The Evolution of Strategy

Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present

BEATRICE HEUSER

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Is there a 'Western way of war' which pursues battles of annihilation and single-minded military victory? Is warfare on a path to ever greater destructive force? This magisterial new account answers these questions by tracing the history of Western thinking about strategy – the employment of military force as a political instrument – from antiquity to the present day. Assessing sources from Vegetius to contemporary America, and with a particular focus on strategy since the Napoleonic Wars, Beatrice Heuser explores the evolution of strategic thought, the social institutions, norms and patterns of behaviour within which it operates, the policies that guide it and the culture that influences it. Ranging across technology and warfare, total warfare and small wars as well as land, sea, air and nuclear warfare, she demonstrates that warfare and strategic thinking have fluctuated wildly in their aims, intensity, limitations and excesses over the past two millennia.

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In memory of Julian Chrysostomides
1928–2008
scholar, teacher, friend

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Acknowledgements

A note on referencing

For the purposes of this book, I needed to adapt Harvard-style referencing, as it was not designed with archival or internet sources in mind, nor for ancient or medieval manuscripts that were first printed centuries after they were written, and translated later still. My references serve as a shorthand for indicating the original date when a text was written; any additional date refers to the translation I have used, so that for example (Anon. 6th c./1985: 10–135) refers to the sixth-century anonymous text *Peri Strategias* translated and edited by George Dennis in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985), pp. 10–135; this full information can be found in the bibliography. Where only a later edition was available to me, this is indicated in the bibliography; nevertheless, the earlier date is given as the in-text references in order keep these short, even where the page reference applies to the later edition. With key texts which have been reprinted many times, however, I have adopted the classicists' convention of referring to book, chapter and verse rather than to page numbers. Finally, 'q.i.' stands for 'quoted in'; 't.i.' stands for 'text printed in'.

Introduction

1 | *What is strategy?*

Man made War in his own image.
>   (Willmott 2002: 14)

The way in which a society makes war is a projection of that society itself.

>   (Sidebottom 2004: 35)

Art of war or science of war, and technical definitions of 'strategy'

'Thinking war': this is how the French sociologist Raymond Aron characterised Clausewitz's work (Aron 1976). It is a conceptual challenge to write about the evolution of Strategy, especially with an emphasis on the social institutions, norms and patterns of behaviour within which it operates, the policies that guide it and the culture that influences it. For, as we shall see presently, the use of the word 'strategy' has changed very considerably over time. This book's *main* purpose is *not* to provide a history of the word 'strategy' and all that it denoted over time. Instead, it will examine how people thought about the link between political aims and the use of force, or its threat, which we will refer to as Strategy with a capital 'S'. This definition will be applied retrospectively to find out how strategists – writers on the conduct of war – thought about this issue in the past, whether or not they employed the actual term 'strategy', which after classical antiquity only came into use again around 1800.[1]

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[1] To use the terminology of linguistics, I am using an onomasiological approach to the evolution of the discourse on Strategy as defined above, not the semasiological approach, which would be a history of the use of the word 'strategy' (Penth 2006: 5–18).

Nevertheless, the evolution of the term 'strategy' itself must be our starting point, not least in order to understand why there is so little agreement on the use of the term, and why it has changed so much over time. The Greek word 'strategy' (either as *strategía* or *strategiké*) was used in antiquity for the art or skills of the general (the *strategós*) – 'the general is the one who practises strategy'. By the sixth century at the latest, however, at the time of Emperor Justinian, in Byzantine usage, a difference was made between 'strategy' – 'strategy is the means by which the general may defend his own lands and defeat his enemy's' – and, hierarchically subordinated to it, 'tactics' (*taktiké*), the 'science [*epistéme*] which enables one to organize and maneuver a body of armed men in an orderly manner' (Anon. 6th c./1985: 10–135). It is possible that such definitions had already found their place in earlier works, such as the lost parts of Aeneas Tacticus (*c*. 357 BCE) or Frontinus (*c*. 35–103 or 104 CE). In either case, Frontinus in his Latin work on stratagems or ruses used the Greek words both for stratagem (*strategémon*) and for strategy (*strategía*), as neither word had a proper Latin equivalent (Frontinus *c*. 1st c. CE: I). Nor did Greek texts of the following centuries distinguish systematically between strategy and tactics. Maurice (539–602), the East Roman (Byzantine) emperor (from 582) wrote a work known a *Strategikón*, which dealt mainly with technical aspects of the conduct of war. A similar subject matter was discussed in a book in Greek called *Taktiké Theoría* dating from the second century CE, written by Aelianus Tacticus.

Emperor Leo VI ('the Wise', 865–912, emperor from 886) drew extensively on Aelianus in his own work, which later became known, not entirely appropriately, as *Taktiká* (Leo *c*. 900/1917), as Leo used the terms *strategía* and *taktiké* in the same hierarchical way as the sixth-century work referred to above. It would be Leo's work that would bring this greater meaning of 'strategy' to the West. Count John of Nassau-Siegen (1561–1623) in his *Book of War* drew on Maurice's *Stratégikon* and on Leo's *Taktiká*. John did not adopt the Greek term 'strategy', circumscribing it with the general's (*Feldher*) tasks. The word '*tactic*' he actually used (John 'the Middle' 1610/1973: 17, 516, 642). John thus built on Leo's analytical framework, which resonated in the literature, even though the word *strategía* had not yet become integrated into the Western languages.

The majority of authors before the French Revolution wrote neither about 'strategy' nor 'tactics' but about military matters in the

tradition of the Roman author Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus, Vegetius for short, who lived in the late fourth century CE; or else they wrote 'military instructions' (Puységur 1690), or about the 'art of war' (Machiavelli 1521). In the Western world, the French Count Jacques Antoine Hippolyte Guibert (1743–91) was probably the first, in his *General Essay on Tactics*, to define higher and subordinate levels of the conduct of war, speaking of 'tactics' and 'grand tactics' when talking about war aims, the configurations of armed forces in relation to the political aims and several such dimensions which we would today regard as Strategy. Without ever using the word 'strategy', Guibert wrote about both what we would today call Strategy and Tactics, dwelling primarily on the relationship between the nature of a society, its internal values and foreign-policy objectives, with an overall Strategy derived from these values and objectives, the armed forces that match these and the way these should be employed, down to battlefield Tactics (Guibert 1772/1781). Just as Monsieur Jourdain had been speaking 'in prose' all his life without knowing the expression, Guibert was what today we would call a Strategic Theorist without thinking of himself in these terms.

Shortly after the publication of Guibert's *General Essay*, the Byzantine use of the terms which pertains even today was introduced in the West. In 1771 Paul-Gédéon Joly de Maizeroy (1719–80) translated Leo's *Taktiká* into French. He still hesitated to translate Leo's term '*strategía*' into French, and used 'the art of the general' in his translation itself, and '*stratégique*' in his commentary (Leo *c.* 900/1771: 5–7). But here, for the first time in the West, the two terms 'strategy' and 'tactics' were used in a hierarchical sense, strategy denoting the higher level, tactical the lower, of warfare. In 1777 Johann von Bourscheid in Vienna published a translation of Leo into German, more appropriately under the title *Emperor Leo the Wise's Strategy and Tactics* [*sic*]. From then onwards, the use of both terms in the Byzantine sense spread throughout the West.

Whether or not they used the term 'strategy', writers since antiquity posited that Strategy should be formulated on the basis of practical experience or theoretical reflections before being applied in war. Authors on war were divided as to whether they were writing about the art or the science of war, a debate that has not been settled to this day, and which from 1800 largely overlapped with the question whether 'strategy' concerned only theoretical reflection or also

practical applicability. This question can probably be found first in the writing of Archduke Charles (1771–1847), the Habsburg commander in the wars against Napoleon, who in 1806 defined 'strategy' as 'the science of war: it designs the plan, circumscribes and determines the development of military operations; it is the particular science of the supreme commander'. 'Tactics', by contrast, he defined as 'the art of war. It teaches the way in which strategic designs are to be executed; it is the necessary skill of each leader of troops' (Waldtstätten 1882: 57; Anon. 1814: vii, 3).

In contrast to all these, the Prussian philosopher-general Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) in his masterpiece on war spoke out against this categorisation of warfare as either an art or a science. Instead, he wrote,

we could more accurately compare it to commerce, which is also a conflict of human interests and activities, and it is *still* closer to politics, which in turn may be considered as a kind of commerce on a larger scale. Politics, moreover, is the womb in which war develops.

This is where we encounter the idea about the relationship between politics and war for which Clausewitz is most famous, namely that 'war is an act of policy' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, I: 1, 24).

Surprisingly, in view of his theoretical ideas on war expressed in other parts of his work, Clausewitz used very narrow definitions. In Book II of *On War* he defined 'strategy' merely as 'the use of engagements for the object of the war' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, II: 1; III: 1). It was not Clausewitz's narrow definition of 'strategy', but his definition of war that would impress future thinkers: war as 'an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, I: 1, 2). This view would resonate through the strategic writing of the following centuries, to the point where it became a commonplace to define the aim in war, and thus victory, as the successful imposition of one's will upon the enemy, and to see all Strategy as a pursuit of that aim.

The narrow Clausewitzian and Jominian definition of 'strategy' would live on until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1845 French Marshal Marmont defined 'strategy' as 'the general movements which are made beyond the enemy's range of sight and before the battle', while 'tactics is the science of the application of manoeuvres' (Marmont 1845: 17–25). Writing in 1853, the French naval officer

Louis-Édouard, Count Bouët-Willaumez defined 'strategy' as 'the art of determining the decisive points of the theatre of war and the general lines and routes along which armies have to move to get there' (Taillemite 1999: 50). Indeed, this unimaginative definition would be echoed well into the twentieth century (Mordacq 1921: 15), albeit mainly outside France, where the words 'tactics' and 'strategy' were apparently rarely uttered until after France's crushing defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1870/1 (Mayer 1916: 7).

One of the echoes came from Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder who saw the 'essence' [*Wesen*] of 'strategy' in the preparations needed to get troops to the battlefield simultaneously (q.i. Schlichting 1897: II: 11). Elsewhere he proclaimed more originally that 'strategy is a system of expediencies' which defied general principles that could be taught (Großer Generalstab 1911: 1). His Russian contemporary, General Mikhail Ivanovich Dragomirov, dismissed the concept of a 'science' of war out of hand, instead endorsing the concept of a 'theory of war' (q.i. Foch 1900/1918: 8). Other very technical definitions abounded, such as this by Clausewitz's contemporary Wilhelm von Willisen: 'Strategy is the doctrine of making connections … the doctrine of battling [*Schlagen*] is tactics' (Willisen 1840: 26). Or take another, that of the Britons Sir Edward Hamley, General J.F. Maurice (1891:7; 1929: 3) and G.F.R. Henderson (1905: 39), who by 'strategy' understood 'the art of rightly directing the masses of troops towards the objects of the campaign'. 'The theatre of war is the province of strategy, the field of battle is the province of tactics.' French General Bonnal, lecturing at the Ecole de Guerre in 1892–3, told his students that '[s]trategy is the art of conceiving; tactics the science of execution' (Castex 1937: 6). In the Cold War, Marxist-Leninist definitions continued to follow narrow definitions of 'strategy' and 'tactics', adding the intermediary level of operation (Leebaert 1981: 14f.).

Clearly, these technical definitions did not make allowance for the political directives under which Strategy operated. Wider concepts were needed. The British military historian Henry Spenser Wilkinson, in discussing naval operations in 1894, gave this definition: 'A policy is national action directed to an end or purpose. The object set up must be one that the nation values and appreciates, or else the Government will have no support in its efforts to attain it. And the means must be suitable to the end' (Wilkinson 1894: 21). A

decade later, Lt.-Col. Walter James, while using narrow definitions of 'strategy' and 'tactics', dwelt on the political aims of warfare:

Strategy is largely affected by moral considerations. Of two different courses – one of which might give important political, the other more purely military results – it will sometimes be more advantageous to choose the former, because of the greater effect it will have on the course of the war. (James 1904: 17f.)

We see how gradually, the line between policy and 'strategy', especially 'grand strategy', was becoming blurred. The emphasis of the link between policy and military execution becomes particularly strong in the writings of Captain (later Sir) Basil Henry Liddell Hart, whose most important works stem from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. He dismissed earlier definitions as too narrow, instead developing the concept further again. For Liddell Hart, 'strategy' was 'the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy' (Liddell Hart 1944: 229). This definition, which has great merits, is so broad, however, that Richards Betts would be justified in criticising it for making 'strategy' synonymous with foreign (or indeed any) policy (Betts 2001/2: 23).

   This had already been recognised by French General André Beaufre (1902–75) and French sociologist Raymond Aron (1905–83). Aron suggested fusing the terms 'policy' and 'strategy' in the neologism 'praxeology'. Beaufre, however, decided to stick with 'strategy', using 'total strategy' as equivalent to the British term 'grand strategy'. Hence Beaufre argued that all warfare is 'total', by which he meant 'carried on in all fields of action', political, economic, military, cultural, and so forth (Beaufre 1966/1967: 19–23, 29). This, however, lends itself to considerable terminological confusion in view of other usage of the term 'total war' (as we shall see in chapter 7).

   While Aron's term 'praxeology' failed to catch on, agreement on his insistence on the link between Strategy and practice spread. His American contemporary Bernard Brodie wrote in the middle of the Cold War that 'Strategic thinking, or "theory" if one prefers, is nothing if not pragmatic. Strategy is a "how to do it" … guide to accomplishing something and doing it efficiently … Above all, strategic theory is a theory for action' (Brodie 1973: 452f.). From this, Colin Gray developed the idea of 'strategic theory' which 'helps educate the

strategist so that he can conceive of, plan, and execute strategy by his command performance' (Gray 2010).

With the introduction of the concept of 'grand strategy' in the Second World War, something closely akin to overall state policy on foreign and military affairs, new variations appear in our list of definitions. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff in their *Dictionary of the U.S. Military Terms for Joint Usage* of 1964 defined 'strategy' as the development and use of

political, economic, psychological and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favourable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat. (q.i. Luttwak 1987: 239–41)

The British political scientist Robert Neild in 1990 defined 'strategy' in an even wider way, as the pursuit of

political aims by the use or possession of military means. In formulating strategy, the first step is to decide on political aims. Without political aims, war is mindless destruction and the possession of military means in peacetime is mindless waste. Once political aims are specified, the military means must be selected and tailored to fit those aims. (Neild 1990: 1)

Thus the link between policy at the highest level and the use of military force as its tool, postulated by Clausewitz but not yet coupled by him to the word 'strategy', gradually became a matter of universal consensus. And yet there was scope for further refinement of the concept, which, as we shall see, brought further essential dimensions of strategy into focus.

The articulation of different dimensions of Strategy

War as an instrument of politics

The rediscovery of the great political philosophers of antiquity and their ideas about the *polis*, the body politic, the state and its relation to its armed forces, made thinkers of the modern age write about the link between Strategy and politics. A crucial place in the translation of these classical philosophical concepts into modern times is held by Niccolò

Machiavelli (1469–1527), who besides writing on the *Art of War* (structured much like Vegetius' classical handbook) also wrote about politics, in his more famous work *The Prince* and in the *Discourses*. Other philosophers on the state, politics, justice and law, such as Matthew Sutcliffe (1546 or 1547–1629) in England, Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) in the Netherlands repeatedly touched on war in their works. Just as Roman law had developed concepts of a justifiable use of war, set in stone for the Christian world by Augustine of Hippo and after him Thomas Aquinas, they were mainly concerned with the legality and legitimacy of warfare.

A few exceptional writers in the tradition of Machiavelli brought these strands of thought together. The most prominent are Sutcliffe, dean of Exeter; the Spanish aristocrat, officer and diplomat Don Alvaro of Navia Osorio and Vigil, Viscount of Puerto, Marquis of Santa Cruz de Marcenado (1684–1732); and Guibert. Coming from the classical Roman and then Catholic just-war tradition (see chapter 2), they assumed that the end state of war should be peace, but a more just peace than that preceding the war (e.g. Saillans 1589/1591: ch. 5). For Sutcliffe, Lipsius and Grotius it was taken for granted that peace had to be the end state of war. In the eighteenth century, the Swiss philosopher Emerich de Vattel by contrast reflected on the consequences of the imposition of an *unjust* peace which would lead to renewed war (Vattel 1758/1834: Book IV). At the close of the eighteenth century, Dietrich Heinrich von Bülow in Prussia had no such qualms: he defined the purpose of all operations in war as bringing about 'peace, which one tries to force upon the enemy through the harm done to him, to be advantageous to oneself, and disadvantageous to him' (Bülow 1799: 12). Nevertheless, there was thus consensus from Cicero to the French Revolution that the only sensible aim of war could be a durable peace. Napoleon's insatiable expansionism, however, changed this perception.

The nexus between political war aims and the conduct of war was commonplace by the time Clausewitz put his pen to paper – it was so widely accepted that few saw the need to spell it out. One who did spell it out was August Wagner, who opined that no commander would be greatly successful unless he knew

what is generally true about all wars; why each war … has been started; which means are to be applied, not alone to win, but to achieve the aims, for the purpose of which one has taken up arms; in short, who has not

reflected on his profession and is not able quickly to apply the fruits of his reflections to actual cases. (Wagner 1809: viii)

Another was Clausewitz's colleague at the War Academy in Berlin, Otto August Rühle von Lilienstern (1780–1847), next to Clausewitz the most outstandingly original German-speaking writer of that generation. In his *Handbook for Officers* (published 1817–18), he argued that every war had a cause and a purpose which would

determine the character and the direction of all activity … The individual operations have military purposes; the war as a whole always has a final political purpose, which means that war is undertaken … in order to realise the political purpose upon which the State has decided.

According to Rühle, then, 'Every war and every [military] operation is based on a Wherefore? and Why?, a purpose and a cause, which will give a specific character and a definite direction to each of its actions' (Rühle 1818: 8). In the light of the Napoleonic Wars, and reflecting Vattel's concerns about the consequences of an unjust peace, Rühle concluded that

victory is not always the necessary condition of conquest or of peace, and peace is not always the necessary result of victory and conquest … Each war has … a main purpose, which, however, is not always … peace. Peace can be seen merely as the termination of the state of war. The obstacle which in war obstructs the attainment of the main purpose is the enemy, and it has to be cleared out of the way. In the best case this may lead to victory, but for this reason alone, victory is not the main purpose of the war, but only a subordinate purpose within war. If somebody concludes a peace without attaining the main purpose … he can be called the defeated party, however many battles he may have won, even if he has won all of them.

Writing with the Napoleonic conquests in mind, he added:

To the contrary, victory and conquest are often causes of the continuation, the renewal and the multiplication of war. Often, peace comes because none of the warring parties was able to defeat the other, and often war is not made in order to establish peace. (1818: 8f.)

Rühle pointed out the ambiguity of the term 'peace': is it merely the absence of war or the 'lasting friendly agreement of states among each

other'? He drew attention to instances in history when peace was concluded so as better to prepare for the next war, and to instances where war was continued and drawn out because at least one side sought to achieve some gains other than victory. There were wars which were fought to further the personal interests of individual 'officers and state officials, or the army; in short, of some subordinate interest, but not for the sake of the common well-being of the state' (Rühle 1818: 8f.). Victory – if defined as the attainment of such particular interests – cannot therefore be the main purpose, but must be subordinated to much greater aims, such as the aim of turning one's enemy into a friendly power (Rühle 1818: 11).

Moreover, in view of the political links and networks which all civilised [*kultivierte*] states entertain with one another, in all wars it is almost as important what impression the conduct and the results of the war have on the public opinion and the interest of the other temporarily neutral states, as what relationship the two warring parties have on account of the war [between them]. A temporary advantage, the early humiliation of the enemy, a conquest – however brilliant – are of little value for the state whose existence has to be calculated and secured for hundreds of years, if there is not the hope of keeping this advantage and the conquests for a long time, or if it creates the fear of a new, greater danger … These concerns about public opinion and the political community of states are so important in determining the legal basis of war, and its essential usefulness, and explain why even very powerful states try at least to package their feuds in an acceptable way and accept limitations on their behaviour even in victory. (Rühle 1818: 12)

While many wars are fought for gains (*Nutzen*) or honour, as Rühle conceded, war *ought* to be only the means of states to obtain justice; 'according to the principles of morality, war should never be waged for any other purpose'. Unfortunately, who is in the right is not always clear, and

war is thus the way in which states settle their legal quarrels, in one word: their [clashing] political aims, against each other with the use of force. It is the attainment of these political aims, which are the true final war aims, not victory, peace or conquest, if these are not perchance in line with the political intention. The army is merely the acting organ, the executive of the higher will. The army's and its leaders' entire mental activity

should aim to tailor the individual operations, to combine and execute them in a way that their success may deflect any danger from their state, or give it political advantages. (Rühle 1818: 13)

In view of Rühle's far-sighted observations quoted above, which Clausewitz, as his colleague, must have been familiar with, it is ironic that it is usually Clausewitz who gets all the credit for articulating this link between politics and warfare, especially as in *On War* he deliberately desisted from spelling out the implications. It was Clausewitz's posthumous rival, Jomini, who devoted a considerable part of his *Summary of the Art of War* of 1837 to what he calls the 'politics of war', which he uses in a way that comes very close to my definition of Strategy. Jomini compares favourably with Clausewitz in that Jomini reflected explicitly on the relationship between politics and war, especially on the political motives that would lead to war. 'A government goes to war', he wrote,

To reclaim certain rights or to defend them; to protect and maintain the great interests of the state, [such] as commerce, manufactures, or agriculture; to uphold neighbouring states whose existence is necessary either for the safety of the government or the balance of power; to fulfil the obligations of offensive and defensive alliances; to propagate political or religious theories, to crush them … or to defend them; to increase the influence and power of the state by acquisitions of territory; to defend the threatened independence of the state; to avenge insulted honor; or, from a mania of conquest. (Jomini 1837/1868: 14)

Jomini divided wars into several categories, explaining that these different types of war required different ways of waging them. The categories were:

- 'Offensive wars to reclaim rights', which he regarded as 'the most just war[s]', even though they would normally be waged on territory at that stage held by the enemy (hence 'offensive', involving the invasion of somebody else's territory).
- Wars that were politically defensive, but 'offensive in a military point of view'. This would include pre-emptive wars, wars in which one attacked an enemy anticipating an attack by him. Jomini was convinced, however, that a defensive war carried out on one's own territories held great advantages, as it would have the support of the

population, a well-known theatre of operations and help from all the local authorities (Jomini 1837/1868: 17).

- 'Wars of expediency', to snatch something from an adversary who happened to be going through a time of weakness or disarray. What he had in mind was Frederick the Great's seizure of Silesia (Jomini 1837/1868: 18).
- 'Wars with or without allies'.
- 'Wars of intervention' in the 'internal affairs of a neighbouring state'.
- 'Aggressive war for Conquest and other Reasons' à la Genghis Khan, which could be 'a crime against humanity' [*sic*], even though Jomini thought that 'it is better to attack than to be invaded' (Jomini 1837/1868: 23).
- 'Wars of opinion' or what we would call ideological wars (such as the war between Revolutionary France and its adversaries, and, looking beyond Jomini's own times, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, or many conflicts of the Cold War pitting communists against non-communists).
- 'National wars', by which he meant wars of resistance against foreign invasion involving the mobilisation of the entire people, with the wars of resistance and liberation against Napoleon's forces in mind. He had personal experience of the Spanish War of Liberation of 1808–12, which he had experienced as particularly dreadful, using the expression 'wars of extermination' to describe them, when Spanish insurgents wiped out – exterminated – whole French units in ambushes and night attacks (Jomini 1837/1868: 29–35).
- 'Civil Wars, and Wars of Religion'.

He stressed that each of these wars had to be waged differently – in 'wars of opinion', 'national wars' and 'civil wars/wars of religion' the rabble was involved in a way in which it was not in 'wars of expediency'. His categories overlap in places; a defensive war might not be distinguishable from what he called 'national wars' as he saw these as defensive. Nevertheless, Jomini's categorisation goes a long way to take political aims into account as chief variable determining the character of any Strategy.

   That one's conduct of war should be governed by politics was a disputed concept, however. Lossau in his handbook stated apodictically

that where politics 'ceases to have its effects, war starts'. Politics only decides the moment when peace yields to war. At least he conceded that the politics – he should have said ideology – of a state determined its defensive or offensive disposition (Lossau 1815: 7). With this he founded the Prussian tradition of those who opposed the interference of political decision-makers in the conduct of war, and in the words of Colonel (later Field Marshal) von Manteuffel to Prussian Prince Frederic Charles in 1857, warning him to keep his nose out of what was the military's business: 'when the sword has been drawn, war … steps into the foreground, becomes fully independent, and politics becomes its servant' (quoted by Hahlweg in Clausewitz 1832/1976: 67). Moltke would famously go even further in his resistance to Bismarck in the context of the Wars of German Unification (Carr 1991).

The political role of Strategy, even as applied within war, gradually won out against this attempt to cut politicians out of the conduct of war. This did not wipe out the tensions between political leaders and the executing military which this division of labour necessarily entailed. The technical approach which we sketched in the previous section still reverberates in the 1989 definitions of 'strategy' by the US military, but it simultaneously acknowledges the political aims of warfare (Handel 1996: 36). But by the late twentieth century, John Garnett's definition of 'strategy' as 'the way in which military power' is or might be 'used by governments in pursuit of their interests' would have found universal recognition (Garnett 1975: 3). The late Michael Handel (1942–2001), venerated teacher of generations of US officers, put it more simply and trenchantly: 'strategy is the development and use of all resources in peace and war in support of national policies to secure victory' (Handel 1996: 36). We see in both American definitions a much wider understanding of Strategy, which takes on board the nexus between policy and war as its instrument.

Dialectics of will

All the definitions of 'strategy' we have encountered so far fall short of taking into account that war has two sides: how can a definition of Strategy take into consideration the interaction of one's own side with the enemy? Clausewitz had been a trailblazer here – his comparison

of war with wrestling incited later strategic thinkers to build this dimension into the relationship between power and the use of force, so as to take account of the *dialectics* of the use of force. The supreme commander of the Prussian forces in the wars of Wars of German Unification, Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800–91), was one of them. Like others before him, he described 'strategy' as positioned on a level between the higher sphere of politics and the lower plane of military operations.

Politics uses war to reach its purposes, it influences decisively the beginning and the end [of war], and retains the right to increase its demands during its course or to settle for lesser aims. Given this uncertainty, strategy can only try to obtain the highest possible aims which could conceivably lie within its reach in view of the available means. It is thus that [strategy] best serves politics, by working for the purpose of politics, but quite independently from [politics] in its actions.

He went on to explain that the next task of Strategy, after that of serving politics, is to prepare the means of waging war. This task had to be fulfilled as a function of given resources, geography, logistics and so forth.

Matters are different concerning the subsequent task of strategy: the military use of available resources, that is, in operations. This is where our will soon encounters the independent will of our adversary. Although we can impose limits on it, we can only break it by the means of tactics, [i.e.] through battle. (Moltke 1960: 316)

More importantly, however, Moltke produced the famous dictum that a battle plan does not survive the actual encounter with the enemy:

It is a … delusion if to believe that one can determine a campaign plan far in advance and carry it out until the end. The first clash with the enemy's main forces creates a new situation, depending on its outcome. Much of what one had intended to do becomes impossible to carry out, some things become possible which could not have been expected earlier. The only thing the army command can do is correctly appreciate the changed circumstances, and then to give instructions to do what is appropriate for the foreseeable next phase. (q.i. Rohrschneider 1999: 157)

After the First World War, Johannes Kromayer developed this strategy further. In the middle of the great German 'Strategy debate' surrounding Delbrück (see chapters 4 and 7), he – rightly – argued that Clausewitz's idea that policy determines a firm set of war aims at the outset of war was deficient, as one's war aims, and policy itself, and with it Strategy, must surely change throughout any war as a function of the success or failure of one's operations (Kromayer 1925a: 401f.). In the middle of the Cold War, André Beaufre developed this idea further. In Clausewitzian terms he saw 'strategy' as 'the art of the dialectic of force, or more precisely, the dialectic of opposing wills, which use force for the settlement of their disputes' (Beaufre 1963/1965: 22). The American military historians Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley came to similar conclusions: 'strategy is a process, a constant adaptation to shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate' (Murray and Grimsley 1994: 1; Murray 1999a: 33). This in turn was echoed by their British colleague Hew Strachan, who argues that 'strategy in war is a process' that requires continuous adjustment in the light of enemy action and a continuous reconsideration of policy and new policy-making, involving political leaders, military leaders and other experts (Strachan 2006: 59–82).

The realisation that any given Strategy must not be static (if it is to be successful), but must react to and be re-formed according to the interaction with an enemy, is another huge step forward in our understanding. It has not, however, penetrated Strategy-making sufficiently in practice, nor has the concession that should logically flow from it, namely, that the achievement of a stable peace will require concessions and a commitment to it from both sides (Heuser 2007a). Instead, the century and a half from the French Revolutionary Wars to the Second World War was dominated by the quest for the enemy's unconditional surrender, and thus de facto a replacement of the enemy regime. This would prove fatal if the 'hearts and minds' of the populations of the adversarial country(ies) could not be won by persuasion to embrace the post-war settlement.

Another crucial realisation is that Strategy is a function of variables – such as one's own political aims and the enemy's political aims – but of partly interconnected variables, which makes the whole equation even more complicated.

War as a function of multiple interdependent variables

The first step on this intellectual exploration of Strategy was Jomini's categorisation of wars, which implicitly shows that one's own war aims vary, and are thus variables. But further variables could be identified.

It was a discovery of Clausewitz's, in my view his most original and insightful one, that war is a function of variables some of which in turn are *interconnected*, that is they are functions of each other. Particularly famous is Clausewitz's 'remarkable trinity' of variables:

- 'Primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force', and these he correlated to the passions of the people as a whole: the more the people were involved in a war, the more they identified with it, the more violent the war would be.
- 'The play of chance and probability', together with 'the interplay of courage and talent' that depended on the peculiarities of the military commander and the army, the commander's *coup d'oeil*, the morale of the troops and so on.
- Policy, using war as its instrument, subjecting war 'to reason alone'. This he identified with the intentions of the government (in other words, its political war aims).

Clausewitz surmised that any war is a function of all three sets of variables and, crucially, recognised that they affect each other: for example, an upwards trend of violence, hatred and enmity might force governments to extend formerly modest war aims. Or a population's lack of emotional engagement in a war might undermine the morale of the armed forces committed. The Clausewitzian notion of war as a function of *inter*dependent variables was taken up by Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929) and others who studied him assiduously in the late nineteenth century in order to find out why the Prussians had defeated France so thoroughly in 1870/1 (Derrécagaix 1885; Foch 1900).

Clausewitz had identified further variables, strewn here and there in his text: in a particularly poignant chapter in Book VIII, he noted that every age has its own way of warfare, thus identifying what today we would call 'culture' as one crucial variable. Material variables, especially the terrain of the battlefield, the ability or inability to communicate fast and gather intelligence during battle (the 'fog of war'), and a number of other technical and circumstantial factors were also emphasised by him.

Clausewitz was not the first to have identified the cultural variable. Classical writers had commented on the very different 'ways of war' of individual culturally very different groups (Scythians, Persians, Huns, Saracens, Turks, etc). In modern times, the central theme in Guibert's *Essai général de tactique* was the nexus that he saw between a society's values (and thus, culture) and internal political system and its way of war (Guibert 1772/1781). Henry Humphrey Evans Lloyd (1718–83), a Welsh mercenary who in his life fought for Louis XV of France, for Empress Maria Theresia of Austria and Empress Elizabeth of Russia, identified political culture as a variable in the waging of war: drawing on the usual examples from classical antiquity but also from his own experiences, he differentiated between the ways despotic, monarchical and republican governments used force in interstate affairs. To him, a democracy (republic) was clearly predestined to have a defensive overall Strategy, and was ill equipped to wage long wars or wars far from home; Lloyd also assumed that democracies would have neither a standing army nor mercenaries, but that its population would rise up as militia to defend its own state (Lloyd 1781/2005: 458–78).

Guibert and Clausewitz noted, and the Clausewitz pupil (and critic) Martin van Creveld brought to our attention again in the late twentieth century, that different cultures perceive war differently. As we have seen, Rühle noted that not all pursue peace. There are cultures (and sub-cultures, thinking of sections of the military even of fairly peaceful civilisations) where the warrior is admired, and there are age-groups (particularly adolescents and young men) in which the excitement of the adventure of 'war' outweighs other cultural counterbalances. As van Creveld put it, there are people who like to make war, and political factors may simply be an excuse for doing so (Creveld 1991, ch. 6). One is well advised to take these factors into account before espousing any theory which sees any violent conflict as guided by realistic political aims from its beginning to its end. Clausewitz underlined the many forms a war can take by likening it to a chameleon: he described war as infinitely variable, depending on a multitude of contextual factors, the many variables alluded to above. In some conflicts between large groups of people (such as tribes, warring factions) or states (with or without the use of force), political aims can be fairly well established. They may show a conscious use of force or the threat of its use in support of these political aims, to change the will of the adversary and to settle the dispute to one's own advantage.

In other wars such aims are less easily discernible, if at all, which can be for a host of reasons: the lack of a strong, co-ordinated leadership and the resulting multitude of unconcerted, divergent interests, but also the previously invoked cultural factors.

This particular wheel has been reinvented by anthropologists towards the end of the twentieth century, albeit in a more systematic way, and with an emphasis on different variables. Employing case studies from different cultures, they have identified three sets of variables that dominate war, apart from situational constraints that are special for each case:

1. material variables, such as the natural environment (geographic features, climate …), technology, the economy;
2. social institutions (anything from clan loyalty or kingship to statehood), including patterns of behaviour that are largely taken for granted and seen as norm;[2]
3. culture (mainly collectively shared belief clusters, images, symbols and myths), defined sometimes to include norms and patterns of behaviour (Snyder 2002: 14f.).

While some, like the anthropologist Raymond Kelly, have looked at these variables as independent from one another, the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, pioneer in this area, but also the philosopher Emile Durkheim, the historian Ernest Gellner and the anthropologist Brian Ferguson postulated a hierarchy of factors ('a nested hierarchy') in which material factors were the most important, influencing institutions, which in turn influenced or even determined culture. Others, like the anthropologist Simon Harrison, reversed the order of nesting, insisting that it is culture that determines patterns of social behaviour and institutions, and even determines how people deal with their environment. In the light of the historical evidence of the evolution of warfare, especially in the Western world, one cannot but agree with the anthropologist Jack Snyder, who postulates reciprocal influences and causality among all three sets of variables. Snyder underlined the effects of their interaction and 'complex feedback relationships' in distinct circumstances (Snyder 2002: 12, 32f.). To sum up, then, anthropologists like some of the early strategists

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[2] According to certain definitions I prefer, social institutions, and especially norms and patterns of behaviour, are subsumed under 'culture'.

before them analyse war as a function of material factors, social institutions and culture.

'Social institutions' and 'culture' overlap, according to many definitions. For this reason and for the purposes of this book, it is more useful to redefine these second and third levels of variables. Subsuming both categories into a single category of 'culture', we shall examine the conduct of war as a function of passive and active aspects of culture. Passive aspects are mindsets or beliefs about the world: for example with hostile groups confronting us, with lessons of past wars to guide us, with rules and conventions of behaviour which would be dangerous or immoral (or both) to ignore or challenge. As John Hattendorf put it, 'strategists think in the context of the prevailing cultural and national attitudes that surround them' (Hattendorf 2000: 1, 21, 127).

Here we should include existing social structures and institutions, and also beliefs and myths about oneself, one's own group, and one's enemies, beliefs about the working of the world, beliefs about moral obligations, existing customs or traditions that have to be upheld. Active aspects of culture are those where freedom of choice is more pronounced: these include the prioritisation of certain values and principles over others, the definition of political aims, the changes that may be brought about through the agency of war (or the threat of the use of armed force), the institutions, norms of behaviour yet to be created and prescribed as desirable. Active aspects of culture tend to be subordinate to its passive aspects: few people can escape, even in their imagination, the world in which they live and which many assume to be immutable. Yet the 'complex feedback relationship' which Jack Snyder postulates exists here too, as all innovation, once realised, in turn affects culture as it is passively perceived.

To return to Jomini, he named further variables, which included the degree of the passions aroused by either side in a war (which correctly implies that what for one side is a 'war of opinion' – fought out over ideological differences worth dying for – might merely be a war for a limited political aim for the other side, mobilising much less public support). Additional variables for Jomini were the military systems of both sides, that is how and whom they recruited as soldiers, with what reserves, financial resources and weapons, and the degree of their loyalty to their military and political commanders.

The 'character' of the head of state or government, the talents of the military leaders, the relationship of political decision-makers and military leadership and of course enduring physical factors such as geography and a state's wealth in human beings, in natural resources, industry and social structure, all were identified by Jomini as variables that would influence the conduct and outcome of a war (Jomini 1837/1868: 38–65). In the following chapters, this very useful list of variables will be applied to war in different ages.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Mahan produced another list of variables which he thought influenced Strategy. He listed geography, with its sub-aspects of sea lanes, harbours and territory (*Hinterland*), the size of the population, the character of the people and the character of the government, the political system and within it the ideology and political orientation of the political party/parties in government (Mahan 1890: 25, 57). The 'character of the people' was a *topos* going back to antiquity, of course, had often been invoked throughout history, but acquired a new appeal in the era of Social Darwinism. Writing a little later than Mahan, Sir Herbert Richmond (1871–1946), a Royal Navy admiral turned Cambridge don, wrote a study of Britain's war of 1739–48 by identifying the following factors that came into play: geography, and the requirements that different parts of the British Empire had, the ships available to the belligerents, the manpower, greater political and diplomatic aims, parliamentary politics and pressures and the wrangling among the main decision-makers and players on either side of the war within the opposing governments (Schurman 1965: 140f.).

Almost a century later, another naval specialist, the Briton Geoffrey Till, established a new list of (arguably interconnected) variables influencing Strategy, very much in the tradition of Mahan:

a. a maritime community;
b. resources (and the economic basis for a big navy);
c. styles of government;
d. geography and geopolitics;
e. shipping;
f. naval bases;
g. the fighting instrument (Till 1982: 75–90).

The Belgian teacher of Strategy Henri Bernard argued that military history had as its proper subject of study the evolution of the art of

war over the centuries, as a function of the multiple variables he discussed, applying a Clausewitzian template, in his three volumes called *Total War and Revolutionary War* (essentially a course on military history up to 1945). His variables included demographic, social, political, economic, ideological, technological and institutional factors such as command structures within the armed forces (Bernard 1965: 5).

Again we see that this list is interconnected – no strong economy without the demographic basis to keep it going, no free society without a related economic structure, no totalitarian ideology without attempts to centralise control over all economic activities within the state. Large, standing armies evolved with the creation of centralised states with the infrastructure required to raise the taxes to maintain such an army. Nationalism arose first out of the rhetoric of the 'nation' which began to be used during the French Revolution, underpinned by the use of the *levée en masse*, which linked citizenship with the obligation to defend the nation. Subsequently, the growth of national printing presses and literacy helped further the growth of nationalism.

A refreshingly original categorisation was produced by T.E. Lawrence (1888–1935) on the basis of his reading of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century texts. Lawrence defined three 'elements, one algebraical, one biological, and one psychological'. The first he liked to call *hecastics*, and it was

pure science, subject to the laws of mathematics, without humanity. It dealt with known invariables, fixed conditions, space and time, inorganic things like hills and climates and railways, with mankind in type-masses too great for individual variety … It was essentially formulable … The second factor was biological, the breaking-point, life and death, or better, wear and tear. Bionomics seemed a good name for it. The war-philosophers had properly made it an art, and had elevated one item in it, 'effusion of blood', to the height of a principle. It became humanity in battle, an art touching every side of our corporal being, and very war. There was a line of variability (man) running through all its estimates. Its components were sensitive and illogical.

The third factor Lawrence described as psychological, 'of which propaganda is a stained and ignoble part', but linked it to what Xenophon called 'diathetic', from a Greek word for 'order'.

Some of it concerns the crowd, and adjustment of spirit to the point where it becomes fit to exploit in action, the prearrangement of a changing opinion to a certain end … It considers the capacity of mood of our men, their complexities and mutability, and the cultivation of what in them profits the intention. We had to arrange their minds in order for battle … and through [our own men] … the minds of the enemy … and thirdly, the mind of the nation supporting us behind the firing line, and the mind of the hostile nation [a]waiting the verdict, and the neutrals looking on. (Lawrence 1920, 266f.)

We see echoes here of Clausewitz's trinity and a very trenchant and helpful perception of what in the evolution of warfare is variable, what are immutable constants.

   New technical developments spawn ideologically driven fantasies and speculations about how to use armies, and about political consequences. Historical experiences of wars, especially traumatic ones, determine the subsequent preoccupations of survivors. Decisions made about war are a function of the structures of the societies that wage the wars, and decision-makers' ideas and views are conditioned by the mindset particular to their culture. War aims are dictated by the concepts of the world, of society, of friend and foe, and of notions of what one can achieve through military manpower and technology. And Strategy is a function of all these variables and many more. This analytical approach will be used to formulate a series of guiding questions to examine the evolution of Strategy in the following chapters.

Strategy in peace and war

But does force always have to be used in order to settle disputes? Can one not change the enemy's will by the threat of the use of force alone? Is Strategy not something that is part of peace as well as war? These questions were particularly acute when in the twentieth century authors realised that the absence of war did not amount to the absence of interstate strife, with the threat of another world war overshadowing peace.

   As we have seen, some writers of the nineteenth century included the *preparation* for war in peacetime among the tasks of Strategy. In the age of total war, the realisation dawned on several writers on the subject that this was not the only role of Strategy outside periods of declared war. The political extremes of communism and fascism

met not least in their common perception of peace as the continuation of war by other means. Western liberal thinkers, by contrast, developed a different perception. They began to see the use of force as only one instrument of state policy, alongside many others, like diplomacy, trade policies and so on. In turn, the latent threat of the use of force could be an instrument of state policy in times of peace. Western liberal thinkers like Norman Angell (1872–1967) did not doubt that conflicts of interest occurred in times of peace, but they tended to think more of these conflicts as resolvable without actual fighting. Even among them, few would doubt that politics, including of course the relations between states, would always include conflict and strife and a struggle of wills. But if military force could be a latent instrument of policy, Strategy needed to be redefined. In the interwar period, Admiral Castex noted:

[S]trategy is … the general conduct of operations … Strategy prepares combat, makes the effort to carry it out in the best conditions, and to produce the best results … [Strategy] contains [*détient*] the general idea to which the campaign is dedicated … It guides tactics, leaving it room for action when its hour has arrived. Strategy is on each side of combat, tactics during combat. (Castex 1937: 9)

But Castex also adopted the contemporary idea that Strategy was operational in times of war and also in times of peace, and the view that naval conferences and diplomacy were just as much tools of Strategy as the use of force in war (Castex 1937: 17f.).

In 1943, while the Second World War was being waged and the public did not know the secrets of the Manhattan Project, the American scholar Edward Mead Earle edited his famous volume *The Makers of Modern Strategy*. Here he wrote, much as Moltke the Elder had done: 'Strategy deals with war, preparation for war, and the waging of war. Narrowly defined, it is the art of military command, of projecting and directing a campaign.'

He noted that the word was used more narrowly for the 'art of military command' which the general had mastered in order to 'win victory' in battle until the end of the eighteenth century.

But as war and society have become more complicated – and war … is an inherent part of society – strategy has of necessity required increasing consideration of nonmilitary factors, economic, psychological, moral,

political, and technological. Strategy, therefore, is not merely a concept of wartime, but is an inherent element of statecraft at all times ... In the present-day world, then, strategy is the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation – or a coalition of nations – including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured against enemies, actual, potential, or merely presumed. The highest type of strategy – sometimes called grand strategy – is that which so integrates the policies and armaments of the nation that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory.

And it is in this broader sense that Earle used the term in his pathbreaking volume (Earle 1943: viii).

After the Second World War, well into the Cold War, the study not only of international relations (really, interstate relations) but also of Strategy took off, with many new definitions being added, some coming from new disciplines. Thomas Schelling (1921–) came to strategic studies from economics and, specifically, games theory, introducing his own term, the 'strategy of conflict', in which various contestants (who might be state regimes) might try to reach outcomes to their conflicts that were mutually advantageous. In the nuclear age, neither side could find much comfort in the notion that Strategy was all about imposing one's will upon an enemy who could make the price for such a success exorbitant. With 'strategy of conflict', Schelling emphasised the 'interdependence of the adversaries' decisions', in conflicts which were equalled to 'variable-sum games', in which 'the sum of the gains of the participants involved is not fixed'. While victory seen as the imposition of one protagonist's will upon the other is a fixed-sum game in which one's gain is the other's loss, Schelling introduced the idea that – especially in the nuclear age – this is only one of many possible outcomes. Crucially, the avoidance of nuclear war might be a mutually advantageous outcome that would persuade warring parties to settle for less than an all-out imposition of their will upon the enemy (Schelling 1960: 3–5).

Robert Osgood, another leading American expert on security issues, drew similar consequences for the meaning of Strategy:

[M]ilitary strategy must now be understood as nothing less than the overall plan for utilizing the capacity for armed coercion – in conjunction with the economic, diplomatic, and psychological instruments of power – to

support foreign policy most effectively by overt, covert, and tacit means. (Osgood 1962: 5)

The definition proposed by John Hattendorf implies a similar approach:

Strategy reaches for an overarching idea, reflecting an understanding of an entire war. While strategy involves this conceptual dimension, it is, at the same time, the comprehensive and actual direction of national power, including armed force, to achieve some measure of control over an opponent, and, by that control, to achieve specific practical and political ends. (Hattendorf 2000: 122)

Sir Lawrence Freedman, with his political science background, put it perhaps most elegantly: 'Strategy is about the relationship between (political) ends and (military, economic, political etc.) means. It is the art of creating power' (Freedman 2008: 32).

Oxford historian Hew Strachan rightly concluded that the term 'strategy' has thus undergone a considerable shift in meaning and usage since Clausewitz was writing. Until the First World War, 'strategy' was used by most writers to mean something below politics in a hierarchy of determinants. Since then, terms like 'grand strategy' or 'major strategy' (as opposed to 'pure strategy' or 'minor strategy') have been coined, embracing the pursuit of political ends (primarily in international relations) not only with military tools, but also with diplomatic, economic or even cultural instruments. The Cold War with its blurred distinction between war and peace finally pushed 'strategy' over the fence up to the level of politics, leading to a 'conflation of strategy and politics' (Strachan 2003). One attempt to bring clarity to this area is the introduction particularly in Britain of the term 'grand strategy', referring to the way political aims are translated into the use of different available tools of state politics (Cabinet Office, Historical Section 1956–76). But the expansion of the word 'strategy' in contemporary usage continues.

All in all, the word 'Strategy' is hard to press into one universally accepted definition valid through the ages. Nevertheless, important insights that have been gained by successive strategists building on previous generations include the following. Strategy is a comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual

use of force, in a dialectic of wills – there have to be at least two sides to a conflict. These sides interact, and thus a Strategy will rarely be successful if it shows no adaptability. Before the French Revolution, it was not spelled out but tacitly assumed that the antagonists – mainly princes – had common aims and that Strategy was not a 'zero-sum game', as no side wanted the total destruction of the social order of the other; in most contexts, both sides assumed each other's survival. From the time of the French Revolution until 1945, by contrast, the assumption that Strategy was a 'zero-sum game' prevailed (although these words were introduced by Schelling only in the subsequent period). To win, one side had to impose its will upon the enemy; or at least this is what the vast majority of strategists assumed. The nuclear age made strategists aware again that conflicting sides might have common interests – especially, the avoidance of nuclear apocalypse. Strategy once again was opened up to the highly political dimensions of bargaining and the quest for 'win-win' solutions that might satisfy – at least to some extent – both sides and avoid worst outcomes (especially major or nuclear war).

In today's popular usage, the term 'strategy' is applied to many realms of life outside politics proper. Its merger with the jargon of economics and management is particularly prominent (Strachan 2003). Today, the advertisement of a vacant 'chair in strategy' is as likely to refer to a branch of business management as to anything military. Meanwhile, governments try to develop 'strategies' for dealing with unemployment, housing shortages, education and so on, and every business has a business plan or 'strategy'. In business-speak, 'strategy' is defined as 'the direction and scope of an organisation over the long term, which achieves advantages in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations' (Johnson *et al.* 2005: 9). The conflation of 'strategy' and 'politics' or even 'long-term economic aims and planning' and the vaguely synonymous use of the term 'strategy' with that of 'policy' (and thus the inflation of the term 'strategy') can be deplored or criticised as unhelpful, or taken as a matter of fact and worked around (Strachan 2003). In this book, however, I shall try not to use the terms as synonyms, but to keep them apart as far as possible. I shall be using the terminology of my sources where at all reasonable, unless this leads to excessive confusion, and given the nature and concerns of these sources, problems will not arise too often.

What is this book examining?

The evolution of the literature on Strategy is of interest for three reasons. First, because writings on Strategy influence the actual conduct of wars, sometimes directly, if the writer was at once a practitioner, or the Strategic concepts were applied or where the literature, staff college textbooks or field manuals prescribing standard operational procedures. More often, literature on Strategy would influence the practice of warfare indirectly, perhaps with a long delay in time, sometimes through ideas that were misrepresented, distorted and misapplied. Either way, the concepts expressed in the literature on Strategy help us better to understand the operational Strategies applied in actual wars.

Secondly, when implicit assumptions in the literature on Strategy are rendered explicit through textual and contextual analysis, we find revealing indicators of social institutions and norms, of the writers' perceptions and understanding of politics and relations between political entities (often in the light of 'lessons learned' from particular historical events), of their values, ideologies and passive and active culture more generally.

Thirdly, once this literature is analysed in its historical context, we can identify more timeless generalisations their authors have made with a claim to truth beyond the immediate material, cultural and other circumstantial factors in which it was created, which take us back to the quest for a better understanding of the phenomenon of war itself. Strategy, from this point of view, is the process by which human, material and cultural factors are brought to bear upon war.

We have noted that before the twentieth century the term 'strategy' was not used in the sense generally accepted today. But even without the actual terms, people thought – not always systematically – about some of the questions that arise from this definition, which will be used to interrogate the texts about warfare that we will be passing in review. They are:

- In their 'passive culture' or mindsets, do they see war as an inevitable part of the world, a legitimate activity, or something to be contained, avoided, or even ultimately banned? Is war seen as the 'normal' solution to such conflicts? If alternatives to waging war are seen, are they dismissed, and if so, why?

- What is the nature of any particular war, what aims are being fought for?
- For whom or which audience is the author writing, who is the presumed 'we' in the work, and what are 'we' fighting for? Who are the combatants? Are they part of the presumed 'we' as citizen-soldiers, or are they hirelings, mercenaries, economically precious but politically unimportant, to be used as the general saw fit?
- Who is the adversary, and how is the adversary seen – is it a hated enemy or an equal, is it an individual prince or a regime, a group, a nation or a race? Is he/she, are they seen as legitimate contestants, or rebels, heretics, indeed sub-humans?
- What are the parts played by particular parts of warfare – preparation, logistics, siege and, above all, battle?
- How is the adversarial population to be treated – punished for disobedience/heresy, annihilated in a Social Darwinian or racist contest for resources and *Lebensraum*, or spared if they are non-combatants?
- How is the other side to be defeated? Through victory on the battlefield, through occupation of the capital, the entire country, through starvation by blockade, destruction of infrastructure and resources, through social reform/revolution or regime change?
- What role do geography and technology play?
- How are the means of warfare – such as the armed forces, militias or professional armies, navies or air forces, conventional or nuclear weapons – and how are the basic postures – defensive, offensive – determined by the ideologies of those who wish to employ them?
- How did ideology, culture and political aims translate into the use of force, planned on paper or implemented in the field?

And once these points are established for particular writers in their historical context, we can ask,

- Was there a 'Western way of *thinking* about war', one recognisable overall set of answers to these questions, or were there always several?
- Did different approaches to Strategy exist side by side, or was there a succession of different ways of thinking? If the latter, were there distinct watersheds or turning points?
- Did they evolve from each other in a unidirectional fashion? That is, did Western thinking – against the background of practice – evolve

steadily from a limited towards an ever more total form of war, or did it meander backwards and forwards between limited and absolute or total war? Were there just these two poles?

- How distinct and original was thinking about naval and maritime Strategy, as opposed to the older strategies for land warfare? How little or much of a departure was thinking on air power and then on nuclear weapons?
- And on a more detailed level, where did certain ideas originate, who picked them up in later context, how did they apply them and perhaps pass them on in turn?

Far from all the authors considered here wrote about all these dimensions, and if they did, rarely in a coherent fashion. Many authors from Machiavelli to Clausewitz did not see a book on war as the proper place to reflect on the relationship between states, the world order, political aims and norms of conduct – for such reflections, one has to turn to Machiavelli's *Prince* or his *Discourses*, not his *Art of War*. Authors of manuals did not see politics as falling within their remit. In turn, the great lawyers like Hugo Grotius with his *Law of War and Peace* rarely reflected on how to pursue political aims on the battlefield.

Before the mid nineteenth century, the two sides only came together in the minds of a handful of exceptional individuals, such as Machiavelli, Sutcliffe, Santa Cruz de Marcenado and Guibert, several of whom had experience both in military command and in policy-making. Even after 1850, few wrote about the use of force in a political context, however evident it was to them that the use of force had a political aim. The numbers of those who consciously brought in the political dimension only truly expanded from the eve of the First World War onwards. In turn, 'Strategic Studies', with its heavy emphasis on this dimension, only became recognised in the Anglosphere from the mid twentieth century, and outside the Anglosphere few people know even today what to make of that word. Nevertheless, flashes of insight into their views of the world order, of potential or actual adversaries, of moral or customary constraints on war, on the political purposes of war in their age can be gleaned from the writings even of some of the field manualists, and there are parts on the conduct of war which are replete with political considerations even in manuals for 'the perfect captain'.

The literature considered here

Most writing on war falls into one of the following categories: historiography, in which causalities of events might be discussed and which thus produce comments on strategies and tactics chosen (and their appropriateness); manuals with practical instructions for generals or higher officers in the field; political philosophers discussing war or the structure and ethos of armed forces in the context of state and politics; theologians, lawyers and moral philosophers writing about the ethics of war; and finally, analyses of war, a genre that was largely invented by Clausewitz (Heuser 2007b).

Ancient historians writing about wars whose works were used time and again by subsequent generations, apart from Thucydides (*c.* 460–395 BCE), the one great favourite even today, included especially Xenophon (430–355 BCE) and Polybius (*c.* 200–*c.* 120 BCE). Some classical authors actually wrote manuals on how to conduct war, including Aeneas the Tactician (4th c. BCE), Flavius Arrianus (after 85–after 160 CE), and his contemporary Aelianus Tacticus. All these were printed for the first time in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But none of them had the widespread readership of Vegetius. The Middle Ages produced little beyond translations or at best updates of Vegetius.

After the invention of the printing press, from 1470 to 1642, Geoffrey Parker has counted 162 English-language and 460 foreign-language books published on warfare (Parker 1976: 197 n. 7). These numbers increased steadily in the following centuries. In the seventeenth century, at least 100 books were published dealing with the 'art of war' and similar subjects. From 1700 to 1756, a further fifty-six such books appeared, with a significant increase from 1748. From the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756 until the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, over 100 books on this subject area were published, and publication numbers remained high during and just after the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (Gat 1989: 25). There was a slump in the publication of monographs in the mid nineteenth century, although by now a number of professional journals were established in several Western countries, adding to the literature through articles.

Until the end of the nineteenth century, writing on war was almost exclusively the domain of soldiers or ex-soldiers on the one hand and

international lawyers on the other. There were a few exceptions to this rule, including Friedrich Engels, Herbert Spencer and Jan Bloch, but even these belong to the second half of the nineteenth century. It was only after the First World War that more civilian thinkers took an interest in war. Accordingly, with rare exceptions, most writers about war until the early twentieth century tended to focus very much on tactics and what Peter Paret has called military 'specifics' (Paret 1983: 164–7). Strategic studies, analytical writing about war as an instrument of policy, increased exponentially after the Second World War, and the discipline of International Relations with its focus from its inception on conflict has established itself in many universities worldwide. Space makes it impossible to provide a fully comprehensive analysis of what has been written about Strategy, even in the Western world, since 1945. Sub-themes such as nuclear Strategy, or counterinsurgency alone, have produced libraries that can compete with those on Shakespeare. The need for a selective study of this literature is therefore blatant. The selection principles for this book will include the celebrity of the argument made (that is, its subsequent prominence in the debate and influence on others), its focus on something largely resembling or overlapping with our definition of Strategy and/or the degree to which it seems to me typical of evolving expert opinion on the subject.

This book is *not* about actual, applied government strategies, but mainly about the thinking of strategists who published their works. While I shall occasionally quote from some government documents, on the whole they will remain in the background, as will all writing on tactics (except where the word is used in the modern sense of Strategy, for example in Guibert's *General Essay on Tactics*). Manuals on the art (or science, as the authors prefer) of war will be used where they contain ruminations about the political purposes of war or other connections between politics and military force. Works written to educate princes or to help generals will be used, provided they tackle such a political dimension. The bulk of the literature considered in the present volume will be monographs (sometimes multi-volume works) on warfare. Some aimed to capture the nature of war and its relations to political ends, society and culture, even though none of them saw their conclusions on this level as entirely divorced from practical applicability; theirs was rarely a quest for understanding for the mere sake of understanding, but for more informed policy-making

and conduct of war. Overall, my analysis will be 'front-loaded', in the sense that the earliest expressions of any idea dealt with here will be given more attention than those which, coming later, merely adopted and reiterated the concept.

A final note on the interaction of ideas is required. Before the French Revolution, knowledge travelled slowly, but finally had a wide effect. When Jacques François de Chastenet de Puységur, Marshal of France, was writing down his principles and rules on the art of war (between 1693 and 1743), he claimed to have no knowledge of any modern work on war except for the memoirs of Montecuccoli (1609–80) and Turenne (1611–75). He claimed that there had been no structured works on the principles on the art of war since Vegetius (Puységur 1748: 3). His book indicates that he had, after all, read Vauban on siege warfare and constructions. But otherwise, he had clearly missed out on the entire Italian, Spanish and English literature that had been produced until that date on the art of war, and he had even missed out on the books of his countrymen Henri, duc de Rohan (1636) and François de la Vallière (1666). The circulation of literature was already increasing in the second half of the eighteenth century, but by the end of the nineteenth century, on the eve of the First World War, European writers read each other's work quickly and avidly. While at the dawn of the twenty-first century electronic journals make it possible for articles to reach a worldwide readership on the very day of publication, there is in some areas of the debate about Strategy a greater parochialism now than from the Renaissance to the eve of the First World War, when the 'strategic community' was both smaller and more international.

The structure of the book

The British military historian Jeremy Black has most persuasively argued against the artificial imposition of cut-off dates, stressing the overlap of different eras and mindsets (Black 2005). I have found this amply confirmed in the literature on Strategy. There are long-term continuities in certain areas – especially the quest for the identification of eternal principles guiding warfare – from Vegetius to the present, and this is reflected in the chapters of Part II. Part III maps tendencies of thinking which originated at the latest in the Age of Reason, the eighteenth century, and found their apogee in the Second World

War. In shorthand, these come under the captions of the Napoleonic paradigm of war and the drive towards total war. Part IV discusses maritime strategy, which took off in the mid nineteenth century, strongly under the influence of prevailing fashions in thinking about land warfare. In turn, some maritime strategists developed concepts which inspired early air power theorists, discussed in Part V, together with the child of air power, nuclear strategy. While the twin atomic explosions of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shocked many strategists into reconsidering and indeed rejecting the Napoleonic paradigm, the turning point for many of them was arguably earlier, with the First World War, and it is this return to 'limited war' thinking that is analysed in Part VII. Small wars have always existed, and some of their key considerations have come to the forefront even in the context of major war, as we shall see in Parts VI and VII. In the Epilogue, we shall consider why there is such a gap between strategic theory and practical application.

Long-term constants

2 | *Warfare and mindsets from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*

And the prince must ponder that victory comes from God and that his kingdom and his rule depend upon Him.

(Robert de Balsac 1502: g.ii)

Part II of the present book will deal, first, in chapters 2 and 3, with the changes in attitudes to war, the theory and practice of strategy from Antiquity to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Then, in chapter 4, it will deal with enduring themes and debates, some of which can be traced back one and a half millennia, some continuing to the present.

Technology and warfare

For the two hundred or so millennia of human existence for which we have archaeological evidence, and during the roughly six millennia for which we have any form of written records, until the nineteenth century, the human mastery of technology showed *no* steady progress. Related to this, Western warfare showed *no* steady development from primitive to ever more sophisticated, warfare did *not* become steadily more deadly or humane or limited or unlimited. The same is true for military technology of all sorts. Martin van Creveld has rightly noted that there were fluctuations in warfare, but no real quantum leaps ahead, between 750 BCE and 1500 CE, with many factors remaining 'unaltered well into the age of gunpowder', or even until well into the nineteenth century (Creveld 1989: 34f.). Indeed, today we must add that many forms of old technology have survived right into the nuclear age. The sword, used for nothing but warfare (as opposed to hunting or agricultural pursuits) since the Bronze Age, seemed to have ceased to have anything beyond symbolic functions in the nineteenth century. Yet machetes – originally cutting tools for use on vegetation – were used as swords in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. The last

cavalry charge in history was thought to have occurred in the Second World War, but at least one took place in Afghanistan in the early twenty-first century.

Other technologies came and went. The crossbow had existed in ancient times, but was 'forgotten' in the Latin West along with many other inventions and technologies of classical Antiquity such as Greek Fire. The Greek *phalanx* or close formation of soldiers carrying spears and shields dropped out of use, but was 'reinvented' in several places in the high Middle Ages and in early modern times. At the end of the West Roman Empire, even at the time of Vegetius in the late fourth century CE, there was a decline in siegecraft. The sophisticated Roman siege engines were all but forgotten in the early Middle Ages; it was only in the high and late Middle Ages that people turned to Vegetius for inspiration for the invention of systems like the trebuchet with similar functions to engines the Romans had.

Like warfare, the development of military technology was thus not one-directional: both technological and organisational inventions could be forgotten or given up, and warfare in the 'Dark Ages' was certainly conducted in ways less sophisticated, but arguably at times no less effective, than those of the Roman Empire at its height. Over these two millennia, we observe a fluctuating pattern with different strands – disciplined infantry, agile horsemen, artillery, heavy horsemen, fortifications, siege engine and so forth – interweaving and dominating at different times, with few if any major technological innovations over the millennia for which we have archaeological evidence, until early modern times. Fashions in warfare, one might say, fluctuated, and certain tactics were used, forgotten and reintroduced from the outside or reinvented. The conduct of war has rarely if ever been static over much more than a century, as hostile groups encountering each other always sought to maximise the advantage they could draw from any particularly successful ways of fighting they had developed or were developing. Differences of tactics, or weapons technology, then usually became subjects of great interest to the inferior party, and technology transfer was always seen as desirable: the assertion that it is in no way dishonourable to learn from the enemy goes back at least to Ovid ('*fas est et ab hoste doceri*', Meta. 4.428).

The swift and highly mobile horsemen of the peoples of the eastern steppes with their bows and arrows inflicted many defeats on the Roman infantry as the disciplined and well-armoured Roman armies

from the late second century CE found themselves at a disadvantage faced with the wily Barbarian horsemen. They managed to turn some of the horsemen into auxiliary forces of the Roman Empire (Luttwak 1976b). Bows and arrows, used by relatively lightly clad Arab horsemen against the Byzantines, in the hands of Saracens and Turks were still a menace for the crusaders in their heavy armour, and in the hands of Pandurs, Vlachs, Cossacks or Tatars, for the regular armies of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The West in the meantime had developed the stirrup and the heavily armoured knight, a combination which seemed the height of military technology within the West from *c*. 800 to 1500, the 'cavalry interregnum' (Neill 1998: 496). From around 1200 the social dominance of the knight was no longer paralleled by physical inviolability, when the reinvention of the crossbow and the importing by the English of the Welsh longbow exposed him to death inflicted at a distance by mere commoners. Around 1300, the Scots, and the peoples of the Rhine, from Flanders to Switzerland, rediscovered what one could do with a tightly grouped infantry formation armed with shields and weapons that kept the attacking knights' weapons out of reach:pikes. The Swiss, the Flemings and the Scots developed the tightly packed formations of pikemen (the Swiss and German *Haufen*, the Scottish *schiltron*), a reinvention or rediscovery, one might say, of the Greek *phalanx*. Battles followed where such pikemen defeated knights.

Army sizes fluctuated considerably from antiquity until the late eighteenth century, and rarely reached six figures in battle on either side before the wars of the French Revolution (Hall 1997: 202–35). Technology hardly changed from the Thirty Years War to the mid nineteenth century. Gunpowder, which first appeared in Europe in the 1320s, was used in various forms – first for siege warfare, later fired by cannon in battle and even later still by hand-held guns. It necessitated changes in the conduct of warfare, which were introduced surprisingly slowly – new forms of fortifications to withstand cannon fire in sieges, new forms of drill for the artillerists who fired hand-held weapons, lest they get in each other's way. But the greatest leap forward in the way of waging war, the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, did not use technology much different from that of the Thirty Years War a good century and a half earlier, or of the Seven Years War half a century earlier. Technology only began to matter in a big way once the Industrial Revolution and the

exponential take-off in the growth of the population of Europe from the eighteenth century, and from the mid nineteenth century, new scale-amplifying technology affected warfare.

Strikingly, authors writing on war were unaware of any major technological change since antiquity, or indeed any 'Military Revolution' brought on by gunpowder until well into the modern period. Even then, for about two centuries, there was a debate between the supporters of the 'ancients' (authorities from Antiquity) and the 'moderns' as to whether new generals, strategists and writers could be as good as the ancients, and whether new technology had transformed war to the extent that one could no longer learn much from the ancients. This debate was only settled largely in favour of the 'moderns' on the eve of the French Revolution (Heuser forthcoming).

Causes, aims and ethics of war from the Roman Empire to the late Middle Ages

The West embattled

Causes of wars also fluctuated wildly before the French Revolution. But literature on warfare rarely dwelt on this point. Vegetius at the end of the fourth century and Maurice around 600 reflect the aims in peace and war of an empire that had long peaked in its expansion and was now on the defensive (Luttwak 1976b). Neither wrote much about entering enemy territory, and if so, in the case of Maurice, only to intercept a retreating enemy army, on its way home from looting on the territory of the Byzantine Empire. The weakness of the late Roman and, after the fall of the West Roman Empire in 476, the East Roman (Byzantine) Empire is also reflected in their recurrent advice to avoid a set-piece battle, and to deal with the enemy through ruses, ambushes and surprise (Vegetius *c*. 387/1996). As the Emperor Maurice elaborated:

To try simply to overpower the enemy in the open, hand to hand and face to face, even though you might appear to win, is an enterprise which is very risky and can result in serious harm. Apart from extreme emergency, it is ridiculous to try to gain a victory which is so costly and brings only empty glory. (Maurice *c*. 600/1984: 65; see also pp. 83, 96f., 107)

There was clearly at the latest from Vegetius' times – when the Roman Empire was in decline and beset by 'barbarians' – no 'Western way of war' that craved battles of annihilation, which did not even live on as an ideal or normative idea in the literature of the time (Sidebottom 2004: 1–15).

Byzantine rulers had long given up the notion that an enemy might be wiped out or turned into a constant ally (or that allies could be trusted indefinitely). Maurice cautioned against integrating allied forces too closely into the Byzantine forces, lest they undermine their cohesion and learn too much about the Byzantine way of waging war. They could obtain dangerous intelligence, should they one day turn into enemies, as Roman allies and clients proved repeatedly since Arminius turned on his former master in the battle of the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE. Yet Maurice advised openness to proposals 'for peace on [mutually] advantageous terms coming from an enemy', even if that enemy had been defeated (Maurice *c.* 600/1984: 84, 87). This view reflects hundreds of years of Roman attempts to assimilate former enemies, which in the final two centuries of the West Roman Empire brought more and more men of 'barbarian' origin into the highest ranks of the armed forces and even onto the imperial throne. The same applied later to the East Roman Empire. The Goths, who had inflicted the crushing defeat of Adrianople on the Romans in 378, were later integrated into the imperial forces, changing their culture and ethos considerably; Maurice himself was overthrown and killed in 602 by a soldiers' revolt. His successor, Phokas, who had risen through ranks of the army, was half barbarian himself.

Phokas' descendant Nikephoros Phokas or Nikephoros II was thoroughly Romanised when he took up the fight against invaders from the south, especially the Arab Hamdanides of Aleppo and Cilicia in the mid-950s, approximately when he must have written or co-authored his *Peri Paradromes*, best translated as *About Skirmishes*. Nikephoros (the name meaning 'the one who carries victory') was emperor from 963 until his assassination in 969. His writings reflect a weak and overextended armed state beset by raids from external enemies hoping for booty; the armed forces of the Byzantine Empire were too overextended to be able to concentrate quickly in response to such surprise attacks in unexpected areas, and Nikephoros' manual discusses various expedients through which one might seek to drive back the invaders while avoiding a pitched battle which one's own forces

might well lose (Nikephoros mid-950s). No 'Western way of war' of seeking decisive annihilation battles here: it was Byzantium's Persian, Arab, Saracen and Turkish enemies, who, 'in contrast the Byzantines, sought decisive victory on the battlefield. They, not the Byzantines, wanted battle' (Kaegi 1992: 128; see also Haldon 1999: 7f.).

With the exception of the short-lived reconquest under Justinian (r. 527–65) and Heraclius (r. 610–41) of areas of the Roman Empire in the west and south that had been lost to various invaders, the Byzantines were entirely on the defensive, and even Justinian's and Heraclius' reconquests were an attempted return to a status quo ante. They were an immediate part of the long tradition started in the West Roman Empire in the late fourth and fifth centuries of defending Christendom against heathen invaders. Thus, without any need for a specifically formulated holy war doctrine, but fighting under the protection of cross and icons carried into battle, they defended good against evil, cosmos against chaos (Haldon 1999: 7f., 13–33). With very few exceptions, the Byzantines preferred peace to war, in the words of Princess Anna Comnena, 'for peace is the end of all wars. Invariably to prefer war instead of peace, always to disregard the good end, is typical of foolish commanders and foolish political leaders, the mark of men who work for the destruction of their own state' (Anna Comnena *c.* 1148/1969: 381). Despite its warrior-saints, despite the centuries of fighting against invaders and despite the important role of the army in the empire, for the millennium of its rule, Byzantium was much less warlike than the other peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East.

The origins of just war ethics

The classical bequest of Greece and Rome to the subsequent centuries dominated by the barbarians is one of the most debated, complex and intriguing question of European history. The bequest in terms of how to wage war, as we shall see, was the simplest part of it, for a thousand years largely confined to the work of Vegetius. It was another matter for the question of when it was just to wage war; here the reality differed largely from the Roman theory, and yet the Roman concepts would persuade generations until our own time (Rich 2001).

The ethical stipulation that war must be fought for the sake of (re-) establishing peace can be found as far back as Aristotle (*Nikomachean*

Ethics X.7), but does not seem to have affected pre-Roman Greek practice much. The most important conditions for a war to be *just* can be traced to Cicero, who stated that the pursuit of peace must be the foremost aim of any war; without the pursuit of peace a war cannot be just. War must not be undertaken if the same aim can be reached otherwise; here we have the condition that recourse to war, to be just, must be the last resort. If one resorts to war, it must be carried out with moderation (that is, the violence used must not be disproportionate to what the enemy had done) and after a formal declaration (Cicero 44 BCE: I.34–8; Tooke 1965: 10).

While it was the Romans more than the Greeks before them who cared about the concept of a 'just war', Greeks adopted it under their influence, as the example of Onosander shows. This first-century philosopher in *Strategikos* (*The General*), echoed Cicero, with views that would influence the later Byzantine writers on the subject:

The causes of war … should be marshalled with the greatest care; it should be evident to all that one fights on the side of justice. For then the gods also, kindly disposed, become comrades in arms to the soldiers, and men are more eager to take their stand against the foe. For with the knowledge that they are not fighting an aggressive but a defensive war, with consciences free from evil designs, they contribute a courage that is complete; while those who believe an unjust war is displeasing to heaven … enter the war with fear. (Onosander 1st c./1923: IV.1–2)

The just-war theory that survived the fall of Rome was a surprisingly neat fusion of Roman just-war concepts, found especially in the writings of Cicero, and dicta from the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. This fusion was effected above all by Augustine of Hippo (354–430), one of the Western Church Fathers. Augustine did not use Greek literature, and accordingly did not build on earlier Greek thinking on war, but only on Roman concepts, especially the concept of a just war, that we find in Cicero (Mattox 2006: 14–18). Scattered over a variety of works including books and letters, Augustine had listed a series of conditions for a war to be just: the existence of a just cause for war (that is, war was just for a party that had been wronged); only God (or a rightful ruler empowered by God) could declare such a war; the war had to be waged with the intention of righting the wrong (for example, restoring land to its rightful owner)

and bringing about peace, not the lust for revenge or booty (Mattox 2006: 44–91). Augustine's views would lay the foundations of the Western just-war tradition (Russell 1975). Similar views, probably without any direct link to Augustine's, can be found in the writings of East Roman Emperor Leo VI (865–912):

It was not the destiny of men to wage war against each other … As creatures that have been formed in the image of God … [it is their destiny] to enjoy peace with each other, to love each other … Since, however, since the origins of the world, the Enemy of our race [i.e. the Devil] has aimed to fight humans through their own nature, it is necessary for them to pre-empt the attacks against them, which He conducts through their equals [i.e. other humans]. They must not subject themselves to other warring nations, but seek their salvation in the science of the arts of war, to protect themselves through these against inimical attacks, and to throw back upon the Adversary the evil which He, upsetting peace, deserves to suffer, until all evil of the impious is expunged. And after the happy restitution of the common wealth, peace will be beloved and accepted by all. (Leo VI *c*. 900: Preface)

The practice and the theory

The waves of pagan invaders of the Roman Empire were quite unaffected by such thinking. From the middle of the third century, Germanic tribes, Huns, Arabs and Moors made raids into the Roman Empire, aiming above all to come away with booty. Gradually, as and when they encountered little and, as time went on, even less resistance, they turned to the conquest of territory and its exploitation as their main war aims (Schmitt 2005: 417–44; Whitby 2005: 355–85). Only when they settled down and their leaders developed a taste for the Roman-Christian lifestyle (and the benefits of the support of the Church for their standing within their own society) did they grudgingly allow themselves to become acquainted with just-war thinking. Christianity was a useful asset in this context: with the espousal of Christianity, tribal chiefs from the Goths settling in the Iberian Peninsula, to Clovis in Gaul and Charlemagne some generations later, from the Saxon Ottos to Polish Mieszko I and Bolisław or Stephen I of Hungary could obtain the Church's blessings for expansionist campaigns against pagan or 'heretical' tribes – ostensibly with the aim of bringing them into the fold of the Church. Annihilation, if they

refused to give up their ways, was part of the legitimised programme, for example in Charlemagne's massacres of the Saxons to the east of his expanding realm. Nevertheless, in their martial ambitions, the rulers of medieval Europe stood firmly in the tradition of those migrant tribes that had brought about the fall of the Roman Empire in the West (Zeller 2001: 102–12).

Indeed, the medieval knight's very *raison d'être* was to fight, even if the purpose was to 'conserver, defendre et garder le peuple en transquillité', to protect the common people. It was practically their mission statement to go out and seek honour and show boldness, as the French nobleman and soldier Jean de Bueil (1406–77) put it in his novel *Le Jouvencel*. It was written in 1466 to instruct young knights in their obligations, and in the conduct of war (Bueil 1466/1887: 13f.). The *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, which was circulated throughout Western Europe not only in Latin but also in Catalan, French, Scots and English and can perhaps be traced back to the twelfth-century Majorca-born Ramón Lull or Llull, similarly defined the task of the knight to serve God and his master, and to protect women, widows, orphans, clerics, the sick and all men weaker than himself (Anon *c*. 1483: 38f.).

The Crusades were a fusion of the warrior cults of the Germanic tribes who had come from the east and the north, now sedentary throughout western and southern Europe, and the Augustinian definitions of a just cause given by the Catholic Church: the crusaders were sent out to aid their Christian brethren in the east, established there since Roman times, who were being prevented from visiting Christianity's places of pilgrimage in the Holy Land, or even from celebrating mass. But from this it followed that one could legitimately set out to reconquer from the infidel any territory that had once been in Christian possession – whether this was the Iberian Peninsula, or indeed anywhere within the confines of the former Roman Empire, including Palestine or North Africa. In general, war aims here were to overthrow the rulers (what today would be called 'regime change') and to break the dominance of the ruling Islamic elites, which could include massacres: if they had troubled the Christian population, local non-Christian populations were seen by the Christian Europeans as barbaric and as oppressors of the Christians and thus evil also in the eyes of God (Riley-Smith 2001: 127–40).

It has to be said, however, that Christian Europeans were in part responding to the way they themselves were being treated by the further

waves of migrant people who continued to come crashing into their lands. Goths of both sorts, Avars and Huns, Magyars and Mongols, Vikings and Turks tended to loot and murder without restraint. Only when they settled, or began to see the advantages of commercial arrangements (the levying of Danegeld or other taxes or 'protection money') did they confine themselves to a less destructive form of exploitation, interrupted from time to time by punitive massacres or other reminders that the levies were worth paying. The general rule gradually became that Christians, at least from the late tenth century onwards, treated each other with relative respect and sometimes spared each other's civilians, as demanded by the Church. Nevertheless, massacres of non-combatants continued: particularly in the British Isles, Christian Englishmen fought mercilessly against Christian Welshmen, Scots and Irish, and in France against the local population if it sided with the Valois dynasty in the Hundred Years War. To be fair, massacres of civilians were inflicted by both sides (Strickland 2006: 107–40). But since the siege of Troy, there was a persistent pattern of bloody massacre of the burghers of a town that had refused to yield, once a siege had been successful. It was Roman, medieval, and indeed modern practice to treat citizens of towns thus invested as rebels and not as protected by customary law. Even though the *Book of the Order of Chivalry* that circulated in many copies and languages from the early thirteenth century expressly condemned the destruction of castles, cities, towns, the burning of houses, the cutting down of trees and the slaying of livestock (Anon. *c.* 1483: 42), Jean de Bueil, with his direct experience of the Hundred Years War, commented that it was the common people who suffered the most in war (Bueil 1466/1887: 15). This is thus not merely a twentieth century phenomenon.

After territorial expansion and exploitation, the next aim for medieval tribal chiefs was to provide for their sons. The fortunes of the male members of a dynasty were seen as more important than those of the collectivity (tribe, people or nation), and no concept comparable to that of statehood – of the motherland, polis or Rome – came above the pursuit of the best fortune of the ruling family. Consequently, the division of the patrimony among (male) heirs was the rule until well into the mid-second millennium CE, and with it the in-built cause of war in which rival kinsmen and -women tried to recreate for themselves, from the possessions of their brothers and nephews, the kingdom their fathers had held (Honig 2001: 113–26).

Rivalling the provision of lands and inheritance for all sons (and of dowries for daughters), by and by, the concept of passing on possessions en bloc to one sole heir came into being, leaving many other members of the family – from uncles and cousins to other sons – high and dry. The logical consequence was the creation of the predominant cause of war even until the French Revolution: dynastic contests over legitimate succession, prominent examples being the Hundred Years War between the Plantagenet and Valois dynasties and the War of the Roses in England (Curry 2001: 141–54). As historian Jeremy Black so aptly put it, 'War was the continuation of litigation by other means' (Black 1998: 47). Primogeniture – the inheritance of undivided lands by the first-born male – established itself in Europe from the twelfth century, but other practices – inheritance by younger brothers rather than sons of princes, or the division of lands among male relatives – persisted in many places. For example, it led to the division of the Habsburg possessions between what became the Spanish and Austrian branches of the family even in the sixteenth century.

Churchmen since Augustine of Hippo had struggled with the problem of reconciling the commandment not to kill with the need to punish offenders and to protect others from them. Those offending against God's will deserved punishment, particularly if they refused to relent, despite being given the opportunity to do so. Offences against God's will included uprisings against the rightful ruler, a key theme in all dynastic quarrels, but also heresy. Medieval clerics taking an interest in these matters were particularly exercised by the long-running confrontation, on the one hand, of the emperors of the Holy Roman Empire – seen as the successors of (Saint) Constantine the Great, who had created the Christian Roman Empire – and the papacy on the other. Much of their writing only makes sense in the context of this conflict, which challenged the world order itself as they understood it; examples include Dante Alighieri's *De Monarchia* of 1313 and Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor Pacis* of 1324, both of whom could only conceive of peace within a strong state or empire. Given these other preoccupations, there is little medieval literature of relevance to this book, beyond the Augustinian-Thomasian writing on just war, or historiography in the forms of chronicles of wars or crusades or the reigns of monarchs punctuated by battles and military campaigns.

The earliest medieval text on warfare that is no longer either a historical treatise or a legal one, nor a copy of Vegetius, is that of

Honoré Bonet or Bouvet. Writing during the Hundred Years War, this Provençal monk and theologian in his *Tree of Battles* (*c.* 1385) could not imagine a world without war, and in the tradition of Augustine actually proclaimed the rightful place of war in the divine order:

[T]he truth is that war is not an evil thing, but is good and virtuous; for war, by its very nature, seeks nothing other than to set wrong right, and to turn dissension to peace, in accordance with Scripture. And if in war many evil things are done, they never come from the nature of war, but from false usage … for all good things, and all virtue, come from God … [W]ar comes from God, and not merely that He permits war, but that He has ordained it.

Bonet then put forward examples drawn from the Hebrew Bible in which God commanded the people of Israel to take up arms against His enemies (Bonet *c.* 1385/1493: 125). As a cleric and scholar, however, Bonet was concerned about how to limit war to 'proper usage' through a due observance of existing laws and customs of war, its legitimacy (the *ius ad bellum*), its legitimate conduct (the *ius in bello*), the proper treatment of non-combatants, prisoners and so forth.

   Drawing heavily on Bonet's *Tree of Battles*, the Venetian-born Christine de Pisan (or Pizan) in her *Livre des faits des armes et de la chevalerie* of 1408–10 covered the question of the justice of war (Saux 2004). Both Bonet and Christine added this dimension to the subject-matter of Vegetius – on whom Christine also drew. Bonet and Christine differentiated between the three conditions listed by Augustine – just cause, legitimate authority, right intention – and motivations that could not be approved of – the desire for revenge or the desire to conquer somebody else's lands. Christine, who with her experience of politics at the French court and in Italian city states did not separate warfare from politics, proposed a political alternative to waging war, if a prince should feel wronged and offended by another: to assemble 'a great council of wise men in his parliament … and not only will he assemble those of his own realm, but in order there be no suspicion of failure, he will also call upon some from foreign countries that are known not to take sides, elder statesmen as well as legal advisors and others', to whom both sides should put their view of the situation. Only if such a council could not bring about a settlement between

the two parties should they be allowed to proceed to war (Christine 1410/1999: 13–17).

