temporal Phenomena', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2018.1529569>

20 Carr, 'It's about Time: Strategy and Temporal Phenomena'.

21 Richard Rumelt, 'The Perils of Bad Strategy', *McKinsey Quarterly*, McKinsey & Company, 1 June 2011. <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-perils-of-bad-strategy>

Gray was particularly wary of *concepts du jour* – current strategic trends – which ‘will be tomorrow’s stale leftover, until it is re-discovered, recycled and revealed as a new truth.’²² This is an accurate observation of how military and security concepts are either recast enduring maxims and principles or new technologies claiming overstated advantages, or both. Recent security dialogue has seen the return of phrases such as ‘great power competition,’²³ and the ‘the great game’²⁴ – *concepts du jour*. The current grand strategic discussion, which utilises such continuous recycling and revelation, exhibits the same shortcomings as a *concept du jour* and therefore remains of limited value.

Discourse does not have to be diffuse and complicated. Richard Betts, in his critique of the overblown nature of the grand strategic debate, posits that ‘a concept should not be simplistic, but should be as simple as possible,’²⁵ which echoes the dictum of Karl Von Clausewitz that ‘everything is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.’²⁶ Both are cogent reminders that unnecessary dialectic does little to ensure the achievement of good outcomes as we can see considerable academic horsepower has been, and continues to be, applied in an attempt to establish some form of anchored ontology. The problem with such an approach is that strategy is deeply rooted in the human condition and therefore inherits the same problem organisational theorists wrestle with. As Karl Weick puts it:

Theories are built on regularities among events, people, and relationships, not on sporadic, infrequent and explosive episodes...
It is these irregularities which are absent from many case studies.²⁷

This inability to deal with irregularities is the one big thing wrong with the grand strategy literature: it is seeking a universal conflict-based view. It lacks emphasis on strategy as a system of contingencies and is lacking in a diversity of possible perspectives.

22 Gray, *Fighting Talk*, p 62.

23 Alexander Boroff, ‘What Is Great-Power Competition, Anyway?’, *Modern War Institute at West Point*, 17 April 2020. <https://mwi.usma.edu/great-power-competition-anyway/>

24 Matt Salyer, ‘Going All in on The Great Game? The Curious and Problematic Choice of Kiplingesque Inspiration in US Military Doctrine’, *Modern War Institute at West Point*, 29 October 2019. <https://mwi.usma.edu/going-great-game-curious-problematic-choice-kiplingesque-inspiration-us-military-doctrine/>

25 Richard K. Betts, ‘The Grandiosity of Grand Strategy’, *The Washington Quarterly*, 2019, 42(4):7–22, p 9–10. <https://doi:10.1080/0163660X.2019.1663061>

26 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 2008, Book 1 Chapter 7.

27 Karl E. Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Volume 8593 of Topics in Social Psychology, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969.

The need for diversity

In the 1990s, the Copenhagen School opened a broader security perspective by providing a new set of lenses for any security challenge that, among other things, presents security matters where conflict-based approaches are untenable. However, even its founders, Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, recognise that this more diverse approach is not the answer to all security challenges. They aver:

Most worrying...[is the] implicit argument that there is only one correct way to study security. We believe that there are many ways to understand security, and that each will have its merits and its drawbacks. Focusing on any one element will always make some things clearer at the cost of obscuring or distorting others.²⁸

In proposing the exigent need for a diversity of views, the Copenhagen School increases the range of expedients—viable outcomes—that can become available. While an effective strategy is dependent upon a diverse set of options being developed, there is little point in considering numerous approaches if they are all contextually indistinguishable. Furthermore, if the problem is cast too narrowly *ergo* narrow options and narrow outcomes will ensue. Empirical studies by Varda Liberman, Steve Samuels and Lee Ross demonstrated that the way a problem is framed does significantly affect both the approach taken and the outcome reached.²⁹

While Gray was not a supporter of the Copenhagen School;³⁰ this paper proposes that framing security issues diversely both inside and outside of the presumption of conflict is essential. This broadened approach does not run contrary to his maxim ‘military power is trumps in politics,’³¹ to use a game metaphor, the player can still choose no trumps. It has been argued here that the conflict-centred, and increasingly turgid grand strategy debate is now redundant, and must be replaced by a more diverse approach that is tailored to each specific context. Strategic planners must learn from but then move beyond the military roots of strategic study and practice.

28 Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, ‘Slippery? Contradictory? Sociologically Untenable? The Copenhagen School Replies’, *Review of International Studies*, 1997, 23(2): 241–50, p 250.

29 Varda Liberman, Steve M Samuels and Lee Ross, ‘The Name of the Game: Predictive Power of Reputations versus Situational Labels in Determining Prisoner’s Dilemma Game Moves’, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, September 2004, 30(9):1175–85.

30 Ripsman, ‘The Emerging Sub-Field of Comparative Grand Strategy’.

31 Gray, *Fighting Talk*, p 97.

Strategy as a set of expedients

Von Moltke clarifies the importance of expedients by stating:

Strategy is a system of expedients. It is more than a discipline; it is the transfer of knowledge to practical life, the continued development of the original leading thought in accordance with the constantly changing circumstances.³²

Expedients are intrinsically flexible and contextually dependent, and Von Moltke's definition does not imply that expedients are solely reactive to changing circumstances. Despite this enlightened stance, he is unlikely to have accepted that strategic context could shift away from the lens of conflict.³³

By employing phenomenological underpinnings, the strategist can employ contextual, temporal, relational and ethical considerations in developing successful expedients. Adding to the work of Carr's 'temporal' and Gat's promotion of the importance of context, this paper proposes two additions: relational and ethical, drawn from both personal experience and the literature.

The following anecdote illustrates the importance of relational insight. Many years ago, at an Indo-Pacific security conference, a South Korean professor gave a remarkably lucid presentation. During question time, a student asked, 'What is the current South Korean strategy towards North Korea?' Sage minds in the audience would have jumped to a shopping list of strategies: engagement, appeasement, containment or deterrence. The initial response from the professor, 'Whatever works,' illustrates, undeniably, how outcomes can be affected by leadership and are therefore relational.

It is necessary to consider another underpinning: that of ethics. To illustrate in a security setting, the long-term failure of the Arab Spring, and in its wake emerging instability, shows a paucity of ethical deliberation. There is a foundation for the centrality of ethics in strategy as articulated by President John F Kennedy.³⁴ An ethical framework does not exist to develop moral codes to underpin the legitimacy of previously chosen action but to advance ethical actions which are proximal to the strategy.

These underpinnings alone are insufficient to avoid the same confusion that has clouded the recent debate on grand strategy because a specific focus is

32 Moltke, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, p 67.

33 Susan Ratcliffe (ed), *Oxford Essential Quotations: Helmuth von Moltke*, 4 ed., Oxford University Press, 2016. <https://doi.10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001>

34 Richard D. Heffner and Alexander B. Heffner, 'John F. Kennedy Inaugural Address and "Strategy of Peace" Speech', in *The Documentary History of the United States*, Ed 10, Signet Classics, New York, 2018, p 388–389.

required to correctly frame temporal, contextual, relational and ethical settings of the strategic challenge at hand. The use of these phenomena does not mean the abandonment of 'classic' strategic considerations such as geography because geography is contextual with relational and temporal effects.

The accurate labelling of a strategy will additionally greatly assist in achieving this specific focus and avoids the amorphous application of 'grand' or any other abstract descriptor. To illustrate hypothetically, the Australian Military Strategy, the United States National Security Strategy and the Chinese Indo-Pacific Economic Strategy more accurately describe the functions of these strategies, rather than using value-laden adjectives such as 'grand'. Interestingly, these titles are also geographically bound. This proposal to reinforce the discipline of naming strategies based on function is designed to bring clarity as well as to add to the lexicon and adds a specific focus.

In executing strategy, avoidance of the abstract is of exceptional merit, but the military origin of strategy can hinder this. It automatically places strategic design into a frame of conflict and, accordingly, subsumes military concepts, ideas and assets into all manner of security issues: to illustrate, 'the war on drugs,' 'the war on cancer' and the 'war on hunger'. This 'war' on abstract nouns is what Sir Michael Howard and Terry Jones,³⁵ both coming from different disciplines, tell us is deeply perilous. Thus, by using military terms (in this case 'war'), in what are broader problems, the tone immediately becomes adversarial. Furthermore, there is a raft of security areas such as health security, gender security and food security, where military expertise, metaphors and resources are not automatically helpful.