Christine's work was popular enough to warrant printing in French in 1488, but her name was omitted as that of the author – probably, as she had put it herself, because it struck contemporaries as 'unusual for women' to write on this subject matter (Christine 1410/1999: 12). The book's success and Franco-English cultural proximity of this age is illustrated by Henry VII of England only one year later commissioning an English translation of Christine's popular work. This and the printing of the English version was undertaken by the pioneer of printing in England, William Caxton, 'so every gentleman born to arms and all manner of men of war, captains, soldiers, victuallers and all others would know how they ought to behave in the feats of wars and battles'. It is perhaps the first instance of a ruler imposing the reading of a field manual; the twenty surviving printed copies testify to the success of this endeavour (Nicholson 2004: 14–19).

Despite Honoré Bonet's and Christine de Pisan's concerns about the rules of war, and although the Church tried hard to protect Christian non-combatants from the ravages of warfare, civilians were rarely spared, particularly not in the wars of religion, and warfare depended on any state's ability to pay for it. Onosander (1st c./1923: XXXV.1) had thought 'Plundering should not be permitted after *every* battle', implying that after certain battles it was acceptable, and Vegetius had emphasised the need to ensure that one's own forces had sufficient supplies, while using famine against the enemy. Besieged fortresses and towns would be forced by famine to surrender, and cutting the enemy's forces off from supplies was also advantageous: 'By this strategy, if the enemy collect together, suffer famine, and if they disperse, are easily beaten by frequent surprise attacks' (Vegetius *c*. 387/1996: 69). His advice was certainly heeded throughout the Middle Ages and in the early modern period. While medieval armies shied away from battles – these were generally seen as a divine ordeal, and the outcome could cost a king his crown – they pillaged and plundered happily, and engaged in scorched-earth policy to deny areas and food to the adversary and to punish populations for siding with opponents (Honig 2001; Goosens 2001).

The use of force against heretics – dissenting Christians among one's *own* population – had existed already in the Byzantine Empire. Heretics challenged the orthodoxy of the majority and with it the

whole edifice of a God-given state founded on the claim to have the only right opinion about what God's will might be. Heretics thus were hated more and treated worse even than the infidel, and religious wars – whether they were the wars against the Paulicians or Bogomils in the east, the Albigensian Crusade, the Hussite wars in Bohemia or the persecutions of the Lollards in England – tended towards greater cruelty, more massacres of civilians, the killing of prisoners and the shedding of the restraints on war by now normally practised between Christians (Strickland 2006). Massacres continued to be common when the occupants of fortresses or other fortified places were successfully besieged and failed to surrender in time.

With all this warfare going on, why was there relatively little writing on the way to wage war in the Middle Ages? One – and perhaps the most conclusive – reason is that it was widely thought that God decided the outcome of war, and man only had a limited ability to influence it, mainly by following a cause that was just in the eyes of the Lord, preferably combined with an upright lifestyle. This conviction is found throughout the Middle Ages in East and West and into the early Renaissance (Haldon 1999: 22f.). Even at the very beginning of the sixteenth century, Robert de Balsac in his *Ship of Princes and Battles* reminded kings that victory was a gift of God (see the quotation at the beginning of this chapter), and a little later, the famous French Chevalier de Bayard, knight without fear or reproach, when confronted with superior enemy numbers, chose to attack, saying 'victory comes from God and not from the number of men' (Champier 1525/1992: 164). As late as 1588, his countryman François de Saillans, writing under the pseudonym of Bertrand de Loque, in his *Instructions for the Warres* asserted that 'the victory dependeth not of the multitude of fighting men, but of the grace and fauour of God' (Saillans 1589/1591: 21). Saillans was still typical of the thinking of his time. Almost a century later, Paul Hay du Chastelet still saw just war as God-willed, and its outcome directly decided upon by God (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 5–8).

With such an independent variable overriding all other factors in war, what was the use of speculating much about the others? The fact that Saillans and Hay, like Vegetius the Christian in the fourth century CE but unlike Western authors in the Middle Ages, wrote so extensively about the other variables suggests, however, that their trust in divine providence was tempered by the conviction that He

expected humans to do their part in making a successful outcome of a just war possible. The 'rebirth' of classical attitudes to arts and sciences, going hand in hand with the rediscovery of classical works but also the discovery of Byzantine authors, can thus be seen very clearly in treatises on war in early modern Europe, to which we shall now turn.

3 | *Warfare and mindsets in early modern Europe*

It seems to me to be imprudence to commit the fortune of a state to the event of a general battle where the fate of arms is always uncertain and dangerous.

(Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 112)

Causes, aims, and practice of war in early modern Europe

Religion would ultimately recede in the thinking of early modern authors, but not before divisions within Christendom had been a major cause for two centuries of wars. This element was present, as we have seen, in the medieval persecutions of heretics. In the sixteenth century, it would tear the Holy Roman Empire and the Habsburg lands apart, as well as France and, on a lesser scale, England, and it would be a major factor in the Thirty Years War. But other drivers for war known to the Middle Ages equally persisted.

The culture of early modern European elites, like that of their medieval predecessors, saw warfare primarily as an opportunity to win glory and renown, and the means to claim and to defend property where courts did not exist or would not arbitrate in their favour. The entire political system of early modern Europe consisted of volatile alliances between thoroughly selfish dynasties, who by marriage, inheritance or war sought to amass for themselves as much territory, wealth and subjects as possible (Black 1987: 20–2). The utterly self-serving nature of these dynasties' politics was mitigated by religious factors, which at the time occupied the place filled by ideology in the twentieth century. Speaking not only of princely dynasties, Niccolò Machiavelli and, echoing him, Raymond Beccarie de Pavie, sieur de Fourquevaux (1508–74) opined that 'men do sooner forget the deaths of their father, then the loss of theyr patrimony' (Machiavelli 1532b/1961: 97; Fourquevaux 1549: 260).

Slightly differently from principalities, in some Italian city states, collectivities could own territory or wage war over its possession. Either way, the wars between these cities aimed not at the overthrow of a system, let alone the annihilation of a people. On the contrary, the prince (or oligarchy) waging such war wanted to step into the shoes of the prince (or oligarchy) ousted through the defeat of the enemy, to enjoy the full fruits of the possessions. Contenders on both sides tended to see each other as equals, as bound by many rules and obligations, rules supported by the Church and its lawyers, except when adversaries could be seen as rebels or heretics, in which case all clemency tended to be suspended. Post-conflict reconstruction and the imperative of clemency practised by the victor play an important part in the military writings of early modern Europe. Paul Hay du Chastelet, who held public offices under Louis XIV, wrote at great length about the obligations of the victor to behave magnanimously towards the defeated, to rebuild towns and cities that had been damaged in sieges and to win the allegiance of the former enemy populations (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 148–51, 155).

As in the Middle Ages when the warrior cult of the knight characterised Europe, early modern Europe was essentially a bellicose society. In the light of this continuity, we need other factors to explain why there were so many wars between 'great powers' ('states which play a major role in international politics with respect to security-related issues') in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, compared with following centuries when 'great-power wars' became less frequent but produced more casualties (Levy 1982: 278–300). One such factor was that the religious inhibitions that had prevented some medieval men from bringing upon themselves a divine judgement through battle receded. Battles were increasingly seen as something that human action (other than praying and repenting of one's sins) could influence, even if unpredictable divine intentions were soon enough replaced by equally unpredictable factors such as Clausewitz's 'friction' and 'chance', neither of which had to do with morality. Instead, battles were now a decision-making mechanism that could settle disputes, but not a last moral tribunal. Famously, 'just causes' in the Catholic tradition of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were ignored by Machiavelli, who wrote in his *History of Florence* (composed between 1521 and 1525):

Those who make war have always and very naturally designed to enrich themselves and impoverish the enemy; neither is victory sought or conquest

desirable, excepting to strengthen themselves and weaken the enemy. Hence it follows, that those who are impoverished by victory or debilitated by conquest, must either have gone beyond, or fallen short of, the end for which wars are made. (Machiavelli 1532a/1847: 254f.)

The aim of territorial conquest, considered quite amorally, was also taken for granted as the prime mover in war by the Spaniard Bernardino de Mendoza (1541–1604), a nobleman from Castile who as a cavalry officer accompanied the Duke of Alba on his campaign to subdue the rebellious Netherlands. Mendoza called the desire to conquer natural in all men, and 'how much more so in kings' (Mendoza 1595/1597: 10). Two hundred years later, Kant described monarchs as resolving 'on war as on a party of pleasure, for reasons most frivolous', and one of his prescriptions for eternal peace was to legislate that '[a]ny state, of whatever extent, shall never pass under the dominion of another state whether by inheritance, exchange, purchase or donation' (Kant 1795/1796: 3, 17).

Causes and thus aims of wars in early modern times, as given in justifications (*claregationes et manifesta*) published by princes, include the following:

- the attempt to reassert or impose a universal monarchy (the Holy Roman Empire or a similar notion) or the fight against such predominance (Cardinal Richelieu's favourite reason for war);
- fight against a rebellion;
- hereditary/dynastic claims;
- attempts to (re)create an equilibrium of powers or a balance of powers;
- economic interests;
- the call for a crusade in the form of a fight against Turks (who from the ninth century onwards were steadily pushing westwards, invading and occupying parts of Europe after their conquest of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, enlarging their areas of conquest until their second unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683);
- preventive action against imminent threats;
- religious issues (*religionis necessitas*);
- defence of one's subjects against a bellicose attack;
- defence of liberties tied to membership of estates;
- treaty commitments;
- redressing of grievances (*iniuria vindicta*). (Repgen 1985: 21)

Critical contemporary observers noted, however, that these justifi-
cations were not always the real or main reasons for going to war.
Indeed, unlike in the writings of the Middle Ages, we find recurrent
from Niccolò Machiavelli to Hugo Grotius and Kant a cynicism about
rulers' and governments' professed justifications for their actions. For
Machiavelli, the ultimate cause of war was 'man's nature', his ambi-
tions, his greed and the eternal dynamics of the relations between
states (Machiavelli 1531: I.37; II.9). Emeric Crucé (1590–1648) in his
Nouveau Cynée of 1623 noted that foreign wars were undertaken 'for
honour, for profit, or for the reparation of some wrong, or for the exer-
cise'. Religion he rather saw as a pretext. Maximilien de Béthune, duc
de Sully (1559–1641), adviser of Henri IV of France, listed 'jealousy,
avarice, ambition and vanity', while to him as a Huguenot, religious
diversity was a serious factor in war (q.i. Hartmann 1995: 39, 56f.).
Grotius, too, pondered whether the reasons given for going to war are
pretexts or not. Under the heading 'On the Unjust Causes of Wars' he
wrote:

Some wars were founded upon real motives and others only upon colourful
pretexts … Though most powers, when engaging in war, are desirous to
colour over their real motives with justifiable pretexts, yet some, totally dis-
regarding such methods of vindication, seem able to give no better reason
for their conduct, than what is told by the Roman Lawyers of a robber, who
being asked, what right he had to a thing which he had seized, replied, it
was his own, because he had taken it into his possession … Others make use
of pretexts, which though plausible at first sight, will not bear the examin-
ation and test of moral rectitude, and, when stripped of their disguise, such
pretexts will be found fraught with injustice. (Grotius 1625/1901: 267f.)

Like Grotius, the Strasbourg historian and lawyer Johann Heinrich
Boecler (1611–72) commented that explanations such as the list
above, as given in public documents, were issued by princes or the
leaders of republics for public consumption. Often, however, these
contained only pretexts designed to dissimulate the more private
and truer causes. Among these he listed 'the love for ruining others,
the immense desire for one's own lucre, avarice and ambition' (q.i.
Repgen 1985: 24f.). Neither Grotius nor other contemporaries seem
to have seen this behaviour on the part of rulers as new to their
age, but saw it as an enduring, age-old phenomenon, citing classical
examples to confirm this (Grotius 1625/1901: 267).

With a good number of princes falling into the category of ambitious as opposed to peaceful (as Feuquières put it), the obligation of princes to pursue any dynastic claim to territory they felt militarily able to sustain, from the time of Charlemagne if not earlier, created a structural driver for war. Even in the high Middle Ages, a pattern could be observed whereby different princes tended to gang up on an overly ambitious peer set upon territorial aggrandisement, witness for example the alignments of the Holy Roman emperor and the English monarch against the French monarch at Bouvines in 1214. This balance of power pattern or, to be more accurate, the increasingly automatic tendency to counterbalance an expansionist power, was developed to a fine art in the early modern period. Henri, duc de Rohan in his *Perfect Captain* of 1636 observed that small states only existed because the jealousies of their (bigger) neighbours stopped those from swallowing the small ones, and that for their defence, they had to rely mainly on this mechanism (Rohan 1636: 352f.).

The Swiss diplomat and lawyer Emerich de Vattel in his *The Law of Nations* of 1758 reflected the preoccupation of the princes of his age with a distribution of power among several states (as opposed to the unitary world-view which was such an important point of reference from Constantine I's Roman Empire until the Westphalian Peace Treaties of 1648 or even the Peace of Utrecht in 1713). In Vattel's age, there was no one state which could justly claim hegemony in Europe, not even Maria Theresia's Holy Roman Empire, which by now was seen as the House (or dynasty) of Austria and its possessions. Vattel's contemporaries were obsessed with the danger that one prince might upset this distribution of power, and – like Habsburg emperor Charles V in the sixteenth century or Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years War, or Louis XIV of France – might aspire to dominate Europe. In this context, Vattel struggled with the moral dilemma posed by preventive war: if a neighbour increases his power (and lands) by whatever means (lawful or unlawful), and we are afraid that the neighbour will next move against us, is it justifiable to attack that state to prevent this aggrandisement? From experience he thought that the stronger a state grows, the more it is likely to bully its neighbours, however just the reasons were for which it grew in the first place. But Vattel thought prudence dictated that one should not use unlawful means for the attainment of just and laudable ends (Vattel 1758/1834: 307f.). Instead, Vattel described his

contemporaries' favourite counter-measure to a bid for aggrandise-ment and domination:

Europe forms a political system, an integral body, closely connected by the relations and different interests of the nations inhabiting this part of the world. It is not, as formerly, a confused heap of detached pieces, each of which thought itself very little concerned in the fate of the others … The continual attention of sovereigns to every occurrence … and the perpet-ual negotiations, make of modern Europe a kind of republic, of which the members – each independent, but all linked together by the ties of common interest – unite for the maintenance of order and liberty. Hence arose that famous scheme of the political balance, or the equilibrium of power; by which is understood such a disposition of things, as that no one poten-tate be able absolutely to predominate, and prescribe laws to the others. The surest means of preserving that equilibrium would be, that no power should be much superior to the others, that all, or at least the greater part, should be nearly equal in force. Such a project has been attributed to Henry IV [of France].

This counterbalancing might even lead to the formation of outright confederacies to oppose a predominant power (Vattel 1758/1834: 312).

Several sets of motives could of course come together. Gustavus Adolphus commented about the Thirty Years War that 'all the wars of Europe are now blended into one' (q.i. Roberts 1995: 18); the same could be said for the confluence of the multiple causes of this war.

As the Catholic Church could by definition not impose universal rules on contesting factions belonging to different religious denomin-ations, the previous near-monopoly of ecclesiastic lawyers in the for-mulation of the rules of (that is, restraints on) war gave way to the writings of secular lawyers. In part they tried to describe common practice, in part derive rules logically from first principles. Political writings of this period, such as Jean Bodin's, Hugo Grotius' and Thomas Hobbes's views on sovereignty and the prince's or state's monopoly of the use of force, give us insights into the perceptions, what we have called 'passive culture', of the times, the beliefs forming the conceptual framework within which war aims could be formu-lated. Thus while we still saw multiple references to Christianity in Saillans's writings, Hugo Grotius, writing only a few decades later, under the impression of the Eighty Years War between the Dutch and the Spanish (which fused with the wider European Thirty Years

War) famously tried to found both *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello* on a secular reasoning, not exclusively on Christianity or its different confessions. Grotius, following the Catholic tradition of Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and Alberico Gentile (1552–1608), which in turn built on Thomas Aquinas and Augustine, and Cicero, insisted on the need for a just cause for a war. Grotius established rules for the conduct of war: first, that only what was necessary to conduct and complete a just war might be done, and nothing more. Any action beyond that which is necessary would be illegitimate. Secondly, that the legitimate position one had might yet be changed in the course of a war, so that, for example, one might have the right to fight against parties that joined an adversary's side. Finally, one might have to accept certain wrongs in order to achieve the redressing of the primary grievance. As an example he gave the conquest of a province rightfully belonging to the enemy, in order to exchange it later for one's own territory which the enemy had unjustly seized. The enemy's women and children could be killed according to the *ius gentium*, he argued with reference to examples from Homer and Thucydides. He personally thought this unjust, as they were unarmed and thus killing them was unnecessary (Grotius 1625/1901: III.4).

By and by, with the waning of the religious cause of war, and the centralised states' monopoly on armed forces, the dynastic driver for war became the most potent and by far the most dominant among the causes of war listed above. The division between medieval wars of succession (which tended to have a civil war element and which tended to weaken, not strengthen, the crown) and the modern wars of succession (which strengthened the state monopoly on the use of force), rather than being a neat line, is more of a century of overlap between old and new. Bernardino de Mendoza, writing in 1595, saw crises of succession as most dangerous for any kingdom, as it gave the vassals a choice of whom to back, weakening the kingdom and being a prime cause for civil war – an observation which fitted well for English experiences of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries and French experiences from the Hundred Years War until the assassination of Henri IV in Paris (Mendoza 1595/1957: 14). The tendency of early modern states to fission into civil wars declined as the centralised monarchies gained strength and monopolised power within the state. The *ancien régime* of the late seventeenth and of the eighteenth century fought wars almost exclusively over dynastic claims

to lands, but now largely without competing claims from among its own aristocracy. Claims were made when the territory was of strategic or economic value, and legal claims might be fabricated; good legal claims by contrast were no longer pursued just for their own sake (Tallett and Felix 2008). In the eighteenth century, civil wars resulting from rival dynastic claims were seen by contemporaries as 'almost impossible … in Europe' (Lloyd 1781/2005: 476). The nobility, who had throughout the high and late Middle Ages and in early modern times had a proclivity to challenge royal successions and fight against each other, had calmed down in all European countries, but this went along with the need to keep it occupied and away from intrigues and feuds among themselves or against the crown. The nobility's self-perception and claim to its rank was entwined with its descent from the warrior caste of the medieval knights, and martial values were still intrinsic to its identity. What better way to keep them out of trouble domestically than to give them high offices in the royal armies, directing their dynamism against external foes and harnessing it to the furtherance of the dynastic interest of the ruling family (Kunisch 1987)?

This phenomenon was particularly pronounced in absolute monarchies. In the same measure in which the state was identified with the person of the monarch, his or her dynastic claims became the supreme *raison d'état*. Even though he was admonished by authors of his era never to undertake anything but wars in a just cause (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 4f., 54f.), Louis XIV with his wars gave Boecler every reason to suspect that legal 'just causes' for going to war were pretexts. John Lynn has shown very persuasively how the Sun King, in the cultural context of his age, cornered himself into a logic in which he staged one preventive war after another. He had locked himself into a web of dynastic obligations, a loudly proclaimed quest for glory in war (which included the seizure of any occasion to increase the territory of France, including territory that could not be claimed dynastically), and fear of attacks from all those increasingly fearful of him, who, convinced that he would strike sooner rather than later, wanted to catch him before he was fully prepared. The result was what the great French military historian André Corvisier has called '*la défense aggressive*', which made Louis look like a 'relentless, insatiable conqueror' (John Lynn), winding up the spiral of preventive wars ever further (q.i. Lynn 1994: 178–204). Louis XIV's aphorism

that he *was* the state could be reformulated as '*la guerre, c'est moi*'; war was the essence of his rule (Kunisch 1987).

   The writings of Frederick II (the Great) of Prussia, especially his political testaments, fully confirm the concerns of the encyclopedist. As a young man of 27, Frederick in his *Anti-Machiavell* (1739) had extolled the virtues of peace and of a stable equilibrium of powers in Europe, noting the dangers to all of Europe that would result from the upsetting of this delicate balance by a new parvenu monarchy set upon expansion (Frederick II 1739). In 1748, after the First and Second Silesian Wars against Empress Maria Theresia of Austria (1740–2 and 1744–5) he could still postulate in his military writings that wars should be short and sharp because long wars would undermine discipline and would be too draining of the resources of a kingdom (Frederick II 1882: 86). Soon the Seven Years War proved that shortness was less easily attained than propagated.

   A good dozen years after writing his *Anti-Machiavell*, when Frederick wrote his first political testament, he found himself in agreement with Machiavelli, who had posited that a disinterested power surrounded by ambitious neighbours, refusing to play their game, would soon go under (Frederick II 1752: 366). Just cause no longer features in Frederick's discussion of wars: he now saw but two causes, 'vanity' and 'self-interest', of which he dismissed the first and fully endorsed the second, elsewhere stressing the importance of 'glory' (Frederick II 1752: 348, 396). A decade later, when Frederick wrote his second political testament, he came even closer to seeing the world like Louis XIV before him:

A prince who makes war because he is worried, frivolous, [and] has upsetting [*désordonnée*] ambition, is just as worthy of being condemned as a judge who uses the sword of the law to pierce an innocent. War is good if it is made to support the interests [*considerations*] of a State, to maintain its safety or to contain the projects of an ambitious prince consisting of conquests harmful to your interests … Honour, the yearning for glory and the good of the fatherland must animate those who dedicate themselves to arms, without vile passions sullying such noble sentiments. (Frederick II 1768: 556)

The Hohenzollerns' interest was to expand their territorial possessions, until they would become 'one of the most considerable powers of Europe' (Frederick II 1752: 376). In 1768 he wrote, 'The

first preoccupation of a prince must be to protect what he has [*de se soutenir*], the second his aggrandisement', aims which required the utmost adroitness of manoeuvre (Frederick II 1768: 650). Prussia was rapidly becoming the expansionist upstart of which, as heir to the throne, the Hohenzollern prince himself had warned in his *Anti-Machiavell*. It was indeed upsetting the status quo, based on the delicate balances of interests, territorial ambitions and powers in Europe. Frederick further contributed to this confusion and upheaval by deliberately attempting to defy predictability and advocating that the successful prince should always vary his conduct so as not to become a calculable entity in the other powers' plans (Frederick II 1752: 396). This also meant that one could not be a dependable constant – at least in the medium or long term – for one's own allies, and, *mutatis mutandis*, meant that no power could rely on the assistance of allies: Frederick warned his heir to count less upon the help of allies than upon his own forces. 'You never make conquests except by yourself' (Frederick II 1768: 652).

For Frederick, alliance politics should be entirely free of sentiments or other personal preferences (such as, for example, religious affiliation or family ties). Alliances should be formed for short periods of time, and entirely as a function of one's own short-term interests (Frederick II 1752: 344). At least, he advised against breaking treaties without a very good reason (Frederick II 1752: 396). In practice, Frederick did not always follow this maxim, as his family ties with the Hanoverians and Brunswick and his 'irreconcilable enmity' with the Habsburgs whose lands he coveted were the two recurrent patterns in his alliance policies. But Frederick's articulation of the value- and sentiment-free pattern of alliances is the clearest representation of the post-Westphalian (and thus post-religious), *ancien régime* counterbalancing-of-powers game which played such a prevalent role in passive culture and assumptions about interstate relations until at least the end of the twentieth century.

Examples of this prevailing culture are the respective war aims of the belligerents in the Seven Years War. For Frederick, as we have already noted, they were the increase of territory ruled by the Hohenzollern dynasty. For Empress Catherine II of Russia, Great Chancellor Aleksey Petrovich Bestuzhnev-Rjumin defined the aim of reducing the Hohenzollern's possessions (by dividing them up with the Habsburgs) to the point where they returned to being minor

princelings with a negligibly small power base. In a letter of 24 July 1759 to her Field Marshal Daun, Empress Maria Theresia claimed that nothing but 'the weakening of the king of Prussia' would eliminate a host of evils, and that this was thus

the true aim of the present war, not merely the reconquest of Silesia and Glatz, but the happiness of the human species and the maintenance of our holy religion, of which I constitute almost the only support in Germany. (q.i. Kunisch 1975: 220)

In this context, war was the norm, peace only the time in which one prepared and trained for war, as Frederick mused with a reference to Vegetius (Frederick II 1752: 406). Nevertheless, princes sought to seek justifications – just causes – for their action, finding which they might well leave to their lawyers or diplomats, as Kant suggested (Kant 1795/1796: 17). That they did so shows that, however callous they were, they recognised the moral imperative of presenting their war as fought in a just cause.

The ethics of war in early modern Europe

The legitimacy of warfare: ius ad bellum

Early modern history saw the numbers of battles and sieges increase dramatically compared with the second half of the Middle Ages (Black 1987: 4–11; Tallett 1992: 13). Bloody conflicts between organised entities with numbers of participants well into four- or five-figure numbers did not take place solely between sovereign princes, oligarchies or what can now accurately be called states. There are many examples of large-scale insurrections, and wars of state fission, in which the people of certain parts of a political entity sought to break away and form their own entity. Examples include the failed attempts to establish independent statehood by Bohemia in the 1620s (the origins and early part of the Thirty Years War), Catalonia in the 1640s and later Transylvania, Hungary and Ukraine in the early part of the eighteenth century (Black 1987: 11).

In the sixteenth century, medieval scholastic arguments along the lines of Bonet's were still marshalled for the legitimacy of warfare. Writing at the end of the sixteenth century, Saillans introduced his

Discourse of War with the question of 'Whether it bee lawfull for a Christian Prince, or Magistrate, to make warre', conceding that 'All men are not of opinion, that the Christian Prince, or ciuill Magistrate may warre with a safe conscience against the enemies of his estate, or of the Church.' He set out to argue the contrary, drawing on examples from the Bible:

The first reason is, because God hath so expresly commaunded … The second reason is, because God himselfe hath at sundry times counselled, and taught his seruantes, how they ought to gouerne themselues in warre … The third reason is, because God himselfe in holy writ is called 'the God of Hostes' and 'the Lord God of battels'. Likewise, that iust warres are called 'the battles of God'. The fourth reason is, because many Kinges and Princes are highly commended in holy writt, for that they had warred valiantly against their enemies … The fifth reason is, because Jesus Christ and his Disciples haue allowed the warre … The sixt reason is grounded on the law of armes, and the lawfull vse of the sword: for the Prince beareth not the sword in vaine, saith S. Paul, because he is the seruant of God [Rom 13.4], for the safegard of the good, and the punishment of the wicked. (Saillans 1589/1591: 1–3)

Unlike Machiavelli, Saillans still peppered his reflections on what might constitute a just cause for resort to war with Christian considerations – he was, after all, writing for 'Christian Princes'. He wrote, 'The causes are two that may moue vnto warre. One, that respecteth the goods of this world, and the naturall life of man: and this is of two sortes. First when it commeth to the point of repulsing the violence and iniury of tyrants that giue the onset', because self-defence of a prince cannot be denied.

Secondly, when it commeth to the pinch of relieuing those that are allyed and haue concluded some league of amity with vs being wrongfully oppressed: For Christian Princes may conclude allyance with their next neighbour Nations, so that nothing bee done against the honor of God. Some will say, that the bornes and iurisdictions are distinct, and that it is against all right to inuade another. I answere that indeed it is ill done to incroch one vppon another, when iuasion is pretended to each others territories … to appropriate himselfe that, which is yet in controuersie. But here the case standeth otherwise, when it commeth to the push … to defend the right of those that are alliaced and confederate vnto vs.

Thirdly, any Christian Prince was obliged to fight in defence of the Church. Finally, 'a Prince may chastice by warre, or otherwise, his heretical subiects, but with some moderation: and yet not before he haue conuinced them to be heretiques by the word of God'. Even given these conditions, wrote Saillans, 'because of the great inconueniences and mischiefs that accompany warre, princes ought not to attempt it, except in time of great extremity' (Saillans 1589/1591: 4–14). Almost a century later, Paul Hay du Chastelet (1619–?70 or 82) admonished Louis XIV to initiate war only as a last resort (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 57–9).

But by and large, military writers did not see it as their responsibility to reflect on the causes and aims of war. The French aristocrat Antoine de Pas, Marquis of Feuquières (1648–1711), the son of a great French general of the Thirty Years War, himself lieutenant-general under Louis XIV, felt no need to tell his son, for whom he was writing, and thus his readers, more about the circumstances of war than that Europe was divided into states, some of which were ruled by princes, others being republics; and that some princes were peaceful and others ambitious. In the latter case, he wrote in a Machiavellian vein, the prince had to 'benefit from the divisions which he will have adroitly sown among his neighbours', and had to 'use any pretexts which they furnished, in order to quarrel with them' (Feuquières 1731: 9).

By contrast, 'D.J.' (possibly the Chevalier de Jaucourt), writing in Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, had similar views to Boecler's on just causes of wars: they were 'the defence of one's religion, one's fatherland, one's possessions, and one's person, against tyrants and unjust aggressors'. However, he thought that '[a]s the sovereigns feel the force of this truth, they take great trouble to circulate manifestos to justify the war they undertake, while carefully hiding from the public or from themselves the true motives which guide them' (D.J. 1757: 966). Tactfully, the ensuing example was one from antiquity, but the express dismissal of 'glory … aggrandisement, and utility' as well as 'personal interest', if the other had not committed any wrong, is indirect criticism of the reasons so often given by princes at the time. The author went on to argue that even a legal reason which was technically correct could not truly serve as justification for warfare which in reality stemmed from different motives – such as the quest for 'vain glory', the desire to become feared (*redoubtable*), 'to exercise one's

armed forces, to increase one's domination', or to acquire the more fertile territory belonging to others, motivations which he asserted were 'very common'. With a resonance of the Spanish theologians like Vitoria, the author declared unjust the conquest of any territory belonging to another people, such as the Native Americans – whose lands the *conquistadores* had seized by force, under the pretext that the natives practised 'idolatry'. Following the tradition of Augustine, Aquinas and Grotius, the *Encyclopedia* thus argued that only such a war was just that had a defensive aim or aimed at the reparation of damages caused by the other side, and that it could only be just if its aim was to establish a solid and lasting peace. The author explained, however, that an offensive campaign could result from just such a set of causes, and that a defensive campaign might aim to protect unjustly acquired possessions. The cause itself might be restitutive, the campaign offensive. In view of the great suffering brought about by war, war must in any case be the last resort, even if one had a just cause. This cause could be just, but still had to be important enough to warrant the recourse to arms – for example self-preservation or the public good. Moreover, there needed to be a fair chance of success (D.J. 1757: 966f.).

The encyclopedist considered it to be part of 'European military laws' that one had to spare the life of prisoners of war as well as that of anybody surrendering and asking for quarter, and of course all non-combatants, that is, old people, women, children and those who because of age or profession could not carry arms. Any dishonourable act against women was particularly unlawful (D.J. 1757: 966f.). D.J.'s text highlights the remarkable continuity in the Western just-war tradition from Roman times to the Enlightenment, notwithstanding the frequent divergences from it in practice.

Writing at the same time, Vattel was mostly concerned with the laws governing a declaration of war and then conduct in war. Vattel's writing reflects the multitude of aims in waging war either in his time or in bygone times, which included self-defence,

the prosecution of some rights, or … safety. We attack a nation with a view either to obtain something to which we lay claim, to punish it for an injury it has done to us, or to prevent one which it is preparing to do, and thus avert a danger with which it seems to threaten us. I do not here speak of the justice of war … all I here propose is, to indicate, in general, the various

objects for which a nation takes up arms, – objects which may furnish lawful pretences, or unjust pretences, but which are at least susceptible of a colour of right.

He added that offensive wars were, of course, also waged for 'conquest, or the desire of invading the property of others', but these were not 'regular warfare, but … robbery' (Vattel 1758/1834: 293). While Vattel still came from the Augustinian just-war tradition, in which 'War cannot be just on both sides', he conceded that 'since nations are equal and independent, and cannot claim a right of judgment over each other, it follows, that, in every case susceptible of doubt, the arms of the two parties at war are to be accounted equally lawful, at least as to external effects, and until the decision of the cause' (Vattel 1758/1834: 306).

    An even more secular approach formed the basis of the views of international law of Vattel's contemporary, Montesquieu (1689–1755):

The law of nations is naturally founded on this principle, that different nations ought in time of peace to do one another all the good they can, and in time of war as little injury as possible, without prejudicing their real interests. The object of war is victory; that of victory is conquest; and that of conquest, preservation. From this and the preceding principle all those rules are derived which constitute the law of nations. (q.i. Hobbs 1979: 4)

Here we see a total acceptance of 'aggrandisement' as the natural right of nations (no longer princes) to set out to conquer territory, even if Montesquieu gave this a defensive interpretation.

    Crucially, however, in all these contexts, what was absent before and after the wars of religion, and then again until the French Revolution, was the war aim of social revolution. No prince, republic or other state waged war to destroy the social and political structure of another country and to export a revolutionary ideology. As Hay du Chastelet put it succinctly: the prince 'only overthrows thrones in order to strengthen them' (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 310).

Restraints on the conduct of war: ius in bello

Rules on how to conduct war (*ius in bello*) were honoured almost as much in their breach (although this invariably led to indignation and

complaints) as in their observance. The invention of printing made it possible for rulers and military commanders to issue all their soldiers with 'Articles of War' which invariably listed looting, theft and rape as punishable offences, carrying the death penalty (see for example Sutcliffe 1593). Soldiers could not plead ignorance, even if they could not read, as the Articles were also read out at weekly army assemblies (Tallett 2006: 22). Nevertheless, irregular payment of troops and unreliable food supplies pushed soldiers to disregard these rules even at the risk of their own lives. There are even examples where one side used force prior to declaring war, especially in naval and colonial contexts, far from a controlling centre. By contrast, wars did not generally start by accident, but hostile attitudes were long established and grievances well publicised. Only major drawn-out conflicts were rarely intended – usually, at least in conventional state-*versus*-state wars, just as in previous or following centuries, both sides hoped for swift victories (Black 1987: 14, 16f.).

As previously in the Byzantine Empire, the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were remarkable for their cruelty and their large numbers of casualties. From the English Civil Wars onwards, religious beliefs first blended with, and were gradually replaced by, ideological struggles, which in equal measure challenged the legitimacy and inner logic of existing states, and were therefore fought more fiercely.

Even though there are examples of campaigns in which the commanding princes or generals consciously sought to cause little collateral damage to the local populations, there are countless examples of atrocities committed against non-combatants, both individually and collectively, and many instances of mass starvation through artificially created famines to deprive the enemy's armies of vital food and fodder for their horses. In the twelfth century, Henry II of England had practised scorched-earth tactics in his fight to subdue Ireland. Henry VIII four centuries later did much the same, and so did his daughter Elizabeth I, followed in turn by Oliver Cromwell in the mid seventeenth century. In the sixteenth century, Maurice of Nassau destroyed more than 200 villages in the Dutch Eighty Years War against Spanish overlordship. Religious wars and civil wars in particular abounded with such examples; apparently such acts were easier to justify to oneself when one defined the victims of one's actions as heretics, unbelievers or devils.

Casualty figures for seventeenth-century warfare as a proportion of the population of the areas affected were topped only by figures of the twentieth century. The sufferings of the non-combatants were not much different from those of medieval times in quality, but increased populations led to increased numbers of people suffering the 'miseries and sorrows of war', title of the famous cycle of etchings by Jacques Callot (1592–1635). During the Thirty Years War, it was regular practice to burn down villages, but also to burn harvests, mills and bakehouses to deny the enemy (and any neutral or inimical population) their benefit (Tallett 1992: 59f.). This scorched-earth policy, coupled with the forced requisitioning of food and fodder from the areas through which armies passed, continued well into the eighteenth century and led, directly or indirectly through famine in the subsequent months, to the high casualty figures among the non-combatants. Rulers tried to spare their own populations – one of the reasons why they and military authors were so keen to carry warfare into the enemy's lands. Even though time and again military authors warned against pillaging and the use of force against local populations, it is in fact wrong to argue that these were less affected by early modern warfare than the populations of the twentieth century. (Only the eighteenth century in some parts of Europe, and the nineteenth century after Napoleon, saw some protection extended explicitly to civilian populations, and then only in western parts of Europe, and to white civilians in the American Civil War.) While special rights and immunities of non-combatants were often disregarded in practice, such behaviour was not advocated by soldiers writing on the conduct of war; indeed, several soldiers or ex-soldiers warned against it, while in the Middle Ages it had been only clerics and Christine de Pisan who had counselled against such actions on moral grounds (Rocca 1582, especially books 2, 3 and 4; Fourquevaux 1549: 222–57).

Rules of war had been developed in the Middle Ages – both for the circumstances in which a Christian prince could declare war on another, and for the conduct of such a war. Saillans formulated 'Certain rules and lawes to be practised of those that vndertake to wage warre, to the end that God may blesse and prosper their actions':

1. That warres be not taken in hand, but for some great and important affaires …

2. That the Prince be not troubled vpon euery light occasion, but before hee make warre, that he assay by all meanes possible to maintaine peace and concord: for if the end of war be to seeke to conclude peace againe (as Cicero saith [*De Officiis* 1]) without all doubt the Christian Prince ought to procure and seeke all honest and lawfull meanes, whereof hee can bethinke himselfe, to pacify and accord all differences, before he procede to armes and to warre …

3. That no man warre, to the end to vsurpe the goods and inheritance of other men …

4. That the Prince that will vndertake to warre against others, first let him knowe how to rule and ouercome his owne passions and affections …

5. That the prince vrged of necessity to warre, chose out wise Captaines and guides well experienced and valiant men …

6. That he choose also for his men at armes and souldiers, men that feare God …

7. That good and holy lawes haue course and vigoure in Christian armies, and not onley in townes and Cities, but also abroade in the middest of the campaigne …

8. That the leaders and Captaines bee valiant and couragious in all such difficulties, as of custome fall out in exploits of warre …

9. That Captaines be diligent and painfull, and in so wise ydle and sluggish …

10. That nothing be enterprised or attempted without asking aduise at the mouth of God …

11. That the armies put their trust in God alone, and not in the helpe of man …

12. That the armies above all thinges be Godly and holy, if wee will haue them worke good effect (Saillans 1589/1591: 17–31).

Hay du Chastelet admonished princes and their generals to be generous in victory, to look after the enemy's wounded as well as their own, to protect the citizens of towns that had surrendered from pillage and worse, and to woo the 'hearts' of people in occupied territories, so that they would become one's own loyal subjects (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 148–57, 310). A century later, Vattel urged his readers to abide by the general rule of sparing non-combatants, as far as possible, and as long as one was not dealing 'with a savage nation, who observe

no rules, and never give quarter' (Vattel 1758/1834: 347). A separate treatment of Hellenes and of barbarians, of Romans and uncivilized peoples, of Christians and the infidel, of Europeans and of natives of other continents runs throughout this period, to be taken up again and vastly amplified by the Europeans of the late nineteenth century in their colonial wars. By then, Social Darwinism and explicit racism injected a new viciousness into European warfare, but the continuity of this pattern of thought whereby operational restraints on war did not apply to certain 'others' runs uninterrupted from Antiquity to the present.

As religious wars tended to be particularly cruel, they spurred humanist endeavours to limit such excesses, most famously associated with Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Antipolemos* of 1521. The perceived need for mutual respect for other Christian confessions was first codified in the famous Confessional Peace of Augsburg of 1555, but it took almost another century until, after the Thirty Years War, this became more generally accepted in Europe, leading to a secularisation of states' foreign policy pursuits, making them subject (again, as in the times of the *condottieri*) above all to financial considerations. By the second half of the seventeenth century, Louis XIV's France fought Catholic and Protestant countries indiscriminately. This did not mean, however, that the Vegetian and medieval practice of creating artificial famines and thus causing the suffering and deaths of large numbers of non-combatants ceased entirely. Under Louis XIV, the Palatinate was subjected to a scorched-earth policy, and its towns and cities sacked and burned (Lynn 2002), contradicting the notion of writers of the following generations that warfare between 1648 and 1792 was particularly civilised (see below).

Eternal war or eternal peace?

Many sixteenth-century men were still under the influence of the earlier Christian teaching which saw war as either God-given (like Honoré Bonet) or saw in war yet another innate vice of man – going back to the murder of Abel by Cain – or indeed a reflection of the 'war in heaven' which had occurred in the very beginning when God expelled Lucifer from his celestial realm. As we noted at the end of the previous chapter, the notion that war was God-given and God-willed lived on well into early modern times. But as the Age of Enlightenment

dawned and purely faith-based explanations of the world became less acceptable, the notion that war was an inevitable part of God's plans for man receded. Biblical precedents gradually paled as models for modern warfare, just as religious pretexts for going to war were seen increasingly cynically by secular writers, of whom Machiavelli, writing a century and a half before Hay, was probably the first. Most early modern authors still took it for granted that war could not possibly be eliminated, and sometimes even took up the complaint of the ancients that long periods of peace were an evil too, because they made society weak and armed forces undisciplined (Guibert 1772/1781: vff.). The bewailing one's own decadence in comparison with the strength of the simpler lifestyle of one's enemies goes back to Herodotus' admiration for the frugal life of the Persians (Herodotus I.69f.), Xenophon's worries about the collapse of the previously equally frugal Spartan lifestyle in his *Lakedaimonion Politeia*, Roman Republican fears of their society's decadence leading to the legislation of 187 BCE (Livy XXXIX.6) and Tacitus' praise for the Germanic peoples and his indirect complaints about his fellow citizens' life of luxury in his *Germania*. The following millennium seemed to furnish more proof of the weakness of sophistication and luxury compared with barbarian simplicity and martial prowess. Both the West and then the East Roman Empires had indeed succumbed to much less civilised invading tribes, and the theme continued to preoccupy writers in early modern Europe, and not only in France. The third Marquis Santa Cruz de Marcenado, for example, pondered both the benefits and the dangers of peace, even though he insisted on the Augustinian criteria for just wars and the condemnation in principle of wars between Christian princes, and included Augustine's stipulation that it is unethical to start a war one is too weak to win (Santa Cruz de Marcenado 1724–30 [1726]/1885: II, 54–72). Some apologists for war argued that war channelled passions outward and made use of unruly elements (for example Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 2f.).

Lawyers and moral philosophers increasingly likened warfare to crime, stressing the lawlessness of the state of war and the many transgressions in civilian society committed by soldiers, even outside war; they saw war as brutalising those involved in it, who in turn imported brutal, lawless and unrestrained modes of behaviour into civil society. Either way, from early modern times onwards, violence was increasingly seen as a function of human passions rather than of

God's design, and sometimes as caused by culture or geography. Some sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century writers worried as much about violence in the form of duelling as about effects of war such as the slaughtering, starving or burning of civilians, rape and pillaging, and saw no need for reflecting on the political origins of wars (Noue 1587; Digges 1604; Hale 1971: 3–26).

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), writing as civil war loomed in England, is most popularly remembered for his view that the state of nature is a state of war of all against all, and that this is mitigated by the creation of the 'Commonwealth', his word for what we today usually term the state (Hobbes 1642: ch. I.12). From this many have drawn the conclusion that war is endemic to the human condition, and that interstate relations necessarily assume the form of war of all (states) against all others. Even Kant still contended that '[w]ith men, the state of nature is not a state of peace, but of war' (Kant 1795/1796: 11). This was not, however, a point of consensus among writers in early modern Europe, even though military men writing about war often took this position. The Saxon Samuel Pufendorf (1632–94), a Lutheran minister's son, argued that the first humans – Adam and Eve – had loved each other, and that the state of nature was thus one of love, not enmity. Nor did he accept Hobbes's reasons for arguing that once human societies had formed up into states ('commonwealths'), these must necessarily be inclined to go to war with each other (Pufendorf 1672/1749: 106–13).

In late Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, the only sphere of lasting peace that could be imagined was within the *Pax Romana*, the Roman – and then Christian Roman – Empire. This claim was inherited by the Holy Roman Empire, but it did not include all Christian states within its confines, and wars between Christian entities were notoriously present in the Middle Ages, in defiance of the papacy's views on this, which presented the alternative (but never realised) model of a peaceful Christian universe. The Grand Design of Henri IV of France and his adviser Sully merely replaced the Holy Roman Empire (of which France was crucially not a part) with the project for the constitution of a European super-state including not only the Holy Roman Empire but also France, England and Scotland, significantly to be called *Respublica Christiana* (Sully 1632/1921: 38). This term had been claimed a century earlier by political philosophers for the Holy Roman Empire alone, with the political programme

for Emperor Charles V to unite the entire Christian world within it. Such an idea of a super-state still underlay the project of 1712 of a European Union [*sic*], published by Charles-Irénée Castel, Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658–1743) in his *Project for Rendering Peace in Europe Everlasting.* The abbé's concept was derided by some contemporaries, but not by all. Jean-Jacques Rousseau liked it so much that he invested his own time to cut it from two volumes to one longish pamphlet, thus ensuring a much larger readership; the product was then occasionally wrongly attributed to Rousseau himself (Rousseau 1761/1761). Even Voltaire, who wrote a sarcastic treatise in response to the abbé's plans, later admitted that he preferred it to the nicest strategies for war (Voltaire 1769).

A crucial new departure in thinking about war and peace came from the pen of Count Jacques Antoine Hippolyte de Guibert, in his *General Essay on Tactics*, which he wrote shortly after the end of the Seven Years War, although he delayed its publication by several years for fear of censorship. There he mapped out a community of states which would all be republics and therefore by his definition not expansionist, because government would be exclusively in the interest of the people, who would only be prepared to wage war in defence of their own territory (Guibert 1772/1781: xxxiiif.). Guibert's idea predated Immanuel Kant's *On Eternal Peace* (1795) with its plan for a confederation of peaceful republics, without central enforcing authority, by twenty-five years. Guibert later became more sceptical, and his youthful ideas have been unjustly all but forgotten. It is Kant's prescriptions for a universal peace treaty that are mainly remembered, which included the abolition of all standing armies and a pledge of mutual non-intervention (Kant 1795/1796: 2–10).

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars could not entirely quell this hope that war might be abolished through human arrangements, which inspired the Holy Alliance of 1815 formed by the victor powers after Napoleon's defeat. They were submerged, however, in the 'realism', militant, xenophobic nationalism and Social Darwinism of the nineteenth century, which we shall discuss in chapter 5. Kant's ideas on the peaceful coexistence of republics would remain famous and gain renewed popularity in the twentieth century, particularly after the end of the Cold War.

4 | *Themes in early thinking about Strategy*

The profusion of variables in war has never discouraged the search for foolproof systems.

<div align="right">(Galula 1964/2005: xii)</div>

There is universality even amidst great diversity. Strategy and strategic effect do not differ from war to war, among geographic environments, or among culturally distinct belligerent polities.

<div align="right">(Gray 1999a: 362)</div>

Chapters 2 and 3 have dealt with attitudes to war and its purpose in late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and early modern history, highlighting both changes and continuities. This chapter will dwell on aspects which have partly or entirely continued to the present: the basic pattern of siege warfare; debates about the recruitment and status of troops; the question of the importance of battle as well as defensive and offensive strategies; the spectrum of warfare from limited to major; and the ceaseless quest for eternal principles guiding warfare and ruling war.

Sieges and static defences from Troy to Basra

From Antiquity to the present, territorial conquest has never been achieved by a total physical occupation of all land. Instead, the symbolic seizure of certain settlements and strategically crucial points like mountain passes or bridges or crossroads (frequently coincident with settlements) had and has to make do. In turn, such places would be defended, best done by fortifying them.

Settlements fortified by stone walls or at least by mud walls, wooden fences and/or ditches had existed since the Neolithic Age. Greek cities had elaborate fortifications; the pattern of a heavily defended enclosure around the royal precinct (the *acropolis*), surrounded by

the dwellings of the lesser townsfolk, themselves protected by another wall, can be found in most layers of Troy, as well as in the earliest layout of many other ancient towns and cities, including Rome, where the old stronghold was the Capitol Hill. The Romans had fortified some of their frontiers. In a less sophisticated way, such land walls for the defence of entire regions continued to be built in the early Middle Ages – Offa's Dyke in Britain, Gunfreds Danevirke under Danish rule and the Götavirke in Sweden, but the practice was then discontinued until the earthworks of the Enlightenment and the Maginot and Siegfried Lines of the twentieth century.

The medieval castle was a development either of Roman fortresses or of the fortified Roman town or the rulers' settlement at the heart of villages, towns or cities along the model of ancient settlements. It seems that after the fall of the West Roman Empire, Occidentals for centuries forgot how to build stone castles and other stone fortifications, notwithstanding the fact that most of them must have lived within a few days' marches at most of surviving examples of Roman fortifications or at least stone walls (Sander 1934: 457–76). It was only in the late tenth century that the stone castle was reinvented in France. The relatively fast spread of castles around Europe from around 1000 is less a technological innovation than a return to a more sophisticated past, a rediscovery or early renaissance of Roman castle architecture (as the name *castellum* itself suggests) after a decline in technology in the previous 600 years.

For the civilians, 'fortified places' – which soon included entire towns, as in Roman times – were the main places of refuge when hostile armies broke into their lands. For governments, they were the places from which the land was administered, including of course the raising of troops or money for war. Armed forces, too, would seek refuge in these places, both from enemy armies and from trying weather conditions. From there, they would sally forth to attack adversarial armies in defensive campaigns. Food and munitions were stored in such places, which limited the range of movement of all armies who relied upon supplies from the authorities for whom they were fighting – as opposed to living off the land.

By contrast, invading and conquering armies necessarily had to move away from their own country's sources of supply and thus had longer supply lines; consequently, they sought to rely on allied (fortified) towns (like the Holy Roman emperors in their campaigns in

Italy), build new fortifications (such as Edward I's castles in Wales) or conquer existing strong points both to deprive their adversaries of them and to put them to their own use. The latter explains the many sieges in the Hundred Years War and in the Franco-Burgundian wars, or the campaigns of the Thirty Years War (Croxton 1998; DeVries 1998). Either way, armies operating outside their own lands were usually forced to live off the land simply because they could not master the logistical challenge of bringing all their victuals and ammunition with them. If the warring factions had sufficient money, they could buy victuals, but until the late sixteenth century warring monarchies tended to run out of money within a few months if not weeks; where soldiers' pay was in arrears, these quickly resorted to loot and plunder and forced requisitions, invariably thereby increasing if not engendering local hostility to these occupying forces.

Sieges occurred more frequently in the high and late Middle Ages than battles, and sieges continued to be frequent in early modern European history, even while the frequency of battles increased significantly. Siege warfare was, however, transformed into a vastly more expensive affair for both sides by the advent of gunpowder, and in response, the *trace italienne*, defensive fortifications, which reached their architectural apogee in the age of Louis XIV of France. Much was written about siege warfare – considered as a distinct part of the art of war for example by the French encyclopedists (Tressan 1757: 992) – in all the literature analysed here until the end of the twentieth century, but it tended to be primarily of a technical nature. Only Machiavelli made points of a more political nature: he advised his readers not to impose harsh conditions on besieged towns, but to tempt them into surrender by promises – including mendacious ones – of good terms. For if the besieged feared that they would be treated as rebels and slaughtered once their town was taken, it would make them only more determined to hold out (Machiavelli 1531/1998: 334–59, 442f.). In any case, Machiavelli's and many other early modern authors' persistent admonitions not to allow one's victorious soldiers to run amok after taking a town was often disregarded in practice: there are many horrifying examples of massacres and mass looting following the fall of towns in early modern times – most notoriously the rape of Magdeburg in 1631 – and in more recent history, from the fall Saragossa in 1809 in the Peninsular War to the genocide in Srebrenica in the Yugoslav War in 1995. It varies from case to case as to whether

such massacres ensued from poor discipline or were part of a deliberately adopted strategy.

Defensive fortifications, in any case, were a strong element of strategy not only in classical times but also in the later Middle Ages and then in modern times, up to the French Revolution. By the end of the eighteenth century, many parts of mainland Europe from the Channel to the Vistula were studded with stand-alone fortifications built in the tradition of the *trace italienne*, and fortified towns of all sizes had huge star-shaped earthworks and walls all around them. Until the French Revolution, sieges of fortified places and towns were central to warfare and as common in Europe as pitched battles. The most famous defender of such fortifications was Louis XIV's adviser and chief engineer, Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707), whose elaborate scheme, moving away from individual castles and fortified towns scattered throughout the country to two to three lines of new fortifications along France's frontiers, was largely implemented in the reign of his patron (Vauban 1685, 1704, 1737–42).

Also on the other side of the Atlantic, in the French and Indian Wars, as in the American War of Independence, sieges were prominent in warfare. While many encounters were hardly more than skirmishes of a 'small war' calibre, the bigger encounters were either straightforward sieges of towns or forts, as the names of the encounters show – Fort Beauséjour, Fort Bull, Fort Oswego, Fort William Henry, Louisburg, Fort Carillon, Fort Frontenac, Fort Duquesne, Fort Ligonier, Fort Niagara – or battles which took place near towns and forts, such as the battle of the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec, following the siege of Quebec, in 1759.

This explains the growing preoccupation of eighteenth-century writers with the organisation of supplies and with the distances between fortified storage facilities and the troops. These distances, and the roads between these two points, or lines, became something of a fetish for a number or writers, first among whom was Adam Dietrich Heinrich von Bülow (1757–1808). He has remained famous only for his mathematical approach to war, a typical example of the mathematical interest in warfare shown by many of his contemporaries, from Guibert in France to the Hanoverian Gerhard von Scharnhorst (1755–1813). Bülow was particularly interested in the geometry of supply lines, 'inner lines' for most defending armies fighting on their own territory and angles of attack. Scharnhorst and other artillerists

concentrated on the mathematics of calculating artillery trajectories for aiming canon and angles for defensive and offensive siege trenches. The equally eccentric Prussian captain-turned-writer Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst (1733–1814) found that since Vauban, fortifications of towns and places had expanded enormously, as had the effort to besiege them in time and space (Berenhorst 1797: 42).

It was the abandonment of reliance on fortified places for supplies that allowed the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies to range much farther and faster than most of their predecessors since Roman times. The Austrian Archduke Charles, writing retrospectively about the Napoleonic Wars, explained the waning of the importance of fortresses:

The deployment of larger masses [of troops] than in previous times, paired with a lightness and acceleration of their movement that we had not been used to, necessarily had to have a changing impact on warfare in its entirety, and thus also on the effects of fortifications. During the time of calm that followed the Seven Years War one saw fortifications as perfect defensive protection of the hinterland without any regard for ownership, circumference or manning, and without demanding more than the passive defence of their ramparts. It is little wonder that one preferred small fortifications to bigger ones, convinced that they could achieve more with lesser means. This delusion dissipated as the armies grew in numbers. [Since then] fortifications in unimportant locations, of small size and manning are only of importance if the adversary's forces are so small that they have to limit their enterprise to the conquest of small areas, being unable to spare the smallest number of troops … With large-scale [armies], the influence of such fortifications disappears altogether. (Charles 1838: 209f.)

The only exception that he saw in the continued relevance of smaller fortifications was their role in people's war (generally planned insurgencies): arms and supplies for the population could be kept at such fortresses which took on the role of arms depots (Charles 1838: 209f.).

But even in the Napoleonic Wars, in which the armies initially swept around fortifications, second-line soldiers were often detailed to deal with them. And in the Peninsular War, the long stretch of free-standing fortifications (in the tradition of the great walls rather than fortified places) at las Torres Vedras gave Wellington a crucial advantage in his defence against the French in 1810. Furthermore, the

fact that a number of capitals were not fortified crucially influenced the Napoleonic Wars. The lack of well-maintained, modern fortifications around Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Moscow and Paris ruled out the option for the defeated Austrian, Prussian, Spanish, Russian and French armies in 1805, 1806, 1808, 1812 and 1814 respectively to withdraw to their capitals and attempt to defend themselves against Napoleon's armies or the Coalition (Brialmont 1895: 11f.).

In the wars from the second half of the nineteenth century, sieges of important cities – Sevastopol (1854–5 in the Crimean War), Atlanta and Petersburg (1864 and 1864–5 in the American Civil War), Plevna/ Pleven (1877–8 in the Russo-Turkish War) – came to the fore again. In 1860 Wilhelm von Willisen, author of a three-volume work on major war, produced a monograph on fortifications, inspired by debates on the need to fortify Berlin. Willisen argued that it was impossible to erect fortifications that could fully protect the – quickly expanding – Prussian capital in a palpable, physical sense, and reasoned instead that it had to be complemented by an indirect, strategic defence in depth through army movements far to the east and south-east of the capital. While the land to Berlin's east (and throughout Prussia along the Baltic) is notoriously bare of physical barriers and inviting to invading forces, Willisen argued this more generally, as few places, to his mind, could be properly defended by fortifications alone (Willisen 1860).

Further examples can be found in the Franco-Prussian War, where some fortifications were found wanting and in dire need of modernisation, and fell to the German armies early on. After the war, this realisation triggered a flurry of constructions of (quickly outdated) fortifications in France. But it was Belgium that produced one of the most prominent theoreticians on the construction of fortifications, Henri-Alexis de Brialmont (1821–1903), who rose to become the Belgian Inspector-General of Fortifications and of the Engineer Corps in 1875. He initially conceived of a defensive Strategy for Belgium that – against much understandable opposition – planned for the need to abandon the capital, Brussels, and to withdraw to Belgium's second-largest city, Antwerp. Taking advantage of its estuary location, from 1864 the city was turned into the fortified national redoubt at his instigation (Brialmont 1895).

After the Franco-Prussian War, Brialmont saw the danger that lay in a renewed conflict between the Germans and the French; in view

of the French fortifications that were now under construction, he predicted that the Germans would move through Belgium in order to attack France. He therefore urged the construction of fortifications along the Meuse. From 1887 to 1892, the cities of Liège and Namur were thus heavily fortified, albeit not heavily enough to withstand the new German 305 and 420 mm howitzers brought into action against them in 1914. Liège fell after only two days, Namur was even less of an obstacle to the German army. Christopher Duffy, in his biographical sketch of Brialmont, regretted 'that he devoted so much of his talent to permanent fortification, a cause that was beyond saving' (Duffy 1967: xliii). And yet, the First World War on the Western Front could be said to have degenerated into one big siege. Nor was the belief in the utility of great walls a thing of the past, as the construction of the Maginot Line showed subsequently.

It seemed at first that the arrival of aircraft and later of long-range missiles made sieges of towns or cities (in the form of ground forces surrounding the built-up areas until they surrendered) obsolete, yet cities like Leningrad and Stalingrad were not only bombed but besieged in the Second World War, and sieges occasionally occurred in the smaller wars of the following decades, until the sieges of Iraqi towns in the war begun by the US and its coalition partners in 2003.

Sieges have thus not become obsolete, but the great bulk of what has been written about them has been overtaken by technical changes. Most technical aspects in the literature are therefore omitted here. The principle of fortifications – the augmentation of human strength for defence by static defences infinitely more resistant – continues to play its role in Strategy, both where it is entirely defensive or where it is aiming to hold an enemy's onslaught in one place the better to be able to turn his flank and counter-attack in another. By and large, defences in history have been a function of the former – a mainly defensive Strategy – whether this was in the Roman Empire when it had stopped expanding and began to be subject to invasions, the Iron Curtain during the Cold War with its more or less elaborate physical barriers throughout Europe or Israel's security fence.

Feudal levies, mercenaries or militia?

Another key theme linked to the purposes of war and thus Strategy, which again goes back to Antiquity, is the question of who should

fight, and how these soldiers should be recruited, with all the polit-
ical, social and administrative implications. Rome had started with
the ideal of the free farmer-citizen who defended his land and Rome.
But Rome had then adopted many different systems including long-
term service in a professional army (in return for land and early
retirement) and also the integration – from auxiliary forces to full
members of a professional army – of 'barbarian' tribes originating
outside Italy. This led to a change of the basic culture and spirit of
the Roman army, and was seen as having contributed to the fall of
the West Roman Empire to barbarian tribes and their chiefs. The
Byzantines were therefore wary of such mercenaries, but the theme
would also be picked up in the West in the Renaissance. In what his-
torians used to call 'feudal' medieval Europe, lords had the right to
ask their retainers to provide annual military service. Getting soldiers
who were doing their military service as a part of a feudal obligation
to stay armed beyond the previously agreed annual period (perhaps
one or two months) could be very difficult.

As the monetary economy flourished again in the twelfth century,
military service began to be replaced here and there by payments
which the lord could translate into arms procurement, food and fod-
der, or use for the hire of soldiers who became increasingly profes-
sional. Individual leaders started turning these mercenaries into what
today would be called private military companies, for hire to anybody
willing to pay their wages and able to pay regularly.

Neither the pike nor the crossbow nor the longbow constituted a
technological quantum leap in the way gunpowder did *in the long run* –
spears, bows and arrows were all among the oldest weapons known to
man. Yet all of these came together to transform later medieval warfare
very profoundly, making lowly infantrymen more important because
they became dangerous even to a well-protected knight, amounting to
what has been called an infantry revolution in the fourteenth century.
Infantrymen were much cheaper to equip than mounted 'men-at-arms'.
From the eleventh century until the Hundred Years War, European
armies had been dominated by knights ('feudal warrior-aristocrats') on
horseback, fighting to capture and exchange for ransom rather than to
kill. By contrast the armies after the Hundred Years War

differed from this description on every single count. They were drawn
from the common population (albeit often led by aristocrats); they served

for pay; they fought primarily on foot, in close-order linear formations which relied more on missile fire than shock action; and they fought to kill. (Rogers 1995: 56)

The Hundred Years War had already been fought to a great extent with mercenaries. The result of this was that during peaceful spells within the period of the Hundred Years War, and after its end, there were bands of soldiers who could not find a way to reintegrate into the civilian labour force and became a plague throughout western Europe. Charles VII of France was the first western European prince to reinstate the Roman concept of the state monopoly of commanding armies, simultaneously setting up the first standing (professional) army in the West since the fall of Rome. This would serve as a model to all of Europe, and become the external symbol of sovereignty.

With the Renaissance came the politicisation of the issue of who the soldiers defending the polity should be. Machiavelli, inspired by the Roman model, strongly opposed the use of mercenaries, as they felt no loyalty to the polity they were engaged to defend. The Roman citizen-solider, by contrast, had defended what was his and the *urbs* (Rome) and its possessions. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli wrote:

[T]he arms on which a prince bases the defence of his state are either his own, or mercenary, or auxiliary, or composite. Mercenaries and auxiliaries are useless and dangerous. If a prince bases the defence of his state on mercenaries he will never achieve stability or security. For mercenaries are disunited, thirsty for power, undisciplined, and disloyal; they are brave among their friends and cowards before their enemy … they avoid defeat just so long as they avoid battle; in peacetime you are despoiled by them, and in wartime by the enemy … a republic which has its own citizen army is far less likely to be subjugated by one of its own citizens than a republic whose forces are not its own. [Thus] Rome and Sparta endured for many centuries, armed and free. The Swiss are strongly armed and completely free. (Machiavelli 1532b/1961: 77–9)

Yet in the two centuries after Machiavelli mercenaries became increasingly useful to warring factions as entrepreneurs took charge of recruiting, paying, training, equipping, housing, feeding and moving them (Mallett 1974; Parrott 2009). Wallenstein for one was such an entrepreneur on the biggest scale. Even so, for ideological reasons,

the theme of the native or citizen-soldier or a militia became important from the seventeenth century (Sweden in the Thirty Years War, England in the Civil Wars): henceforth, polities seeing themselves as republics or commonwealths either implemented or toyed with the idea of an obligation for all men to perform military service.

Spanish authors of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also tended to come out against mercenaries, and – earlier perhaps than writers from other countries – against multinational armies. Jerónimo Jiménez de Urrea (1510–74) was concerned mainly with deflecting the Spanish nobles' overdeveloped quest for personal honour away from duelling to fighting for their sovereign, while claiming that one could not gain honour from serving a foreign prince. Yet he postulated that even as a mercenary, any officer or soldier was bound by duty to serve that prince loyally, just as the soldier was duty-bound to serve his captain (Urrea 1556: 163–5). Four decades later, Urrea's countryman Mendoza argued that it would be preferable to have culturally homogeneous armies – armies whose soldiers hailed only from one *nación*. He claimed to see patterns of mutiny and conspiracy within armies composed of different nationalities with leading captains also hailing from different countries, but acknowledged that it would be difficult – at any rate for Spain – to raise enough soldiers from its native population to form a nationally 'pure' army (Mendoza 1595: 64f.).

While piketeers or pikemen decreased in number and were replaced by musketeers, the infantry remained the bulk of all armies, outnumbering cavalry. Sir James Turner in *Pallas Armata* (1683) wrote:

the ancient distinction between the Cavalry and Infantry, as to their birth and breeding, is wholly taken away, men's qualities and extractions being little … regarded … most of the Horsemen, as well as of the Foot, being composed of the Scum of the Commons. (q.i. Roberts 1995: 23)

Gustavus Adolphus' army in the Thirty Years War, hailed as 'the first truly national European army' (Michael Roberts), in reality consisted not only of Swedish militiamen but also of large numbers of mercenaries. In the seventeenth century most armies including the Swedish continued to contain mercenary forces, drawn above all from Scotland, Switzerland and the Balkans, countries with a surplus of poor, yet hardy males, with a strong fighting culture. Only by the end

of the seventeenth century did the monarchs of Europe gain full control of their armies, doing away with military enterprisers: this 'was a significant development; for once the armies became royal (as the navies already were), the way was open for their eventually becoming national' (Roberts 1995: 16f., 22). In the reign of the Sun King in France, Hay du Chastelet advocated recruiting one's army above all from natives (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 22f.), even though foreign mercenaries would continue to serve in the French armies for a good century yet.

In the mid eighteenth century, Emerich de Vattel thought it the norm that only the sovereign had the right to raise troops (Vattel 1758/1834: 293). 'Every citizen is bound to serve and defend the state as far as he is capable.' Only those should be exempted 'who are incapable of handling arms, or supporting the fatigues of war', these being old men, children and women.

Although there be some women who are equal to men in strength and courage, yet such instances are not usual; and rules must necessarily be general, and derived from the ordinary course of things. Besides, women are necessary for other services in society; and, in short, the mixture of both sexes in armies would be attended with too many inconveniences. (Vattel 1758/1834: 294)

Vattel recognised that in earlier communities, all males had been called upon to fight once there was war. Yet he also observed that societies had gradually moved towards a division of labour, and in Vattel's day societies everywhere tended to have 'regular troops' (professional armies). Vattel, however, thought in principle all citizens should be involved in the war effort (Vattel 1758/1834: 294f.). If mercenaries there were – foreign soldiers who do not owe military service but perform it in return for pay – they should have the right to equal treatment as natives, but it was the latter whom Vattel clearly preferred (Vattel 1758/1834: 297f.). As we shall see in chapter 6, a similar argument underlay Guibert's plea in his *General Essay on Tactics* for the constitution of a militia or citizen-army (Guibert 1772/1781: viiif.).

Vattel's and Guibert's contemporary, the Welshman Henry Humphrey Evans Lloyd, who sold his own services to several European monarchs, retained his fundamental admiration of the

British political system in which he had been raised, which, as a constitutional monarchy, he termed almost a republic as the monarch could not do as he pleased (Lloyd 1781/2005: 470–4). He divided states into despotic states, (absolute) monarchies, constitutional monarchies and republics. The despotic states to him included the Ottoman Empire; among constitutional monarchies, oddly enough, he included China and India besides Britain. Absolute monarchies he identified with professional, mercenary armies, which harmed both the nation and its ruler (Lloyd 1781/2005: 464–9). Republics – a term he also used interchangeably with democracies – he argued, were defended by their citizens, which made democracies fundamentally defensive, but very committed to the cause of the defence of their state. Lloyd, as had Guibert before him, postulated that different forms of government fought wars differently, an idea that Clausewitz developed into a cultural variable in his work (Lloyd 1781/2005, 458–78). As earlier with Guibert and later with Kant, and another century later with Jean Jaurès (see chapter 7), we see again a notion linking republics with defensive warfare.

Drill, discipline, mathematical war and the abhorrence of chance

What role did chance play when the purpose of all teaching and most writing about war was to influence the outcome of war in one's own favour? Chance was clearly an upsetting concept for military planners. Paul Hay du Chastelet in 1668 explained to his readers that the monarch should fear war or at least never assume its positive outcome, because God's will – Christian destiny – might be different from his, and was always incalculable. It was not really chance that influenced battle, but God who decided everything, down to the trajectory of the canon-ball or bullet which killed, 'as there is nothing in the universe that happens except through His immutable and eternal order' (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757, 56f.). This was small comfort, and in early modern history, the art of war aimed, where humanly possible, to eliminate chance.

What soldiers from about 1300 did need, if they were using pikes, arrows or firearms, was tight tactical co-ordination, effected by long training, drill and discipline. Not surprisingly, in view of what we have learned about the denial of change, this was justified primarily

in terms unrelated to the technological requirements. It was a new *Renaissance* mentality which led Justus Lipsius to advocate drill and exercises, which he thought would inculcate stoicism in the soldiers; Maurice of Nassau was very keen on Aelianus' description of Roman close-order (infantry) drill, which was soon practised by the army of the Dutch Republic.

The need not only for practice but for never-ending drill characterised the armies of early modern Europe that relied increasingly on hand-held, single-shot guns. The strictly choreographed movements of lines of soldiers which had been developed from the sixteenth century onwards were still very much in place in the eighteenth, by which time soldiers were clad in colourful uniforms; this form of war is picturesquely referred to by the French as the 'lace war', *la guerre en dentelles*. Such discipline was vital, as was movement in neat formations, columns and lines, as the danger of being shot by one's own comrades was great if their movements and one's own were not highly predictable and precise. Discipline was famously the leitmotif of Frederick II of Prussia's military style and, unsurprisingly, forms a prominent part of his military writings. He called for nothing less than perfection in the discipline and drill of his soldiers, well aware of all too human tendencies towards laziness, and postulated that the officers had to keep after their soldiers incessantly to drive them to give their best in all circumstances, and to keep them busy with hard physical work and exercises, in war and peace. He also listed many measures to be taken to minimize desertion which was at a high rate in eighteenth century armies, precisely because of the hard drill that was imposed on soldiers (Frederick II 1748: 174–6).

Consequently, the calculability of actions was foremost in the mind of writers on war. They called for maximum planning in all areas – from the crucial supplies and logistics mentioned above to exercises and movements in actual battle. Maurice de Saxe wrote that 'war can be made without leaving anything to chance. And this is the highest point of perfection and skill in a general' (Saxe 1732: 298f.). Chance, as several writers recognised, could throw the spanner into these delicate works at any moment, and chance was the enemy of good planning. Chance was thus seen as inimical and something that again had to be hedged against, but also as the central explanation why the best plans might come to naught (Kessel 1933: 248–76). Accordingly, several writers saw the defence of a country as easier

than an offensive war: the defence was more easily planned, within one's own, well-known territory, with one's own resources, on inner lines, and less vulnerable to the vicissitudes of fortune or to a breakdown in supplies.

Battle avoidance or decisive battles?

Classicist Victor David Hanson has claimed that there was a Greek commitment to decisive pitched battles (Hanson 1989), a claim that has been contested by fellow classicists. Hans van Wees has shown that surprise attack, siege warfare and skirmishes were, even in ancient Greek culture, more frequent than major battles (Wees 2004: 131–50), and Harry Sidebottom argues that the pitched battle may have been an ideal in some periods and places in classical antiquity, but it was not the practice (Sidebottom 2004). In this book, we have demonstrated that Hanson is certainly wrong to elevate any Greek ideal of major battles into a 'Western way of war', for which he claims continuity throughout the ages. Whatever may have been the prevailing thinking and practice in the eight centuries between the age of Pericles and the late Roman Empire, in the fourteen centuries between Vegetius and the French Revolution, few believed either in the inevitability or the unconditional desirability of battle. Nor were battles always decisive. By contrast, ruses, diplomacy and other indirect approaches were seen as highly desirable by all. Views were balanced among those who thought the defensive stronger, and those favouring the offensive. The verdict on these points of the different writers we have quoted was based on empirical findings, not on ideological preconception – something that would change radically in the second half of the nineteenth century.

We have noted that in the high and late Middle Ages, far fewer battles were fought in Europe than in the early modern period. In Italy, the trend towards an increase in numbers of battles was noticeably among the city states in the fifteenth century, even though strife among them had been consistent throughout the earlier centuries. The frequency of battles increased towards the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but did not necessarily make battles decisive for the outcome of war.

Attitudes towards battles and campaigns changed over time. Sun Tzu famously favoured the avoidance of battle, where other means

to bring down the enemy were available, but he had no impact on Western military thinking until the twentieth century, when the West began to take note of Sun Tzu's disciple, Mao.

In the Occident, one can identify different phases – in the Middle Ages, battles were seen as divine ordeals, best avoided (lest God might favour the enemy in view of everybody's inherent sinfulness). The majority of European writers on war, and many generals, from the fourth to the late eighteenth centuries can be counted among the 'Fabians' (Liddell Hart 1930), an expression inspired by the Roman general Fabius Maximus (*c*. 280–203 BCE), nicknamed *Cunctator*, the hesitator, who time and again avoided a full confrontation and pitched battle during the Carthaginian invasion of Italy in 218–203 BCE; frequent direct references were made to him. While there were strategists who asserted the centrality of battles and their central role in all warfare, the Fabians, equally experienced in military affairs, counselled avoidance of decisive battles (especially where a favourable outcome for one's own side could not be predicted confidently).

Vegetius preferred bloodless victories through ruses, or through starving or surprising the enemy to bloody battles, and emphasised the need to keep one's own plans secret from the enemy for as long as possible (Vegetius *c*. 387/1996: 116–19). Most of Byzantine warfare, with the exception of the brief reconquests of Justinian and Heraclius, was marked by the defensive (Chrysostomides 2001: 91–101). Unsurprisingly, Maurice's *Strategikon* clearly puts him among the Fabians as he wrote: 'It is safer and more advantageous to overcome the enemy by planning and generalship than by sheer force; in the one case the result is achieved without loss to oneself, while in the other some price has to be paid.' And '[i]t is well to hurt the enemy by deceit, by raids or by hunger, and never be enticed to a pitched battle, which is a demonstration more of luck than of bravery' (Maurice 600/1984: 82f.). We find the same caution about battles – to be avoided if conditions are not entirely favourable – in the anonymous Greek treatise on 'strategy' of the sixth century (Anon. 6th c./1985: 102f.).

It was 750 years later that the Western cleric Honoré Bonet by contrast contended that it was more 'virtuous' to 'attack one's enemies than to await attack'. He reconciled this with Christianity, as he assumed that the good Christian knight would be fighting the enemies of God, and he also conceded – drawing on Aristotle – that in some contexts

one should patiently await the right moment for an attack, and not rush it (Bonet *c*. 1385/1493: 120f.). He was not followed in this point by his disciple, Christine de Pisan. Drawing on several classical writers, Christine collected quotations from them counselling prudence: it was better 'to use diet and hunger before steel' (Caesar), 'good military leaders' should 'be old men in character' (Lucius Aemilius Paulus Macedonus) and Scipio Africanus, she noted, had emphasised that it was prudent 'not only to offer one's enemy a way to escape, but also help him to find it' (Christine 1410/1999: 99f.).

Machiavelli in his *Discourses* gave a very balanced view of when the offensive was more appropriate than a defensive posture, based on Livy's historical examples but also on examples from more recent times. In short, he thought that a well-defended (fortified, organised) country should risk a defensive stance, while a country with poor defences would be better off trying to carry a war into the adversary's territory (Machiavelli 1531/1998: 306–8). Writing at much the same time, the sieur de Fourquevaux cautioned that a general should never give battle unless he was convinced that it would turn to his advantage (Fourquevaux 1549). Lazarus Schwendi (1522–84) urged his readers to err on the side of caution even if chances looked good: 'Whoever could defeat the enemy by waiting or starving him is foolish if he decides on a battle instead.' But Schwendi was not a partisan of a defensive Strategy in all circumstances, as he thought there was much to lose and little to win by adopting it (q.i. Delbrück 1920a: 4. 396f.). Mendoza warned against initiating a battle, as even the victorious battle was expensive and led to the death of many; he told the Spanish Crown Prince, to whom he dedicated his book, to approach battle with a 'leaden foot' (Mendoza 1595/1597: 109).

In the opposite camp, views were similar. The Dutch opponents of the Spaniards were equally reluctant to give battle. John 'the Middle' of Nassau-Siegen, one of the Dutch military leaders in their wars against the Spanish Habsburgs, advised against skirmishes which might escalate into an unplanned battle. Yet he concluded from the Dutch experience that many small battles could achieve more than few encounters, even if the latter were 'big and strong' (John 'the Middle' 1597/1960: 129f.). William Louis of Orange wrote to his cousin Maurice in 1607, with a direct reference to Fabius Cunctator: 'we have to conduct our affairs in a way that will not subject them to the chances of battle', and urged him 'not to proceed to give battle, except

out of extreme necessity'. In the same year, William Dilich published his *Warbook* in Hesse, expressing his preference for 'winning nothing' rather than suffering a battle and its consequent losses (both q.i. Delbrück 1920a: 397).

These views influenced the French in turn. Jean de Billon in his treatise on the Dutch military reforms actually outlined tactics of exhausting the enemy, by moving one's troops about, keeping the enemy guessing as to whether or when one might give battle. He described these tactics as preferable to the 'uncertain fortune' of giving battle (Billon 1613: x).

Critics of this cautious approach (who at the same time confirm its prevalence) include Henri, duc de Rohan, writing during the Thirty Years War:

Of all actions of war the most glorious and the most important is to give battle; winning one or two leads to the acquisition or the overthrow of entire empires. In antiquity all wars were decided by battles, which led to such quick conquests. Now war is made more in the fashion of the fox than of the lion, and it is based more on sieges than on combat. And yet there are even today nations which mostly decide their wars by battles, like the Turks and the Persian; and even among the Christians we have seen recently that several battles took place in Germany. (Rohan 1636: 257f.)

Like Rohan, Raimondo de Montecuccoli, one of the Habsburgs' generals in the last part of the Thirty Years War, urged his readers, 'Do not avoid combat, but seek to give it where you have the advantage' (q.i. Chaliand 1994b: 567).

And yet even the Thirty Years War saw fewer battles per year than other protracted wars. Of the two famous imperial generals of this war, Johann Tserklaes Tilly favoured battles and by and large emerged successfully from the majority of the forty he fought as a general. Albrecht von Wallenstein (or Waldstein), by contrast, hesitated to give battle, even though he performed well when he was not laid up with one of his periodic illnesses (Domes 1995: 148–62).

Twenty years after the Westphalian peace treaties, Hay du Chastelet in France thought of battle as crucial to any decision in war, and urged his reader to put it at the centre of all efforts. Interestingly, he was a civilian, and never saw battle himself (Hay du

Chastelet 1668/1757: 127–9). By contrast, Feuquières, as an experienced general, was among the Fabians. Only extreme necessity or good reasons, he argued, should drive one to give battle. Among the good reasons he counted one's own numeric superiority; fear of mass desertions among one's own ranks; or a window of opportunity before the enemy received his own reinforcements. He urged that one should weigh the advantages one might gain from a victory against the disadvantages of a defeat – if the latter were greater, one should not run the risk (Feuquières 1731: 124). Feuquières was succeeded as leader of the sceptics by Maurice de Saxe, who led the French forces in the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14), in the Austro-Turkish Wars under Prince Eugene (1716–18) and the Wars of the Austrian Succession (1740–8). In his *Dreams about the Art of War*, he wrote,

I do not favour pitched battles, especially at the beginning of war, and I am convinced that a skilful general could make war all his life without being forced into one. Nothing so reduces the enemy to absurdity as this method; nothing advances affairs better. Frequent small engagements will dissipate the enemy until he is forced to hide from you. I do not mean to say by this that when an opportunity occurs to crush the enemy that he should not be attacked, nor that advantage should not be taken of his mistakes ... But when a battle is joined under favourable circumstances, one should know how to profit from victory and, above all, should be contented to have won the field of battle in accordance with the present ... custom ... On the contrary, the pursuit should be pushed to the limit. And the retreat ... will be turned into a rout. (Saxe 1732: 298f.)

The pursuit of enemies after a battle had been won and lost was exceptional in his era, and reserved for armed forces who could be defined as traitors and insurgents against legitimate authorities, who were thus treated as criminals, like the Jacobite supporters after their lost battles against the Hanoverian kings of Britain (especially after Culloden in 1746). No such post-battle slaughter thus took place when Maurice de Saxe defeated the Duke of Cumberland (son of George II) a year earlier at the battle of Tournai in 1745, as this was seen as a contest between two legitimate opponents.

In Spain, Santa Cruz de Marcenado was among those urging caution against giving battle unless one could be very confident of

its positive outcome for one's own side (Santa Cruz de Marcenado 1724–30 [1727]/1885: X). His Austrian Habsburg contemporary, Field Marshal Count Khevenhüller (1683–1744) elaborated the pros and cons of the decision to give battle, developing decision-making criteria for when a battle was to be avoided, when sought (q.i. Delbrück 1920a: 400f.). As late as 1815, Johann Konstantin von Lossau cautioned against accepting a battle which the enemy sought to impose, as this would give the initiative – and the leading role – to the adversary (Lossau 1815: 40f.).

Even Frederick II of Prussia, while favouring the offensive, had cautioned against battles that did not usefully further one's war aims. Commanders should avoid being forced into battle in adverse circumstances, and if the enemy sought to impose a battle, he automatically imposed the 'laws' of that battle – the battlefield, the positions, the time and weather conditions. A commander, he wrote, must have a good reason to seek battle; otherwise, as we have seen, his general rule (which he himself was unable to apply) was that wars should be short and lively (Frederick II 1748: 180–2).

There has been a considerable debate about whether Frederick really aimed for short, sharp wars. Did he instead, as the Prussian-German historian Hans Delbrück (1848–1929) argued both before and after the First World War, favour manoeuvres and last-minute decisions on whether or not to give battle? In a comparative study of Pericles and Frederick II of Prussia, Delbrück opposed a 'strategy of throwing down' or 'crushing' the enemy in decisive battles, to an 'exhaustion strategy' or 'tiring strategy'. In the latter, big battles would be avoided; the enemy would be worn out not only by pinpricks and skirmishes, but also by the cost of keeping his own forces in being for a long time, to wear the enemy down through constant manoeuvring requiring constant marches in response, which would lead to an exhaustion of supplies, demoralisation of the forces, desertion and indirect success (Delbrück 1890; Hobohm 1920: 203ff.). Delbrück saw two categories of generals, the ones who primarily sought to crush the enemy, among whom he counted Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, Gneisenau, Moltke, and those who sought to wear him out until he came to terms: Pericles, Hannibal, Gustavus Adolphus, Eugene, Marlborough, Frederick II and Wellington. Majority opinion today tends to be that Frederick, like Tilly or Marlborough, might have wished for quick wars with decisive battles, but as his adversaries,

especially Daun, the field marshal of Empress Maria Theresia, tended not to, and other circumstances mitigated against them, he was forced to manoeuvre and avoid battle just as much as the other side.