In the context of expedients chosen to address COVID-19, a commentary by Joseph Nye highlights the shortcomings in contemporary American strategy towards what he considers to be adopting a broader view. Nye states:

This administration has shown an inclination toward short-term, zero-sum, transactional interpretations, with little attention to institutions and allies. "America First" is defined too narrowly ... On transnational issues like COVID-19 and climate change, power becomes a positive-sum game. It is not enough to think of American power over others. We must also think in terms of power to accomplish joint goals, which involves power with others. On

35 Beatrice Heuser, 'Captain Professor Sir: Some Lessons from Michael Howard', commentary, *War On the Rocks*, 27 February 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/02/captain-professor-sir-some-lessons-from-michael-howard/> (Also: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/8863>); and a member of Monty Python's Flying Circus, Terry Jones, 'Why Grammar Is the First Casualty of War', *The Telegraph*, 1 December 2001. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1364012/Why-grammar-is-the-first-casualty-of-war.html>

many transnational issues, empowering others helps us to accomplish our own goals.³⁶

While Nye's proposition is insightful in a classic grand strategic sense, it is siloed contextually and ethically. He views the COVID-19 crisis to be about national power and strategic competition. Undoubtedly, there is an impact on national power because of major economic and social shifts. However, the statement is not suitable as the primary, or even secondary contextual lens, for what was a predictable health security threat—to say nothing of the ethical issue of minimising human suffering. To return to Von Moltke's admonition that a system of expedients is at the core of strategy, Nye's statement suffers from a fixed original leading thought that is not context dependent. It fails to consider the transfer of scientific knowledge about the virus, the continually changing circumstances of the pandemic and their impact. The narrow definition of a problem overly relies on the certainties of the past and, to a certain extent, stifles the ability to think creatively. In an age of uncertainty, this can result in overly simple solutions being offered to complex problems.

Conclusion

This paper proposes four underpinnings that should be considered for the creation of a security strategy. These contextual, temporal, relational and ethical underpinnings are necessary for the design of a strategy, and whose title should reflect its' specific focus. This is a phenomenological framework which uses a diversity of viewpoints and conditions; and departs from a narrow, classic sense of strategy. However, it is not a radical departure because it seeks to build on the fundamentals of strategy.

An essential element in this proposal is the need for specific rather than umbrella strategies of the type inspired by the shifting paradigm of grand strategy. Specificity may often demand a departure from the traditional default of the presumption of conflict and competition. More importantly, specific strategies provide greater utility.

The classic definition of grand strategy and ongoing debate is doing little to improve the quality of strategic planning and, most importantly, its execution. It is undesirable and impossible to arrive at a universal description because strategy will always be fluid and case dependent. Contemporary efforts to do so are detrimental to the sharp and dynamic focus that is essential to the development of an effective strategy.

³⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr, 'COVID-19's Painful Lesson about Strategy and Power', Commentary, *War On The Rocks*, 26 Mar 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/03/covid-19s-painful-lesson-about-strategy-and-power>

Gray believed in the primacy of effective strategy, and that ‘prudence is the supreme virtue in statecraft and strategy’³⁷ – a warning against narrow viewpoints and fixation upon desirable goals.³⁸ Von Moltke’s broad view of strategy as a system of expedients resists such a narrow approach. A system of expedients demands flexibility, diverse knowledge and the courage to depart from existing approaches. Then we might have strategies that could genuinely be considered ‘grand’.

³⁷ Gray, *Fighting Talk*, p 131–133.

³⁸ Gray, p 131.

Westmoreland's dream and Perrow's nightmare: two perspectives on the future of military command and control

Shane Halton

The near simultaneous introduction of machine-learning technologies into the heart of traditional command and control arrangements coupled with the operational challenges inherent in executing complex missions, such as hypersonic missile defence, poses unique risks and opportunities to today's military commanders. This commentary explores this challenge from two perspectives. The first is the technological positivist perspective of US Army General William Westmoreland, which holds that military command and control functions can and should be automated to the highest degree possible to increase operational efficiency. The second is the more sceptical perspective of Dr Charles Perrow, which holds that interactively complex systems with tightly coupled components are inherently prone to unexpected and often dramatic failure. By incorporating both these perspectives into the design and operation of modern command and control systems, the author hopes these systems can be made to operate safely and more effectively.

In October 1969, standing behind a podium at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington DC, Army Chief of Staff General William C Westmoreland presented his vision of the future of warfare to the assembled attendees of the Annual Luncheon Association of the United States Army.

On the battlefield of the future, enemy forces will be located, tracked, and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted intelligence evaluation, and automated fire control ... I see battlefields or combat areas that are under 24-hour real or near real time surveillance of all types. I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we locate through

instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower.¹

Westmoreland presented this vision, this dream, years before the US Department of Defense (DoD) embarked on its Second Offset Strategy, which was designed to leverage the US's superiority in science and technology to overcome the Soviet advantage in raw troop numbers in Europe, and decades before the US would first operationalise this approach to warfare during the first Gulf War. In his speech, Westmoreland was describing 'network-centric warfare' almost 30 years before the idea would gain broad acceptance in the Pentagon in the late 1990s.

In April 2017, the Pentagon established the Algorithmic Warfare Cross Functional Team, also known as Project Maven, to integrate:

computer-vision algorithms needed to help military and civilian analysts encumbered by the sheer volume of full-motion video data that DoD collects every day in support of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.²

Maven would later begin a second series of initiatives designed to bring not only Silicon Valley's technology but also its approach to developing and deploying software into the heart of the US military. Eventually the whole of Project Maven would be absorbed into the much larger Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, a new organisation with the express goal of bridging the gap between DoD and Silicon Valley. A close collaboration between the brightest minds in academia, the commercial world and national security, this too was Westmoreland's dream.

Though many facets of Westmoreland's dream have since come to pass, the late 1960s were in many ways a high-water mark for this brand of *technological positivism*, the practical philosophy that holds that almost any environmental, technological or social problem can be overcome if you throw enough resources, computing power and engineers at it. The 1970s and 1980s saw a fairly radical paradigm shift in thinking about complex adaptive systems, such as weather patterns, animal populations and human-machine hybrid organisations like air traffic control systems. In the mid-1970s, research in physics and mathematics by Benoit Mandelbrot, Mitchell Feigenbaum and others laid the groundwork for a new way of thinking about complexity, chaos and the basic nature of the

1 Randolph Nikutta, 'Artificial Intelligence and the Automated Tactical Battlefield' in Allan M. Dims (ed), *Arms and Artificial Intelligence: Weapons and Arms Control Applications of Advanced Computing*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987, p 101.

2 Cheryl Pellerin, 'Project Maven Industry Day Pursues Artificial Intelligence for DoD Challenges', US Department of Defense, last modified 27 Oct. 2017. <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1356172/project-maven-industry-day-pursues-artificial-intelligence-for-dod-challenges>

universe. This vein of research – which eventually entered into mainstream culture with the popularisation of concepts such as fractals, ‘sensitive dependence on initial conditions’ and the ‘butterfly effect’ – set limits on what could be reliably known, modelled or predicted about the world at any given time. And, it placed hard limits on Westmoreland’s techno-optimistic vision of the future. Engineers designing complex systems, and the technicians and managers responsible for operating them, began to gain a fuller appreciation for the many devious and difficult to predict ways glitches, friction, malfunctions, turbulence, poor design choices and interactive complexity could cause a system to underperform expectations or in certain cases fail all together.

One of the first researchers to incorporate the lessons from chaos and complexity research into the design and operation of complex systems was Charles Perrow. Perrow, in effect, made his career studying disasters. In 1984, he published *Normal Accidents: Living With High Risk Technologies*, which explored the root causes of industrial disasters, such as the partial meltdown of a nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island complex near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Perrow identified two factors which, when combined, increase the risk of a system failing catastrophically: tight coupling and interactive complexity. The ‘normal’ in normal accidents is a synonym for ‘inevitable.’ Normal accidents in a particular system may be rare (‘it’s is normal for us to die, but we only do it once’) but the system’s design and configuration make it more likely such accidents will occur. Perrow identifies systems at risk of normal accidents as ‘high risk systems.’

Interestingly, Perrow released his book two years before the 1986 Soviet nuclear disaster at Chernobyl but it subsequently became the normal accident *par excellence*, providing students of industrial design with an easy shorthand to reference normal accident risk. Today, it is chilling to read Perrow’s description of a normal accident knowing what happened in Chernobyl a mere two years later.

We need two or more failures among components that interact in some unexpected way. No one dreamed that when X failed, Y would also be out of order and the two failures would interact so as to both start a fire and silence the fire alarm. Furthermore, no one can figure out the interaction at the time and thus know what to do. The problem is just something that never occurred to the designers... This interacting tendency is a characteristic of a system, not of a part or an operator; we will call it the “interactive complexity” of the system.

...But suppose the system is also “tightly coupled” that is, processes happen very fast and can’t be turned off, the failed parts cannot be isolated from other parts ... operator action or the safety

system might make it worse, since for a time it is not known what the problem really is.³

When the reactor crew at Chernobyl disabled the automatic shutdown mechanisms in preparation for a test and a previously undiscovered flaw in the control rod design caused hot nuclear fuel to rapidly mix with reactor cooling water which led to a rapid increase in pressure within the reactor, this was Perrow's nightmare.

Chernobyl isn't the only example from the late Soviet Union where an interactively complex and tightly coupled system catastrophically malfunctioned, causing near-instant death and destruction. In the early morning hours of 1 September 1983, Korean Air Lines Flight 007 (hereafter KAL007) departed Anchorage for Seoul. At the start of the flight, the flight crew made a fateful error; instead of selecting the Inertial Navigation System, which would have steered the plane on the proper route, the autopilot was instead set at a constant magnetic heading. This may have been caused by the failure to twist a knob one position further to the right. KAL007 drifted off course, unnoticed by the flight crew or any civilian air traffic controllers, eventually entering into Soviet air space near Kamchatka.