Guibert was torn on the subject of the performance of the admired Frederick II of Prussia. Guibert had as a youth witnessed the Seven Years War, and especially the ignominious defeat of the French at Rossbach (1757), where French losses had been almost twenty-five times greater than Prussian losses, thanks to Frederick's use of the oblique order of battle he liked to apply. While this was not Frederick's only victory, it was an exceptional one. It was far more common even for him to be unable to bring about decisive battles. Either the defeated side managed to reconstitute armies fairly soon after the defeat, or refused to give battle and manoeuvred around him, or he himself chose not to engage in battle, or the victor did not manage to exploit the victory in battle diplomatically and politically, as the other side formed new coalitions or had other reasons to hope that the situation could still be reversed.

Frederick II was not the only one to find that 'decisive' battles eluded him: the same applied before his time, to other military commanders of the *ancien régime* as much as to the commanders of the Thirty Years War. In the intervening period, the Duke of Marlborough, who had won several battles in the War of the Spanish Succession, had found it equally difficult to bring about battles and to create the conditions for them to be truly decisive diplomatically (Ostwald 2000: 649–78).

Both contemporaries and later historians saw the Thirty Years War as well as several of the wars of the *ancien régime*, especially the Great Northern War or the Seven Years War, as notable for their indecisive campaigns and battles. Bülow wrote

A defeat is of much less consequence in the modern system of war, than it was among the ancients … The number of the killed is never very great; that of the wounded is considerable, but they recover … Modern battles never weaken an army to such a degree, but that it may be ready for a fresh attack a few days after; and even that is not necessary, as every victory may be rendered fruitless by Strategic manoeuvres on the flanks and rear of the enemy. (Bülow 1799/1825: 107f.)

There were notable exceptions in that period. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and Frederick II of Prussia would be remembered for their

keenness on battle, especially by writers of the nineteenth century. But confronted with the battle-eager Huns, Arabs, Magyars and Turks, over a millennium or more, the Byzantines and west Europeans were not only on the defensive, but also on the hesitant side, even if there were some crucial and 'decisive battles' in which, pushed into a corner, they managed to hold their own.

Offensive and defence

On average, writers before the second half of the nineteenth century were divided as to whether the defensive or the offensive was preferable. For Feuquières, there were five different sorts of war: defensive wars (to be waged, he thought, mainly by a weaker party, or if otherwise attacked), offensive wars (which one should only wage if much stronger than one's adversary), wars in which both sides were perfectly equally balanced, wars fought as a result of treaty obligations to allies and civil war (which alone he regarded as a very unfortunate business). Feuquières expressed no preference, but simply commented on the problems and opportunities arising from each form of war (Feuquières 1731: 113–57). Frederick II of Prussia, who was willing to take risks and to bluff in his wars, dismissed any purely defensive plan. Instead, he argued in favour of an offensive defensive, that is, a defensive Strategy that would turn into counterattack at the earliest opportunity. He much preferred aggression, however, unbalancing the European state system in the process of his opportunistic campaigns, coming close to engendering an alliance against Prussia which might have brought down his dynasty (Frederick II 1748: 176). Henry Lloyd, who fought against Frederick in several campaigns, recognised only two forms of war, defensive and offensive. For Lloyd, neither form was by definition superior (Lloyd 1781/2005: 485–99).

  The comte de Tressan, writing on war in Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, still took a completely technical view of war. According to Tressan, the 'State of War' – by which he meant the totality of all preparations for war, including the making available of human and other resources, their training and the war plan – should incline to the offensive or to defence in view of the balance of forces – one's own side vs. the opponent's. He made the barest reference to differing war aims as independent of resources, such

as a potential opponent's wish to conquer or reappropriate a disputed province. Otherwise, he described offensive or defensive wars primarily as functions of the forces available on one's own side. If these were weaker or smaller than those of the enemy, then one should choose a defensive posture; if one's own forces were larger or stronger, one could choose the offensive. He thought that a defensive war was more difficult to conduct than an offensive war, where one could feed one's forces from the enemy's territory, which had the added advantage of denying these resources to the enemy (Tressan 1757: 988–91). Famously, Carl von Clausewitz after his experience of Russian defence in depth against Napoleon's *grande armée* in the campaign of 1812, in which only a small fraction of Napoleon's forces ever returned, would also proclaim defence the stronger form of war (Clausewitz 1832/1976, VI: 1).

The wars of the French Revolution, and those of Napoleon, proved a watershed in this context. Thenceforth and until the end of the Second World War, the 'decisive battle' became the be-all and end-all of warfare, indeed, the very aim of all Strategy.

Limited and unlimited wars

An important but mistaken notion spread among writers on Strategy even before the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and that was the assumption that wars until then had been 'limited' in aims and means, and that they became 'unlimited' in aims and means under Napoleon. We find it with Vattel (1758/1834: 347) and Guibert, who regarded the warfare of his age – with the exception of that of Frederick II of Prussia – with distaste: 'Today, all of Europe is civilised', he wrote disparagingly.

Wars have become less cruel. Outside combat, blood is no longer shed. Towns are no longer destroyed. The countryside is no longer ravaged. The vanquished people are only asked to pay some form of tribute, often less exacting than the taxes that they pay to their sovereign. Spared by their conqueror, their fate does not become worse [after a defeat]. All the States of Europe govern themselves, more or less, according to the same laws and according to the same principles. As a result, necessarily, the nations take less interest in wars. The quarrel, whatever it is, isn't theirs. They regard it simply as that of the government. Therefore, the support for this quarrel is left to mercenaries, and the military is regarded as a cumbersome group of

people and cannot count itself among the other groups within society. As a result, patriotism is extinct, and bravery is weakening as if by an epidemic. (Guibert 1772/1781: 187f.)

Describing the state of affairs before the French Revolution, the Hanoverian Johann Friedrich von Decken (1769–1840) thought that 'wars have become less frequent and less devastating', thanks to the state monopoly on standing armies (Decken 1800: 134). Clausewitz, who had not witnessed the 'limited' wars of the *ancien régime* himself, writing more than half a century after Guibert, uncritically paraphrased Guibert's impression of them (Clausewitz 1832/1976, VIII: 3). From this Clausewitz formed his much-quoted paradigm of 'limited' (especially *ancien régime*) war vs. absolute (especially Napoleonic) war, which was at the centre of his major revisions of *On War* which remained incomplete at his death (Aron 1976: I).

There was some truth in this with regard to wars immediately preceding the French Revolutionary Wars, but even among the wars of the *ancien régime* more generally, some were barely limited by rules of conduct in war. If we go back further in time, the Thirty Years War was anything but limited in nature, in any sense that both Guibert and Clausewitz would have recognised: relative to the total population of the areas where the war was waged, greater losses of life were caused (with up to two-thirds of the population dead in places) than in the First or even the Second World War.

Nevertheless, the perception of the eighteenth century as an age of limited war was passed on to the following generations and became commonplace. To give just two examples, both dating from 1933: the British strategist Basil Liddell Hart in his appropriately entitled *The Ghost of Napoleon* claimed that 'The features of the eighteenth century that first strike the historical observer are the rareness of battles and the indecisiveness of campaigns' (Liddell Hart 1933: 20). The Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero (1871–1942) wrote similarly:

Restricted [i.e. limited] warfare was one of the loftiest achievements of the eighteenth century. It belongs to a class of hot-house plants which can only thrive in an aristocratic and qualitative civilisation. We are no longer capable of it. It is one of the fine things we have lost as a result of the French Revolution. In losing it we won many other kinds of progress, but it might

in the end wipe out all that we have achieved. That is the great danger. (Ferrero 1933: 63f.)

Few would, like Russell Weigley, point out that the early modern age had been the *Age of* (frequent) *Battles*.

Particularly when seen from a long-term perspective, the notion that wars before 1792 were limited and thereafter became unlimited in scope, decisiveness and war aims is a misconception. This is because, as we have seen, war aims, and the strategies employed to achieve them, have fluctuated widely in European history and the history of war in other parts of the world. In fact almost all major categories of warfare, and Strategy, have existed before the French Revolution, from terrorism and irregular warfare and insurgency to genocide, from limited, small-scale skirmishes to massive battles with large-scale casualties. Technological change did not play the direct and dominant role as the simple, all-conditioning variable which determined the intensity of wars. Instead, throughout history, the use that was made of technology has depended on social, cultural, political and ideological variables. The evolution of warfare has not been one-directional. The notion of a one-way development of war from limited to unlimited (and ever more bloody) has to be rejected as false, just as the Whig interpretation of history in general as one of steady progress was exposed as false.

Frank Tallett has argued that it was only logistics that restricted the options available to military commanders in early modern Europe. War, he argued, was rarely limited in its effects on civilians, or in its war aims: these were grandiose, aiming (before the Peace of Augsburg 1555 and again in the early decades of the seventeenth century), to change the religious face of Europe. Or else they aimed to change the order of the known world (as did several parties in the Thirty Years War), or to swallow up sovereign states as in the Seven Years War (Tallett 1992: 67f.).

While this sounds persuasive, the fact remains that contemporaries saw the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars as a watershed, and it changed their thinking on warfare, finally prising it away from the denial of change. But if change there was, did all warfare change? Were there no eternal constants, no eternal laws governing war the way they governed physics or the human body? If one acknowledged change in technology and other circumstances of

war, could one still seek to identify eternal patterns of warfare? Were there eternal maxims applicable through the ages? Could one still distil these from history?

The enduring quest for eternal principles governing warfare

During the Vietnam War, the French strategist David Galula remarked:

Ever since men have thought and fought (sometimes in the reverse order), attempts have been made to study war – philosophically, because the human mind loves, and needs to lean on, a frame of reference; practically, with the object of drawing useful lessons for the next war. Such studies have led, in extreme cases, to the denial that any lesson at all can be inferred from past wars, if it is asserted that the conduct of war is only a matter of inspiration and circumstances; or conversely, they have led to the construction of doctrines and their retention as rigid articles of faith, regardless of facts and situation. (Galula 1964/2005: xii)

Indeed, most works on warfare since antiquity started from the firm assumption that one could learn lessons from past examples, just as theologians or lawyers deduced ethical tenets or laws from the writings of the ancients and the Bible. This was of course the central assumption on which Vegetius and others had constructed their field manuals, and this assumption survives until the present as the foundation of empirical research in all the social sciences. Moreover, authors until well into the eighteenth century denied that changes in military technology, especially what has retrospectively been called the military revolution (Roberts 1956) flowing from the introduction of gunpowder, transformed war to the extent that historical examples drawn especially from classical antiquity and the works of the ancients should be abandoned as guidance to its conduct (Heuser forthcoming).

Since antiquity, such empiricism was the basis of all sciences. Addressing himself to his patron, Lorenzo de' Medici, Machiavelli wrote:

As for intellectual training, the prince should read history, studying the actions of eminent men to see how they conducted themselves during war and to discover the reasons for their victories or their defeats, so that he can avoid the latter and imitate the former. Above all else, he should read

history so that he can do what eminent men have done before him … In this way, it is said, Alexander the Great imitated Achilles, Caesar imitated Achilles; and Scipio, Cyrus. (Machiavelli 1532b/1961: 89f.)

This is an attitude that Machiavelli shared with medieval writers on Strategy. Even another century and a half later, with gunpowder firmly established on the battlefield not only in the form of cannon but also of light artillery, most writers on Strategy agreed that (in the words of historian Azar Gat) 'while the forms [*Formen*] of war may change with time, its spirit [*Geist*], or essence [*Wesen*], remains unchanged' (Gat 1992: 67). Writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, like Vegetius and Machiavelli before them, wanted to extract the 'best principles' of fighting from the study of past wars, in the words of the baron de Traverse (1752: v).

The reflections and recommendations made by the early modern writers on military matters tended to focus, in the tradition of Vegetius, on the craft of war, and generally mention few political considerations. Good examples of this are the works of Diego de Alava y Viamont, Montecuccoli, Puységur and Feuquières. All four concentrated to the exclusion of almost anything else on what the 'perfect captain' or general needed to prepare for war and conduct his campaigns and battles successfully. They and other military professionals saw themselves as highly skilled craftsmen, or artisan/artists, or other specialists in their field. They hardly if ever touched on political issues.

It was logical that they all sought principles easy to articulate, to teach and to learn, as what they all had in common is that they wrote instruction manuals. An early example of such rules can be found in Henri, duc de Rohan's seven rules on how to win battles:

1. Never to let oneself be forced to give battle against one's will.
2. To choose a battlefield fitting to the quality and the number of soldiers.
3. To deploy one's army on the battlefield in accordance with the quality of one's soldiers so that it is to one's own advantage: put the cavalry before infantry or infantry before cavalry, depending on which is stronger … and have a reserve, like the Romans.
4. To have several good generals, not just one.
5. Keep good distances between forces in the order of battle.

6. The bravest soldiers should fight on the wings, not in the centre.
7. Do not allow pursuit of enemy forces or pillage. (Rohan 1636: 259ff.)

Such sets of rules were drawn up, as in the writings of Machiavelli, Bernardino Rocca or Bertrand de Loque, for the prince as supreme commander of his armed forces, or like the treatises of the sieur de Fourquevaux for the general, or even, like the works of Thomas and Dudley Digges, or Henri, duc de Rohan, for an officer at any level, the 'perfect captain'. All of them sought to formulate doctrine as defined by Barry Posen, the part of Strategy that concerned only the armed forces, that they were to learn and apply to their warfare (Posen 1984: 13f.). This tradition of writing instruction manuals continued unabated until the end of the eighteenth century. After the early example of Henry VII of England distributing Christine de Pisan's *Boke of the fayt of armes and of Chyualrye* to his knights in the late fifteenth century, it was mainly from the eighteenth century that specially prepared instruction manuals or field manuals were issued to officers as compulsory reading. Among them we find Frederick II of Prussia's field manual of 1761, written by himself for his officers. By 1783 at the latest Britain had issued similar regulations (Anon. 1783). Napoleon himself opined that

[s]trategy ... rests on principles which no one must forget. All the generals of old and all those following in their footsteps with dignity have only done great deeds because they have internalised the natural rules and principles of the art of war, which are the good fit [*justesse*] of combinations [of forces], the exact concept of the means to be applied, resistance to difficulties. (q.i. Foch 1909: 3)

Books of instruction also continued to originate from the pens of private authors. One such was Johann Friedrich Konstantin von Lossau, who stipulated that the 'spirit of war' was always the same, even if it was difficult to try to theorize about it – theories had the catch of being either 'too general and thus subject to endless modifications', or 'actually have their eyes fixed on very particular circumstances' which they pretend to be worthy of universal generalisation (Lossau 1815: 35).

Scharnhorst in 1792 wrote the main German-language field manual in the classical style that can be seen as exemplary for its kind, in

the tradition of Vegetius. It can be taken as a prime example of *ancien régime* thinking, reflecting no interest in political or ethical dimensions. Instead, what interested him as a mathematician and artillerist were the technicalities of siege warfare and targeting (Scharnhorst 1793: 390–442).

In the middle of the Napoleonic Wars Archduke Charles postulated both the existence of immutable principles of war and a constant change in the way they had to be applied, as a result of constant evolutions in weaponry and military technology (Charles 1806: 88f.; Waldtstätten 1882: 225). Shortly after their end, the Bavarian engineer Joseph Ritter von Xylander (1794–1854) professed scepticism about the 'science of strategy' being able to yield any such rules: 'The science [*Wissenschaft*] of Strategy does not yield rules the direct application of which must lead to certain events; it only yields general principles of wars, from which rules can be abstracted for the infinite number of different cases that result from reality.' He did, however, settle for one, that of the offensive as key to success (Xylander 1818: 20, 34).

Clausewitz can also be subsumed in this generalisation, as his writings express both the belief in eternal, intrinsic characteristics of war, while emphasising the infinite variety of its manifestation in reality (Clausewitz 1832/1976, VIII). In a note in a paper of 1827 Clausewitz enumerated a list of principles of warfare:

- that defence is the stronger form [of warfare] with the negative purpose, attack the weaker form with the positive purpose;
- that the great successes also determine the smaller ones;
- that one can thus trace back strategic effects to certain centres of gravity;
- that a demonstration is a weaker use of force than a real attack, that it must therefore be based on particular conditions;
- that victory does not merely consist of the conquest of the battlefield but in the destruction of the physical and moral fighting forces, and that this is mostly only achieved in the follow-up to the battle that has been won;
- that success is always the greatest where the victory was achieved by fighting;
- that therefore the change from one line and direction [of attack] to another can only be regarded as a necessary evil;

- that an attack on the rear [*Umgehung*] is justified only by [one's own] superiority in general or by the superiority of one's own line of communications and retreat over that of the adversary;
- that flanking positions are conditional upon the same circumstances [as spelled out in the previous point];
- that every attack weakens as it progresses (t.i. Clausewitz 1832/1976: 182f.; Gat 1989: 255–63).

Attempts to try to boil down the rules guiding successful warfare had become fashionable. Clausewitz' contemporary and rival Antoine Henri Jomini is most commonly associated with such a list of principles, writing in an American edition of his works:

There exist a small number of fundamental principles of war, and if they are found sometimes modified according to circumstances, they can nevertheless serve in general as a compass to the chief of any army … Natural genius will doubtless know how, by happy inspirations, to apply [these] principles as well as the best-studied theory could do it … The fundamental principles upon which rest all good combinations of war have always existed … These principles are unchangeable; they are independent of the nature of the arms employed [!], of times and places … For thirty centuries there have lived generals who have been more or less happy in their application. (q.i. Gat 1989: 112)

Jomini's recipe for success, deduced from Napoleon, was 'the employment of masses upon the decisive points' (Jomini 1811/1865: 149). In his *Summary of the Art of War*, he wrote that 'Strategy, particularly, may be regulated by fixed laws resembling those of the positive sciences', but conceded that this was 'not true for war as a whole' (Jomini 1837/1868: 321).

Shortly after the Franco-Prussian War, French officers were taught rules of war, with opinion differing only on whether there were twenty-four or forty-one. There were opponents of such reductionism, but the rules dominated the teaching methods (Mayer 1916: 7). Opponents included General Berthaud, but also General Lewal (Lewal 1892: 49ff.). Writing a good decade later, the French General Victor Derrécagaix related 'strategy' to a small number of immutable principles, while tactics were eternally subject to mutation under the influence of new weapons. But when pressed to pronounce on what such an eternal principle might be, the only

one he articulated was 'to be the strongest at the decisive point' (Derrécagaix 1885: I: 4, 375).

In 1895 the first French field manual containing a set of rules was produced. The essential rules were:

1. To preserve one's own freedom of action and to limit that of the enemy.
2. To impose one's will upon the adversary and to avoid submitting to his [an echo of Clausewitz].
3. To economise one's forces in favour of mass and to apply that to a conveniently chosen point and to a favourable movement, in order to produce a decisive development.

Everything else, it was explained, flowed from these principles (q.i. Bonnal 1920: 18f.).

On the eve of the First World War, Clausewitz's disciple Sir Julian Corbett produced a more sophisticated argument centred on human nature. He held that theoretical study

can at least determine the normal. By careful collation of past events it becomes clear that certain lines of conduct tend normally to produce certain effects; that wars tend to take certain forms each with a marked idiosyncrasy, that these forms are normally related to the object of the war and to its value to one or both belligerents; that a system of operations which suits one form may not be that best suited to another. We can even go further. By pursuing an historical and comparative method we can detect that even the human factor is not quite indeterminable. We can assert that certain situations will normally produce, whether in ourselves or in our adversaries, certain moral states on which we may calculate. (Corbett 1911: 9)

Alfred Thayer Mahan was characteristically more interested in rules and maxims in the Jominian tradition:

Maxims of war … are not so much positive rules as they are the developments and applications of a few general principles. They resemble the ever varying, yet essentially like, forms that spring from living seeds, rather than the rigid framework to which the free growth of a plant is sometimes forced to bend itself. But it does not therefore follow that there can be no such maxims, or that they have little certainty or little value. Jomini well says, 'When the application of a rule and the consequent maneuver have procured victory a hundred times for skilful generals, shall their occasional failure be

a sufficient reason for entirely denying their value and for distrusting the effect of the study of the art? Shall a theory be pronounced absurd because it has only three-fourths of the whole number of chances in its favor?' Not so; the maxim, rooting itself in a principle, formulates a rule generally correct under the conditions; but the teacher must admit that each case has its own features … which modify the application of the rule, and may even make it at times wholly inapplicable. It is for the skill of the artist in war rightly to apply the principles and rules in each case. (Mahan 1918: 229f.)

In the light of technological change, however, the French General Colin, writing shortly before the Great War, was sceptical about what in his time was the commonplace of 'immutable grand principles of war'. He opined that many among them were defunct, while others that were in fact 'eternal' had been neglected and might make a reappearance (Colin 1911: 233).

Marshal Foch by contrast tried to reinforce the teaching of Jomini's list of principles or variables: Foch invoked Napoleon (who said that 'The principles of war are those which have directed the great Commanders whose great deeds have been handed down to us by History') and Jomini, who extolled the virtues of 'sound theories founded on principles both true and justified by facts', which, in addition to history, were the true training for commanders. Foch summarised: 'There is, then such a thing as a theory of war. That theory starts from a number of principles[.] The principle of economy of forces. The principle of freedom of action. The principle of free disposal of forces. The principle of security, etc.' (Foch 1900: 8f.). Foch complained that in the past, the variable of morale had been neglected by his countrymen in writing on the subject (Foch 1900: 3).

The first listing of such principles in the USA occurred in the *Training and Regulations 10-5* field manual of 1921 (q.i. Brodie 1959: 24). In Britain it was J.F.C. Fuller who introduced the idea of such rules, following Foch, after his countrymen – like Sir Edward Hamley (Hamley 1872; J.F. Maurice 1891: 8) – had long rejected the notion that warfare could be guided by eternal principles.

Fuller boldly condensed all his wisdom into 'eight principles of war, and they constitute the laws of every scientifically fought boxing match as of every battle'. Echoing Foch, these principles are:

1st Principle: The principle of the objective.
2nd Principle: The principle of the offensive.

3rd Principle: The principle of security.
4th Principle: The principle of concentration.
5th Principle: The principle of economy of force.
6th Principle: The principle of movement.
7th Principle: The principle of surprise.
8th Principle: The principle of co-operation (Fuller 1923: 27f.).

Fuller's principles made their way into the British *Field Service Regulations* of 1924 (vol. II). They were:

- maintenance of the objective
- offensive action
- surprise
- concentration ('of superior force at the decisive time and place')
- economy of force ('involves the correct distribution and employment of all resources in order to develop their striking power to the utmost')
- security ('of a force and of its communications')
- mobility ('implies flexibility and the power to manoeuvre and act with rapidity')
- co-operation

and Basil Liddell Hart wrote extensive comments upon them (Liddell Hart 1944: 179f.).

The 'economy of forces' is an often misunderstood concept which goes back at least to Clausewitz. Admiral Castex explained it as really meaning the management (in the original Greek meaning of the word, husbandry) of forces: distribution, organisation, deployment, provisioning, with an underlying notion of a harmonious order underpinning all this (Castex 1934, IV: 54–61). In another volume of his work, however, he defined the economy of forces as prioritising a principal aim and giving fewer resources to secondary aims (Castex 1939, II: 7). As Bernard Brodie observed:

The term 'economy of force' … derives from an interpretation governed by the nineteenth century connotation of the word 'economy', meaning judicious management but not necessarily limited use. Thus, the violation of the indicated principle is suggested most flagrantly by a *failure to use* to good military purpose forces that are available … Of late, however, the term has often been interpreted as though it demanded 'economizing' of forces, that is, a withholding of use. (Brodie 1959: 26)

Liddell Hart subsequently simplified his recipe for British military success in a chapter headed 'The concentrated essence of war':

DO
1. Choose the line (or course) of least expectation.
2. Exploit the line of least resistance.
3. Take a line of operation which offers alternative objectives.
4. Ensure that both plan and dispositions are elastic, or adaptable.

DON'T
5. Don't lunge whilst your opponent can parry.
6. Don't renew an attack along the same line (or in the same form) after it has once failed. (Liddell Hart 1932: 310–14)

In 1928, Fuller modified his principles, with the most important four remaining:

> The offensive should be assumed on all occasions when circumstances permit.
> Offensive action should spring from a strong defensive basis.
> The defensive should be so organised as to permit of it changing into an offensive at the shortest possible notice.
> The offensive cannot be too strong in reserves, therefore the defensive should not employ a weapon beyond the minimum necessary to establish security. (Fuller 1928: 1)

These Fullerian principles still inspire British field regulations.

Several British and American naval strategists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – the historical school, one might call them – were particularly convinced that they could draw lessons for the present from their countries' naval history (see chapter 9). Yet their deductions from past experiences were constantly challenged by changing technology. No lesser man than Admiral Sir John Fisher, British First Sea Lord shortly before and again during the First World War, and patron of several naval historians, thought that 'Whatever service the past may be to other professions, it can be categorically stated in regard to the Navy that history is a record of exploded ideas. Every condition of the past is altered' (q.i. Kennedy 1989: 183).

By contrast, Charles Callwell, writing in 1905, argued that 'While naval tactics and military tactics are constantly going through a process of evolution as the science of producing arms of destruction

progresses, the broad principles of strategy ashore and afloat remain unchanged from century to century.' He conceded, however, that

it is none the less true that the principles of maritime strategy have in the course of years undergone appreciable modifications, in conformity to a certain extent with the advances which have taken place in the craft of the shipwright. Then, again, developments and discoveries in the science of electrical communication are exerting no small influence over the principles governing the applications of strategy to modern conditions at sea. Progress in civilisation, moreover, has tended to more clearly define the relations which should exist between belligerents and neutrals, than [before]. (Callwell 1905: 23f.)

Continuities of a different sort were at the heart of an analysis of war that stood more in the Clausewitzian tradition, and this we find in the writings of Hans Delbrück that we have already alluded to. Even before the First World War, Delbrück thought that he had identified two basic strategies, one of which he called the Strategy of exhausting the enemy through constant manoeuvring, pinpricks and the avoidance of battle where possible, thus drawing out the war (*Ermattungsstrategie*), which, as we have seen, he pinned on Frederick II. The other Strategy he identified was that of seeking to crush his army in a decisive battle (*Niederwerfungsstrategie*; see also chapter 7). Delbrück thought he could see this dual pattern right through history, from Pericles to Napoleon. One of his critics, the historian Otto Hinze, baulked at this:

Concrete historical systems do not repeat themselves in world history. What repeats itself in the flight of manifestations are only the elements of such systems which can be identified analytically, i.e. abstract principles or tendencies, such as the principles of crushing or exhausting the adversary … But those, I argue, are present in all strategies, only in very different mixtures and in infinite gradations. These differences constitute the individual, concrete historical system of strategy in different eras and with different military leaders. (Hintze 1920–1: 145f.)

Regaining a superior Clausewitzian level of analysis and turning away from mere Do's and Don'ts for armed forces' instruction manuals, the Anglo-American strategist Colin Gray sought to identify eternal truths about warfare that could be seen to apply whatever

the technology, culture and other context of a war. Gray asserts that:

Notwithstanding the uniqueness of every historical context, only a mind monumentally closed to evidence and reason could fail to acknowledge the generic continuities in strategic history … [W]ar has an unchanging nature … [while] warfare takes many forms, not infrequently even within the same war. In the broadest terms, warfare comes in two varieties, regular and irregular.

Factors that Gray regards as ever present he enumerates, following Clausewitz, as the 'trinity of passion, chance and probability, and reason' and the restrictions that can be imposed upon the conduct of war by rational actors. These will seek to control war because of considerations of cost, policy, Strategy, of fear and of culture. Some may prefer not to use all their power in 'the interest of a civilised order' (Gray 2005: 16–19). In his *Fighting Talk* he sought to identify tenets about war that are of lasting applicability, indeed, truth (Gray 2007b). Unlike some of the early modern writers, however, Gray in no way denies change: rather, he argues that 'the strategic thread is the most significant of the several engines of historical change', albeit not 'the sole driver' (Gray 2007a: 280).

The quest for eternal principles determining success and failure in war, the wise application of which might produce a favourable outcome for one's own side, thus continues to this day. And yet crucial parameters were subject to change, such as the aims of war and the means to conduct it.

The Napoleonic paradigm and Total War

5 | *The age and mindset of the Napoleonic paradigm*

Napoleon was not a personality, but a principle.

(The Duke of Wellington in 1837)[1]

Causes of wars, world-views and war aims 1792–1914

Chapters 2 and 3 charted the fluctuations and the constants in warfare prior to the French Revolution. From Cicero until the French Revolution, there was agreement in the Romano-Christian world that war could only be justified if it led to peace, and a better peace than previously. There were varied opinions about the importance of battle in warfare, and many counselled extreme restraint in seeking and giving battle. While military men wrote about victory in battle, writers of all professions were aware that a lost battle did not necessarily mean the end of war, and that victory in battle needed to be followed up in certain ways to lead to peace. Even though thinkers from Machiavelli, Urrea and Bernardino de Mendoza to Vattel favoured militias drawn from local populations, armies were more often than not multinational, composed of local levies and often foreign mercenaries.

Most of this changed dramatically with the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, known in Britain as the 'Great War' until the First World War claimed that epithet. They were a watershed not only in the conduct of war itself, but also in thinking about war (Ford 1963/4: 18–29). Without any technological revolution, the French fought differently, with much larger armies than Europe had seen since antiquity, reaching six-figure numbers under Napoleon. His organisation of armies into columns was one element of his success,

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[1] Quoted by Philip Henry, fifth Earl of Stanhope, *Notes of Conversations with the Duke of Wellington, 1831–1851* (London: John Murray, 1888): 102.

but the new tactics applied by the French were aptly summarised by the Prussian General Valentini who saw it as the conduct of small (or irregular) war, but on a much larger scale (see Part VI of this book): in battle, France's soldiers relinquished drilled formations and sought out the enemy individually, whether by careful targeting of their muskets, or with sabre or bayonet (Valentini 1779/1820: 1–3). When challenged by the royalist armies who sought to put King Louis XVI back on the throne, the French Revolutionaries fought for themselves and for their newly won liberties. They were inspired by new political ideals, and fought for their own cause, something which Count Jacques Antoine Hippolyte de Guibert had predicted would give them a very special force (Guibert 1772/1781: 138). The Napoleonic armies – composed of an increasing percentage of foreigners – fought for France, but above all for their charismatic leader, for honour and glory.

Contemporaries unsympathetic to the French Republic or to Napoleon struggled with the supposed secrets of French success. If they were monarchists like the Prussians, they tried to ignore the appeal of democracy, talking condescendingly of the French rabble. Still, they gradually conceded that the nation in arms as a concept revived if not engendered by the French Revolution had transformed warfare in scale and intensity, and introduced a force and a passion into the warfare of the subsequent 150 years that had been absent since the last 'wars of opinion' (Jomini), the religious wars of previous centuries.

By contrast Napoleon's admirers, like Jomini, created a Napoleonic paradigm for success: they emphasised his monumental victories, his fast moves and surprising attacks, his clever concentration of his troops on one point in the adversaries' forces, the 'centre of gravity', and his relentless pursuit of battles with casualty figures on both sides entirely unprecedented in living memory. This latter interpretation in particular, popularised by both Jomini and Clausewitz, would seize the imagination of contemporary commentators and later strategists, who up to the present have tended to write admiringly about Napoleon's 'annihilation battles', his reckless pursuit of victory. Very few realised, like the French socialist Jean Jaurès (1859–1914), that Napoleon had ultimately failed both at Leipzig and finally at Waterloo, and nothing of his empire survived. Even along the way, he had engendered more enmity than victories, to the

point where ultimately he had most of Europe united against him (Jaurès 1911: 53–5).

Those who resisted the French discovered xenophobic nationalism for themselves, a tremendously important change of European passive culture, by and by to spread to most parts of the globe. They were mostly opposed to (French) republicanism, (French) democracy, (French) secularism, in fact, all things French (including Napoleon's relatives as imposed monarchs), and they upheld their own old royal families. They also discovered the cult of their own language, culture and people, aspiring to statehood for their own nation. Tyroleans, Spaniards and Prussians fought not only for their princes but also for their 'nation', their culture. From the loving rehabilitation of vernacular languages and peasant lore that had been ignored in the great century of French cultural predominance in Europe grew angry self-assertion, amply fuelled by the inferiority complex which the defeats at the hands of the French had engendered. This complex turned into an aggressive need to prove one's supposed superiority. Logically, it took the shock of a similar defeat for France in 1870/1 to turn 'peasants into Frenchmen' and to engender, there too, a xenophobic nationalism of a quality not previously known in France (Weber 1977; Audoin-Rouzeau 1989).

Ironically, it had been Napoleon and the French who had given other Europeans the concept of national unity – as for example in Northern Italy, where Napoleon established the Italian Republic (later transformed into the Kingdom of Italy) and first united principalities that had been separate entities for centuries. Then there was Poland, temporarily liberated by Napoleon from Prussian and Russian encroachments, where his memory is sacred. The seeds of nationalism were thus sown by the Napoleonic occupations (Llobera 1994: 179–210).

Ethnic or xenophobic nationalism, discovered almost overnight in the first decade and a half of the nineteenth century, initially seemed to run out of steam after the defeat of Napoleon and the collapse of his empire, but it continued to gestate throughout Europe. The contest between *ancien régime* and republicanism continued, culminating in the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Ethnic nationalism was the 'third way': it could be harnessed to monarchies who had lost their absolutist claims to power, or it could be married to democratic tendencies, or it could occupy an ambiguous space between the two,

where the 'people' were glorified without gaining the vote. As the republican and democratic forces failed to triumph over monarchies in 1830 and 1848, democratic urges in on the European continent were increasingly channelled into ever-growing national pride and concomitant popular hatred of supposed enemy 'nations'. Xenophobia was turned into poisonous ideas of one's nation's superiority and irreconcilable, hateful competition with others through the admixture of the popular reading of Malthusian and Darwinian teachings about the scarcity of resources in the world, and a competition of nations or 'races' for survival. Nationalism had blossomed earlier in some places – in Britain, there had been English antecedents in the sixteenth century, and the Napoleonic Wars forged British nationalism; the French had since the Middle Ages seen themselves as having succeeded the Israelites as God's new chosen people. Elsewhere nationalism took until the First World War to develop its full force. Either way, nationalism transformed warfare.

The deliberate mass killing of civilians simply because they belonged to one group rather than another had been extensively practised in classical antiquity, in the Middle Ages, in the religious wars of early modern Europe and in colonial warfare. In the nineteenth century, it reappeared in Europe, spreading from the Balkans. 'It is the moods of the peoples, lust for annexation and revenge, the desire to draw close to peoples of the same tribe … which endanger peace' wrote the Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder late in his life (Großer Generalstab 1911: 4). He knew what he was talking about: he had spent several years as adviser to the Ottoman Empire, a pressure-cooker heated up by the force of nationalism that was boiling from Greece to Armenia, from Bulgaria to Egypt. The 1870s in particular saw horrible atrocities committed by both sides in the Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire. With an exponentially grown world population, the following century would see genocide on scales unprecedented in history.

The American Civil War (1861–5) is an exceptional case in this context. Obviously, the opposition between both sides was not primarily based on xenophobic nationalism, but on sentiments not unrelated. White Southerners believed in their own inherent racial supremacy over their slaves, with the issue of the abolition of slavery dominating the debates between North and South in the decade before the outbreak of the war and providing a key cause. Northerners

generally had a comparable faith in American exceptionalism, in being God's chosen people. The extreme religious convictions of William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–91), one of the chief generals of the Union, that God's hand and His divine providence could be seen throughout the war are not untypical of the culture or religious revival of his age (McPherson 1997; Bower 2000). Nor was Sherman's or General Philip H. Sheridan's attitude to enemy civilians, and their respective campaigns for the destruction of civilian morale in Georgia, the Carolinas and in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, merely the product of the passions of the moment. During the Franco-Prussian War, Sheridan joined the Prussian side as an observer, urging Bismarck to cause 'the inhabitants [of France] so much suffering that they must long for peace, and for their government to demand it. The people must be left nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war' (q.i. Degler 1997: 68). Indeed, the American Civil War has been called 'the first of the modern total wars' (Williams 1954: 3), although in view of the definition of the term which we will discuss in the next chapter, it can at best be regarded as such in terms of the large-scale mobilisation of men and resources (Neely 1997 29–52).

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1 was carefully orchestrated by Bismarck with two ends in mind: one, the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine, which interested him not only because the populations spoke a German dialect as remote from modern German as Dutch, and could therefore be declared ethnic Germans who should be integrated into the new German nation-state. That Bismarck was capitalising on nationalist sentiments rather than on deeply held national convictions is apparent from his lack of interest in the inclusion of Austria, where modern German was spoken, but which rivalled Prussia for German leadership. Alsace and Lorraine were also interesting because of their industry and natural resources, and their strategic location on the west bank of the Rhine. Which led to Bismarck's second aim: to override the deep historical rivalries among the many German principalities through confronting them with an outside threat, France: it was arguably his cleverest manoeuvre to have manipulated the French Emperor Napoleon III into declaring war on Germany, mainly out of hurt pride. This was a war with limited aims, but national feelings were mobilised on both sides to the extent that the limited territorial losses suffered by France – and the huge punitive payments imposed by Germany – led to smouldering irredentism and lasting animosity.

Both the Franco-Prussian War and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/5 followed the new pattern set by the American Civil War in terms of how mass-produced weapons, quantum leaps in the yield of firepower, railroads, the telegraph and other innovations could increase both the sizes of armies involved and the numbers of casualties inflicted. The First World War would trump all three in terms of casualties.

The Russo-Japanese War, like the Franco-Prussian War, was fought over the control of a limited albeit strategically important piece of territory in Russia's Far East. By contrast, the war aims of the First World War were less clear. The war notoriously started, much like the Franco-Prussian War, over an issue of pride and personal injury to the imperial family: after the Austrian crown prince and his wife had been assassinated by a Serb terrorist, Serbia refused to do Austria's bidding with regard to the treatment of the terrorist himself and Serb army officers he had implicated. In the absence of an international criminal court, or any international organisation that could have contained the situation and effected a mutually satisfactory handling of the situation, Austria went to war with Serbia, Russia as Serbia's ally went to war with Austria, Germany as Austria's ally went to war with Russia, France as Russia's ally went to war with Germany, and Britain followed suit as Germany, in its infamous Schlieffen Plan pre-emptive attack against France, crossed through neutral Belgium, guaranteed by Britain in turn. What war aims were for any party from this point was far from clear. True, France wanted to repossess its provinces and to humiliate the Germans with a peace treaty as smarting as the one imposed by Bismarck in 1871, Serbia wanted Austrian possessions in the Balkans to form a greater Serb kingdom and Britain wanted to liberate Belgium, the neutrality of which seemed important to it. But in the context of this, much else was achieved, especially the destruction and the parcelling out of the German, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires. Nor would the Germans and the Austrians have done otherwise had they won – witness the territorial concessions exacted by Germany from Russia at the Peace of Brest-Litovsk of March 1918, even if they had been dreamt up by clever diplomats at the green table and had not been part of any design in 1914. None of this had been part of a real 'grand strategy' prior to 1914, and all sides made it up as they went along. The only clear plans which had existed in 1914 – the German army's Schlieffen Plan for a sickle

attack on northern France through Belgium and the German navy's plans for attacking America or at least Scandinavia and preferably Britain – were at best, as Stig Förster has convincingly shown, an attempt to pre-empt all others in what was seen to be a window of opportunity (Förster 1995, 1999). But even there, the absence of properly articulated demands that could have been the basis of quick armistice negotiations made nonsense of it politically (Kennedy 1976, 1979; Wilson 1995). While Clausewitz's view that no one in his right mind should ever start a war without a clear idea of what he wants to achieve is praiseworthy, the reality of the First World War was different. But then, this was not an age of enlightenment and rationality, but one which prided itself in its irrational passions and emotions, its xenophobic nationalism and its glorification of war.

Militarism

For another novelty in the passive culture of the nineteenth century was 'militarism', a word coined by Madame de Chastenay just after the Napoleonic Wars, but taken up only in 1861 by Pierre Proudhon writing about *War and Peace*, soon used widely in Germany, France and Britain (Berghahn 1981: 6). The phenomenon, which also spread to the United States and indeed to other parts of the globe like Japan, mixing well with the old Ottoman warrior-culture, had several aspects. One was that of a new and qualitatively different admiration for the military, even though the cult of the warrior can be observed in many societies past and present. There are cultures in which all adult men are under pressure to prove themselves as warriors; there are other cultures, found in Europe from the Dark Ages until the *ancien régime*, in which an elite claims its position of superiority as a warrior caste. The militarism of the nineteenth century differed from this in that through various forms of conscription, entire classes of men spent anything from one to five years in a purely military environment, with its culture of shouted orders and unquestioning obedience, and the inescapable respect for the higher ranks which flowed from their power to punish or pardon and order all the others about. Military behaviour spread into civilian spheres, and no profession, no occupation was generally held in greater esteem than that of the military officer (or, for a young man, his time in military service). The lawyer Hermann Kantorowicz (1877–1940) noted about the

spirit of that age that 'the officer became the male role model for pri-
mary school teachers, postal employees and greengrocers' (q.i. Picht
1954: 461). Even children were put into miniature imitation naval
uniforms, the famous sailor suits, throughout North America and
Europe.

Whole nations were militarised. Worse still, from the point of view
of policy-making, civilian leaders tended to be ignored unless they
donned uniforms, as Prince Otto von Bismarck noted with dismay,
and monarchs with their waning powers vis-à-vis parliaments or oli-
garchies who increasingly encroached upon regal prerogatives still liked
to assume the posture of military commanders-in-chief; to this day
monarchs and members of royal families incongruously like to be por-
trayed in uniforms. The posturing of Emperor William II of Germany
as supreme military commander and his meddling in military matters
contributed to the lack of co-ordination of German military planning
and political leadership on the eve of and during the First World War
(Ritter 1954: 21–48).

Accordingly, those writing on war and Strategy between the death
of Clausewitz and the outbreak of the First World War throughout
the West were mostly military officers, usually lieutenant-colonels or
colonels at the time of writing, several of whom attained the level
of general or even marshal. They had all experienced major military
action first-hand, but also knew colonial policing, such as G.F.R.
Henderson (1853–1904), J.F. Maurice (1841–1912) and C.E. Callwell
(1859–1928). Most of them had plenty of international experience –
either in the respective empires, or, in the case of Moltke the Elder
and Colmar von der Goltz (1843–1916), in the Ottoman Empire.
Several were military instructors in staff academies, which accounts
for the sprinkling of civilians like the later Oxford don Henry Spenser
Wilkinson (1853–1937), Chichele Professor of Military History at All
Souls College, Oxford, and Sir Julian Corbett (1854–1922), teacher
of British naval officers.

The others were not only very similar in background, but they were
also all avidly reading each other, in what was perhaps a more inter-
national debate than any since. Literature took much less time to travel
from one country to another, and translators were busy. Curiously,
nationalism, while so crucial to the animosity between these coun-
tries which was to drive them into the Great War, did not prevent stra-
tegic theorists from reading very closely and respecting their enemy's

works. Of course they also used much the same case studies from recent history, and drew very similar lessons from them.

Militarism was also an accepted cultural feature of their general readership. While it is generally thought today that the populations of Britain, France and Germany were less universally happy about the outbreak of the First World War than had long been claimed, there was widespread jubilation (Liddell Hart 1944: 17), and at any rate they were well prepared for heroic self-sacrifice (Bruendel 2003). The British had long been led to think of themselves as a warrior nation (Paris 2000), but this applied also to the French and to the self-appointed 'heirs' of Frederick the Great. Militarism – the special, very powerful role in society of the military, whose leaders were still to a large extent recruited from the same social strata as 100 years earlier – was weaker in Britain. It was fairly strong – especially on the right and among the more affluent classes – in France and Germany. Only a handful of critical minds doubted the inherent superiority of the moustachioed or bearded caste of professional officers and the hierarchy of uniformed human machines created to serve and obey them.

Opinions on civil–military relations were not divided according to nationality, but right across national boundaries. One central issue was whether the civilian leadership – the politicians – should have the final say on the conduct of military operations even *during* war, or the supreme military leader – the famous Bismarck vs. Moltke controversy in the war of 1870/1. In Prussia, General Wilhelm von Blume (1835–1919) had a complex prescription for civil–military relations, which could suit even full-fledged democracies today, with the stark exception of his claim, reflecting the realities of the Second German Empire (1871–1918), that the military commander was not subservient to the politician, but to the emperor, who appointed both without parliamentary checks (Blume 1882: 16). Blume emphasised the importance of constant discussion between politicians and the military, in which the former would explain their aims, the latter explain what they could do or what they could not do, and the former would have to adapt their aims accordingly. Moreover, a constant adaptation of war aims might become necessary during the course of a war (Blume 1882: 19–21). General Rudolf von Caemmerer (1845–1911) sided with Bismarck in the controversy over whether the military leader or the political leader should have the final say on the major

lines to follow during war time (Caemmerer 1904/1905: 84–7). By contrast French General Jules Louis Lewal (1828–1903) and his colleague Commandant (later General) Jean Colin (1864–1917) thought, like Moltke, that the politicians should keep out of the conduct of war altogether. They could and should, both conceded, have a say in the declaration of war, in the war aims and in the armistice and peace negotiations. Other than that, they should respect the military's sole decisions on how to conduct the war (Lewal 1892: 16; Colin 1911: 341–6). The German General Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849–1930) in *On War of Today* conceded that political aims, and thus political decision-makers, had to dominate war:

War is only ever a means to reach an aim which is altogether outside its sphere. Therefore, war cannot decide on this aim for itself, by determining the military target according to its own judgement. If one conceded this privilege to war, one would always incur the danger that war, freed from all bonds, would be … fought for its own sake, or that its achievements would fall short of what is politically necessary.

But in barring politicians from interfering in the conduct of war, Bernhardi spoke for the majority of his colleagues in the West: if politics, that is, political decision-makers

define their aims in relation to the means of power available to the state, and in co-operation with the military leader determine the military targets which are to be reached, it must nevertheless *never interfere in the conduct of war itself* and *attempt to order it to take a particular course* to actually reach the military targets … For war is the continuation of politics with *other* means and will be unfaithful to its innermost essence, as soon as it makes use of political means … If politics [i.e. decision-makers] wanted to conduct the military action onto a political course, and use war not as an independent means of politics, but as a political means, politics would put at risk military success in all cases. (Bernhardi 1912b, II: 205, 207f.)

Another aspect of militarism was the related world-view in which violent solutions to the political disagreements of states were the best, most noble and most honourable. Negotiations with another state – always seen as adversary – let alone compromises were seen as cowardly, unmanly, weak. In the spirit of militarism, political decisions were thus taken with a proclivity towards violent solutions.

The cultural differences between Britain, France and Germany on the eve of the First World War were very small compared with the differences between today's Britain and the pre-1914 Britain, between today's France and pre-1914 France, between today's Germany and pre-1914 Germany. If anything, they understood each other far too well, as they all were out to be top nation and to prevent the others from starving them out of colonies, *Lebensraum* and existence in the deeply Hobbesian international environment of the times. In defiance of any theory postulating that people go to war with each other because of *differences* in ideology, in the case of the First World War, it was because they were so similar to each other, and understood each other so well, that they all sought to get their retaliation in first.

The influence of Social Darwinism and racism

Even during the Franco-Prussian War, the term 'racial war' (*Rassenkrieg*) cropped up in soldiers' letters (Stonemann 2001: 288). Social Darwinism was inappropriately named after Charles Darwin, owing much more to Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Biology* of 1864, where he coined the famous notion that only the fittest race/nation would survive a colossal struggle for resources against all others in a world that was getting too small for all of them. This notion was only a little more prominent (if that) in Germany than in France and Britain.

Helmuth von Moltke the Elder thought of the world as a constant fight of 'that what will be against that what is', in an almost biological analogy presupposing limited resources fought over by competing races. Moltke's and Bismarck's Wars of German Unification in themselves stand for the distinctiveness of the spirit of the age. Bismarck built a feeling of common destiny among the peoples from several German-speaking states (traditional adversaries and rivals) by manipulating them into waging war against common constructed enemies. Absurdly, the victory over France in the last of these wars was used to proclaim a united German Empire, or *Reich*, absurd, as Austria, the major German-speaking power, as homeland of the Habsburgs the true heir to the Holy Roman Empire, was deliberately left out; like the American Civil War, the Wars of German Unification were thus in part a secessionist war. Bismarck believed that only the shock of wars and victories, of 'blood and iron' could bring the other

German states to surrender their distinct historical and regional identities to the united Germany under Prussian tutelage. War – the military solution – was preferred over any alternatives. Bismarck's Strategy had its equivalent in the wars of Italian unification. Although Moltke and Bismarck were competitors for power, their views in this matter are in agreement and stand for the international dimension of militarism. 'Eternal peace is a dream', wrote Moltke disparagingly,

and not even a beautiful one, while war is an element of God's world order. In war, the most noble virtues of man unfold, which would otherwise slumber and become extinct: courage and abstention, loyalty to one's duty and willingness to make the sacrifice of one's life. The experiences of war are a lasting influence, strengthening a man's ability for all future.

Conceding that war brought suffering for the families, Moltke described this as an inescapable part of 'this world', the *condition humaine*, 'according to the will of God'. He harked back to the poet Schiller's *Sturm und Drang* phase in which he glorified war as 'good', as it made people more resourceful, forced them to think and take action. As a result of 'improving morality', there might be fewer wars in the future, he speculated,

but no State can do totally without war … As long as distinct nations exist, there will be conflicts which can only be sorted out through the use of force. I regard war as the *last*, but a fully justified means, to defend the existence, the independence, and *the honour* of a State. (Großer Generalstab 1911: 1–3)

Deterrence was not a concept congenial to this culture. Moltke's contemporary Wilhelm von Willisen argued that the sole purpose of armies was war (Willisen 1860: 66). Similarly, Lorenz von Stein, writing in 1872, saw war as the only external purpose of armed forces, the internal purpose being the protection of the independence of the state. War, in his words, was the benchmark of all peoples, their 'highest life-task' (Stein 1872: 4f., 33).

The widely read Wilhelm von Blume grudgingly conceded that 'every war destroys much happiness in life, annihilates the fruits of much industry, demands great sacrifices, and remains an evil, albeit one that is at times necessary and salutary in its consequences'. He

believed in the 'invigorating' effects of war on a population involved in it. Deploying the purple prose so popular in his age, he admired the way in which a *Volk* (people) might engage

all its strength, its possessions and blood in order to secure the life conditions of the State, for its honour, its cultural mission. Spirits are forcefully stimulated and directed towards ideals, slumbering forces are awakened. Bravery and manly strength, sense of duty and self-denial, triumph over caution, sloth, indolence, selfishness; the feeling of solidarity, the self-consciousness of the State are given life, what is true and real in people and State seizes its rights, while lies, incompetence and pretence are unmasked. Such a war is like a thunderstorm which after hot summer days sweeps across the land, fearsome and destructive, but at the same time cleansing, impregnating, awakening weakened forces to new life … thus States and peoples intermittently need war in order to retain their vigour …

The dangers of an excessively long peace grow for the people just as its luxury grows. A people that amasses wealth and becomes soft with an agreeably good life, will fall victim to the changes of borders and states through war so much the faster, as its riches will instil desires abroad. (Blume 1882: 8f.)

This morbid quest for a purge, a purification of the nation from its corruption and social problems had developed not only in Germany, but throughout Europe; as we have seen in chapter 2, it goes back to classical antiquity. Nevertheless, Social Darwinism added a new dimension to it, when the military writers of the late nineteenth century almost to a man worried about the non-martial *mentalité* of their fellow nationals, which might give the edge to less civilised, more robustly barbarian peoples once the ultimate showdown was upon them all (see, for example, Blume 1882: 41–6). Time and again, the strategic theorists stressed that it was counterproductive for the higher aim of the survival of the nation if the individual soldiers valued their own lives – the currency through which the glory, independence and liberty of the nation had to be bought. For they all agreed that the ultimate showdown would come and was inevitable (Cairns 1953: 283, 285). Sacrifice instead of comfort and indulgence was seen as the panacea for society's ills. Here is David Lloyd George speaking on 19 September 1914:

We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable and too indulgent … and the stern hand of Fate has scourged us

to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a nation – the great peaks we had forgotten of Honour, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of Sacrifice pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven. (q.i. Eksteins 1990: 189)

Social Darwinism also inspired visions of states and empires as organic systems with a childhood, adulthood and old age or decline, followed by demise. The German geographer and geopolitician Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) described states as organisms. In his writing he created the basis for the German cult linking 'blood and soil' ('*Blut und Boden*') by harping on about the relationship of people and the soil and geography, and the related theme of people and space ('*Volk und Raum*'). This soon turned into a complaint about the overpopulation of Germany, leading to the logic of colonial expansion either overseas or within Europe, a battle cry taken up by the German colonial movement and later by the National Socialists (Ratzel 1897: 65f.).

Peoples, cultures and societies were described along with species as less developed or more developed. Ratzel projected a similar hierarchy into forms of war: the *lowest* (!) form to him was 'war of annihilation', 'where the eradication of the adversarial people becomes the sole purpose, as one disdains its territory; a part [of the people] is killed, a part abducted into slavery, the land is left uncultivated or falls to the victor as a collateral gains'. The word 'annihilation' here clearly stands for genocide. After this, and only slightly less barbaric according to Ratzel's categorisation, came closely related forms of war: wars for booty and wars of conquest of territory. Most of the wars of the previous two millennia, he thought, had been wars for territory, which in his view even applied to the national wars of the nineteenth century, where peoples wanted to reconquer lost territory, or make their national territory more compact and less patchy. Trade wars, another one of his categories, he thought were never just about trade, but usually reflected long-standing conflicts. They were similar to colonial wars, but both, unlike the other categories, were ill suited to arouse great popular passions (Ratzel 1897: 65f.). Where the French invoked the 'civilising mission' of France (*mission civilisatrice*) and Bernhardi spoke of Germany's 'highest cultural tasks' (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 7), Ratzel fantasised about the 'heroic traits of the colonists'. While Ratzel emphasised a hierarchy of advanced and

primitive cultures rather than supposed biological (racial) differences between populations (Ratzel 1897: 65f.), his works easily lent themselves to racist interpretations.

The most extreme protagonist of Social Darwinist views of the struggle for the survival of the fittest must be Bernhardi. He was the faithful offspring of a line of sadistic and misanthropic German high-priests of the state and adulators of war as purifier of society from Frederick the Great, Goethe and Schiller in their bad moments, to Hegel and Fichte, to August von Schlegel, Treitschke and the German Social Darwinists like Claus Wagner, all quoted by Bernhardi:

The natural law, to which all laws of Nature can be reduced, is the law of struggle. All … property, all thoughts, inventions, and institutions, as, indeed, the social system itself, are a result of the intrasocial struggle in which one survives and another is cast out. The extrasocial … struggle which guides the external development of societies, nations, and races, is war … In what does the creative power of this struggle consist? In growth and decay, in the victory of the one factor and in the defeat of the other! This struggle is a creator, in that it eliminates. (Bernhardi 1912a: 11f.)

From all this Bernhardi deduced a 'duty to make war' (Bernhardi 1912a: 38–55). Bringing in the arguments of Social Darwinism, Bernhardi succinctly summed up the dilemma of the ever-expanding world population as many saw it since Malthus:

War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow, which excludes every advancement of the race, and therefore all real civilization. 'War is the father of all things.' [Heraclitus] The sages of antiquity long before Darwin recognized this. The struggle for existence is, in the life of Nature, the basis of all healthy development … The law of the stronger holds good everywhere … The weaker succumbs … Strong, healthy, and flourishing nations increase in numbers. From a given moment they require a continual expansion of their frontiers, they require new territory for the accommodation of their surplus population. Since almost every part of the globe is inhabited, new territory must, as a rule, be obtained … by conquest, which thus becomes a law of necessity … [Eventually], might gives the right to occupy or to conquer. Might is at once the supreme right, and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament [*sic*] of war. War gives a biologically just

decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things. (Bernhardi 1912a: 10, 15)

Hitler's argument about the need for '*Lebensraum*' was fully fledged well before the First World War (Puschner 2001).

Bernhardi also argued that the qualities of armies depended on the spirit of the nations, their discipline, strength or moral weakness, whether they are 'infected by revolutions' or by 'increasing opulence'. Germany had a (growing) population of 65 million on a territory the same size as France with a population of only 40 million; Germany needed more food, and therefore more colonies, which could only be at the expense of other colonial powers. In Bernhardi's view, Germany faced a 'European war against superior enemies', and Germany's freedom of action was hampered to an intolerable degree. Germany's position in the world – 'purchased … so dearly with the blood of our best' – was being threatened. Germans should ensure that the needs of their country were met, as befitted its greatness, as 'the very existence of our people as a civilized nation' was endangered. Germans should set out on their 'civilizing tasks' with a greater colonial empire, increasing the 'influence of Teutonic culture in all parts of the globe'. France, Russia and Britain were Germany's enemies (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 7).

Writing almost thirty years before Bernhardi, Wilhelm von Blume did not sound quite as brutal, but his writing, too, echoed a world in which all were at war against all. It reflected the spirit of the Bismarckian world when no traditional friendships between states could be counted upon any longer after Bismarck had used all and deceived all in order to promote the rise of the Second German Empire at the expense of all its neighbours – 'The friendship of other states today might even tomorrow turn into enmity' – and therefore he advised against relying on the support of any other state (Blume 1882: 49). The Prussian Field Marshal Colmar von der Goltz got his ideas on the influence of discipline from Darwin – it makes the armed forces so much more powerful than an armed mob (Maurice 1891: 43). Von der Goltz claimed that high culture and great prowess in war went together, while decadence sometimes went along with a continued knowledge of warfare, absent bravery and self-sacrifice (Goltz 1883/1906: 8ff.).

Similarly, von der Goltz quoted Clausewitz's dismissal of naïf views of humanity, which played straight into the hands of the enemy who

would gain ascendancy (Goltz 1883/1906: 8ff.). 'The matter thus lies in a nutshell', he wrote.

All projects of disarmament are framed in misconception of our present political life, which proceeds from the tribal consanguinity of nations. Owing to the community of interests, which today prevails in every nation, the various peoples confront each other like persons among whom a natural inherent selfishness becomes the source of disputes, individual good-will notwithstanding. National egotism is inseparable from our ideas of national greatness. This egotism will always appeal to arms when other means fail, and where would a tribunal of arbitration be found which were capable of dictating peace? Only a world-empire could do this. But world-empires owe their being to, and are inseparable from, wars. (Goltz 1883/1906: 10f.)

Echoing Moltke the Elder in his famous exchange of open letters with the Swiss professor Bluntschli, von der Goltz wrote: 'We must accept what the gods send. What is … absolutely certain, is that *wars are the fate of mankind, the inevitable destiny of nations; and that eternal peace is not the lot of mortals in this world*' (Goltz 1883/1906: 570).

   This passive culture, this world-view was not alien to Britons. Lt.-Col. F.N. Maude, writing in 1905, thought that

Clausewitz was the first to define War as an extreme form of human competition. In other words, he did for the nation what Darwin subsequently did for individuals, viz. he showed that War was nothing more or less than the 'struggle for the survival of the fittest' on the national plan. (Maude 1905: v f.)

Biological concepts were employed all round, to argue that along with the new weaponry, warfare now required even stronger and even hardier human beings to conduct it – precisely a scarce commodity unless a physical (and moral) reform could be effected among the masses of young men destined to go and fight (Altham 1914, I: 1–5). The French *Jeune École* of maritime Strategy discussed in chapter 9 was also thoroughly taken by such biologically deterministic arguments (Bueb 1971: 19). Ratzel praised 'war' as the extreme manifestation of the 'masculine traits of … the will to dominate', while peace 'fettered the man to his wife and descendants' and was the expression

of the 'feminine-conservative sexual life', which in the context of his times was not meant positively (Ratzel 1897: 65f.). Historian Antulio Echevarria sees in this fear of decadence and decline the origins of the cult of the offensive, which all sides hoped would stem the tide of moral disintegration (Echevarria 2002a).

Exceptionally among the nineteenth-century strategic thinkers, Blume understood that modern weapons were a great equalizer – no longer would it be important whether an individual was brave, healthy, robust, muscular and sporty: the bullet or bayonet pierced his chest as easily as that of the weakling, the coward, the pale miner or the malnourished industrial worker (Blume 1882: 42). This realisation, much as the introduction of the crossbow in the twelfth century, threatened any system of internal social hierarchy posited on the inherent, physical, hereditary superiority of some families over others, and thus of the old system of class rule which despite growing democracy was alive and well not only in the imperial Germany of the Junkers, but also in Britain and France (Cairns 1953: 273–85; Gordon 1974: 191–226). How could classes expect to rule others if they were not stronger, fitter and less vulnerable than their social inferiors?

Of the belligerent, nationalist ethos that was spreading through Europe like a fatal, contagious disease towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Spanish-born American philosopher George Santayana wrote:

The spirit in which parties and nations beyond the pale of English liberty confront one another is not motherly nor brotherly nor Christian. Their valorousness and morality consists in their indomitable egotism … a desire which is quite primitive. (q.i. Eksteins 1990: 128)

But the disease touched not only people 'beyond the pale of English liberty'. Social Darwinism spread widely among these military authors on all sides. Its argument ran along the following lines: only the fittest nation/race (both terms still used fairly synonymously) would survive in a struggle pitting nation/race against nation/race. The ruling classes of all three countries – possibly more in Britain and France than in the aggressively upwardly mobile German Empire – also succumbed to cultural pessimism (Gordon 1974: 199). They became conscious that their industrialised societies had large working classes living mostly in poor conditions, who were physically anything but

fit. All the military writers considered here were convinced of the high civilisation and culture attained by their own nation, but saw with concern the lack of martial lust and prowess, alongside the disintegration of old social structures, customs and class structures (Blume 1882: 46f.). Such cultural 'superiority complexes', accompanied by the fear of one's own cultural decline in relation to vigorous barbarian foes outlived the First World War not only in Germany, where it turned into the diabolical racism of National Socialism. To give but one example of such language, the British military historian, later General, J.F.C. Fuller (1878–1966) in 1923 explained his view that 'Though the desire of man is peace, the law of life is war; the fittest, mentally or bodily, survive, and the less fit supply them with food, labour and service' (Fuller 1923: 7).

Morale

The importance of 'morale' fitted in with the belief that a Darwinian struggle for the survival of the fittest race was looming, for 'morale' was seen as a function of national or racial superiority. The recognition of the importance of morale, as an independent factor alongside physical forces, goes back at least to the French naval specialist Audibert Ramatuelle, writing at the time of the French Revolution and of Napoleon (Depeyre 1990b: 85). This is a particularly French theme, and late in the nineteenth century came to substitute for numbers, when the French realized that the German population was 'outbreeding' the French, as the French had already developed the civilised trend towards smaller families, often with only one son, the famous *fils unique*.

The particular French answer to this, paired with the doctrine of the *offensive à outrance*, culminating in the views of Marshal Ferdinand Foch, was that the French simply had to force themselves to be mentally, spiritually and emotionally superior to the numerically superior and militarily obviously very impressive Germans (Foch 1900). It was the *élan* and the will that had to make the French superior to the Germans. Over and over, French military writers had to tell themselves that they were superior – and blot out the memory of the ignominious defeat of 1870/1 (Cairns 1953: 280–2).

Similar ideas, emphasizing the morale over *matériel*, can also be found in British writing: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond called 'the

human factor … the most influential of all the elements in war, transcending that material factor which tends to dominate the minds of superficial men' (Richmond 1931: 298). Writing in mid-1921, Captain Basil Liddell Hart (1895–1970) agreed on the importance of morale. 'The strength of an army depends on its moral foundation more than its numbers; the strength of an armed nation depends on the morale of its citizens. If this crumbles the resistance of their armies will also crumble, as an inevitable sequel.' Liddell Hart paraphrased Foch (without acknowledgement):

Man in war is not beaten, and cannot be beaten, until he [has] acknowledged himself to be beaten … So long as war persists as an instrument of policy, the objects of that policy can never be attained until the opponent admits his defeat … Hence it can be seen that victory is a moral, rather than a material effect. To conquer, one has to make one's foes feel the force of a moral superiority which will shake their faith in their own power to win. This demoralization is achieved, however, by a concrete effect. The infliction of casualties will not alone produce it. The survivors, who alone retain the power to admit defeat, must themselves feel the superiority of the opponent. The concrete proof of this to them comes clearest from the fact of being driven back – not a few yards only, for their morale will survive this; but being hurled back in confusion, from which there seems no hope of recovery. The demoralization which begets a general conviction of inferiority comes from retreat and the break-up of organization. (Liddell Hart 1944: 20)

Morale henceforth became something all military doctrines considered as a crucial factor.

The original 'realists'

Against the widely held belief that universal struggles for national survival were afoot, amid the growing tide of nationalist selfishness that matched such a zero-sum Darwinian world-view, the nineteenth century gave birth to what would in the twentieth century become known as 'realist' interpretations of international relations. This saw interstate relations in terms of Hobbesian anarchy, in which each state would fend for itself, totally selfishly, without any loyalty to any other party, and with at best a regard to the balance of power logic inherited from early modern Europe, practised so ruthlessly by Bismarck.

Where selfishness was previously the dominating motivation of princes and their dynasties, it was now the narrow selfishness of nations that was widely accepted as the key determinant of interstate relations. This supposed a total distrust of international law and interstate conventions which, nevertheless, were increasing in number and scope during the same period (Honig 1995/6). The 'realist' approach also fitted well with the Napoleonic paradigm, as it was mutating into the pursuit of total war (see the following chapter).

Moltke himself had, surprisingly, held rather pacific tendencies in his youth. In 1840 he professed his faith in 'the much derided concept of general European peace', and in 1842 he explained his belief that social and economic developments in Europe, especially trade and industry, would increase the hankering of its peoples for peace. By the mid-1850s, as his military career flourished, his view had changed profoundly, and he wrote disparagingly of legal and diplomatic attempts to settle disputes between states. At the time of the Franco-Prussian War he wrote that in view of the fluctuating goals of diplomacy, 'strategy has no choice but to strive for the highest goal attainable with the means given' (q.i. Gat 1992: 72).

Blume recognised the restraints of international law, humanitarian concerns and world opinion on warfare. He conceded that certain laws were followed by civilised nations, but only their conscience, and their concern about the opinions of third parties, could make them uphold these laws. There was no point, he thought, in formulating any conventions which go beyond existing laws as they would be disregarded in war (Blume 1882: 1f.).

Typically for the 'realists' of this period, von der Goltz totally distrusted any proposals for disarmament. 'Only that nation is secure which is prepared at any moment to defend its independence sword in hand' (Goltz 1883/1906: 8–11). Von Bernhardi thought that 'The enmities surrounding us cannot be exorcised by diplomacy' (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 12). Writing on the eve of the First World War, he opined:

The arbitration courts, which the contracting powers engage to obey, are meant not only to lessen the dangers of war, but to remove them altogether. This is the publicly avowed object of such politics. In reality, it is hardly caused by an ideal love of peace, but is evidently meant to serve quite different political purposes, [namely their particular advantages] … We

Germans therefore must not be deceived by such official efforts to maintain the peace. (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 10f.)

Bernhardi concluded: 'If we wish to gain the position in the world that is due to us, we must rely on our sword, renounce all weakly visions of peace, and eye the dangers surrounding us with resolute and unflinching courage' (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 11).

   Britain and the US also tended to distrust international agreements, either not ratifying them, in the case of the US, or, in the case of Britain, secretly (or indeed openly) basing their planning on the assumption that they would not be respected by either party in war time. Lord Goschen, First Lord of the Admiralty, declared in 1898 with regard to the danger of the interruption of commerce by an adversary:

I know that it is said that we could secure ourselves from this particular danger by accepting an alteration in the rules of International War which would exempt merchant ships from capture in war; but the life of a people must rest in something stronger than the adhesion of a belligerent to a technical rule made in peace. We know too well that if the decisive issue of victory depended on their breach, plausible reasons would be found, probably on the pretext of reprisals, for breaking a law which had no other sanction than the authority of a paper agreement. (q.i. Gretton 1965: 9)

It is no accident that the most prominent writer on air power, Giulio Douhet, writing after the First World War, also belonged to the 'treaties-are-pointless' school:

All the restrictions, all the international agreements made during peacetime are fated to be swept away like dried leaves on the winds of war. A man who is fighting a life-and-death fight – as all wars are nowadays – has the right to use any means to keep his life … The limitations applied to the so-called inhuman and atrocious means of war are nothing but international demagogic hypocrisies.

He therefore predicted that poison gas would be used in a future war, despite its prohibition (Douhet 1928/1983: 181f.).

Owing to extreme necessity, all contenders must use all means without hesitation, whether or not they are forbidden by treaties, which after all are

nothing but scraps of paper compared to the tragedy which would follow. (Douhet 1928/1983: 189)

A common ploy in the context of such an argument was always to profess one's devotion to principles, but to declare them unworkable, as the enemy would not adhere to them, as in the following passage of a memorandum which was circulated by Royal Air Force Chief of Staff Hugh Trenchard in 1928 – at a time when Trenchard still suspected that the next war by Britain would be fought *against France*: 'If this restriction' on bombing cities

were feasible, I should be the last to quarrel with it; but it is not feasible. In a vital struggle all available weapons always have been used and always will be used … [F]oreign thinkers on war have already shown beyond all doubt that our enemies will exploit their advantage over us in this respect and will thus force us to conform and to counter their attacks in kind. (q.i. Chaliand 1994: 910)

Opponents of this 'realist' approach – who were in a small minority – included the socialists of Europe, like Bertha von Suttner, August Bebel and, on the more extreme end, Karl Liebknecht. A particularly prominent opponent was Jaurès in France, who wanted for his country a defensive Strategy, on the basis of which, if attacked, France could submit her cause 'to the arbitration of civilised humanity' (Jaurès 1911: 72). But even a self-styled pacifist like Liddell Hart, writing in 1925, was sceptical of the value of treaties, as opposed to a wide-ranging change of heart:

The humanization of war rests not in 'scraps of paper', which nations will always tear up if they feel that their national life is endangered by them, but in an enlightened realization that the unlimited spread of death and destruction endangers a victor's own future prosperity and reputation. (Liddell Hart 1944: 36)

The consequence of this distrust of international law and engagements was horrendous. Here just one example from naval warfare: 1909 saw the Declaration of London, which regulated the circumstances in which neutral shipping could be treated as hostile (if it carried contraband or enemy personnel; contributed to the enemy's intelligence-gathering efforts) and might even be destroyed if its conduct to a port

'would involve danger to the safety of the [capturing] warship or to the success of the operations in which she is engaged at the time'.[2] Historian Bryan Ranft commented:

When war came in 1914, Britain successfully resisted pressures from neutrals, led by the United States, to abide by the Declaration and gradually established, using heavy pressure on European neutrals, measures designed to cut off Germany from all seaborne supplies, measures incidentally accepted by the United States when she became a belligerent. In both [world] wars Germany used these measures as a justification for waging unrestricted submarine warfare as an exercise of the recognised right of reprisal.

Limitations on submarine operations against merchant shipping were imposed at the Washington Naval Conference (1921–2), the London Conference (1930) and the Submarine Protocol of 1936, which was ratified by over forty states by 1939, including Germany, the USA, Britain, France and Japan. Nevertheless, unrestricted attacks on merchant shipping began early in the Second World War (Ranft 1982: 170). The 'realist' mind frame of crucial individuals thus ensured that the 'scraps of paper', intended to tame war and render it more humane, were indeed blown aside when the storm broke.

So much for the passive culture and the world-views of the era of the Napoleonic paradigm. In the following chapter we shall explore the different dimensions of this paradigm, and watch its transformation from the pursuit of victory in battle to the pursuit of total war.

[2] Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War 208 Consol. T.S. 338 (1909), Art. 49, www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/1909b.htm, accessed 13 October 2009.

6 | *The Napoleonic paradigm transformed*
From total mobilisation to Total War

[T]he absolute form of war is deduced, not from any of the changes in weapons or in the organizations of armies, but from the entrance of nations into the arena which was before occupied by 'sovereigns and statesmen'.

(Henry Spenser Wilkinson 1910: 181)

This chapter will examine the predominating elements of Strategy in the long nineteenth century and map the evolution of the Napoleonic paradigm into one of Total War along two strands. The first was rooted in the perceived need to make warfare – defensive warfare – more effective by harnessing the entire nation's strength to the cause of the defence of the country, including all its members, all its productivity, all its wealth. In truth this was more an ideal of the French Revolution than a Napoleonic measure, but the two were often merged into one in the minds of men. This ideal originated even before the Revolution, in the Enlightenment, with Count Guibert. It is what would in the First World War be called 'total war' in the sense of 'total mobilisation of one's national resources' by the French politician Léon Daudet, who claimed to have invented the term (Daudet 1918: 8f.).

The second is the quest for a war-deciding battle, which is truly the core of the Napoleonic paradigm. Clausewitz saw the 'battle of annihilation' as central to Napoleon's success (Clausewitz 1832/1976, IV: 11[1]). The sense of the term 'annihilation' would evolve over time in a terrible way, under the shadow of Social Darwinism and racism, as we shall see.

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[1] Howard and Paret (in their translation of Clausewitz 1832/1976: 258) translate '*Vernichtung*' as 'destruction' rather than 'annihilation', but in view of the subsequent impact of Clausewitz's writing and the use of his ideas by others in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'annihilation' is the more appropriate translation.

As we shall see in the following chapter, three different responses to the horrors of the First World War shared the quest for an alternative Strategy to that of attrition. One response was to embrace the defensive in the most static possible way, with the Maginot Line. A second response was to adopt a more indirect approach to confronting the enemy. Of these, one approach sought a new way of mobile war to lead to a more decisive form of battle than what had turned into the attrition warfare of the Western Front. The other concentrated on targeting a different part of the enemy – his civilian population where it was undefended. This last response overlapped greatly with another war aim which had its roots elsewhere and aimed *not* at the targeting of civilians to bring war to a quicker end, but at annihilating an enemy people down to the last man, woman and child. This was a war aim that was not unknown to classical Antiquity, nor to the medieval world or to the wars of religion, and that was present in the ruthless fight against the aristocracy and royalist insurgents in the French Revolution: the annihilation of the enemy, a concept that from the second half of the nineteenth century was interpreted in an increasingly racist and comprehensive way. This is 'total war' in the sense in which the most famous National Socialist strategist, First World War leader General Erich Ludendorff, elaborated it in his eponymous book of 1935. He defined the aims of a future war as 'the *annihilation* of the enemy Army *and of the enemy nation*' (Ludendorff 1935/1936: 168; my emphasis).

From this literature, and contemporary usage, Stig Förster and Jörg Nagler have developed four criteria for the use of the term 'Total War':

- Total mobilisation: going back to definitions used by Daudet and others, it includes total mobilisation of human and material resources for the war.
- The pitting not of prince against prince, or army against army, but of nation against nation, until one or the other is totally annihilated, enslaved, subdued. Förster and Nagler home in on Ludendorff's claim that Total War should be fought 'for the purpose of fighting a war for the life or death of a nation' but included in their definition also total control by the military of one's own country for this purpose, so that peace becomes nothing but a prelude to war.
- According to Förster and Nagler, Total War is organised by modern states with gigantic bureaucratic and military machines: the state,

originally justified to protect its citizens, 'now turned into a murderous fighting machine that used its citizens as "human material" [*Menschenmaterial*]'.

- Förster and Nagler emphasised unlimited war aims as an essential characteristic of Total War. Unconditional surrender, an American term which goes back to the American Civil War (!), was demanded by one side. The other side – the Germans in the Second World War – aimed for physical annihilation or enslavement of enemy peoples, soldiers and civilians alike.

Förster and Nagler summed up their definition thus:

Total War, at least theoretically, consists of total mobilization of all the nation's resources by a highly organized and centralized state for a military conflict with unlimited war aims (such as complete conquest and subjugation of the enemy) and unrestricted use of force (against the enemy's armies and civil population alike, going as far as complete destruction of the home front, extermination, and genocide). (Förster and Nagler 1997: 10f.)

As we have noted, the killing of unarmed civilians had existed since time immemorial. Massacres of unarmed populations are the first proven form of warfare (Guilaine and Zammit 2001: 120–2). The question arises: is all genocide Total War? Förster and Nagler acknowledge earlier forms of deliberate mass killings of civilians, but see the presence of industrialised mass societies as a prerequisite for 'modern' total war, and therefore discourage the use of the term 'Total War' for earlier cases of genocidal warfare, even though these meet other criteria of their definition (Förster and Nagler 1997: 10f.). This last point is debatable, but we should make these definitions our starting point for what is discussed in this chapter: the transformation of a quest for military victory into a war of national survival or even genocide.

The quest for total victory

In the light of the experience of the Napoleonic Wars, Clausewitz's colleague Rühle von Lilienstern noted in 1818 that war was always conducted for political aims which might transcend battlefield victory or even the establishment of (a short-term) peace (see chapter 1). And Clausewitz, as Napoleon's interpreter, is most famously remembered

today for having articulated the link between political purpose and war. The era that began a couple of decades after Clausewitz's death, however, and ended with the two World Wars was marked, above all, by the dismissal of political constraints by most writers on Strategy. Limited war became inconceivable to most. Instead, they ceaselessly emphasised the need for a decisive victory, modelled on Napoleon's battles of annihilation, in which the enemy's armies had to be 'ruined', 'wiped out', 'crushed'. This could only be achieved, they thought, in a commitment to the offensive, as the more 'vigorous', active, indeed 'virile' form of war (Blume 1882: 8f.).

What were the strategic-political aims of such a war? For the Bavarian Joseph Ritter von Xylander, shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, the aim of war was the occupation of and conquest of the territory and possessions of the enemy (Xylander 1818: 17f.). Half a century later, the German university professor Lorenz von Stein from Schleswig-Holstein defined as aims in war the maintenance of the independence of one's own state, and 'victory over the enemy abroad' (Stein 1872: 33). Victory as an absolute concept – not linked to the achievement of political aims – became the be-all and end-all of all strategic writing, and it had to be sought on the battlefield, as the Italian naval historian and Dominican priest Alberto Guglielmotti put it, as just one of many articulating this ill-defined idea (Ferrante 1993: 106f.). Nor was Goltz's war aim of 'complete subjection of the enemy' defined any further (Goltz 1883/1906: 9f., 13). Echoes of Clausewitz's general definition of the aim of war of 'imposing our will on the enemy' were found everywhere. At the time of the outbreak of the Great War, British Major General E.A. Altham defined military success as the ability 'to compel' one's 'adversary to conform to the nation's will' (Altham 1914, I: 3).

Victory was sought for its own sake. As Liddell Hart correctly observed, '[a] "decisive victory" is apt in military language to have a mystical sense which is by no means synonymous with its actual effect'. It did not matter that '[t]he statement hardly accords with the last two or three thousand years of experience' (Liddell Hart 1944: 43). And he mused critically, '[i]t is extraordinary how many victories have been gained in wars without the effect that in normal language is meant by the word "decisive"' (Liddell Hart 1944: 50). The strategic theorists of the era dominated by the Napoleonic paradigm saw it. They wanted *la victoire pour la victoire*.

The Romano-Christian idea that only just wars should be fought, with their prerequisite of a just cause, now rarely featured. If any nexus between the conduct of war and political cause was ever spelled out, it would sound like Scottish Lt.-Col. Walter H. James's elaboration of the law of the bully:

The object of war is peace on the victor's terms. To obtain it, it is necessary to bring home to the hostile nation the futility of resistance, and the right method to pursue is that which soonest demonstrates the uselessness of further opposition. Campaigns, therefore, should be conducted simply with this end in view. Hence during the operations, while military reasons will usually play the chief part, moral or political considerations must not be neglected. (James 1904: 10)

Nor was any objective framework of justice invoked by Major-General F.B. Maurice, who defined the 'ultimate object of war' as 'either the complete conquest of the enemy; or to make him sue for peace on satisfactory terms; or to cause him to abandon the purpose for which he went to war' (Maurice 1929: 68, 86). After the First World War, his colleague J.F.C. Fuller served us evidence that Social Darwinism was not dead, even in Britain: 'Nature knows nothing of morality, unless morality be defined as race survival' (Fuller 1923: 15). If one's worldview was one in which irreconcilable 'races' were pitted against each other, then they must of necessity come to blows, and each side had an interest that such a clash should be decisive.

Such all-encompassing, that is, total war obviously called for total victory, brought about by the enemy's unconditional surrender. The genesis of this concept can be traced at least to the American Civil War; the victory of the German coalition over France in 1871 proclaimed in the mirrored hall at Versailles was translated into an imposed peace treaty which was quite as punishing as the Treaty of Versailles imposed by a revanchist France and her allies on Germany in 1918, in the same hall of mirrors. Both engaged the defeated party – an entire nation and as yet unborn generations – not only to payment of reparations for decades to come, but also deprived it of territory, and in each case went along with regime change (even though the latter was not imposed by the victors). Unconditional surrender would again be espoused as a war aim by the allies fighting Germany, and this time Japan, in the Second World War, making it arguably more difficult

than absolutely necessary for the Japanese government to terminate the war. In the end, the Japanese were shocked into unconditional surrender by the ultimate weapon of Total War, the atom bomb.

The centrality of the battle

Rühle von Lilienstern had remarked soberly after the Napoleonic Wars that a party in war should be seen as defeated if it had not attained its main political purpose in that war, 'however many battles he may have won' (Rühle 1818: 8f.; see chapter 1). This view would be abandoned by almost everybody in the following century and a half, only Sir Julian Corbett dissenting, as we shall see in the next chapter. Basil Liddell Hart rightly observed that '[s]ince the late eighteenth century the nations have been enslaved by a military doctrine – the doctrine of a fight to a finish – from which, once committed to war, they were helpless to shake free' (Liddell Hart 1944: 43, 50). To Moltke, writing in 'Instructions for Superior Commanders of Troops',

The victory in the decision by arms is the most important moment in war. Only victory breaks the enemy will and compels him to submit to our own. Neither the occupation of territory nor the capturing of fortified places, but only the destruction of the enemy fighting-power will, as a rule, decide. This is the primary object of operations. (q.i. Gat 1992: 68)

For Wilhelm von Willisen, also, the art of war had but one purpose, and that is to achieve victory in battle (Willisen 1840: 26). Colmar von der Goltz argued that one could not vanquish an enemy by defeating his minor armies: the victory has to be achieved sooner or later by confronting his main army on the battlefield. Instead, one must 'unite all the available forces for the decisive moment' to achieve that (Goltz 1895/1899: 9–21).

Von der Goltz elaborated on the effect of mass politics on war, and on the great national interests that were at stake: 'War nowadays generally appears in its natural form, i.e. as a bloody encounter of nations, in which each contending side seeks the complete defeat, or, if possible, the destruction of the enemy.' Anything less than that would not do, as Napoleon's wars had purportedly shown. Von der Goltz could not imagine wars with limited aims, short of the 'overthrow of the enemy', engaged in with merely a portion of one's force.