Ground-based Soviet air defence operators in the region had previously been tracking an American RC-135 spy plane (a converted Boeing 747) that had been tasked with observing a Russian missile test. The missile test was postponed and the RC-135 was told to return to base. As the RC-135 began its return trip to Alaska, Soviet air defence operators confused the two aircrafts' radar tracks and began tracking KAL007 as though it were the RC-135. Eventually, as KAL007 unknowingly moved closer to Russia, Soviet air defence operators scrambled three interceptor aircraft in order to visually identify the wayward aircraft and attempt to communicate directly with the aircrew and guide the trespassing plane down onto a Soviet airfield. However, once aloft none of the three interceptors were able to visually confirm whether the aircraft was an RC-135 or a civilian aircraft, nor were they able to make radio contact with KAL007's aircrew. At 3:25am local time, the pilot of one of the interceptor aircraft, an Su-15, was given the order to shoot down the non-responsive aircraft. He launched two air-to-air missiles which struck the KAL007 and caused it to crash into the sea, killing all on board, including a sitting member of the US House of Representatives.⁴

3 Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies - Updated Edition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2011, pp 4–5.

4 David Hoffman, *The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and its Dangerous Legacy*, Random House Inc, New York, 2009, pp 50–52.

Perrow studied whether these types of air traffic control or air defence systems should be considered 'tightly coupled.' His conclusion was yes, though less so than automatic mechanical systems such as those found in nuclear reactors.

Tight coupling reduces the ability to recover from small failures before they expand into large ones. Loose coupling allows recovery. Time constraints are tight; the (air traffic control) system is ... moderately tightly coupled.⁵

Should the Soviet air defence system in this scenario be considered interactively complex? Certainly. The land based military air traffic controllers (ATCs) relied on a combination of radars and interceptor aircraft to gather information on what was happening in the air. These inputs would be delivered to the ATC in a variety of different formats – radar tracks appearing on a screen, interceptor updates relayed via radio – and the ATCs had to convert them into a workable approximation of reality in their heads.

The Soviet air defence example above highlights the essentially dualist nature of modern military command and control; it is a mission, something commanders do, but it is also 'a thing' – a set of modern communication technologies without which it would be impossible for the commander to do anything. Exercising command and control (C2) therefore is as much about aligning responsibilities and functions within a command hierarchy as it is about utilising digital technologies to gather information about one's operating environment and to maintain clear lines of communication and feedback between the different nodes within the chain of command. This challenge – to construct and maintain a robust, resilient information architecture that can keep everyone informed and 'in the loop' about what's happening in the battlespace – gets more difficult, perhaps exponentially so, as we get closer to achieving Westmoreland's dream.

The battlespace of the 2020s is one in which the United States, its allies and its competitors will field hypersonic munitions, robust offensive cyber and electronic attack capabilities, as well as autonomous lethal weapons systems. To direct these forces quickly and effectively militaries across the world are investing in modernising their C2 systems and associated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Military leaders in the US are openly discussing when and how they should integrate machine-learning systems into kill chains. At first glance, all this seems to be the ultimate expression of Westmoreland's dream, a military technopia where cutting edge Made-in-America science and technology relieve command staffs

⁵ Perrow, *Normal Accidents*, pp 4–5.

of the grunt work of running the war and allow commanders to focus on their real passion – *strategy*.

However, the battlespace of the 2020s will also be an interactively complex and increasing tightly coupled affair – a hugely scaled up version of Perrow's nightmare. To understand why this trend towards tight coupling is accelerating let us consider military C2 at the most basic, functional level.

To command, a commander must first be able to perceive their operating environment, make decisions about it and finally pass orders back to their subordinates. That is the bare minimum. Today there are tools to assist commanders and their staffs in these tasks such as intelligence satellites, classified networks and information technologies, for example the Windows Office suite. However, the technological state of the art in 2020 poses unique challenges to command as well. The speed of modern weaponry, such as ballistic or hypersonic missiles and cyber attacks, reduces human response time. There is also the uncomfortable fact that many of these weapons, specifically cyber attacks, are optimised to attack command structures directly instead of deployed units i.e. why waste time and resources wiping out an army in the field when you can remotely destroy command headquarters and throw the army into disarray?

These challenges have led military commanders to seek out automated solutions to speed up the different command functions. During the Second World War, few C2 functions would be considered tightly coupled in the modern sense. They were based around humans sharing information with one another and humans inherently lack the ability to transfer huge amounts of complex information quickly. We can only absorb and retain so much, and pay attention for so long. The 'Information Age' (roughly 1970 to 2010) saw the integration of machine-to-human information transfers across military command structures, mostly in the form of classified networks and desktop computers. This changed the calculus, as at least one component in the equation (the machine) could pass large amounts of information instantaneously. Humans, however, still needed time to absorb information and make sense of it. This has kept most processes slow enough to be managed effectively. Military operations in the 2020s, by contrast, will be defined, in part, by increasing reliance on instantaneous machine-to-machine connections to support different command functions, reducing or removing the human component entirely for the sake of speed and efficiency.

How does this look in practice? Consider the evolution from a Second World War scout plane to a modern unmanned aerial system (UAS). A scout plane would report back what it was seeing – ideally via radio – to the command staff. In many cases however, radio was not a viable option (it could be broken or the

pilot's plane could be out of radio range) so the pilot would have to land back at base first and be physically debriefed about what they had seen during their flight. This introduced at least two information transfer challenges, the first was that the information was time-late and the second was that the commander did not see exactly what the pilot saw. Instead, the commander received a report of what the pilot thought they saw. The pilot and the commander were forced to construct a common mental picture of events via dialogue, based on the pilot's recollection.

Today, the drone pilot 'sees' what the UAS sees, and sees it instantaneously – even if they are half the world away from one another. This connection is still subject to constraints, however. The video feed from the UAS is bandwidth heavy, which requires its ground station to be equipped with special gear to receive the feed. The feed can also be disrupted which, in many cases but not all, forces the UAS to land, effectively ending its mission. There is also the requirement that a human being constantly watch the video feed to generate a report for the commander.

Advances in machine-vision technology are such that it is now possible to pre-program a UAS so that it is able to see and understand the environment it is operating in (i.e. identify the difference between different types of buildings and vehicles, read licence plates, figure out if a person is holding a weapon, etc.) using software installed directly on the UAS. In this scenario, there would then be no need to pass a constant, bandwidth-intense video feed back to a human operator. Instead, the UAS could fly on autopilot, collect all the information it needed to and send that information directly into a battle management network via bit-sized chunks of text data so that the commander's picture of the world could be updated instantly.

A UAS configured in this manner could also pass that information to a second, third or fourth UAS thereby allowing multiple units to automatically share information about the battlespace without the need for a human to facilitate that sharing. Different UAS could be outfitted with different types of sensors, one UAS collects imagery while another collects electronic signals intelligence (SIGINT). Algorithms on board each UAS could merge this information via multi-sensor fusion so that each UAS had a layered, complex picture of the battlespace. Some UAS could be equipped with weapons so that they could automatically utilise this robust picture to deliver effects on the battlespace. This of course is what Westmoreland meant when he dreamed 'we can destroy anything we locate through instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal fire-power.' The only difference is that, at this stage in technological development, human action is no longer required beyond the mission planning stage.

While this proliferation of artificial intelligence throughout C2 structures can positively impact the ability of commanders to perceive and understand their operating environments, it also becomes a major driver of tight coupling, highlighting the possibility that realising Westmoreland's dream risks simultaneously birthing Perrow's nightmare. However, before pressing this point any further it is important to differentiate between two different types of artificial intelligence, the latter of which is a more serious risk driver of interactive complexity in C2 systems.

Expert systems are attempts to reproduce human decision-making in mechanical form. The 'decision trees' that form the backbone of expert systems are based on the types of if/then propositions a human mind goes through when completing a complex task (i.e. if the ball is red then put it in the bucket, if not drop the ball on the floor). Most military systems that incorporate artificial intelligence today (such as the US Navy's AEGIS combat system) are expert systems.

Machine-learning (ML) algorithms are not generally concerned with replicating human thought patterns, they just want to find the 'right' answer. ML algorithms are fed a data and then instructed to complete tasks. If they complete the task successfully, they are rewarded, if not they are punished. Over time these systems can become very good at completing tasks but the 'thought patterns' that led them to the right answer over and over again are often completely foreign to human beings.

In the last two decade, systems built around ML have displaced expert systems as the artificial intelligence approach of choice in the commercial world. It is cheaper and easier to generate a solution that simply works than to spend time trying to replicate human behaviour and thought patterns. Most language translation programs are based around a type of ML, as are most visual recognition technologies and fraud detection systems. However, ML continues to present challenges in human endeavours where the stakes are literally life and death, such as military options.