He thought that trivial causes would not generally culminate in wars (the reactions to the assassination of Sarajevo in 1914 must have come as a surprise to him). Any government attempting to cut short a war would be prevented from doing so by the 'the inflamed national feeling of the people' who

will at once interpose and not allow those in authority to make the fate of the whole war dependent on a misfortune sustained by a small portion of its fighting resources. Public opinion will insist upon their reinforcement; the enemy will do likewise, and thus, little by little, contrary to all original intentions, the whole strength of both the combatants will become engaged. Now that states and nationalities are in most cases almost identical, they resemble persons who would rather lose their lives than their honour. (Goltz 1895/1899: 5–7)

Even in a small controversy, he thought it unlikely that a large army would be held in readiness with only a small section striking blows. One would try to get the enemy to accept one's will as quickly as possible, which would be done by as hard a blow to start with as possible. One could not, he argued, defeat an enemy by defeating his minor armies: the victory had to be achieved sooner or later by confronting his main army on the battlefield. One should 'unite all the available forces for the decisive moment' to achieve that (Goltz 1895/1899: 8–20). Furthermore, he wrote,

[w]here such forces set the great machinery of war into motion, wars can only end with the entire annihilation of one party, or the complete exhaustion of both … [T]he growing national sentiment and the political realisation of the principles of nationality have increased to a marvellous extent the powers of resistance of States.

Future war

will be waged with a destructive force such as has hitherto never been displayed. War is now an exodus of nations, and no longer a mere conflict between armies. All moral energy will be gathered for a life and death struggle, the whole sum of the intelligence residing in either people will be employed for their mutual destruction … The growth of national motives of jealousy and national enmity entails a corresponding display of force. (Goltz 1895/1899: 463–69)

The British military held similar views: in the words of Henderson, the aim of 'strategy' had to be to bring 'the enemy to battle, while tactics are the methods by which a commander seeks to overwhelm him when battle is joined' (Henderson 1905: 39). The 1920s British *Field Service Regulations* proclaimed 'battle' to be 'the decisive act in war' (Maurice 1929: 68); the early 1930s edition of the *Regulations* stated that 'Battle is usually the decisive act in land warfare' (Liddell Hart 1944: 50).

Writing in 1900, Henry Spenser Wilkinson embraced von der Goltz's views, which he thought were 'held by all Continental military men and by all Continental Governments'. Spenser Wilkinson, with his widely read publications, ensured that the British, too, became convinced that

war in our time is bound to be a struggle for national existence, in which everything is risked, and in preparation for which, therefore, no conceivable exertion must be spared … the absolute form of war is deduced, not from any of the changes in weapons or in the organizations of armies, but from the entrance of nations into the arena which was before occupied by 'sovereigns and statesmen'. The dynastic form of war was a courtly duel, which went on until the first wound, whereupon honour was satisfied, reparation made, and the episode closed. The national form is a bitter quarrel, and a fight which ends only when one or the other combatant lies prostrate and helpless at the mercy of his foe, whose first anxiety will be to prevent the beaten enemy from ever recovering sufficient power to be able to renew the quarrel with hope of success. (Wilkinson 1910: 180)

His countryman General Maude underlined the need to get the whole country (including business) organised for a major war, because a defeat would be so catastrophic (Maude 1905: 125).

What France had to do to win was explained in similar terms: echoing Moltke, General J.L. Lewal noted that there was but one objective in warfare, 'to win, overwhelm the adversary materially and morally, to oblige him to ask for mercy' (Lewal 1892: 17). General Messimy emphasised that 'Victory is not achieved through the possession of a town or territory, but through the destruction of the adversarial forces'; Lieutenant Colonel Rousset argued, 'One has to think exclusively of battle. All efforts, all thoughts, all preparations have to pertain to the assurance of its success'; and General Langlois spelled

out as the main aim 'to ensure that one wins the battle' (Langlois 1906: 74). The rest would come by itself.

Annihilation of the enemy

A word that was frequently used in this context, and which would grow in meaning, was to 'annihilate' (in German: *vernichten*). The term was frequently linked with the aim of any battle from the age of Napoleon until the First World War. Writing just slightly before Clausewitz, Xylander in Bavaria wrote that 'to annihilate the inimical army must be the aim of the commander in the largest battles as much as in the smallest engagement'. Xylander added, however, that the war aim must be to occupy the enemy's territory (Xylander 1818: 8, 17f.). Clausewitz himself wrote: '[T]he annihilation of the inimical armed forces is … always the means to reach the purpose of the engagement' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, I: 2). This term, originally used to describe the destruction of enemy forces by Napoleon in his big battles, over time took on a life of its own.

Some strategists rightly shunned the ambiguity of the term 'annihilation'. Clausewitz himself had used 'destruction' as well as annihilation, and had written, 'The fighting forces must be destroyed: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight. Whenever we use the phrase "destruction of the enemy's forces" this alone is what we mean' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, I: 2). Colmar von der Goltz still echoed Clausewitz when he wrote:

[W]e mean that, by the annihilation of a portion of his fighting power, we make him despair altogether of any subsequent favourable turn in the hostilities; – and by 'destruction', we imply that we reduce him to such a physical and moral state that he feels himself incapable of continuing the struggle.

While claiming that 'war … must aim at the complete subjection of the enemy', von der Goltz noted that armies did not have to be completely wiped out to achieve that. Once they lost 20 per cent of their battle strength, or at most half, the battle would normally be decided (Goltz 1883/1906: 7, 9f., 13).

Colonel J.F. Maurice was also more precise:

[T]he aims of strategy directed against the actual condition of the armies of our time are twofold – first, to break up the organic force of the opposing

army by dealing in concentrated force with fractions of the enemy, and secondly, to threaten, and if possible to destroy, the enemy's connection with the sources from which he draws his supplies. (Maurice 1891: 32)

Spenser Wilkinson explicitly developed Clausewitz's and von der Goltz's ideas of what the logical aim in battle must be, that

each side would, from beginning to end, aim at the total destruction of the enemy's forces, by which is meant, not necessarily killing all his men, but making an end of all his armies. The armies who surrendered at Sedan and Metz were in this sense destroyed, though only a percentage of the men were killed or hurt. (Wilkinson 1910: 180)

Nevertheless, the military sense of this term soon receded. We have seen above that with Ratzel the word 'annihilation' was used synonymously with genocide, and this meaning would become predominant in the thinking and later actions of the National Socialists.

In practice, for the looming First World War, this meant the need for mass armies which would be given the task of 'annihilating' each other. This resulted in a Strategy of attrition, of *Materialschlacht*, and of 'bleeding the other side dry' in the hope that one's own human resources would not run out, as generals from Falkenhayn to Foch and Hague did on both sides in the First World War. 'Annihilation' would fully unfold its horror also for civilians in the Second World War, at the hands of Hitler's eager supporters.

The universal cult of the offensive

Another characteristic of this age was the cult of the offensive. 'Military technology', wrote Jack Snyder, an expert on the First World War, 'should have made the European strategic balance in July 1914 a model of stability'. In his view, both the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War had given witness to the enhanced strength of the defensive through innovations in firepower and inner lines or interior logistics improved by railways (Snyder 1984: 108). And yet the overwhelming majority of military writers of the time all favoured the offensive, their judgement coloured by a shared cultural and ideological predilection.

We have seen that in the centuries up to Napoleon, there was no consensus as to whether defence or offensive was preferable – most

writers took for granted that both options had to exist, and a few, especially Clausewitz, actually thought that the defence had the better cards (see chapter 3). This view was not shared by his contemporaries, and became anathema in the nineteenth century, until the First World War. Xylander had written as early as 1818, 'The attack is the actual basic principle of war; only through the offensive can a result be arrived at' (Xylander 1818: 34). A century later, Bernhardi expressed the conviction, that especially in modern mass warfare, the offensive is the by far superior form of warlike operation [*Verfahren*]', thus explicitly contradicting 'the greatest of military authorities', Clausewitz (Bernhardi 1911: 399). He concluded that

an offensive operation holds out greater chances of success than a defensive one, and that it commends itself especially to the weaker party, as long as the balance of forces [between the adversaries] holds any possibility at all of a favourable decision. A certain degree of superiority cannot be levelled even by the most ingenious offensive; but in that case the defensive is completely unable to bring about a favourable decision. (Bernhardi 1911: 411)

Clausewitz's rival Jomini is most famous for his writing on Napoleon's big, often campaign-deciding battles, and his praise for them as central to warfare. Even so, he had seen advantages in waging a purely defensive war on one's own territory where shorter supply lines favoured the defence (Jomini 1837/1868: 17, 72). Jomini's, not Clausewitz's, views on defence and offensive would be the lodestar of strategic writing for the rest of the century. General Jean Auguste Berthaut (French War Minister 1876–7) praised Jomini's commitment to the offensive as it gave the commander 'freedom of action' and the ability to dominate the movements of his adversary, who was forced into a reactive mode of conduct (Berthaut 1881: 19f.). General Victor Bernard Derrécagaix (1833–1915) equally echoed Jomini when spelling out the only law that he saw fit to guide French Strategy, namely 'to be the strongest at the decisive point', as 'strategy has but one goal, victory'. The offensive alone would enable France to reach her aim, he wrote, with a reference to von der Goltz's agreement on the subject (Derrécagaix 1885, I: 375–80, 617f.).

Berthaut also followed Jomini's views on the strategic offensive: 'The offensive … gives [the general] all his freedom of actions and … subjects his adversary's movements to his.' The offensive has

the advantage of surprise, choice of place, gives the possibility of taking the war outside of one's own territory. Berthaut quoted Marshal Marmont, who had said 'One dominates the thinking of the adversary, and a first success sometimes gives an ascendant that one will not lose again' (Berthaut 1881: 19f.). Berthaut backed this up with many historical examples, and of course the clinching argument that Napoleon had always chosen the offensive. After all, mused Berthaut, just like his other European colleagues: 'Only the strategic offensive … gives important and decisive results: one therefore has to make all efforts to seize it while one is stronger and even, in some circumstances, when one is the weaker [party].' On the down side, this meant that one had to be able to be the first to take action, before the adversary, which was not always politically advisable (Berthaut 1881: 28).

Captain Georges Gilbert, incarnation of the cult of the offensive, was but one who called for a revival of Napoleonic warfare. The argument ran roughly as follows: France had invented the modern (Napoleonic) form of major warfare, she was the first to apply it in its most perfect form. But then France lost her *élan*, neglected her own traditions and through misgovernment forgot her Napoleonic military heritage, no longer listened to her special genius and was punished for it in 1870, when France's enemies used the Napoleonic way of war against her. The only prescription for success would therefore be for France to recover her own genius: then she would find her way to victory again (Gilbert 1890, 1892).

Also in France, Commandant J.J.H. Mordacq saw a link between diplomacy and war aims: 'An energetic, courageous diplomacy almost always corresponds to an offensive war, that is carried out most vigorously; and reciprocally, a timid foreign policy, that is shortsighted, is usually followed by a defensive war, conducted without *esprit*, without a clear guiding idea' (Mordacq 1912: 2).

Even the mere discussion of a defensive Strategy became dishonourable. General Lanrezac, commander-in-chief of the French Fifth Army at the outbreak of the First World War, addressed a group of high-ranking French officers; at the end of his talk, he supposedly said: 'The doors are well shut? Well, in that case I can speak to you about the defensive' (Castex 1934, IV: 137). The strategy expert Douglas Porch judges that the 'doctrine of the offensive' in France seemed to obviate the need for 'serious reform' of the armed forces

and it compensated for real innovation in arms technology and for cohesion within the armed forces, whose officers, like the country itself, were still very torn between republicanism and left-wing sentiments on the one hand and reactionary-Catholic values on the other (Porch 2006: 142).

East of the Rhine, Willisen in his *Theory of Major War* seemed reluctant to tackle 'the Teaching of the Defence' at all, as he saw it as passive, weak and incapable of proving decisive in the course of a campaign (Willisen 1840: 115ff.). Moltke the Elder conceded that the defensive party could choose the places from which to defend itself, forcing the attackers to take certain routes and to expose themselves to the defender's fire. But he praised the offensive for imposing the 'law' of action upon both sides, by choosing the way and means and aim of the war, with the connotations of strength, confidence, decisiveness, while the defender had to wait in [demoralising] uncertainty (Großer Generalstab 1911: 141). Colonel Blume, writing some years after the Franco-Prussian War, noted that 'an energetic conduct of war strengthens the national character; by contrast, wars conducted over a long time and lamely entail the greatest material losses and moral damages' (Blume 1882: 1f.). And the geographer Ratzel opined, 'It is always the first *aim* of war to penetrate into the territory of the adversary' (Ratzel 1897: 65 f.).

Von der Goltz for one was not blind to the renaissance of defensive fortifications. Since 1870/1, France had taken the lead and started building vast fortifications for a future theatre of war, with many other countries following suit, including Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and Rumania. There was a big shift towards recognition of the need for a 'closer union between siege operations – hitherto regarded as a thing distinctly apart – and action in the open field, and, furthermore, of making more general use of entrenchments in the latter phase of warfare' (Goltz 1883/1906: 2f.). Nevertheless, von der Goltz insisted that the distinctive characteristics of the modern method of conducting war would be:

1. Calling up the military resources of the country to such an extent that, victory being gained, one could proceed to enforce a favourable peace with the least possible delay.
2. Placing all one's forces in readiness at the very commencement of the war.

3. A ceaseless and untiring prosecution of the campaign until the organized resistance of the enemy is broken in decisive battle; after which, until the conclusion of peace, a less strenuous action and one more sparing of the 'instrument of war' would ensue.

'The defence is … strictly speaking, not a complete form of the art of war with which we can reach the object of the war, namely, the overthrow of the enemy.' This had to be the object of every war, Goltz opined (Goltz 1895/1899: 21f.).

If France wanted to be offensive, the decision to go ahead had to be taken as soon as possible. Accordingly, mobilisation had to take place as soon and quickly as possible (Derrécagaix 1885, I: 375ff.). In his section on defensive operations, Derrécagaix emphasised all the disadvantages of the defensive, again quoting a suitable passage from von der Goltz. This included the concession that the defence could have its advantages – simpler, shorter inner lines and so forth. Derrécagaix commented:

The defensive is thus a mode of operations that can lead an army to victory … a nation can be dragged forcibly into a war or be threatened with aggression by its neighbours. What should one do in that case, other than proudly to accept this provocation, with the determination not to lay down one's arms until one's fatherland has been freed? In the conditions of modern warfare, the circumstances that define the need to [resort to] the defensive are, generally speaking: 1. The inferiority of [one's own] forces; 2. Delays in the mobilisation of [one's] armed forces. Numeric inferiority obliges nations to espouse a particular way of war and to prepare all their efforts in times of peace in the perspective of the sole aim of defending one's territories. This is the situation of second-rate powers … which leads us away of the main subject to be treated here …

namely France's defence, as he did not see France as a second-rate power (Derrécagaix 1885, I: 615–18).

Even the Belgian General Brialmont, greatest advocate of defensive fortifications, succumbed to the temptation to write enthusiastically about the offensive: 'The offensive increases courage, augments the confidence of the soldier, and gives a freedom of movement which multiplies possible force configurations and favours success' (Brialmont 1895: xxix).

The Russo-Japanese War gave an insight into the devastating effects of the new firepower on the aggressor. And yet its lessons were ambiguous: the victor, Japan, had seized the initiative from the beginning to pre-empt its opponents, and achieved success before Russia was ready. Instead of cautioning about the new strength of any defensive position well-equipped with firepower, it thus also furnished arguments for those favouring the offensive at all costs. As W.H. James wrote, '[t]he offensive, moreover, carries the war into the enemy's country, raises the enthusiasm of the troops and saves the nation, which takes it, from the evils of war in its own land … The offensive, then, is the resource of the strong' (James 1904: 37, 39). He reflected on Clausewitz's theory of the diminishing returns of the offensive. As the offensive army advances, it has to detail troops to garrison the conquered area, leading to a diminution of its own strength. He conceded that one needed large numbers and good organisation to start an offensive.

But given these, there can be no doubt of its advantage. The moral gain is great, the soldier feels he is superior to his adversary when led with determination against him; and this mental attitude leads more than half-way along the road to victory … Whatever the advantages of defensive strategy may be, no sane being would propose to exemplify them by allowing the enemy to invade this country before defeating him. (James 1904: 40f.)

James knew that this was not merely a British perspective, but that it was shared by 'every Continental nation'. He predicted the race to mobilise and pre-empt an attack from the other side: every party, he thought prophetically,

seeks by the most careful organisation in time of peace to ensure that, in the event of a conflict with a neighbour, it may be able to gather its forces with the utmost rapidity on the frontier and anticipate the assembly of the hostile armies. The object then of the first battles would be to render a further offensive possible, and so enable the victor to continue the war in the territories of his defeated opponent … the quicker a nation can put its troops on a war footing, the greater will be its chances of success, other things being equal. (James 1904: 42f.)

To confirm that this tenet was just as firmly entrenched by then in the British military mind as it was in France or Germany, it suffices

to quote General C.E. Callwell, the great British guru of small war, who writing in 1899 contrasted it to the prevailing offensive doctrine. He explained well why it was so firmly believed that the offensive was necessary, and had to be implemented pre-emptively, as soon as possible upon the outset of war:

In regular warfare between two nations possessing highly organized military systems, this taking the lead at the outset is an object which both seek to obtain. Each has its plan of campaign. The one that gets the start can thereby dislocate the whole scheme of operations which has been elaborated, in theory, by the other. (Callwell 1896/1906: 72)

Pre-emption was thus at the centre of the cult of the offensive.

Writing with hindsight in 1916, the French General Bonnal noted: 'General Bernhardi, and all those who have studied war, have claimed that the offensive has all virtues' but also 'the genius of the German people'. What they had not foreseen, however, was the stalemate that came into being in the First World War resulting from each side applying the same overall Strategy (Bonnal 1916: 1–5). By then, Émile Mayer, standing for many, had fully recognised the defensive power of the new weaponry: 'The most important transformations in military technology have augmented the armies' capacity for defence' (Mayer 1916: 83f.).

Total mobilisation or professional military elites?

Dreaming about the perfect state, the perfect polity, its perfect internal order and its perfect external behaviour, Guibert, writing his *Essai général de tactique* in the late 1760s, made an impassioned plea for a citizen army (a militia) to replace any paid professional armed forces. The advantages he saw as manifold: a lower cost of defence resulting from an (unpaid) duty for each male citizen to defend his polity, while still pursuing his normal job in civilian life. If attacked, however, such a citizen army would fight with vigour unmatched by mercenary armies who were not defending their own land, family or prosperity. Citizens would be defending their own cause, not that of a feeble government or a dynasty. Such a reform would make France resistant against all attacks from the outside and prosperous and strong internally (Guibert 1772/1781).

Such an army would be defensive: if would pose no threat to its neighbours, as it would only fight if attacked. Guibert likened such an army, once provoked to fight, to a fierce northerly wind bending the slender reeds that stood up against it. Nothing could stop such an armed nation before it had completely subdued all its enemies (Guibert 1772/1781: 134–51).

Guibert's ideas contained contradictions. Like so many before him, Guibert took up the ancient refrain of one's own nation's decadence and excess of luxury and the need to restore its ancient simplicity, austerity, hardiness and warlike spirit. But a warlike culture tends to become a warring culture, and it is difficult to extol martial virtues without succumbing to the temptation to practise them on one's neighbours if the opportunity presents itself. On the one hand, Guibert extolled a citizen army and a nation in arms as not posing a threat to its neighbours and thus becoming the building-block of a peaceful world which ideally should consist of nothing but states similarly configured. On the other hand, he dreamt of more decisive battles than those he had witnessed, of a war that would truly change the political situation, and the 'fierce wind from the north' he imagined might carry 'a fixed plan of *agrandissement*', expansion, which would then result in the subjugation of all peoples around (Guibert 1772/1781: 137).

Guibert changed his views on the composition of armies as he grew older. As the French Revolution was breaking out, in a treatise called *On Public Force*, he extolled the virtues of a professional army, which alone could be sent to fight far away from its home in defence of the state's interests (Guibert 1790). He still favoured a militia that would ensure the defence of its country if attacked, but it should be framed – *encadré* – by a professional army. The contradiction between the warlike, austere spirit which he wished for the entire nation in his earlier work and a peaceful society with a spirit of law-abidance and conflict-avoidance had dawned on him. He now began to see armed civilians, and above all men whose profession is war, as a potential threat to a peaceful society. In his late work, therefore, he postulated that professional soldiers should be denied the citizen rights of voting for a parliament or standing for elections, and the militia should decidedly not have the right to bear arms in peacetime (Guibert 1790: 567–638).

It was Guibert's earlier ideal of a peaceful and defensive army of citizen-soldiers lived on: in February 1793, the French Revolutionary Isnard, in order to justify the *levée* of 300,000 men, exclaimed 'May the victory of the Revolution be the victory of universal liberty, but also the victory of universal peace!' (q. i. Jaurès 1911: 133). Guibert came to be regarded as prophet of the *levée en masse*, proclaimed in August 1793, to defend France against the invading forces of Habsburg emperor Francis II and other supporters of his kinsman by marriage, Louis XVI. The rural populations of northern and eastern France rose up to fight the invading coalition forces, with men and women, old and young, resisting alongside the regular forces. The myth of the *levée en masse* was born (Heuser 2009).

While the Revolutionary National Assembly in 1789 had abolished compulsory military service, it was soon brought back. The 'nation in arms', already encountered in the writings of Machiavelli and Vattel, now became French. Every (male) citizen, pronounced General Edmond Dubois-Crancé (1747–1814), War Minister of the Directorate in 1799, must be a soldier, a view that was enshrined in Article 109 of the French Constitution of 1791. As Deputy Barère said on 23 August 1793: 'France's military contingent, fighting for her freedom, comprises her entire population, all her industry, all her building works, all her engineering works' (Serman and Bertaud 1998: 79). The *levée en masse* thus already contained the concept of total mobilisation of one's citizenry, but also one's industrial and economic resources, characteristics of 'Total War', as we have seen.

Professional armies, conscripts and militias

Napoleon followed Guibert's line of argument and stated his belief that a nation in arms – 'a nation defended by the people' – would be 'invincible'. An emperor, he also postulated, should rely on 'national soldiers', not upon mercenaries – a maxim he himself soon abandoned in practice (Napoleon 1906: 158, 178). Nevertheless, the six-figure armies for which he managed to recruit the men throughout Europe swept through the Continent from west to east, bringing down one regime after another through devastating victories in battle. To counter Napoleon's armies, Scharnhorst and his protégé Clausewitz grudgingly favoured the establishment of a militia

to back up a regular professional army, recruited purely locally – this fitted nascent German nationalism (Usczeck and Gudzent 1986: 219–25).

Other monarchists in Europe saw things differently. Thus Archduke Charles had a decided preference for professional forces. 'If the soldier's physical adroitness alone was sufficient, then there would be nothing better than militias [*Bürgerwachen*].' But in his view, and despite his experience with the French Revolutionary forces, the fighting of militias was nothing but 'puppet play' compared with that of professional soldiers (Waldtstätten 1882: 82). Gerhard Scharnhorst's friend and fellow Hanoverian Johann Friedrich von Decken also argued for a standing (professional) army, as he believed war to be an endemic problem, requiring the need for the best possible armed forces (Decken 1800: 68). What he had in mind were warriors like the Scots, who since the Jacobite defeat at and exile after Culloden in 1746 could be found in mercenary armies throughout Europe (Decken 1800: 11, 15). To fight with an all-volunteer force: (1) society must be differentiated into different occupations; (2) the theatre of war must be nearby; (3) war must be over quickly; (4) armies must not be too large – he thought it impossible to maintain an all volunteer army of 100 000; (5) weapons must be easy to learn to use and handle (Decken 1800: 31f., 34). While sophisticated cultures were capable of sophisticated ways of waging war, they also tended to decline – here again the old *topos* of decadence (Decken 1800: 39, 49). His conditions for a state to delegate responsibility for defence to a part of the population were:

1. these soldiers must be particularly loyal and self-sacrificing;
2. they must not be employed for other tasks, such as in agriculture;
3. neighbouring states must not have standing armies;
4. there must be no fortifications that have to be defended permanently;
5. there must be no fighting far away, no colonial ambitions;
6. they must not be employed in wars of aggression (Decken 1800: 40).

Decken realised that there was an argument for a voluntary force, a militia serving to defend their own country. He feared, however, that such a militia would of necessity become forced to fight and would lose the will to do so, if their concerns about what was happening

at home began to outweigh their commitment to the war. Free men, he thought, were more likely to go to war if they had slaves tending to their fields at home. As a nobleman, he connected this with the ideal of a warrior class, while simultaneously expressing concerns about the potential consequences of arming the poor. Nor did he want to follow Guibert's advice and have two forces, a militia for homeland defence and a professional force for expeditions abroad (Decken 1800: 84).

Decken was aware of criticism that could be levelled against standing armies, for example by Edmund Burke, who had told the British parliament that all standing armies could become dangerous to the constitution, or Kant's plea for the gradual dissolution of all armies or the danger of Caesarism with the example of Oliver Cromwell in mind, who had commanded more loyalty among his troops than did the king. Had not Montesquieu warned that the soldier's duty of obedience was incompatible with his republican rights as a citizens? Would he not therefore hate all those who had those rights? And yet Decken preferred to hedge and prepare against such dangers, for instance by rotating officers through command posts frequently to prevent their troops from becoming too attached to them, in order to have the advantages of a standing professional army (Decken 1800: 92, 118–20, 122, 134).

These advantages according to Decken included above all the 'taming' of war. Standing armies he thought had a stabilising effect because the adversary knew what he was up against: this is a deterrence argument. A regularly paid [i.e. standing] army would not plunder, and thus war would affect civilians less (Decken 1800: 134–40). As Decken followed Montesquieu's and the mature Guibert's reasoning that a soldier, who had to obey, could not be a citizen with citizen's rights, he could not see militias as compatible with republics either (Decken 1800: xii, 44, 64, 81, 118–20).

In contrast with this aristocratic plea for a professional army, the 'nation in arms' in France became an ideal associated not only with nationalist movements, but also with Republicanism. Jomini had written:

National wars … are the most formidable of all. This name can only be applied to such as are waged against a united people, or a great majority of them, filled with a noble ardour and determined to sustain their

independence: then every step is disputed, the army holds only its camp-ground, its supplies can only be obtained at the point of the sword, and its convoys are everywhere threatened or captured. This spectacle of the spontaneous uprising of a nation is rarely seen, and though there be in it something grand and noble which commands our admiration, the consequences are so terrible that, for the sake of humanity, we ought to hope never to see it. (Jomini 1837/1868: 29)

For several reasons, this idea was difficult to accept for the elites of the countries under French occupation. In Prussia, Scharnhorst's and Clausewitz's plans for resisting the Napoleonic conquest were the mobilisation of the entire adult male population as a militia in a people's war. But was this a temporary measure, or did they indeed want to establish armed forces based on general conscription in peacetime too? The commission instituted by King Frederick William III of Prussia in 1807 produced a majority report, written by General Scharnhorst, and a minority report by Colonel Boguslawski. Scharnhorst's majority report proposed the immediate introduction of conscription, in other words universal military service for all Prussian men, explicitly on the model of the law of conscription of the French Revolution. It counselled the immediate abolition of the interdiction on the bearing of arms by civilians, which had been imposed to stop illegal hunting. It also counselled a better treatment of all soldiers so that they might take pride in the defence of their country.

  Boguslawski, by contrast, pleaded with the king not to expect townsfolk and soft noblemen to be as hardy and well prepared for the hardships of military life as peasant boys, and therefore to allow for the French practice, introduced soon after conscription, of *remplacement*: paying for somebody else to do your military service for you. Further, Boguslawski saw no point in introducing universal conscription as long as Prussia was not directly under attack, or if the state's finances and political circumstances allowed this, which, by implication, he doubted (Miszellen 1889). The Prussian king, worried about this attempt to 'turn everything into soldiers', put the report to one side for a while, and at the end of a year asked for a new one, the one which finally produced the military reforms of 1808, in which Scharnhorst's egalitarian ambitions were toned down. Nevertheless, the king had it proclaimed on 3 August 1808 that henceforth every

male subject of his, of whatever birth, was liable to military service (Lehmann 1922: 436–57).

But how much could one expect from a conscript army? Like the mature Guibert, Scharnhorst, one of the chief Prussian reformers together with General Count August Wilhelm Neidhardt von Gneisenau (1760–1831), never ceased to believe that a conscript force had to be complemented by and integrated with a professional force, which was to be promoted on the basis of merit, not of seniority or descent (Wollstein 1978: 325–52; Greiselis 1999: 102–17). The problem that Guibert had recognised in part was that the spirit of such an army was different from that of a militia, in which the nation had a stake in its own defence. Guibert had felt concern about their assertiveness and their martial, uncivic spirit. He did not fully articulate what this meant, but we can sense the mature Guibert's fear of the armed masses.

There was also another side to this issue. If men were defending their nation, their status had to rise, and less emphasis could be put on their subject-status vis-à-vis the monarch. For the Prussian reformers, both elements were still quite compatible, while they abhorred French concepts of democracy or people's sovereignty: Karl vom Stein saw 'Germany's nobility and culture firmly and indissolubly chained to the happiness of the Prussian monarchy' (Haussherr 1960: 271). Scharnhorst argued against the continued practice of corporal punishment in such conscription-based armed forces (Demeter 1960: 226). There was more to the issue of a citizen army than just the need to treat citizen–soldiers better in the armed forces. The biggest issue of all was how to deny them what for the French Revolution was the rationale at the heart of a citizen army: namely, that the citizenry, the nation, was the new sovereign, and that the citizen-soldiers defended their own rule in a democracy. The reactionary societies who aimed to free themselves not only from the Napoleonic occupation but also from everything that France stood for – most notably, democracy – hated this as much as they hated the French. No way would Frederick William III of Prussia allow himself to be turned into a figurehead of a constitutional monarchy of a quasi-democracy, giving his people the vote. It needed considerable persuasion on the part of Gneisenau to get him to appeal to 'my people' to initiate the Prussian resistance in 1812, and even the reformers were nationalists, but not democrats. Indeed, Clausewitz, the most famous disciple and protégé of both

Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, distrusted the people, whom he saw as the source of 'the primordial violence of [the] nature [of war], the hatred and enmity which must be regarded as a blind natural instinct' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, I: 1, 28), and he hated and feared the French model of democracy. Instead – under the influence of his half-British wife – he liked the oligarchic system of Britain. Other reformers equally cited the British militia system as a desirable model (Lehmann 1922: 438f.).

Feelings were no different among the Spanish elite. They were happy to have various partisans fighting for Spain against the French, but the *juntas* – the royally appointed or self-appointed provisional governments in different regions – early on tried everything to regain complete control over the self-organised rebels, and to integrate them into the regular armed forces, lest they become in every way too independent from their control (see Part VI). Democracy, like French secularism and anti-clericalism, was anathema also in Spain.

Whether one was afraid of them or not, the nations – numerically larger than ever before – were now a factor in warfare, as warfare had become a national business. Mass warfare and the nation in arms went hand in hand, one conditioning the other.

In Prussia, the issue of conscription versus professional army remained central in the nineteenth century. Classically for a nationalist, Colonel Blume, writing in the 1880s, thought war beneficial only if the people themselves fought for their state; by contrast he thought a war fought by mercenaries extremely noxious for the body politic (Blume 1882: 8f.). Bernhardi spoke for all when he thought that mass armies would be the most significant feature of the next war – 'armies of millions … the like of which have not been seen before in history' (Bernhardi 1912b: 62). On this point there was agreement between the left and the right in Germany (Bebel 1892).

To simplify, from the French Revolution to the end of the twentieth century, two antagonistic tendencies in French politics engaged in a tug of war over the nature of French armed forces: one was the more conservative, reactionary, royalist tendency, which wanted a professional army (or at least a system whereby rich individuals could buy themselves out of military service) and feared the population, and the other a more republican, egalitarian tendency, in the tradition of the young Guibert and Carnot, which demanded universal conscription and was deeply suspicious of the professional

army, a tendency that was embodied in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. The prevailing view of the military chiefs was that in order to have a good soldier, it was indispensable that he should serve for a long time and become thoroughly disciplined, and thoroughly different from a civilian. Conservatives accused the Republicans of wanting to weaken the professional French army through universal conscription, depriving it of its military spirit. The result was, as it was remarked, that 'The army is a nation in the nation, that is the vice of our time … It asks itself incessantly whether it is slave or ruler of the state; this body searches everywhere for its spirit and cannot find it' (Montheilhet 1932: 10). The French middle and upper classes and important members of the generality, in the words of General Antoine Chanzy (1823–83), saw in universal military service the 'danger of arming the nation' (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 13). The professional army that had been created by the restoration survived without much change the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. For in France, the army had two functions, an external one and an internal one: to restore order there in all the unrest which had troubled France since the French Revolution. As a contemporary parliamentarian, Francisque Bouvet, commented in 1851, 'the armed forces are not so much designed for international war, but to serve as an instrument of power domestically and to underpin … strong governments' (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 31).

The Republicans continually criticized this. In 1848 the Republican-minded General Christophe de Lamoricière demanded

that the Army should be constituted in the image of the nation, that it is animated by its spirit, its thinking. Against obligatory military service, the argument is made that France is not used to so much rigour, our values are not Republican enough to comply with [conscription], we are not Spartans. Well, I say: alas for France, if today she has recognised that the Republic is her only anchor of salvation, but she still does not have enough faith in the value of the institutions that she has created for herself [i.e. the Republic] to dare hope that they will function according to these values and will harmonize them with the conditions of its new existence! Alas for her, for she can only found an indestructible Republic once she has eradicated the old monarchist values. (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 27)

Another Republican, Etienne Vacherot, in his book on *Democracy* argued that:

Democracy does not go along with a real [professional] army, however national-minded it may be. It goes along with the nation in arms. If this system is more appropriate to defence than to conquest, this is a happy constraint in which civilization should rejoice. With such military institutions [universal military service], a government is not tempted to become involved in adventures by the ambition of sovereigns or the temptations of the military spirit. If an external war is recognised as just and necessary, it will be an entire nation that will rise to wage it … [With a militia], a people is invincible on its own territory; and, if justice and civilization oblige it to carry its forces abroad, it becomes irresistible through the strength of its national *élan*. The military strength of standing armies is more brilliant but more fragile, quicker at achieving startling victories and great conquests, but more subject to irreparable defeats, and above all more feeble in the face of invasions. A people without militia forgets the military arts and finds itself reduced to relying only on its professional army in supreme danger. Once this army is destroyed by a superior force, such a people without discipline and military initiative will suffer foreign invasion … A military people, on the other hand, is an irrepressible force; there is no attacking army of which it could not get the better. (Vacherot 1860: 314f.)

The military operations in which France was involved between 1815 and 1870 did not involve any vital interests. With strange echoes of the Prussian Boguslawski half a century earlier, the French politician Adolphe Thiers echoed Guibert's differentiation between homeland defence by militias and the need for professional armies for action far away from home, when he argued that in the face of large-scale aggression, 'the nation in arms may be adequate; but, when we have to fight what I shall call political wars [i.e. limited wars], in which enthusiasm does not play the principal part, such an army would be inadequate' (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 35).

When the Prussians won over the Austrians at the battle of Sadowa/Königgrätz in 1866, Emperor Napoleon III tried to reintroduce conscription, as Prussia was now seen as a threat to France. Republicans in his country formed a curious alliance with the emperor to bring about a return to Revolutionary concepts of the military, and to recreate a nation in arms. But there was too much opposition: all proposals were watered down into inefficiency in the law of 1868. The politician Adolphe Thiers summarised the majority view that:

The peasant, put into the ranks of the army, finds there conditions that are better than at home … But military service is an intolerable tyranny for the

man who is destined to a civilian career … The middle-class people who have a taste for the military go to the military schools.

Thiers repeated his views almost literally in 1868 and 1872: 'The society in which everybody is a soldier is a barbarian society … In the countries in which everybody is a soldier, everybody is badly off …', and obligatory military 'service would inflame all heads and would put a gun on the shoulder of every Socialist' (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 30, 65). After France's defeat of 1870/1, Thiers became the first President of the French Third Republic. Although conscription was reintroduced, the Third Republic continued with the old system of buying oneself out.

French society in the restoration period, as in the Second Republic and the Second Empire, was thus a thoroughly non-militarized one. Its dominant classes had a strong aversion to all things martial. As Prosper Mérimée wrote:

By preaching that money is the sovereign good, one has profoundly changed the belligerent sentiments of France, I won't say among the people in general, but among the higher classes. The idea of risking one's life has become very repugnant, and those who regard themselves as honest folk would describe it as base and crude. (q.i. Montheilhet 1932: 47)

Incarnating the Republican tradition of the French Revolution, and also imbued with the defensive spirit of Guibert's militia, the French socialist leader Jaurès was impressed by the Swiss model of reserves, which offered an example of total mobilisation for defence that could turn into an irresistible offensive power after an initial defensive phase. Such a defensive force could choose and prepare the battle-field to confront the invader, and could confront him with the 'armed nation' itself (Jaurès 1911: 95, 163–95). Jaurès therefore pleaded for the reliance on such a reserve, well trained and well equipped: including the twelve classes of reserves, France might thus muster 2 million men, plus territorial forces. With these she would confront the 900,000 attacking first-line German soldiers, according to calculations. France should be able to deploy her forces in a way that suited her and would be well placed for a Napoleon-style victory over the Germans (Jaurès 1911: 104f.). We find echoes of Guibert's *Essai* (Jaurès 1911: 122):

If we want for France a defensive strategy, it is because we want for her a defensive policy, a policy of peace and equity … A people that, wanting peace, gives proof of this to the world … which until the eve of war proposes the litigation to the arbitration of civilised humanity, a people which, even when the storm has broken still asks humankind to settle the conflict, such a people has such an awareness of being in the right that it will be prepared for all sacrifices to save its honour and its life. It is determined to put up an untameable and prolonged resistance. By contrast, in a nation that has been thrown into war by a movement of pride and robbery, malaise will grow from hour to hour. (Jaurès 1911: 106)

In order to restructure France's armed forces for an optimal defensive posture, Jaurès turned to the revival of militias, a term which was scorned at the time. Von der Goltz, for example, opposed militias, and Moltke had derided France's armies (Jaurès 1911: 109). But for France, Jaurès argued, mass armies had their roots in the Revolution, with Carnot and the law of 1 August 1792 (Jaurès 1911: 116). Jaurès consciously followed this tradition:

It is thus absolutely necessary that, in the free countries, every citizen should be a soldier, or nobody should be one. But France, encircled with ambitious and warlike nations, obviously cannot make do without an army; it is thus necessary, to take up the expression of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that every citizen should be soldier by duty, and no one by profession. (Jaurès 1911: 117)

By the time Jaurès was writing, consensus in France had shifted after the stunning defeat of 1870/1. While Jaurès's defensive approach, which we will examine in detail in the following chapter, was anathema to the majority, they agreed with him on the need for a mass army to compete with the numerically superior Germans. One advocate of a conscript army in France, General Lewal, had emphasised the nexus between the need for mass armies and industrialisation, which was coming to dominate all spheres of social activity (Lewal 1892: 87).

As a consequence of technological innovation, armies now could occupy larger spaces, and thus larger armies were called for, as J.F. Maurice observed in Britain before the Great War (Maurice 1891: 14–18). General Maude also underscored the importance of mass. The new stress on land warfare in such large numbers was a

departure from British traditions, yet Maude thought armies had much more to offer than navies:

The land forces of this Empire exist for the purpose of compelling any possible enemy or enemies to submit to our will. The fleet alone cannot accomplish this object, because 'ironclads cannot climb hills' [as the Ottoman Sultan commented on the occasion of a British naval demonstration at Ducigno 1880]. Hence we need an organisation capable of very great expansion, and regulations – tactical, logistical, etc. – capable of enabling the Army, this organisation, to meet any European army or part of it in its own country on equal terms. (Maude 1905: 125)

In the late nineteenth century, Colmar von der Goltz was alone in thinking that in a more distant future there might be

the coming of a time when the armed millions of the present will have played out their part. A new Alexander will arise who, with a small body of well-equipped and skilled warriors, will drive the impotent hordes before him, when, in their eagerness to multiply, they shall have overstepped all proper bounds, have lost internal cohesion, and, like the greenbanner army of China, have become transformed into a numberless, but effete, host of Philistines.

But he agreed with the others that war in the near future would be conducted by mass armies, and his writing is based on that assumption (Goltz 1883: 5).

   Again the odd one out, Sir Julian Corbett criticised his contemporaries' obsession with mass armies. They had this

idea of making war not merely with a professional standing army, but with the whole armed nation – a conception which of course was not really Napoleon's. It was but a revival of the universal practice which obtained in the barbaric stages of social development, and which every civilisation in turn had abandoned as economically unsound and subversive of specialisation in citizenship. (Corbett 1911: 20–2)

Corbett pointed to the mistaken notion that it was 'the armed forces of the enemy and not his territory' that was one's main objective – mistaken, as the victory over an army did not mean that the enemy state was ready to surrender (Corbett 1911: 20–2).

Following Corbett, after the First World War, it was Basil Liddell who became the principal British critic of conscription and mass armies, in his view a crass fallacy which had proved so disastrous for the millions of young men killed and maimed in this war. He explained:

The theory of human mass dominated the military mind from Waterloo to the World War. This monster was the child of the French Revolution by Napoleon … The wave of democracy in the 1840s fostered the growth of this mass-theory. The idea of the nation in arms appealed to the democratic mind. Other minds, also short-sighted, were quick to take advantage of it. Equality of service was a convenient substitute for the reality [of democracy]. The victories of the Prussians in 1866 and 1870 were regarded by the world as confirming the truth of this theory.

Prescriptions for mass warfare, he realised, had become

fixed on the mind of Europe. Proclaimed by soldiers everywhere, not least in vanquished France, as indisputable truths, they were submissively accepted by a generation of statesmen dangerously ignorant of war. The … threefold consequences were: to make war more difficult to avoid, more difficult to conduct successfully, and more difficult to terminate save by sheer exhaustion. (Liddell Hart 1944: 33, 133)

He mused after the First World War that once mobilised, conscript mass armies of Germany, France and Russia had made it hard if not impossible to call off a war. 'Moreover, these armies were so cumbrous, their movements so complex, that even direction could not be modified' (Liddell Hart 1944: 18). At the time, in words reminiscent of Thiers's, J.F.C. Fuller also explicitly linked conscription to the world's return 'to tribal barbarism', caused by the French and Industrial Revolutions (Fuller 1961: 33).

Having been raised in the Clemenceau tradition of seeing his own country as world policeman, Charles de Gaulle wanted to see a world order which would only be completed after the founding of the United Nations after the following Great War. At the Geneva Disarmament Conference in the early 1930s France had proposed the creation of an international police force composed of contingents from countries willing to contribute them. 'And of what could this force be composed, except of professional soldiers? One cannot imagine Governments

calling upon conscripts and reserves to go and separate Japan and China … or to eject the racist militias from Austria or the Saar … So the professional soldier becomes the necessary guarantee of all great human hopes' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 71). De Gaulle's conclusion was that 'the tendencies of the world, the conditions of an international organization of peace, at all events our own duty of assisting the weak and maintaining order in the Empire, all combine to compel us to create professional troops' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 74).

Writing in the early 1930s, de Gaulle obviously saw Germany as France's main adversary, past and future, although until 'recently' Germany had been limited in arms and weaker than France. Nevertheless, unlike most French strategists of 1871–1914, and like Basil Liddell Hart, de Gaulle had had a horror of mass armies before the Second World War, as the wars fought with them – Moltke's wars, the American Civil War, the First World War – had been so terrible. If evolution moved away from mass armies, 'it would be a priceless boon for the human race'. While he thought war an inevitable part of human existence, 'its horrors depend, very largely, on the dimensions one gives to it. On the whole, no form of battle is more sanguinary than that of nations-in-arms' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 76f.). As for France, with a numerically smaller population compared with Germany, only mechanization could make 'Destiny … once more … serve the fortunes of France' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 83). After the Second World War, de Gaulle would change his views on this – he would embrace conscription as something French society needed as a socially integrating, nation-building factor. Even then, he would not entrust France's vital defence to a professional army. The French sanctuary would be guarded, instead, by the magic of nuclear weapons (Heuser 1998a: ch. 2).

Others who put their faith in new technology also saw the option of moving from mass army to a small professional force, for example the US military air pioneer General William (Billy) Mitchell, who thought it 'probable that future wars again will be conducted by a special class, the air force, as it was by the armoured knights in the Middle Ages' (Mitchell 1925: 19).

Nevertheless, mass armies fought the First World War, and conscript mass armies fought the Second World War. After 1945, even the Korean War, France's Indochina War and America's Vietnam War were fought with conscript soldiers (see chapter 18).

Fear of the 'excited masses'

Guibert had foreseen and, after the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, Jomini and Clausewitz had recognised the enormous force of populations emotionally and physically mobilised for a war. 'If England has proved that money will procure soldiers and auxiliaries, France has proved that love of country and honour are equally productive', as Jomini wrote (Jomini 1837/1868: 51). The conservative writers of the second half of the nineteenth century found this daunting: there was a widespread fear among the French right and the more affluent parts of French society that social inferiors might rise against their masters as the French had done in 1789, 1830 and 1848, and again 1871. With the great exception of Jaurès, the French military writers considered here stood in awe of the rabble and potential uprisings, which they felt the strong need to suppress (Faivre 1985: 63–91).

In France the military establishment continued to be a nation within the nation, dominated by particularly Conservative, reactionary, authoritarian sentiments, and they were fairly anti-intellectual. Caesarism – the rise of popular military leaders to the top – was rampant. In 1873, after Adolphe Thiers, General Marie Edmé MacMahon was elected second President of the Third Republic; he attempted to rule against the National Assembly and was forced to resign in 1879. In 1889, Georges Boulanger, Minister of War, who was strongly supported by the army, was forced to go into exile at the eleventh hour by Republican elements which had uncovered his plans for a putsch.

The Dreyfus affair exposed the differences between the spirit of the Republic and the spirit of the army and showed the enormous polarization in French society between the republican, egalitarian forces (who continued to want a nation in arms) and the Conservative reactionary forces, particularly in the army, who did not share republican values but were anti-Semitic and allied to the Catholic Church. The two sides feared each other more than they feared the external enemy. Again, the armed forces and their Strategy were deeply influenced not by the external threat but by the internal dynamics of French society, and the two deeply conflicting sets of values which divided French society so profoundly.

It was only in the last years before the First World War that the French army was really integrated into the nation, and that conscription

really began to effect the population in general. Even going into the war, the conservative part of French society was still fearful of an insurrection of the left against the state. In fact the opposite was produced by this most nationalist of all wars: the 'sacred union' (*union sacrée*). The army, with its universal military service, was the quintessential expression of this 'sacred union' (Gorce 1963: 131).

In Britain and Germany also, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the 'have-nots' were beginning to get organised, causing the conservative 'haves' nightmares. They seemed to fear their own lower-class compatriots more than the enemy across the frontiers. Meanwhile, the post-Dreyfussard *Kulturkampf* in France made the left hesitate until about the time of the Second Moroccan Crisis (1911) to decide that the Germans were more hateful than the repressive French armed forces (Porch 2006).

On the one hand, then, were those military officers and writers in France, Germany and Britain who feared the physical weakness, the lack of moral fibre and the pacifism of (at least large segments of) their own populations. On the other were those who saw the masses as a factor escalating violence, whether as potential social revolutionaries, or as a blood-thirsty rabble who would not accept an armistice until an enemy was utterly defeated. Writing after the Franco-Prussian War, which had seen the most extensive mobilisation of conscripts in German-speaking states yet, Moltke the Elder saw 'the introduction of general military service' as important in integrating 'the educated classes of society into the armies. Admittedly, the rougher and more brutal elements remained, but they are no longer the sole components of the military.' He nevertheless continued to fear 'popular passions pushing for war'. He cautioned: 'We must not allow the inner quality of the army to be weakened, otherwise we will end up with militias. Wars conducted by militias characteristically last much longer, and for that reason demand more sacrifices of money and lives than all other wars.' He listed the French 'experiments' with militias of 1792 and in the Franco-Prussian War, as well as the American Civil War, as 'horrors' which 'nobody would wish to transplant onto European soil'.

An armed crowd is far from being an army, and it is barbarian to lead them into combat … savagery and cruelty inevitably accompany the arming of the people … What happens when the government loses the reins of power,

when power is assumed by the masses, is demonstrated by the history of the Paris *commune*.

Moltke's was thus a passionate plea for lengthy military service to turn even conscripts into disciplined, drilled professionals through an intensive education (Großer Generalstab 1911: 2–11). Von der Goltz equally thought that 'the excited masses are more prone to clamour for war than Cabinets' (Goltz 1895/1899: 3). Nevertheless, he was convinced, using very Guibertian–Clausewitzian terminology, that 'The day of Cabinet wars is over … Wars have become solely the concern of the nations engaged' (Goltz 1883/1906: 9).

Such feelings were not unique to the German upper classes. Lt.-Col. W.H. James also emphasised the role of popular sentiment:

In democratic nations the people are supposed to be the arbiters of their own destinies, but they are, as history shows us, often swept along by a sudden wave of sentiment which may hurry them into a position where war becomes unavoidable. Countries in which public opinion has great power are much more liable to be thus affected than those in which the Government is in the hand of a few individuals placed above such influence. (James 1904: 11)

He had little faith in the military policies of democracies:

The more autocratically a nation is governed the more consistent its policy will usually be. An autocratic ruler, although not independent of his environment, is less affected by it, and is more likely to influence the current of politics by impressing his will on his statesmen and even on his successors. (James 1904: 12)

Spenser Wilkinson was fascinated by the writings of von der Goltz, who 'expresses the conviction, *shared by all contemporary military thinkers*, that the identification of Governments with nations has made permanent what Clausewitz called the absolute type of war' (Wilkinson 1910: 181; my emphasis). Wilkinson therefore pleaded with his countrymen to cease thinking of future war as limited, and to think of throwing the nation's entire resources into it instead.

To sum up, writers on warfare with a republican, democratic frame of mind tended to favour militias, all the way up to Jaurès writing in

early twentieth-century France and the spiritual fathers of the West German Bundeswehr. Monarchists, or others favouring oligarchic forms of state and governance, preferred professional armies, distrusting the (potentially revolutionary) masses. Nationalists of all hues liked mass armies of conscripts. Only the British had the geographic luxury of not having to think about such a major contingency until 1914.

Mass armies were indeed the forces that would clash in the First World War. And to some extent, the fears of the conservative strategists were vindicated. After several classes of soldiers allowed themselves to be slaughtered, there were uprisings in 1917/18 not only in Russia, but also in Germany and France. While the socialist revolution was contained in Western and Central Europe and limited to Russia, the tensions between left and right, between social classes, the haves and have-nots, continued to haunt those who thought about Strategy. But these were not the only traumas brought on by the war that was sold to the public as the Last of the Last (*La Der des Ders*), and yet became the first of *two* World Wars, indeed the first of two *Total* wars.

It brought together the strands of *Total War* discussed at the beginning of this chapter: the well-nigh total mobilisation of the populations of the countries at war, and the annihilation of army after army on the Western Front. Moreover there was the genocidal annihilation of the Armenians carried out by the Ottoman Turks. Again, these strands fused in the Second World War, with its societies put on war footing, its mobilisation of civilians and industry, its air attacks on cities, its battles of annihilation at Stalingrad and Kursk and, finally, the largest genocide in war that the world has seen inflicted on Russians and Jews by the Germans.

7 | *Challenges to the Napoleonic paradigm versus the culmination of Total War*

Do you want Total War? If necessary, do you want it more total and more radical than we can imagine it today?

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(Goebbels's speech at the Palace of Sports, Berlin,
18 February 1943)

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Mars mechanised: the Napoleonic paradigm versus technological innovation

We have seen that Americans on both sides of the Civil War rendered homage to the Napoleonic paradigm, which they knew through Jomini's writings; the Prussians developed their own version of it, ostensibly through their selective reading of Clausewitz but mainly under the increasingly 'realist' military leadership of Moltke; the French felt the need to rediscover Napoleonic warfare after their defeat at the hands of the German coalition in 1870/1 which they attributed to the Prussian officers' studies of Napoleon, again through the medium of Clausewitz. Just as Renaissance men had felt the need to resurrect the wisdom of the ancients and to model their strategies on those of great generals of Antiquity, the emulation of the Napoleonic way of war became the lodestar of strategy from *c.* 1860 to 1918, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Nevertheless, there were strong voices who doubted that the Napoleonic paradigm could be applied without significant modifications, pointing to the great technological innovations affecting warfare in this period. Unlike in early modern history, these innovations were both fast in coming and their significance was not denied; however, what the consequences would be was open to debate. In addition to belief in Social Darwinism and biology, and in the right of might, there was the changing factor of technology. The Wars of German Unification and the American Civil War especially had seen revolutionary changes there. Both used railways, the telegraph and industrial

mass-production of weapons, ammunition and other equipment, and both harnessed mass armies to a popular cause (Degler 1997: 53–74), which made them 'industrialised people's wars' (Förster and Nagler 1997: 9). Liddell Hart gave a succinct summary of the 'revolution in warfare' caused by the new technology from the introduction of the railways and the interwar period (he was writing in 1934):

[The evolution of war since the mid eighteenth] century has been marked by four main trends. First, was the growth of size. From France under the Revolution and Napoleon, to America in the Civil War and Prussia under Moltke, the armies swelled to the millions of 1914–1918. Second, came the growth of fire-power, beginning with the adoption of rifles and breech-loading weapons. This, imposed on size, conduced [*sic*] to a growing paralysis of warfare on land and sea. Third was the growth of industrialisation … And fourth was the revolutionary growth of mobility, due in turn to the steam engine and the motor.

This revolution of technology had 'mechanised Mars' (Liddell Hart 1944: 24f., 69).

Completely unlike in the previous centuries, technology became a hotly debated subject in the mid nineteenth century, and remains one. Not only in debates on naval/maritime Strategy, but also those on land warfare, and later air power, was there from now on always a '*matériel*' school which focused on this aspect at the expense of all others, and we can see a continuity here lasting to the works of the ardent admirers of the 'revolution in military affairs' at the end of the twentieth century. But if so much had changed in technology, was the French Revolution still the great watershed in view of the technological changes in the late nineteenth century (Echevarria 2002a: 199–214, 2002b: 84–91)?

It is significant that the ideology-driven Bernhardi, while writing at length on the importance of new technology from railways to firepower, still dwelt on the importance of cavalry (Bernhardi 1912b: 190). By contrast in France, General Derrécagaix wrote that after the German victory 1870/1:

We have understood that since the day when the Prussian example has forced the European powers to transform their military institutions, and to arm all their able-bodied men, since the perfecting of firearms, since the development of the railway network and electrical communications,

the rules of the military art have undergone changes which every day are affirming themselves more, and which put armies in a true period of transition. (Derrécagaix 1885, I: 1)

At the very end of the nineteenth century, the German General Sigismund von Schlichting started his work on tactical and strategic principles of the present by echoing Clausewitz (*On War*, III.8), 'times have changed, and ... war has changed profoundly and is inspired by very different forces' from those which obtained during the wars of Frederick II and Napoleon (Schlichting 1897: 9).

In Germany, Britain and France there were strategic theorists who bravely contended that the next war would have to be short as no long war could be sustained because of the lethality of the new weapons or because of the speed with which campaigns would now be carried out (Cairns 1953: 282f.; Farrar 1972: 39–52). A few well-informed individuals, however, usually in the armed forces, predicted rightly that it would be long and drawn-out. Even the German military leadership did not really believe in the possibility of a short war, as Stig Förster has shown; instead, they embarked on a desperate gamble, at best hoping to be able to seize the initiative and in a sharp, short *coup de main* against France to give Germany a good position from which to win a longer war of attrition (Förster 1995: 61–95; Showalter 2000: 679–710; Herwig 2002: 681–93). While General Joffre in France also proclaimed that the war would be short, Douglas Porch shows that military opinion in France doubted that the war could go on for long because they had little faith in the power of resistance of their own nation – 'undermined' and 'weakened' morally by the disease of pacifism (Porch 2006: 121).

The pre-First World War debate about the length of the next war reads much like the post-First World War debate about the effects of aerial bombing on any future war (see chapter 12). Von der Goltz, for example, thought that the stronger the weapons, the more fear they caused ('deterrent effect'), the sooner the battle would be over, and is 'generally ... less bloody in proportion as the engines of destruction have attained greater perfection'. A single modern shrapnel bomb could kill ten to twenty people, with consequently great moral effect; therefore, he extrapolated, war should be over more quickly.

In spite of ... the enhanced effect of the weapons of war, no battle of modern times has produced such carnage as did those of Eylau or Borodino.

But most bloody of all were the battles of ancient times, in which the attack was made with a club or the short Roman sword.

Nowadays, battles would simply be more rapidly decided, war concluded faster; 'that is certainly an end to be desired, since, war, in these modern times, by displaying itself in its natural and violent form, convulses all creation' (Goltz 1883/1906: 13).

In the United Kingdom, in 1891, Colonel Esdaile had argued that the new weapons had brought on 'an absolute revolution in all our present systems of tactics and strategy' and that the new balance between offensive and defence inclined towards the defence. But in the same year, Spenser Wilkinson pronounced this to be 'erroneous', arguing that there had been no revolution on the battlefield, only 'progress. Weapons produce their old effects at longer distances and more speedily. But the effects are not new in character' (Wilkinson 1910: 156f., 162). Looking backwards rather than forwards, he took a leaf from the writing of Moltke the Elder, who in his 1865 work *Remarks upon the Influence of Improved Firearms upon Fighting* had said:

Generally speaking, the consequence of the peculiarities of the improved firearms will be to strengthen the defence as against the attack. The defender can choose his position in such a way that the enemy must advance over an open plain … The attacker has, from the fact of attacking, certain evident advantages, which he will always retain. (q.i. Wilkinson 1910: 163)

These included the choice of the object, and the way by which to reach it. Spenser Wilkinson agreed with Moltke that

in future the defence must seek the open plain, the attack, broken ground … The less the chance of success for a frontal attack, the more surely will the enemy turn against our flanks, and the more important it becomes to secure them … The smaller the force and the shorter its front, the easier it is to turn its defensive position. (Wilkinson 1910: 156f.)

Flanking movements would be necessary, even in what would seem to be a frontal assault. Little did Spenser Wilkinson foresee that in this desperate attempt to outflank the enemy, the mass armies on the Western Front would spread themselves out halfway across Europe, along a front entirely lined by trenches.

Others did foresee this 'crisis of fortifications'. In France, General Hippolyte Langlois (1839–1912) was very sceptical of the value of the fortifications which France constructed after the 1870/1 war, with Belfort, Épinal, Toul and Verdun in the front line, but also fortresses further inland along inroads. He thought they would hamper France's flexibility (Langlois 1906: 15–36). He argued that after assuring the defence of the French territory against an initial German assault, France would have to prepare the offensive into enemy territory (Langlois 1906: 83–6).

Notwithstanding the enormous innovations in military technology, Corbett rightly noted that his contemporaries continued to be obsessed with Napoleonic warfare, which they saw as the only way, and 'the bare suggestion that there may be other ways' was branded by them as heresy (Corbett 1911: 20–2). Liddell Hart, writing in the mid-1920s, found this still to be the dominant paradigm. 'The textbook principle of aiming "to destroy the enemy's main forces" came to be visualized in the [First] World War as a destruction of the enemy's troops, rather than the disruption of his military organization.' This was reflected in

the memoirs, and letters, of those who directed our strategy – with the constant emphasis upon 'killing Germans'. Compared with this purpose there was small concentration of thought upon the far deeper effects of paralysing the enemy's brain, physically and psychologically: his nerve systems and arteries. (Liddell Hart 1944: 57)

While consensus on the Napoleonic paradigm prevailed, the historical school more generally, that is, those authors stressing continuity in warfare and harking back to historical examples as inspirations for their Strategy – respectively, Hannibal's successful indirect approach at Cannae and Napoleon's division of the enemy's forces at Austerlitz (Groote 1990: 33–55) – did not go unchallenged in the light of new technology. Von der Goltz commented:

Although the leading principles of warfare are said to be eternal, yet the phenomena which have to be dealt and reckoned with are liable to continuous change. War, as an act of human intercourse, is, in its eternal form, subject to all the same changes which affect the latter. Railways and telegraphs, which show new ways to trade, have also opened hitherto closed paths to military science … Military precepts are thus continually changing

in their application, and it may rightly be said, that every age has its own peculiar mode of warfare. Hence, methods which, in 1870, led to triumph, cannot now be regarded as the absolute standard for the future; new conditions, ushered in by the present, compel us to devise fresh ways and means. (Goltz 1883/1906: 1)

Yet his prescriptions for the following war were the application of the Napoleonic paradigm with massively added firepower; and few writers on Strategy had as much influence on the thinking of their time – both inside and outside their own country – as von der Goltz and Bernhardi.

The dissenters: Corbett's limited wars and Jaurès's defensive army

Before the First World War, challenges to the Napoleonic paradigm came from other quarters, too, even though in this atmosphere of rabid nationalism and militarism it was difficult to dissent. It took not only exceptional intelligence and character, but also originality of thought to do so, and it helped if one was not brainwashed by military service. Thus it was two highly educated civilians who were the main dissenters, Sir Julian Corbett and Jean Jaurès.

  Unlike almost all his contemporary strategic thinkers, Corbett thought that limited war was by no means dead. He was well aware of opinion around him. He distinguished 'between the German or Continental School of Strategy and the British or Maritime School – that is, our own traditional School, which too many writers both at home and abroad quietly assume to have no existence'. The latter school's views, in his opinion, was familiar with a distinction between what Clausewitz called unlimited and limited war, a distinction also found in Jomini (1837/1868: 330–1), who had written: 'There are two different kinds [of war], one which may be called territorial or geographical … the other on the contrary consists exclusively in the destruction or disorganisation of the enemy's forces without concerning yourself with geographical points of any kind.' The first Jomini had called 'offensive wars to assert rights', such as Frederick's conquest of Silesia. By and large, this coincided with Clausewitz's own idea of limited wars, which were seen as very different from the unlimited aims of Napoleon. As Corbett remarked and most of

Jomini's disciples chose to ignore, Jomini had criticised Napoleon for his unlimited aims in his campaign against Russia in 1812 – with a limited territorial aim Napoleon might have got out of it again (Corbett 1911: 46).

Corbett pointed out that at the time of Clausewitz, the German states' territories were scattered all over central Europe, but by the time Corbett was writing, consolidated states had formed with contiguous territory. When Clausewitz 'conceived the idea, the only kind of limited object he had in his mind was … "some conquests on the frontiers of the enemy's country", such as Silesia and Saxony for Frederick the Great, Belgium in his own war plan, and Alsace-Lorraine in that of Moltke'. Corbett observed that this would be unworkable in reality, when nations would see these provinces as 'organic parts' of their country, and when little would stop a nation from stepping up its efforts to defend them. In his view, Clausewitz's concept, while no longer applicable to wars between nationalist states in Europe, might still apply to at least one side in a colonial conflict overseas.

German analysts agreed with Corbett only on the unfeasibility of limited war in Europe. The rise of nationalism with all its symbolism of unity of nation, territory and state outdated Clausewitz's idea that war might take the form of the conquest of a hamlet for the mere purpose of acquiring a negotiating chip for diplomacy (Hintze 1920–1: 131–77). A nation, especially if ethnically or racially defined, could not allow any of its members to fall (or remain) under foreign domination – a creed which turned the ethnic patchwork of Central and Eastern Europe into a field of landmines, all of which duly exploded in the First and Second World Wars.

As we shall see in chapters 9 and 10, Corbett would be either admired or hated by his contemporaries; he had many more unorthodox views for which he was finally disowned by the British Admiralty, which arguably speeded up his death (Grove, Introduction to Corbett 1911/1988).

On the French side, almost the only voice crying in the wilderness and arguing against the cult of the offensive was that of Jean Jaurès, France's leading socialist. A philosopher and historian by training, Jaurès significantly broached strategic questions coming from the classic French *topos* of composition and recruitment of the armed force. Jaurès in particular challenged Captain George Gilbert's and General Langlois's call for a revival of Napoleonic

war, as Jaurès thought this had been a 'mortal period … for the military institutions of France and for [our] national defence'. As we have seen Jaurès had understood the significance of the ultimate defeat of Napoleon, but he was in a small minority; most of his compatriots still saw Napoleon as France's genius. Napoleon, Jaurès argued, had gone for vainglory, causing destruction and sterility, when French Revolutionary warfare contained so many more promises and possibilities that could have been to the benefit of mankind more generally (Jaurès 1911: 53–5). If anything, he argued that one should rehabilitate the warfare of Henri de Turenne, Louis XIV's general, who fought mainly limited, defensive wars against the Holy Roman Empire's leading generals. This was of course the sort of limited, defensive warfare despised by Jaurès's contemporaries (Jaurès 1911: 57f., 61f.). At the same time Jaurès was sceptical of all historical models and 'servile imitation'. Moreover, he pointed out a contradiction: if those like Captain Gilbert cautioned against 'Prusso-mania' among French militaries, that is, an admiration of the Prussian military because of its victory against France in 1870, this Prussian style was actually a derivative of Napoleon's way of war, and Bismarck's imperial policies had more than a little in common with Napoleon's: neither was founded primarily on the rule of law and justice, but on crude force (Jaurès 1911: 61f.).

Jaurès then went on to draw attention to Clausewitz's conclusion from the Napoleonic Wars that *defence*, not the offensive, was the stronger form of war. By then Clausewitz was greatly, albeit grudgingly, admired in France as a Napoleon analyst and as the intellectual vehicle carrying his secret of success – 'the rapid, concentrated and bold offensive' – from France to Prussia (Jaurès 1911: 75).

Like Mao three decades later, the Socialist Jaurès was particularly inspired by Clausewitz's recipe of for defensive 'people's war'. This, he argued, should be the inspiration for France (Jaurès 1911: 76f.).

For if tomorrow, war breaks out between France and Germany … Germany will certainly resort to the offensive … [S]he will brusquely invade French territory and … will seek to strike at the main French forces, only just assembled, with one of those formidable strikes which will knock out the adversary or leave him at least so shaken that even in a prolonged fight, he will not be able to recover full combat strength and the élan of victory. (Jaurès 1911: 81)

Jaurès drew on the writings of French Captain Louis Nathaniel Rossel (1844–71), who like Jaurès had advocated a defensive Strategy for France with her demographic inferiority to Germany, and who died in the siege of Paris (Jaurès 1911: 86). Properly organised to defend France, 'total application of her forces' could lead to success. 'By contrast, France risked losing everything by launching herself into a premature offensive, uncovering her own hinterland' (Jaurès 1911: 89–92).

There is a parallel between Jaurès's thinking and the much less developed plea, made almost twenty years earlier, by a German Socialist, August Bebel (1840–1913), for an egalitarian system of conscription for his country. Like Jaurès, Bebel was immune to the militarism of his age, and in 1892 incurred the anger of his fellow parliamentarians in Germany's powerless Reichstag when he pleaded for a return to France of Alsace and Lorraine, as he saw Germany's annexation of these two French provinces as the prime cause for Europe's insecurity. Bebel deliberately quoted the French republican tradition of conscription as a model for Germany, which again did not endear him to the rabid nationalists by whom he was surrounded (Bebel 1892). Bebel and Jaurès disagreed famously on some interpretations of Marxism, but both, with their Socialist internationalism, sought in vain to stem the tide of bellicosity which led to the deluge of 1914–18. Jaurès would be one of its first victims: on 31 July 1914, he was assassinated for opposing the brewing war.

Lessons of the First World War

What united all participants of the Great War on the Western Front after this war was the utter determination never again to wage a war in the way in which this one had been waged, at least between 1914–17. Even those who were convinced that 'the normal condition of mankind is not peace but war', and that Britain, at any rate, before 1914 had benefited from war, after 1918 thought that 'a new era had begun in which civilization, as a whole, cannot benefit, but must suffer, from warfare between its integral parts' (Groves 1934: 30f.). As the British army officer J.F.C. Fuller – no shrinking violet he – noted:

I can understand the Quaker spirit, the Crusader spirit, and the Mercenary spirit. I can understand a man detesting war, glorying in war, looking upon

it as a good business. But I cannot understand anyone wishing to repeat the last war'. (Fuller 1928: v)

The strategic and tactical stalemate, the slaughter at the Western Front, the feeling that the politicians and indeed the population back home had betrayed the soldiers were universal, and all strategists drawing lessons from this war emphasised that next time round everything had to be done differently. The next war had to be brought to a conclusion quickly, and any – *any* – means, any new technology that might make this possible, was considered. The subliminal hatred for one's own government and civilian population which had accepted the suffering of millions in the trenches and even retrospectively did not understand what the survivors had gone through was usually sublimated in a call for carrying the next war far into the territory of the enemy, to make the (enemy) population, and not just the soldiers at the front, feel the scourge of war.

   Indeed, the general cultural reaction especially in Britain, France and Belgium was a turn away from jingoism and towards pacificism (Martin Ceadle), that is, the proclivity always to give negotiations and peace a greater chance than militarism and war. Charles de Gaulle described the change of mentality in his book of 1932:

Everything in the climate of opinion generated by the … peace combines to disturb the mind of the professional soldier. The masses, after having been exposed for so long to the horrors of violence, violently react against them. A sort of *mystique* spreads rapidly which not only calls down curses upon war in general, but leads men to believe that it is an outmoded activity, for no better reason than that they want it to be so, and this fervour breeds its own form of exorcism. The world is noisy with the condemnation of battle, murder and sudden death. To inspire a sense of guilt, the visual arts are widely employed to make men familiar with the ravages of war. A veil is drawn over the achievements and the heroism of those who did the fighting. No longer is that sense of glory evoked in which, throughout the centuries, nations have found consolation for their sufferings, but only the memory of blood and tears and death. History is distorted so that the battles of the past shall be forgotten, and the profession of arms attacked root and branch. (Gaulle 1932/1960: 12)

To paraphrase Oswald Spengler, the First World War was the traumatic Myth of the Twentieth Century for France and Britain. France

lost one in six of her mobilised men, dead or missing in the war. In addition, over 3 million Frenchmen were wounded, of whom over a million remained disabled for life. Germany lost 1.8 million dead or missing, with 4.2 million wounded. Britain lost just under a million dead or missing, with over 2 million wounded. Austria-Hungary lost 1.2 million with 3.6 million wounded; Russia lost 1.7 million, the largest figure after Germany, with the greatest number of wounded, just short of 5 million (Doughty 1985: 72).

The war had seen far-reaching mobilisation, but was still far from realising the ideal of the French National Assembly of 1793 or of total war in terms of mobilisation. A fifth of the total population of France had been involved in the war effort, that is, in the armed forces or military industry. In Germany it was 18%, in Italy 15%, in Austria-Hungary 14%, in Britain 13% and in Russia 10%. But all sides drew the lesson that in any future war, it had to be less a matter of 'business as usual', and the civilian economy and population had to be mobilised more totally still.

Strategy responses to the First World War

The German military historian Hans Delbrück made himself very unpopular with the establishment and the Reichswehr by criticising the German military commanders of the First World War. Looking at Falkenhayn's Strategy in his attack on Verdun, he commented that it

was no attempt to break through; it was not a battle; it did not aim to bring about a great tactical decision. Had we finally taken Verdun, it would of course have been of great importance for morale, but in Falkenhayn's view, such a success was not entirely necessary. The point of this enterprise … was the exploitation of the advantage of our … positions, in order to inflict on the enemy much greater losses than we were suffering ourselves. The aim was not to beat the French, but to bleed them to death. As great as the pain was that they had to suffer, they had to hold Verdun, as … its surrender would have been an unbearable loss of prestige … This bleeding [the enemy] is a form of … exhaustion-strategy. It is neither merely passive waiting, nor manoeuvring without bloodshed. (Delbrück 1920b: 49)

As we have seen in chapter 3, Delbrück had developed an analogous dualist interpretation of warfare through the ages, claiming

particularly that Frederick the Great had pursued a Strategy of attrition, not of decisive battle. This was tantamount to an attack on Germany's sacred national symbols. In the age of the cult of the offensive, nationalist Prussians and Germans found it impossible to accept such a verdict on 'their' Frederick, and a heated debate ensued (Kromayer 1925a: 394). Reinhold Koser was among Delbrück's angry critics. Misrepresenting the 'exhaustion strategists' as those who refused to give battle altogether, he could haughtily claim that this could not possible apply to Frederick. Koser rightly noted that the Strategy of 'crushing' the adversary varied as a function of the different ages and cultures in which it was applied. The princes and generals of the *ancien régime* may have aimed to crush the enemy's armies, but not overthrow a regime or a state with all its structures as Napoleon would. At best, a prince of the *ancien régime* wanted to replace another prince as ruler of a state, but social or political revolution was not on the agenda. With the rise of the nation(alist) states of the nineteenth century, however, the aim of crushing the enemy nation (and not merely its armies, or even revolutionising its social and state structures) was conceived and spread throughout Europe (Koser 1904).

Delbrück would achieve more lasting fame abroad. His interpretational pattern was taken up by the twentieth-century American historian Russell Weigley, who adopted it in his famous classic on *The American Way of War.* As a weak and, in terms of manpower and ships, initially small state, the young USA, according to Weigley, had to adopt a Strategy of attrition or exhaustion of the adversary in any conflict. As the USA's population and economic and especially industrial power grew, it could transform its way of war into war with the aim of the annihilation of the adversary's armed forces in battle (very much Napoleon-style), a Strategy it practised from 1865 until 1945 and favours to this day (Weigley 1976). Critics of Weigley have shown that while this might have been the preferred Strategy, necessity forced the USA to choose deterrence or indeed piecemeal operations more akin to attrition (as defined by Delbrück and Weigley) on several occasions between 1865 and 1941, and especially after 1945 (Linn 2002). Nevertheless, the Delbrückian distinction proved a useful analytical tool.

While Delbrück himself did not really put forward an alternative account of how to deal with warfare in the context of all this new

technology, other German critics of the conduct of the First World War concentrated on individual military campaigns, especially the Ludendorff offensive of 1917/18. This was found deficient in the light of Napoleonic imperative of concentrating forces on one point, as opposed to the broad offensive along the whole front from Ypres to Reims (Mayr 1925). This led to the call for a revival of manoeuvre warfare, and the development of the *Blitzkrieg* operations of the Wehrmacht, practised so successfully in the early stages of the Second World War.

French Strategy: total defence

The First World War purged France of her militarism and any adulation of war stemming from previous centuries. French Strategy became entirely defensive. Jaurès, first French victim of the Great War, was vindicated posthumously. General André Beaufre commented forty years later: '[T]he victors of 1918 lost interest in strategy because they had been taught, not Strategy as such, but *a* strategy which was held up as the be-all and end-all of the art. This particular strategy' – the pursuit of annihilation battle – 'proved false. The idol [Strategy] was therefore torn down' (Beaufre 1963/1965: 13).

In concrete terms, France had not thought about the consequences of the loss of her north-eastern frontier regions, which produced three-quarters of the total iron ore of France, and between two-thirds and three-quarters of her coal. But these regions were lost at the beginning of the war in 1914, opening the eyes of the French leadership to the need to defend the area where so much of France's economic resources were. The French learned from this how vulnerable and crucial at once their eastern industry was, whence the emphasis on the need for better defences in a future war. Hence their opting for a predominantly defensive posture, with the construction of the Maginot Line, promoted in particular by the Generals Maxime Weygand and Maurice Gamelin (Doughty 1985: 126f.). Originally plans had foreseen the movement into Belgium almost to the border between Belgium and Germany. But Belgium's declaration of neutrality in 1939 rendered this plan politically impossible. Plan D, operational from 1933–5, would have meant going forward to the Namur–Dyle River–Antwerp line ('Dyle Plan'). There was also a Plan E or Escaut Plan, to move forward to Tournai, the Escaut River, and

then Antwerp (Doughty 1985: 66). With the Maginot Line in place, it was hoped that French forces could concentrate on the defence of the north alone. But sitting behind the Maginot Line, unable to pass through neutral Belgium because a democracy abiding by international law did not do such a thing, France was quite unable to take any offensive action, come to the aid of Czechoslovakia or Poland or even take effective action when Hitler remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936. France's static defences were at odds with what Jaurès had called for, and proved unfortunate.

While the lessons the Germans had drawn from their experience in the East and the West during the First World War led them to insist on the need for mobility and thus the tank, the generals and marshals of the right in France, including Pétain himself, but also Generals Weygand, Debeney and Gamelin, were sceptical of the tank and the aeroplane. Instead, their lesson from the First World War was that firepower was the most important acquisition to make, and that well-fortified trenches and defence systems could not be overrun, if they were protected with ample firepower.

There was a minority view, based on movement, pre-First World War Plan XVII, which advocated mass movement forwards. Foch and Joffre were in favour of this immediately after the First World War, and later de Gaulle took an interest in the mobility provided by tank warfare. But among the French leadership, they were in the minority.

The indirect approach I: manoeuvre warfare

The distrust and ignorance of technology of many military leaders had proved fatal for millions in the First World War. Germany and Russia drew the lesson that mobility had to be the key to future operations. Both started planning for mobile warfare, what would later become famous as German '*Blitzkrieg*' operations. There were no great theorists of this outside the armed forces. The brains behind this manoeuvre warfare committed little of their thinking to published writing, or if so, merely retrospectively.

The commander-in-chief of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in the First World War, General John Pershing, had espoused an all-out Strategy of going for the annihilation of the adversary's armed forces, confirming Russell Weigley's model of an American

way of war. But the reality was the incremental build-up of US forces in Europe as a result of delays caused by training and transport by sea imposed even on the AEF campaigns, which historians critical of Weigley's interpretation have characterised as attritional rather than decisive (Grotelueschen 2000; Linn 2002: 521–3).

The USA initially returned to the preferred 'American way of war', with the *Field Service Regulations* of 1923 fully embracing again the annihilation of the enemy's armed forces in battle as the unlimited objective of any war (Linn 2002: 525). By 1934, in contrast, General Douglas MacArthur as army Chief of Staff described future war as being fought by small, highly mobile elites. '[T]he American defense system envisions gradual rather than a simultaneous commitment of forces to action whenever an emergency may arise.' The entire young male population of the USA would, if necessary, be mobilised for a larger-scale conflict (Linn 2002: 527). Innovation in the US military was stymied in the interwar years, however; David E. Johnson concludes that there was a lack of innovative writers of the calibre of a Fuller, a Liddell Hart, a Charles de Gaulle or a Guderian, and the prevailing US mentality was apathetic to military pursuits, resisting the expenditure that would have been needed to effect any major transformations of the sort that MacArthur proposed. By the outbreak of the Second World War, the US military was thus neither on the ground nor in the air transformed into the decisive weapon MacArthur or Billy Mitchell had dreamed of (see chapter 12), and both became once again, as in the previous war, above all instruments of attrition, precisely what the few innovators had hoped to avoid (Johnson 1998: 218, 225).

The need to revive manoeuvre warfare was the main lesson drawn from the trench warfare that had characterised the First World War on the Western Front. In a future war, units should advance rapidly to defeat enemy armies partly by the surprise of timing, partly by the surprise of the angle of attack, or by encirclement, cutting them off from their supplies or other units. The argument has been made that the long-range cavalry raids into enemy territory which formed an important part of the Confederacy's Strategy in the American Civil War were seen as a model by European strategists of the interwar period. But they had no need to look across the Atlantic for models (Dwyer 1999). Here, too, the Napoleonic Wars and the Franco-Prussian War provided model enough, and the revival of manoeuvre

warfare can be seen as yet another tribute paid to the Napoleonic paradigm.

Arguments for speed and surprise were anything but new (Holleindre forthcoming). Because of the perennial nature of war, von der Decken had argued during the Napoleonic Wars that pre-emptive war had to be an option: he wanted a standing army capable of attacking first, at short notice, preferably to fight one's own defensive war on the enemy's territory. Underlying was a balance of power argument: even a smaller country might have to rise against a bigger one that was growing too powerful and threatening (Decken 1800: 173f., 181). Surprise was of course one of the agreed 'principles of war' of the field manuals of the early twentieth century. But one strategist took the concept to new dimensions, and this was Captain Basil Liddell Hart with his book *Strategy: The Indirect Approach*, frequently reprinted after it was first published as *Decisive Wars of History* in 1929, arguably Liddell Hart's greatest work (Danchev 1999: 314). By his own definition, Liddell Hart's 'strategy of indirect approach' was 'the highest and widest fulfilment of the principle of surprise' (Liddell Hart 1944: 238). With this binary concept, Liddell Hart had much in common with Delbrück's binary theory of strategies of attrition and strategies of direct confrontation, and Liddell Hart's would become as famous. Writing at the beginning of the 1930s, Liddell Hart like Delbrück before him criticised the frontal assaults of the First World War:

Foch's idea of surprise was, as he said, guided by 'mechanics' and consisted 'in applying superior forces at one point', the reserve being 'hurled as one block'. This conception was built on a fallacy; it was already undermined by the improvement of weapons to which Foch and his contemporaries gave so little heed. The theory of the Greek phalanx, with its reliance on mass, is nullified by the machine-gun. The more ranks, the more swathes of dead – that is all. In face of this hard reality, the mechanistic theory of surprise broke down in the [First] World War. (Liddell Hart 1944: 204)

Foreshadowing the thinking of the American theorists of the 1960s and 1970s, he wrote in 1926, 'The real target in war is the mind of the enemy command, not the bodies of his troops. If we operate against his troops it is fundamentally for the effect that action will produce on the mind and will of the commander' (Liddell Hart 1944: 48). At the outset of the Second World War, Liddell Hart contrasted the

indirect approach with the doctrine of mass: 'Although war is contrary to reason, since it is a means of deciding issues by force when discussion fails to produce an agreed solution, the conduct of war must be controlled by reason if its object is to be fulfilled' (Liddell Hart 1944: 177).

Liddell Hart claimed to have derived the concept of the 'Strategy of Indirect Approach' from his historical studies in the 1920s, summing it up as follows:

[T]he fact [has] emerged that a direct approach to the object or objective along the 'line of natural expectation' has ever tended to negative results. The reason being that the strength of an enemy country or force lies far less in its numbers or resources than in its stability or equilibrium – of control, morale and supply … To move along the 'line of natural expectation' is to consolidate the enemy's equilibrium. And by stiffening it to augment its resisting power … In contrast, the decisive victories in military history have come from the strategy of indirect approach, wherein the dislocation of the enemy's moral, mental or material balance is the vital prelude to an attempt at his overthrow. (Liddell Hart 1944: 238)

Liddell Hart's emphasis lay on manoeuvre warfare, and he later claimed to have influenced the German Wehrmacht to invent '*Blitzkrieg*' – a myth created by Liddell Hart himself that has since been discredited (Searle 1998). Another strategist interested in the possibilities offered by new technology was J.F.C. Fuller, whose works concerned mainly mechanisation, admittedly with the possibilities in manoeuvre warfare which this entailed (Fuller 1920).

In France, too, there were a few strategic thinkers who were very keen on a mobile way of war. There was an early precedent in France for interest in manoeuvre. One of the concerns in France before the First World War had been that because France was a republic, its mobilisation would take longer than in Germany, a monarchy, where the emperor could simply order it. The horror scenario on the French side had been that of a brusque German advance which might at best be slowed down by the forces deployed along the frontier. Langlois had hoped that France could compensate for the numeric superiority of the Germans by an 'essentially French quality: subtlety', plus mobility, *vitesse*, initiative, 'in short, manoeuvre' (Langlois 1906: 1–13).

As noted above, the young Charles de Gaulle was among this unfashionable interwar minority who saw the tank as bringing an evolution to warfare which, 'insofar as one owes it to mechanization, gives back to quality, as opposed to quantity, the importance which it had at one time lost' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 59). De Gaulle thought it was a 'technical necessity which is driving the military system towards a professional army'. But there was also another factor, namely, that

the exclusive system of the nation-in-arms is only suitable to conflicts in which the stake is unlimited. In order to justify a call to arms of all men capable of bearing them, the death of millions, the loss of vast riches and the social and moral confusion which are the characteristics of mass warfare, we must first of all have violent quarrels, the class of frenzied hatred and ambition, and threatened bondage. That, at any rate, was the state of mind of the nations of Europe before 1914, convinced that war would offer them the alternatives of death or victory.

But writing his book just before Hitler came to power, de Gaulle thought that 'the conditions from which "total war" [*sic*] grew', with an obvious albeit implicit reference to the First World War, were 'gradually disappearing and making way for others. There are good reasons for believing that a war starting tomorrow would only be remotely connected, at the beginning, with the premature attack of mobilized masses.' Like Jan Bloch before him, he even mistakenly believed that 'the ubiquity of wealth, the overlapping of interests and the infiltration of ideas has created among the nations an interdependence which compels them to limit their [military-expansionist] ambitions' (Gaulle 1934/1940: 63–5).

The indirect approach II: target the population

The alternative to harnessing new technology to one's cause was the targeting of the enemy's weakest spot, described variously as his 'soft underbelly', or a 'centre of gravity' of a different sort from that of the enemy's armed forces that had previously been seen as such. In 1903 Prince Louis of Battenberg, director of naval intelligence in the United Kingdom, speaking to the Royal Commission on Food Supply, said how awful it would be if any of the other powers would use a naval blockade against the United Kingdom: 'there is the larger question of humanity. You cannot condemn forty millions [Britons] to starvation

on the ground that they assist in defending their country, because you include women and children.' By the same token, it became clear to the British military leaders that Britain could turn the tables on the continental powers that might actually be as vulnerable to a naval blockade as the United Kingdom. Moral reservations were laid aside, and by 1908 high-ranking naval officers wanted the naval blockade to be adopted as a Strategy option. It was not adopted until well into the First World War, as it was ineffective as long as Germany could obtain supplies via Belgium or the Netherlands. The assurance of the latter's neutrality had of course been the crucial reason for the truncation of the Schlieffen Plan by Moltke the Younger (Gooch 1994: 292f.).

Bernhardi understood the new possibilities offered by naval blockade: 'The course of events at sea may mean starvation for the population' (Bernhardi 1912b: 16). Sir Julian Corbett was in favour of blockading the Germans:

In order to increase the pressure on the enemy and to strike at him financially it is necessary to undertake secondary operations against his trade. We must be careful [however] to keep this in its proper place, and to remember that it is not the primary object of the war. (q.i. Haggie 1985: 122)

The blockade of Germany in the First World War did not bring the war to an end any earlier, but it led to increased civilian mortality, especially among the very young and very old and the sick.

After the First World War, the Berlin history professor Otto Hintze, the bitter adversary of Hans Delbrück, pleaded for an 'indirect' [*sic*] approach of aiming to exhaust the enemy in a future war. These included tiring out his armed forces through manoeuvres, forcing them to undertake long marches without giving battle, or through making their upkeep excessively expensive by drawing out a war, or through ruining his economy in other ways, such as a continental blockade, or by cutting off food supplies to his population through a blockade, or by exploiting the social and political tensions within the enemy nation to foster revolutionary tendencies or civil wars. Hintze identified such measures in the continental blockade of Napoleon, or in the Strategy of Moltke in the second phase of the Franco-Prussian War. Strategy, he argued, is a mixture of these tendencies, but the mix shows infinite variation in its proportions. Any military commander would prefer to crush the adversary in a decisive annihilation battle,

but this opportunity rarely presented itself, and rarely would it decide the war (Hintze 1920–1: 131–77).

Writing in 1925, Liddell Hart had not as yet developed moral revulsion against blockade, but saw other disadvantages.

First, it can only be successful where the enemy country is not self-supporting, and can be entirely surrounded – or at any rate its supplies from outside effectively intercepted. Second, it is slow to take effect, and so imposes a strain on the resources of the blockading country.

In his outrage over the dying and suffering of the soldiers in the First World War, he for a while was a fervent advocate of turning any war into 'a duel between two nations', with all the consequences this implied, namely the explicit targeting of civilians (Liddell Hart 1944: 49, 52).

For 'terror' was the weapon, other than manoeuvre and static defences, that strategists often named that might change the future of war. The thought that 'terror' might lead to a quicker end to a war, and that its sum total might thus be less horrifying in terms of human suffering than a long-drawn-out war was not altogether new, nor can the possibility be denied that the advocates of such 'terror' campaigns had some naïf belief in this logic. Even in 1569, Thomas Churchyard, a pamphleteer who accompanied the English general Sir Humphrey Gilbert on his campaign to subdue Munster in Ireland, wrote in defence of the atrocities that Gilbert and his men committed: 'through the terror which the people conceived thereby, it made short wars' (q.i. Selesky 1994: 61). Three hundred years later, the American Lieber Code, standing at the beginning of the era of establishing multilaterally agreed laws of war, stated, 'the more vigorously wars are pursued, the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief' (q.i. Biddle 1994: 147). Optimists even in the late nineteenth century thought that while military technology was making war bloodier, it would become shorter and more decisive and might even lead to long-term peace and the abandonment of war. This included men like Hiram Maxim, inventor of the Maxim gun, who thought that making war 'appalling to contemplate' would make 'nations pause'. He thought that 'men who are good students of human nature', among whom he clearly included himself, had to realise 'that the best way to preserve peace is to make war as terrible as possible – terrible in its

toll of blood and money, terrible in its widespread ravages, and terrible in its uncertainty' (Budiansky 2003: 10). In 1899 an international movement tried to ban hot-air balloons as precursors of aircraft that might be used for bombardment. At the time, the American delegate Captain William Crozier voiced the following considerations:

Who can say that such an invention will not be of a kind to make its use possible at a critical point on the field of battle, at a critical moment of the conflict, under conditions so defined and concentrated that it would decide the victory … localizing at important points the destruction of life and property, and … sparing the sufferings of all who are not at the precise spot where the result is decided? Such use tends to diminish the evils of war. (Budiansky 2003: 11)

After the First World War this desperate belief became widespread. To get away from the bloodshed of the trenches, J.F.C. Fuller advocated the use of 'terror', always in the hope that it would terminate a future war more quickly, with less overall bloodshed. The destruction of the enemy's possessions might not be the best way to proceed: 'A nation which destroys the economic resources of its enemy, destroys its eventual markets, and thus wounds itself.' He hoped that the principle of destruction could be replaced by this new principle of imposing one's 'will at the least possible general loss'. In order to achieve this,

the means of warfare must be changed, for the present means are means of killing, means of blood; they must be replaced by terrifying means, means of mind. The present implements of war must be scrapped and these bloody tools must be replaced by weapons the moral effect of which is so terrific that a nation attacked by them will lose its mental balance and will compel its government to accept the hostile policy without further demur. (Fuller 1923: 28–30)

The third indirect approach, then, would be the use of air power against the enemy's industrial centres and populations (see chapter 13). Writing in the interwar period, General F.B. Maurice reflected the debate on the indirect approach. If the war aim was 'the restoration of peace on satisfactory terms' and if this was 'achieved by overcoming the opponent's will to continue the struggle', how was this to be done? '[T]here has never been any question until recently, that once a state of war has arisen, the way to overcome the opponent's will was

to defeat his armed forces.' In the British *Field Service Regulations* it was now 'suggested that it is within the power of aircraft to terrify the civil population of an enemy country to an extent which will overcome the opponent's will even if his armed forces are undefeated' (Maurice 1929: 68).

Total War and genocide: Ludendorff and the National Socialists

Nevertheless, it was a substantial moral and conceptual step away from targeting the population in order to break the enemy's will to resist, to practise genocide. The genocide of the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during the First World War stood in a long tradition of smaller-scale, mutually inflicted Balkan atrocities. It was the first large-scale forerunner of the two great state-perpetrated genocides or democides: the Holodomor of 1932–3, Stalin's organised famines in the Ukraine, and the Holocaust, the German persecution above all of Jews. To this must be added the radical ill-treatment of the Slavs by the Germans during the Second World War, which resulted in several times as many millions of deaths among Soviet citizens by deliberately engineered starvation, much on the lines of the Holodomor (Davies and Wheatcroft 1994: 57–80).

The key strategic thinker and practitioner who actually advocated such a Strategy is Erich Ludendorff, one of the German supreme commanders in the First World War. He has the dubious fame of having been Adolf Hitler's rival for the leadership of the German National Socialist Workers' Party founded soon after the war; in 1925 he was this party's candidate for the presidency of Weimar Republic Germany. In 1935, frustrated that the little Austrian had beaten him to becoming *Führer* of Germany, and under the influence of his racist wife, he published his *Total War*. His wife, who believed in the application of breeding principles for domesticated animals to human beings, had added a special touch to Ludendorff's views, rooted in the Social Darwinist thinking of the previous century. But in his hands, they were transformed into a book that, next to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, comes the closest to defining what the Germans would do in the Second World War, namely wage a Total War which added to total mobilisation the dimension of genocide.

Some passages in *Total War* are little different from the writings of those who even before the First World War had advocated the application of naval blockades to get at the enemy's nation as the true centre of enemy gravity, or Douhet or Trenchard (see chapters 9, 12 and 13). But none of the others had gone to the explicit length to which Ludendorff went in spelling out the war aims; nor did the others aim for genocide, as he and the National Socialists did.

He agreed with those such as Bernhardi and Colin that limited wars as Clausewitz had described, the 'cabinet wars' which he had still thought possible, were now utterly outdated, and like some after him at the end of the twentieth century consigned Clausewitz to the waste-paper basket of history. The fighting in the First World War affected great swathes of territory and the civilian populations living there:

Not only the armies, but the populations themselves are now indirectly subjected to the operations of war … Nations are now directly involved in a war through blockades and propaganda. Total warfare is thus directed not only against fighting forces, but indirectly also against the nations themselves … The nature of a Total War postulates that it can be waged only when the existence of the entire nation is actually being threatened, and the latter is really determined to wage such a war. (Ludendorff 1935: 15f.)

War he described as 'the highest test of a nation for the preservation of its existence', and the German nation was being challenged, in his view, just in this way.

The more nations are regaining their racial consciousness … the stronger the knowledge is growing of the world-destroying activities of super and international powers, of the Jewish people and the Roman Church … who are striving for universal power above and over the nations. (Ludendorff 1935: 24)

And he concluded, '[f]or a morally strong people, the war decision lies solely in the victory on the battlefield and in the annihilation of the enemy Army and of the enemy nation' (Ludendorff 1935: 168). These lines would seem like hyperbole, if it were not for the fact that this is precisely the policy that the National Socialists embraced.

The Second World War: culmination of Total War

The National Socialists infamously developed Social Darwinism to its racist extreme. A stunningly obvious but neglected element of continuity between the First World War and the war aims of Hitler and his supporters lies in the applied Strategy and the strategic writing of Ludendorff. Peace, to Ludendorff as to Hitler, and indeed to Lenin and Stalin, was the continuation of war by other means. To Ludendorff in theory and Hitler in practice, Auschwitz was a proper battlefield of this war of annihilation, along with Stalingrad, besieged Leningrad or Kursk. Hitler's government did, consciously, aim at the total annihilation of the Jewish people, and indeed of the enslavement or annihilation of the Slavs. Besides the killing of Europe's Jews in the Holocaust, Hitler's government consciously implemented policies directly or indirectly causing the starvation of Russian civilians. In addition to Red Army losses of 8.7–13 million (Krivosheev 1997: 79) and to other acts of war such as the bombing of Leningrad, the Germans thus deliberately caused the deaths of between 7 and 10 million civilian Soviet citizens, total Soviet losses being estimated at between 25 and 26 million (Davies and Wheatcroft 1994: 58, 78f.).

The Second World War, more so even than its great predecessor, was by every definition Total War. It is irrelevant whether Hitler had hoped to get away with salami-tactics of aggrandisement, or whether the Japanese hoped the Americans would not react as they did to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Both the Germans and the Japanese made as great an effort as is humanly and collectively possible to win a world war which they had partly inadvertently started. Their adversaries had to retaliate in kind. As President Roosevelt told Congress on 11 January 1943:

We wage total war because our very existence is threatened. Without that supreme effort we cannot hope to retain the freedom and self-respect which give life its value. Total war is a grim reality. It means the dedication of our lives and resources to a single objective: victory. Total war in a democracy is a violent conflict in which everyone must anticipate that both lives and possessions will be assigned to their most effective use in the common effort – the effort for community survival – National survival. In total war we are all soldiers, whether in uniform, overalls, or shirt sleeves. Total war requires nothing less than organizing all the human and material resources of the Nation. (q.i. Hobbs 1979: 61f.)

The Second World War produced genocide, but also the greatest tank battles ever, with the Battle of Kursk an outstanding example, and the greatest sieges ever, with the siege of Leningrad haunting memories still. It produced the apogee of city bombing, with 'conventional' ordnance and the first and so far only use of atomic bombs in war producing firestorms with comparable effects.

The age of Total, genocidal War did not come to an end in 1945. Genocide and democide occurred also in the Cold War. It was arguably practised by Tito in Yugoslavia, by Mao during the Cultural Revolution and by Pol Pot in Cambodia (Rummel 1992). After the end of the Cold War, the Hutus practised it against the Tutsis in Rwanda with more primitive weapons, and on a smaller scale it was carried out by Milošević's followers in Bosnia. Again, we find that the boundaries between different eras cannot be neatly drawn.

Barbarism in warfare

At this point, an excursion into the progressive barbarisation of warfare from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, which contemporary observers commented upon, is necessary. Changes in the practice of warfare have much in common with fashion, and this applies also, perhaps mainly, to their effects and to how these are perceived. The early twentieth-century cultural historian Max von Boehn noted that fashion in clothes is in large part driven by the fact that the novelty of the exposure of a part of the body previously covered seems particularly shocking, no matter how much flesh used to be revealed, and how little now (Boehn 1904). A similar observation can be made about the perception of barbarism in warfare: it was often what was unusual that shocked in many contexts.

No matter how few deaths were caused in total by, say, Native American practices in warfare relative to the settlers' use of shotguns, or by the *francs tireurs* on the French side of the Franco-Prussian War relative to the massive number of casualties caused in battle by the needle-point gun or by gas in the First World War compared with the machine gun, it was scalping, *francs tireurs* and gas that were homed in on as particularly barbaric, not the objectively greater lethality of other weapons and practices. The bombing of Guernica in 1937, which may at worst have caused over 1,000 deaths, shook world opinion, while the bombing of Warsaw by the Germans two

years later, causing probably twenty to forty times as many deaths, is merely one of many such events of the Second World War. Thus the perception of barbarism in warfare is dependent on cultural norms, and the perceptions rooted in these, and is not something that would stand up to objective benchmarks, such as overall number of casualties resulting from it, relative to casualties resulting from other measures.

Moreover, the conduct of war since Roman times, as we have seen, did not develop in a one-way fashion from very simple warfare towards ever greater professionalism or the ever greater observation of restraints on warfare, or warfare on an ever larger scale. Instead, the evolution of warfare fluctuated quite strongly. What we *can* see after the chaos that spread in Europe with the end of the West Roman Empire and the gradual reconstruction of a wider civilisation with accepted norms is an initially slow but, from the nineteenth century onwards, constant progress with the *ius in bello* to incorporate more and more humanitarian considerations designed to ward off actions seen as particularly cruel. Nevertheless, unarmed people of all ages and sexes were the casualties of war, by direct killing, maiming, wounding and rape, or indirectly through famine and disease, throughout the two millennia covered in this book.

There are, however, objective criteria for barbarism. One concerns the killing of the unarmed, those unable to defend themselves. Relative to the horrors of previous wars, the total numbers of non-combatants killed or wounded rose to completely unprecedented numbers from the mid nineteenth to the twentieth century, culminating in the democide inflicted by Stalin and Hitler.

There are at least three main reasons for this, one, quite simply, the exponential growth of populations around the world that explains the difference of scale. The twentieth century thus saw a quantum leap; its mass atrocities were not unprecedented in *intention*, but entirely unprecedented in the *numbers* of victims. While even after the Second World War, the terrible record of the Thirty Years War of having led to the deaths – directly, but more often indirectly – of one third of the population of the theatre of war remains unparalleled in *relative* terms, in *absolute* numbers, the casualties of the Second World War of course far surpassed it. More Europeans died in the Second World War than populated the continent at any one time in the seventeenth century.

The second reason is that only an advanced state administration, composed of 'willing executioners', obedient and without compassion, and possessing the technological means to keep track of the population (what the German bureaucrats called *Erfassen*) can practise genocide on the scale of the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians, Stalin's Soviet Union in the Holodomor, Germany with the Holocaust and its mass-starvation of Russians or even Rwanda's Hutus against the Tutsis. Only these two factors jointly made possible the extent of mobilisation and the industrialised warfare of the American Civil War, the German Wars of Unification and then the two World Wars. Equally, they made possible the geno- or democides of the twentieth century, including even the low-tech Rwandan genocide, with their unprecedented total numbers.

But the third is an ideology that proclaimed the killing of certain categories of people as absolutely necessary for one's own 'race's' or 'class's' survival. It was needed as the motivation to overcome what Bismarck reportedly called a 'culpable laziness in killing' (q.i. Degler 1997: 68), which from time to time seized even Wehrmacht soldiers and SS men in the Second World War. And such ideologies flourished particularly in the 130 years after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. In the following chapters we shall see how the interplay of new technical possibilities and dangers, values, ideals and ideology shaped thinking, particularly with regard to maritime Strategy.

Naval and maritime Strategy

8 | *Long-term trends and early maritime Strategy*

The rule of the sea is indeed a great matter.
>   (Pericles, q.i. Thucydides I.143, 20)

Those nations and cities that have the command of the sea, even if they are foiled on land, they can never be thoroughly vanquished, before they are beaten from the sea.

>   (Matthew Sutcliffe 1593: 273)

Strategy on land, at sea and in the air

Terminology for land warfare and sea warfare is partly different. Where we talk of Strategy, Tactics, sometimes of operational art, with relation to the sea, it has been within the wider context of 'command of the sea' or 'seapower', a term traced to Thucydides' 'rule of the sea' (Starr 1978). Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, who upon retiring from the Royal Navy became a Cambridge don, defined it thus just after the Second World War:

Sea power is that form of national strength which enables its possessor to send his armies and commerce across stretches of sea and ocean which lie between his country or the country of his allies, and those territories to which he needs access in war; and to prevent his enemy from doing the same. (Richmond 1947: ix)

The term 'strategy' appeared even later in a naval context than in Western writing on war in general. An entirely unsurprising definition in the Clausewitzian and Jominian tradition (see chapter 1) is that of Giovanni Sechi in his *Elementi di arte militare marittima* of 1906:

The conduct of naval warfare belongs to naval strategy; the execution of the strategic concepts is attributed to logistics if one is not in the presence

of the enemy, to tactics when the cannon thunders … Consequently, we can say that strategy is the spirit which thinks, logistics and tactics are the arms [*brazzi*] that act. (q.i. Castex 1937: 6)

Here, as in general definitions of Strategy, much value was added by bringing in the political dimension. Sir Julian Corbett very helpfully introduced 'maritime strategy' as a generic term which subsumes the narrower concept of 'naval strategy' for the use of force at sea. Taking a wider, holistic perspective on Strategy, Corbett understood that 'maritime strategy' necessarily had to involve land warfare, but might – and in the case of island states like Great Britain usually did – involve the use of navies. If both land and naval warfare were involved, Corbett recommended the use of the term 'maritime strategy', with the purely sea-bound element of this Strategy being naval warfare:

By *maritime strategy* we mean the principles which govern a war in which the sea is a substantial factor. Naval strategy is but that part of it which determines the movements of the fleet when maritime strategy has determined what part the fleet must play in relation to the action of the land forces … it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone.

On their own, navies could but exhaust the enemy, and would simultaneously exhaust themselves. For a 'firm decision', co-operation of land and naval forces was required.

Since men live upon the land and not upon the sea, great issues between nations at war have always been decided – except in the rarest cases – either by what your army can do against your enemy's territory and national life or else by the fear of what the fleet makes it possible for your army to do.

In Corbett's system of thinking, 'maritime strategy' incorporated 'naval strategy', which was its derivative (Corbett 1911: 15f.). This definition subsequently became widely accepted and will be employed here, as far as it does not misrepresent views (Gretton 1965: 3).
    US navy historian John Hattendorf built on Corbett:

[G]rand strategy is the comprehensive direction of power to achieve particular national goals, within it maritime strategy is the comprehensive

direction of all aspects of national power that relate to a nation's interests at sea. The Navy serves this purpose, but maritime strategy is not purely a naval preserve. Maritime strategy … include[s] diplomacy, the safety and defense of merchant trade at sea, fishing, the exploitation, conservation, regulation and defense of the exclusive economic zone at sea, coastal defense, security of national borders, the protection of offshore islands as well as participation in regional and worldwide concerns relating to the use of oceans, the skies over the oceans and the land under the sea. (Hattendorf 2000: 256)

As with the definitions of Strategy in general which we discussed in chapter 1, Hattendorf's broad definition would by no means have been generally understood or accepted in the eighteenth, nineteenth or even early twentieth centuries. Indeed, many who accepted Corbett's point continued to write about 'naval strategy', 'naval thinking' or 'naval warfare', so we can only follow the current convention, noting that when 'naval' is used here, it will be interpreted in the Corbettian sense of 'maritime', unless stated otherwise (Hill 2006: 160).

Yet another – typically French – approach is given by the historian Jean Pagès (1990: 15):

Naval thinking is the discourse in which strategic doctrine is born, accompanied by essential tactical rules to which the leaders of the naval forces of the country have to refer in preparing to carry out all their operations. It takes account of political, military and economic imperatives, and of geographical constraints. It is susceptible to evolve as a function of changes within the country or outside it. Naval thinking can be profoundly influenced by an ideology. In one word, it is at the outset an intellectual step which leads to decisions and concrete actions.

This usefully recalls some of our main tools in the analysis of the evolution of Strategy attempted in this book.

Eternal principles, enduring variables or unique geographic situations?

There are eternal principles governing naval warfare, of which the importance of land is perhaps the greatest: John Hattendorf laconically reminds his readers that 'Throughout naval history, naval battles have mainly taken place close to land' (Hattendorf 2000: 258). As with

writing about land warfare, there were those who sought to identify eternal principles, or at least enduring variables, in maritime warfare. For example Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge (1839–1924), who had sailed all parts of the globe before becoming director of naval intelligence and Britain's chief strategic planner in the 1890s, complained about the tendency to focus excessively on new weapons. Writing in 1907, he argued that 'From age to age, from one stage of culture to another, men remain essentially the same. They can add to their acquired knowledge; but in boldness, fortitude, wariness, energy, persistence, the savage of Guadalcanal is essentially on an equality with the graduate of Oxford or the General Staff Officer of Berlin' (Bridge 1907: 3, 5).

While acknowledging human nature as a constant, many historians of the 'all-history-is-unique-and-incomparable' persuasion believe that no generalisations can be drawn from the history of warfare, as every instance is so unique as not to lend itself to any analysis of recurrent patterns. There have been very few naval or maritime powers in world history. At sea, interstate war is, even more so than most land warfare, determined by geography. The number of 'island states' with overseas empires but without land frontiers to worry about – all told, throughout human history – at best reached two figures. By the time writers tackled the principles of naval warfare, there were only three states that could qualify: Britain, Japan and, stretching the concept, the USA. Generalisations about the need (and even remote possibility) of achieving naval dominance, or 'command of the sea', could perhaps apply to these states, but hardly to any state with finite resources needing to worry about its land frontiers at the same time. To state the obvious, land-locked states have to worry about armies and indeed about their vulnerability to aircraft and missiles, but not at all about attacks from the sea.

There are many substantial differences between land warfare and warfare at sea. One which Corbett identified is that 'lines of communication', or 'lines of operation', can be switched in the open seas. 'Seeking out the enemy's fleet' on the open oceans is thus more difficult than on land (Corbett 1911: 158f.). The concept of concentration of effort also differed on land and at sea, because fleets also need to protect commerce and not just win battles. Corbett noted that there was nothing comparable in land warfare.

Nor is it more profitable to declare that the only sound way to protect your commerce is to destroy the enemy's fleet … What are you to do if the enemy refuses to permit you to destroy his fleets? … the more you concentrate your force and efforts to secure the desired decision, the more you will expose your trade to sporadic attack. (Corbett 1911: 160f.)

To a greater extent than in writing on land and air warfare, writing about naval warfare was therefore country-specific. If Jomini's and the young Clausewitz's fixation with decisive or 'annihilation' battles could be applied to the sea, even as an ideal concept, it only made sense as a Strategy for the world's half-dozen biggest navies in conflicts with each other. And in practice, what was a dream worth pursuing for Britain and the USA was a chimera for France, Italy, Germany and perhaps even the largely ice-bound fleets of the Soviet Union. Indeed only a small number of states could afford a navy with worldwide reach and major ships (Howard 1980: 79); this has been true since ships first travelled around the globe.

In addition technological change affected maritime warfare more than land warfare, and made debates about war at sea more focused on the latest technology and at an earlier point, as we shall see. Paul Hay du Chastelet, writing soon after the creation of the French navy in the mid seventeenth century, thought that:

Whatever knowledge we have of ancient maritime wars conducted by the [ancients] … we can barely draw any rule from them for what we do in our own times: our usages are too different from practice in antiquity, and the invention of artillery has made all machines used then useless. One could hardly form precepts on what our own ancestors have done, unless one drew lessons from what has been done long since the invention of cannon. Thus the principles [of naval warfare] are quite new … The size of the ships, the types of weapons, the equipment and the fire ships are changing almost every year, and rarely does one use the same methods in the same battles. (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 160)

Writing about naval/maritime warfare, power or Strategy tends to revolve around two themes: powers with a potential for predominating an entire ocean or even on a global scale – which basically means, in early modern history, Spain, the Netherlands and Britain, in the early modern period also briefly France, later just Britain and the USA, with regional bids for domination made by Japan and Russia;

or second-tier powers who had to work out how to protect themselves and pursue their interests in the face of a stronger adversary, and the extent to which they might challenge and equal (or even outclass) this adversary. A third permutation exists, that of the second-rank naval power that opts for a permanent alliance with a first-rank power (or one or more equals), which enables it to concentrate its forces on other adversaries (single or multiple). Short of this, third-rank or small naval powers could never do more than see to their coastal defences, the defence of their territorial waters and perhaps engage in piracy, if they were far enough removed from the great powers to be able to get away with it.

As we shall see, the first theme, that of the first-tier powers and those aspiring to join them, tended to go along with a focus on big battles annihilating enemy fleets. It should have carried the health warning 'for superpowers only' (Hill 1986: 79), but in fact did not, as it flourished in the ugly age of the universal Social Darwinist scramble for 'world power'. The second theme, pursued by the second-tier powers, is perhaps the most interesting, as it revolves around ways of maximising one's own particular strengths (geographic, possibly in terms of ships and weapons), avoiding annihilation by a numerically superior enemy and defending one's own interests (mainly commerce and protection from invasion). The third permutation was explored primarily by Britain and France in the twentieth century, albeit very reluctantly, as dependence on an ally, however much strength it brought, always reduced their freedom of decision-making in other ways.

Admiral Sir Reginald Custance (1847–1935) observed that since about the 1860s there were two schools of naval teaching: first, the 'historical school', which sought 'eternal truths' (Lucien Poirier) about naval warfare in historical examples; secondly, the '*matériel* school', which focused on new developments in technology, arguing that the past cannot teach us much. We have seen that this school had also existed for, and indeed dominated writing about, land warfare since the middle of the nineteenth century, and a similar school would later hold its own in air power and nuclear debates. Custance by contrast was on the side of the 'eternal truths in history' school and resented the domination of the 'technology changes everything' or *matériel* school (Custance 1907). Interestingly, as we shall see, there was little general agreement within these two schools on some of the most

central themes, such as the desirability of battle or the value of commerce raiding or brick-and-mortar coastal defences.

Writing in the age of oar and sail

Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, one of Britain's earliest naval educators, Admiral Philip Howard Colomb (1831–99), claimed that 'Naval warfare is of comparative modern origin. Sea fights there were, no doubt, in very ancient times, but sea fights do not of themselves constitute naval warfare' (Colomb 1891: 1). Admittedly, there is little that shows a connection in the minds of early writers between political aims and military Strategy. Yet gradually, we see the following debates emerge:

- a quest by some for the 'command of the sea' as opposed to others who say it cannot be obtained;
- naval battle, with some saying it must be sought and others that it should be avoided if a favourable outcome is uncertain;
- the advocacy of a *guerre de course*, that is, privateering and the attack on enemy trade, as alternative;
- and finally, blockades, and how to defend against them.

Writing about naval warfare can, like writing about war more generally, be traced back to antiquity: Vegetius (Book IV, chs. 31–43), Leo (XIX) and in the Middle Ages Christine de Pisan and Jean de Bueil all wrote about it, but from a very tactical perspective. In the Renaissance, Thucydides' 'rule of the sea' was rediscovered, and from this Francis Bacon (1561–1626) derived his claim that 'He that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much and as little of the war as he will' (q.i. Lambert n.d. b). The claim was exaggerated further by Sir Walter Raleigh (1555–1618): 'Whosoever commandeth the sea commandeth trade; whosoever commandeth trade commandeth the riches of the world', and thus the world itself. The Italian Tomaso Campanella later put it even more concisely, '*Che e signore del mare e signore della terra*' (q.i. Olivier 2004: 38).

 In contrast to Bacon and Raleigh, Hugo Grotius in the Netherlands was the first to dismiss the 'command of the sea' as a chimera. In his *About the Freedom of the Sea* of 1609 and subsequently his *On the Laws of War and Peace*, Grotius argued that the ocean 'cannot be reduced to a state of private property' (Grotius 1625/1901: 103–8).

By implication this meant that 'command of the sea' could never be more than an ideal – a realisation that later writers had to labour to rediscover.

Few authors of the early modern era showed an interest in the strategic dimensions of naval warfare. One has to agree with the French Admiral Raoul Castex (1878–1968), who claimed that there was an 'almost complete void in the writing on naval Strategy before the French Revolution, which stands in utter contrast to the work of authors writing about the army in the same period' (Castex 1937: 31). We do, however, find one parallel to writings on land Strategy, and that concerns the desirability of battle.

Naval battle versus privateering and commerce warfare

The Frenchman Charles de la Rouvraye (1783–1836 or 1850) was an early fan of naval battles of annihilation: 'Combat does not cease until one of the two [sides] is totally destroyed', later adding, 'You cannot abandon the field of battle until there are no enemies left to fight, or until one cannot fight any longer' (Rouvraye 1815: 8, 35). By contrast his Swiss contemporary Victor Emmanuel Thellung de Courtelary (1760–1842) was still imbued with the *ancien régime*'s caution with regard to giving battle, and warned against it (q.i. Langendorff 1999: 87–9). While up to the Napoleonic Wars, the age of oar and sail saw many naval battles, including major ones, in the subsequent period until Tsushima (1905) there were very few; arguably, only three wars were strongly affected by naval operations, but none was a battle between two hostile fleets. The first of these was the war between Germany and Denmark (1848–9), when the Danish fleet stopped a German general from crossing to the island of Alsen, where the Danish army was. The second was the American Civil War, where the North had not only superior numbers in armies but also the command of the sea, the coast and the major rivers, the last being the key to their victory in this very major war, while the South had no fleet (Wilkinson 1894: 3). The third was the Battle of Lissa (1866), in which Italy attempted to come to the aid of Prussia in its war against Austria, but was defeated.

Nevertheless, the age of sail was replete with smaller-scale naval activity. Piracy, which goes back to antiquity, had been exploited politically since the high Middle Ages, when princes began to issue

'letters of marque and reprisals' to give such entrepreneurs state protection – and secure a cut of the prize for their state. This is intimately linked to war, as in times of war, states sought to intercept each other's merchant shipping, particularly where the claim could be made that cargo carried by enemy merchantmen served their war effort.

From the seventeenth century, wars between state-owned navies (the Anglo-Dutch Wars) proved very expensive, while commerce raiding was cheap and profitable. The Anglo-Dutch Wars were perhaps the 'purest' naval wars in modern times, and were settled by economic exhaustion. The following Anglo-French Wars, by contrast, had a land dimension centring on the Low Countries and allowed France to use alternative naval strategies. The *guerre de course* thus played an important part in Franco-British conflicts between 1689 and 1815 (the 'Second Hundred Years War') because the Royal Navy was much superior in numbers, putting France at a disadvantage in pitched battles. Attacks were also made by all sides on vessels with neutral flags, creating pressure for legislation. From this it has been argued that there were two different traditions, the supposedly French tradition of commerce raiding and a British tradition of seeking battle (summarised in the myth of 'Trafalgar'). The reality, on both sides, was a mixture, with a significant amount of bluff thrown in on the British side.

The Declaration of Paris of 1856 outlawed privateering. Henceforth states' navies monopolised commerce war, which thus stopped being a lucrative business practice and became a standard element of naval Strategy. But it now entailed the destruction of cargo, ships and often crew as an 'acceptable alternative to capture', because in the American Civil War, the South had little opportunity to sell prizes or to return them to their own harbours (Olivier 2004: 8).

A French 'tradition'?

Modern French naval history can be traced back to Cardinal Richelieu's (1584–1642) forceful programme of naval construction and centralised administration, undertaken in the knowledge that Europe now depended greatly on the import of gold and silver, as well as other merchandise, from overseas, and in the conviction that the French monarchy's sovereignty had to be defended and demonstrated on sea as much as on land (Granier 1992: 37–53). Richelieu's convictions

about the importance of commerce and the centrality of its protection to France's naval tasks in every way foreshadow similar American and British thinking towards the end of the nineteenth century.

It has been argued primarily by Britons since John Clerk of Eldin (1728–82) and most famously by the American Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) that the French traditionally shunned battles and, instead, inclined towards the harassment of the enemy's shipping and protection of one's own (Mahan 1890, 1892; Depeyre 1992: 70). Indeed, a few French writers took this line, most famously Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, Louis XIV's minister and architect of France's ring of fortifications, who in advocating the avoidance of major battles was an important precursor of the later French *Jeune École*. In 1695, he wrote in favour of the abandonment of large-scale naval warfare in favour of *la petite guerre navale*, the naval equivalent of the irregular warfare that was known at the time as 'small war'. He wrote: 'War at sea conducted by big fleets [*en corps d'armée*] has never yielded what the King had hoped from it, and will never do so … because [the great countries of Europe] will probably always be stronger at sea than us.' As the French could not hope to become 'masters of the sea', he recommended that they harass Anglo-Dutch commercial shipping, a Strategy he thought 'less expensive, less hazardous, and less costly to the state' while 'enriching the kingdom'. This course of action he praised as simple, yet subtle and advantageous: it would cost the adversaries much to protect their shipping adequately, while they could not retaliate in kind, as France relied so little on overseas commerce. Moreover, France had geography on her side: 'France has all the advantages of the *course* which surpass in every way those of her neighbours, as all the commerce of its enemies goes back and forth within reach of her coasts and her most important harbours.' France could thus cut the 'nerves' of her enemies, suing for peace on much better conditions than by following any other Strategy (q.i. Motte 2003: 93).

By contrast, other French naval theorists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from Paul Hoste (1652–1700) to Jacques Raymond vicomte de Grenier (1736–1803), were just as keen on battle as British practitioners, possibly more so than contemporary writers on land warfare. As Captain Audibert Ramatuelle (1759–1840) wrote in 1802, 'The French navy has always preferred the glory of assuring or protecting a conquest to the perhaps more brilliant, but

effectively less real, seizing of some ships; and in this it has been closer to the actual aim … of war': conquest (q.i. Castex 1937: 33). Moreover, the French official naval doctrinal manuals of the nineteenth century (formulated in 1832, 1857, 1864 and 1878) had the naval battle at their centre (Darrieus 1993: 209–31). So the French 'tradition' of battle-avoidance and preference for the *guerre de course* is something of a myth. It was really only in the second half of the nineteenth century that several French naval strategists advocated it strongly, in view of the double menace of Britain and its empire on one side, and the growing and aggressive Germany on the other. This combination made it impossible for France to meet both threats on an equal level.

A British 'tradition'?

In British writing, it is hard to tease out any principles before the second half of the eighteenth century. It is by and large a British national characteristic not to articulate things that are a shared tacit assumption – the need is not perceived, there is enough continuity among people and ideas to pass them on by osmosis, 'learning by doing'. This also applies to British naval Strategy, passed on from one generation of sailors and military commanders to the next, as naval historian Andrew Lambert has rightly observed (2003b).

   Notwithstanding Raleigh's and Bacon's great words about the 'command of the sea', England initially practised the *guerre de course*, particularly when it faced the much stronger Spanish in the sixteenth century and then the redoubtable Dutch. The English were seen by their sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century contemporaries as dangerous pirates. As Britain became richer and its navy grew in size, the – tacit – British Strategy was mainly defensive and deterrent, even if Britain deployed ships with advanced offensive potential, and occasionally realised its latent threat of destroying an adversary's strategic port through bombardment from the sea, especially in far-flung parts of the empire. This can be subsumed under 'gunboat diplomacy', which could function both as what twentieth-century strategists would call 'deterrence' ('don't do this to me or I shall do that to you') and 'coercion' ('do this or I shall do that to you'). On the whole, Britain's leaders preferred 'deterrence, arms racing, negotiation, or concession, usually in a combination to meet

the circumstances' to large-scale naval battles that would be costly to the victor and vanquished alike (Lambert 2003b: 165). Britain ran its empire on perpetual 'imperial overstretch', its ships constantly tasked to police an area far larger than could be reasonably expected of them, but this fact seems to have remained unrecognised by many of its adversaries. Even as a first-rank power, Britain had much more strategic weight than actual military force. Where possible, Britain offset other powers' forces indirectly, through intercepting their commerce where it was conducted across the sea. Britain's main rivals – permanently or temporarily France, Spain, the Netherlands, from the nineteenth century Russia, and finally Germany, Japan and Italy in the twentieth century – all needed to muster armies as well as fleets, while Britain could afford not to raise armies as large as those of these adversaries.

It is true that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when dealing with the numerically inferior fleets of France, and during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the British navy was configured to give battle, while its continental adversaries, especially towards the end of this period, had little to gain and much to lose from a direct confrontation. Thus the concept of the 'fleet in being' came into existence. It is usually traced back to Admiral Arthur Herbert, Earl of Torrington (1647–1716), who developed it in the context of war against France at the end of the seventeenth century. This was incidentally at the same time as Frederick William I of Prussia (1688–1740) created his 'army in being', one might say, which he used to deter other powers from attacking his country, while avoiding battle where possible. Similarly, Torrington in an encounter with the French at Beachy Head in 1690 tried to avoid a showdown. Instead, he thought,

[w]hilst we observe the French, they can make no attempt [to attack] either on sea or shore, but with great disadvantage … Most men were in fear that the French would invade; but I was always of another opinion: for I always said, that whilst we had a fleet in being, they would not dare to make an attempt. (q.i. Till 1982: 113)

Unfortunately, the Anglo-Dutch leadership did not agree and forced the English fleet to give battle at Beachy Head after all, where it was squarely defeated; what saved Britain from a French invasion was

not Torrington's posture, but the failure of France to exploit her victory.

In the nineteenth century, Britain made much of 'gunboat diplomacy', the ability to threaten any port with bombardment, which in the case of threatening a power of equal or greater strength amounted to deterrence; interestingly, this is when the use of the term 'deterrence' spread in English (Freedman 2004). Thus Britain carried out its latent threat in the War of 1812 against the USA (famously burning Washington), and again in the *Trent* crisis of 1861, forcing Americans, French and Russians to invest heavily in fortifications. In the age of steam, armoured vessels and long-range artillery, naval bombardment could do considerable damage to forts and fortified harbours situated within river estuaries (Lambert 2003b: 164–95). The Crimean War had its share of it with the British bombardment of Sweaborg near Helsingfors (Helsinki) in Finland in August 1855, and in October 1855, Fort Kinburn on the Kinburn Peninsula, dominating the estuary of the Dnieper in the Black Sea. Finally in April 1856, the British threatened Kronstadt on the island of Kotlin, which dominated the estuary of the Neva River and thus the access to St Petersburg, persuading Russia to sue for peace. In this context, Britain did not fight major naval battles, as Russia refused to give them and resorted to a fleet-in-being Strategy. So instead, Britain blockaded or attacked enemy harbours; it sought the strategic fruits of victory through applying pressure to the shore. Again, one can see parallels with eighteenth-century 'manoeuvre tactics' as employed by land strategists at the time, parading armies for show, in the hope that their bluff would not be called, but sometimes achieving the desired effect on potential adversaries (Salewski 2002, I: ch. 2).

At the same time, Britain posed a threat to any adversary's commercial or military fleets through unpredictable harassment. In some ways, 'gunboat diplomacy' resembles guerrilla or partisan warfare (see chapters 15 and 16): a relatively small, very mobile navy can keep all adversaries and all colonies around the globe on their toes, forcing them to invest in costly coastal defences, while it is the navy that decides where to strike and where to catch enemies or insurgents against colonial power by surprise (Esdaile 1995). Bases all over the globe were crucial to Britain's empire – for the purpose of provisioning and refitting its ships, but also for

protecting its shipping and thus its commerce – and to its Strategy of harassing adversaries' fleets far from home waters. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain had naval bases right around the world. By creating constant insecurity for Britain's adversaries, Britain could be said to 'command the sea', or at least large parts of the world's oceans. For other powers, it paid to be on good terms with the United Kingdom. In short, Britain's 'tradition' was not so much one of seeking decisive battles at all cost, but the flexible adaptation to circumstances, derived from instinct and long experience rather than principle and strategic reflection.

Mahan and Basil Liddell Hart were the main creators of the master narrative of a particular 'British way of war'. Britain's overwhelming naval penchant is undeniable, unsurprisingly given its geography. But Mahan's Jominian emphasis on decisive naval battles sought by Britain in its history is not. Slightly more realistic is Liddell Hart's characterisation of 'the historic Strategy of Britain', where he argued that since the Elizabethan age, the proven successful Strategy for Britain has been to keep off the continent and to offset land power by 'sea pressure on the enemy' and 'financial support to all possible allies' (Liddell Hart 1932: 36f.). Such generalisations always depend on the time-span examined. If British history since Roman times is considered, the period when England/Britain did not have continental possessions to defend is very short, beginning with Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, and even she, with her German husband and her European grandchildren, was hardly disinterested in the fate of the Continent. Given the same long-term perspective, Britain's history as a naval power with a sphere of rule beyond its coastal waters amounts only to a quarter of its recorded history.

While two myths have been exposed as such in this chapter, we have also encountered some maritime Strategies which were to be of lasting importance. These were, first, the Strategy of seeking a degree of predominance at sea, which would oblige the state adopting it to try to chase away or give battle to any hostile navies. Secondly, and as one alternative to this, there was the opportunist Strategy of enriching oneself by raiding the enemy's commerce while avoiding large-scale encounters. Thirdly, as another alternative to the first, there was the Strategy of maintaining a 'fleet in being', to be a direct or

indirect deterrent to other fleets, while not seeking battle, if it could be avoided.

In the following chapters, we shall see permutations of these Strategies being developed, adopted or abandoned, partly for practical, but also in part for ideological reasons.

9 | *The age of steam to the First World War*

In order to determine the way in which one has to fight, it is important to define first the aim one pursues in fighting. This aim is the annihilation of the enemy.

(René Daveluy 1902: 19)

At sea, the old Strategy is obsolete: the objective is no longer to seek out in the principal navy of the enemy to put it out of operation … A navy must serve (1) to protect the nation's coasts and the maritime commerce; (2) to attack the coasts and the commerce of the nation's enemies … [The aim is to] attack the enemy either when he leaves his base of operations, or en route, before his arrival in sight of the threatened coast; to pursue him and to fall upon him during his retreat once he has succeeded in executing his attack on the littoral; to strike at him when he thinks he has escaped pursuit and wants to return to his port … One can see that our strategy is simple, unitary, scientific, modern.

(Z and Montechant 1893: 407–9)

The 'Anglo-Saxon' writers in the age of steam

As late as the end of the nineteenth century, Philip Colomb still complained that no one had written seriously about naval warfare. Thenceforth, he thought most naval writers were obsessed with '[t]he struggle … for the mastery at sea, whether territorial conquest was or was not to follow success in this respect'. Philip Colomb maintained against this the argument that commerce across the oceans had grown, and intercepting it and appropriating the wares was advantageous in itself (Colomb 1891: iiif., 32). Despite the actual rarity of naval battles, the naval orthodoxy of the late nineteenth century read something like this: 'The primary object of our battle-fleet is to seek out and destroy that of the enemy.' The parallel to the contemporary prevalence of the Napoleonic paradigm is obvious. As Corbett

remarked, however, the enemy might not oblige – he might simply
'remove his fleet from the board altogether. He may withdraw it into
a defended port, where it is absolutely out of your reach without the
assistance of an army' (Corbett 1911: 156).

The matériel *and the historical schools*

We have seen in writing on warfare in general how the mid nineteenth
century ushered in an understandable obsession with new technol-
ogy and the changes it brought to warfare, which brought challenges
to the Napoleonic paradigm and to the view that lessons of history
could be applied to Strategy in a very simple way (see chapter 7). This
pattern of a clash of a 'historical' and a 'technological' or '*matériel*
school' is paralleled in the naval warfare literature of the same period.
The writers who focused on technology are the least interesting in
the long run, as the technology that fascinated them itself became
quickly outdated, unless they reflected also on how technology would
allow them to attain political aims. So we shall confine ourselves here
to only one prominent example of this '*matériel*' thinking: Admiral
Sir John Fisher, who was to direct Britain's naval war effort between
1914 and April 1915, wrote on the eve of that war:

The submarine is the coming type of war vessel for sea fighting … It
means that the whole foundation of our traditional naval strategy … has
broken down! The foundation of that strategy was blockade. The Fleet
did not exist merely to win battles – that was the means not the end. The
ultimate purpose of the Fleet was to make blockade possible for us and
impossible for the enemy … Surface ships can no longer maintain or pre-
vent blockade … All our old ideas of strategy are simmering in the melt-
ing pot! (q.i. Till 2006: 62)

Such shocks were produced by several successive technological inno-
vations – steam, the torpedo, the ironclad, aviation, radar, missiles,
to name but some. These did indeed introduce major changes, pro-
viding new dangers and new opportunities, not necessarily changing
the strategic purpose of the use of navies. Therefore, more interesting
than the *matériel* school, for our purposes, are members of the his-
torical school. As we shall see, they diverged in their findings, and
there were sub-groupings, such as the blue water school (or the British

Mahanians), or the bricks-and-mortar school, mainly soldiers writing on naval matters. Their interest in the past as a data bank for them to draw upon, analyse and interpret was not different from the methodology used by writers on warfare in general since Vegetius, but in the context of writing about naval Strategy, it seemed new.

In the last third of the nineteenth century a small number of men, no more than a dozen, on either side of the Atlantic began to see the need to articulate enduring principles of naval Strategy, that could be passed on from generation to generation, notwithstanding changes in technology, primarily with the aim of 'educating the navy' (Schurman 1965). The institutions they helped found, or in which they taught, have contributed greatly to their fame, although their number is disproportionally small compared with those writing on land warfare. They included a mathematician by training, the Briton John Knox Laughton (1830–1915), instructor at the Royal Naval College from 1866, later Professor of Modern History at King's College, University of London, where he created the antecedents of what today is a large department of war studies. Then there was the American Admiral Stephen Bleecker Luce (1827–1917), founder of the United States Naval War College in 1885. He recruited the naval officer Alfred Thayer Mahan, himself the son of a military instructor at the US Military Academy at West Point. Mahan's major writings were only published from 1890 onwards and earned him the reputation of America's 'naval schoolmaster' (Schurman 1965). What these men had in common was the positivist conviction going back to antiquity, that eternal truths about or lasting principles of warfare could be discovered through the study of history.

In Britain, the 'historical school' included the blue water school. It was led by the Colomb brothers, Philip (1831–99), who rose to the rank of Vice Admiral in the Royal Navy, and John (1838–1909), originally an artillerist with the Royal Marines, later an MP, who tended to lecture the House of Commons on naval matters. None of the early members of the 'historical school' had studied history in any formal educational context, but they saw historical evidence as a database for early political-science-type reasoning about military policy (Heuser 2007b). In the words of one of the writers of this school, Sir Cyprian Bridge, their purpose was 'to show the value – indeed the necessity – of a knowledge of naval history, which, it is held, ought to be studied not as a mere gratification of antiquarian

predilection, but as a record of the lessons of naval warfare' from which he sought to deduce 'sound principles' to guide the officer in future wars. He did, however, warn of false lessons from history (Bridge 1907: viif., 8). The historical school also includes the by far cleverest and most original of these men, a lawyer by background, Sir Julian Corbett.

The purpose and value of historiography was much debated at the time. Mahan and Philip Colomb saw past historical events – experience of warfare – much like data in scientific experiments, and sought to deduce – largely 'immutable' – principles from them to provide guidance for the present (Schurman 1965: 37–59, 72f.). Corbett was more prudent in his formulations, but the general principle of using historical 'data' in the quest for iterative patterns was common to them all.

Occasionally, specialists on land warfare turned to writing on naval warfare, such as Henry Spenser Wilkinson, like Corbett a lawyer by training, later Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford, and General Sir Charles Edward Callwell, better known for his writings on counterinsurgency.

In the next sections, we shall focus on the main subjects of their debates.

The importance of commerce

The importance of commerce is seen by Britons and Americans as a predominantly Anglo-Saxon theme, even though the naval writers of other countries equally focused on it. There was general agreement among all those analysing Britain's position in the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that trade by sea was the key to her pre-eminence, and that this applied to any power aspiring to increase its wealth through overseas commerce. John Hattendorf has identified the great commonality between British and American approaches, which put utility and commercial gains for their own country at the centre of all naval policies (Hattendorf 2000: 109–20). Yet Mahan, Laughton and initially Richmond gave trade protection a relatively lower priority than the need to crush the enemy in a decisive battle (Schurman 1965: 136); Richmond later reversed his position (Richmond 1930). This reflects their emphasis on the need to acquire 'command of the sea' as the prior condition for one's own prevalence.

The Colombs emphasised the great importance of her commerce to Britain's wealth and position in the world. They extrapolated from this the need for a strong navy to protect Britain's shipping. The brothers came to stand for a policy of prioritising naval expenditure at the time when the primacy of the army was an accepted tenet in British military spending (Schurman 1965: 16–59).

Mahan is exceptional in deliberately playing on the link between commerce and navy, especially in democracies: 'where merchant shipping exists, it tends logically to develop the form of protection which is called naval; but it has become perfectly evident … that a navy may be necessary where there is no shipping'. He thought that American President Monroe's Doctrine of 1823, the commitment to defend the Western hemisphere against any interference from other powers, especially Spain, had commercial roots, but that it was also

partly military, defensive against European aggressions and dangerous propinquity; partly political, in sympathy with communities struggling for freedom. A broad basis of mercantile maritime interests and shipping will doubtless conduce to naval efficiency, by supplying a reserve of material and personnel. Also, in representative governments, military interests cannot without loss dispense with the backing which is supplied by a widely spread, deeply rooted, civil interest, such as merchant shipping would afford us.

He concluded, '[t]o prepare for war in time of peace is impracticable to commercial representative nations, because the people in general will not give sufficient heed to military necessities, or to international problems, to feel the pressure which induces readiness' (Mahan 1911: 446f.).

Spenser Wilkinson saw a similar nexus for Britain: 'if British trade is to be kept up, it is absolutely necessary to be ready for … prompt and complete victory at sea; and this course, evidently the best if war must come, is also the surest way of averting war altogether' (Wilkinson 1894: 63). Admiral Sir Reginald Custance echoed Mahan:

In the conduct of a war are to be distinguished three influences – the political, the economic, and the military – which react on each other and tend to strengthen or weaken the national effort according as they pull in the same or opposite directions. The connecting links between the three influences are the controlling minds – whatever be the form of Government – and

public opinion, which are moved first by the political object, and later by economic necessities; then both react on the military effort. Each influence possesses a spiritual, mental, or moral as well as a material side. (Custance 1919: 1)

Command of the sea

John Colomb used Thucydides' and Raleigh's term 'command of the sea' without further definition (Olivier 2004: 17). He was accused of 'virtually declar[ing] that naval war was an end in itself' and not the means to an end. Navy supporters, by the same token, saw him as the author of the 'New Testament' of the blue water school, that is, those advocating naval supremacy in defence spending over spending on the army (Schurman 1965: 56f.). Colomb was convinced that he had deduced his principles of eternal value systematically from his studies of British naval operations since the Anglo-Dutch Wars. Mahan, whose series of extraordinarily influential monographs began to be published in 1890, reached similar conclusions. He, too, stood accused of presenting navies as able to win wars on their own without substantial support from land forces.

Mahan's ambition for his own country to dominate the sea had an interesting limitation, however: he thought that the USA could only achieve this jointly with another power, not on its own. This was not so much for want of resources: in contrast to the European writers on the eve of the First World War who deeply feared the bellicosity of their own populations (see chapter 6), Mahan, as we have seen, thought that democracies ('popular governments') were unwilling to foot the bill necessary for such a military posture.

Is it true that, as the French claimed, 'the sea brooks only one mistress'? Mahan answered his own rhetorical question: 'The control of the sea, even in general, and still more in particular restricted districts, has at times and for long periods remained in doubt; the balance inclining now to this side, now to that. Contending navies have ranged its waters in mutual defiance' (Mahan 1911: 256). For Mahan, the obvious partner to help the USA achieve naval supremacy was clearly Britain. Anglo-American relations continued to be rocky well beyond the First World War, when US and British military planners still thought they might in the foreseeable future have to fight a war against each other (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 442), but Mahan

with his admiration for English naval history yearned for the 'special relationship' from the 1890s, if not earlier.

At the time, Britain had a 'two-power standard' for its navy, that is, the postulate (formulated in 1893) that the Royal Navy should be the size of her two main potential adversaries' navies taken together (Gretton 1965: 6). As the Anglo-German naval race made itself felt in the first decade of the twentieth century, the First Lord of the Admiralty notified the British Prime Minister of his fears that the two-power standard might be inappropriate in dealing with Germany; instead, a mere margin of superiority over the German High Seas Fleet should be Britain's goal (Hattendorf 1993: 754f.). This became concrete policy soon: in the following years, the Admiralty tried to develop and hold a '60% superiority in vessels of the dreadnought type over the German navy' (Hattendorf 1993: 757).

Even then, the mantra of 'command of the sea' continued to haunt British minds. Bridge also placed the greatest emphasis on the command of the sea as the aim in naval warfare, explaining that it meant 'control of maritime communications … The power that obtains this control can attack its enemy where it pleases, and evidently the control must be obtained before a great military expedition can be sent across the sea.' He thought that command of the sea could at times – but not usually – be obtained without fighting – for example, by Britain and France in the Crimean War, and Britain in the Boer War. Sometimes it could be obtained by intimidating the enemy. He conceded that command of the sea was never complete – small enemy raids would always remain possible. The command of the sea could be won, for example, by making the enemy fear one more than one feared him, with him thinking one would do unto him what he wanted to do unto one, and before he could do it. Surprise was thus useful, but Bridge also cautioned against rash attacks (Bridge 1907: 123, 131, 139).

Yet Bridge belonged to the decisive-battle school: 'To gain command of the sea we must defeat the enemy's navy.' While one might just drive it into a port and keep it there, mindful that it would not break out, 'The enemy's force remains the objective until its destruction or the end of the war' (Bridge 1907: 141). Henry Spenser Wilkinson agreed: 'The command of the sea is to be had only by destroying or crippling the hostile navy. Until this has been done the transport of troops by sea is a dangerous operation' (Wilkinson 1894: 33).

Callwell preferred the term 'maritime preponderance' rather than 'command of the sea' (the latter being more complete, the former more usual). It is rare that nothing is left of the beaten fleet (the implication of 'command of the sea'). Even Trafalgar, he noted, had not resulted in total interdiction of enemy shipping (Callwell 1905: 1ff.).

Corbett was more modest in his ambitions for 'command of the sea' and the function of naval battles. He approved of the idea of 'seeking out' the enemy only in order to boost morale, or to strike 'before the enemy's mobilization is complete' (Corbett 1911: 174). Corbett explained how one might secure command of the sea, although he rarely used the expression and spoke more of a 'working command':

1. Methods of securing command:
   (a) By obtaining a decision.
   (b) By blockade.
2. Methods of disputing command:
   (a) Principle of 'the fleet in being'.
   (b) Minor counter-attacks.
3. Methods of exercising command:
   (a) Defence against invasion.
   (b) Attack and defence of commerce.
   (c) Attack, defence, and support of military expeditions (Corbett 1911: 165f.).

Depending on one's geographic location and preoccupations, however, one could have more modest ambitions. Napoleon reportedly said in 1804, 'Let us be masters of the Straits [the English Channel] for six hours and we shall be masters of the world' (q.i. Till 1982: 130).

Attack, defence, and annihilation battles

Three other major debates concerning naval Strategy will be summarised only briefly here, as they so closely paralleled those conducted over land warfare. The first concerned defence and the offensive and, most famously, Mahan and his British followers, in the Jominian tradition, strongly favoured the offensive. Notably, there were also two dissenters: Admiral Hyacinthe Laurent Théophile Aube (1826–90) of the *Jeune École* held strongly that in naval warfare 'the defence is the superior objective, in contrast to what happens on land, where the offensive appears as the surest means of keeping the national soil

inviolate by invading the enemy's soil' (q.i. Ceillier 1990: 206). The other was Corbett, who saw the advantages and disadvantages of both a defensive and an offensive Strategy.

The second, closely related theme is that of the decisive or annihilation battle. If Mahan's work on the navy can be characterised by one idea, it is the need for a large fleet ideally to crush an enemy in a decisive battle, as Mahan's hero Nelson had done at Trafalgar. Mahan thus applied the Napoleonic paradigm to naval Strategy (see chapters 5 and 6). This interpretation of the blue water school's and Mahan's teaching thrived in the contemporary cultural context of the naval equivalent of militarism, sometimes referred to as 'navalism'. For 'navalists' of all countries, the great naval battle became the absolute aim without much justification, as '*l'art pour l'art*', as Michael Salewski has noted (2007: 90).

For Corbett, by contrast, battle was a means to an end, perhaps not always a necessary means, and certainly not an end in itself. As he used to point out, even confronted with naval personnel who worshipped Nelson as the English god of war, it was not Trafalgar that decisively defeated Napoleon (Schurman 1965: 147–84). The Nelson admirers were represented in Britain by Admiral Sir Reginald Custance and his advocacy of naval battle and the *offensive à outrance* (Custance 1919: 3). This they regarded as 'the true spirit … and traditions of the navy' (Custance 1907: 189, 228). The British Admiralty proclaimed at the 1902 Colonial Conference:

The primary object of the British Navy is not to defend anything, but to attack the fleets of the enemy, and by defeating them to afford protection to British Dominions, supplies and commerce. This is the ultimate aim … The traditional role of the Royal Navy is not to act on the defensive, but to prepare to attack the force which threatens – in other words to assume the offensive. (q.i. Till 2006: 80)

Like him, Spenser Wilkinson and General Callwell argued relentlessly that the destruction of the enemy's fleet was crucial to the successful outcome of a war (Wilkinson 1894: 50f.; Callwell 1905: 51). This view was widely held – in harmony with the 'primacy-of-battle fetish' that reigned throughout the Western world (Marder 1961: 306). This conviction crossed the boundaries between the *matériel* school and the historical school.

Equally related was the third theme, that of the concentration of forces. Naval writers on this point sounded just like their khaki comrades. Take Admiral Louis Edouard Bouët-Willaumez, writing in the mid-century: 'The tactical combinations of a good general or admiral must above all aim to operate with superior forces and combined effort on a decisive point' (q.i. Taillemite 1999: 50). Echoing Jomini, Mahan himself wrote that 'strategic advantage' lay 'in concentration, in central position, and in interior lines' (Mahan 1911: 76).

Fortifications, naval defences and bases

More particular to maritime Strategy are several other themes. Fears of invasions of Britain obviously go back to Roman times, and came to the fore whenever there was a crisis, especially in Anglo–French or later British–French relations. In the British wars against France of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, this fear agitated Britons, but the navy was deemed sufficient to ward off such foes. There was Admiral John Jervis, first Earl St Vincent's (1735–1823) apocryphal quip that he never claimed that Napoleon couldn't invade Britain, but that he couldn't come by sea. Indeed, Napoleon's great invasion plan with army, navy, and hot air balloons, as illustrated on the front cover of this book, never materialised. From the mid nineteenth century, however, invasion scares increased with the introduction of steamships which were supposed to have 'thrown a steam bridge across the Channel' for any invader, as the long-time British Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister Lord Palmerston put it (Till 2006: 61). This gave rise to a 'bricks-and-mortars school' of advocates of coastal fortifications. The second half of the nineteenth century therefore saw the erection of a string of red-brick defences along the southern coast of England, just as coastal fortifications had become a feature of the Atlantic seaboard of the United States of America.

John Colomb, in an essay of 1867 entitled 'The Protection of our Commerce and Distribution of Our Naval Forces Considered', wrote:

[O]ur policy should be this: in times of peace to provide for the safety and welfare of our merchant fleets on the high sea, and at trading ports *not* in our possession, nor in that of any European power; and in time of war with any European power or America, our object should be, to ensure the safety of those ports *in* our possession, and to afford protection, not only to them, but to as great an area as possible around them. (q.i Olivier 2004: 17)

Both Colombs centred their campaign for naval reforms on the call
for secure naval bases along Britain's sea shores but also along the
lines of Britain's commercial shipping routes throughout the empire
and Britain's overseas bases, a view shared by Richmond (Schurman
1965: 144) and Callwell (1905: 65–89). They rightly recognised that
in view of the regular need for refuelling with coal which distinguished
steamships from sailing-ships, well-provisioned overseas bases were
more important than ever before. Moreover, compared with wooden
ships, metal ships needed more professional refurbishing at regular
intervals to fight the effects of salty sea water on their hulls, and this
meant the need for dry docks along shipping routes. The Colombs,
Richmond and Callwell succeeded in raising public and governmen-
tal awareness of this issue and influenced policy-making (Schurman
1965: 21–4, 33, 42–6, 50).

In 1875, Colonel Sir William Jervois, writing for the Admiralty,
called upon the British Secretary of State for War to improve
the defences of Britain's many bases, only some of which were
adequately fortified. Jervois argued for fortifications, as opposed to
'floating defences' in the form of ships protecting the bases, as the
former seemed to him significantly less expensive (Hattendorf 1993:
595–8).

The 'bricks-and-mortar school' were derided by the blue water
school and the Mahanians. Yet it was clearly a British strategic
aim in case of war where possible to capture enemy's naval bases,
naval stations or maritime fortifications – terms used synonymously
(Callwell 1905: 94ff.). But for this, naval action alone might not be
enough, as the Russo-Japanese War demonstrated: 'The reduction
[i.e. destruction] of a maritime stronghold must generally be effected
by attack from the land side.' This war reinforced the insight that
in general, the defeat of an enemy navy has to be followed up with
operations on land – a point which even Mahan conceded (Mahan
1911: 435).

Although himself a great advocate of drawing lessons from his-
tory, Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, a typical example of the blue water
school, warned that 'Naval history down to our own day is filled with
instances of wrong deductions from observed occurrences.' One of
the false lessons in his view was the policy of putting fortifications
everywhere in the British Empire, a lesson deduced from the siege of
Sevastopol in the Crimean War. 'Not only were most of these useless,

the scheme of defence in accordance with which they were constructed was also so radically unsound that it brought about a great relative decline in our naval strength, thus exposing the country to serious peril' (Bridge 1907: 10f.). Instead, Bridge advocated strategic defence: What he called the three divisions of naval warfare were 'coast defence, colonial defence, and defence of commerce'. Coastal defence he used in the largest sense, not merely the defence of a particular port or stretch of coast – that would be 'local defence'. Bridge thought it was a waste of money to spend much on particular points, rather than on a flexible sea-going fleet which could reconfigure to protect particular points (strategic defence). In his view, it made sense to have as big a fleet as possible, even if this led to an arms race. To concentrate his fleet for an invasion, the enemy had to give away his plans, and would then be easier to catch. Raids would occur either way, thought Bridge, and could not be excluded totally, but they would have 'little influence on the course of a war as a whole'. For local defence, he thought one might need special smaller craft. Passive defences – fortifications – he dismissed as too cumbersome and limited in their effectiveness. For colonial defence also the best answer, according to Bridge, was 'an adequate sea-going force'. He thought that the same applied to defence of commerce (Bridge 1907: 91–116). In war, maritime trade should be secured by putting merchant vessels in convoys protected by an escort of men-of-war, or keep cruisers around trade routes to ward off attackers. The latter choice, however, required too many cruisers to be affordable. Typical of the 'realists' who dominated his generation (see chapter 5), Bridge was dismissive of international treaties and conventions, claiming it was against man's nature to respect them (Bridge 1907: 162). Such scepticism was and is the luxury of citizens of great powers who have the option of effecting their own security in alternative ways to trying to uphold general norms.

In general, the blue water school thus argued that one should not invest in land fortresses – which would be purely defensive – but in a navy instead, which could be defensive and offensive. Mahan proved exceptional here when he warned against the view that 'military force can always, under all circumstances, dispense with secure bases of operations'. He rejected 'the opinion that the navy is the proper instrument, generally speaking, for coast defense in the narrow sense of the expression, which limits it to the defense of ports' (Mahan 1911: 153). But fortresses had other limitations: 'Fortresses,

coast or other, defend only in virtue of the offensive power contained behind their walls. A coast fortress defends the nation to which it belongs chiefly by the fleet it shelters.' This in his view applied also to fortresses along land frontiers, which above all shelter the garrisons which will attack invading armies, and thus be offensive, even if they defend their country. 'Strategically, coast fortresses are not for defense, but for offense, by sheltering and sustaining that force which against an invader is the offensive arm; that is, the navy' (Mahan 1911: 432–5).

The army's bricks-and-mortar school in turn were dismissive of the blue water school and the Mahanians, Britain's General Wolseley cautioning in 1896:

I know nothing that is more liable to disaster and danger than something which floats on the water. We often find in peace and in the calmest weather our best ironclads running into each other. We find great storms dispersing and almost destroying some of the finest fleets that ever sailed. Therefore, it is essentially necessary for this country that it should always have a powerful army, at least sufficiently strong to defend our own shore. (q.i. Gretton 1965: 12)

Interservice rivalry was clearly an important factor in the different naval perspectives (on this, see also the Epilogue to this book).

Naval blockade

Raids on enemy ports must have been among the earliest forms of naval warfare: actual blockades featured even in the Peloponnesian War. The pinnacle of blockades during the age of sail was the 'continental system' of Napoleon, an attempt to strangulate Britain's economy through a Continent-wide embargo on trade with Britain. In turn, the Royal Navy arrested any ship sailing towards any continental port, no matter what flag it was flying (Wilkinson 1894: 12f.). In the American Civil War, the blockade of the South by the North was very effective. In turn, Southern (Confederate Navy) ships pursued the *guerre de course* with some success.

British authors in particular wrote about blockades, which before the First World War aimed primarily at undermining an adversary's war effort. The authors in question included Philip Colomb, Corbett,

Callwell and the official historian Captain Stephen Roskill (1903–82). They divided blockades into the sub-categories of:

- the 'close blockade', where the enemy fleet was 'sealed up' in one or several ports, and associated with Lord St Vincent during the Napoleonic Wars;
- the 'open' or 'distant' blockade, associated with Admiral Richard Howe, the first Earl Howe (1726–99), in the naval campaigns against revolutionary France (Schurman 1965: 45f.).

In practice, the difference between them could be blurred, and navies might need extra help from armies to succeed, as Callwell thought in the light of the Russo-Japanese War (Callwell 1905: 120ff.). Callwell also warned that an adversary's navy could re-emerge if it was only bottled up in the harbours and had not been destroyed in battle (Callwell 1905: 127).

In view of the threat posed by torpedoes to capital ships, after 1888 the United Kingdom moved naval exercises from close blockades to distant blockades (Olivier 2004: 15). By 1911, the United Kingdom planned almost exclusively for distant or 'open' blockades. Blockade was both feared by and seen as promising for Britain. Sir John Fisher famously said in 1904, that 'It is not *invasion* we have to fear if our Navy is beaten, it's *starvation*!' (q.i. Till 2006: 75).

Amphibious/maritime operations

Britain had had a pioneer in the thinking on joint navy and army operations in the person of Thomas More Molyneux, writing in the mid eighteenth century (Molyneux 1759). The subject was by and large neglected by writers until well over a century later, when Philip Colomb wrote that 'the dividing line between attempts to gain the command of the sea in order to facilitate a descent upon the land, and descents upon the land with an admitted want of command of the sea, is an exceedingly fine one' (Colomb 1891: 203). He emphasised the mutually reinforcing factors in land and naval warfare, where coastal targets were concerned: 'certain conditions – command of the sea, sufficient and well-handled land forces, landings either away from the batteries, or after their fire has been temporarily silenced … small vessels – have always been necessary to secure the success of territorial attack' (Colomb 1891: 430).

Perhaps not surprisingly it is a general, Callwell, who is called 'the father of Joint thinking' (Colin Gray), in that he developed the famous concept of co-operation between army and navy. Callwell liked to quote Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey's dictum that 'The British Army is a projectile to be fired by the Navy' (Callwell 1905: xiii). Callwell wrote his book on *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance* during the Russo-Japanese War, which illustrated what could be achieved through co-operation between army and navy. Callwell raised the question whether sailors should be trained to go ashore to fight. His answer was that one should rather take soldiers, transported by sea. He argued that only a joint ('amphibious') force could cause the adversary extensive damage, not a navy acting on its own (Callwell 1905: 148–55, 170, 182f.). Sir Cyprian Bridge, Callwell's contemporary, although a naval man to boot, advocated 'jointness' on the one hand on the grounds of similarities and connections between naval and land warfare. Both on land and at sea, he opined, 'the primary objective is the enemy's armed force'. On the other hand, differences made for complementarity:

[N]aval campaigns by themselves are not likely to end a war or cause the complete surrender of one side. A purely naval contest may wear out one belligerent; but the process will be long, and if one side is quite worn out, the other will almost certainly have begun to feel the effects of fatigue. Consequently, as a rule naval strategy should aim at enabling a land army to give the finishing stroke. (Bridge 1907: 22–4, 163–83)

Several other thinkers took a similar line, such as Colonel George Furse, who had a particular interest in logistics, and David Hannay (Furse 1897). Writing on the eve of the First World War, George Grey Aston of the Royal Marines was one of the first to integrate aircraft into his vision of joint operations of the future (Aston 1914). In theory, then, the value of jointness was well recognised, even if in practice it often foundered on interservice rivalries. The British Admiralty conceded, at the end of the Great War, that 'The war has been fought, and the final decision reached, on land; but the land campaign was rendered possible only by reinforcements and supplies from oversea' (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc.441).

Coercion and deterrence before the nuclear age: the fleet in being and gunboat diplomacy

Two centuries after Torrington invented the concept of the 'fleet in being', Sir Philip Colomb took up the view that a naval force 'in being', even if numerically inferior to that of an adversary, might deter an invasion of the British Isles. He described the navy as a 'shield or guard', while the army was the 'spear to strike' an adversary (Till 2006: 82f.). Since then naval strategies for second-tier navies have been subsumed under this heading.

The British Empire was based on a Strategy of deterrence, coercion and bluff, although this was codified nowhere – one future British Secretary of State for War commented in 1900 that it was true 'to say that our existing military organisation is based upon no known and accepted principle' (q.i. McDermott 1985: 101). If deterrence or coercion were applied, it was done so without any conscious articulation of this concept. British Strategy was seen more as 'muddling through'. In the words of one War Office official, 'we are attempting to maintain the largest Empire the world has ever seen with armaments and reserves that would be insufficient for a third class military power'. Until the Boer War, Britain's Strategy when confronting Asian and African countries had largely exploited British technological superiority, which would inspire terror and induce the local population to co-operate, in ignorance of the fact that British manpower resources were severely limited. In most cases, the British were bluffing and could have done little to increase their pressure. Coercion and deterrence, making much of a threat that could barely be realised but was occasionally implemented to drive the message home, but otherwise signalled through the parading of gunboats and the deployment of small, well-equipped units, was the one recognisable pattern in British military dealings with potential and actual colonies (McDermott 1985: 101).

The dividing line between peace and war was thus fluid in British maritime operations even in the nineteenth century. Bridge for one acknowledged by 1907 that 'There is a strategy of peace as well as of war.' With a large fleet, any power would have a special weight also in peacetime (Bridge 1907: 24f.). Bridge argued that 'In every detail the strategy of peace should conduce to furthering the object which we are

likely to have in war' (Bridge 1907: 24f.). Corbett characteristically had much sympathy for the fleet in being as a deterrent, in the hope that one need not give battle every time, and in certain circumstances could retreat and avoid it. In auspicious circumstances, however, such a fleet might be used to attack (Corbett 1911: 26). Mahan, equally characteristically, dismissed the 'fleet in being' school (Mahan 1911: 398–400).

Gunboat diplomacy was a practice uniquely developed by naval warfare, unless one admits parallels with police patrolling on the highways. The nineteenth century for Britain and France was the era of imperial policing, which heavily involved their respective navies. William Ewart Gladstone (1809–98), the British Liberal statesman and Prime Minister, strongly advocated Britain's assumption of a world police role, most famously remembered in his Midlothian electoral campaign speeches in 1879. Gladstone was defeated in 1893 over the issue of naval spending. There had never been universal consensus on this: one of Gladstone's Foreign Secretaries, later Liberal Prime Minister, Lord Rosebery (1847–1929), told Queen Victoria: 'we cannot afford to be the Knight Errant of the World, careering about to redress grievances and help the weak' (q.i. Crewe-Milnes 1931, II: 426).

The subject of gunboat diplomacy was most convincingly analysed by a diplomat, James Cable:

Gunboat diplomacy is the use or threat of limited naval force, otherwise than as an act of war, in order to secure advantage, or to avert loss, either in the furtherance of an international dispute or else against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state. (Cable 1971: 39)

Cable identified essentially different sorts of gunboat diplomacy since the twentieth century: what he calls 'island grabbing' – a sudden *coup de main* on a long-coveted neighbouring island – and the deployment of American carriers near an adversary's or a threatened ally's coast, which can include the imposition of a blockade (Cable 1971: 24, 131–3). What was needed in times of peace to resist gunboat diplomacy 'is not a surface force capable of winning a naval battle on its own, but one which cannot simply be shouldered out of the way' – echoes of the fleet in being!

The inherent advantages of coastal defence are so great that even an inferior fleet can deprive an assailant's threat of credibility, let alone prevent him

from achieving a *fait accompli*, whereas bombers and submarines cannot be presented as a counter without at least an implicit threat of escalation. But the fleet must exist and be ready to sail. (Cable 1971: 187)

While the label was invented in Britain, gunboat diplomacy was clearly practised by other powers as well. As we shall see in chapters 12 and 14, the similarities between this thinking and some nuclear Strategies show the roots of the latter in naval deterrence.

French naval theorists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

In France, too, there appeared a historical and a *matériel* school. The *matériel* school, for whom the development of steamships, mines, stronger and more precise cannon, ironclads, torpedoes, submarines and later the air forces were the central points of concern, dominated around the turn of the century, but then the pendulum swung back towards the historical school, strongly inspired by the writings of Mahan. Unlike the 'Anglo-Saxons', adherents to the French historical school did not necessarily claim to find eternal invariables; much to the contrary, big changes, resulting from new technology, were stressed by them. The difference between the (politically more left-wing) *matériel* school and the (politically more conservative) historical school lay more in the policies they prescribed.

The French matériel *school and the* Jeune École

Politically, like the *Jeune École*, the French *matériel* school as a whole was associated with the left and with social-climbers from more humble backgrounds with a technological education and engineering mindset. They looked down upon by the old naval elite with their *littéraire* and anti-scientific tradition (Motte 1990: 127f.).

The pure *matériel* school was particularly strong in France. Ever since the Enlightenment, the French have been welcoming new technology, eager to try to apply it to solve problems, and to compensate for what from the late nineteenth century was seen as France's weakness in relation to her enemies. Unlike the 'Anglo-Saxons', the French tended to see new technology as an opportunity more than a threat.

A precursor of the *matériel* school in France, and particularly of its radical sub-group, the *Jeune École* ('new school'), from whom they clearly drew some key ideas, was Henri-Joseph Paixhans (1783–1854), an army artillerist who promoted the R & D of the exploding shells named after him. Most of his writing concerned artillery innovations, and besides urging their adoption, he raised the question of the moral justification of their introduction. He did not see how any of the missiles he advocated made killing more horrible than those already existing; it was not these arms, he argued, that were inhumane, but war itself, caused by human deficiencies and ambitions. Optimistically, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, he thought humanity was becoming ever less ferocious. At the same time, he saw his country using war to promote the freedom of the seas for all, and not just for the British and the Americans. (Funnily enough, the British and the Americans also claimed to be fighting for freedom for all.) Paixhans anticipated the *Jeune École* argument that, armed with the new missiles, smaller ships could destroy the biggest ships of the line and thus make them obsolete, thus pleading for the acquisition of more numerous, smaller ships, such as swift frigates and corvettes. His emphasis on speed, again, would be taken up by the *Jeune École* (Taillemite 1994: 106–32).

Unlike the Anglosphere, where late nineteenth-century writers on naval matters were mainly civilians of various backgrounds, in France the writers were mainly professional naval officers, like Admiral Jean-Baptiste Grivel (1778–1869), who had risen to the defence of the French navy against a campaign to abolish it in view of its dramatic lack of success over centuries (Grivel 1837: 165–94), his son, Baron Louis Antoine Richild Grivel (1827–82), who also rose to the rank of Admiral, René Daveluy and Ambroise Baudry, both of whom rose to high ranks in the French navy.

The two Grivels, father and son, both writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, incarnated the French preference for the *guerre de course*, commerce-raiding. The father came out strongly in favour of distributing the captured vessel's goods among one's own sailors, and practically advocated the *guerre de course à outrance*:

Let us use frankly the resources remaining to us [against a stronger enemy]; let us use them without scruples, and in a way that leads us to our aim … even though this form of war … does not bring us any positive benefit,

granted that we burn and sink anything we get our hands on, we shall have gained enough on the day on which we will have proved to our enemy that we can cut off his sinews of war [literally: nerve] by attacking his commerce. (Grivel 1837: 190)

Where in the classical adage money was described as the 'sinews of war,' commerce was here substituted for it.

The son, Richild Grivel, spilled much ink on the great move from sail to steam, and other technological innovations (Grivel 1869). He identified three Strategy options for any power:

- coastal defence and attack;
- *la grande guerre*;
- cruiser warfare (the new form of commerce raiding) as most suited to France against the United Kingdom because of the Royal Navy's superior size.

Richild Grivel thought one should use bigger ships to fight smaller vessels, but shun battle with the United Kingdom, anticipating the tenet of the *Jeune École*, which was: 'shamelessly flee from the strong; shamelessly attack the weak'. France, he emphasised, needed different strategies depending on whether she would encounter 'an *inferior* or *superior* power (speaking navally)'. On this depended, in his view, whether France should opt for a fleet Strategy to crush an inferior enemy, or a cruiser Strategy to harass a superior foe (Olivier 2004: 281f.). The latter allowed a state 'to hit directly commerce and industry, that is to say, the very sources of the enemy's prosperity'. This should be France's Strategy against Britain, or the Strategy of a continental power towards an island power (of which, of course, there were not that many in the world).

By contrast, if an island power wanted to affect the continent, then mastery of the sea – and Richild Grivel went along with the Elizabethan tenet that this meant mastery of the world's commerce and thus the world – was desirable: one would combine naval and army action, attacks on enemy ports, impose blockades (Taillemite 1992: 91). Her geography alone, the predicament of having to face both a possible land war against the German states and the naval power Britain, necessarily deprived France of the option of matching both sides on a completely equal footing. It would only become clear after 1871 how true this was. But Richild Grivel may have been the first to have introduced the concept of France having to counter

her enemies as David countered Goliath – with the weapons (and the Strategy) of the weaker against the stronger, '*le faible contre le fort*' (Taillemite 1992: 94). This is a subject that would become the leitmotiv of French thinking in the nuclear age, but the perceived need to compensate for the innate quantitative superiority of adversaries is all-persistent in French military thinking from about this time, deeply reinforced by the humiliating and surprising defeat of 1870/1.

The recognition that France could not aspire to a first-class navy by British standards was at the heart of the ideas of the *Jeune École.* Admiral Louis Edouard, Count Bouët-Willaumez (1808–71), summarised the rationale for his country's navy in the mid nineteenth century as follows:

Our navy protects our maritime commerce and our colonies: leading the second-class navies [of the world], she has for centuries depended on the great principles of the freedom of the seas … In case of war, the navy serves as a force multiplier for the armies, transporting them across great distances, recruiting and supplying them; it makes it possible to attack the enemy wherever he is vulnerable. (q.i. Taillemite 1999: 61)

French naval officers believed France had to stand up to Britain, the foremost naval power of the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the question was: how?

The group of French naval thinkers who became known as the 'young school' tried to find an answer to this. Conscious of France's limited capabilities compared with Britain, they proposed a package of coastal defence, anti-blockade warfare and attacks on the enemy's commerce in the tradition of the *guerre de course* (Bueb 1971).

The actual birth of *Jeune École* thinking has been dated to the French government's budget report of 1879. In the French National Assembly, Deputy Ernest Lamy articulated an alternative Strategy for France as 'second naval power' in a changing Europe. He implied that France now had to worry also about the German navy, so France should aspire to have a navy that 'could hold out against the combined efforts of two fleets other than' the Royal Navy. But the costs of a navy were now so high that he thought France could not construct many ironclads to fight a war of major battles with many ships of the line (*guerre d'escadre*). Instead, France should ensure the defence of her coasts, produce strong ships with strong motors and strong guns,

capable of staying at sea for a long time, and with them pursue a *guerre de course* (Ceillier 1990: 198).