This is because the information that feeds a military commander's decision-making process is should be *traceable*, *verifiable* and *intelligible* (though the 'fog of war' ensures that is rarely the case in practice). Verifiability is the ability to ascertain whether or not information is correct. Traceability is the ability to identify where information came from (Which UAS detected this?). Intelligibility is the ability to understand the thought process that led to a decision (Why did the UAS classify this wi-fi signal as a cell phone?). The challenge of obtaining reliable, traceable information will be exacerbated as ISR sensors based on ML proliferate throughout the world's militaries. This will in turn drive normal accident risk.

A single ML-based ISR sensor in a broader information architecture (one sensor on a single UAS for example) is unlikely to be a significant driver of normal accident risk by itself. Intelligibility may be a challenge as a human being may never know exactly 'why' a specific sensor is providing erroneous data but it should be easy enough to trace the error to that the one sensor that is known to have a mind of its own. Verifiability too may be easier than it initially appears because when ML-based systems fail they tend to do so in unexpected and occasionally dramatic ways that do not mimic human failure modes.

The challenge is when multiple ML-based sensors are linked to one another within an architecture to facilitate multi-sensor fusion, as in the UAS example above. While the goal of the fusion process is to instantly provide a detailed, multi-faceted picture of the operating environment to the commander, it also creates a complex mini-system with several tightly coupled components.

The question becomes: if ML-based multi-sensor fusion introduces so much normal accident risk into a C2 system, why would a military commander ever choose to rely on it? There are several understandable and perhaps justifiable, if not altogether comforting, reasons why this might be the case. It might be because:

- the system's designers or operators have insufficient understanding of normal accident risk
- there is no one 'designer' of the C2 system, as multiple designers contribute components that, when combined, create a system of systems with a high level of risk
- the system never 'failed' in testing so the risk has never been identified
- the commander inherited a C2 structure dependent on multi-sensor fusion and is not aware of it
- designers, operators and military commanders are aware of the risk but feel they need to rely on the system to accomplish their mission.

The last reason – that the risk is known but it is balanced against the advantage offered by multi-sensor fusion – is worth further consideration. It points to a broader challenge for military commanders in the 2020s; critical modern warfighting functions, such as defensive cyber operations and high-speed frequency hopping to avoid communication jamming, occur faster than human perception and therefore *must* be automated to a high degree. Commanders, consciously or not, will be forced to make trade-offs between possessing a battlespace awareness based on verifiable, traceable and intelligible information on the one hand and operational speed and efficiency on the other.

Recent work by Olivia Garand and B.A. Friedman has explored how modern information technologies are driving commanders towards over-centralisation and depriving subordinates of the ability to exercise 'mission command' (effectively 'command at the lowest possible level'). They note that this is particularly dangerous in a world where lower echelon units may be cut off from higher headquarters and be forced to act on their own.⁶

While this assessment is broadly accurate (and should be adopted where applicable), re-emphasising the advantages of mission command in military operations is not a panacea for the challenges of C2 in the age of modern era. Certain missions, like hypersonic missile defence, manoeuvrer warfare in the electromagnetic space or the synchronising cyber and physical attacks in real time, rely on the ability of commanders to coordinate the activity of multiple actors spread out over time and space. In cases like these, subordinate units will very likely be subjected to a very high degree of centralised C2.

In closing, the military technologies coming fully online in the 2020s (hypersonics, cyber and electromagnetic warfare) are so fast that in many cases they prevent human operators from acting 'in the loop'. These capabilities will therefore be reliant on the use of non-human intelligent agents, likely powered by ML, to coordinate effectively. The full effects of the increased use of these intelligent agents across C2 structures is unknown at this stage but Perrow's research shows us that when it comes to interactively complex, tightly coupled systems, systemic failure is a question of when, not if. Militaries the world over are engaging in a titanic struggle to build the largest, most capable and wide-ranging battle management systems they can while defending against adversary cyber and physical attacks designed to directly target the heart of those systems. Additionally, mitigations will need to be put in place to ameliorate the normal accident potential inherent in the systems themselves. Exercising effective command and control in the modern era will therefore be a delicate balancing act, poised between the *yin* of Westmoreland's dream and the *yang* of Perrow's nightmare. Both perspectives will need to be considered and constantly revisited if we are to successfully navigate this challenge.

6 BA Friedman and Olivia Garand, 'Technology-Enabled Mission Command', *War on the Rocks*, last modified 09 April 2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/technology-enabled-mission-command-keeping-up-with-the-john-paul-joneses/>

Reviews

Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare

Thomas Rid

Profile Books, London, 2020.

Reviewed by Zac Rogers



Few subjects seem more central to our current condition than disinformation. Media of various types repeat familiar tropes – we are suffering a crisis of truth – the once purportedly distinct line between fact and fiction has been blurred indefinitely. Our capacity to navigate the information environment and discern truth from lie has been breached, and the very fabric of democracy is imperilled.

Thomas Rid's excellent *Active Measures* offers readers a trove of meticulously researched historical examples of modern disinformation operations – active interventions in the information environment intended to deceive, distort and disorient the

political community at which they are targeted.

Active Measures's most important contribution, however, is in how it frames the subject. Rid has a warning about the history of disinformation for open democratic societies worth repeating here. He notes with curiosity that, aside from a handful of infamous examples, much of this rich history has been ignored. He warns that 'Ignoring the rich and disturbing lessons of industrial-scale Cold War disinformation campaigns risks repeating mid-century errors that are already weakening liberal democracy in the digital age.'¹

Usefully, Rid structures his historical sweep by way of four waves. Modern disinformation began in the 1920s. The interwar years saw the first wave of disinformation emerging from the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, leveraging the popularity of journalism and radio as amplifying agents. New media and mediums, and their role in the subject at hand, is a central theme throughout the book. The second wave emerged after the Second World War – the CIA professionalised what it labelled 'political warfare' while the Eastern bloc before the Wall was rife with disinformation. (Notably, Rid considers this period the only time the West has been in the disinformation ascendancy.)

¹ Thomas Rid, *Active Measures*, Profile Books, London, 2020, pp 8–9.

The third wave rose in the late 1970s, which Rid describes as the time when ‘active measures’ were at their most active *and* most measured. Disinformation was refined into an operational art as the nascent digital revolution, driven by advances in solid-state electronics, brought computational power and with it the prospect of more raw fuel – information – to the fore. The fourth wave was defined by the rise of the internet and brings us to our present moment. Here we discover how quickly the assumptions of the Information Age have turned inward. Rid argues the Internet Era has put a question mark over the very concept of disinformation operations. Internet-era operations are increasingly active while becoming markedly less measured and measurable – a conundrum that opens the way to some of the book’s core insights. The art and science of disinformation are disintegrating just as it becomes more dangerous.

If we are falling into error as we contend with contemporary disinformation, what is the error? Rid flags a pervasive presentism – ‘The sense of novelty is a fallacy, a trap’ – as the chief obstacle preventing clearer understanding of the nature, threat and opportunities to counter disinformation. Rid reminds us of a crucial axiom. Disinformation – at least of the most effective kind – has never been merely a bunch of lies masquerading as facts, cleverly deceiving the

unwitting victim or victims. Rather, effective disinformation has always been a weaving of *fact and fiction together*, a way of making the two categories indiscernible from one another and deploying that amalgam against the already existing binaries and fissures every society accommodates. Here, Rid rightly identifies the ultimate target of active measures as an attack on the ‘epistemic order of liberal society,’ which is based on openness, convention and trust. An unutterable truth may follow. The internet, which Rid rightly identifies as a machine optimised for mass disinformation, may simply be incompatible with such an order.

Tropes about fake news and post-truth are therefore not merely descriptions of disinformation but are *themselves affectations*, obscuring a more nuanced and perhaps dissonant situation. Better fact-checkers and devoted truth-stewards will not stave off the effects of disinformation. This expresses another of the book’s most important insights: disinformation can be most effective when it self-perpetuates and takes on a life of its own. In other words, disinformation *about* disinformation may now be the ultimate active measure. Rid explains:

What made an active measure active was not whether a construction resonated with reality, but whether it resonated with emotions, with collectively held views in the targeted community, and whether it managed to exacerbate

existing tensions – or, in the jargon of Cold War operators, whether it succeeded to strengthen existing contradictions.²

The internet may be one such contradiction. True, the epistemological foundations of open democratic societies have themselves been destabilised for some time, a discussion Rid enters at the conclusion of the book that is arguably its most consequential. The source of instability in western societies is not chiefly the work of foreign agents, nor is it in the familiar can-carrier of post-modernity. It is not simply a product of post-structuralism or the social justice theory it elevates and propels – nor the sometimes spoiled and myopic woke-warriors who seem to carry it forward.

Paradoxically, the most destabilising forces undermining the episteme of open democratic society have come, rather, from its very successes. Postwar science, in particular the cognitive neurosciences, have delivered multiple blows against the epistemological foundations of the modern western settlement. Cognitive science shatters the Aristotelian mirage of the unitary and continuing Self – yet our social and political systems labour under full-scale assault from a heavily manipulated internet – a business model designed specifically to turn neuro-chemical addiction triggers against this Aristotelian ‘person’

– in order to predict, shape and nudge behaviour for commercial or political gain. The very concept of free will and its corollary – agency – has been scattered against the gale of an increasingly manipulation-based society. These are the true ‘existing contradictions’ the adversaries of open society have succeeded in targeting, and will continue to.