The Strategy advocated by Lamy was to pose a real threat to maritime commerce in the form of amphibious assaults and close blockade. Admiral Jean-Pierre Edmond Jurien de la Gravière (1812–92), later president of the French Academy of Sciences and member of the Académie française, put it as follows:

It is up to the nations for whom the navy only comes second in national ranking [after the army], and who are too poor to imitate the luxury of England, to work out what the future is. A good idea of this future can give their navy a menacing step forward. Every invention which threatens the giants and tends to emancipate the flies is a progress which the French navy could not welcome more, as it would no longer have to double its forces and its strength in a few years. (q.i. Ceillier 1990: 203)

A young journalist, Gabriel Charmes (1850–86), took up the idea and started to campaign for the necessary military reforms and the ruthless – and indeed lawless – pursuit of attacks on the enemy's commerce, with audacity and courage (the famous French *élan*). Charmes brought to the *Jeune École* fashionable concepts, focusing on the image of France as the weaker power having to tackle a stronger power:

Battles between big fleets [*la guerre d'escadre*], blockade warfare, wars aimed at diverting forces on the continent, will in future only be memories of the past. There are only two forms of war left: the *guerre de course* in the open seas and coastal warfare against undefended towns … The *guerre de course* is the weapon of the weak against the strong. It has to be [pursued] without limit and without pity, but it remains a moral[ly acceptable] endeavour: even though the means for reaching it are terrible and savage, it is certainly not a result which is contrary to the progress of human society, as this new power of the weak which one day will assure the entire freedom of the seas will prize away predominance from some nations that are luckier than others. (q.i. Monaque 1997: 60)

Gabriel Charmes thus cast France in the role of the defender of the rights of the weaker nations against the stronger ones – foreshadowing the key feature of French nuclear Strategy. This fitted well with France's self-perception, since the French Revolution, as 'soldier of humanity'

(Chuter 1996). In defence procurement terms, Charmes argued for more role specialisation and thus the construction of a range of different types of ships, gun-boats, torpedo-boats, cruisers. Concomitantly, he opposed the trend towards ever larger, heavier ironclads that was prevalent in France at the time (Ceillier 1990: 207f., 211).

These ideas came close to becoming government policy when Admiral Aube, with experience in the colonies, became Navy Minister in Charles de Freycinet's short-lived cabinet of 1886–7 and suspended the battleship construction programme. Instead, he supported the construction of cruisers and torpedo-boats. He argued for French missions of coastal defence (including in France's colonies) and commerce raiding with the help of cruisers specially built for this purpose. He was a new prophet of total economic war, fully aware of the effects this would have on the enemy nation (Monaque 1994: 133–43). In 1885, Aube wrote in starkly Social Darwinist terms:

War is the negation of law. It … is the recourse to force – which rules the world – of an entire people in the incessant and universal struggle for existence. Everything is therefore not only permissible but legitimate against the enemy … Therefore the torpedo-boat will follow from afar, invisible [to] the liner it has met; and, once night has fallen, perfectly silently … it will send into the abyss liner, cargo, crew, passengers; and, his soul not only at rest but fully satisfied, the captain of the torpedo-boat will continue his cruise. (q.i. Olivier 2004: 134)

Aube thus totally disregarded the legal obligations under the Declaration of Paris of 1856. He also recommended shelling ports to put pressure on the population, thus fully anticipating the argument for city bombardment put forward by the early air power strategists (see chapter 12). Aube hoped that economic and financial chaos would result for the enemy nation from French commerce raiding. In terms that Moltke, Bernhardi and indeed Ludendorff and Hitler would have endorsed, Aube described the conflicts of the future as 'the decisive wars, the wars for survival … veritable struggles for life' (Olivier 2004: 134f.). Although Aube thought that the French navy should adopt a defensive Strategy, his concept of how to conduct it foreshadowed the total war against the enemy population that would be put into practice by the British naval blockade in the First World War:

– What does one want from war? – To be the stronger side to impose one's law [upon the other]. – How does one impose it? – Through exhaustion [*en accablant*]. – Whom does one exhaust? – The members of the nation in their persons, their interests, their possessions. One thus has to attack the most abundant mainsprings of life. To destroy the fleet of England [!] is to defeat its pride; to sink the ships which bring to the English bread, meat, cotton, the salaries for the workers, it is that to conduct war against England. The principle of strategy is henceforth: not to waste time on the enemy fleet, but to concern oneself only with its riches and its ruin. (q.i. Ceillier 1990: 206)

Here is a link that would fit well into Talmon's view of the connections between French Revolutionary democracy and totalitarianism (Talmon 1952): Admiral Aube was postulating a war against the entire enemy nation, civilians included, men, women, young and old. His disciples at least harboured the arcane hope that somehow wars could in this way be brought to a swifter end, foreshadowing the thinking of several of the air power theorists after the First World War (Motte 1990: 121f.). The members of the *Jeune École* were seen as republicans or even radicals (that is, on the left in the French political spectrum), standing out in the sea of Conservatism which the French navy otherwise represented – the *Marine* was also known as 'La Royale', not only because the Navy Ministry happened to be located in the rue Royale in Paris, but also because of its Catholic, Conservative and even royalist leanings (Jackson 2000: 131). The members of the *Jeune École* presented the torpedo-boat as a democratic vessel as opposed to the cruiser and capital ship, which they saw as fetishes of the elitist thinking of reactionaries (Motte 1994: 149, 151).

Other *Jeune École* writers included Commandant Paul Fontin and Lieutenant J.H. Vigot, who, writing under pseudonyms, wanted to show 'that our country will be invincible on the seas, on condition that we stop pursuing the … chimera of wars of big fleets'. They accused their government of lacking a coherent Strategy. France should above all renounce the construction of ironclads, 'those ruinous mastodons', which would produce no good effect in war. Instead, she should put all her money into cruisers, gun-boats and torpedo-boats, nothing else, until the submarine was ready. An anonymous writer – French military officers were not allowed to publicise their views – accused France of stupidly copying foreign countries (that is, Britain). He and

his colleagues saw little point in this, as both countries were so different in strategic terms – Britain had all to lose away from home, on the oceans of the world, while France had all to lose on her own home territory. 'The defensive system of France's coasts is the foundation of her offensive power' (Anon. preface to Z and Montechant 1893: ix–9).

Another officer, writing as 'Z', together with a civilian, H. Montechant, poured scorn on those who claimed that naval Strategy follows immutable principles, regardless of technological developments. The authors argued instead that naval Strategy is a function of new engineering and new weapons systems. What they saw as immutable by contrast was France's need, for geographic reasons, of a defensive naval Strategy.

While in Admiral Tourville's time (1642–1701), two fleets, coming within sight of one another, had to give battle, because of the speed of modern ships, this was no longer necessary, said Z and Montechant. In Tourville's era, the greatest immediate danger in war had been the disembarkation of enemy forces on one's territory; today, enemy navies would start by bombing ports. Then, sailing ships had to follow the wind, now ships could go anywhere. Then, one could hide in the Channel; with modern means of signalling and the speed of ships, this was no longer possible without being detected. For France, major battles 'in the open seas' were now less beneficial than the *guerre de course* and coastal defences. The members of the *Jeune École* concluded that France only stood to lose if she tried to match the enemy's ironclad fleets and if, as in previous centuries, she sought out the enemy's main fleet to give battle. Acknowledging that this quest for major battle dominated land warfare, they asserted that in this respect naval war was the antithesis to land warfare. This was the 'simple, unitary, scientific, modern' maritime Strategy that they advocated for France (Z and Montechant 1893: 407–9).

With the fall of the Freycinet cabinet in 1887, Admiral Aube's and the *Jeune École*'s influence was temporarily terminated, although their ideas lived on, and came to the fore again after the Great War. They also had some impact on thinking in other countries: Austria-Hungary in the 1880s adopted the *Jeune École*'s ideas (which ignored international law on prizes and so on) because they meant a 'fleet on the cheap' (Olivier 2004: 135). Moreover, the submarine warfare of both World Wars was conducted in the spirit of the *Jeune École*.

The French Mahanians

Unlike all the authors quoted above, one could subscribe to the *matériel* school and yet be a French Mahanian, a fan of the great battle. This can be seen in the *Naval Battle* (1912) of Ambroise Baudry, written in the staccato style of which his contemporary Foch was so fond, with memorable phrases that could be drilled into dull brains. Baudry did little besides translating into terms of naval warfare the prevailing views on future war among writers on Strategy in general, the Colins and Gilberts of his age, based on Clausewitzian terminology. Battle was all-important, whether for army or navy. Small wars had become unthinkable to Baudry; major wars would be all the more intensive for that reason. Only a decisive victory would enable that side to impose its will on the adversary. The *guerre de course* made no sense to Baudry, as the only aim was the all-out annihilation battle, without difference between land or sea warfare, both based on the total mobilisation of the nation. Blockades were a waste of effort. Building small ships meant squandering money; everybody (that is, France) had to strive to build nothing less than the largest possible fleet. Nothing less than a duel of the giants would settle scores. This was the *offensive à outrance* gone to sea (Baudry 1912: 1–47, 224–7).

The French historical school subscribed to this principle, which until the First World War predominated over the *matériel* school and the *Jeune École*. The French historical school were thus, to a man, entirely unoriginal Mahanians, and were in agreement with the 'decisive battle' fashion of the age, the spirit of the annihilation battle and the *offensive à outrance* advocated by the land strategists. While some French writers accused Mahan of Francophobia (the heroes of his histories were mostly the British), many of the 'historians' found a source of pride in his extolling of some feats of French naval history, such as those of Admiral Suffren (1729–88), who had preferred decisive battles over coastal defences and the *guerre de course*. At any rate, around the turn of the century Mahan's books were devoured in France much as in Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy and elsewhere (Motte 1994: 145–72).

Two writers typical of this conservative Mahanian thinking are Admiral René Daveluy (1863–1939) and Admiral Gabriel Darrieus (1859–1931), the latter, like Mahan, primarily a naval educator.

Besides Mahan, René Daveluy was influenced by Prussian land warfare writing, centring on the importance and centrality of the annihilation battle. In the tradition of Guibert and Clausewitz, he belittled the wars of the *ancien régime*:

[T]here was an era when one pretended to make war without fighting; one did not seek battle, one took it on with regret. This period coincided with the American War of Independence, and the false ideas which spread at the time had their effect also on the navy … As one did not admit the need to get rid of the enemy, to wipe him out [*supprimer*], the predominant aim was to get out of an engagement with the least damages. One only entered into an engagement half-heartedly, one fought outside the effective range of cannon, then one disengaged without getting hurt … Indecisive battles are sterile. (Daveluy 1902: 19f.)

He accused the French navy of a tendency to want to preserve their ships and of staying on the defensive, which he condemned: 'The true protection of the hardware [*équipement*] is victory' (Daveluy 1902: 22f.).

Moral victories which leave the adversary intact only have effects of little importance or duration. By the fact that one leaves to the enemy the ability to come back to the battlefield, one gives him the possibility of reconquering what one has lost … The annihilation of the enemy is one of the general rules of war; it flows from its very essence, from its definition. It is a necessity which prevails even more at sea than on land. (Daveluy 1902: 20f.)

And he concluded: 'The aim of combat … is the annihilation of the enemy' (Daveluy 1902: 19f.). 'There are no two ways of fighting, there is only one: one has to seek out and destroy the enemy' (Daveluy 1902: 26). And this had to be done with 'the mass or concentration of forces: that is the weapon of victory' (Daveluy 1902: 44). After battle should come the inexorable pursuit of the defeated party, which 'nothing must stop' (Daveluy 1902: 100f.). 'Military strategy teaches to attack first of all the [enemy's] principal army.' If you could strike at the heart of a nation, you should do so (Daveluy 1905: 23f.). For Daveluy, the decisive battle was key to all success in naval warfare: to him it was not a question of either protecting the coast or attacking the adversary's territory or his commerce. 'Destroy the enemy and you will have both these results simultaneously' (Daveluy 1905: 8).

And, just like Foch and the other French land warfare strategists, Daveluy raved about the importance of moral force: under the French navy's motto 'Honour and Fatherland', he postulated, one should write 'it is the most obstinate who will win' (Daveluy 1902: 127–33). As it was difficult to explain (after France's defeat at the hands of the Germans in 1870/1) how the French navy could be crucial in a future war to free Alsace and Lorraine, Daveluy pointed to the growth of the French navy's preferred enemy, the Royal Navy (Daveluy 1905: xiv, xvi). The constant pointing to 'England' as enemy by the French navy is noteworthy. Instead of using the term 'Britain' that stood for a liberal state set steadily on the path to democracy, it conjured up centuries of enmity, furnishing excuses to both sides for not uniting against oppressive states throughout the world.

Quite in keeping with these sentiments, Daveluy shared with many of his contemporaries a disdain for alliances (Daveluy 1905: 45). When discussing the advantages and disadvantages of offensive and defence, however, he showed himself more subtle than some. He admitted that a fully offensive role made little sense as the navy could not seize ground the way armies could on land. The navy's mission, besides, always had to be to protect their nation's 'floating riches', which presented a great part of the 'national capital', and had to police the seas to prevent an invasion of the '*metropole*' (homeland) and the colonies. At the same time, the navy had to resort to attacks on the enemy's 'interests'. The navy thus had multiple tasks, which often meant the need to prioritise. Concentrating only on the defence of the coastlines, however, would be the death knell to any colonial power (Daveluy 1905: 51–8). Equally, he dismissed the *guerre de course*, noting condescendingly that it had actually been started by the English, but later used by the French against them. This, he argued, should be left to slow vessels out in the colonies; one must not use expensive new ships for this diversionary purpose (Daveluy 1905: 240–76).

Admiral Gabriel Darrieus's writings, like Mahan's and Corbett's, stemmed from his lectures at the French higher naval staff college (Darrieus 1993: 209–31). His patron, Navy Minister M.E. Lockroy (1895–6), had founded the *École de Guerre de la Marine*. Unlike Jomini, but like Mahan, Laughton, the Colombs and Corbett, Darrieus did not claim that hard and fast rules ('code') could be found (or deduced from history) that could be applied to the conduct of war, leading dependably to victory. His aim, he wrote, was both 'more

modest and more useful: it consists of seeking in the past general indications which are appropriate to give to a great military leader, which, all other things being equal, will orient him towards greater chances of success' (Darrieus 1907: 7).

Darrieus parted company with the Anglo-Saxon commitment to naval predominance, writing (before Corbett) that it was 'megalomania' to believe in the possibility of a total, real 'mastery of the sea', a dream that only the British might be forgiven for dreaming. Nevertheless, he shared the Mahanian desire for decisive and big naval battles (*guerre d'escadre*). The French tended to quote Montesquieu on this matter, who in his *Esprit des lois* had famously pronounced against defensive warfare as it was bad for morale, '*décourageant*', giving the enemy the advantage of showing courage and energy. Darrieus had also read his German contemporaries, and accepted the views of von der Goltz and the others that the attack, the offensive, was infinitely better than the defensive. Quoting Moltke and von der Goltz, he asserted that the destruction of the enemy fleet was the main aim of war (Darrieus 1907: 96, 287f., 299f., 358). Concomitantly, Darrieus like Daveluy dismissed the *guerre de course* as an aberration, claiming that historical examples showed its lack of success. The big battle was what counted for Darrieus, and submarines or cruisers could only have minor roles in this central element of naval war (q.i. Darrieus and Estival 1990: 100f., 111f.). It was with this thinking that a generation of naval officers entered the First World War, and found itself quite disappointed.

Mahan's thinking raised a central question for France's Strategy: how could France (or Germany, or Italy, or Spain or any other continental power), not an island empire, afford the military posture of Britain that need not truly worry about invading armies? This had of course been the central line of criticism put forward by the *Jeune École*, but there were also writers after the demise of the *Jeune École* in 1887 who raised this question. Commandant Abeille, writing in 1912, dismissed the deductions generally derived from Mahan's writings as 'simplifications bordering on the ridiculous and generalisations so outrageous that they cannot withstand examination'. Mahan himself he accused of ignoring variables such as the intellectual, religious and political evolution of humanity, simultaneous land warfare and geographic specificities: were not Mahan's works with their selective

choice of historical examples written specifically as advocacy of a certain naval policy for his own country, America, and were they not in essence advocacy of a political ideology (Motte 1994: 170f.)?

An alternative option for France – one not discussed by the strategists – was a diplomatic solution, long overdue: in recognition of the convergence of the political values and ideologies of France and Britain (and the USA), to abandon attempts to match them quantitatively and to secure an alliance with Britain (and the USA in the First and Second World Wars and, from 1949, in the Atlantic Alliance). The turning point in French operational Strategy was thus the conclusion of the *Entente cordiale* in 1904, which kept France's western 'back' free for her to concentrate, in her land defence, on Germany, and with her navy, before 1918 on the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and on Italy after Mussolini's rise to power in 1922.

Germany before the First World War

There is not the space to do justice to the naval writers of all countries of the period. Italy, with its outstanding traditions in naval commerce and power in the Mediterranean, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a vivid debate that would feed into early air power theory. Here, too, the cult of the offensive had its followers and some notable adversaries (Ferrante 1993).

Germany, by contrast, was a latecomer on the naval scene. It was only with the arrival of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz at the head of the new German Empire's equally new navy that this changed. Tirpitz dismissed any *guerre de course* or cruiser warfare Strategy that might have fitted a colonial policy. He wanted the German navy concentrated on the North Sea, not the Baltic, where Germany might have played the role of a regional hegemon. In an internal memorandum (*Dienstschrift* IX) on Tactics and Strategy of 1894, the fight for command of the sea was clearly defined as the ultimate aim of naval warfare. Much in the offensive spirit of the age, a defensive Strategy was deprecated as inactive and thus as 'moral suicide', and the navy was tasked to take any war to the coasts of an enemy, beyond its own territorial waters. In the context of the strategic offensive, giving battle with all its capital ships at the earliest possible opportunity was the aim of all efforts. Commerce raids was the Strategy of the defeated and the weak, and thus not for

Germany. Initially German naval Strategy under Tirpitz, unsurprisingly, was Moltke and the Prussian school of army thinkers gone to sea (Berghahn 1971).

In 1899 Tirpitz formulated a second Strategy for Germany whereby the High Seas Fleet should aspire to represent a 'risk' or deterrent, but not a threat, to Britain. The logic resembled both the 'fleet-in-being' logic and that of France's future nuclear Strategy in an uncanny way: the High Seas Fleet should be of such importance that a battle with it would leave even a victorious world power (that is, Britain) significantly weakened vis-à-vis any third power, so that such a strong power would avoid a direct clash with Germany (Rosinski 1977: 54). This 'risk strategy' with its accompanying naval building programme had the effect, however, of provoking Britain into changing over from focusing its naval planning on war against France and Russia (or even America) to war with Germany. It ushered in the naval arms race which led to the *Dreadnought* and gave grist to the mills of the 'decisive battle' school (Salewski 1979), and ultimately ensured Germany would be weakened by a naval arms race. The *Entente cordiale* between Britain and France in 1904 allowed the United Kingdom to withdraw its ships from the Mediterranean, which was left to the French to defend, and to concentrate them on the Channel, the North Sea and the Atlantic – which put paid to Tirpitz's risk Strategy as it supposed a threat to Britain from a third party. Like the French navy, the German navy fancied itself as the great challenger of the British Empire, in a struggle between 'Teutonic' and 'Anglo-Saxon races'.

There were dissenting voices, however. German Vice Admiral Victor Valois considered the challenge to British power heroic but unprofessional. Valois was a cruiser man, arguing against the commitment to capital ships of the greatest tonnage. Captain von Maltzahn equally came out in a struggle *against* the fetish of command of the seas, recognising that the *Reich* was a second-rank power in this respect. Vice Admiral Karl Galster advocated a 'small war' against Britain's commerce instead of giving a decisive battle, and urged his superiors to see to the defences of the *Reich*'s coasts and harbours – accordingly, he was a torpedo man (Brezet 1990: 129f.). This view sat uncomfortably with the offensive spirit of the age, and with Emperor Wilhelm II's obsession with rivalry with his British relations.

Conclusions

The full range of thinking about maritime Strategy had unfolded in the nineteenth century. Across national boundaries, different Strategies were advocated and different approaches existed and fuelled debates within each major naval power. But approaches and Strategies did not necessarily go together. Some historically minded writers argued for big battles – Trafalgar resonated as an aspired-to model – or else for alternatives like commerce raiding or the deterrent Strategy of the fleet in being. *Matériel* schools with their concern about the impact of ever-changing technology could argue, one day, for big battles with ironclads, another for commerce raids with torpedoes fired from cruisers as stand-off weapons and a third day for the abandonment of both in favour of the invisible submarine.

Crucial concepts were developed here which would influence air power and nuclear thinking and later Strategy in general: deterrence, coercive Strategies derived from the subtle use of force as political instrument known as gunboat diplomacy, but also the role of blockades in attempting to bring an enemy state to its knees by hitting its 'soft underbelly', the civilian populations. There was an ideological element in many of these approaches, or else a practical common-sense argument, sometimes both. But the ideological element did not necessarily have to fit the overall disposition of the political culture in which it had grown. Thus one would hardly have expected 'liberal' countries with a developed concern about human rights like France or Britain to have developed the *Jeune École*'s or the blockade advocates' disdain for civilian lives, nor Tirpitz in Germany to have so eagerly embraced the at least partly defensive 'fleet in being' strategy. The reality is more complex and shows that within each of these countries, arguments of practicality might contend with ethical concerns, and traces of ideologies otherwise alien to that political culture could flourish even within it.

10 | *The World Wars and their lessons for maritime Strategists*

The purpose of war at sea … is to protect one's own naval traffic and to cut off the enemy's.

<div align="right">

(Admiral Kurt Assmann, 1943: 29)

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The First World War

However many strategists like Corbett had earlier emphasised the need for amphibious operations, on the eve of the Great War the British, American and indeed German navies wanted to win decisive battles by themselves, not plan jointly with their khaki comrades. Under the influence of Mahan, but also of strategists of land warfare, American official naval Strategy also favoured the offensive, even though when war came, it was not as offensive in execution (Kennedy 1976, 1989). The Royal Navy's preferred Strategy was a distant blockade and the economic war, but many within it had a soft spot for Mahanian teaching.

The First World War saw only two supremely important naval operations, if one does not count the transport of the British Expeditionary Force to the European mainland, the bottling up of German military vessels in the North Sea and Baltic after the naval battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 December 1914 or the fight against German submarines. These two operations were the unsuccessful attempt to seize the Turkish Straits with the amphibious landings on the Gallipoli (Gelibolu) Peninsula in 1915, and the battle off Jutland (Skagerrak) between the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet on 31 May 1916.

The British naval blockade of Germany gradually greatly affected the German economy. In early 1915, food shortages had already become painful. The overall result, rather than undermining the enemy's war effort decisively, was starvation among the German and Austrian populations, with around 900,000 deaths attributed to its effects.

Admiral Fisher, the First Sea Lord, had originally hoped to use a (near) blockade to force the German High Seas Fleet to meet the Royal Navy in a major battle, while it was his long-time adviser Corbett who recognised in the blockade the tool to 'exert pressure on the citizens and their collective lives'. This was an idea Corbett had picked up from his German colleague, General Colmar von der Goltz, who even before the First World War had developed the *Jeune École*-style idea that ways should be found to force the other side to beg for peace by 'making the enemy's country feel the burdens of war with such weight that the desire for peace will prevail' (Corbett 1911: 97f., see also Lambert 2010).

US strategic planning for war with Japan in the interwar period goes back to the impact on Americans of the Japanese victory against Russia in 1904/5, and to anti-Asian riots in San Francisco in 1907. A series of interwar plans under the title 'War Plan Orange' (and its successors in the 'Rainbow' series) all assumed three phases, starting with a Japanese attack on American outposts in the Pacific, followed by a gradual reversal turning into a US counteroffensive, leading to phase three, a blockade of Japan and air bombardment of her industry, until Japan surrendered (Hattendorf 2000: 124). Prior to the Second World War, the concept of the blockade was thus well established in US military thinking, as was the concept of air bombardment of industry as a complement with similar aims.

As we shall see in chapters 12 and 13, this logic would connect the rationale of the blockade – on the basis of the arguments of Goltz and Corbett – with the rationale of city bombardment – as advocated by Douhet and Trenchard and implemented most memorably against Coventry, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Both World Wars saw the triumph and then the defeat of the submarine. In the First World War, of every 12.5 tons of shipping sunk by the Germans, 11 tons were sunk by submarines. In the Second World War, two-thirds of the shipping sunk by the Germans was as a result of submarine attacks, 13 per cent was caused by German aircraft (Lindsey 1980: 32f.). The perception was widespread in Britain that it nearly lost the war at sea to German U-boat attacks, but for the belated adoption of the convoy system in 1917. This was profoundly counter-intuitive. The Royal Navy initially opposed it for a host of reasons, such as their conviction that merchant vessels would be unable to keep station and would constantly collide with each other in convoys, that

the ships would have to sail at the speed of the slowest among them and that ports would not be able to cope with the need to deal with a large influx of ships all at the same time (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 440). Britain had been almost entirely unprepared, at the outbreak of the Great War, for this menace, being – perhaps excessively – focused on the German cruiser challenge (Gordon 2006: 89–102).

British lessons

Just like strategists of pure land warfare, Western writers on maritime Strategy were convinced, after the Great War, that any future war must be conducted differently – quicker, more conclusively, with fewer military casualties, with stronger effects on the enemy population who were expected to put pressure on their governments to admit defeat sooner. Here, as in land warfare, but unlike air power thinking, the cult of the offensive had abated significantly in Britain after the Great War.

While Britons continued to hold on to the firm belief that being British meant 'naturally' being 'sailors and an amphibious race' (in the words of First World War Prime Minister David Lloyd George), the bellicosity of Social Darwinism had given way in Britain (and France) to a war-weary, defensive mindset, recasting self-perception and history, marvellously summed up by Lloyd George as a Liberal MP in 1930:

The whole history of the British Navy has been one of *defence*, sometimes of our own coasts, more generally defence of world freedom from one tyrant or another. Its strength … has always been employed in defence of liberal civilisation, the freedom of nations and individuals. It is today, and has for centuries been, the only effective and honest police force of the seas … For centuries past the British Navy … has been the chief agent for the suppression of gun-running, the chief liberator of slaves … it will take centuries of effort by the League of Nations to achieve as much at Geneva for peace, freedom and honour as has been achieved by the British Navy on the high seas of the world. (Bell 2000: 180f.; my emphasis)

In 1921, British navy planners were still happily drawing up contingency plans for war with the USA (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 442). By 1922, however, this new defensive stance, against a background of imperial overstretch, rocketing costs of the 'post-Jutland' ships and

steeply rising social expenditure by the United Kingdom government, led to the acceptance of parity with the US fleet in the Washington Naval Treaty, where the ratio for the navies of USA, Britain, Japan, France and Italy was fixed at 5:5:3:1.75:1.75. Britain accepted German naval rearmament with the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in 1935, and by 1940 it conceded an overall reduction of the role of the navy in British Strategy. Meanwhile, the new air force, holding out promises of defence against new threats from the air, gained exponentially in importance (Lambert 1994: 97). While imperial policing clearly continued to be a role for the navy – and continued to be seen as such well into the twenty-first century, in the new guise of world policeman – the central role that many naval thinkers had wished for the navy was on the wane, as even naval writers conceded (Kennedy 1936: 45–96, 221–8).

Liddell Hart was neither the first nor the last Briton who thought that in Britannia's hands, 'the Trident [is] a mightier weapon than the sword', as one British MP put it in 1910 (q.i. Till 2006: 119). He argued for British abstention from continental warfare, except by supporting proxies fighting on the side where British interests lay. This argument received renewed attention in the Cold War, when Michael Howard, later long-time doyen among British strategists and known for his staunch commitment to NATO and European defence, temporarily used it to plead for British disengagement from the Continent (Howard 1958). This nostalgia was anachronistic, however, in an age of aircraft and missiles.

The waning of decisive battle

The naval battle of Jutland in 1916 had been the only big naval battle in which the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet fought the German High Seas Fleet in the First World War, and – arguably – ended in a draw: while the German fleet was smaller, both fleets were approximately equally equipped technologically, and the Germans owed their ability to fend off defeat to training, not to the quality of their technology (Hattendorf 2000: 44f.). Different lessons were drawn from this. Extreme supporters of victory through decisive battle, such as Commander John Creswell, Custance, Captain Bernard Acworth and Commander Russell Grenfell, thought Admiral Jellicoe had been too cautious during this battle. They thought the consequent development

of the war had proved that it was more expensive for Britain to try to secure command of the sea by methods short of annihilating the main enemy fleet. Had this been achieved, patrolling trade routes would have been much easier and cheaper. Richmond remained sitting on the fence. He saw the pros and cons of attempting to impose a large-scale naval battle on the enemy's principal fleet. On the one hand, he conceded that its pursuit at all costs might detract attention from more urgent and vital operations, depending on circumstances, as the overall aim always had to be the protection and defence of British and Commonwealth trade routes, followed by the ability to support the army with amphibious operations. On the other hand, much could be done by wiping out the enemy's capital ships: once that had been achieved, this would liberate one's own (remaining) ships to act as escorts for convoys, to impose blockades or to attack the enemy's overseas possessions.

The dangers of invasion are removed and ships and men and material are set free for protection of trade, or attack upon trade. The whole experience of war tells the same tale – a great victory is followed by a dispersion of the ships that had concentrated for it. (q.i. Till 2006: 115)

On the other end of the spectrum, Richmond's patron Corbett, the official historian of the Great War at sea, displeased the Admiralty with his unenthusiastic analysis of the importance of battle when dealing with Jutland. It famously led to the official disavowal of his conclusions in a preface, in which the Admiralty complained especially about 'the tendency to minimise the importance of seeking battle and of forcing it to a conclusion' (q.i. Till 2006: 114).

Corbett was not alone with his views, however. Sir Archibald Hurd, perhaps the earliest retrospective critic of the performance of the Royal Navy in the Great War, wrote in 1918,

If the Battle of Jutland had resulted in the annihilation of the [German] High Seas Fleet our position would not have been greatly altered: Germany would still have possessed in her destroyers, submarines and minelayers the only active element of her naval power; her coast defences … would have remained. The great ships would have gone, and to that extent our great ships would have been set free. For what purpose could they have been used after the German High Seas Fleet had been destroyed? (Hurd 1918: 126)

Many opinion- and policy-makers in the navy were persuaded by Corbett's and Hurd's position, and lost any obsession with decisive battles à la Jutland, if ever they had had one. They returned to the old British naval mission of protecting Britain's coasts and commerce, and threatening any enemy's. In the interwar years, the Royal Navy planned and exercised for a long struggle of this sort, not for big naval battles. Meanwhile, the decline of the British navy itself was precipitous in the face of a rising triple threat from Germany, Italy and Japan (Bell 2000: 1–47).

John Creswell and Russell Grenfell, writing in 1936 and 1937 respectively, still thought that Britain needed a battlefield supremacy which alone could enable her to reach a decisive decision in battle – blockade, attack on enemy trade and anything else he regarded as second best. Both were still steeped in the pre-First World War spirit of the offensive (Creswell 1936). Grenfell deplored the waning of the Nelsonian heritage in the First World War: Jutland should have been more decisive, should have been key to a British presence in the Baltic. 'In addition to the glamour of victory and the appeal it would have made to the imagination of the world, it would, I believe, have convinced all nations that the final victory was bound to be with the Allies, and it might easily have shortened the war by a year.' Grenfell believed there were two primary objectives in naval warfare, 'of which the destruction of the enemy's armed forces is one and the control of sea communications the other, both being interrelated' (q.i. Till 1982: 103). This was nostalgic thinking; a more realistic appraisal of the inconclusive battle of Jutland led to a spreading concern on both sides of the Atlantic that Mahan's belief in the possibilities of sea power had been exaggerated (Sumida 1999: 40). Yet in the interwar period, the US navy's preferred exercise scenarios tended to revolve around decisive, ever larger-scale naval battles.

After years of cuts in spending, the dire straits in which all three branches of the armed forces found themselves, coming on top of war-weariness, greatly contributed to the British government's penchant for appeasement. The Royal Navy's leadership were among the strongest advocates of this policy (Gordon 1994: 63–85).

While Mahan had still envisaged Britain as the senior partner in a special Anglo-American naval consortium, Britain was rapidly sinking to being the USA's equal and then, after the Second World War, junior naval partner. The stages of this decline were the US Naval

and Shipping Acts of 1916, shortly before US entry into the First World War, which initiated a significant expansion of the US fleets, commercial and military. The next step was the already mentioned Washington Naval Treaty of 1922. In the Second World War, the US domination of the Pacific was acknowledged by Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Confirming this, in 1951 Australia and New Zealand concluded the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, US) mutual defence treaty with the US which left out the United Kingdom (Hattendorf 2000: 109–20). Britain, too, continued to place her reliance on the US, in her case in the Atlantic: the Royal Navy was subsequently configured to play a role almost exclusively as the USA's ally in NATO, with a clear complementarity of roles – Britain's navy was reoriented primarily towards blocking Soviet naval access to the North Sea and the North Atlantic. Britain now played the role of junior partner that Mahan half a century earlier had envisaged for the USA.

As the official historian of British naval operations in the Second World War, Captain Stephen Roskill also underlined the importance of the offensive tradition, but in a new context of jointness:

Though the exercise of maritime power in defence of trade is essential to the nation's war economy, and it alone can provide the conditions from which the final decisive offensive will be launched, it is by exercising this same heritage in the despatch of great military expeditions overseas that a maritime strategy can be crowned by final victory. (Roskill 1954–61: 12)

Roskill cautioned against 'indecisive battles' with unnecessary loss of shipping and lives (Gardner 2006: 151, 157).

Amphibious operations, convoys and blockades

As the major British and Commonwealth amphibious operation of the First World War, the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign of 1915 received equally contradictory reviews as the Battle of Jutland. Neither Corbett, Richmond nor Callwell thought that the outcome of the unsuccessful and casualty-heavy campaign in the Dardanelles had invalidated the concept of amphibious operations altogether. Indeed, consensus remained that amphibious operations were good in principle and might be applied in the future (Till 2006: 110–13). Churchill in the Second World War proposed a similar angle of strategic attack on the

spreading German sphere of power to an unenthusiastic Stalin, but then Turkey's neutrality was in the end more valuable than the potential gains from such an assault. The growing roles of air power, however, made other British strategists more sceptical about the future possibilities of seaborne invasions: while the Second World War was looming, Liddell Hart, for example, thought another Dardanelles-style amphibious operation would lead to an even greater catastrophe (Liddell Hart 1939: 131).

The persistent attacks on Allied merchant shipping by German submarines during the First World War put paid to the British and American tendency to dismiss the *guerre de course* as outdated or irrelevant. Importantly, the U-boat menace could not be dealt with offensively in a decisive naval battle, but could only be met defensively, and through the application of the convoy system (Kennedy 1989: 174f.). Against French opposition, Britain failed to impose the elimination of submarines on all sides in the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–2; the Royal Navy feared them precisely because they posed a new challenge to its battle fleets, while regarding them, in Admiral Wilson's words, as 'underhand, unfair, and Damned unEnglish' (Kennedy 1989: 182) – much in the same spirit as the Second Lateran Council in 1139 had banned the crossbow as unchristian (and no more successfully).

Few writers had foreseen the importance of convoys. This was one of the points which Corbett, otherwise extremely clear-sighted and indeed prophetic, had got thoroughly wrong in his *Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Corbett, a lawyer by training, equated blockade with the occupation of enemy territory as a weapon of war, thereby foreshadowing an important element of Total War (Corbett 1911: 245). One of the great lessons of the First World War was that it was pointless to try to protect lines of communication as though these were railways, every inch of which had to be intact for a train to be able to move on it. It was infinitely more sensible to move convoys of ships about under the protection of naval vessels (Till 2006: 77).

As far as blockades were concerned, the British ban on German (and Austrian) overseas trade in the First World War had had effects beyond those of any historical precedent. Richmond, Hurd and other supporters of the navy claimed that the blockade of Germany had made a vital contribution to Western victory. Few if any of the British strategists lost any sleep over the fact that, technically

successful as it was, the blockade claimed victims mainly among non-combatants.

French lessons

Even though the French navy had ranked fourth among the world's navies on the outbreak of the First World War, it had fought no major naval battles in this war, but concentrated its efforts on the Mediterranean, more to counter the influence of its allies Britain and Italy than to combat the Austro-Hungarian navy. For the defences of her imperial lines of communication, France had to rely to a larger extent on Britain than imagined even by the architects of the *Entente cordiale*. The need for the alliance with the United Kingdom was strongly confirmed, much to the annoyance of the French navy leadership, who had been raised on rivalry with Britain.

Although the French navy joined in the blockade against Germany, remarkably few Frenchmen wrote about naval or maritime Strategy in the interwar period. Nevertheless, some lessons seemed to stand out. The most important concerned the paucity of big, decisive naval battles (or their complete absence, in the case of France). But like so many historical events, one could see it in two different lights: either a vindication of the usefulness of a mere fleet in being (the French, in this case, which checked and paralysed the Austro-Hungarian navy), or the call for an avoidance of the slaughter in the Western trenches through the shifting of the main theatre of war from land to sea, where a decisive battle might be fought less bloodily. Even before the Great War, its bloodiness on land had been prophesied, and a less painful naval alternative had been proposed by Ambroise Baudry (1912: 10). After the war, most French authors abandoned any hope of France being able to confront a first-rate power (such as Britain or the USA) in a *guerre d'escadre*, a major battle between capital ships, or to secure, on her own, 'command of the sea'. They confirmed the need for an alliance with the United Kingdom, which alone would allow France at least to predominate (against Italy) in the Mediterranean, where it might seek 'command of the sea' on a local scale (Motte 1990: 123–7).

Commandant C.C. Richard resuscitated the *Jeune École*: his lesson drawn from the Battle of Jutland was that the concept of the decisive naval battle of annihilation was inappropriately imported into naval

Strategy from land warfare. In his view, the attack on and defence of naval communications and the blockade were the true objects of naval warfare:

Unlike on land, at sea, the destruction of the organised forces of the enemy does not constitute the unique, necessary and sufficient means of imposing one's will upon the adversary. Battle, while always desirable, is only useful where this destruction is needed to reach the double objective of the true mode of action of naval power: the maintenance of the integrity of its communications, and the rupture of those of the enemy.

And in the light of the French experience in the Mediterranean in the First World War, the concept of a fleet in being, to Richard, was attractive. Such a Strategy could be appropriate for a second-rank navy (like that of France) 'on condition that their fleet truly demonstrates its existence through an incessant activity, jointly with that of its *corsairs*', the modern-day *corsairs* par excellence being the submarines (q.i. Motte 1990: 149f.).

In the light of the submarines' *guerre de course* and the few big naval engagements otherwise, one might have expected the *Jeune École* to come out of the First World War triumphant. Yet the 'Royal Way' of the Mahanians continued to predominate in the French navy's educational establishments, albeit not completely immune to revision, reconstruction and updating. Among those musing on the lessons of the First World War, one stands out: the reconstructed or neo-Mahanian Admiral Raoul Castex, whose main work, the six-volume *Théories stratégiques*, was first printed between 1927 and 1935.

Castex stood in the tradition of the Mahanians Daveluy and Darrius, and indeed of the Prussians and Germans since Moltke.

The defeat of the organised force [of the enemy] is ... the first objective [of war]. Concomitantly, the quest for combat ... imposes itself. All aspirations, all dispositions have to be oriented towards this ... Until we have achieved this crucial defeat of the organised forces of the enemy, we have to abandon all other preoccupations, [such as] the defence of our coasts or communications. That would harm our central objective, lead us to disperse our forces and would expose us to a dissipation of efforts ... What matters is to win in the naval theatre itself ... We shall practice the offensive which alone assures the full flowering of our concept, without worries about the risks which await us on this path. (Castex 1937: 220f.)

He retracted somewhat from this absolute statement when he reha-
bilitated other components of naval warfare, declaring, for example,
that the creation of coastal defences in peacetime was desirable
(Castex 1934: 167–76). The *guerre de course*, however, he thought
had brought only failure to France, despite the heroic memories of
France's *corsaires* (Castex 1934: 111, 166). He conceded that victory
could be achieved only through 'an integrated offensive' of all forces,
surface fleet, submarines, air forces. But submarine and air offensives
were secondary, the surface fleet played the central role, and the main
enemy was the enemy's surface fleet. It made sense for the air force to
attack enemy military and commercial harbours, 'treating them just
like other enemy towns'. But this was ancillary to the main fleet battle
(Castex 1934: 116f., 142–9).

Castex dwelt on the disadvantages of defence on land, above all,
demoralisation through 'waiting, expecting, anxiety, uncertainty,
which depressed courage'; as usual, Montesquieu was invoked. Castex
conceded reluctantly that there might also be merits in the defence
of land. By contrast, he saw no advantages in naval defence (Castex
1934: 106, 150–65).

He admitted that a thoroughly offensive naval Strategy was more
difficult to carry out than an offensive in land warfare, as the immense
width of the oceans could never be entirely dominated, and the enemy
could withdraw into his ports (Castex 1934: 126). Castex conceded a
point to Corbett, who had warned against a blind rush into an offen-
sive at all costs, as an offensive Strategy requires the means both in
quality and quantity to carry them out (Castex 1934: 121). It was thus
all-important that France acquire these, and that she begin to favour
an offensive posture if at all possible (Castex 1934: 136).

As a true Moltkean, Castex emphatically denied that there was any
innate link between the overall political war aims of a country and
its choice of an offensive or defensive Strategy. Thus he had difficul-
ties explaining why 'pacific' France had in 1914 adopted an offensive
Strategy (Castex 1934: 133–6). He turned a blind eye to the alter-
native explanation, namely, that France's militarism offset its defen-
sive and pacific spirit, and that nationalistically infected democracies
might do terrible things.

Castex, like Liddell Hart, de Gaulle, Guderian and other contem-
poraries, showed a great interest in the potential of manoeuvre, intel-
ligent movement to create a favourable situation for oneself. Despite

his devotion to the offensive, he did not favour a mindless, frontal offensive à la Verdun or the Somme (Vascotto 2001: 81–8). Instead, he, like several key thinkers of the interwar period, devoted a good deal of thought to ways of outflanking the enemy fleet, catching it by surprise:

Instead of a homogenous, symmetrical, unimaginative … distribution of forces we choose an asymmetric arrangement, with an eccentric point of gravity [*désaxé*], oriented towards a previously determined direction, intended by the spirit which moves the forces and the material. (Castex 1939: 10, 16)

Castex's views were untypical for war-weary, defensive France. In terms of overall Strategy, French defence spending in the interwar years was concentrated on the army and the fledgling air force, and funds were taken away from the French navy, especially during and after the Great Depression. The French Admiralty resented the growing French dependence on co-operation with Britain, and the political leadership's acceptance in 1922 in the Washington Naval Treaty of having a navy only little more than a third the size of that of Britain and the USA, and equal to that of Italy. Realising French fears, Italy soon cast off the shackles of the Washington Treaty, and like Germany engaged in a major naval construction programme, both of which soon troubled the French navy. British and French strategies for dealing with these growing 'threats in being' differed diametrically. While France tried to defend the status quo fixed in the Versailles and Washington Treaties at all costs, Britain's overall Strategy during the interwar period was to release pressure from fascist, nationalistically charged Italy and Germany by making limited concessions to what was seen as their understandable ambitions (Scammell 1997: 92–118). The *Royale*, but also the civilian French government, saw the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 as a perfidious betrayal by Britain. And yet France's strategic dependence on the United Kingdom and the empire was inescapable. The French Admiralty did not cease to stress that this spelled disaster for France; they almost anticipated the ultimate act of what the French saw as 'Albion's perfidy' at Mers el Kebir, where the largest part of the French fleet was sunk in mid-1940 without prior warning to France, resulting in the death of 1,300 French crew, in a British surprise attack to prevent it from falling

into the hands of the Germans (Heuser 1998c). This overshadowed a naval co-operation which was dictated by the otherwise closest possible convergence of values and political ideology, and by strategic necessities (Jackson 2000: 130–59).

The second-tier powers

Germany

As Britain failed to fulfil the German naval leadership's expectations in terms of battle-mindedness, a small number of German officers under Rear-Admiral Hipper proposed more offensive action against British lines of communication. The German submarine or '*U-Boot*' provided the perfect tool for this. Yet this was pursued at once in defiance of the laws of war (provisions for saving sailors and passengers from attacked ships were soon abandoned) and only half-heartedly from a strategic point of view. For the naval leadership continued to have its eyes on its capital ships in the North Sea, and craved the big battle.

From 1915, a young naval captain, Wolfgang Wegener (1875–1956), saw this dilemma and pleaded for a transfer of Germany's naval centre of gravity to the Baltic Sea, where the High Seas Fleet had a real chance of cutting off all allied supplies to Russia, while abandoning the North Sea and with it the quest for a decisive battle. Wegener produced a memorandum to this effect, which was rejected by Tirpitz as 'poison for the fleet' (Rahn 1990: 138f.). After the war, Wegener, by now Vice Admiral, produced a critique of German naval action in the First World War, in which he accused the High Seas Fleet of having wasted its strength on the Jutland campaign. Instead, he thought it should have tried 'to reach the Atlantic at all costs', with an amphibious campaign that should have secured southern Norway. Wegener noted that the German navy's leaders at the beginning of the First World War were convinced that Britain would attack Germany's northern shores – in the belief that the stronger always attacks. The German Admiralty was so blinded by the prevailing doctrines of land warfare, he argued, that they did not understand British inaction.

But in fact, argued Wegener, the Royal Navy's behaviour made eminent sense, as Britain's strategic position was almost unassailable – her supplies came from the Atlantic, her lines of communication were

out of reach for the High Seas Fleet, while German trade was easy to cut off in the English Channel or near Scotland. The British could thus turn the North Sea into a 'dead ocean' with little effort, and had no reason to change their Strategy (Wegener 1941: 4f.). In all of this, Britain's position was strategically defensive. Only the German submarine attacks on British shipping across the Atlantic eventually affected the United Kingdom (Wegener 1941: 8).

Instead, Germany should have taken a different approach: 'Command of the sea', he explained, 'means controlling commercial lines of communication. Such a line was within our reach', namely, that to Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and thence to the Atlantic, to break through Britain's blockade. But Germany had failed to reach out for it (Wegener 1941: 11). Such a Strategy would have made sense, as it would have taken account of actual commercial needs and geostrategic givens. Instead, the High Seas Fleet was yearning for 'the battle "as such"', 'a battle, which does not exist' (Wegener 1941: 20–3, 46). Battle should be seen as means, not as an aim in itself (Wegener 1941: 32). Instead, 'naval warfare is a struggle about the lines of communication … nothing else' (Wegener 1941: 49).

Wegener argued that 'for the army … strategy only begins with the outbreak of war, while for the navy, it is detached from tactics and thus begins before war, ideally in peacetime'. Groping towards the realisation that the greatest German mistake before and during the First World War had been the total absence of political direction for military planning (but also the lack of co-ordination between the two services), he stated, 'naval strategy is not a mere military task but a joint task for the military man and the politician, in war and peace' (Wegener 1941: 64). 'World politics … is naval power' (Wegener 1941: 80).

Another assault on the prevailing Tirpitzian orthodoxy came from Captain Otto Groos (1882–1970), a contemporary of Wegener's (although with a less brilliant career), who was Germany's foremost disciple of Corbett. Like Wegener, Groos saw the need to point to differences between naval and land Strategy: while in the latter, the destruction of the enemy forces and the occupation of land might be the necessary aim, this was quite different for the navy. He quoted the geographer Ratzel, who had stressed that war at sea tended to take place in much greater spaces, and could not be localised, the way war naturally is on land. Consequently he argued, like Wegener,

that battles, especially naval battles, could not be aims in themselves. Nor were they the only way to achieve one's aims in war at sea. Only an understanding of the overall strategic situation – on land, at sea – could lead to sensible choices in Strategy (Groos 1929: 44f., 57ff., 76f.). Like Wegener, Groos emphasised the peculiarities of every country's geographic situation. Options such as the command of the Atlantic were simply not available to Germany, while Germany might achieve much with its cruisers and submarines through commerce raiding (Groos 1929: 181–95).

While Groos sympathised with a 'fleet in being' Strategy, he also saw its problems. He gave his own definition of its aims:

To deny the command of the sea to a numerically superior enemy who needs … it for the realisation of his plans. This should be done through a decisive battle, while one's own fleet acts defensively, but takes advantage of every opportunity to injure the enemy through counterstrokes.

The limits of a 'fleet in being' Strategy was that it would never allow one to gain command of the sea oneself (Groos 1929: 121).

A contemporary observer detected a trend in interwar German thinking putting increasing emphasis on the interception of enemy trade and protection of one's own (Rosinski 1977: 61–5). It culminated in the writings of Admiral Kurt Assmann (1883–1962), which put economic warfare – *Wirtschaftskrieg* – at the centre of all naval warfare in the industrial age, and pointed to its centrality in British naval Strategy in both World Wars. This, not the pursuit of any decisive battle, in Assmann's view had to be the German navy's main preoccupation (Assmann 1943: 2–16, 29).

On the eve of the Second World War, Admiral Erich Raeder (1876–1960), commander-in-chief of the German *Kriegsmarine* (as the navy had been called since 1935), adopted something much akin to a fleet in being Strategy:

Enemy naval forces, even if inferior in strength, are only to be attacked if this should be necessary to achieve the main objective. Frequent changes in the operational area will provide uncertainty and delays in the sailing of the enemy's shipping, even if no material success is achieved. The temporary disappearance of German warships in remote areas will add to the enemy's confusion. (q.i. Till 1982: 119)

Raeder, like most of his generation, saw Britain as Germany's main and traditional adversary and the USA as Britain's natural ally, however isolationist it seemed at the time. And yet in 1929, tasked with a definition of its objectives in times of war, the navy directorate, under Admiral Raeder, planned for naval operations against Poland and France. Raeder underscored that it was necessary for Germany to avoid any major conflict with Britain, simply too powerful an adversary. By contrast, interrupting the trade of France and Poland seemed a realistic option (Rahn 1976: 281–6).

Raeder and Wegener were realistic, recognising Germany's limitations even when they began to build a new fleet in breach of the peace treaty obligations. When in May 1938 Hitler issued a directive in which he listed France, the USSR and Britain as adversaries for the sake of military planning, the naval directorate's (*Seekriegsleitung*) section Skl 1 produced a 'Memorandum on Britain' in October 1938. It prioritised the *guerre de course* against Britain and her colonies; its motto was 'Naval warfare is the struggle about the economic and military lines of communication.' From this followed the principal task: to destroy the enemy's 'rule of the sea in areas of the sea which are needed by the adversary for his sea communications'. The document stated that this would only be possible if Germany dispatched units of cruisers to these areas in advance of any blockade Britain was likely to impose on Germany; moreover these units would have to be self-sufficient and must not rely upon supplies for three months. There were echoes here of the hope that the British might be persuaded to come to an agreement with their German fellow Aryans – as Hitler himself hoped fervently – as any alternative would be so unpalatable and costly (Salewski 1970: 45–58). This was, however, a considerable misperception of Chamberlain's motives for appeasing Germany, where racial sympathies played no part.

Once the Second World War was under way, the *Kriegsmarine* hardly played a role in the defeat of Poland and France. Raeder and the leadership of the High Seas Fleet were unenthusiastic about Hitler's two-front war against the 'Anglo-Saxon Powers' in the West and the USSR in the East. In true German (and French) naval tradition, they wanted to turn against the West: they saw the British Empire, plus the USA, almost as one sole entity. They urged a declaration of war against Washington even in 1939, and advocated unlimited submarine warfare against all shipping supplying the British Isles, in

the full knowledge that such action had brought the USA into the First World War (Herwig 1971: 650). Hitler only declared war on the USA on 11 December 1941, in the wake of allied Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, when the great German invasion of the USSR – 'case BARBAROSSA' – was well under way. Much to the chagrin of the naval leadership, BARBAROSSA continued to have total priority until the defeat of Germany.

In 1942 the naval leadership tried once more to develop a comprehensive Strategy, referred to as 'great plan' by Michael Salewski, in order to concert the entire Strategy of the Third Reich to defeat the German navy's favourite enemy, Britain, in a triple indirect approach. The army's campaign against Russia should turn south through the Caucasus to deprive Britain of supplies from the Persian oilfields and the Middle East; Rommel's land campaign in North Africa was to aim at seizing Egypt and the Suez Canal; and Germany's ally Japan was to be persuaded to advance to the Indian Ocean to deny Britain further supplies from there. Much to their dismay, however, Japan did not fully comply, as it continued to see the USA, not Britain, as its main enemy. Thus the 'great plan' was dead even in mid-1942 (Salewski 1975: 72–107).

Germany's defeat put an end to any independent German naval Strategy. The Bundeswehr, created in 1955, had to content itself with a small role in the North Sea and Baltic, always acting alongside allies.

Lessons elsewhere

While the Italian Admiralty had been fervent Mahanians on the eve of the First World War, the war itself did not at all follow their expect ations. Capital ships were destroyed – not in battles, but in their harbours, both on the Italian and the Austrian side. Other than that, war in the Adriatic in particular was a stand-off, with mutual paralysis generated by two fleets acting, one might say, as 'fleets in being', with capital ships more important as political symbols than military assets.

Nevertheless, even after this war, there was a tendency towards Mahanian thinking and there continued to be fervent advocates of the construction of capital ships. The fascist victory in 1922 encouraged great dreams and great ideas, postulating that the Mediterranean

should once again become 'our sea', *mare nostro*. Mussolini had his naval strategists to support these dreams, such as Oscar di Giamberardino (1881–1960), Edoardo Squadrilli and Vittorino Moccagatta, who preached the offensive, the cult of the big battle and the need to annihilate an enemy's fleet to obtain a decisive victory, all of which fitted perfectly into the fascist ideology (Giamberardino 1937; Squadrilli 1937). Alongside these, however, there were also followers of a more cautious approach: Alfredo Baistrocchi, convinced that the next war would again be a war of attrition, underscored the primary task for the Italian navy of defending Italy's maritime commerce; Giuseppe Fioravanzo (1891–1975) tended towards a 'fleet in being' Strategy, which he adapted to mean a fleet free to fight wherever and whenever it wished to, but defensively (Baistrocchi 1924; Fioravanzo 1930–1). Fioravanzo was the main opponent of Giulio Douhet, the air power theorist, in defending the continuing and equal importance of the navy: he argued that navies were still and would continue to be vital for transport, commerce, troop movements and supplies, a role even an air force with much larger aircraft could not hope to usurp in the foreseeable future. Moreover, Fioravanzo defended the need for an integrated use of all three forces in a future major war, 'an integrated war', as he called it. Douhet, by contrast, thought that navies need only be small, with fast ships and submarines to defend the coastlines from enemy attacks at sea, while the main action in future would be in the air (Ferrante 1997: 153–69).

Of the world's other naval powers, only Japan had remained unscathed by the First World War. The Japanese navy leadership were admirers of Mahan, and had his writings translated into Japanese even before the nineteenth century was out, so that his works could be read at all naval academies. The Japanese defeat of the Russian fleet in 1905 seemed to them ample confirmation that Mahan was right. They were convinced that in their rivalry with the USA, what was needed was a major naval battle, for the purpose of which they had to get the US navy to concentrate in one place in the western Pacific. Japanese aviation should then help bring about a defeat of the US navy. For the Japanese naval aviator and politician Minoru Genda (1904–89), this hinged on the creation of aircraft-carriers, from which their aircraft could launch their attack. Genda was not without opponents who disliked this particular form of marriage between air forces and navy, but he prevailed (Budiansky 2003: 257). Japan's grand Strategy in the

1930s and 1940s was a function of its interservice rivalry, the navy drawing it into a conflict with the USA, the army into land warfare in China; the resulting compromise that tried to do both was as spectacularly unsuccessful as the close co-operation between army and navy at Port Arthur and Tsushima in 1904–5 had been successful.

US lessons from the Second World War

As Eric Grove and Geoffrey Till have underscored, 'British and American experience in the Second World War had been quite dissimilar' and so were the images of the utility of navies in the Cold War. The USA had fought and won classic naval battles, while the Royal Navy had been much more focused on the protection of its own naval communications and the interception of enemy ships and trade. The US navy emerged from the Second World War with a Mahanian emphasis on ships on the largest end of the spectrum still going strong, and with decisive naval battles still at the centre of naval education. Aircraft-carriers in particular had been at the centre of the US navy since 1941, and had played a large role in the Pacific theatre. And even among those strategists who had previously believed that a purely naval Strategy could exist independently of land forces, the First World War had sown doubts. By contrast, the Second World War saw the transformation of the battleship into a useful albeit subsidiary weapon, in support of combined operations: this was shown in the successful British attack on the Italian fleet at anchor at Taranto on 11 November 1940, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the US victories at Midway on 4 June 1942 and near the Philippines at Leyte Gulf on 23–26 October 1944 (Grove and Till 1989: 281–83; Till 1982: 109).

The decisive naval battles of the Second World War had above all involved the US navy in the Far Eastern theatre. While some strategists acknowledged that these naval battles had to be seen in the context of submarine warfare against Japanese commercial and military shipping, and the indecisiveness of naval operations before air power brought to bear the ultimate weapon on the war in the Far East, these naval battles led some to insist that the nuclear technological revolution had not changed 'the fundamental principles of sea power' any more than had the arrival of the steamship (Gretton 1965: 4). Indeed, what one US Secretary of War said about the US navy during the

Second World War continued to hold well into the Cold War period, namely that its leaders and spokesmen 'frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet, and the United States Navy the only true Church' – with Trafalgar its Epiphany, one might have added, replaced after the Second World War by the US navy's experience in the Pacific war (q.i. Till 1994b: 197).

The course of the Second World War in Europe, however, and particularly its gruesome air-power dominated finale in the Far East, reinforced the call for 'jointness': the conclusion for most was that it was pointless to think in terms of a 'naval' vs. a 'continental' Strategy. By the end of the Second World War, the battleship had clearly yielded its 'queen-of-the-naval-battlefield' position to the aircraft-carrier, the recognition of the end of an era where one could fantasise about decisions being brought about by navies alone, without land or air dimensions (Clark and Barnes 1966: 63).

Conclusions

While the USA came out of the Second World War still believing in naval battles, the faith in Mahanian ideas had been shaken in all other major players. While Castex's Mahanianism in France survived the First World War, German thinkers urged their superiors to reconsider after their experiences with the Battle of Jutland/Skagerak. By the end of the Second World War, the myth of Trafalgar had paled considerably, and naval thinkers on all sides found themselves confused as to what course to steer. The simplest, bureaucratically logical way was to cleave to earlier configurations where possible and to replace obsolete shipping with as many of the same types as still affordable, or, if one was a rich nation, to try to keep up with the Joneses in naval procurement (which particularly applied to France).

However, the full unfolding of air power that the Second World War had brought, and then the nuclear revolution, imposed new considerations, which only gradually made their way into the particularly long planning and procurement cycles of navies. These considerations we shall discuss in the following chapter.

11 | *Maritime Strategies in the nuclear age*

Come to think of it, I would not put anything on the surface of the ocean – it's too good a target [for nuclear weapons].

(Edward Teller in the mid-1950s, q.i. Till 1982: 183)

The Cold War framework

The interwar period (especially the 1930s) and the Cold War had in common that they were at once characterised by the absence of major war and the ever-present fear of it. The French naval officer Hubert de Moineville rightly commented about the Cold War:

[I]n the state of the world today, and in that unprotected space that is the sea, peace does not really exist. The word is used, mainly as a linguistic convenience, to describe the permanent state of tension in which we live. (Moineville 1982/1983: 9)

What continued in the Cold War was the preoccupation of the *matériel* school with new technologies and the problems of overall strategic analysis in the context of ever new imponderables presented by technological innovations and revolutions. The focus on fleet action was lost in the preoccupation with all these new technological features (Martin 1967: 10). Similarly, specialists accused NATO and successive Cold War governments of lacking a grand Strategy with regard to the employment of naval power (Hattendorf 1982: 59). Sir Peter Gretton (1912–92), who rose to the rank of Admiral and Fifth Sea Lord and upon his retirement from the Royal Navy became a research fellow at Oxford, thought NATO and US Strategy incoherent:

Here we seem to have the Army and Navy preparing for a long war in which reserves could be used, while the Air Force stressed the Strategic Bomber attack … [the scenario of] a long global war still survived [the

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Korean War and the advent of thermo-nuclear weapons] as the main reason for which the expansion programme had been planned, though already the talk of broken-backed wars cast doubt on the whole concept … What, in the meantime, had been the development of strategic thought in NATO naval circles and in particular at the Norfolk headquarters of SACLANT? … none. (Gretton 1965: 34f., 44)

Gretton was not the only critic, as the 'great debate' about NATO's nuclear Strategy of those years showed (Aron 1963b). As one of those SACLANT planners commented, '[t]he "concept" of fighting a nuclear war was inherently incoherent … Meanwhile the armed services had to strive to develop contingency plans for handling the results' of a nuclear exchange. They tried to do their best with a 'surreal' mission.[1]

In the Cold War, the very geography of the world seemed to change, but not just for technological reasons. Obviously, the advent of aircraft had transformed Strategy since the First World War, and in the Cold War, the development of aircraft with the capacity to reach any point on the globe and to remain airborne for more than a day thanks to in-air refuelling began to change the meaning of geographic distances. Missiles did the same.

But changes in the perception of geography occurred also thanks to political changes. In the interwar period the Mediterranean had been of unprecedented importance to Britain on account of the surge of British and imperial shipping through this sea and on through the Suez Canal to Asia (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 446). With the existence of the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean was Britain's lifeline to its empire until 1949, when the Indian subcontinent ceased to be a British colony. Yet the perception of the importance of this line of communication continued even thereafter, as Britain's attempt to secure the Suez Canal in 1956 proved. With the loss of empire, the Mediterranean's importance for Britain evaporated, although the realisation of this took long to sink in. Only in 1967–9 did Whitehall's Defence White Papers draw a line under the history of British Empire and military commitments east of Suez, to refocus on the North Sea and the Atlantic, with only occasional sorties into the Mediterranean, where British forces had their bases in Gibraltar and Cyprus.

[1] Michael MccGwire, letter to the author, 15 August 2008.

A similar reorientation with regard to the Far East took place for France after the loss of Indochina in 1954, while the Mediterranean emphatically remained central to France's maritime Strategy. Both Britain and France have retained individual island possessions and bases scattered throughout the world, the naval mobility to send ships to remote places for disaster relief and potential crises requiring the evacuation of their own nationals. But this is a far cry from their firm military commitments at the height of empire.

The Atlantic played varying roles in US Strategy. From the principal zone through which hostile European forces could navigate to pose a direct threat to the young United States, the Atlantic turned into a protected zone of influence under the Monroe Doctrine, to be left largely to Britain to defend in the two World Wars, while in the Second, the USA concentrated its naval efforts on the Pacific. In the Cold War, the situation changed again, and the USA assumed some of the burden of defending the Atlantic, but also a major role in the Mediterranean and the other open seas between South Atlantic and Pacific.

New interests in the sea developed globally with the discovery of off-shore mineral resources and led to legal, albeit rarely military, disputes. Certain islands remained flashpoints, especially in the waters between Turkey, still expanding in good Ottoman tradition with the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, and Greece, still on the defensive in the tradition of its Byzantine ancestors; between Japan and China; and between China and several other neighbours. A classic instance of island snatching, performed by Argentina with regard to the British-held Falklands Islands in 1982, led to what was perhaps the most significant naval encounter of the post-1945 era, although it would be an exaggeration to call it a '"fleet versus fleet" battle' (Grove 1990: 159). Michael Salewski has called this the last nineteenth-century-style naval war. British–Spanish wrangling over Gibraltar by contrast was kept to a civilised level by mutual membership in the European Union.

As the world population exploded in size, fish-stocks diminished as a result of over-fishing. This led to tensions between Chile, Ecuador and Peru, and at various times to near-war conflicts over fishery rights between Britain and Iceland (the 'Cod Wars' of 1958, 1972–3 and 1975–6, which escalated up to the ramming of ships and cutting of nets) and Canada and Spain (the 'Turbot War' of 1995). The distances

travelled by fishing crews tended to be greater than in previous times. Whaling, too, led to international tensions. Navies assumed new roles in the protection or exclusion of fishing fleets.

Is decisive battle still possible?

Both the British and the US navies continued to prefer a Strategy which, in the context of an overall defensive scenario of Soviet or later Warsaw Treaty Organisation attack, was offensive and 'forward', focusing on areas as close to the enemy's bases as possible, and as far away from one's own coastline (Grove and Till 1989: 281–3).

There was a turning point in this respect in Soviet naval Strategy, when in 1979 the foremost Soviet naval strategist of the Cold War, Fleet Admiral Sergei Georgevich Gorshkov, commander in chief of the Soviet Red Fleet, published his *The Sea Power of the State*. He emphasised that decisive battles had not been frequent in the two World Wars, and that 'Most of the combat clashes of the major forces' in the Second were 'associated with operations against the shore … or to ensure transoceanic or sea communications' (Gorshkov 1979: 11).

Like Gorshkov, Western experts increasingly doubted that a Third World War scenario including major naval battles was realistic. Hedley Bull, the Australian strategist and Oxford don, thought that

between nuclear powers a major war at sea is difficult to envisage … [If forming] part of a 'general war' involving a strategic nuclear exchange between the super-powers … a slow-moving struggle for command of the seas is likely to be rendered pointless before it is underway. There have been speculations that a limited war might be fought at sea by nuclear powers, but the interests at stake in such a conflict would be so vital, especially for the Western powers, that it is hard to conceive that the strategic nuclear threshold would not be crossed. (Bull 1980: 7)

Thus in the nuclear age, the 'decisive battle' school among naval thinkers was soon dying out. It became ever clearer that the tasks of navies had to be seen in conjunction with the tasks of armies and air forces on land, with navies relegated to support roles, albeit crucial or even essential ones. British historians from Michael Howard to Paul Kennedy emphasised in their works the interconnectedness of naval and army actions, best subsumed under Corbett's term of 'maritime

strategy'; they were unconvinced, by contrast, that the navy had much of a role to play in isolation in the 1970s.

The impact of nuclear weapons

When in mid-August 1945 leading members of the Royal Navy leadership put their ideas on paper about the effects of the invention of the nuclear bomb, their views on its impact on the navy were as follows:

- 'The best place to put British nuclear weapons might be in rockets, preferably launched from ships or', thus the extraordinarily foresightful thinking of Professor P.M.S. Blackett, director of naval operational research, 'on submarines, as they were least prone to detection and pre-emption'. Atomic-powered nuclear submarines would be a very desirable acquisition on account of their stealth.
- The possibility was great that if the next war were to begin with nuclear attacks on 'civilian morale' (the British euphemism for the bombing of population centres), then the navy would not have a great role to play.
- Ports, naval bases, naval convoys and large ships would be particularly vulnerable to atomic attacks (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 449).

If the aircraft-carrier had emerged from the Second World War as the new queen of the sea, how did nuclear weapons affect it? Edward Teller, a physicist who helped build the H-bomb, in the 1950s dismissed the aircraft-carrier as useless, being excessively vulnerable in the nuclear age.

It looked to me like quite a good target. In fact, if I project my mind into a time, when not only we, but also a potential enemy, have plenty of atomic bombs, I would not put so many dollars and so many people into so good a target. (q.i. Till 1982: 183)

Teller's view on this matter became widely known and affected the thinking of – at least – Western thinkers about future configurations and missions of navies (Géré 1992: 206). At the same time British admirals, generals and field marshals quarrelled over this point – while Sir John Slessor of the RAF declared the carrier obsolete, the vice-chief of the naval staff, Vice Admiral W.W. Davis, tried to persuade

the British commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, of their continuing value (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 453). France and eventually the USSR also persuaded themselves that carriers had important roles to play outside all-out nuclear war and that it was worth investing in them. In the early 2000s, Britain once more debated a costly two-carrier acquisition programme.

Initially, both the Soviet and Western militaries thought of nuclear weapons as a way of causing much more effective and powerful explosions than with conventional ordnance, and they integrated the new invention into their operational planning in this role. Then they came to see them as a profoundly different weapon, the use of which would make all other forms of war and all other weapons irrelevant. From around the 1960s at the latest, when knowledge of the less obvious effects of nuclear explosions spread among leading service personnel, both Western armies and navies concluded that 'nuclear weapons interfered with good fighting' (Hill 2006: 160). This accounts for conventional proclivities among military planners in the USA from around 1960, while the Soviets first tried to ignore the effects of nuclear explosions on their own personnel, and then, in the late 1970s, were also converted to conventional war alternatives. 'At least up to 1975 the consensus among [Western] naval officers appears to have been that strategic nuclear deterrence was not an element of seapower as such, but a politico-military capability that happened to be most conveniently placed at sea' (Hill 2006: 164). Initially, 'American military and naval thinking had been based on the notion that deterrence required the explicit threat of escalation to the nuclear level. That threat alone was … considered to be sufficient to preclude warfare' until the Korean War came along in 1950. But even then, until the mid-1970s, American naval thinkers had difficulties in fully accepting that other forms of deterrence and limitations on war had to be developed, as wars occurred as frequently in the nuclear age as previously. Nuclear weapons had merely added to its complexity (Hattendorf 2004: 7; see also chapters 17 and 18).

From the 1980s until the early 1990s, Britain's and France's strategic nuclear deterrent became increasingly identified with their nuclear-powered submarines equipped with long-range nuclear missiles, so that the identification of sea power and nuclear weapons became somewhat stronger. British and French navies also had carrier-borne

aircraft capable of firing nuclear missiles. Since the end of the Cold War, however, the British, French and American navies' nuclear dimension has diminished greatly, with the exception of the submarines carrying the 'strategic deterrent', now significantly reduced in numbers. Meanwhile, naval officers of all nuclear powers were happy to keep their ships 'nuclear-free zones', to make them employable in lesser – but more likely – situations.

Command of the sea in the nuclear age?

'Command of the sea' had finally been recognised as unobtainable in the nuclear age, four centuries after Hugo Grotius had put forward this view. Roskill, for one, wrote that it was unreasonable to expect 'complete control'; it would suffice to have 'an ability to pass ships safely across an area of water which may be quite small in extent or may cover many thousands of square miles of ocean … it is far more common for control to be in dispute than undisputed … sporadic attacks will remain a possibility' (q.i. Gardner 2006: 150). The US Admirals Stansfield Turner and Henry E. Eccles proposed a reformulation of the old concept of command of the sea. Turner, writing in 1974, postulated the substitution of the term 'sea control', explaining that:

This change in terminology … is a deliberate attempt to acknowledge the limitations on ocean control brought about by the development of the submarine and airplane … The new term 'Sea Control' is intended to connote more realistic control in limited areas and for limited periods of time … It is no longer conceivable, except in the most limited sense, to totally control the seas for one's own side or to totally deny them to an enemy.

The purpose of all of this was to 'ensure industrial supplies' for one's own side, to transport and deploy, and thereafter reinforce and resupply, one's military forces overseas, to supply allies in war, and to 'provide safety for naval forces in the Projection of Power Ashore role'. In turn, one sought to deny all these abilities to the enemy (q.i. Till 1982: 189f.). Admiral Eccles accordingly broke down 'sea control', as he put it, 'by area and by time':

> *Absolute control (command of the sea)* Complete freedom to operate without interruption. Enemy cannot operate at all.

> *Working control* General ability to operate with high degree of freedom. Enemy can only operate with high risk.
>
> *Control in dispute* Each side operates with considerable risk. This then involves the need to establish working control for limited portions for limited times to conduct specific operations.
>
> *Enemy working control* Position 2 reversed.
>
> *Enemy absolute control (command of the sea)* Position 1 reversed. (q.i. Till 1982: 189)

A NATO study on naval power of March 1969, called the Brosio Study after the then Secretary-General, translated this into the mission of being able 'to control and use the seas throughout the entire conflict spectrum'. The defence of NATO's sea lanes against submarines stood at the centre of this mission (Sokolsky 1989: 310, 314). Yet throughout the Cold War this, and NATO's sea-lift capability in all imaginable circumstances where the theatre of operations would be sea-bound, were secondary to the mission of maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent, meaning nuclear weapons that could be launched and would reach their targets with some certainty, even after one or more NATO countries had been hit by enemy nuclear weapons. And this mission was increasingly conferred upon submarines carrying nuclear-charged missiles (SSBNs).

Increasingly, it was understood that 'command of the sea is relative and partial rather than absolute and general' (Hill 1986: 81). A maritime power would be measured by its ability to use the sea for its own purposes, to deny it to adversaries, and by its reach at sea – regional or global (MccGwire 1976: 15).

Along with command of the sea, the decisive battle fell into disrepute in the nuclear age. No serious naval thinker still imagined in a hyper-Mahanian way that his service could decide war more or less on its own, even though Mahan remained the point of reference of naval thinkers throughout the world, from Italy (Ferrante 1999) to China (Holmes and Yoshihara 2005) and beyond (Rosenberg 2000). As we shall see, this dream passed to some of the air force thinkers. Naval strategists all turned into maritime strategists, that is, to follow Corbett's definitions, they henceforth recognised the importance of jointness, of the closest possible co-operation between navy, air forces and land forces. As the Italian strategist Giamberardino put it in 1947: 'Any particularist and independent concept of each of the three services must be considered as overtaken and arbitrary' (q.i.

Ferrante 1999: 173). This was a jibe addressed not at old-fashioned naval thinkers, but at the air forces, where Douhetian ideas of the third service as a war-winning force lived on (see chapter 12). Subsequently, it was also applied by naval men in several NATO member states as a criticism of NATO's strategies, which until the late 1950s relied so heavily on the American Strategic Air Command's (SAC) ability to destroy the enemy's war effort by striking at his big cities and key infrastructure.

Multiple roles for navies

Nevertheless, Geoffrey Till asserted in 1982 that there was 'little evidence to support the contention that the general idea of a maritime strategy' in the Corbettian sense 'or of sea power itself are moribund matters of interest only to historians' (Till 1982: 239). NATO collectively had very strong navies throughout the Cold War, mainly composed of contingents above all from the USA, Britain and France, with the Netherlands making a disproportionally large contribution for the size of the country. Throughout the Cold War, NATO's naval forces were superior to those of the Warsaw Pact, creating an imbalance inverse to that of the conventional land warfare superiority of WTO forces. But were and are such navies of any use to the West in the nuclear age?

There was a creeping fear that as a whole service, navies might have lost their central role in major war. The Western war scenarios of the earliest years of NATO's existence assumed all-out aggression on the part of the Soviet Union and its satellites (as its allies in Eastern Europe were referred to in the early Cold War) against Western Europe, to be met with strategic nuclear bombardment of the USSR by SAC. Once the USSR had a nuclear arsenal, it was assumed it would equally use all its nuclear weapons. This Doomsday scenario assumed also that war would be short – where, then, could navies bring their weight to bear? As carriers of troops and provisions that would take weeks to arrive in Europe across the Atlantic? As the long-term protectors of commercial shipping or as defenders against repeated attempts of penetration into NATO waters by the enemy? The British navy first realised that in such a scenario it would be redundant, and in the early 1950s pushed the idea that after an initial mutual attack of unprecedented violence and destruction, there

would still be a period of 'broken-backed warfare' in which the land and air forces might be enormously decimated, but in which the navies would come into their own (Baylis 1995: 126–77; Heuser 1997, chs. 1 and 2). This concept that Europe might be resupplied by sea a month and a half after the major nuclear exchange apparently also made sense to naval men in other NATO countries, such as Admiral di Giamberardino of Italy, whose navies might otherwise face the same predicament (Ferrante 1999: 179).

Vice Admiral Sir Peter Gretton commented: 'It seems to me to be hypocritical to talk of preparing to fight a long general war at sea, and to put forward claims for the exercise of maritime strategies in such a war seems absurd' (Gretton 1965: 79). On the other side of the East–West divide, Admiral Gorshkov equally deplored the views of some influential '"authorities" who considered that with the appearance of atomic weapons the Navy had completely lost its value as a branch of the armed forces. According to their views, all of the basic missions in a future war allegedly could be fully resolved without the participation of the Navy' (q.i. Grove and Till 1989: 293).

Even though in the early 1950s, navies desperately sought to retain their role in general war, most naval men were unhappy about thinking exclusively about this scenario, where after a short, intensive nuclear exchange, there might be little left for them to do. In contrast to the Soviet navy, the Royal Navy, the US navy and the French navy had traditions of naval use in limited-war scenarios, which they resurrected even in the nuclear age (Grove 1990: 189). These words of an admiral of the Royal Navy from the nineteenth century applied again from the late 1950s and into the twenty-first century:

I don't think we thought very much about war with a big W. We looked on the Navy more as a World Police Force than as a warlike institution. We considered that our job was to safeguard law and order throughout the world – safeguard civilisation, put out fires on shore, and act as guide, philosopher and friend to the merchant ships of all nations. (q.i. Till 1982: 208)

This thinking came to the fore again in the Cold War (perhaps minus the 'philosophy', not something British military men are inclined towards).

Navies therefore needed new reasons for existing, and these were found in peace, or limited conflicts, rather than in major war. In the Cold War, tasks for navies were thus described by Gretton as:

[P]atrols of ships and maritime aircraft to prevent gun-running and the infiltration of saboteurs and guerrillas, of flag-showing visits to troubled areas, and of the ability to land seamen, marines and soldiers speedily and at short notice to deal with civil unrest and disturbance – police tasks which the sailor has performed with discretion for a hundred years and for which he is eminently suitable. (Gretton 1965: 80)

Gretton contrasted outdated and remaining tasks for the navies of NATO powers. Outdated principles included the two-nation stand-ard in peace time, as well as the unique naval task of fighting against the enemy's fleet. Enduring tasks included those of protecting one's own land from invasion, and equally one's shipping (shared with the air force), amphibious operations, advanced bases and the ability to attack enemy shipping and bases (Gretton 1965: 24–8).

For a reasonable statement of what a second-tier power could aspire to as general and even geographically transferable principles, three French pieces furnish good examples. One is by the French Admiral Adolphe Auguste Marie Lepotier (1898–1978), prolific au-thor on naval/maritime Strategy from the 1930s until the 1960s, here with a piece dating from 18 January 1949 on 'eternal missions' of the navy: to retain 'freedom of action' and strategic mobility for one's own forces, to secure supplies from overseas which of course included the need to protect one's own ports and coasts, the ability to engage in joint operations with or without allies, to carry 'out naval air oper-ations against the territory or the sea communications of the enemy', and direct defence (q.i. Géré 1992: 188).

The second example is an anonymous essay published in 1955, which contrasts the eternal principles and the variables for the particular case of France. Permanent tasks are listed as:

– the protection of maritime communications; – French presence in over-seas territories; – support at all times of the policies of the government; – in times of war, operations at sea and along the coasts in cooperation with the other services and with allied nations. Currently this last mission is carried out in the framework of the Atlantic Pact. There is no change that could question the need for the navy … As long as there are other surface ships

that carry supplies and fuel necessary for the armies and for populations, we need military surface ships alongside them to protect them.

The variables by contrast were identified as 'the proportions between different categories of vessels' within a navy 'and the proportions between naval and air forces. The technical progress of arms is the essential cause of these changes' (q.i. Géré 1992: 186f.). At the same time, Vice Admiral Pierre Barjot argued that naval power is subtler and more applicable in limited-war scenarios than air power.

Today, air forces are prisoners of weapons of mass destruction … This will be increasingly so in the future … Air warfare is 'all or nothing'. By contrast, the navy allows nuances. In limited wars, the navy can intervene where strategic air power runs the risk of setting fire to the world. If strategic air power is a weapon of intimidation, its effects cannot be calibrated, and it may be nailed to the ground while the navy retains the spectrum of its possibilities … The navy offers the possibility … to enter into a war or not, and to calibrate political interventions. The navy is a factor of peace. (Barjot 1955: 293f.)

Despite its Socialist Realism and scientific Marxism-Leninism, the Soviet Red Fleet in some aspects– such as the acquisition of aircraft-carriers – sought to rival the USA, suggesting that national pride and rivalry with America prevailed over any ideology-specific deductions about the uses of naval forces in the furtherance of international socialism. Decisive differences from US preferences persisted, as a result of the geographic-climatic dilemmas that have confronted Russian navies for centuries, revolving around the problems of access to the open sea and ice-free waters and the need to maintain four fleets. But the parallels between Gorshkov's limited war/Cold War use for the navy – the support of friendly regimes and revolutionary movements worldwide – and those put forward by, say, the UK's Admiral Gretton for limited/Cold War scenarios are striking (Gretton 1965; Gorshkov 1979; Till 1982: 68–74). Gorshkov's book introduced a new tone into Soviet strategic writing. His list of peacetime roles for the Soviet navy dwelt particularly on its role in limited wars (Gorshkov 1979). Hitherto, it had been dominated by the concept of East–West tensions as a continuous strife, in which even peaceful coexistence was different from peace in that it equalled ideological strife which, according to Marxist-Leninist historical necessity, had to be won ultimately by

communism. The Soviet military and political leadership did not want a Third World War, on the contrary, ever since the Great Patriotic War of 1941–5, they had hoped fervently that it could be avoided. If it did come, however, the USSR must 'win', whatever that meant. But until the 1970s it seemed that Soviet military writers were not allowed to ponder the concept of limited war. From then on, Soviet fleet exercises, especially Okean 70, which included even Cuba, indicated that the USSR was developing a new rationale for its navy outside that of an all-out East–West conflict. Again, close parallels between Eastern and Western naval thinking are evident when Russian Admiral S.E. Zakharov wrote in the 1970s:

Soviet military doctrine … recognises the possibility of the outbreak of local wars which take place without the use of nuclear weapons. In this [kind of war] Soviet military doctrine allots an important place to armed battle on the sea, which could acquire an enormous strategic significance. (q.i. Till 1982: 184)

In the West, some experts questioned the role of navies in an age of air power with global reach. In the words of Rear Admiral Richard Hill, it was said in the Cold War, 'with some justification, that the naval staffs of the West should get down on their knees nightly to thank their Maker for the Soviet Navy' (Hill 2006: 166). Once the USSR had disappeared, one *enfant terrible* even argued for the abolition of the US navy, his tongue only partly in his cheek (q.i. Hattendorf 2006: 10).

But great-power navies could claim roles in more limited conflicts. Even without participation in fighting, their role might be considerable, said strategic theorist Eric Grove:

Their presence can act to set the boundaries for a conflict by demonstrating the willingness of larger powers to intervene if things get out of control. They may be used to exert pressure on one or both sides to accept a cease-fire, especially in a protracted conflict in which neither side can clearly win. Similarly, the presence of one major power's naval forces may neutralize the activities of the other by the demonstration of the potential capacity to disrupt any planned intervention. (Grove 1990: 218)

Navies have the advantage over land forces that they can be brought to crisis zones – near the sea – fairly quickly, can intervene but

transform themselves again from 'gladiators to helpful bystanders, and back again with little need to delay or reconfigure'. They can be 'extricated so much more easily than their land … equivalents' if 'things go wrong' (Till 1994b: 180, 190). Navies could thus limit the risk of escalation. Paul Nitze, US Secretary of the Navy 1963–7, was a key proponent of this view (Grove and Till 1989: 298).