In short, the increasingly insecure cognitive environment – and our vulnerability to unsophisticated but high-volume disinformation – is a symptom of our cultural-political malaise, *before* it is the work of Machiavellian operatives lurking in cyberspace. The undercurrent of Rid’s history of disinformation suggests an uncomfortable truth. It has been the inability of open, rule-of-law, democratic societies to process and incorporate these existential blows emerging from the very forces modernity was so successful at propelling – science and technology – that has led to our current perilous condition. The status and function of truth and falsehood is just one of high modernity’s many casualties. Adversarial operations have simply ‘nudged’ open society towards a more acute awareness of its own contradictions. Disinformation about disinformation does the rest, closing the loop on unreality and thus closing off the means by which open societies mediate conflict and change.

² Rid, *Active Measures*.

It does not take a scholar of Sun Tzu to recognise that our strengths have been deployed against us. Compounding the problem, the insights of postwar science have been directed against the citizen/consumer in open society, largely in the form of tools and methodologies developed in the private sector for ostensibly commercial objectives, absent any meaningful democratic oversight. Worse again, when the state agencies which govern open society feel compelled to engage in mass manipulation – to game the gamers, as it were – Rid’s warning about the protean nature of disinformation in the digital age resonates. Accidents and side effects abound on the back of hubris about the boundaries, both spatial and temporal, of unrestricted manipulation.

This risk is summed up in the book’s most evocative and important passage: *‘It is impossible to excel at disinformation and at democracy at the same time.’* Let that stand as a crystal-clear warning to Australia’s national security community. As Rid explains:

Disinformation operations, in essence, erode the very foundation of open societies – not only for the victim but also for the perpetrator. When vast, secretive bureaucracies engage in systematic deception, at large scale and over a long time, they will optimize their own

organisational culture for this purpose, and undermine the legitimacy of public administration at home... being at the receiving end of active measures will undermine democratic institutions – *giving in to the temptation to design and deploy them will have the same result.*³

Active Measures also leaves us with some much-needed clarity in terms of the techno-political trajectory open societies have taken to this point. The national security state in the US, while often seed-funding the tools and methods of dual-use manipulation, has lost control in terms of its capacity to bend those instruments towards the greater social good. As the 21st century dawned, libertarian crypto-anarchist subculture combined with myopic Silicon Valley utopianism to produce ideal conditions for the active measures of foreign adversaries, whose chief strategic aim was to thwart the generation of strategic value that the US expected to accrue from the its multi-decade investment in digital technologies. The fact that these communities were then, and remain today, the chief locus of tech innovation is a paradox the US polity is struggling to deal with effectively, as China’s authoritarian model of tech innovation gathers momentum and, among autocratic like-minds, admirers.

On the commercial abuse of the information environment by Big Tech, and

³ Emphasis added. Rid, *Active Measures* p 10.

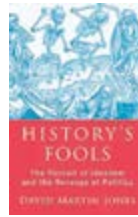
the relationship with the absence of political will to erect corporate guard rails as custodians of democracy, *Active Measures* is largely silent. This leaves an important question hanging if we are to begin the gigantic task of recovering the capacity to restore a semblance of coherence to our sociopolitical fabric in the digital age. Thankfully, other works fill this gap successfully, such as Zuboff's *Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Sadowski's *Too Smart*, Foer's *World Without Mind*,⁴ and a litany of others. Alongside *Active Measures*, these works make required reading for practitioners, elected officials, industry and citizens interested in arresting the slide of democratic society further into incoherence and, ultimately, into strategic peril.

History's Fools: The Pursuit of Idealism and the Revenge of Politics

David Martin Jones

Hurst & Company, Oxford, 2020

Reviewed by Mark Beeson



Realists have never had it so good; or, perhaps that should be, so bad. However we describe the relationship between scholars of a realist bent and the times they inhabit, many of their central arguments and assumptions about the world look alarmingly persuasive, even prescient. By contrast, this is not a good time to be a cosmopolitan or an idealist. Indeed, it may never be so again. The world seems more troubled and disorderly than it has for decades, and this provides the backdrop for David Martin Jones's timely tome, *History's Fools*.

4 See Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Profile Books, London, 2019; Jathan Sadowski, *Too Smart: How Digital Capitalism is Extracting Data, Controlling Our Lives, and Taking Over the World*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA USA, 2020; Franklin Foer, *World Without Mind: Why Google, Amazon and Apple Threaten Our Future*, Vintage, 2018.

Anyone who is familiar with Jones's work will have a shrewd idea what to expect from a volume that draws, in part, on previously published work. Even if you haven't read any of his work before, you might want to take a look at this. The volume is by turns polemical, confronting, impressive, infuriating and scholarly – to the point of showing off. This is not an irrelevant or flippant point. Jones is scathingly dismissive of many of his academic peers and is certainly not hesitant to put the intellectual boot in when he judges it efficacious and/or deserved, which turns out to be quite a lot.

Jones makes quite a display of his erudition, which is fair enough – given that he does know a lot about political theory. While you may not like some of his ideas and conclusions about the state and direction of contemporary scholarship, it's hard to argue that his arguments aren't well-grounded in the literature. The first chapter on 'the end of history and the Kantian moment' is quite the tour de force and would be a useful, if polemical, addition to any political theory course. As the title suggests, Fukuyama gets quite a pounding as he's emblematic of everything Jones thinks was wrong and misguided about 'the West's' hubris and complacency in the aftermath of the Cold War's unexpected ending.

Two of the principal targets of Jonesian invective are liberal academic intellectuals and radical Islam. As far as Jones is concerned they are interconnected in potentially fatal ways:

The evolving progressive response to Islamically-sanctioned, catastrophic violence of the al-Qaeda and IS variety thus entailed a far from compelling mix of queasy agnosticism, euphemism, moral equivalence and logical *non sequiturs*.¹

This has led those with 'progressive minds' to underestimate and misconstrue the threat posed by Islamism, Jones argues, because of 'an official tendency to mistake terrorism's limited means for limited ends.'² The consequence of such short-sightedness, especially when combined with a misguided belief in the salutary impact of multiculturalism and social inclusivity, has led, Jones suggests, to ineffective policies 'that treat the homegrown threat as a community relations problem, rather than an ideology that threatens the internal stability and integrity of secular politics.'³

Whatever you think about his claims regarding the extent and nature of the threat posed by Islamism, there is little doubt that even the most 'progressive' governments, such

1 David Martin Jones, *History's Fools: The Pursuit of Idealism and the Revenge of Politics*, Hurst & Co, London, 2020, p 101.

2 Jones, *History's Fools*, p 127.

3 Jones, *History's Fools*, p 142.

as Sweden's,⁴ have struggled to manage large scale immigration from countries that have different values and belief systems. Although there is some brief discussion of the rise of populism, Brexit and – of course – the problems afflicting the European Union, the migration issue doesn't feature as prominently as we might expect. In part, this is explained by the fact that Jones is primarily interested in explaining the rise, and what he considers the misguided and unrealisable ambitions of the 'new liberalism,' embodied in Tony Blair's 'Third Way' in particular and globalisation more generally.

Authors have their own predilections, no doubt, but it is still surprising that many observers, including Jones, fail to consider adequately the material conditions in which some theories and political ideals come to exercise an influence. The classic case in point is the natural environment and its increasingly visible impact on the international system and domestic politics. A fellow realist, Anatol Lieven, has persuasively argued that 'existing nation states may well eventually collapse due to climate change, but the result will not be world government but universal chaos.'⁵

In this context there may, indeed, be an argument to be made about 'the West' being deluded and needing to "de-radicalize" its own progressive thinking,' but not simply because of the supposed threat posed by other civilisational and/or religious values. On the contrary, as Jones perceptively – and rightly, in my view – points out, 'the structural implications of the intangible economy increasingly favour what Robert Michels identified as an "iron law of oligarchy: in a twenty-first century networked form".'⁶ Likewise, Jones's critique of ASEAN's failings and the significance of the China challenge may be familiar to some readers, but they are not without merit: 'China is busily rewriting the rules of international trade, gradually constructing a Sinocentric regional order...[and] finds ASEAN-style norms hugely conducive to promoting its national interest.'⁷ Quite so.

In the face of all these challenges, Jones advocates something he describes as 'prudential realism,' which is characterised not by 'justice or rightness' but timeliness, necessity and above all prudence. Given some of the epic strategic follies of recent years there are worse

4 Amanda Billner and Rodney Jefferson, 'Swedish liberalism is struggling under the weight of immigration', *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 31 January 2019 10:31am. <https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/swedish-liberalism-is-struggling-under-the-weight-of-immigration>

5 Anatol Lieven, *Climate Change and the Nation State: The Case for Nationalism in a Warming World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2020, p xxi.

6 Jones, *History's Fools*, p 172.

7 Jones, *History's Fools*, p 203.

principles to live by, perhaps. The implication is that:

The search for a grand master strategy is therefore as elusive as the quest for grand utopian schemes of cosmopolitan justice. Unlike normative grand theorizing, however, prudent statecraft adjusts morality and law as circumstances and interest dictates.⁸

John Mearsheimer has recently developed similar sorts of arguments about the seemingly unachievable goals of liberal internationalism and the folly of idealism.⁹ Looking around the world today, it's hard not to concede that the likes of Jones and Mearsheimer have a point, no matter how bleak its implications may be. And yet, some commentators think that climate change will not only eventually compel states to rethink their view of sovereignty and the basis of economic organisation, but also that this may not be a bad thing.¹⁰

However, there is nothing more irritating for authors than reviewers telling them what they should have written about rather than considering what they actually did write about, so I shall refrain. One thing that Jones did write about that merits comment, though, is the rather mean-spirited afterword,

which is a diatribe about the supposed 'erosion of academic integrity.' Numerous scholars are implicated in this process, most of whom have received entirely undeserved recognition, reward and, most galling of all, research funding, Jones claims.

It's worth pointing out that the Department of Defence doles out large amounts of money to 'suitable' projects with much less scrutiny than demanded by the likes of the Australian Research Council; and yet, conservative commentators and politicians aren't queuing up to criticise security agencies. Consequently, this all sounds a bit like tendentious sour grapes and adds nothing to an otherwise important, albeit provocative, contribution to what is often a surprisingly uncritical, uniform and self-referential debate.

This is a book that will no doubt get mixed reviews, as they say, but it's none the worse for that. There is much with which I disagree, and the general tone of intellectual condescension can get a bit wearing at times. But we need contrarians and original thinkers, especially in times like these. Cosmopolitans and idealists – of whom there are still some stellar and rather inspiring examples¹¹

8 Jones, *History's Fools*, p 241.

9 John J Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2018.

10 Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright, *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future*, Verso Books, London, 2018.

11 Luis Cabrera, *The Humble Cosmopolitan: Rights, Diversity, and Trans-state Democracy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019. DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190869502.001.0001

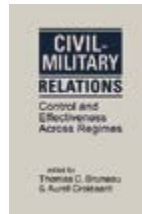
– should read *History's Fools*, if only to sharpen their own arguments. I've benefited over the years from reading Jones's work, even if my blood pressure hasn't; better that than the pious, politically correct, bland uniformity that passes for much supposedly 'critical' scholarship these days. There are worse things than being challenged, surprised and even outraged by authors with whom one may not instinctively agree.

Civil–Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness Across Regimes

Thomas C Bruneau and Aurel Croissant (eds)

Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder CO, 2019

Reviewed by Michael Evans



The field of civil–military relations is an important part of interdisciplinary strategic studies. Yet it is one in which most research is narrowly conceived and often concerned with relations between political systems on one hand and the armed forces on the other. There is far less research conducted on military interaction with civil bureaucracies in producing strategy or with the outcomes of military effectiveness.

During the Cold War era, much of the civil–military relations literature from Samuel Huntington through Morris Janowitz to Amos Perlmutter was concerned with what American scholar, Peter Feaver defined in the mid-1990s as the 'civil–military

problematique' – that is how to reconcile protection *by* the military with protection *from* the military. In the twenty-first century, such a focus is far too conceptually restrictive. This is especially true of established liberal democracies with militaries that are fully reconciled to civil control. In liberal democracies, the military is itself a state bureaucracy and while it may be neutral in terms of the dynamics of party politics, it is never apolitical in outlook. Military establishments have their own institutional interests and goals to pursue, which range from budgets to equipment acquisition and the making of strategy. As a result, the pattern of civil–military relations existing in any modern state produces a defence output, namely the efficacy of national defence strategies, operational capabilities and military organisational systems at any given time. It is this broader subject of effectiveness that is the concern of the essays compiled in *Civil–Military Relations: Control and Effectiveness Across Regimes*, edited by Thomas C Bruneau and Ariel Croissant. Both scholars are leading experts in civil–military relations and their edited book explores the importance of effectiveness in defence and military outputs.

The editors mount a powerful case that 'the civilian control and military effectiveness nexus' is understudied in civil–military relations and requires ongoing research effort by scholars. The book defines effectiveness as the capability of the military to

achieve politically desired outcomes across a spectrum of activities ranging from conventional warfighting, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, and internal security through to peace operations and the provision of humanitarian and disaster relief. These roles are, in turn, measured by three main indicators of military effectiveness. The first indicator is the presence of defence planning processes (white papers and national security strategies). The second indicator is the existence of proper organisational structures (departments of defence, joint military staffs and interagency national security coordination). The third indicator is the systematic allocation of sufficient resources to ensure that the military is equipped for the missions it may have to undertake. The editors recognise that military effectiveness as a process links itself to a distribution of political power. This distribution ranges from the polar opposites of civilian control existing in liberal Western democracies through one party control such as that in China to outright military dictatorship of the kind found in today's Egypt.

With the above analytical framework in place, the international contributors to the volume develop a comparative analytical approach to the control and effectiveness relationship. Essays range from examining control and effectiveness in consolidated democracies such as the United States, Japan and Germany, through such

emerging democracies as Chile, Indonesia and Tunisia to the authoritarian political regimes of Russia, Turkey, Egypt and China. While in all cases, the relationship between state, society and armed forces is of fundamental importance, the differences identified in regime type determine a variety in civil–military patterns of control and effectiveness.

Thomas-Durell Young's chapter on the United States presents a case study of control and effectiveness in an advanced democracy. However, Young identifies a striking contradiction in that while the US Congress advocates military unity and jointness, its political practices and lobbying procedures all but ensure that the Department of Defense remains in 'a state of bureaucratic disaggregation.' This situation serves to hamper the operational effectiveness of America's armed forces.

In his chapter on Japan, Chiyuli Aoi, notes that, until the 1990s, the country possessed a system of 'bureaucratically-managed civil–military relations' in which career civil servants managed both the national security agenda and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF). This situation is a direct outcome of Japan's post-1945 pacifist constitution whereby for half a century, the *bunkan tosei* system of bureaucratic civilian control by the Defense Agency's Internal Bureau Operations and Planning Division dominated the

military at the expense of the influence of Japanese politicians. In the twenty-first century, with the rise of China and a deteriorating international security environment, Tokyo shifted towards much stronger political control of the Japanese defence system. The Japanese government dissolved the Internal Bureau's Operations and Planning Division, strengthened the Joint Staff and created a National Security Council. Nonetheless, Japan's transition of protection *from* the military to protection *by* the military remains a work-in-progress given the residual strength of Japan's culture of anti-militarism. While the Japanese SDF is well trained and equipped, its transition towards the status of a 'normal' military power is uneven with Japanese forces untested in their military effectiveness beyond peace support operations.

In Germany, similar concerns about military effectiveness are apparent with the Bundeswehr existing as the unwanted stepchild of German democratic politics. In his essay, Sven Bernhard Greis suggests that Germany is the classic 'civil–military problematique' that asks 'how to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask them to do with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilians authorise them to do.' In the post–Cold War era, German strategic culture has embodied the idea of *Zivilmacht* (civilian power) with the Bundeswehr systematically downsized and underfunded

by German politicians into a state of organisational dysfunction. German military undertakings occur at the request of allies rather than following any coherent national strategy. At the same time, the Bundeswehr's self-concept of *Innere Führung* (citizen soldier) contributes to an image of the German armed forces as a 'gigantic and self-referential bureaucracy' run by careerists rather than an effective military force controlled by dedicated military professionals. From this perspective, President Donald Trump's belief that Germany does not pull its financial and military weight in NATO appears to have considerable justification.

Ofer Fridman's chapter on Russia presents an analysis of the Russian military as the historic defenders of the motherland. Despite a long history of autocracy and authoritarianism, Russia has never suffered direct military rule but the military has always been a political actor in the shadows. After suffering deep neglect under Boris Yeltsin, the Russian armed forces have been rehabilitated, reformed and revitalised by President Vladimir Putin. Russian military actions in Georgia, Ukraine, Crimea and Syria demonstrate a level of effectiveness that testifies to the success of Putin's defence reforms.

Further chapters on Indonesia, Turkey and Egypt serve to illustrate how regime type creates a pattern for the unfolding of civil-military relations.

Both Indonesia and Turkey have long traditions of military involvement in politics but in both countries, military effectiveness is only apparent in internal security and counterinsurgency operations. Since the 1990s, the Indonesian military, while still a political actor, has accepted the primacy of democratic institutions. In contrast, Turkey has slipped into neo-Ottomanism under the executive presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with its military involved in operations in northern Syria, with uncertain outcomes. Robert Springbord's chapter on Egypt presents a case study of where direct military rule has led to a poor capacity by the Egyptian armed forces to undertake conventional military operations. As Springbord observes Egypt's modern military history 'demonstrates that running a country and being an effective military are incompatible roles.'

You Ji's chapter on China emphasises how the creation of a highly effective military has been a key driver of China's transformation since 1978. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) represent a symbiotic relationship of shared strategic interests that dates back to the anti-Japanese war of the 1930s. This civil-military symbiosis is described as a 'historically-embedded and special lip-and-tongue integration of the party and the armed forces.' In Xi Jinping's China, the goal is the realisation of a 'superpower military' by 2050. There is dialectic

between control and effectiveness at work in China because as the country has become an economic powerhouse so too has the PLA benefited from a largesse promoting military modernisation and professionalism. As You puts it, 'the nexus of military effectiveness and war preparation is organic for the PLA's modernization.'