Navies were quick to claim their place in the 'low intensity conflicts' of the Cold War, if only to transport, supply and evacuate their countries' ground forces, but also in the range of operations well short of war that involve coastal patrolling to control smuggling and illegal immigration, to protect against piracy or guard offshore installations (Hill 1986: 111–31). After the end of the Cold War, John Hattendorf aptly summarised the multiple roles of navies, in a 'joint' context. In wartime, the focus of 'the military element in maritime strategy' would be to establish control of strategically important parts of the sea, and use them for one's own purposes. Such 'control' can take a range of forms: it can be 'general or limited, absolute or merely governing, widespread or local, permanent or temporary'. Once some degree of control is achieved, the navy's tasks in war are:

- Protecting and facilitating one's own and allied merchant shipping and military supplies at sea.
- Maintaining safe passage for shipping through restricted waters and access to ports and harbours.
- Denying commercial shipping to an enemy.
- Protecting the coast and offshore resources.
- Acquiring advanced bases.
- Moving and supporting troops and advanced bases.
- Gaining and maintaining local air and sea control in support of air and land operations.

In the tradition of the 'fleet in being' thinkers, Hattendorf acknowledged the latent importance of navies in peace and war, as 'the foundation upon which the diplomatic and policing role rest' (Hattendorf 2000: 236–8f.).

At any rate, after the arrival of aircraft, navies could no longer be seen as a country's 'first line of defence', as the US navy was described in Mahan's age. Nor could they be presented as the only instruments of maritime power and the ability to project it. A case thus had to be

made each time for the use of naval assets as opposed to alternative means equally capable of achieving any particular mission.

Modern 'gunboat diplomacy', power projection and conventional deterrence

Another buzzword was that of 'power projection' to denote naval peacetime roles, especially the naval transport of troops and aircraft and anything else around the world, and diplomacy underpinned by naval deployments, up to and including the threat of limited force (United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence 1957: para. 37), formerly subsumed under 'gunboat diplomacy'. As Captain Stephen Roskill noted:

The functions of our maritime forces in an amphibious expedition [in which the navy carries troops to another shore] differ considerably from those of the forces employed on mercantile convoy work. In the latter case their duties end with the safe arrival of the convoy in port; but in the former case they must continue to support and assist the army after it has landed, and continue to maintain the maritime control on which success on land hinges. (q.i. Gardner 2006: 154)

In the 1930s, deterrence became linked to air power by the British, and after 1945 it became the foundation of British, US and then NATO nuclear Strategy. Nuclear deterrence was initially a concept alien to strategists from other NATO member states. The Italian ex-naval officer Romeo Bernotti (1877–1974), for example, in his ruminations of 1954 on the form that a Third World War would take, could not conceive of this role for nuclear weapons. To him, nuclear weapons were a means of destruction, and would be used as such in a future conflict, in a way that deprived 'winning' of any real sense (Bernotti 1954; Ferrante 1999: 175). Admittedly, both declaratory and operational NATO Strategy at the time had little but destructive aims. 'Massive retaliation' emphasised the use of nuclear weapons both on the battlefield, where battlefield nuclear weapons were becoming available, both for naval and land use, and for strategic bombardment as an immediate response to aggression. However, the corresponding NATO Strategy document put deterrence first, and there was an underlying conviction on the part of key NATO and member state

decision-makers on this subject that this emphasis on massive and ubiquitous use of nuclear weapons would enhance deterrence (Heuser 1997, ch. 2).

In the mid-1960s, Sir Peter Gretton was emphasising the role of the navy in military interventions in limited wars outside Europe, a line of argument which declined in Britain after the government decision at the end of that decade to cut her commitments to areas east of Suez. In 1980, Hedley Bull developed James Cable's theme of 'gunboat diplomacy' in situations short of war, even though Bull rejected the term in view of its historical association with the 'coercion of weak states by strong ones'. Navies were used in the Cold War to support friends and clients, coerce enemies, neutralise 'similar activities by other naval powers, [to exert] a more diffuse influence in politically ambiguous situations in which even one's own objectives may be uncertain, or merely [to advertise] one's own sea power or "showing the flag"'.

Moreover, sea power could serve '[a]s an instrument of diplomacy', where it had 'certain classical advantages vis-à-vis land power and, more recently, air power'. These included, first, flexibility: 'a naval force can be sent and withdrawn, and its size and activities varied, with a higher expectation that it will remain subject to control than is possible when ground forces are committed'. After several extended wars of decolonisation and the American experience of Vietnam, Western powers had become reluctant to use 'ground forces in contested areas of the Third World' for fear that these could 'lead to uncontrollable involvements' (Bull 1980: 8).

The second advantage was that of visibility (Luttwak 1974: 14). The third Bull called 'universality and pervasiveness', the ability of navies to get to any part of the oceans even in the absence of bases. This was something aircraft could do in principle, but even with in-air refuelling, they could not visibly circle an area for days, let alone weeks or months.

The flexibility of navies is valued because of the fear of nuclear war and the belief that there is less risk of unintended expansion of a war when only naval forces are involved than where ground or air forces are used – partly for reasons of command and control, and partly because destruction confined to the sea is bound to be less than destruction which spreads to the land.

Navies could be visibly deployed without actually using force – exploiting the latent threat of the use of force, an important instrument of Cold War diplomacy (Bull 1980: 8). This theme was developed especially by Edward Luttwak, who from the 1970s became a much-listened-to guru on Strategy in the USA. In *Political Uses of Sea Power* (1974), he developed his 'theory of suasion' in relation to naval activities. He divided 'suasion' into active and latent. Active 'suasion', he argued, could be either supportive (of an ally) or coercive (of an adversary), the latter of which could be either positive (compellent) or negative (deterrent). Latent 'suasion' again could be deterrent or supportive (Luttwak 1974: 1ff.).

Luttwak made the argument, previously developed by Pierre M. Gallois (see chapters 12 and 13), that no force can [per]'suade' in the absence of a willingness to carry out the latent threat if necessary. This is the central problem with an incredible threat made in the context of deterrence: 'To speak softly while carrying a big stick may be less effective as a deterrent than to make a firm, overt commitment to use a rather smaller stick.' This problem is linked, he argued, to the fact that governments address multiple audiences, which he called the 'inherent indirection' of the 'suasive' measure: 'while the U.S. Sixth Fleet may be continuously deterring Russian and Arab moves against American interests as well as reinforcing the Alliance, it may also be giving unintended encouragement to Israeli activism in a manner inimical to the interests of the United States' (Luttwak 1974: 12f.).

Gunboat diplomacy – whether under this term or any other – was practised mainly by the USA in the Cold War; other states resorted to island snatching if these were close to their own territorial waters, in the hope of extending their geographic possessions. Hedley Bull rightly observed that this expansion of Soviet naval activity, including the expansion of its navy, in the 1970s led to a change in the opportunities available to the United States, which had truly dominated the oceans since the end of the Second World War. From the 1970s until the end of the Cold War, the USA had to face the possibility that the Soviet Union would neutralise American naval deployments by creating a naval counter-presence nearby; the USA could not hope to dominate situations of concern to the USSR as unilaterally as it had done in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Bull 1980: 9). Yet the USA continued to use its naval

forces for military purposes, such as the seizing of the island of Grenada in 1983 and the bombing of Libya in 1986. The Soviet Union by contrast had rarely if ever used its navy quite in this way (Grove 1990: 158). While the Soviet navy had not been created as an instrument of peacetime policy, it began to operate as one in the 1980s, when it was used at times to deter US attempts to stifle anti-colonial movements.

Blockade and protection of 'lines of communication' in the nuclear age

One of Stephen Roskill's lessons of the Second World War was the affirmation of the utility of the blockade, 'one of the chief means whereby a nation which is stronger at sea may be able to impose its will on one which, though stronger on land, is not self-supporting in food and raw materials'. Despite the German civilian casualties produced by naval blockade in the First World War, Roskill thought this 'a relatively humane form of war' albeit slow to take effect (q.i. Gardner 2006: 153). Commercial blockade had been less effective in the Second than in the First World War. Germany had made comprehensive preparations for it in the interwar period, with immense efforts to substitute raw materials available for those only accessible through maritime imports. During the Second World War, land conquests provided it with new sources of raw materials (Gardner 2006: 156). The Cold War would see blockades applied in many instances – usually affecting civilians rather than the regimes with whom the blockading powers disagreed.

In the East–West conflict of the Cold War, blockades took on a new dimension, too: no longer was blockade a matter of preventing ships from leaving ports (close blockade); it became a matter of preventing Warsaw Pact fleets from accessing the Mediterranean and Atlantic (distant blockade). In turn, for the Soviet Union and its allies, Strategy revolved around preventing NATO ships from gaining a foothold in the Baltic which it had in peacetime through the navies of Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany. Planning revolved around three areas: the Turkish Straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) which were the sole exit from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean; the waters north of Norway, south of Svalbard (Spitsbergen) that are largely ice-bound in winter; and the exit from the Baltic Sea to the North Sea through

Kattegat and Skagerrak. US Admiral Stansfield Turner preferred to call this not blockade, but 'sortie control':

Bottling up an opponent in his ports or on his bases … Today's blockade seeks destruction of individual units as they sortie. If we assume an opponent will be in control of the air near his ports, sortie control tactics must primarily depend on submarines and mines … a most economical means of cutting off a nation's use of the seas or ability to interfere. (q.i. Till 1982: 187)

Concomitantly, the need for the protection of 'lines of communication' (LOC) was still a key concept of Cold War naval Strategy, even though one can hardly disagree with Sir Peter Gretton when he wrote:

When I read on the naval recruiting posters 'Join the Navy and help to protect Britain's Sea Lanes', my heart sinks for another ignorant officer has been allowed to perpetuate the old aimless catchword … It is *ships* which must be protected, not lines drawn across charts. The core of the problem of sailing a ship or ships from one port to another in war is to control the slice of water in which the ship floats, as well as the air above and the depths below. Any wider degree of control is welcome but not essential. (q.i. Gardner 2006: 156)

Strategies for second-tier powers

If even Americans had to concede that 'command of the sea' was little more than an ideal, this was clearer still to the second-tier powers, among which Britain had to count itself soon after the end of the Second World War. Most Britons failed to recognise this prior to the Suez Crisis of 1956 and pretended that Britain continued to be a global player until the late 1960s, when she relinquished her commitments east of Suez. Yet Britain and the British continued to have a disproportionate degree of influence in naval matters. After Suez, British naval capacity exceeded the NATO requirements for operations in the North Sea, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, focusing increasingly on the defence of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap in the North Sea (Hill 2006: 161). In NATO, the Royal Navy played a role second only to the (admittedly, much, much larger) US navy. It is also true for intellectual input: the majority of widely read writers on naval

Strategy of the twentieth century have been Britons. John Hattendorf, doyen of US naval educators, listed as the most famous (in the USA!) in the latter part of the twentieth century Laurence Martin, Edward Luttwak, Ken Booth and Sir James Cable – of these, only Luttwak is not British (Hattendorf 2000: 203).

Britain had become a medium power, as Admiral Hill rightly found, and he built on this realisation an explicit analysis of maritime Strategy for medium powers. Medium powers he defined as powers that lie between the self-sufficient superpowers and the insufficient small powers. Examples he had in mind included France, India, Japan, Australia, Israel and Britain, acknowledging special historical baggage, self-perception and other cultural peculiarities (Hill 1986).

In the tradition of political science and international relations, Hill used power in two senses, that of a state capable of taking action and that of 'the ability to influence events'. Such power in the latter sense, he argued, was generated by goods and money, by knowledge and ideas, and by arms.

The first is intrinsically desirable, and provides the base for others forms of power, but is often operationally unusable; the second is powerful but slow-acting, not always controllable; the third dangerous and either menacing or violent. They may be thought an unholy trio, and they are certainly not the three Graces, but they are the means by which states seek to protect their vulnerabilities and promote their interests. (Hill 1986: 7)

As 'maritime power is the ability to use the sea' (Hill 1986: 48) he explained a state's Strategy as a balancing act between the means of power available, the degree of the state's control over them and over the situation in general (including influence on allies) and resulting from both the ability to initiate and sustain policies.

Having forged a permanent alliance with the USA in NATO, and having lost almost all her colonies, Britain gave up entirely her balance-of-power tradition. By 1945 at the earliest and 1991 at the latest, the greatest power on earth was the USA, and 'realist' as well as 'balance-of-power' logic should have led Britain to counterbalance America, as France attempted to do under de Gaulle in the late 1960s and again, briefly, after the end of the Cold War. At least Britain should, according to this 'realist' theory, have refrained from bandwaggoning. But Britain did no such thing. Instead, Britain remained the loyal ally of the USA.

Alliance Strategies

One difference between the Cold War and previous eras concerned alliances: they were structured and institutionalised as never before. In the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and in NATO, member states subjected their own Strategy-making to that of the alliance as a whole, albeit to varying degrees. An Italian commentator saw in NATO the 'end of the military-national identity' of Italy, and illustrated the extreme subordination of all Italian strategic debates, naval or otherwise, under the imperative of alliance cohesion (Ferrante 1999: 171–88). The Federal Republic of Germany had no Strategy of its own, to the point where its Defence White Books (Papers) were derivatives of NATO strategies. Japan, too, lost any Strategy of its own, and any offensive, aggressive edge, tied to the USA in a bilateral relationship. The disappearance of aggressive intentions and planning among those three countries was one of the best results of the Second World War, and it led to a substantial down-scaling of the roles and potential of their navies.

There was a certain degree of freeloading on the part of NATO member states in ostensibly and rhetorically putting the Alliance first in all they were doing, as Admiral J.R. Hill commented (Hill 1986: 81), but perhaps it was only France, and temporarily Greece, that truly managed to optimise their own selfish state interests while benefiting from Alliance membership and the coverage of the American nuclear umbrella, a commitment not actually spelled out in the Treaty itself (Heuser 1997: 15–25).

The French discovered early on that they had problems with the Atlantic Alliance. Even on the eve of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, Admiral Lepotier reminded an all-services French military audience of the disadvantages of alliances, very accurately foreseeing many of the problems that would bedevil NATO throughout the decades to come. States belonging to a geographically spread-out alliance would have divergent interests in any theatre of war. Each ally would put himself (and any colonial possessions) first *in extremis*. Each would think about his national prestige when command posts and headquarters were assigned, the states with great naval traditions being particularly keen to protect their reputations (Géré 1992: 188). Indeed, France's Strategy, going back to the eve of the First World War, of opting for an alliance with a Western naval great power in order to concentrate her own naval efforts on the Mediterranean,

soon after the conclusion of the North Atlantic Alliance brought her into conflict with her two main naval allies, who had other views on that area. While for France the Mediterranean was above all a north–south line of communication with her North African possessions, but also a theatre she wanted to dominate as local great power, for Britain it was until the late 1960s an east–west line of communication to her empire beyond Suez. For the USA, it was a supply route to southern Europe in an East–West general war scenario; consequently, the USA made it increasingly clear that it intended to be 'top dog' in the Mediterranean.

As a Briton, Hill had every reason to criticise successive British governments for their extreme submissiveness in their alliance with the USA (so clearly in contrast with France's stance), and he rightly underscored the strategic cost of alliance. While it does indeed act as a force multiplier on the one side (keeping a state's back free), it comes at the price of independence in many matters of defence decision-making.

Dependence represents a diminution of power not an accretion of it. The state's interests become less identifiable as they become less independently defensible. Freedom of action, restricted in the military sphere, becomes more and more constrained in diplomacy, and finally in economic matters. (Hill 1986: 222)

What this criticism of dependence on an alliance and especially on one major ally does not deal with is the very limited influence that medium powers, let alone small powers, can exercise in an anarchic world without permanent alliances. The same holds true for a world without generally respected norms, which on the one hand restrict the freedom of action of states, but which on the other clarify who is acting unlawfully, and who by contrast deserves the solidarity and protection of the other states. This last point, although only of limited reliability, contrasted the performance of the UN with that of the League of Nations in the interwar period, and in the eyes of others is the greatest *acquis* of the post-1945 period.

Geoffrey Till has underscored the utility of navies in servicing alliance systems. They are useful in joint exercises, and helpful for friendship visits and on-board receptions, the pretty side of the coin of gunboat diplomacy (Till 1994b: 191). But one must go further and

recognise that alliances alone, permanent ones or ones at least for the 'foreseeable future', allowed Britain, France and Japan (not to mention Germany or Italy) to escape from the predicament of second-tier powers. And this is the assumption that they had to face several other powers alone, with two-nation standard navies, which either burdened them with intolerable military expenses or led Germany and Japan to such foolish acts of (supposedly preventive) aggression in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Change of world-views and principles in conducting international affairs

Power projection has been widely seen as acceptable even after 1945. By contrast, the perception has disappeared from naval Strategy writing that it is legitimate to start wars, especially large-scale wars. It has been eclipsed by the concomitant development of international law since the Briand–Kellogg Pact of 1928 that outlawed the use of aggressive war as a legitimate instrument of politics.

Hedley Bull for one drew attention to the change not only of international law but also of (corresponding) mentality since Mahanian times, when the great naval strategists developed their theories. While Mahan – like Frederick II of Prussia – had had no hesitations about advocating aggression as a Strategy for the USA, with the aim of increasing its possessions, 'States today no longer use sea power to seize colonies; they experience inhibitions, unknown in Mahan's time, in overtly coercing weak states; and they do not describe their actions as aggression.' Indeed, he argued, towards the end of the Cold War:

Today no international order can be viable that is not based on a wider consensus than can be found among the Western powers, or between these powers and the Soviet Union. A consensus will have to be sought that embraces the Third World, whose alienation from the present international order cannot be brought to an end without a radical redistribution – not merely … of wealth and resources, but also of political and military power. The great powers' pursuit of the traditional form of global naval ascendancy, viewed by the Third World as the source of its historical subjection and a bulwark of its present status of dependence, flies in the face of this requirement. (Bull 1980: 11)

Bull, who ended his career as an Oxford don, was not simply an isolated example of views in the ivory towers of think tanks and universities. In the USA, the Brookings Institution argued in 1977 that military power rarely achieved lasting political results and such traditional forms of domination were outdated. Such arguments came to the fore periodically in debates about the structure of the US navy, especially the size of its carrier fleet (Pay 1994). Despite some overall force reductions, the US navy thus robustly survived the demise of the Mahanian 'decisive battle' scenario, still strong in the first half of the Cold War. The 'power projection' argument is underpinned variously with the need to pursue US interests (in the language of US Republicans) or world order (in the language of President George H.W. Bush, but also the US Democrats). The debate on the number of carriers the USA needs is thus a small mirror of debates about America's place in the world and the shape which America would like the world to have, just as Strategy is a mirror of views of the world and the use of force which the writer on Strategy sees as legitimate or at least justifiable.

Conclusions

Naval Strategy has almost always been intimately connected with land Strategy, while the opposite cannot be said. As Corbett correctly noted, naval Strategy was ultimately always about the access to and control of land, with the seas being means of transport of goods and men, defence of transport, attack and defence of littoral areas or points or sea passages.

Geography dominated naval Strategy, while it only affected tactics in land and air warfare, Strategy less so. But while anybody could have a use for armies, a limited number of states had access to the sea. Long – and not ice-bound – coasts are needed to make a navy a key element of overall Strategy, or even one equal or superior to the other services. As a direct function of geography, successive German states or indeed France could simply never aspire to 'command of the sea' in the way in which island states and states with many geographic characteristics in common with them could – and these are finite in number: in different ages, Spain, Portugal, Britain, the USA and Japan. Some island states, surprisingly for geo-strategists, never tried their hand at it – the Philippines, the Indonesian islands before

Dutch conquest, the Malay peoples, Madagascar or Sri Lanka might have played the role of a Venice or Genoa, but emphatically did not. Russia's access to the sea has been hampered by geography and concomitant climate to this day, and the Ottoman Empire could never dominate more than the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The constellations were finite, and so were the options.

The change from sail to steam was more of a revolution than the slow introduction of and adaptation to gunpowder – at any rate, it occurred in a far shorter span of time. This resulted in the emergence of two interpretational patterns in naval Strategy, the historical and *matériel* schools. The first tended to demonstrate a fundamental unchanging geographic pattern of naval warfare, while the latter emphasised change through technology and the need constantly to adapt Strategy. Both schools included believers in the centrality of naval battle ('Mahanians'), much in keeping with the offensive, battle-centric spirit of the age. However, both also had proponents of more indirect naval pressure on adversaries, such as the *guerre de course* (supposedly the French tradition) and blockade, or the fleet in being, even though throughout history the British and the French in particular had followed each of these strategies at different times, sometimes simultaneously.

In the late nineteenth century 'Mahanians' liked to see navies as able to win wars almost on their own, with ground forces relegated to secondary, albeit not wholly dispensable, importance. They equally believed in the centrality of decisive naval battles. In this, they foreshadowed the belief of later air power strategists that their service alone could be the war-winning weapon. A similar claim would later be made more legitimately for nuclear weapons, which each of the services would try to acquire to protect its claim to a major – if not the decisive – role in a Third World War.

Other nineteenth-century strategists saw the practical importance of great power deterrence and gunboat diplomacy to settle issues in one's favour without big battles. Navies, as von der Goltz and Corbett thought, might decide wars through the imposition of blockades that could leave the strangled societies begging for peace. In practice this did not happen, as such populations rarely have the means, or even will, directly to bring about a change in their governments' policies, as their governments are seen as only defence against the evil forces starving them (Chuter 1997).

The advent of nuclear weapons initially brought into question the very need for navies in a future all-out nuclear war, likely to be over too soon for navies to fully assume their protective or (trans-Atlantic) transport roles. In such a context it was really only the nuclear-powered submarine with nuclear missiles (SSBNs) that gave navies a role. From the second half of the Cold War, Navies reinvented themselves, so that their foremost *raison d'être* was no longer major war, but anything short of it, from gunboat diplomacy to all sorts of more limited contingencies. With the exception of the SSBN (and the role of denying Soviet SSBNs access to the North Sea and the Atlantic), the US, British and French navies became predominantly support services for air and ground forces, whom they transported to the theatres of operations and kept supplied and nursed if there were casualties. These navies substituted for the bases in colonies or on allied territory which could become unavailable over time. With the exception of roles in alliance contexts played by several navies – notably the Dutch, Canadian and Australian navies and the Japanese Self-Defence Forces – none of the other navies have seriously developed or maintained capacities going beyond their own regional waters, and roles beyond equally local, traditional ones.

If in our world – where globalisation began in 1492 – it is increasingly difficult politically to keep one's head down and pay attention only to regional issues, this has implications for alliance policies. From the time of the Washington Naval Treaty, or at the latest from the Second World War, Britain, which had come close to 'commanding the sea' in the nineteenth century, recognised the importance of close and continuing co-operation with the superpower USA. Successive British governments of the second half of the twentieth century thought – in the words of a particularly influential British diplomat, Sir William Strang (1951) – that 'We have in fact no alternative but to work with them' (q.i. Grove and Till 1989: 274). This is a view likely to dominate Britain's military policies in the twenty-first century, unless the USA one day decides to cut Britain loose. Other states aspired to a position like Britain's in the nineteenth century. America was one of them (succeeding in taking Britain's place in the twentieth century); Japan and the USSR were partially and temporarily successful. No others came near, trapped as they were in their respective geographic boundaries and concerns about land warfare on other fronts. France, like Britain, had to concede

the need to form a lasting alliance, with the United Kingdom, or the USA or both.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, 'Mahanian' big naval battles are difficult to imagine, while many of Corbett's views still stand up very well: all military action at sea has an element of force projection onto land, and necessarily requires some form of 'jointness', that is, co-operation between naval and other forces (whether these be marines, naval air arms or the separate services). Fleets in being – generally, smaller fleets, whether mere coastal defence navies or blue-water capable formations – have many times proved their worth as either as 'risk factors' in a Tirpitzian sense, that is, as forces that tie down a certain number of enemy forces, or as deterrents to piracy (Hattendorf 2000: 260).

The former can be seen as an enduring factor, while piracy as a factor in naval operation has fluctuated. It is on the rise again in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, so that policing, protection of shipping (but only against individual assaults, not on the scale on which Allied shipping had to be defended against German submarines in the two World Wars) and coastal defence tasks are eminently topical. Medium-sized and small navies are growing in number in Latin America, Africa and Asia, navies that would have little use for Mahanian ideas. However, the growing navies of India and China may prove exceptions. The navies of the Permanent Five in the UN Security Council, especially the self-designated 'world policemen' the USA, Britain and France, are likely to be involved more in the 'management of turmoil' (Geoffrey Till) than in the sorts of operations that were at the centre of their training and thinking (albeit not their operations) for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In general, Till early on predicted rightly that the post-Cold War world would see a shift of the tasks of Western navies away from 'blue water naval operations' (especially 'securing control of the sea' or the protection of shipping against large-scale and systematic commerce raiding by enemy military vessels), towards what the Americans began to call 'littoral warfare', the projection of power ashore (Till 1994a: 179). But, as the wide-angle perspective of this book suggests, that is not likely to be the final shift in the long and fluctuating history of maritime warfare.

Air Power and nuclear Strategy

12 | *War in the third dimension*

Whoever is master of the air will be master of the world.

(General Jean-Henri Jauneaud, q.i. Artzet 1999: 47)

[F]light … is still so new, so beautiful … so swift, that its value in peace and war … is bound to be somewhat magnified … [T]he result is that we tend to ascribe to it boundless potentialities and to reject other implements of war as outmoded. We are under the sway of a dogma of innovation, just as blind and as dangerous as that [claiming] there is nothing essentially new in war.

(Bernard Brodie 1942: 193)

Child and grandchild of naval Strategy

We have seen that writing on naval warfare differed in many points from that on land warfare. Air Strategy emerged in most ways as the child of naval or maritime Strategy, and much less of thinking on land warfare. The main tenet inherited from the land Strategy thinkers was the Clausewitzian war aim of 'imposing one's will upon the enemy'.

The inheritance from naval thinking was both much larger and more detailed. The three crucial bequests from naval writing to air power theory were:

- the debate about whether the navy's (or as it might be the air force's) actions should be subordinated to the needs of land warfare, which was essentially the argument of Corbett;
- the claim that the navy (or then, the air force) could win a war more or less on its own, mainly in a central and decisive naval battle (or strategic air campaign);
- the perceived possibility of using the navy (or later, the air force) to circumvent the enemy's strongest or hardest part, his military forces, and carry the war directly to the enemy's vital but softest

part, his civilian populations in his big cities. While the overall aim of advocates of this route – through blockade or city bombing – was to defeat the enemy state, not to annihilate his population in a genocidal fashion, a Social Darwinist element resonated in this thinking.

Some concepts – such as command of the sea/command of the air, sea power/air power – could be transposed one to one. Other translation of ideas from naval and maritime Strategy to air Strategy included cross-overs and mergers of the ideas of several 'schools' on maritime Strategy. At times, the genealogy of ideas can be explicitly traced, as was particularly true for the writers on general Strategy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and their influence on naval/maritime Strategy thinkers. But with the growth of formal educational curricula and cheaply available specialist periodicals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ideas spread in ways that elude specific tracing. Some were 'in the air': when finding in somebody's writing on air Strategy traces of a previous author's or school's ideas, we often cannot prove that these were consciously assimilated. In some cases a certain idea may well have been re invented, rediscovered. In others, two individuals, dealing with similar questions, having read similar things, may independently have hit upon very similar answers.

The beginnings of air power

It took centuries of writing about war before some writers began to focus on Strategy – as nexus of the use of force for political ends. Writing on maritime Strategy in relation to political purpose only took off with the age of steam. By contrast, in the case of air warfare, all these developments were squeezed into a very short time indeed, as most major ideas on air warfare were produced within four decades of the Wright Brothers' first heavier-than-air flight in 1903, only three years after the first *Zeppelin* airship or 'dirigible'. It has been claimed 'that almost every basic tactical and strategic application for air power had been tried out, at least experimentally, by the end of the 1914–18 War' (J.W.R. Taylor, q.i. Wells 2000: 23). This is almost true, with the exception of Soviet air-landing operations of the late 1920s (Sterrett 2007: 8). Something similar can be said for air power

Strategy: most of its possible variants had been articulated by the time the Second World War broke out. If some proved inadequate thanks to the still limited technology available, the ideas themselves would prove resilient to these misadventures and flourish once technology caught up, in turn paving the way for most of the key arguments of nuclear Strategy.

Even in 1893, a British Royal Engineer, Major J.D. Fullerton, told an international meeting of military engineers in Chicago that the future development of airborne vehicles meant as great a revolution as that brought about by gunpowder, that future war might start with battles in the air and end with 'the arrival of the aerial fleet over the enemy capital'; meanwhile, the 'command of the air' would be crucial to obtain, as without it, armies on the ground would be at the enemy's mercy (q.i. Wells 2000: 7). Essentially, he had put his finger on both the future 'strategic' and 'tactical' roles of air forces, which we shall discuss below. The 'tactical' use for the support of army or navy was the gathering of information, which the French, for example, had done even during the wars of the French Revolution with the help of hot-air balloons (see also the illustration on the front cover of this book). Yet this function took a while to gain acceptance: on the eve of the First World War, General Douglas Haig was still dismissive of the potential of aircraft, instead putting his faith in cavalry (q.i. Wells 2000: 9). Others by contrast – such as Friedrich von Bernhardi – quickly grasped the possibilities of air warfare: 'Even the air must be conquered; dirigible balloons and flying machines will form quite a new feature in the conduct of war' (Bernhardi 1912b, I: 15).

More important still was the fact that with air power, war would become the business of the people – the ordinary non-combatant citizens of the states involved in any war – in a way neither Guibert nor Clausewitz could have foreseen. As H.G. Wells later recalled in his thoughts on the eve of the First World War:

Before any practical flying had occurred, I reasoned that air warfare, by making warfare three dimensional, would abolish the war front and with that the possibility of distinguishing between civilian and combatant or of bringing a war to a conclusive end. This I argued, must not only intensify but must alter the ordinary man's attitude to warfare. He can no longer regard it as we did the Boer War for example as a vivid spectacle in which his participation is that of a paying spectator at a cricket or baseball match. (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 8f.)

General concepts adopted from land and naval warfare

As early air strategists usually came originally from the other services, it is logical that concepts from ground and naval Strategy featured prominently in air Strategy; the wheel was not entirely reinvented. One inherited concept was that of the concentration of forces on one point, which we have encountered as part of the Napoleonic paradigm. Admiral Raoul Castex added 'command of the sea' to the mix: 'the interest of concentrating the largest possible number of air-craft on the decisive point is evident. Only from this point of view does it make sense to speak about "command of the air"' (Castex 1934: 34). In Britain, General (later Field Marshal) Jan Smuts wrote in 1917:

It is important that we should not only secure air predominance, but secure it on a very large scale; and having secured it in this war, we should make every effort and sacrifice to maintain it for the future. Air supremacy may in the long run become as important a factor in the defence of the Empire as sea supremacy. (q.i. Tedder 1948: 84)

The most prominent thinker on air Strategy was the Italian, General Giulio Douhet (1869–1930). His advocacy of an air force began even before the First World War, and his starting points were key concepts of naval warfare which he transposed to the air:

We are fully conscious today of the importance of having command of the seas, but soon the command of the air will be no less important because only by having such a command – and only then – can we make use of the advantages made possible by aerial observation and the ability to see targets clearly – advantages which we shall not be able fully to enjoy until we have the aerial power to keep the enemy grounded. (q.i. Chaliand 1994: 893)

In his most famous work, the *Domination of the Air* (translated as *Command of the Air*), Douhet seemed to echo H.G. Wells:

By virtue of this new weapon, the repercussions of war are no longer lim-ited by the farthest artillery range of surface guns, but can be directly felt for hundreds and hundreds of miles over all the lands and seas of nations at war. No longer can areas exist in which life can be lived in safety and

tranquillity, nor can the battlefield any longer be limited to actual combatants. On the contrary, the battlefield will be limited only by the boundaries of the nations at war, and all of their citizens will become combatants, since all of them will be exposed to the aerial offensives of the enemy. There will be no distinction any longer between soldiers and civilians. (Douhet 1921/1983: 9–10)

And he formulated: 'To have command of the air means to be in a position to prevent the enemy from flying while retaining the ability to fly oneself.' Foreseeing the development of bomber fleets, he concluded:

A nation which has command of the air is in a position to protect its own territory from enemy aerial attack and even to put a halt to the enemy's auxiliary actions in support of his land and sea operations, leaving him powerless to do much of anything. Such offensive actions can not only cut off an opponent's army and navy from their bases of operations, but can also bomb the interior of the enemy's country so devastatingly that the physical and moral resistance of the people would also collapse.

Thus 'to have command of the air is to have victory'. Concomitantly, 'to be beaten in the air means defeat and acceptance of whatever terms the enemy may be pleased to impose' (Douhet 1921/1983: 24f., 28).

   But as with 'command of the sea', critics had pointed out that the ideal of 'command of the air' was difficult or impossible to implement. The Soviet strategists were aware of the benefits of the 'command of the air', but also of how ephemeral it was. N.A. Iatsuk, head of the tactics department of the Air Academy, wrote that 'Without air superiority, even having superiority on land, it is difficult to defeat the enemy, and if the strengths are even, it is impossible.' He concluded that however much the army and fleet were to beg the air force for close air support or for other action against military targets, 'the war should begin with a decisive strike' on the enemy air force (q.i. Sterrett 2007: 25). Aleksei Sergeevich Algazin, one of the generals later purged by Stalin, writing in 1928, noted that 'air superiority can only be gained through massive numerical superiority and for a very short time' (q.i. Sterrett 2007: 29). P.P. Ionov, appointed chief of staff of the Red Army airborne troops

in 1941, echoed traditional land and naval warfare concepts about the concentration of forces:

To gain air superiority in a given operation means to gain, for the entire period of the operation, freedom of action for one's own air force and to exclude or significantly constrain the activity of the enemy air forces in supporting the ground forces. Thus this superiority will be temporary (for the time of the conduct of the operation) and local (in the region of active operations). It can be achieved through massed air power, at the cost of weakening other less important axes. Falling short of the enemy in the battle for strategic air superiority, concentrated force on selected axes at the time of the operation makes it possible for the weaker side to gain air superiority. (q.i. Sterrett 2007: 43)

In France, Castex, who, exceptionally, agreed with Corbett on this point, thought it unrealistic to think about any permanent command of the air just as there was little point in thinking about a lasting command of the sea. With air power, the absurdity of the concept seemed to him even more blatant, as aircraft could stay in the air for a much shorter time than ships could stay at sea (Castex 1934: 34). In the British Royal Air Force (RAF), John Slessor (1897–1979) emphasised that one no longer spoke about 'command of the seas', but more modestly of 'control of sea communications', and equally, not of 'command of the air' but of 'air superiority' (Slessor 1936: 266). Half a century later, Air Marshal M.J. Armitage and Air Commodore R.A. (Tony) Mason updated the definition:

Classically, air superiority was only a means by which freedom of action was gained so that bomber forces could achieve their primary aim. But once the bomber offensive became outdated, at least in the superpower confrontation, and once attention focused on a likely short war rather than a long war of attrition, then not only the notion of air superiority but even the use of the term itself lost currency. Air superiority was replaced by expressions such as 'local air superiority', 'favourable air situation', or even by the phrase a 'tolerable air situation'. (Armitage and Mason 1985: 266)

And yet only six years later, it was crucial in the First and Second Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003) for the success of the Western coalition against Iraq that they should have complete control of the air over and

around Iraq; throughout the 1990s, the UN declared a large area of Iraq a 'no-fly zone' that was patrolled by US and British aircraft, and the same air control was exercised in the NATO bombing campaign of targets in Serbia and Kosovo in 1999 (Operation Allied Force). 'Command of the air', or at least 'local air superiority', is thus not only highly desirable, but, with contemporary technology, achievable against a technologically inferior adversary.

The obsession with the offensive that had dominated the long nineteenth century up to the First World War lived on in some minds. A crucial one was Hugh Trenchard (1873–1956), an early aviator who dominated the infancy and youth of the RAF. As commander of the Royal Flying Corps in France he wrote a memorandum for General Haig in September 1916:

An aeroplane is an offensive and not a defensive weapon … British aviation has been guided by a policy of relentless and incessant offensive. Our machines have continually attacked the enemy on his side of the line, bombed his aerodromes, and carried out attacks on places of importance far behind the lines … [T]his has had the effect so far on the enemy of compelling him to keep back or to detail portions of his forces in the air for defensive purposes … [T]he sound policy, then, which should guide all warfare in the air would seem to be this: to exploit the *moral effect* of the aeroplane on the enemy, but not let him exploit it on ourselves … [T]his can only be done by attacking and by continuing to attack. (q.i. Wells 2000: 13; my emphasis)

Trenchard, the Bernhardi of Britain, supervised the establishment of the first British long-range bomber force in mid-1918 (Murray 1999b: 73). After the First World War, he fought against budget allocations on air defences, arguing instead that one should concentrate on the preparation of a bomber offensive against any adversary. With this he set the tone of RAF doctrine until the end of the Second World War (Biddle 2002: 70, 75). Even though, at the time, Trenchard was still uninterested in the use of the air force in a role independent of the war on the battlefield, we see here in embryo his later ideas on *morale bombing*, which were taken up not only in Britain, but also in France (Vauthier 1930: 50–4). Trenchard's thinking and Giulio Douhet's thinking were so close as to be indistinguishable in many points, yet they clearly developed their views in parallel – there is no firm evidence that one read the other (Golovine 1936: 7f.). For

Douhet, 'The air plane [sic] is the offensive par excellence' (Douhet 1921/1983: 15).

The very magnitude of possible aerial offensives cries for an answer to the question, 'How can we defend ourselves against them?' To this I have always answered, 'By attacking.' … Viewed in its true light, aerial warfare admits of no defense, only offense. *We must therefore resign ourselves to the offensives the enemy inflicts upon us, while striving to put all our resources to work to inflict even heavier ones upon him.* (Douhet 1921/1983: 52, 55)

So it was 'futile to divert aerial forces to defense' (Douhet 1921/1983: 60f.). As we have seen in chapter 10, Douhet got into a substantial debate on the matter with Captain Giuseppe Fioravanzo of the Italian navy, who by contrast argued that like naval superiority, air superiority could also be contested; the one who had won it had to defend it (Ferrante 1997: 156–64).

In France, the Douhet-follower Pierre Faure used Clausewitzian terminology of *negative* defence and *positive* offensive to demonstrate that for France, the ground forces behind the Maginot Line would take on purely negative roles if Germany attacked. Only the air force could take on the positive role of counteroffensive (Faure 1931: 25). Such Douhetian–Trenchardian thinking would resonate throughout the following century.

Deterrence through air power was a further important concept imported primarily from the navy (see chapter 9). It was already fully developed in the 1930s and became of crucial importance with nuclear Strategy, that special heir of air power. Initially, some dismissed it. Before the Second World War, Slessor could not see an air force on the ground as 'a fleet in being' in the same way as a navy (Slessor 1936: 34). Even after the war, Air Marshal Lord Tedder claimed it was nonsense to have an air force 'in being' in the way one can achieve political-military effects with a 'fleet in being': apart from the vulnerability of aircraft and airfields, an air force could not have the same visibility as a fleet (Tedder 1948: 84).

This view was soon revised, and, by any other name, 'fleet in being' thinking played an important role in air power and nuclear Strategy. The most famous occasion where an air force 'in being' had openly affected an adversary was on the occasion of the flyover of new Soviet bombers on Soviet Aviation Day in July 1955, attended by foreign

observers. A small number of Soviet intercontinental bombers over-flew the same terrain several times, leading the foreign observers to conclude that the Soviet Union had a much larger total number available than they had in reality. There followed US hysteria about a supposed 'bomber gap' between the Soviet and American arsenals.

From the 1960s, the main argument that would be made for US air force (USAF) bases in Europe, once the USAF had acquired intercontinental bombers, was their visibility and thus their political function of signalling US presence to foes and reassuring allies. The same argument of visibility was later made in 1979–83 for the deployment of the land-based intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe. We shall see also that the 'fleet in being' concept in other ways informed French nuclear Strategy.

Service rivalry

Another inherited feature was that of interservice rivalry, in fights over the state's military budget. Where previously some followers of Mahan had dreamed that the navy might decide wars, from the First World War onwards, it was the air force's turn to nourish this dream. From the beginning, Douhet, and along with him some other air enthusiasts, postulated that aircraft and an air fleet should form a service in their own right, and not become subservient to the army or the navy. As 'air fleets will grow in importance as they get larger', Douhet wrote, '[t]he army and navy should not then see in the airplane merely an auxiliary arm of limited usefulness. They should rather see in the plane a third brother, younger of course, of the powerful family of war' (q.i. Chaliand 1994: 893). General Jan Smuts went further still, telling the British cabinet in the summer of 1917:

[T]he day may not be far off when aerial operations with their devastation of enemy lands and destruction of industrial and populous centres on a vast scale may become the principal operations of war, to which the older forms of military and naval operations may become secondary and subordinate. (q.i. Jones 1973: 136)

Indeed, his views found general acceptance in the cabinet. In the following year, they thought, air bombardment of 'the chief industrial centres … may form the determining factor in bringing about peace'

(q.i. Budiansky 2003: 98). With its vital role for British Strategy thus recognised, the RAF became truly independent on 1 April 1918, while in the USA, air forces continued to be part of army and navy until after the Second World War. While the US navy retained its air assets, an independent US air force was created in 1947.

The French, who prior to the *Entente cordiale* saw themselves as doubly challenged by the numerically superior Royal Navy at sea and by the numerically superior German armies on land, pondered technological solutions to this in both naval and land warfare. With the arrival of air power, they developed an interest in yet another technological fix. As the aviation pioneer Clément Ader (1841–1925) put it, squeezed between Britain as the mistress of the seas and Germany with her superior land forces, France had no choice but to try to predominate, at least, in the air (Artzet 1999: 47).

Douhet developed the prototype of what after the Second World War would be NATO's sword–shield debates of the 1950s and 1960s: Douhet assigned the shield or holding role to the ground forces, that of the sword to the air force, which could plunge deep into the enemy nation's heart. His motto was: 'resist on the ground and create a mass in the air'. Not surprisingly, Douhet got into a quarrel with naval strategists on the subject of whether the navy was still needed. Douhet grudgingly conceded that the navy still had a role to play, but in view of the vulnerability of its bases to naval and to air attack, it would in future be quite secondary to that of the air force, which alone could strike not only the enemy's coastal production centres but those deep within his country (Ferrante 1997: 156–64).

The same pattern of an early air force-navy antagonism can be found in the USA, where General William (Billy) Mitchell (1879–1936), a First World War flying ace, posed an outright challenge to the grand Mahanian concept that the 'navy was America's first line of defence' with the argument that any ship could be sunk by a bomber. He went even further than Douhet in declaring the navy and army obsolete with the advent of air power, albeit modestly defined by him as 'the ability to do something in the air'. His argument, like Douhet's, was that the air force could be used against 'vital centers' of the enemy nation (q.i. Wells 2000: 59), a phrase which came to dominate Western air power and nuclear strategies for the rest of the twentieth century.

Not only will it insure peace and contentment throughout the nation because, in case of national emergency, air power, properly developed, can hold off any hostile air force which may seek to fly over and attack our country, but it can also hold off hostile shipping which seeks to … menace our shores. (Mitchell 1925: ix)

Much to the ire of the sailors, he argued that:

The missions of armies and navies are very greatly changed from what they were … Surface navies have entirely lost their mission of defending a coast because aircraft can destroy or sink any seacraft coming within their radius of operation … aircraft today are the only effective means of coast protection. Consequently, navies have been pushed out on the high seas. The menace of submarines from below and aircraft from above constitutes such a condition that the surface ship as an element of war is disappearing. (Mitchell 1925: xvf., 56)

And he added:

[A]n entirely new method of conducting war at a distance will come into being … superior air power will dominate all sea areas when they act from land bases and that no seacraft, whether carrying aircraft or not, is able to contest their aerial supremacy. (Mitchell 1925: 11f.)

On the one hand, Mitchell claimed that both aircraft and submarines were essentially defensive (Mitchell 1925: 120). Yet on the other he asserted that 'No defense from the ground is capable of stopping air raids over a country' (Mitchell 1925: 123). While antagonising the other services, Mitchell thus became the idol of the American military aviators.

Whereas Trenchard and Douhet probably developed their virtually identical views in parallel, the French Douhetians clearly took their views from the Italian general. His influence reached its height in the 1930s, when Colonel P. Vauthier published a synthesis of Douhet's ideas, issued with a preface by First World War hero Marshal Pétain. In 1931 Pierre Faure warned of another great French defeat à la Charleroi in August 1914 unless France developed a strong air force of bombers, which would at the same time not create a crushing economic weight for his country (Faure 1931: 9f.). Indeed, Faure hoped for a 'quick and cheap victory' through air power, should its

deterrence force fail (Faure 1935: 43). Faure went further and argued that the occupation of the ground no longer had the same importance as before – at best, the army would occupy the ground as symbolic confirmation that the air force had won the war. Faure expressed his astonishment 'that the doctrine of the occupation of the terrain is still so widely accepted' (Faure 1931: 42, 46). This same argument, as we shall see, would be made in the context of the 1991 Gulf War. Faure spelled out the conclusion: 'aviation is likely to become the preponderant weapon … The machine will have more importance than man … [T]he nation whose aviation outclasses that of its adversaries has the greatest chances of victory' (Faure 1931: 44–6).

This interservice rivalry was observed at close quarters by J.M. Spaight, a lawyer and Whitehall civil servant. He noted that there were two sides in the struggle for a 'philosophy' of air power in its early decades: one side thought air power ineffective, the other argued that air power had relegated armies and fleets to 'the scrap heap'. The latter Spaight identified with Douhet and his followers – he was careful not to mention Trenchard – with their 'gospel of war and damnation' (Spaight 1938: 169). Air Commodore L.E.O. Charlton, for example, predicted that henceforth armies and navies would only serve as shields from behind which the air forces could attack the enemy and decide the outcome of the war; from this followed that the 'old ideas of offence and defence have undergone a complete change' with air power incarnating the offensive (Charlton 1935: 166). Two years later he even went further, bluntly declaring armies and sea power as 'obsolescent'; the next war would be conducted 'mainly in the air' (Charlton 1937: 70–82, 205).

Two former naval men took the same line, as the army and navy in their view were no longer forces that could take the offensive (Kennedy 1936: 58–79, 149–68). One, in a long diatribe about the British navy, its traditionalism, its lobbyists, its stick-in-the-mud supporters who distrusted any innovation, accused them of blindness to air forces being 'the decisive arm in war today' (Macmillan 1941: 25).

In the USA, Major Alexander de Seversky wrote that 'The most significant single fact about the war now in progress is the emergence of aviation as a paramount and *decisive factor* in war-making' (Seversky 1942: 3). He argued that aircraft had taken over the traditional tasks of the navy:

Navies have lost their function of strategic offensive … The blockade of an enemy nation has become a function of air power … Only air power can defeat air power … Land-based aviation is always superior to ship-borne aviation.

He doubtless endeared himself to his navy comrades, particularly with one chapter headed 'The Twilight of Sea Power', where he wrote:

Navies are no longer lords of the seas. Their authority is being rapidly restricted and in some respects wholly wiped out. Certain naval units may be salvaged for auxiliary jobs under the protection of air power. A portion may make itself felt against backward nations lacking effective aircraft. But the rest – especially battleships – will be consigned to museums of outlived weapons along with the bow and arrow and the blunderbuss. (Seversky 1942: 155)

Seversky's most intelligent critic was probably the Czech Ferdinand Otto Miksche, who had served on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War and argued that 'while the aircraft has a place in the war machine, it can never of itself *become* the war machine' (Miksche 1943: 9f.; my emphasis). Seversky had claimed that aviation was emerging as the '*decisive factor* in war-making' (Seversky 1942: 3). Miksche, by contrast, showed that as the Second World War had unfolded:

The Polish, French and Russian campaigns – not even the battle of Crete [*sic*] – were not decided in the air. They were decided on land, with the Luftwaffe playing an important role in these battles … *support*[*ing*] the other two sections of the Wehrmacht in their operations – sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, but generally combining both methods. (Miksche 1943: 13)

Miksche dismissed Seversky and Douhet as utopian in the light of the unfolding campaigns of the Second World War:

[A]n air concentration by itself is as incapable of achieving a decision as a concentration on land can if operating alone. It is also a mistaken idea that a decision must or could be reached in the air before it is reached on land. The two concentrations, on land and in the air, are integral. Both are necessary for victory; each supplements and reacts to the other. (Miksche 1943: 21)

Had not even arch-fascist Ludendorff dismissed the notion that a war
could be decided by air bombardment alone (Miksche 1943: 26)?

Miksche's informed scepticism about the claims of the air force
was widely shared even in the interwar years. Marion W. Ackworth,
writing as 'Neon', held that aircraft were so utterly vulnerable and
unreliable, and their reach so limited, that there was no point in
the state continuing investing in them on a large scale. Air power
would be 'utterly ineffectual so far as winning the war is concerned'.
They could play a minor role in the support of navies and armies
that would bear the brunt of any war, and bring about a decision
(Neon 1927: 127–30, 190). While being overly pessimistic with
regard to the future role of aircraft, 'Neon' was right in claiming,
at least for the years of the Second World War, that 'Aerial bombing
is from its very nature absurdly inaccurate, therefore indiscriminate.
Successful attacks on specific and protected targets are operations
beyond the scope of "air power".' And from this 'Neon' concluded
that 'Bombing attacks on the non-military population are deliberately
intended' and thus contrary to international law (Neon 1927: 178,
184). Similarly, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond in 1923 and Admiral
Sir Richard Custance in 1924 defended the importance of the navy
and army against the air force or what Custance called the 'aery'
(Spaight 1938: 50). Richmond scathingly summarised the views of the
strategic or city bombing school: they aimed not to defeat the enemy
armed forces, but 'to overcome the enemy people', who could now be
attacked directly, 'without any need of overcoming a defending force'.
Instead, 'Air forces will bombard the great centres of life and indus-
try, the organisations of transport, water-supply and other internal
national services, the administrative establishments and the civil
population itself' (Richmond 1934: 100f.). In France, General Albert
Niessel, translator of Clausewitz and Falkenhayn, also emphasised
that it was the ground forces who in his view must decide the outcome
of wars (Spaight 1938: 53). In the United Kingdom Admiral John
Tovey, commander of the Home Fleet, protested to the Admiralty
against the 'absolute priority' given to Bomber Command and its city
raids in terms of defence budget and effort. In the spring of 1942 he
wrote:

The Navy could no longer carry out its much increased task without
adequate air-support; that support had not been forthcoming … Whatever

the results of the bombing of cities might be, and this was the subject of keen controversy, it could not of itself win the war, whereas the failure of our sea communications would assuredly lose it … It was difficult to believe that the population of Cologne would notice much difference between a raid of 1000 bombers and one by 750. (Budiansky 2003: 274–7)

While the critics did much to keep air force expenditures down, it is the strategic or city bombing that gained force on the Western side in the Second World War. Trenchard's successor in spirit, Field Marshal Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris (1892–1984) and USAAF General Carl Andrew Spaatz (1891–1974) both thought little of the performance of the other two services. The chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Alan Brooke, recalled: 'Harris told us how well he might have won the war had it not been for the handicap imposed by the existence of the other two services.' At the time, Spaatz had opined that the Normandy landing would be pointless and doomed to failure (Budiansky 2003: 299).

Spaatz felt vindicated in his belief in air power dominance with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. US General Frederick L. Anderson wrote to Spaatz: 'I wish to congratulate you upon proving to the world that a nation can be defeated by air power alone' (q.i. Wells 2000: 151). Douhet and the city bombing school seemed vindicated by the air-craft's new ordnance, the atomic bomb.

The rivalling claims to predominance of the different services became even if anything more pronounced in the USA after the Second World War, when initially the USA cut down its armed forces drastically, and the shares in the remaining pie became that much more contested. Rivalry remained prominent and disruptive when the USA began to rearm from 1950, resulting in intense competition for resources (Wells 2000: 149–74, and 175–204).

The air forces in turn had their comeuppance when the 'unmanned bomber' (cruise missiles) and ballistic missiles started to usurp their place. Would these replace the 'manned bomber' and do them out of business? Dwight D. Eisenhower as US President told the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1960 that he no longer saw any need for the bomber (Trachtenberg 1986: 756).

The conventional wars of the 1950s to the 1980s neither excluded air forces nor allowed them to 'go it alone'. The one success story, that of LINEBACKER II, proved ephemeral (see below). The picture

seemed to change, with Douhet once more in the ascendant (this time with conventional, but unprecedentedly precise air power) in the Gulf War of 1991. Former US Marine Corps General Bernard Trainor noted that it was here that the coalition ground campaign had, for the first time, supported the air campaign. The Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS), conducted by a mix of military experts and leading independent academics, concluded that 'for the first time in history, air power had reached the expectations of its proponents' (GWAPS 1993, II.i: 327). For, as USAF Colonel Dennis Drew commented, in the Gulf War, the impact of air power 'was clearly overwhelming and decisive ... [T]he air victory ... symbolised the maturity of air power, the domination of air power and the need for a new paradigm of warfare' (q.i. Mason 1994: 235–78).

Moreover, proponents of strategic bombing claimed after the 1991 Gulf War 'that the Gulf War heralds a new age in which strategic bombing will be the strongest form of military power, dramatically enhancing America's coercive capabilities and options'. As the academic Robert Pape observed, in all subsequent crises, such as the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, 'increasingly the first question in debates over American intervention is becoming, Can air power alone do the job?' Pape's answer to this was 'no' (Pape 1996: 314, 318f.). As the GWAPS team explained, boots were still needed on the ground there (and subsequently in crises such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, again Iraq ...) to hedge against a 'stab-in-the-back' legend such as that which the German army had created after 1918, claiming it was not military defeat, but political betrayal that had led to the demise of Wilhelm II's *Reich* in the First World War (GWAPS 1993, II.i: 32).

These debates about the role of the air forces in the general context of war and other military operations, and especially debates about strategic bombing, continue to this day. The next chapter will examine generically all the Strategies proposed or air power, again tracing traditions and links to earlier thinking which we have identified in previous chapters.

13 | *Four schools of air power*

The strategic/city bombing school was only one of four, of which three existed from the beginning of the history of aviation, but several of which would only approach realism with further developments of technology. The strategic/city bombing school at least initially was inspired by Social Darwinist concepts of 'national wars' in which nation was pitted against nation in the war effort and no target was out of bounds. It achieved its summit with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The second is the military targets school, often referred to as tactical, loved best by the other two services. The main tasks of the air force under this heading would be to provide close air support (CAS) for the other two services, or, beyond the actual field of battle, reconnaissance and the targeting of enemy military forces (and those only) that were approaching the battlefield from afar.

The third school – overlapping with the first two – concentrates on leadership targeting, and depends on precision bombing, although its concepts also go back to early thinking about air Strategy. It is posited not on a more or less explicit tendency to kill enemy civilians indiscriminately, but on a concept of justice that would target the wicked leaders (rogue regimes, tyrants, oppressors) in 'decapitation strikes' which would bring the enemy war effort to an end. Often there is the assumption that this would lead to the liberation of their long-suffering, oppressed and perhaps misguided populations. This carries echoes of the war aims of the French Revolution, and of the USA in the First and Second World Wars.

The fourth school was the political signalling school, which had the shortest life-span, from the end of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s, with a few blips of revivals in the 1990s.

The strategic or city bombing school

The strategic or city bombing school has much in common with the 'blue water school' or Mahanian tradition of naval thinking, and was therefore dubbed the 'blue skies school' by John Spaight. Its claims for what air power could do, he noted, went far beyond what the blue water school ever claimed for itself (Spaight 1938: 37–9). Both liked to claim that their service could almost single-handedly bring about the decision in war, and that it was on the open seas – or by targeting the enemy's 'vitals' from the air – that a war should be fought and won. They differed greatly, of course, in the nature of their adversaries: the blue water thinkers saw the enemy navy as main opponent, while the city bombers sought to avoid the clash with enemy armed forces and to take the war to the undefended masses of the enemy's population instead. 'The classic air-power theorist had never quailed at the notion of killing civilians' (Budiansky 2003: 285). As the German Admiral Tirpitz put it during the First World War, 'If one could set fire to London in thirty places, then what in a small way [i.e. with a single bomb] is odious would retire before something fine and powerful.' And historian Williamson Murray showed that 'All the major powers involved in the air war' during the First World War 'pursued strategic bombing to some degree' (Murray 1999b: 72).

Yet from the beginning of the use of air power, the legitimacy of bombing civilian targets was known to be ethically problematic. The Hague Conventions on Land Warfare of 1899 and 1907 had outlawed the bombing or shelling of cities (but had failed to articulate the possibility that this could be done from the air).

The Hague Aerial Bombardment Rules of 1923 that had made this quite explicit failed to be ratified by the states that had participated in the conference. They included:

Art. 22: Aerial bombardment for the purpose of terrorizing the civilian population, of destroying or damaging private property not of military character, or of injuring non-combatants is prohibited.

Art. 24: Aerial bombardment is legitimate only when directed at a military objective, that is to say, an object of which the destruction or injury would constitute a distinct military advantage to the belligerent.

Military targets, according to Article 24, included factories producing military supplies and lines of communications. Article 25 listed

targets to be avoided if at all possible: historic monuments, places of worship, buildings dedicated to art or science and hospitals. Nevertheless, Article 24 provided the loophole which could excuse any bombing as long as one protested that one was only in pursuit of a 'military objective', whatever the collateral damage. In the words of James Spaight, adviser to the British delegation:

The doctrine of the 'military objective' … will be no adequate protection. Any belligerent who chooses will be able to keep within the rules … and yet use his air arms for a purpose quite distinct from the destruction of objects of military importance, namely, for the creation of a moral, political, or psychological effect within the enemy country. (Budiansky 2003: 188)

During the 1920s the hope was still alive that the 1923 rules might become binding, and in subsequent years there was some awareness that they might become observed in practice and thereby turn into customary law. In July 1939, Hermann Goering as chief of the German air force gave out instructions on the conduct of air warfare which neatly sums up the prevailing paradox:

Any target is of military importance if it is important for the enemy's conduct of war. [Targets] of military importance are e.g. water, gas, and power supplies, food stores, large-scale bakeries, cool storage buildings, etc. … Terror attacks on the civilian population are contrary to international law. Nevertheless, the context of the war may make even this form of aerial attack necessary. (Goering 1939)

And indeed, this is how Germany began the Second World War with its air attacks on Warsaw.

Deterrence through city targeting?

Some even thought optimistically, *before* the invention of nuclear weapons, that air power alone might deter war altogether. We have seen in chapter 10 that 'deterrence' – dissuading an adversary from a particular course of action by threatening intolerable punishment – was practised in British maritime Strategy long before the word was invented, and Alexander George and Richard Smoke rightly note that example of deterrence posturing can be found in Thucydides (George and Smoke 1974: 12). In the context of air power, it gained wide

prominence in the interwar period, but especially in the 1930s. Pierre Faure spelled it out most plainly in France early in that decade. If France built a bomber force, he opined, ideally one bigger than that of her adversaries,

[t]he fear of terrible retaliation [against their aggression], without prece-dent in history with its human hecatombs [of dead], would certainly make those on the other side of the Rhine think before they undertake a new war. If the German people knew that an attack by its army on France would signify the probable and immediate destruction of twenty of its lar-gest cities and the population they contained, it would seem doubtful that the German government would take this risk … 400 aircraft … capable of annihilating twenty German cities, the bridges of the Rhine, important railway stations and the great industrial centres, are the best guarantee of peace that we could own. (Faure 1931: 9f., 13)

In his second book of 1935, however, Faure fully accepted the pos-sibility that deterrence might fail; and, he argued, 'because war has only one aim: victory', as a result, it would be 'more important to destroy a city than an enemy air squadron'. So if war did break out, he believed it would be reduced to one phase only, 'an aerial offen-sive destined exclusively to take moral and material disorder to the enemy', much as NATO strategists from 1949 until the late 1950s thought that a Third World War would start with a massive nuclear exchange. Like the nuclear strategists later, Faure thought that the alternative would be a return to 'an abominable war of mutual attri-tion' on the battlefield (Faure 1935: 74, 81, 83). His great hope was that with a sizeable bomber force (in French possession), 'war would become an impossibility, and the aircraft will *have killed off war*' (Faure 1935: 202; my emphasis; the title of his book translates as *The Aeroplane Will Kill War*). This strikingly foreshadows the hope of the early nuclear age that war would now become an impossibility, that one had entered the age of the *non-guerre* (non-war); in the optimistic words of French strategists: '*la guerre est morte*', war is dead (Heuser 1998a: 84f.).

In the same years, this was also the British government's think-ing in backing the RAF leadership's preference for a bomber force over air defences. British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (Prime Minister 1935–7) and his advisers put their money on the deterrent effect of the British bomber force on any adversary (Bialer 1980).

Deterrence theory was thus fully established well before the nuclear age, as George Quester has so brilliantly shown (1966). The effect of this deep commitment by the British to deterrence in the form of an offensive strategic posture resulted in a mirror imaging with regard to German intentions, and ultimately in *self*-deterrence: Chamberlain reached a settlement with Hitler in Munich because of his fear of a 'knock-out blow' of the Luftwaffe against Britain, and the ultimate commitment to the defence of Poland came after a false alarm about a planned German surprise attack on the West in early 1939 (Watt 1989).

Strategic bombing: the debate

Strategic bombing was the extension of the thinking behind the naval blockade. In the First World War, the British government had attempted to break German morale by starving the population through a naval blockade. That the idea was crucial, not the technology, can be shown by the fact that other ways of achieving the same aim were explored. Some British scientists during the First World War had already researched ways of starving the Germans into submission by burning Germany's crops from the air (Budiansky 2003: 110).

Before, and even after, a declaration of war, city bombing might be illegal, as Captain Pierre Yvon of the French navy noted, but he doubted that this made it less likely in the future. Yvon drew attention to the German bombing of arms factories in London suburbs in the First World War – these targets could hardly be distinguished from civilian targets, even if this bombing was arguably not carried out with the objective of terrorising civilians. Against this background, he elaborated on the parallels between naval blockade and air force-imposed blockades, stressing the similarities (Yvon 1924: 92, 97, 101–18). Indeed, Douhet even advocated pre-emptive war: 'the air arm … may try for the destruction of the enemy's capital *even before war is declared*' (Douhet 1928/1983: 188; my emphasis).

This crucial link between naval blockade thinking and city bombing was spelled out particularly clearly by British Royal Flying Corps veteran Captain Norman Macmillan (1892–1976). Two years into the Second World War, he advocated imposing 'air blockades', which would stop vital supplies (food and raw materials) reaching the enemy's factories.

Unlike a sea blockade, which is an external form of blockade, air blockade is at its most effective when applied against internal targets within the enemy country or zone of occupation. So the aeroplane ... is an instrument capable of bringing about blockade in a new form in which the weapon is directed straight at the citizen. To be applied with success, air blockade must have a wide application. Its effect is purely destructive ... (unlike sea blockade, which ... can seize prizes) ... It is a more cruel form of blockade, one which ignores all the canons of war, for it puts into the front line women and children, and aged and non-combatant men, as much as or even more than the armed forces. It is a weapon used not only to destroy the commodities before they reach the consumer, but impartially to destroy the consumer also, by fire as well as high explosive, and perhaps by gas. (Macmillan 1941: 109f.)

Macmillan was hopeful of socio-political effects that the bombing might have:

Air blockade might be employed in such a way as to cause internal disruption in a country by the excitement of some of the human passions ... War and revolution stalk hand in hand. And it is no less than a German revolution that Britain has pledged herself to secure by the overthrow of the Nazis by force of arms. (Macmillan 1941: 113)

Blockade and air bombardment were usually euphemistically said to be designed to reduce the enemy nation's 'morale', a term, as we have seen, that in the nineteenth century was linked with the armed forces, not the nation as a whole. All sides seem to have hit on this 'intellectually mushy' (Budiansky 2003: 136) concept pretty much simultaneously. In May 1917 the Germans rolled out the new big Gotha bombers, with a range allowing them to strike London. The crews of these and other German bombers were told that their targets were 'the morale of the English people' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 96). Hugh Trenchard wrote in a memorandum of November 1917: 'Actual experience goes to show that the moral effect of bombing industrial towns may be great, even though the material effect is, in fact, small.' In May 1918 he wrote: 'The anxiety as to whether an attack is likely to take place is probably just as demoralising to the industrial population as the attack itself.' He therefore wanted plans to stage bombing raids throughout Germany so that Germans everywhere would worry about whether they would be the next to be hit (Budiansky 2003: 101). It fits the Social Darwinist – or should we say

racist? – mindset behind these statements on both sides perfectly that a Royal Flying Corps paper on targeting of 1917 argued that bombing German chemical works would produce a great effect on morale, as 'a majority of German chemists' were Jews who were 'not usually brave'. The paper also posited that German bombing of the East End of London was more likely to lead to panic because of the many 'Jews' who lived there (Budiansky 2003: 102f.).

In January 1918, the British Air Policy Committee proclaimed a new Strategy to be followed, 'to attack the important German towns systematically' to shake 'the morale of workmen' to the point where 'output is seriously interfered with' (Jones 1973: 161f.). While the Strategy was not carried out by the British air force during the First World War, the doctrine survived (Jones 1973: 188). In his first lecture, Air Vice Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, the first commandant of the Air Staff College, told his officer-students: 'it is now the will-power of the enemy nation that has to be broken, and to do this is the object of any country that goes to war' (q.i. Meilinger 2003: 52). He told the Royal United Services Institute in a lecture in December 1919:

The material effect of bombs … is small compared to its moral effect, and I think most people will agree that bombing from aircraft has considerably greater moral effect than ordinary shelling. This of course applies with still greater force to towns and places far behind the line which, at any rate previous to the war, considered themselves immune from attack. (q.i. Biddle 2002: 79)

When the RAF created 'home defence' forces after the First World War, they still put most of their eggs in the other, the offensive basket of the retaliatory bomber force. In a memorandum of 19 July 1923, Trenchard as the Chief of Air Staff advocated concentrating on bombers, still holding the widely shared assumption that in the next war the enemy would be France. If Britain bombed France, he felt 'that although there would be an outcry, the French in a bombing duel would probably squeal before we did. That was really the final thing. The nation that would stand being bombed longest would win in the end' (q.i. Jones 1987: 29). He personally was convinced

that a high casualty rate would have a greater effect on the morale of the French pilots than it would on ours. Casualties affected the French more

than they did the British … the policy of hitting the French nation and
making them squeal before we did was a vital one – more vital than any-
thing else … The Army policy was to defeat the enemy Army – ours to
defeat the enemy nation. (q.i. Jones 1987: 30)

Brooke-Popham's successor at the RAF Staff College in the early
1930s, Commandant Joubert de la Ferté, like Trenchard and Brooke-
Popham was still thinking in such Social Darwinist terms:

The nation with the better fighting men, the stouter hearts, the better
leaders and equipment will, in the end, outfight the weaker, who will be
forced more and more on the defensive, until finally the successful offensive
of the stronger side will have given it the security it requires. (q.i. Biddle
2002: 101)

Applicants to the RAF Staff College were made to sit an entrance
exam, and as one participant recalled, not surprisingly the expected
answer to one question was clearly 'that the only appropriate use
for air power lay in the offensive against enemy morale' (Budiansky
2003: 134–6). None of this sounds very different from the German
Luftwaffe officer Albert Kesselring's statement at roughly the same
time that Germany should aim for a strategic bombing competition
with its adversaries, convinced that an enemy nation would withstand
it less well than the German *Volksgemeinschaft*. Kesselring became
Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe in 1936, and rising to field marshal
remained throughout the war one of Hitler's most trusted generals
(Murray 1999b: 97–9).
    By contrast, even in 1917, the French air service adopted a pol-
icy paper in which they warned that there was no point in bombing
just for the sake of bombing: 'on ne bombarde pas pour bombarder'
(Budiansky 2003: 101).
    But even for most advocates of city bombing, it was not merely
a case of bombing for the sake of bombing. We have seen that in
the desperate quest for alternatives to the trench warfare of the First
World War (see chapter 7), several strategists explored alternatives of
all sorts, what Liddell Hart called indirect approaches. Spaight com-
mented on how

The Great War … left men's minds wearied, disillusioned, disgusted with
the murderous slaughter, the slow, muddled, wasteful ineffectiveness of the

tactics of attrition. The air seemed to offer a way of escape from the condition of deadlock, of stalemate to which war had been reduced. It was a new domain which could be called in, if not to redress the balance, at least to relieve the impasse that had been reached in the old. (Spaight 1938: 168)

One seeking for alternatives whom we have already encountered was J.F.C. Fuller. His vision of future war was that 'Fleets of aeroplanes will attack the enemy's great industrial and governing centres. All these attacks will be made against the civil population in order to compel it to accept the will of the attacker' (Fuller 1920: 42). He emphasised that 'the policy of a nation is founded on the will of its civil inhabitants and that the supreme military power of aircraft is their ability to "hop" over armies and fleets and attack what is in the rear of them' (Fuller 1923: 148). Basil Liddell Hart, who later liked to think of himself as a pacifist, in 1925 advocated a Strategy that sought to 'discover and exploit the Achilles' heel of the enemy nation' striking 'not against its strongest bulwark but against its most vulnerable spot', just as Paris, prince of Troy, had killed Achilles by striking at his vulnerable heel. The enemy's cities he saw as the modern equivalent of Achilles' heel in his ambiguously-named book *Paris and the Future of War*; Paris could stand both for the Trojan prince who had defeated Achilles and for the French capital, potential target for British air bombardment, if France was the future enemy (Liddell Hart 1925: 26f.).

   The British government's former scientific adviser, Hardinge Giffard, second Earl of Halsbury (1880–1943), wrote in the *Daily Mail* on 8 July 1927: future war would 'not merely be armies engaging armies but whole nations mobilised against nations'. With the total involvement of one's own and one's enemy's nations in war, the distinction between combatant and non-combatant was disappearing (see chapter 7).

The girl filling a shell at a factory is just as much part of the machinery of war as the soldier who fires it. She is much more vulnerable and will certainly be attacked. It is impossible to say that such an attack would be unjustified. The matter does not end with mere munitions workers. The central organisations essential to modern warfare are carried on in 'open towns' and largely by civilians. An attempt to paralyse them would be perfectly legitimate. The first conclusion, therefore, that emerges is that an attack will be made upon the civilian population. (q.i. Jones 1987: 40)

Trenchard also listed economic and military-strategic factors as reasons for city bombing. In his famous memorandum of May 1928, he argued that in future, it would no longer be 'necessary for an air force, in order to defeat the enemy nation, to defeat its armed forces first. Air power … can pass over the enemy navies and armies, and … attack direct the centres of production, transportation and communication', which of course would be located in urban centres, but this he did not mention. He denied vehemently that this would be

indiscriminate bombing of a city for the sole purpose of terrorising the civilian population. It is an entirely different matter to terrorise munitions workers (men and women) into absenting themselves from work … through fear of an air attack upon the factory or dock concerned.

Invoking the right conceded to any belligerent in the Hague Convention of 1907 of destroying munitions destined to be used against him, Trenchard created the fiction that massive destruction of a city could be kept separate from well-targeted daytime attacks on munitions factories or harbours (Webster and Frankland 1961: 71–6). From here it was only a small step to Harris's 'dehousing' Strategy, which sought to convey the impression that the houses would be destroyed by night-time bombing raids, while the workers and their families were not inside them.

Until the introduction of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) in the 1970s, however, technology was still far from fulfilling the dreams of early air strategists. Bombing from great altitudes proved much less effective in practice than in artificial test situations. The experience of the Spanish Civil War, used by the Germans, Italians and Soviets as a test for their air forces and doctrine, proved to them, and to other observers like the French, that ground support and low-level bombing of undefended targets were the more feasible options.

The RAF's experience early in the Second World War showed that daylight bombing (let alone battlefield support!) resulted in large losses of planes, so they embraced night-time (and thus of necessity big-target) bombing. At the time it was still technically impossible, in high-altitude night-time raids, to differentiate between targeting factories and surrounding residential areas. When the USA came into the war, its air forces, to the annoyance of the RAF, initially opted for daytime precision bombing. But the Americans, too, soon abandoned

it because of the heavy losses they incurred. The turning point was the American Eighth Air Force's attack on Schweinfurt in August and October 1943, when almost a fifth and then a quarter of the bombers were lost, many more being damaged and beyond repair. From this point onwards, American military targeting gave way to city bombing, whatever General Arnold later claimed. American bombers resorted to 'drenching' targets in order to increase the likelihood of direct hits (Budiansky 2003: 286, 320, 323).

Where, then, were the restrictions of the laws of war in that context? 'Realists' shrugged off such restrictions as mere scraps of paper (see chapter 5). The Conservative MP and aeronautical engineer Sir Charles Dennistoun 'Dennis' Burney believed like Trenchard that international law would fall by the wayside when every country had become nothing but 'one huge arsenal'. Everybody would use their weapons without restraint. 'In any future war', he opined, 'all the vital parts of the city [of London] could be heavily bombarded within twenty-four hours, and all our defensive preparations would be powerless to prevent it' (Burney 1934: 74).

Many authors foresaw accurately how war would evolve and understood the moral dilemma of facing ruthless 'realists' like Hitler and Mussolini, who, like his protégé Douhet, believed that the role of air forces was 'to break up enemy formations, to command the air, and to weaken the morale of the enemy's civilian population'. Mussolini added with insouciance: 'Centres of population on both sides are bound to suffer' (q.i. Spaight 1938: 161).

Acknowledging the moral dilemma that city bombing posed, Brigadier P.R.C. Groves in the United Kingdom nevertheless thought those pacifists misguided who, in order to prevent such a future development of war, supported 'the reduction or even the abolition of our already inadequate Air Force'.

For … if a pacifist people, owing to an objection in principle to the use of force, are not prepared to oppose force by force, they will in the long run strengthen the rule of violence, that is the rule of their militarist opponents. The cause of peace cannot be promoted by leaving Right weaponless. (Groves 1934: 33)

Lord Thomson, who in the interwar years was twice Secretary of State for Air, foresaw ruthless bombing of densely populated areas,

leaving 'both victors and vanquished … with ruined cities … hospitals filled with the maimed and mutilated of all ages and of both sexes, asylums crowded with unfortunate human beings whom terror has made insane'. Thomson saw great possibilities for air power to underpin international peace, but also warned of the dangers of its abuse in war. He rightly feared that technology had outrun the moral development of humanity (Thomson 1927: 26f., 190–2).

Alexander Seversky, writing in the USA in the 1930s, put his finger on a crucial question: 'Does the attacker aim at the possession of the enemy country or at its elimination as an economic and political factor?' The difference mattered, because '[t]he war of possession calls for ground forces, for aviation co-ordinated with those forces, for air power on a tight leash in order to avoid unnecessary destruction' (q.i. Hobbs 1979: 90). Wars before the spread of Social Darwinism, racism and 'totalitarian democracy' (Talmon 1952) had aimed at conquest and exploitation, not at annihilation. In the political-ideological climate of the interwar years, annihilation of the enemy became an end in itself, as the Germans demonstrated with their extermination camps.

Some American airmen also thought city targeting desirable well before practical difficulties put paid to the prevailing US Strategy of bombing military targets. General H.H. Arnold and Lt.-Col. Ira Eaker thought of bombardment of a city as the best way to 'break the will' of the enemy people – note the Clausewitzian term (Arnold and Eaker 1938: 129). 'Hap' Arnold would later command the US Army Air Forces during the entire Second World War, as American bombing degenerated from unsuccessful attempts at precision strikes into city busting. In August 1944, General Carl Spaatz informed him of British pleas to 'join with them in morale bombing'. Spaatz was worried that 'any deviation from our present policy' of precision bombing would result in the US being accused of unethical behaviour. Yet the USAAF slid into this bombing pattern, mainly because technically it had few alternatives if US bombers were to have a reasonable chance of survival. Even after the infamous raid on Dresden in the night of 13/14 February 1945, Arnold and Spaatz denied publicly that the USAAF had changed its targeting away from 'military objectives' (Budiansky 2003: 321f.). At the same time, the USA completely switched to a city-flattening bombing Strategy in Japan – with the first massive use of incendiary bombs being made under Curtis LeMay against Tokyo

on 9 March 1945. The joint target plan that advocated this showed awareness of the magnitude of civilian casualties it would entail, but justified it in terms of the targets being civilian 'workers', whose killing would lead to 'losses in labor' (Gentile 2001: 87) – an echo of the Trenchard memorandum of 1928.

Punishing the enemy nation – on a small scale

During the Conference at the Hague in 1922–3, the British delegation asked for a clause to be inserted in the Convention to allow indiscriminate bombing 'for police purposes in certain outlying regions', that is, for the sort of operations they had been conducting in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan (Budiansky 2003: 188). Colonial warfare 1897–1923, according to RAF estimates, had cost the lives of thousands of British soldiers and far fewer tribesmen. Since the RAF was brought in, the relation was inverted. The 1920 British Army Directive regarding Mesopotamia read like a prescription for scorched-earth measures in the Hundred Years War or in Cromwell's campaigns against Ireland:

Villages will be razed to the ground and all woodwork removed. Pressure will be brought on the inhabitants by cutting off water power and by destroying water lifts; efforts to carry out cultivation will be interfered with, and the systematic collection of supplies of all kinds beyond our actual requirements will be carried out, the area being cleared of the necessities of life. (q.i. Meilinger 2003: 50)

In this context, a discussion between General Sir Claud Graham, Chief of the General Staff of the Indian army, and Air Marshal John Salmond, Commanding Air Officer in India, with regard to British military action against Afghanistan is exemplary. Salmond protested against aerial bombing of Kabul and native villages. Graham replied that Afghanistan was 'not a signatory to the Hague or Geneva Conventions, the Afghans mutilated and ill-treated wounded opponents, they were not a civilised nation and he assumed, therefore, that there were no reservations.' He added, 'Personally, if I were doing the bombing, I should not care what the restrictions were … In the past they had not used the Air Force ruthlessly enough' (q.i. Meilinger 2003: 50). (In a similar way, but on a much larger scale, the fact

that the USSR had not ratified the Geneva Conventions would be invoked in the Second World War by the Germans to excuse their horrendous treatment of Soviet prisoners.) Financial restraints also affected the decision for aerial bombing. It was used against Afghan rebels in 1919 with bombers which had been completed just too late to be used against Berlin in the First World War. When in 1920 the 'Mad Mullah' Mohammed bin Abdulla Hassan in British Somaliland staged a revolt against the British occupying forces, the forecasted costs of subduing him with ground forces were off-putting. By contrast, the RAF promised to do it much more cheaply, through bombardment from the air (which they did effectively, as Hassan did not have any anti-air defences). These bombing raids, under the heading of 'air control', were applied also to Iraq in 1922, again under the command of John Salmond, with the aim of establishing 'a tradition' that would teach the 'natives' what to expect in return for insubordination. In the words of one RAF officer:

One objective must be selected – preferably the most inaccessible village of the most prominent tribe which it is desired to *punish* … The attack with bombs and machine guns must be relentless and unremitting and carried on continuously by day and night, on houses, inhabitants, crops and cattle … The news of the punishment will spread like wildfire … This sounds brutal, I know, but it must be made brutal to start with. The threat alone in the future will prove efficacious if the lesson is once properly learnt. (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 143; my emphasis)

Again, we can identify a visible link between the condescension with which the imperial policing was undertaken, and morale bombing. In 1924, Wing Commander C.H.K. Edmonds explained it at a lecture on 'Air Strategy' at the Royal United Services Institution:

Just as in the small war our continuous bombing made the tribe's life intolerable and brought [the enemy] to heel, so in the case of the big war our object is to destroy the enemy's morale – we must make him feel that life has become so impossible that he prefers to accept peace on our terms. (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 144)

In a paper of 1922 Trenchard even went as far as to suggest that air power might be used to quell 'industrial disturbances' in 'settled countries' including India, Egypt and Ireland, or even England.

Churchill as Secretary of State for War and Air told him never again to mention the last two in such a context (Budiansky 2003: 146f.). This reflects not only the overlap between class thinking and Social Darwinism on the part of Trenchard (and many of his contemporaries even in liberal countries), but also the more racist thinking of, in this case, imputed by Churchill to his audience, for whom the treatment meted out to the 'coloured' peoples was one thing, that used against whites – one's own people – another.

But punishment was not merely a European idea, inspired by notions of imperial policing. In the USA, Billy Mitchell prophesied in 1925 that in future, states would use air power as their first resort, as 'first punitive element', in any conflict with another state, because it was so easy to call upon (Mitchell 1925: 131).

The lesson of the German bombing of London in the First World War and in the Spanish Civil War, as anybody could see, was that the bombing of cities reinforces solidarity among the victim populations and the determination to hold out (Pape 1990, 1992, 1996; Budiansky 2003: 8f., 207–9). But this was not what the RAF wanted to hear (Chuter 1996). As the War Cabinet directed on 14 February 1942, even before Harris took over, the air offensive should have as its 'primary objective … the morale of the enemy civil population and, in particular, industrial workers'. Aiming points would be specifically 'built-up areas' of cities, and soon Harris issued the instructions for 'dehousing' workers (Biddle 1994: 152). On 30 March 1942, in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Harris, too, advocated that the bombing should be directed against German cities so that a third of the German population could be 'turned out of their house and home', claiming that 'dehousing' had a worse effect on morale than having 'friends and relatives killed': 'There seems to be little doubt this would break the spirit of the people.' In this he put forward the same argument as Machiavelli had four centuries earlier (see chapter 3). Churchill was persuaded by this argument, and told Stalin in the late spring of 1942, 'Morale is a military target … We shall seek no mercy and we shall show none' (Budiansky 2003: 284).

In general, the British bombing campaigns against German cities were welcomed by Britons and allies alike. A Gallup poll of 1938 found that 91 per cent of the Americans asked thought that 'all nations should agree not to bomb civilians in cities in wartime'. But three days after Pearl Harbor, 67 per cent of Americans asked

were in favour of indiscriminate bombing of cities, with only 10 per cent firmly opposed. Only a few had qualms about city bombing, including the British government's scientific advisers, Sir Henry Tizard and Lord (Solly) Zuckerman. The latter pointed out that technological options were driving Strategy, not the other way round, as it should be. There were also objections from religious quarters. On 11 March 1944 *The New York Times* reported that 28 clergymen, professionals and others protested against bombing of civilians, calling upon 'Christian people … to examine themselves and their participation in this carnival of death'. But this only provoked a public outcry against 'softheartedness' towards the 'rapacious Germans' (Budiansky 2003: 282–5, 320f.).