The PLA has gone from a strategic posture of 'defensive defense' to one of 'defensive offense' while moving from a focus on continental military concerns towards a much greater concentration on maritime warfare and anti-access operational strategies. You believes that the evolution of the CCP-PLA relationship will be decisive in China's ambition of achieving global superpower status. Currently, there is a control-effectiveness nexus based on CCP rule and continuing PLA professionalism in a coalition of interests. However, You sounds a note of caution. He warns that since the PLA serves both the party and the nation, any divergence between party and populace automatically threatens the dialectic between political control and military effectiveness. At some point in the future, the PLA might face the choice between being the political instrument of an unpopular party or the professional servant of a population demanding political change.

In their conclusion, Bruneau and Croissant highlight the myth that it is only in democracies with civilian control that military effectiveness flourishes. The illiberal regimes of

Russia and China demonstrate that authoritarian civilian control can produce effective military establishments. In a clear reference to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the editors go on to note that 'despite a defense budget that is more than twice as large as the combined budgets of Russia and China, the US armed forces have not been particularly effective in many of the conflicts in which they have been involved for some years.' Similarly, the armed forces of both Germany and Japan possess untried militaries due to legacies of pacifism, bureaucratic control and political indifference. The overall conclusion of the book is that while 'civilian control may be a necessary condition for military effectiveness, democratic civilian control is not.'

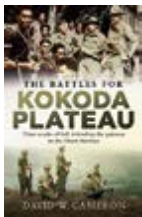
The material gathered in this volume is a useful reminder of the paucity of research conducted into Australian civil-military relations since the 1980s. This is a perplexing situation in that knowledge of the theory of civil-military relations define both the character and culture of modern defence organisations and the direction of policy and strategy. As Eliot Cohen puts it, 'a theory of civil-military relations contains within it a theory of strategy.' Such an approach to defence organisation is not evident in twenty-first century Australia. Accordingly, both the ADF and Canberra's policymakers would benefit from a renewed focus on civil-military relations, beginning with reading this book.

The Battles for Kokoda Plateau

David W Cameron

Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2020

Reviewed by Kate Tollenaar



The Australian experience in the Second World War features many myths, and in the last 20 years, Kokoda has grown in significance in Australian popular cultural memory. The story of the battle to hold the Kokoda Plateau has been the focus of many recent works, with over nine books published since 2000 and many articles debating the place of Kokoda in Australia's military history and remembrance. The movie *Kokoda* was released in 2006, introducing the story to a new generation. Many Australians walk the Kokoda Track each year and this experience is often framed in the language of pilgrimage.

David W Cameron's *The Battles for Kokoda Plateau* is a contribution to the field that focuses on individual truth and much of the account is drawn from letters and diaries. After

capturing Singapore in early 1942, Japanese forces landed at Papua New Guinea in July 1942, not to establish a base from which to invade Australia as was thought at the time but with the intent to isolate Australia and New Zealand from the United States. The Japanese intended to capture Kokoda and the airstrip and then advance overland to capture Port Moresby. Over the next five months, Japanese forces advanced along the Kokoda Track, fighting Australian and Papuan forces, until they were defeated at Oivi-Gorari in November 1942.

The Battles for Kokoda Plateau, however, recounts the events of three weeks of the battle between July and August 1942, when the 39th Battalion, supported by 1st Papuan Infantry Battalion and Royal Papuan Constabulary fought the Japanese I/144th Battalion. These events are divided chronologically into five chapters: Preparation, Invasion, the First and Second Battles for Kokoda and Lines of Escape. This detailed account illuminates one part of the theatre which General Sir Thomas Blamey and General Douglas Macarthur oversaw.

The Battles follows the same approach of drawing on unpublished first-hand accounts focused on particular timeframe that Cameron's has used in some of his previous works such as on the battle for Lone Pine at Gallipoli in the First World War and

the Battle of Long Tan in the Vietnam War. This allows for a deep dive into the actions and reactions of individuals that were part of these events.

The reader follows the experience of several commanders, senior non-commissioned officers, a medical officer, an American airman and Australian missionaries who move along the Kokoda Track. The narrative weighs heavily on several narrators, but this does not detract from a sense of the broader experience. Relying on individual letters written during the period, or recollections afterwards, the account brings a sense of immediacy to their experience. Wanting to know what happens to these people compels the reader to read on.

David Cameron writes about the human experience of war, which makes this account easy to read without the need to decipher dense tactical details or force dispositions. Cameron focuses on the experience of these men and women in arduous conditions, battling the infamous terrain over the Owen Stanley Ranges, which all believed impassable, in difficult weather and coping with disease, including dysentery and cholera, and critical shortages of ammunition and food.

The author also writes with empathy for the families of the deployed personnel who waited for years to

learn what had happened to their loved ones. This approach makes *The Battles* a deeper and broader account, encompassing social as well as strictly military history. Part of this social history approach is the addition of brief but absorbing recollections of some veterans who reflect on their experience at Kokoda over 30 years later. These examples demonstrate the often pervasive nature of wartime service and the way that memories can change over time, as well as influence collective memory and myth.

An important part of the mythology of Kokoda has been that the Australians were fighting against tremendous odds, vastly outnumbered by the Japanese. Some accounts claim it was up to ten to one at the first Battle of Kokoda and in *The Battles* Cameron asserts the Australians were outnumbered by at least three to one. However, this number has been contested by a number of historians. For example, Peter Williams in *The Kokoda Campaigns 1942: Myth and Reality* debunks eight common myths about Kokoda including the myth that the Australians were constantly outnumbered by Japanese.¹ It is true that during skirmishes in July, Japanese forces were superior but it seems likely this was not significantly more than one to one, certainly less than two to one. The size of Japanese

1 Peter Williams, *The Kokoda Campaigns 1942: Myth and Reality*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139196277>

forces at Kokoda remains contested in historical and popular accounts.

Cameron is an experienced historian, and this is a strong historical work. One of its particular strengths is the inclusion of letters and diary entries from Japanese soldiers and officers, which provide additional insights into the Japanese experience of Kokoda. There are also several interesting facts in the book from Cameron's research which would warrant additional research for a reader wanting to know more. These facts include the misinformation provided to the Australian public from Headquarters about what was occurring at Kokoda, the press-ganging of 100 Sydney men to enlist and make up the numbers of a Darwin battalion, and accounts of mistreatment and exploitation of the local carriers who assisted the men of the 39th Battalion to carry supplies over the Owen Stanley Ranges during the three-week period.

The tone of the book is imbued by the many accounts of violence by Japanese forces towards civilians and military personnel. These depictions are graphic and include Japanese forces' executions of Australian prisoners, missionaries and local civilians by gunshot and bayonet. Some of the executions were botched, or deliberately cruel, exacerbating the trauma for the victims and witnesses. Although true and important, these parts of the book make for difficult reading. The first chapter opens with

these events, which sets the tone for a sombre and occasionally grisly read. There are some moments of humour; however, overall the account is evocative and challenging.

Readers wanting to know more about this time period will find excellent source material in *The Battles*, and some companion reading, such as the Williams account mentioned earlier, would help more fully explore the Kokoda experience.

The Battles meets its intent to honour voices of the men and women who fought in July and August 1942 at Kokoda. Their bravery and fortitude is clear. This book is a worthwhile read for those interested in the individual experience of war in Papua New Guinea during the Second World War.

Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War

*Randy Brown and Steve
Leonard (eds)*

Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019

Reviewed by Imogen Mathew



As a lecturer in professional military education on the Australian Command and Staff Course, my day-to-day work involves helping Defence personnel with their academic writing. Many of my students left secondary school early to join the forces; a quarter of our cohort comes from an ESL background; and those with a tertiary education favour STEM disciplines. In this context, writing an essay on the Peloponnesian War or Social Identity Theory is hard work: students must produce thesis statements and topic sentences; their writing must be clearly signposted, follow a logical structure, and be supported by appropriate and credible

evidence. There are important reasons to write in this way, but my goal is not to create league upon league of scholars. Rather, I hope to imbue my students with a passion for writing that extends beyond the marking rubric to something more personal and long-lasting. And in this, the spirit that animates my daily work is shared by the editors of *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*.¹

Why We Write is an anthology of essays published under the aegis of the Military Writers Guild in late 2019. Randy Brown and Steve Leonard edit the collection; both are veterans who have parlayed their military experience into successful writing careers. Brown has published several poetry collections as well as embedding with US forces as a civilian journalist in Afghanistan. Leonard is a lecturer at the University of Kansas and a senior fellow at the Modern War Institute at West Point. Between them, Brown and Leonard have gathered together a multitude of voices (military, ex-military and civilian), all of whom explore the meaning writing has for them in their professional and personal lives. The contributors to this collection are predominately US-based, although there is a sprinkling of Australian authors. At 61 essays, the number of contributions is quite high for an edited collection; and, coming in at a total of 225 pages, the length of

1 Jonathan Baxer, 'Dreaming of Ishtar In the Land of Two Rivers' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 168.

each essay is correspondingly short. Yet length constitutes one of this collection's chief attractions: these bite-sized essay morsels are accessible and engaging, and their brevity allows readers to dip in and out of the anthology with ease. This collection thus has a broad appeal, and will be of interest to civilians and military professionals alike: a relatively low time investment (say, an empty 5 minutes between zoom meetings) will yield a highly satisfying reading experience.

Many of the essays engage directly with the question 'Why I write?', and the answers are as individual as each author. Some contributors emphasise the professional benefits that accrue to those who write: for Mick Ryan, 'being a better writer makes me a more thoughtful leader.'² In other essays, writing represents a powerful therapeutic 'tool for processing loss, grief, and change.'³ Some write to ensure forgotten voices are heard: for instance, Hugh Martin writes to create

a 'more multi-vocal, polyphonic tapestry' of the Iraq War.⁴ There are those who write for the 'rush,'⁵ 'to create a legacy,'⁶ or 'to give [their] life meaning.'⁷ Writing may not come easy,⁸ but it is as essential as a good night's sleep.⁹

A smaller selection of essays are as interested in the process as they are in the outcome, and offer valuable insights into the *how* of writing. Josh Powers offers a particularly evocative example:

I try to write every day. Most mornings, I am awake at a time that feels unnatural yet efficient, an old habit from years of early mornings. With a cup of hot coffee in hand, I reflect on the previous day's notes. I might read a few business or military articles. I capture some fragments in a separate section of my notebook, with pages reserved for reflection, thoughts, and lessons-learned. Then, I consider these elements in the light of this question: Which of

2 Mick Ryan, 'Writing and Our Profession', in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 44.

3 Colin D Halloran 'The Warrior-Poet and an Unexpected Journey' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 201.

4 Hugh Martin, 'An Iraq War Veteran Reads the Iraq War' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 208.

5 Carmen Gentile, 'Some True Lies about Conflict Reporting' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 82.

6 Joe Byerly, 'Pressing the Button' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 16.

7 Baxter, 'Dreaming of Ishtar', p 68.

8 Tom McDermott, 'Armour Against Atrocity: Writing to Find One's Moral Compass' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 93.

9 Matt Condon, 'Writing Myself to Sleep' in Brown and Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, pp 70–5.

these thoughts could benefit someone else?¹⁰

Here, there are no rules on how to write, just principles and lessons learned. The tone is free of didacticism, and Powers makes no attempt to coerce the reader into his daily rituals. Rather, Powers's reflections are generous and giving; he shows the reader what works for him in an effort to highlight one of the many paths that could begin a writing journey.

The key argument pursued by the editors of this collection relates to the centrality of writing in the development of modern Western militaries. While there is already a notable amount of scholarship that addresses the importance of reading to the profession of arms (see, most prominently, *The Leader's Bookshelf* by James Stavridis and R. Manning Ancell, and *The Challenge of Command* by Roger Nye), writing is given considerably less attention. This is where the originality of Brown and Leonard's collection comes fully into view. *Why We Write* is unique in the way it promotes the act of writing to military professionals. By making an argument for the importance of writing, the editors also make an implicit argument for the importance of individuality, creativity and self-reflection within the

profession of arms. This approach introduces a note of vulnerability into our understanding of the profession of arms:

Many junior leaders perceive the Army as "zero defect," where mistakes are unacceptable or seen as weakness. I once shared these fears. Now, I write to demonstrate to others that not having all of the answers is OK. ... My writing stems from personal shortcomings and professional failures, and growing from those experiences.¹¹

This approach also recognises that each person '[has] a story to tell' and that this story is 'unique' to the individual,¹² and refuses to view Defence personnel as uniform and homogenous.

This anthology's main audience (like the majority of its contributors) is military professionals. And it is this audience who will gain the most from this book; indeed, it seems that the intention underlying this anthology is to transform an audience of readers into an active community of writers. As Charles G Ingram puts it in his Introduction, 'Our hope is that one of these writers will inspire you to tell [your] story, in your own way.' Thus, beyond profiling the work of a dynamic community of practice, the intent behind this collection is to

10 Josh Powers, 'Operationalizing "The Field Grade Leader"' in Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 159.

11 Powers, 'Operationalizing "The Field Grade Leader"', p 159.

12 Christopher G. Ingram, 'Introduction' to Randy Brown and Steve Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, Middle West Press LLC, Johnston IA, 2019, p 1.

entertain, encourage and, above all, inspire would-be writers. This is no mean feat when the potential audience for this book may have chosen a military career precisely because they lacked confidence or ability in their writing skills. Thus, a key function of *Why We Write* is to render accessible a practice that may not be an obvious or especially comfortable bedfellow for its intended audience. Further to this, the editors of *Why We Write* work hard to remove any sense of hierarchy from the practice of writing. In this sense, it is impressive that the writers are identified by name only; there are no prefixes of rank or learning (for example, either MAJGEN or Dr) in the authors' by-line. Essays by well-known and widely published authors, such as Peter W Singer, Max Brooks, Kori Schake and Thomas E Ricks, rub shoulders with the work of little-known veterans who now work as marketing executives or run manufacturing businesses. This is in keeping with the general ethos of the book, which aims to democratise the act of writing. You don't need to be a highly literate academic or extensively published author for your story to be of value. The message here seems to be that if you *can* write, you *should* write.

All contributors to this collection are alike in their endorsement of writing, both as a process and as an object

that circulates in the world. In both these views, to write is to enact change on a scale that ranges from the infinitesimally small to the wholesale re-visioning of self, nation and history. This type of insight is not new: writing on writing is a widely recognised and popular genre. Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way*, Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird*, Stephen King's *On Writing*, and Haruki Murakami's *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running* are just four of the many titles that explore the writing process. And these are just the single-authored texts; collections such as Meredith Maran's *Why We Write* feature interviews with some of the most experienced and successful practitioners in the business including Jodi Piccoult, Isabel Allende, Terry McMillan, Ann Patchett, and Jennifer Egan. Those in search of writing advice and inspiration would do well to consult any of the texts mentioned above. Given the scholarship that already exists in this genre, the true value of Brown and Leonard's *Why We Write* lies less in its reflections on the writing process, and more on the way it makes a substantive case for military personnel of all levels to embrace writing as part of their ongoing professional development.¹³

It is not sufficient, this collection argues, to concentrate the core business of the military on a panoply of hardware. This argument coheres strongly

13 Thomas E Ricks, 'Babylon Revisited' in Brown and Leonard (eds), *Why We Write: Craft Essays on Writing War*, p 222.

with messaging from the Australian Department of Defence regarding what it calls the Joint Professional Military Education Continuum. In a recently released guidebook, we are told that ‘the Australian Defence Force cannot rely on a long term capability edge, as regional military modernisation has started to diminish Australia’s advance. Therefore, the greatest opportunity to generate advantage over the adversary is through an *intellectual* edge.’¹⁴ The Australian Defence Force offers many ways to obtain this intellectual edge, including through participation on the Australian Command and Staff Course, or the Defence and Strategic Studies Course. However, this intellectual edge can be honed just as sharply through the informal and accessible writing practice demonstrated in *Why We Write*.

14 Dept. of Defence, *The Australian Joint Professional Military Education Continuum*, Department of Defence, 2019, p 3.

Australian Journal of Defence and Strategic Studies

Call for Submissions (2021–2022)

The Australian Journal of Defence and Strategic Studies (AJDSS) is the flagship journal of the Australian Defence Force. The AJDSS encourages contributors and readers from across the professional military, academic, government and industry sectors. The AJDSS welcomes submissions considering contemporary and future concerns relevant to the defence and strategic outlook of Australia and the Indo–Pacific region.

Submissions Deadlines

Submission are accepted at any time, however, please note the issue deadlines below:

Vol 3. No. 1	1 February 2021
Vol 3. No. 2	31 May 2021
Vol 4. No. 1	27 September 2021

Length of submissions

- Academic articles of 4000 to 7000 words
- Commentary and opinion essays of 2000 to 4000 words
- Reviews and review essays (generally by commission) of 1000 to 2000 words
- Correspondence in response to articles of 1000 to 2500 words

Submissions should be original, clearly argued and demonstrate appropriate levels of research and evidence. Academic articles undergo a double-blind peer review process. This process can be lengthy and reviews may recommend revision and resubmission.

The AJDSS is interested in receiving submissions on:

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- defence and security debates, including economic, political and climate change concerns, relevant to the Pacific region
- counterspace capabilities and Australia's strategic approach to the use of space for Defence
- deterrence in contemporary statecraft and warfare

- defence responses to information and political warfare e.g. propaganda, disinformation and other influence operations and operating in the grey zone
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All submissions should be anonymised and accompanied by a cover letter that clearly states the type of submission word count and declarations; an abstract; and biographical and contact information on all credited authors, as outlined in the submission guidelines on the website. Submissions should be submitted by email to: cdr.publications@defence.gov.au

Please review the editorial policies and submission guidelines on the AJDSS website before submission.

To discuss potential papers or submissions, or to propose books for review, please contact the editorial office at the Centre for Defence Research via email: cdr.publications@defence.gov.au

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