Robert Pape concluded in the 1990s from this and subsequent air operations aiming at punishment and coercion that 'conventional punishment' – that is, military operations without the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons – 'rarely succeeds'. In 'conventional' war contexts, 'denial strategies work best' – that is, the use of all forces to deny the enemy a military objective. Robert Pape looked at thirty-three cases and, among these, at five in detail, Japan 1945, Germany 1945, Korea 1953, Vietnam 1965–8 and 1972 and Iraq 1991, and concluded that:

The evidence shows that it is the threat of military failure, which I call denial, and not threats to civilians, which we may call punishment, which provides the critical leverage in conventional coercion. Although nuclear weapons can make punishment the critical factor, in conventional conflicts even highly capable assailants often cannot threaten or inflict enough pain to coerce successfully. Conventional munitions have limited destructive power, and the modern nation-state is not a delicate mechanism that can easily be brought to the point of collapse. Moreover, governments are often willing to countenance considerable civilian punishment to achieve important territorial aims. Consequently, coercion based on punishing civilians rarely succeeds. (Pape 1996: 10)

In a nuclear context, by contrast, denial strategies did not seem useful to him, while risk strategies were most likely to be effective, and 'nuclear punishment' – which he conceded 'should be … rare' – could in his view be 'effective'. His empirical database for the latter is of course limited to just Hiroshima and Nagasaki, plus the Cuban Missile Crisis and one or two other Cold War crises, making his

conclusions about nuclear coercion difficult to back up with a significant base of evidence. Where 'conventional' campaigns are concerned, however, his findings are very persuasive. Most importantly, he, like British Ministry of Defence official David Chuter, exposed the false expectation that populations subject to bombing would rise up to overthrow their governments or at least coerce their governments to submit to the will of the enemy. An arguable exception to this was the 1999 air campaign to free Kosovo from Serb domination, but it followed many years of conflict over the fission of Yugoslavia and mounting Western pressure on the Serb leader (Lake 2009).

Will terror shorten the war?

In chapters 6 and 7, we saw that in the late nineteenth century, and especially after the Great War of 1914–18, several people – from Hieram Maxim and Alfred Nobel to J.F.C. Fuller and Liddell Hart – had hoped that weapons inspiring ever greater terror would shorten if not prevent any future war. This was also put forward as one justification of the terrible drift towards city bombing that started with the First World War. Even in 1909, R.P. Hearne wrote that:

I agree that airships will make war more terrible, but I have endeavoured to show that its very terror will delay an outbreak. Airships will also render warfare more localised in its destruction (that is to say, more humane), more decisive, and more rapid … [T]he destruction will be more closely restricted to the combatants, and there will be far less of that cruel slaughter of non-combatants and that widespread and useless destruction of property which are likely to result from ordinary methods of warfare. (Hearne 1909: xxix)

'Strategic' air attacks – on enemy cities – did indeed occur in the First World War: the Germans attacked London and Paris, and the Allies staged airborne reprisals against Karlsruhe, Trier and Saarbrücken. Some saw this as repulsive even then (Wells 2000: 40). By contrast, the British magazine *Flight*, reflecting the desire of military men to bring the experience of this ghastly war home to the civilians, in 1917 called for the bombing of Berlin in retaliation for the attacks on Britain: 'Until we can bring home to the originators of bombing raids on towns not ordinarily in the military zone the horror and injustice of it, these raids will continue' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 97).

While in reality the record of British bombing effectiveness during the First World War had been poor, on 1 January 1919 Trenchard published the official record of the British air force's performance in the war, claiming that morale bombing had been effective: 'At present the moral effect of bombing stands undoubtedly to the material effect in a proportion of 20 to 1.' By what reckoning he got to this equation, he did not explain (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 103, 131).

Even Douhet belonged to those who after the First World War thought that terror would shorten the next war and cut the losses. 'Mercifully', he wrote,

the decision will be quick in this kind of war, since the decisive blows will be directed at civilians, that element of the countries at war least able to sustain them. These future wars may yet prove to be more humane than wars in the past in spite of all, because they may in the long run shed less blood. But there is no doubt that nations who find themselves unprepared to sustain them will be lost. (Douhet 1921/1983: 60f.)

Douhet later noted his disdain for

that peculiar traditional notion which makes people weep to hear of a few women and children killed in an air raid, and leaves them unmoved to hear of thousands of soldiers killed in action. All human lives are equally valuable; but because tradition holds that the soldier is fated to die in battle, his death does not upset them much, despite the fact that a soldier, a robust young man, should be considered to have the maximum individual value in the general economy of humanity ...

Any distinction between belligerents and nonbelligerents is no longer admissible today either in fact or theory. Not in theory because when nations are at war, everyone takes a part in it: the soldier carrying his gun, the woman loading shells in a factory, the farmer growing wheat, the scientist experimenting in his laboratory. Not in fact because nowadays the offensive may reach anyone; and it begins to look as though the safest place may be the trenches. (Douhet 1928/1983: 195f.)

Billy Mitchell also subscribed to the view that city bombing would have benign overall effects:

No longer will the tedious and expensive process of wearing down the enemy's land forces by continuous attacks be resorted to. The air forces will strike immediately at the enemy's manufacturing and food centers,

railways, bridges, canals and harbors. The saving of lives, man power and expenditure will be tremendous to the winning side. The losing side will have to accept without question the dominating conditions of its adversary, as he will stop entirely the manufacture of aircraft by the vanquished.

He therefore thought victories might be 'sharp and decisive' (Mitchell 1925: xv f., 15). Similarly, Liddell Hart in his *Paris, or the Future of War* dismissed the 'ethical objection' to 'the seeming brutality of an attack on the civilian population', adding:

The events of the last war have, however, in some measure acclimatized the world to the idea that in a war between nations the damage cannot be restricted merely to the paid gladiators. When, moreover, the truth is realized that a swift and sudden blow of this nature inflicts a total of injury far less than when spread over a number of years, the common sense of mankind will show that the ethical objection to this form of war is at least not greater than to the cannon-fodder wars of the past. (Liddell Hart 1925: 50–2)

In 1928, Trenchard sought to nip any criticism of his Strategy in the bud:

I emphatically do not advocate indiscriminate bombing, and I think that air action will be far less indiscriminate and far less brutal and will obtain its end with far less casualties than either naval blockade, a naval bombardment, or sieges, or when military formations are hurled against the enemy's strongest points protected by barbed wire and covered by mass artillery and machine guns. (q.i. Jones 1987: 45)

We see here foreshadowed the expectation of the half a million lives saved on one's own side with which Truman would justify the use of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Britain, Brigadier Groves explained that:

In Europe, warfare hitherto primarily an affair of fronts will be henceforth primarily an affair of areas. In this 'War of Areas' the aim of each belligerent will be to bring such pressure to bear upon the enemy people as to force them to oblige their government to sue for peace. The method of applying this pressure will be by aerial bombardment of national nerve-centres, chief among which are the great cities. (Groves 1934: 32)

But the reality proved different: if anybody among the Second World War Allies actually harboured the illusion that a victory over Hitler's regime could be effected without a ground invasion, by bombing the German population into an insurgency against their own government, to force Hitler to sue for peace, they were gravely mistaken. The same illusion was entertained by some in the First Gulf War, and equally exposed as such (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 15). As we have seen, this assumed mechanism with which bombing a country would trigger an uprising to depose the leadership and sue for peace has so far not materialised.

Criticism of strategic bombing

Several authors showed great concern about the possible effects of city bombing even before it was so widely practised in the Second World War. 'Neon' described air bombardment of towns and villages, which had already been carried out many times in British and French colonial warfare in the 1920s, as 'alien and abhorrent to the instincts of the British nation, as it must be to all civilised and Christian people' (Neon 1927: 176, 189). Lord Beatty in a letter to *The Times* (2 May 1930) criticised 'the adoption, as a basic war aim, of attack on enemy non-combatants' as 'un-English' and unacceptable to the majority of Britons (q.i. Spaight 1938: 51). Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond condemned the prevalent views on the use of air power, involving the attacking of civilian populations, on ethical grounds: 'Frightfulness, expressly repudiated recently in the case of sea warfare, appears to be a fundamental principle in the air' (Richmond was referring to the Submarine Rules of the Washington Treaty of 1922). There were equally Americans who thought it unacceptable as a Strategy for their country, for example Major-General C.P. Summerall of the 2nd Corps and Captain W.S. Pye of the US navy, testifying to the Swight Morrow Aircraft Boards in 1925. Summerall saw bombing non-combatants as contrary to the laws of war: 'If that falls everything falls.' Pye was afraid the US would become known as '"the baby killers" and the "Boches" of the future' (all q.i. Spaight 1938: 51f.).

There was opposition to the Trenchard memorandum of May 1928 from the chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal George Francis Milne, and the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Charles Madden. Madden criticised the assumption that Trenchard took 'for

granted that direct air attack on the centres of production, transportation and communication must succeed in paralysing the life and effort of the community and therefore [in] winning the war'. But 'No evidence has so far been produced that such bombing in the face of counter attack will have such a result.' Both Milne and Madden feared rightly that air attacks of this sort might stiffen, rather than undermine, enemy resistance. Both criticised Trenchard's priorities as amounting to indiscriminate attacks on civilians, which would be unethical. Madden feared the conflict with international law, because, as Milne pointed out, Trenchard's doctrine 'amounts to one which advocates unrestricted warfare against the civil population of one's enemy' (Webster and Frankland 1961: 76–83).

At the Geneva Disarmament Conference 1932–4, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, the USSR and the Hedjaz proposed the elimination of military aircraft; others proposed a ban on bombing from the air, but no resolution was adopted (Spaight 1938: 62–5). Germany walked out of the Disarmament Conference in 1933, and that was the end of that. Nevertheless, long before the invention of nuclear weapons, the conventional free-fall 'bomb was, for most men, the Beast of the Revelation whose number they could not calculate', with the consequence that 'The civilised world took alarm' and tried to ban it like the dumdum bullet or chemical weapons before it (Spaight 1938: 169).

Strong criticism of the Trenchard–Portal–Harris Strategy came from within the RAF, even during the war itself. In 1941, Sir Wilfrid Freeman, Vice Chief of the Air Staff, disagreed with Trenchard's assessment of the weakness of German stamina in standing up to the British bombing: 'Lord Trenchard's theory … depends on a basis which is fundamentally unsound. Material damage would be negligible and the enemy's morale, if not stimulated, will certainly be strengthened in a very short time' (Biddle 2002: 196). After the war, inhibitions about putting forward ethical arguments against city bombing decreased. In 1949 an anonymous author published a pamphlet called *The Strategic Bombing Myth* which not only emphasised the importance of bombing German transportation for the collapse of the German army, but also described the strategic bombing of cities as immoral and ineffective (Gentile 2001: 160).

While the debate about the ethics of British and American air power Strategy in the Second World War is still going on (Markusen and

Kopf 1995), few today would fail to see where the moral problem lies, and this applies equally to views on what targets air forces or nuclear weapons can legitimately hold at risk. From the Second World War onwards, in US military parlance, 'strategic' in the context of air warfare meant (a) nuclear means and (b) the targeting of cities, including where possible the enemy leadership hiding in bunkers that could be cracked only by nuclear weapons.

Panacea targets

We have seen that an alternative to population targeting was championed by the Americans, but in the context of overly optimistic assessments of possible precision. The alternative revolved around the claim that a society could be paralysed by striking some vital points in its complex economy, points usually identified as power supplies (especially oil and electricity), transport nodes (key railways or railway or road intersections, key bridges), or particular industries. All of these were dismissed by adversaries of this approach as 'panacea targets' that would not work; unsurprisingly, the main champions of terror bombing, especially Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, who headed the British strategic air command from 1942, were among these critics (Webster and Frankland 1961: 290). From 1943, the USA particularly targeted synthetic oil production in Germany; Britain targeted Romanian oilfields in sorties from Italy. Attempts were made to take out ball bearing factories, but also fighter aircraft factories, a particularly famous example being the US daylight precision bombing campaign of February 1944, 'Big Week', which proved very costly in terms of the USA's own losses. Yet German fighter aircraft production rose – while the factory buildings had suffered extensive damage, much of the production machinery had remained intact or had been dispersed in time to avoid destruction (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 29f., 59). The lack of success of these sacrifices did not become clear immediately: in November 1945, General Arnold still clung to special targets:

The Strategic Theory, as applied to the United States air warfare concept, postulates that air attack on internal enemy vitals can so deplete specific industrial and economic resources, and on occasion the will to resist, as to make continued resistance by the enemy impossible. To accomplish the strategic purpose, it is necessary to destroy only a small proportion of

industry, probably not more than a fraction of the total required to conduct modern warfare on a large scale. Indiscriminate widespread destruction of enemy industry is simply a waste of effort. Examination of any national economy will disclose several specific industries or other national activities without which the nation cannot effectively carry on modern warfare. It is conceivable that there will aways be one industry, such as the oil industry in Germany, so necessary to all phases of the national war-making ability that its destruction would be fatal to the nation. (q.i. GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 9f.)

The strategic bombing surveys conducted by the USA and Britain after the Second World War, however, confirmed Zuckerman's scepticism, showing that the results of the bombing were most unsatisfactory. They had not been the single most important cause of the defeat of Germany, either through lowering morale or through fatally injuring the German war machine. Nor had the bombing of Japan's cities with conventional ordnance, even the firebombing, pushed the Japanese into surrender; it had taken the atomic bombs to do this (Chuter 1997).

   On the basis of the findings of the United Kingdom strategic bombing survey, Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens concluded that the bombing strengthened German morale, did not lead to a significant fall in productivity and was uncivilised. Dickens argued that the bombing made reconstruction work exceedingly difficult, but that this reconstruction was needed at the end of the war (Dickens 1946: 39). Often cited were the retrospective statements of Albert Speer, German Minister of Armaments and War, that a focused attack on the chemical industry would have brought Germany to its knees (Webster and Frankland 1961: 284). Wing Commander Hubert Raymond Allen was very critical of Trenchard and his pupils Sir Charles Portal and Sir Arthur Harris. Writing about 'The Scandal of Hamburg' and 'The Rape of Dresden', he argued that 'it was all unnecessary!'. After a careful examination of arguments made by them and the strategic bombing survey evidence (and indeed the perceptions of Albert Speer), Allen concluded

that the power of Bomber Command was totally misapplied in the Second World War. Area bombing was forced on Sir Arthur Harris because his aircrews could hit nothing smaller than a city except in special conditions. But the position changed quite soon after he assumed command and he failed to recognize this startling fact … Bomber Command should have sought

out the several weak points in the German economy and concentrated on them, in the same way that the Germans were hoping to sever Britain's sea communications by submarine warfare and put her out of the war. (Allen 1972: 131, 177, 181)

There is little to suggest, however, that the air forces of the Second World War would have been capable, against enemy defences, of carrying out such a precision air campaign. Attempts to follow such priorities in the Korean War with the 'Air Pressure Strategy', where especially hydroelectric power stations were targeted, had some, but not decisive success (O'Neill 1985: 379). Nor did selective targeting of this sort really succeed in the Vietnam War, but it has been argued convincingly that without taking the bombing raids into Chinese territory, whence North Korean and North Vietnamese supplies came, it was unlikely to paralyse either war effort anyway. The authors of the GWAPS have modestly argued that one reason for the success of Desert Storm, which included a large element of panacea targeting (especially of power supply and communication), was that Iraq did not rely on an external power for its supplies (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 365). By then, Warden's 'centres of gravity' had replaced 'panacea targeting' (see below).

The military targets school: denial

Tactical support or strategic weapon?

France emerged from the First World War with purely military missions for its air force. Here is how the first instruction book for 'large units' of 1921 described them:

Reconnaissance aircraft act for the benefit of the command, of artillery and infantry … Bomber aircraft attack targets on the battlefield, extend the range of action of the artillery and intervene against the [lines of] communication and the installations of the enemy, up to the limits of their range of action. They operate night and day, searching for [opportunities] of massive action that alone are capable of producing appreciable results. Fighter aircraft grant the reconnaissance and bomber aircraft their freedom of action on the battlefield, giving them cover against the actions of the enemy air force; they seek out the enemy aircraft to fight and destroy them. (q.i. Marill 1997: 26)

Oddly, the time of the planning (from 1926) and construction (from 1930) of the Maginot line coincided with heavy French flirtation with a Douhetian Strategy. Those charmed by it included First World War hero Marshal Philippe Pétain (1856–1951), the French air force leadership under General Victor Denain (1880–1952) and at least one of the Air Ministers, Pierre Cot (1895–1977) and his adviser General Jean-Henri Jauneaud (1892–1976). From the official institution of the French air force as an independent service in 1933 until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, they pushed for the construction of 200 bombers (Marill 1997: 28f.). Then France switched to a different approach, pushed by General Paul François Maurice Armengaud (1879–1970) and inspired by the thinking of the Italian Mecozzi, who like the Germans in the 1930s preferred close air support for battlefield operations. Gradually Cot and his 'brains trust', Generals Denain and Jauneaud, fell in with this line, supported by the lessons drawn from the Spanish Civil War. At the time when Cot left office in 1938, a specific form of close air support predominated, the *aviation d'arrêt*, whose mission was to stop an enemy invasion on the ground. The overall result of these several successive shifts within a few years has been described as 'chaos', one plausible explanation of France's poor performance in 1940 (Vivier 1997).

The USA in the 1920s and 1930s had the luxury of not being too concerned about invasions and, in the predominant spirit of isolationism, had little intention of getting involved in wars abroad. As the US Army Air Corps continued as an entity subordinated to the army until the establishment in 1947 of the USAF, its proclivity for military targeting in the interwar period was assured.

Even in the RAF, not everybody favoured the emphasis on bombers that the Trenchard–Portal–Harris school imposed. Slessor wrote in 1936 that air forces had the advantage of particular flexibility – they could be committed to this mission one day, and to another, far away, the next, whereas it took much longer to move armies and navies. The main air offensive, he suggested, should be directed against the enemy's lines of communication, and other targets defended by enemy aircraft. In this context one's own air forces might be able to avoid the enemy's ground forces and aircraft. The 'supplementary offensive' should be directed against the enemy's own air force as such. '[A]ir forces are less able to decline actual combat than are armies or navies.' One should, however, use one's own aircraft for the strategic and

tactical defensive only occasionally, and avoid it if possible (Slessor 1936: 34, 37). Consequently, the RAF entered the Second World War with a pronounced disdain for co-operation with either of the other two services, even the coastal command. Its leaders showed persistent reluctance to have their bombers accompanied by fighter aircraft on their missions, wanting to keep them back for the defence of the United Kingdom only. In 1940, the RAF balked at giving close air support to the retreating British and French ground forces and barely covered the evacuation from Dunkirk (Murray 1999b: 87–9, 120f.).

The Soviet Union had developed a strategic bomber force in the mid-1930s, but by the time it was invaded by Hitler's Wehrmacht in 1941, it had, in the words of air historian Edward Homze, 'the most tactically oriented air force in Europe' (q.i. Wells 2000: 27). The Soviet Union's air force lagged behind the others in modernisation: by contrast, the Luftwaffe was ahead of the others, producing aircraft of the latest technology from 1937–8, making it 'the world's most advanced airforce' by 1939. The RAF only made the transition to this new generation of aircraft in 1938–9; France from late 1939; and the USSR from 1942 (Murray 1999b: 105, 109).

Soviet strategists had from the Civil War onwards concentrated on the use of aviation to support the actions of ground forces, albeit not in what would later be called 'close air support'. Early on, the Soviets tried their luck in somewhat deeper strikes behind the enemy rear, against enemy aviation, but also against ground targets to cut off supplies and destroy forces not yet applied to the battle. Despite some debate about alternatives, this would remain the hallmark of Soviet air power use until and into the Second World War (Sterrett 2007: 54f., 86–126). The Soviet Union, and even more so Germany and Italy, had learnt from the Spanish Civil War: despite the notoriety acquired by the bombing of Guernica, the most effective use of air power there had been in battlefield support, especially at the fortnight-long Battle of Guadalajara in March 1937. Here the Republicans fought with the support of Soviet fighter aircraft against the Nationalists with their Italian backing. On this occasion, fighter aircraft for the first time posed a great challenge to bombers, which had to be defended by fighters against attacking fighters (Budiansky 2003: 206f.; Sterrett 2007: 60–4).

Unlike the air forces of its future adversaries, the Luftwaffe paid attention to the entire spectrum of possible air force missions, while

the RAF and the American air force only caught up with fully developing all these missions by 1943 (Murray 1999b:116). German Strategy included targeting military installations and enemy forces, entirely in keeping with international law (Corum 1995b, 1996, 1997). While the first field manual of the German Luftwaffe was written in 1935 without the benefit of its experiences of Spain, it already emphasised military targeting and close air support. The Luftwaffe from the very outset of the Second World War used the full panoply of possible air operations, from CAS to the strategic bombing of Warsaw, Rotterdam and then Belgrade (Boog 1992b). The Luftwaffe targeted airfields and ground forces' installations in Poland, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, with greater success in the west than in Poland, as the French, Belgians and Dutch had not dispersed their aircraft.

Subsequently, both the French and the British air forces did very poorly in close air battlefield support. In the summer of 1940, when the Luftwaffe tried to grind Britain down with its relentless bomber attacks on the British mainland, the Battle of Britain proved all those who had claimed that air power had no defensive role wrong: this operation was won by British fighter aircraft (Budiansky 2003: 225f.).

In contrast to the attacks on Britain, in 1941 the Luftwaffe achieved an easy victory over the Soviet air force similar to those achieved over the Poles, French, Belgians and Dutch, with surprise on their side. While the Soviet air force was not altogether wiped out on the ground and attempted a defence, it performed poorly. Disorganised after the Stalinist purges, it even had to resort to using long-range 'strategic' bomber aircraft for close air support of ground forces. The Soviet air force only began to recover at around the time of the Battle of Stalingrad in late 1942, and was numerically far superior to the Luftwaffe by the end of the war. Even so, in 1943 the Luftwaffe managed to bomb Soviet industry – its medium-range bombers were just capable of this – while the Soviet bomber-building programme got on its way too late to have a decisive impact on the Great Patriotic War (Wells 2000: 85–110).

The Japanese air force was largely oriented towards a Strategy of targeting military installations. In May–September 1939 over Mongolia, air force-to-air force battles took place between Japanese and Soviet air forces, won by the Japanese, after the Khalkhin-Gol incident. Japanese aircraft sank the Royal Navy's two capital ships off Singapore in late 1941, spelling out the end of British naval

involvement in the war in the Pacific and of its protective role vis-à-vis Australia and New Zealand. The attack on the US fleet anchoring at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 also fits the pattern of military targeting. The Japanese naval air force proved particularly important in this war, and the Japanese air force saw the support of the other two services as its main function, although it also bombed Chinese cities well into the mainland, such as Chunking (Wells 2000: 73–84).

Military targeting was also very important in the Mediterranean theatre. Allied action against German lines of communication across the Mediterranean was successful, not least because of Allied control of the air over North Africa; Rommel's operations in North Africa were handicapped by this (Budiansky 2003: 293). Of course, submarines played a huge part here. Yet German submarines also fell prey to Allied aircraft: the turn of the tide came in 1941 from which point a third, and increasingly more, attacks on submarines were staged by aircraft.

Despite these successes, the RAF was very unenthusiastic about convoy-protection. This is particularly true for Bomber Harris, who disliked such 'purely defensive' operations. The US aviators protested about being sent to 'look for a needle in a haystack' and preferred to bomb submarines 'where they are built and launched', in the ports. Attempts to do just that – bombing French ports like Saint-Nazaire in which the Germans were building their submarines – resulted only in vast destruction of the harbour towns, while the hardened shelters under which the submarines were being constructed escaped unscathed. By contrast, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of the Allied forces, emphasised the use of aircraft against the German U-boats in the Mediterranean as he was preparing the invasion of North Africa (Budiansky 2003: 274–8f.).

We have already seen that the US in principle preferred military targeting but found it technically unsustainable in the Second World War. Only one year after its end, the Greek Civil War created the need for renewed targeting discussions which could not possibly revolve around 'city busting', as the rebels were hiding in mountainous regions and did not have the support of entire cities. Then in 1950 the Korean War erupted, and again simply targeting North Korean cities was not the solution. While Thomas K. Finletter, US Secretary of the Air Force (1950–3), thought that Korea was a one-off and need not influence US Strategy or force procurement, General Otto P. Weyland,

US commander of the Far Eastern air force (1951–5), thought the Korean War something of a model for the future. So did Sir John Slessor in the United Kingdom, who had by now risen to command the RAF:

We must expect to be faced with other Koreas … The idea that superior air power can in some way be a substitute for hard slogging and professional skill on the ground in this sort of war is beguiling but illusory … all this is cold comfort for anyone who hopes that air power will provide some kind of short cut to victory. (q.i. Armitage and Mason 1985: 45)

The civil wars and anti-colonial insurgencies of the Cold War also evoked traditional reactions and can be seen as continuities in the use of air forces from the imperial policing of the 1920s and 1930s. Helicopters, first produced on a large scale late in the Second World War, made an important contribution to French counterinsurgency campaigns in Algeria from 1955. They became the quintessential air weapon to be used in support of ground forces, rising to particular prominence in the Vietnam War, despite their vulnerability to fire from the ground.

In turning away from the painful experience of Vietnam, the American military from 1975 to 1983 developed the new 'preferred' Strategy of AirLand Battle, and, as a derivative, NATO's Strategy of follow-on-forces attacks (FOFA). Both foresaw the use of conventional air power (and, as the last resort, nuclear weapons) mainly against military targets, largely in support of the operations of the ground forces, but preferably in deep strikes way beyond the 'forward edge of the battle area' (FEBA), launched from air bases on the ground or from ships. The emphasis of this Strategy was on jointness – hence the quaint spelling of AirLand Battle. Strategic (nuclear) targeting was only part of AirLand Battle as the ultimate threat of escalation. If the air forces were going to interfere with the enemy's supplies they preferred to cut them off at the source ('strategic interdiction') rather than in the immediate vicinity of the battlefield ('battlefield air interdiction'). All of this was made possible by the infinitely greater precision in bombing that came with precision-guided munitions (PGM) technology from the 1970s onwards. Meanwhile, also as a result of progress in technology since the beginning of the air power age, the survival rate of bomber planes carrying out attacks had risen exponentially, giving Western governments more confidence in their use without courting the risk of unacceptable levels of casualties among their own air crews

(Budiansky 2003: 421). All of these measures, with military targets bombed or held at risk, amounted to what Robert Pape has called the use of air power with the purpose of 'denying' the enemy victory (Pape 1996); the bombing is carried out not to punish the enemy, but to withstand aggression.

The leadership targeting school: decapitation

PGMs also provided the crucial prerequisite for the 'leadership targeting school', which aimed to inflict punishment on the chief evil doers, avoiding collateral damage when possible, a notion that existed also in nuclear Strategy in the 1980s. Leadership targeting is arguably a sub-category of panacea targeting, but it has a special moral dimension. Underlying this approach to air power is a notion of divine justice, which can now finally be administered by humans in war, from afar, in all places, without too much cost and pain to one's own side. The aircraft or the precision missile unleashes the lightning of Zeus that strikes down the tyrant, and ideally not the innocent people surrounding him.

Deterrence might be preferable, but would it always work? Professor Frederick Lindemann, later first Viscount Cherwell, a physicist from Oxford and one of the British government's scientific advisers on the eve of and during the Second World War, did not think deterrence, trying to keep the other side in check through threats of reprisals, would work against 'the heads of gangster governments' – what we today call 'rogue regimes' (Budiansky 2003: 189f.). Once the time of deterrence was gone and the Second World War was well under way, bombing from the air proved quite incapable of punishing the enemy leaders: Hitler survived the massive bombardment of Berlin in his bunker to end his own life.

During the nuclear age, as we shall see, the concept of leadership targeting – then referred to as 'decapitation' – was revived. This entailed the development of special 'earth penetrating weapons' or 'bunker busters' against 'very hard targets', which could only be tackled with nuclear weapons before the development of GBU 28 'bunkerbuster ordnance' with depleted uranium BLU-113 penetrators. While PGM fans uphold 'decapitation strikes' as an option, the GWAPS showed that the inability to 'land a bomb on Saddam's lap' (or later, Milošević's of Yugoslavia, or Osama bin Laden's) was due to

insufficient intelligence, not technical ineffectiveness (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 367; Pape 1996: 322f.).

But other ways of bringing an enemy state to its knees were considered. Even before Iraq invaded Kuwait, in 1988 Colonel John Warden of the USAF had developed the theme of 'strategic air warfare' as *the* best way to wage war in a paper, 'Centers of Gravity – the Key to Success in War' (Olsen 2003, 82; Olsen 2007, 112–14). Warden deliberately tried to exclude the targeting of civilians and aimed to limit collateral damage. Instead, he tried to target the leadership directly from the opening of an air campaign, with the aim of achieving 'strategic paralysis'. While this might include 'decapitation' of the enemy leadership, the crucial result sought was the paralysing of its decision-making and executive abilities, by cutting it off from its military forces and from incoming information. Beyond this, wrote Warden, 'Military objectives and campaign plans must be tied to political objectives *as seen through the enemy's eyes, not one's own.*' Warden made the intended end-state the criterion for target selection. Warden's concepts rejected any ground-forces-support role for the air force, advocating instead deep strikes into enemy territory, with particular care given to target selection. Warden claimed that, blinkered by the fear of a Third World War, the other services were pursuing war-fighting, not war-winning strategies (Olsen 2003: 84f.).

Inspired by Clausewitz, Warden's 'centres of gravity' had the following objectives:

[A] state realizes its political objectives when the enemy command structure (i.e., the enemy leader or leaders) is forced by direct or indirect action to make concessions. Control of the enemy command structure, civil and military, must be the ultimate aim of all military operations. At the strategic and operational levels, inducing the enemy to make the desired concessions requires identification and attack of those parts of the enemy state and military structure which are most essential to his ability and desire to wage war.

Concessions the enemy might be asked to make can range from 'his right to existence' to 'his desire to destroy his opponent. In between these extremes, he can concede a province, a trade right, or his intention to conduct a military offensive' (Warden 1992: 63). INSTANT THUNDER was a plan for strikes against eighty-four targets in Iraq over six to nine days (Olsen 2003: 64; Olsen 2007, 140–82). Warden

believed that this air campaign, on its own, could not only force Saddam to withdraw his troops from Kuwait, but also bring down Saddam's regime, as the population (including the armed forces) would rise up against him, once his tyrannical power over them was undermined by a paralysis of government through the destruction of its brain, heart and nervous system, in short, its vital centres.

Eventually Warden's ideas strongly influenced the four-phase concept of DESERT STORM as actually implemented:

Phase I: Strategic Air Campaign against Iraq;
Phase II: Air Campaign against Iraqi air forces in Kuwait;
Phase III: Ground combat power attrition to neutralize the Republican Guard and isolate the Kuwait battlefield;
Phase IV: Ground attack to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait (Olsen 2003: 131).

The strategic air campaign included the leadership itself, electricity supplies and oil refineries, air defences and known sites connected with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes. Effectively, this was a mix of leadership, counter-military, counter-force and panacea targeting.

Warden saw the ground forces as a fall-back force: a 'cocked fist' to be 'held in reserve'. This annoyed army leaders (Budiansky 2003: 414–18). To a large extent, Warden's quarrel with the army leadership was a rerun of the sword–shield debates in nuclear Strategy of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Gulf War Air Power Survey concluded, however, that the idea of fomenting a revolt against Saddam Hussein or a coup against him through a few days of strategic bombing had been unrealistic (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 15). As Budiansky noted, '[t]he political strength of Saddam's regime was such that only a campaign aimed at breaking Iraq and probably involving tens of thousands of casualties could have toppled the dictator' (Budiansky 2003: 427f.). Critics like Pape and Chuter pointed out afterwards that in this assumption about the population's willingness to rise up and overthrow a tyrannical regime, Warden followed the erroneous assumption of the city bombing school's morale bombing arguments. In fact no top Iraqi leader was killed in the air strikes, despite many strikes on government buildings and presidential residences. Nor did communications between Saddam and his commanders break down, as Warden had hoped.

Eliot Cohen, a lecturer at Johns Hopkins University and director of the Gulf War Air Power Survey, poured scorn on the 'passive collection of targets' as excessively mechanistic and in no way responsive to the enemy's moves, culture, psychology and social vulnerabilities (Budiansky 2003: 427f.).

Eight years later, when Operation Allied Force over Kosovo was carried out, there were calls for leadership decapitation (that is, the specific targeting of Serb leader Milosevic), but the intelligence was lacking to find Milosevic, as it had been in the 1991 Gulf War with regard to Saddam Hussein. Among the shortcomings of Desert Storm and of Operation Allied Force was that little thought was given to what to do once the enemy leader(s) was/were overthrown and how to turn this into a lasting victory (Olsen 2003: 288–90). The Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) decreed that the first requirement was not to have any NATO casualties or even losses of aircraft. The Kosovo campaign was a spectacular success, with fewer NATO casualties than in any air operation before. No resistance was put up by the Serbs on the ground. Christopher Coker of the London School of Economics commented: 'Humanitarianism, it would seem, is not just an objective. Western societies can now fight wars which minimise human suffering, that of their enemies as well as their own.' He remained sceptical, however, of attempts to 'sanitise' war and render it more 'humane', driven by the 'liberal conscience' (Coker 2001: 2f.). While it is true that damage to civilians and even to the environment were relatively limited in the Kosovo campaign, in this and the following conflicts in which the USAF and its allies participated, 'collateral damage' has continued to result in the unintended deaths of non-combatants. This is difficult to reconcile with the increasingly humanitarian aims that Western liberal democracies list among their aims in using force.

The political signalling school: games theories

The political signalling school of air targeting, the last and least to be discussed here, had its roots on the one hand in operations research or analysis thinking introduced into the policy-making process by mathematicians and economists, and on the other in games theory derived from economics. It dominated the early air power application by the USA in the Vietnam War.

Four days after becoming President, Lyndon Johnson approved National Security Action Memorandum NSAM 273, which defined America's war aims in Vietnam as: 'to assist the people and government of [South Vietnam] to win their contest against the externally directed and supported communist conspiracy'. All US 'decisions and actions' should be geared to ensure 'the effectiveness of their contribution to this purpose' (q.i. Clodfelter 1989: 40). After the Tonkin Gulf incident in 1964 (a North Vietnamese attack on a US cruiser), President Johnson's advisers urged him to bomb North Vietnam from the air. Of three options – (A), stepping up of covert activities; (B), allout bombing of North Vietnam; (C), slow squeeze, gradually escalating – the third (C) was chosen, with a bit of (A) mixed in. The Joint Chiefs of Staff preferred option (B), or at least a heavier bombing than option (C) as approved by Johnson.

The bombing campaign – ROLLING THUNDER – started on 2 March 1965 and went on for three and a half years, a length of time not originally planned. The public was told that the campaign was designed to punish the North for its intervention in the South, to undercut this support and to raise the morale of the people in the South. ROLLING THUNDER can be described as tactically offensive, even though the overall American Strategy was defensive and aimed at the restoration of the status quo ante in Vietnam. Over time, the bombing was stepped up both geographically and quantitatively to cover almost the entire North; Haiphong harbour was a target, but Hanoi, the North Vietnamese capital, was spared deliberately. In 1968 the bombing rates were wound down. Paradoxically, the North Vietnamese government gained kudos from withstanding ROLLING THUNDER, and managed to motivate its population to support the war. North Vietnam had espoused a 'long war' Strategy of seeking to exhaust the patience of their adversary (Smith 1994: 48f., 211–24, 240f.).

The concept underlying ROLLING THUNDER stemmed from early 1960s strategic thinking that can be traced to political scientists Robert E. Osgood (1916–91) and Thomas C. Schelling (b. 1921), labelled 'graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension' or GRIT, a variation of what they also called 'conflict management'. This was based on economic 'games theories' which assumed that conflicts, including bloody wars, could be played dispassionately with one side signalling its willingness to play with certain self-limitations in the hope that the other would make the same concession, or that one

side might make conciliatory gestures, while threatening to up the ante if the enemy took advantage of such a self-limitation and refused to make an analogous 'gentlemanly' concession. McGeorge Bundy (1919–96), for one, wanted to apply such targeting principles as developed by the RAND think tank, including categories of targets deliberately *not* attacked, with the idea that the North Vietnamese should realise that 'there is always a prospect of worse to come'. While Curtis LeMay (1906–90) claimed to want to 'bomb them back into the Stone Age', the actual air strikes were very discriminating, deliberately avoiding whole categories of targets, especially big conurbations. President Johnson and his collaborators retained the closest control on the targeting, approving 'packages' of targets for the weekly bombing at their Tuesday White House meetings (Budiansky 2003: 379).

But the 'pauses' in the bombing which the US government introduced in the vain hope that they would lead the North Vietnamese to seek negotiations and an armistice merely allowed the latter to repair damage, bring in new supplies and open up new lines of communication. Threatening to up the ante, escalating to a level of violence thus far not present in the game, like raising the stakes in a game of poker, while signalling willingness to come to an understanding and to de-escalate proved dramatically unsuccessful in Vietnam. The American side had much less to lose than the Vietnamese communists, for whom everything was at stake – not only their lives, but their society, their ideals and their people. Thus one 'player' was trying to fight an economic signalling 'game', using bombers instead of light signals or Morse code, while the other was fighting an irregular war, dismissing any game rules the first was trying to impose. One 'player' played with limited stakes only, the other invested all his stakes, willing to fight to the death. It turned out that it was this commitment and engagement which was decisive, not the objective strength in terms of quality or quantity of military hardware.

Arguably, South Vietnamese morale was initially boosted a little by ROLLING THUNDER, but not in the following years (Smith 1994: 211–24). Crucially, as Robert Osgood had to concede,

Hanoi was not persuaded. After three years the experiment in punitive bargaining was abandoned as a failure. Perhaps the signals were not clear. Indeed, in response to public protests throughout the world, the

US government stressed the purely military objectives of the bombing as though to deny their punitive function. (Osgood 1979a: 115)

The Tet Offensive in 1968 showed that ROLLING THUNDER had failed to break the will of the North Vietnamese regime. ROLLING THUNDER came to stand for failure.

The Nixon administration, determined to bring the war to an end, adopted a very different approach with its air strikes which for the first time used PGMs in great quantity. The LINEBACKER I operation of May to November 1972, and even more so the LINEBACKER II December 1972 'Christmas bombings', were qualitatively different from previous bombings, as by now North Vietnam was fighting a regular war. The aim, which was attained in January 1973, was to get the North Vietnamese to the conference table in Paris. LINEBACKER II comes closest in US practice to DESERT STORM in the First Gulf War, as it was a round-the-clock operation, with the use of laser-guided munitions, targeting also Hanoi and Haiphong; while targets were mainly military facilities and transport nodes, up to 2,000 civilians were killed unintentionally (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 63–5). While more PGMs were used in the First Gulf War, the difference was not an order of magnitude.

The USAF air power theories as applied to Vietnam, as one analyst opined,

derive their coherence less from how they interacted technically in the events of the 1960s and 1970s than from their common origin in the thinking done between World Wars I and II. First, air power's proponents … have typically stressed the essential novelty of the air age and the consequent irrelevance of historical experience. The new principles and practices of air power supposedly superseded old military lessons and dogmas. (Mrozek 1989: 5–7)

The theme of LINEBACKER, however, was an old one, with its overwhelming focus on strategic air offensive (strategic bombing and autonomous bombing offensive), with roots not only in Billy Mitchell's writings but also in Mahan's (Mrozek 1989: 183). Clodfelter summarized: ROLLING THUNDER on the one hand and LINEBACKER I and II on the other 'differed in their effectiveness as political instruments, and the political objectives guiding them contributed to the disparity of results'. With ROLLING THUNDER,

President Lyndon Johnson turned to air power to help achieve his positive goal of an independent, stable, non-Communist South Vietnam. At the same time, his negative objectives – to prevent a third world war and to keep both domestic and world public attention focused away from Vietnam – limited *Rolling Thunder.*

By contrast, with LINEBACKER,

President Richard Nixon's ... positive political goal was an American withdrawal that did not abandon the South to an imminent Communist takeover ... Even after he decided to court President Nguyen Van Thieu, Nixon's positive goals remained more limited than Johnson's ... Negative goals had a marginal impact on Nixon's application of air power. His détente with the Chinese and Soviets removed the threat of an expanded conflict ... The lack of negative objectives allowed Nixon to expand the bombing until it threatened to wreck Hanoi's capability to fight by rendering its army impotent.

Before North Vietnam's 1968 Tet Offensive against the South and its allies,

the Southern war was a guerrilla conflict ... *Rolling Thunder* could have affected northern war-making capacity only by attacking two targets: people and food. The destruction of either the North's population centres or its agricultural system would have had a minimal impact on the war in the South, however ... the prospect of North Vietnam's ruin did not guarantee a South Vietnamese victory ... The cessation of Northern support was no guarantee that Saigon could survive against the Viet Cong.

Again by contrast,

Nixon's *Linebacker* campaigns were effective political instruments ... [in part] because the war's nature changed in 1972. After the decimation of the Viet Cong in the 1968 Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese Army was the only military force capable of achieving ... unification. (Clodfelter 1989: 204–8)

While ROLLING THUNDER remains until this day an example of how not to, LINEBACKER II was seen by several strategists, including Richard Shultz, as a good example of the use of air forces

or 'compellence' – forcing an enemy to do something he did not want
to do (Shultz 1992: 171–91). However, Robert Pape thinks that

PGMs have done nothing to enhance the coercive strength of strategic air
power. Punishment, risk, and decapitation strategies had little merit before
PGMs, and they have little merit now. Denial remains the most effective
coercive air Strategy, and PGMs have further increased the superiority of
theatre air power over strategic bombing. (Pape 1996: 326f.)

There was an element of signalling in the First Gulf War's Strategy,
too, and a way in which strikes that were supposed to have purely tac-
tical or operational consequences suddenly rose to strategic import-
ance. The most famous example was the destruction during DESERT
STORM of the Al Firdos district bunker in Baghdad, which unbe-
knownst to US intelligence was being used as a shelter for civilians.
The ensuing international furore caused by these casualties resulted
in a significant reduction of strikes against Baghdad and Basra in the
subsequent campaign, as it became a priority to avoid a repetition
of this unintended outcome. The 'signalling' does not seem to have
worked. After the war, Iraqi officials said that they had taken US
strategic air strikes as evidence that there would be no extensive bom-
bardment of Baghdad and Basra and that therefore they should 'hold
tight and the Americans will go away'. Saddam Hussein's Interior
Minister commented: 'We would have understood carpet bombing,
but we didn't understand this other'; he thought the United States was
'just being spiteful' (Pape 1996: 320f.)

Conclusions

These four schools of air power are still with us today, although
what we have called the 'political signalling school' has in some way
changed beyond recognition, and games theory is no longer fashion-
able. The dividing lines between them have become blurred at times.
For example, the denial to the enemy of control over his military
apparatus by striking key communications centres could be seen either
as decapitation or as military targeting. But by and large, these differ-
ent approaches are still here. Moreover, they can be found transposed
into nuclear Strategies, which are the subject of the next chapter.

14 | *Nuclear Strategy*

Science has brought forth this danger; but the real problem is in the minds and hearts of men.

(Albert Einstein on nuclear weapons, q.i. Sokol 1961: 71)

Targets

'A history of air Strategy is really a history of targeting', wrote Philip Meilinger (2003: 170), and this applies equally to nuclear Strategy. This is also a practical way to point out the direct continuity from air power targeting to nuclear targeting. At the same time, the choice of targeting allows us to cut through rhetorical-ideological packaging, pointing to real, or in the case of plans, potential physical effects. Given the lack of precision that could be achieved with the aircraft technology of the 1940s, it is a matter of complete indifference to those killed in the bombing whether the intention in hitting them was one of deliberate indiscriminate bombing, dehousing them or targeting the factory two miles up the road. This of course also applies to whatever intentions and principles guided nuclear Strategy. Equally, it allows us to get to some hard facts, frequently obscured through rhetoric about 'knock-out blows', 'annihilation', 'surgical strikes' with 'collateral damage' or 'dehousing'.

City targeting from the First to the Second World War was partly a function of ideology, but definitely dictated by technological limitations which virtually ruled out precision in long-distance bombing. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in practice there was a clear preference for air attacks on targets directly connected to the enemy war effort, whether these were enemy armed forces themselves (land, naval, air) or logistic in the widest sense (transport-, communication- or supplies-related).

There was a remarkable continuity between the preferences of the pre-1939 military target school and the more general preferences of

Table 1 *Targets for conventional strategic bombing*

Operation	Military installations, including airfields, arms industry	Ports, transport nodes, railway lines	Civilian industries, power stations, gas works, oil refineries	Residential areas, civilians	Elites, leadership
Gen. Sykes (UK) 1911		✓			✓
Adm. Paul Behncke (Germ.) Aug. 1914		✓		(✓)	⊘
Kaiser Wilhelm II Feb./July 1915		✓		⊘/✓	
British air attacks against Germany 1918		✓		✓	
Gen. Douhet (It.) 1921	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	
Marshal Brooke-Popham (UK) 1926		✓	✓		
Pierre Faure (Fr.) 1931		✓	✓		
Macmillan (UK) 1938, 1941		✓	✓	✓	
RAF Western Air Plans 1939		✓	✓		
Germans in WW II	✓	✓	✓	✓	
UK in WW II	✓	✓	✓	✓	
US in WW II	✓	✓	✓	⊘/✓	
US in Korea 1950–3	✓	✓	✓	(⊘)	⊘

Vietnam (USA) Rolling Thunder	✓	✓	✓	✓	⊘	⊘
Vietnam (USA) Linebacker I and II	✓ (I and II)	✓ (I and II)	✓ (I and II)	✓ (I and II)	✓ (II)	✓ (II)
Gulf War (USA) Desert Storm 1991	✓	✓	✓		⊘	✓
Kosovo Allied Force 1999	✓	✓	✓		⊘	✓
Afghanistan 2001	✓	✓	✓		⊘	✓
Gulf War II 2003	✓	✓	(✓)		⊘	✓

✓ targeted or recommended as target
⊘ withhold target

Sources:

Report by the British General Frederick Sykes, 1911 on the future of aircraft; German Rear Admiral Paul Behncke, Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff, memorandum of 20 August 1914 on the usefulness of air attacks on cities; views of Emperor William II of February 1915 and May 1915 (Budiansky 2003: 45–8).

Giulio Douhet and Pierre Faure (Douhet 1921/1927: 28, 41; Faure 1931: 13, 31f., 43). Brooke-Popham 1926 (Spaight 1938: 45).

The RAF's 'Western Air Plans' for bombing of Germany on the eve of the Second World War; several of these were applied by mid-1941 (Budiansky 2003: 282).

Captain Norman Macmillan, air correspondent of the *Daily Mail* (Macmillan 1938: 55–7, 1941: 113).

General 'Hap' Arnold and Ira Eaker (Arnold and Eaker 1938: 128).

Summary of air power use in Korean War (Armitage and Mason 1985: 32, 36f., 38f., O'Neill 1985).

Rolling Thunder (Smith 1994: 211–24; Budiansky 2003: 380f.).

Linebacker I and II (GWAPS 1993, II.ii: 63–5; Michel 2001).

Desert Storm in 1991 (GWAPS 1993, II.ii; Budiansky 2003: 414–18).

Allied Force in 1999 (Budiansky 2003: 430).

Second Gulf War of 2003 (Budiansky 2003: 437).

Afghanistan campaign (2001–) (Batschelet 2002).

Table 2 *Targets for nuclear bombing*

Nuclear weapons Targets → Plans	Military installations, including airfields, arms industry, missile bases, other nuclear installations	Counter-force	Ports, transport nodes, railway lines	Civilian industries, power stations, gas works, oil refineries	Residential areas, civilians	Elites, leadership
US and NATO until 1954	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
US SIOP 1960		✓		✓	✓	✓
British preferred		✓				
McNamara (USA) 1962	✓					
NATO 1969– first and follow-on use	✓		(✓)		⊘	⊘
NATO 1969– general nuclear response				✓	✓	✓
NSDM242 (USA) 1974	✓		✓	✓		

Colin Gray (1979) ✓
WTO until 1987 ✓   ✓   ✓   ⊘   ✓

✓ targeted or recommended as target
⊘ withhold target

Sources:
British nuclear targeting preferences (Heuser 1997: 66–9).
US and NATO Strategy in the 1950s, SIOP 1960 (Ball 1986: 61, 64–9, 72–83).
McNamara in his Ann Arbor speech, 1962 (Olsen 2003: 72).
Limited Nuclear Options (Davis 1975/6).
President Richard Nixon on 17 January 1974 in a National Security Decision Memorandum NSDM 242; SIOP of 1983 (Ball 1986: 72–83).
Colin Gray (Gray 1979: 65–7, 1984: 66n).
SIOP 6F of 1989 (Ball and Toth 1990).Warsaw Treaty Organisation (Heuser 1993).

'conventional' (that is, non-nuclear) air strategists after 1945, when the 'strategic or city bombing school' emigrated in toto to the nuclear domain. With increasing technical precision, 'conventional' air Strategy largely abandoned city bombing, although this was treated as a 'worst case' or 'withhold option', applied for example at the end of the Vietnam War in LINEBACKER II, and even then not in the form of indiscriminate bombing of residential areas. Instead, 'conventional' air Strategy focused on targets of the enemy's war machine, to the extent that air technology and intelligence available permitted in each context. With the increasing precision given to nuclear weapons also (as these moved from the oldest nuclear technology of free-fall bombs to missiles and then precision targeting guided by satellite intelligence), the military targeting school was also able to become prominent in the nuclear context, as we shall see.

Nuclear Strategy is the child of air Strategy, in that the concepts governing it were mostly derived from air power theory. Some concepts were owed to naval or maritime thinking, but these were usually imported into nuclear thinking via air Strategy. Again, as with the influence of naval/maritime thinking on air thinking, the transfer was not directly one to one. Air Strategy was dominated by four schools, the strategic or city bombing school, the military target school and the two less important schools advocating leadership targeting and political signalling. In the 1930s, as we have seen, official British and some French air power thinking clung to the hope that a British or French strategic bomber force would deter the next war's opponents from using their air forces to bomb British and French cities, but this hope proved unfounded. A conventional 'deterrence school' was thus not viable in the pre-nuclear age. By contrast, the deterrence concept came to dominate nuclear Strategy. In fact, the strategic or city bombing school of the pre-nuclear age became the nuclear deterrence school, while the military targeting preferences of conventional air strategy underpinned nuclear war-fighting strategy.

Political signalling, which was applied conventionally in the Vietnam War, came to inspire NATO's compromise nuclear Strategy MC 14/3 and its derivative documents from 1967 (Heuser 1997: ch. 3). Leadership targeting also popped up from time to time in a nuclear context for deeply buried (leadership) bunkers that could not be taken out with deep-penetrating missiles. But even these concepts were usually harnessed to the overall sought-after effect of deterrence.

Deterrence

The British 'fleet in being' heritage

The history of nuclear weapons began with the aim of deterrence. Just as the British had hoped in the 1930s that the RAF's bomber force would have a *deterrent* effect on its enemies in a future war, deterrence was at the root of the collaborative Western nuclear programme from which America's first atom bombs stemmed. Two physicists at the University of Birmingham, who had recently escaped from the Nazi *Reich*, Otto Frisch and Rudolf Peierls, in a memorandum submitted to the British government in February 1940 urged it to commission the research and development of nuclear weapons. They themselves had worked out the basics of what was required, and added:

We have no information that the same idea has also occurred to other scientists but since all the theoretical data bearing on this problem are published, it is quite conceivable that Germany is, in fact, developing this weapon … If one works on [this] assumption … it must be realized that no shelters are available that would be effective and that could be used on a large scale. The most effective reply would be a counter-threat with a similar bomb. Therefore it seems to us important to start production as soon and as rapidly as possible, even if it is not intended to use the bomb as a means of attack. (t. i. Arnold 2003: 111–26)

Even in mid-August 1945, the British navy leadership, in pooling their thoughts and reactions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, came up with the following ideas, as expressed by Rear Admiral R.D. Oliver:

- The only hope of countering an atomic threat was deterrence, i.e. the possession of atomic bombs by Britain.
- 'So far in history, the appearance of a new weapon has always been followed by suitable countermeasures.' While '[t]he likelihood of this occurring in the case of atomic missiles' was 'not yet known', there was not much optimism that this would be the case.
- If Britain were attacked by atomic bombs, this small country, albeit the head of the empire, would 'be rendered ineffective from the war-making point of view and the survival of the "British Empire idea" would then hang upon the ability of the Dominions (and the

United States of America) to bring forth a greater counter-blow with rapidity'.

- All concentrations of military, industrial, or governmental power would be particularly vulnerable to atomic attacks, i.e. cities, military bases of all sorts (ports, any other naval bases, air bases, army bases), naval convoys …
- The net effect was 'that the price worth paying for peace is now very much higher, and that the main function of our armed forces should be the *prevention of major* war, rather than the ability to fight it on purely military grounds' (Hattendorf *et al.* 1993: Doc. 449; my emphasis).

At the same time in America, the academic Bernard Brodie made the case for nuclear deterrence:

[T]he first and most vital step in any American security program for the age of atomic bombs is to take measures to guarantee to ourselves in case of attack the possibility of retaliation in kind. The writer in making that statement is not for the moment concerned about who will *win* the next war in which atomic bombs are used. Thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose. (Brodie 1946: 76)

As Brodie said later, 'nuclear weapons do by their very existence in large numbers make obsolete the use of and hence need for conventional forces on anything like the scale of either world war' (Brodie 1973: 412). Had nuclear weapons now usurped the role of the navy and then the air force as self-proclaimed war-winning – or indeed war-averting – services, making the other services redundant?

Deterrence would be seen by many as the only rationale nuclear weapons could ever have, and the desire for 'deterrence' was thus at the heart of British government policy to develop nuclear weapons (Gowing 1974). As British Admiral J.R. Hill commented:

Inevitably, over the next 40 years, complications crept in. First, great confusion was caused by the application of the noun deterrent to the means of nuclear bombardment alone. Frequently the atomic weapon and its means of delivery were referred to as *the* deterrent, and this led to many distortions and errors of emphasis … Theories such as massive

retaliation … gave nuclear bombardment a deterrent function over too wide a range of issues, a function it could not credibly sustain. The misconception is inclined to survive in the more simplistic French attitudes to nuclear retaliation in response to any attack on metropolitan France. (Hill 1986: 80)

Very quickly, the possession of nuclear weapons by several parties led many strategists to the conviction that only deterrence made sense, because a nuclear war was unwinnable. Contrary to all we now know about Soviet and Warsaw Pact Strategy until Mikhail Gorbachev took it in hand in the late 1980s (Heuser 1993), Westerners, applying culturally blind mirror-imaging, began to assume in the 1950s that the Soviet leadership must share this view. While in 1949 and 1950 there was still the fear of a Third World War by Stalin's design, by the late 1950s, Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, the First Sea Lord of Britain, wrote:

We believe that so long as we remain united with our allies, maintain the nuclear deterrent and sufficient conventional forces to show our ability and determination to protect our vital interests in all circumstances, direct war with Russia is unlikely to break out except by miscalculation. (Hattendorf *et al*. 1993: Doc. 455)

NATO documents usually added the possibility of war by 'accident' (Heuser 1997: 1–14).

   Those who argued for international control of nuclear forces with the Baruch Plan of 1946, or since then for a drastic reduction in nuclear arms while taking care not to bring back conventional war in the absence of a nuclear deterrent, tended to explain the continued need for nuclear weapons in terms similar to the concept of a 'fleet in being'. They usually coupled it to the argument for the need to forestall a rogue regime becoming the only nuclear power on earth. In this context, numbers only mattered up the minimum needed to make a nuclear force 'sufficient' to be credible – a British discovery. With the technology available since the 1960s, this can be expressed in the concrete terms of three or four nuclear-powered submarines (to ensure that in a crisis, at least two could be active) carrying no more than fifty independently targetable and launchable nuclear missiles each.

Closely connected to the concept of existential deterrence is the concept of accepted mutual vulnerability. As noted by the British planners even in 1945 (see above), until nuclear weapons were invented, new offensive technology had always tended to find its defensive answer. Before 1945, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond's belief was shared widely: 'Man is so ingenious an animal that he finds a way of providing an antidote to most inventions. The accuracy of fire with the bomb and the torpedo has increased, and, simultaneously, the means of resisting the attack have improved. Finality is far distant' (Richmond 1934: 112). The advent of nuclear weapons had changed this. In France, the aviator General Pierre Marie Gallois argued that nuclear weapons have put an end, at least for the time being, to the old technological struggle between 'sword' and 'shield'. No reliable 'shield' was in sight to counter a nuclear attack, as even an anti-ballistic missile defence system would be fallible enough to let a small percentage of attacking missiles (or aircraft) through, sufficient to cause unbearable damage to the other side. He used this to back up his argument that a nuclear 'battle' could no longer take place (Gallois 1977: 220–2). Since the dawn of the nuclear age, scientists have worked on responses to a nuclear attack, and several were developed, including, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems, and the Strategic Defense Initiative ('Star Wars') of the early 1980s, with space-based technology. Unfortunately, no such system has as yet been able to achieve 100 per cent effectiveness, and anything less than a 100 per cent is unsatisfactory in a context where of, say, 1,000 incoming nuclear weapons, a penetration rate of even 0.5 per cent could spell the end of five major cities.

This led strategists and key decision-makers grudgingly to concede that it was paradoxically better to live with mutually assured destruction – MAD – than with missile defences. This point was implicitly conceded even by the Soviets when they agreed to sign, with the USA, the ABM Treaty of 1972, limiting ABM systems to the protection of two sites only, one the country's capital, one a site containing one's own strategic nuclear weapons.

The paradox of this mutually agreed perpetuation of vulnerability by enemies otherwise continuing to entertain operational war plans against each other has worried strategists ever since. Colin Gray accused US governments of having allowed a misplaced balance-of-power thinking to creep in (Gray 1984: 7). Other critics included President Ronald

Reagan, who with 'Star Wars' temporarily threatened to undermine the ABM Treaty, and George W. Bush, who after the USA's unilateral withdrawal from the treaty in 2002 pushed for a limited ABM system too small to undermine any deterrence relationship with nationalist Russia, but large enough to deal with perhaps a small, two-digit number of missiles fired by a nuclear proliferator elsewhere in the world.

Notwithstanding this de facto agreement by the Soviets to what in the West would be described as a state of nuclear deterrence, the Soviets did not really embrace it. They described their own Strategy towards the West as one of restraining it (*sderzhivaniye*). Western Strategy they described as intimidation (*ustrasheniye*) (Betts 1987: 5). This different perception on the matter led them to fail to grasp or deliberately ignore NATO concepts of 'signalling' resolve with restraint, and to abstain from developing limited nuclear options on a Western model (see below).

Deterrence by threat of punishment and French nuclear Strategy

While the United Kingdom adopted a counter-force preference, as we shall see, its declaratory nuclear Strategy and the characteristics of its 'strategic' nuclear system always hinged on the ability to strike 'key aspects of Soviet state power', *vulgo*, the 'Moscow criterion', that is, the ability to penetrate ABM defences around Moscow (Heuser 1997: 76–8). For a small nuclear force, any counter-force option, let alone tactical nuclear war-fighting in support of ground forces, was limited by its capacity and could be implemented only in an alliance context.

French nuclear Strategy was to a large extent a successor of the British 'fleet in being' Strategy, with a probably unconscious admixture of Tirpitz's 'risk strategy' (with its deterrence of a stronger force by a weaker force) and a conscious borrowing from the *Jeune École*. Even in 1945, Admiral Castex had hit on the formula that the atom was 'a great leveller', it equalised the standing of stronger and weaker powers, as long as the weaker power also had a nuclear weapon (Castex 1945). This idea was avidly taken up by General Gallois (1960: 4), the main thinker behind the *dissuasion pure et dure* (pure and hard deterrence) school which under de Gaulle became French government orthodoxy (Heuser 1997: 93–123). Just like Tirpitz,

Gallois argued that his country needed only a smallish nuclear force, as the Soviets did not merely have to take into consideration this force, but also how weakened they themselves would stand in relation to the USA, if France had inflicted upon the Soviets all the damage she could do (Gallois 1960: 185). Gallois was partly inspired in this argument by the British debate, where British nuclear forces were sometimes invoked as a trigger to bring in the USA on a conflict (Heuser 1998a: 34). Gallois and de Gaulle, however, firmly believed that this link with another superpower could not be relied upon in a formal alliance: unlike Raymond Aron, his main adversary in the *Grand Débat*, Gallois believed that the atomic bomb had killed alliances, a theme he developed in his belief that the Americans and the Soviets would sell out the Europeans in the Anti-Ballistic Missile and Strategic Arms Limitation treaties of the early 1970s (Gallois 1960: 187, 1975).

This was of course the key difference between France and her NATO allies who – willy-nilly in the case of those that did not or could not develop nuclear weapons, willingly in the case of successive British governments – preferred to put their money on the alliance with America as their nuclear guarantor. Robert Osgood later recalled that 'Outside Europe the credibility … of [the USA threatening to initiate] the use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances seem[ed] to reach its high point in 1954, during the Quemoy and Matsu crisis and the fall of Dien Bien Phu, and has steadily declined ever since' (Osgood 1979a: 104). Not just outside Europe: many Europeans, too, came to think of the American 'guarantee' – which was never written down anywhere, not even in the North Atlantic Treaty's Article V – as a bluff. Even Americans shared France's doubts: Bernard Brodie thought that the USA 'may not forever be willing to incur' the risk of nuclear attack on it 'in order to defend the nations of western Europe. It is therefore time we began to think of some alternatives to total war as a means of defending' Western Europe (Brodie 1959: 336). He therefore approved of the deployment of US and indigenous British and French nuclear weapons in Western Europe, but also substantial ground forces as a 'trip wire', to force the USSR to make any aggression equally substantial (Brodie 1959: 346). Where in naval Strategy the benefits of alliances as force multipliers and their credibility are uncontested, in the extreme case in which nuclear weapons would play an explicit role, reliance on

an ally is much less so. Let us look at this paradox from a different perspective.

In the context of an obsession with mathematical-economic formulae that had spread to France from the other side of the Atlantic, Gallois developed a formula for deterrence which has by far outlived any of its time. He described deterrence as the product of the technical performance of weapons or military means in one's possession, and of the subjective perception by the side to be deterred of the will of the threatened nation (or rather its decision-makers) to use these means (Gallois 1960: 151f., 209).

This formula, perhaps even more helpfully rendered as 'the product of the force of the means available and the will to use them', provides an insightful key into the whole phenomenon of deterrence – and self-deterrence. For example, anybody but a pacifist would be very likely to have the will to use conventional weapons to defend themselves against aggression. An aggressor might not, however, be deterred by conventional weapons, despite harbouring no doubt that his adversary would indeed use them. The limited means would weaken the deterrence effect considerably. Yet a state would be more likely to use its soldiers or its navy than its nuclear weapons in support of an ally in distress. The matter is different with nuclear weapons. Here, the willingness of key decision-makers to risk a nuclear defence against a aggressor who himself owns nuclear weapons might indeed be doubted, as these decision-makers might be 'self-deterred' by the danger of nuclear escalation. Though the means available might be terrifying, the product of means and perceived willingness to use them might tend towards zero, depending on the personalities of the decision-makers one was dealing with. There is no reason to doubt that Hitler would have used nuclear weapons, had he owned them. In the Cold War, no Soviet leader was willing to bring on nuclear war deliberately to speed up the spread of socialism to the rest of the globe. But then, no Soviet leader of the nuclear age was ever faced with an invasion of his country, and in such a case the perception would be different. It might be different again from that of European leaders with more humanist convictions.

For alliances this means that it is the best option to commit firmly to mutual *conventional* defence; this at least is credible, faced with anything short of a full-fledged nuclear adversary, and to make all necessary arrangements (peacetime command structures,

organisation, exercises, logistics networks and so on) to make them credible. In the Cold War, the problem with this otherwise sensible proposition, favoured by the USA, was that the Europeans rejected the course of preparing for conventional war in Europe. For them, the devastation caused by such a 'merely' conventional war, the Second World War, had been too great to contemplate a repetition. Europeans thus preferred *nuclear* deterrence, however lacking in credibility this might be.

Gallois's deterrence *pure et dure* was the essence of this European option, and it was uncompromisingly tied to city targeting. He described it as one of the central paradoxes of nuclear peace that with the 'resolutely pacific intentions' of using force only if it was itself attacked, the state had to commit itself to targeting the enemy's population. By the same logic, it would be the attacker that would target his victim's military means (Gallois 1960: 180). Refusal to give battle – the *non-bataille* (Gallois 1976: 22) – was central to France's posture and especially to de Gaulle's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command just as other alliance members wanted to come to an agreement on what to do if deterrence failed.

The descendant of Faure's unrealistic dreams of deterrence in the pre-nuclear age, French official nuclear Strategy is wedded particularly strongly to the notion that nuclear weapons have abolished at least major war. Dissenting voices, including those of prominent retired military officers, have been accused of being lackeys of the Americans, and have never been able to make much of an impact. The beauty of French Strategy is that it can satisfy both pacifists (Gallois 1976: 113), as atomic war 'will not take place', and the most uncompromising anti-American nationalists.

Both British and French strategies essentially hold enemy cities 'at risk', and as we have noted, this continued to be the ultimate fall-back option of US nuclear Strategy. This is the essence of any deterrence by threat of punishment, where targets especially valuable to the adversary must be held at risk. It does not rule out sparing them deliberately during a war, and for as long as possible hitting only targets that contribute to the enemy's fighting strength, but sparing cities, as Robert McNamara proposed to his NATO colleagues in Athens in 1962 (McNamara 1962).

This raised the question, however, of what the Soviet leadership really valued most, its population – of which it seemed willing to

sacrifice a considerable proportion – or its political control over the society as a whole and its military in particular (Albert Wohlstetter, q.i. Gray 1984: 18). We have seen that the USA had adopted in the 1970s, inter alia, a 'counter-recovery' targeting list, to destroy Soviet industry that would be vital to the recovery of the USSR after a Third World War. Colin Gray took issue with that, arguing that it should be the Soviet regime that should be eliminated through conscious targeting choices. He disapproved of population targeting on moral grounds, and thought that even counter-recovery targeting would indirectly punish the surviving population after a nuclear war (Gray 1979, 1984). His arguments on this point remain persuasive.

Morality, legality and credibility

This brings us to the legality of population targeting, the implied threat of deterrence. In 1961 the UN General Assembly passed a Resolution on the Prohibition on the Use of Nuclear and Thermonuclear Weapons, saying 'any state using nuclear and thermonuclear weapons is to be considered as violating the Charter of the United Nations, as acting contrary to the laws of humanity and as committing a crime against mankind and civilization'. It was introduced by African and Asian states, supported by the USSR, and passed with fifty-five votes to twenty, the USA, the United Kingdom, France and seven other NATO members among those voting against, and twenty-six abstentions. The USA tried to introduce an amendment about the use of nuclear weapons in individual or collective self-defence, but the amendment was defeated by fifty votes to twenty-eight with twenty abstentions (Rosenberg 1994: 165).

In 1965, the Second Vatican Council in its *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* addressed but failed to resolve the dilemma of the morality of nuclear deterrence. Essentially, the Catholic Church's stand was that deterrence was ethically justifiable, but not nuclear use (Osgood and Tucker 1967: 195–322). This makes little sense, if nuclear deterrence depends on the credibility of the implementation of the nuclear threat, as summed up in Gallois's formula above.

On 6 July 1996 the International Court of Justice gave an Advisory Opinion that even 'the *threat* or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law' (my emphasis).

Nuclear weapons states are under obligation 'to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control'.

In the long run, international law, and with it the stability of the international order which it is intended to govern, are bound to suffer from the continuing difference of view with regard to the legal status of weapons as deadly as nuclear weapons. It is consequently important to put an end to this debate of affairs: the long-promised complete nuclear disarmament appears to be the most appropriate means of achieving that result. (ICJ 1996)

A good decade earlier, during the last Cold War crisis, when American intermediate range nuclear forces were deployed in Europe, American Catholic bishops in a pastoral letter of 1983 gave their approval of the concept of deterrence for the sake of peace, but denounced any nuclear use in war (US National Conference of Catholic Bishops 1983). The illogic of condoning a nuclear deterrence stand but denying it any credibility in the form of executable nuclear plans was most famously exposed by Albert Wohlstetter (1983). In the United Kingdom, the Permanent Undersecretary and thus the highest-ranking civil servant in the Ministry of Defence and the brains behind official British – and much of NATO – nuclear Strategy at the time, Michael Quinlan, equally denounced the illogic of such a stance that would deprive any deterrence posture of credibility (Quinlan 1986). The same point was made by Colin Gray (Gray 1984). This criticism – rejected by the French for their own Strategy – provides the nexus between a nuclear deterrence posture and a nuclear war-fighting Strategy.

Nuclear war-fighting Strategy

The apogee of strategic bombardment

As we have seen, the effects of the atomic bombs in 1945 were claimed as the triumph of Douhet's, Trenchard's and Mitchell's ideas, which previously had not been realisable with mere conventional ordnance. The Japanese emperor felt forced to surrender, and the Allies had clearly 'imposed their will upon the enemy', to use the Clausewitzian expression. This is the common perception even now; whether or to

what extent this was truly the sole effect of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is the subject of considerable retrospective debate among historians (Heuser 1999: 8–34).

Simultaneously, it was one extreme of 'annihilation', and this strategy lived on into the Cold War. In 1949, Vice Admiral Arthur W. Radford testified to Congress that the USAF's atomic Strategy aimed at a 'war of annihilation'. But could this be reconciled with Western values, upon which the principles of the UN Charter were founded? Shortly after the war, President Truman, who had defended his decision to use atomic bombs against Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the argument that it had 'saved half a million American lives' and cut short the war, began to reason in a more complex way. During the Berlin blockade of 1948–9, Stuart Symington, Truman's Secretary for the Air Force, wanted control of US nuclear weaponry to be given to the air force and taken away from the civilian Atomic Energy Commission, so that they could train while 'handling it'. Truman refused, explaining 'that this is not a military weapon ... It is used to wipe out women and children and unarmed people, and not for military use. So we have got to treat this differently from rifles and cannon and ordinary things like that' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 351, 353).

Late in 1947, the USAF directorate of intelligence prepared a study of targets for atomic bombing within the USSR, with the horrific title 'To Kill a Nation', and the targets were above all industry located in and near seventy Soviet cities. A sub-committee of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Strategic Plans Committee, concluded in a report of 15 March 1948:

Atomic bombs will be used by the U.S. Strategic concept: To destroy the capacity and will of the enemy to continue hostilities. Initially to launch attacks designed to exploit the power of atomic weapons against the war-making capacity of the enemy. (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 349)

This thinking continued right through the Cold War. When General Thomas S. Power, Chief of the US Air Staff, was briefed by RAND in December 1960 on the concept of 'counterforce' doctrine and the virtues of restraint and controlled escalation with 'withhold targets', he exclaimed: 'Why do we want to restrain ourselves? Restraint! Why are you so concerned with saving *their* lives? The whole *idea* is to kill the bastards! Look, at the end of the war, if there are two

Americans and one Russian, we win!' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 366). This was not unlike the Soviet definition of victory prevalent until the late 1980s, when Gorbachev rightly put an end to such thinking (Heuser 1998b).

There was even, on the Western side, a short flirtation with preventive nuclear war, at a time when the Soviet arsenal was still so small and unprotected by means of hardened shelters as to be incapable of surviving a large-scale counter-force attack by the US even with conventional bombers. Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie, who had previously been a director of the US strategic bombing survey, in 1948 advocated preventive war; while the US would give its plans away if it made any conventional military preparations, such a preventive war could be prepared by stockpiling nuclear weapons and building bombers (Gentile 2001: 155). General Orvil A. Anderson, commandant of the Air War College, in September 1950 (that is, after the outbreak of the Korean War) made the mistake of recommending such a course of action in an interview with an Alabama journalist, which cost him his job; others shared his view, but General Hoyt Vandenberg, Air Force Chief of Staff, would not tolerate such public statements. Even Bernard Brodie seems to have flirted with the idea at the time (Gentile 2001: 159–61), as did the British philosopher Bertrand Russell before turning into a disarmer.

On the Western side, there were critics of city targeting from the moment such practices were aired, and not only among the anti-nuclear movements which formed among the public, especially in Western Europe in the 1950s. George Kennan in the late 1940s, when briefed about USAF strike plans against the USSR, noted: '[i]f you drop atomic bombs on Moscow, Leningrad, and the rest, you will simply convince the Russians that you are barbarians trying to destroy their very society and they will rise up and wage an indeterminate guerrilla war against the West'. Perhaps under his influence, a review of plans of the American Strategic Air Command (SAC) in April 1949 argued that bombing Soviet cities with nuclear weapons would 'not per se bring about capitulation, destroy the roots of Communism or critically weaken the power of Soviet leadership to dominate people'. Instead, it might well 'validate Soviet propaganda … unify the people … and increase their will to fight' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 353).

Other critics of SAC's Strategy tended to find themselves in the US navy. Admiral Ralph A. Ofstie, who in 1948 was still advocating that

the US should 'knock hell out of Moscow with atomic bombs', by October 1949 argued that the killing of civilians in the bombing of enemy cities had been immoral, and that it would be similarly immoral to kill Soviet civilians, and that such 'military methods' could not be endorsed by the US people as they were 'so contrary to our fundamental ideals'. Admiral Radford took the same position about the 'massive killing of noncombatants'. Admiral Thomas Kinkaid condemned the city bombing of the Second World War as 'terrorizing bombardment' violating the laws of war. Admiral W.H.P. Blandy thought that 'no sane man would derive any satisfaction from killing women and children' as it was nothing but the 'slaughter of innocent people' (Gentile 2001: 154).

Nevertheless, as we have seen, city targeting continued to dominate Western nuclear employment planning. As Stanford professor Anthony Sokol noted, the prevailing idea even in the 1960s was that 'strategic bombing' of the enemy's 'vital centers' (Billy Mitchell) would be central to any future East–West war, which would be even more 'total' than the Second World War had been.

It is the basis of most of the currently accepted theories of 'total war' and of the assumption that a revolution has occurred in the method of conducting wars in general. It is also the foundation of the present strict distinction between 'strategic' weapons and forms of fighting – those which affect the enemy nation directly – and 'tactical' ones which are used in the literal fighting between the opposing armed forces. (Sokol 1961: 30)

This was not just the public assumption, but operational war planning. In his survey of US contingency plans, Jeffrey Richelson found continuity of population targeting from 1946 to the late 1980s. Soviet cities always led the target list. Richelson pointed out that this was incompatible with the US ratification of Protocol I of 1977 of the 1949 Geneva Convention, which in Article 85 prohibits 'making the civilian population or individual civilians the object of attack'. This protocol tried to avoid the loophole of the 1907 Hague Convention, which had made military considerations possible excuses for targeting built-up areas. We find in the 1977 protocol that prohibitions covered attacks that 'may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and

direct military advantage anticipated'. While even this formulation is wide open to interpretation (who decides what is excessive?), it is indeed difficult to reconcile it with hundreds of thousands or indeed millions of non-combatant casualties (Richelson 1986: 244).

Counter-force targeting

In the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), the Marxist-Leninist faith in the inevitable triumph of socialism, taken to mean the necessary survival of a socialist society of sorts, dominated Strategy, but was repeatedly assailed by some who had a clearer picture of the physical consequences of nuclear war. There was much speculation among Western experts as to what operational Soviet and WTO Strategy was, and we still have little access to archives that would give us a definitive answer. Much, however, can be surmised from the exercises conducted by the WTO, some on the ground, some at a boardroom planning level.

Targeting was counter-force and counter-military: the WTO exercised the destruction of NATO nuclear forces (missiles and aircraft) before these were launched, on receiving warning that they would be launched, fictitiously launching WTO weapons at the very moment of Western launch (which makes no sense logically). With these impracticable simultaneous-launch scenarios, WTO exercises tried to make allowances for Brezhnev's 1977 oral commitment to 'no first use'. The numbers of missiles fired in the exercises were limited only by the available launchers; firing would therefore have taken place in several salvos. There is no indication of any attempt at 'symbolic' or signalling use, nor is there any indication that the WTO would have reacted with differentiated nuclear use (i.e. with a selective rather than an all-out nuclear response) to NATO limited nuclear use packages. The WTO exercises indicate above all an operational Strategy of trying to knock out – by conventional or nuclear means, both options were exercised – enemy nuclear weapons, but also command centres, air defences and other military installations directly connected with NATO's ability to use nuclear weapons in the European theatre. Surviving WTO nuclear strike plans for these exercises never included the direct targeting of population centres. But the collateral damage to big cities – for example Hamburg – from nuclear hits on military installations in suburbs would have been lethal for a large part of the

population, depending on the direction of the wind (Heuser 1993). The exercises give us no indication, however, how such 'theatre' use of WTO nuclear weapons would have related to 'strategic' use for targets in the USA, or even targets in the United Kingdom.

If any sense can be made of what was an ambiguous mishmash of postures (Baylis 1995), in the case of deterrence failure, preferred official British nuclear Strategy in the 1950s and 1960s would have been to use British strategic forces in counter-force strikes, which presupposed scenarios of joint action with the USA (Heuser 1997: 63–92). The issue of credibility arose here, too. At the end of the 1950s, the NATO powers abandoned their most-likely war scenario inherited from Douhetian thinking of the 1920s and British air power thinking of the 1930s, in which a major war would start with an all-out air attack by the other side, possibly as a 'bolt from the blue'. Thereafter, the scenario planned for was more one of 'accident or miscalculation', with a conventional attack by the WTO which NATO would try to stop, but which might get out of hand. The question was, how should such an attack be met, if conventional defences proved insufficient? There had to be options other than the incineration of Soviet cities as the next-best response. Could nuclear weapons be used 'tactically', in support of military operations, to deny the enemy a successful invasion?

Tactical nuclear use: deterrence by denial

At the beginning of the Cold War, and in the case of the USSR until almost the end of the Cold War, some military men, but also civilians, saw in nuclear weapons – at least the smaller, low-yield weapons that were developed from the 1950s – weapons of military use, just like any previous form of weapon. NATO Strategy MC 48 of 1954 ('Massive Retaliation') planned for their use on the battlefield in large numbers, but in rhetoric and operational planning, this was mixed up with massive strikes against cities in communist countries, all assumed to be part of the 'communist bloc' at the time.

In 1956 the British retired naval officer Anthony Buzzard, pleading for a more sophisticated Strategy than 'Massive Retaliation', made the suggestion that the West should declare that it would henceforth make 'distinctions' in terminology but also in planning and possible use, borrowing from air force terminology: 'The *tactical* use of

nuclear weapons … is to be confined to 'atomic [i.e. low-yield] weapons, and is to exclude even these from use against towns and cities. Their *strategic* use … is to include hydrogen weapons and the mass destruction of targets in towns and cities' (q.i. Baylis 1995: 198). In fact, this differentiation was henceforth made in popular parlance. Despite the fact that many other terms were used by insiders in the coming decades for a host of reasons related to Strategy and technology (such as battlefield weapons or short-range nuclear forces (SNF), theatre nuclear forces (TNF), intermediate range nuclear forces (INF) and so forth), several leading strategists – including key figures like Sir John Slessor and Pentagon planners – ultimately regarded such a distinction as impracticable (Baylis 1991: 143–6). While Buzzard's aim in recommending this differentiation had not been to make nuclear weapons more useable but to make escalation to city busting less inevitable – he wanted a more 'graduated deterrence', his linguistic differentiation coincided with the period in which military planners envisaged nuclear use in all circumstances (Heuser 1997: chs. 2 and 3).

This applied even to 'limited war' scenarios. Since the expulsion of Yugoslavia from Cominform in 1948 and the subsequent Soviet planning for an invasion of Yugoslavia which the West felt it should counter, US government planners and key decision-makers had developed the concept of limited war (see chapter 17), a concept which rose to some public prominence with the Korean War, and also that of limited nuclear war. In 1951, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) developed options for the use of nuclear weapons against Soviet satellite states that might invade Yugoslavia to return it forcibly to the communist fold. They deliberately excluded Soviet targets, in the hope that they might be able to contain aggression against Yugoslavia without escalation to world war (Heuser 1989: 167). From its inception, 'containment' was not a passive Strategy, but one aiming, like its more honestly named successor Strategy, to 'roll back' Soviet control of Eastern Europe and the Far East, but always in reaction to a strongly perceived, centralised communist military threat (Heuser 1989).

In 1951, the targets for such a 'limited' nuclear war as envisaged by the JCS would have been cities for want of the ability to hit anything else with bombers loaded with free-fall atomic bombs – the hydrogen bomb was first tested in the following year. Even in the late 1950s,

Bernard Brodie still thought that 'Limited war might conceivably include strategic bombing carried on in a selective or otherwise limited manner, for example bombing with nuclear weapons on selected targets such as airfields while being as careful as possible not to hit cities' (Brodie 1959: 310).

The question remained unanswered as to whether such use would have inevitably resulted in escalation. The hope of keeping a nuclear war limited grew with the development of low-yield 'battlefield' or 'tactical' nuclear weapons, undertaken since 1951, with usable prototypes ready by 1953. Thomas Schelling at the RAND corporation wrote six years later:

With the development of small-size, small-yield nuclear weapons suitable for local use by ground troops with modest equipment, and with the development of nuclear depth charges and nuclear rockets for air-to-air combat, the technical characteristics of nuclear weapons have ceased to provide much basis, if any, for treating nuclear weapons as peculiarly different from other weapons in the conduct of limited war.

But some argued that

there are political disadvantages in our using nuclear weapons in limited war, particularly in our using them first, and that those who consider a fireball as as moral as napalm for burning a man to death must nevertheless recognize a worldwide revulsion against nuclear weapons as a political fact. In other words, if there is no longer a technical military dividing line between the effects of nuclear weapons and the effects of other weapons, there is a political distinction, a restraint exercised by the reactions of allies and neutrals. (Schelling 1959: 1)

It was such battlefield nuclear weapons which led Henry Kissinger to embrace the concept of limited nuclear war, which he thought possible, if combined with the tactics of 'small, highly mobile, self-contained units, relying largely on air transport even within the combat zone'. He was convinced that both sides would refrain from escalating such a conflict to a strategic level (Kissinger 1957: 174–202, esp. 180).

War between nuclear powers has to be planned on the assumption that it is likely to be a nuclear war. Nuclear war should be fought as something less than an all-out war. Limited nuclear war represents our most effective

strategy against nuclear powers or against a major power which is capable of substituting manpower for technology. (Kissinger 1957: 199)

But it would work only in certain conditions, namely if strategic exchanges were avoided (that is, escalation to all-out war), if the enemy was not expected to surrender unconditionally, if one came across as determined and yet created a framework for a settlement of the conflict that was acceptable to the adversary and if one employed force in a discriminating or 'graduated' way (Kissinger 1957: 201).

By the early 1960s, however, official US thinking was that nuclear war should not be viewed in the category of 'limited' war, a term henceforth reserved for warfare involving the use exclusively of conventional weapons (Trachtenberg 1986: 763). Robert Osgood, an American strategist who devoted much thought to the concept of 'limited war', soon concluded it was impossible for Europe:

Most official studies and war games indicated that, even if it could be limited geographically, a tactical nuclear war in Europe would probably ... devastate the European allies, and that it would require more rather than less manpower. Moreover, given the growing Soviet tactical nuclear weapon force, NATO's ports, airfields, supplies, and logistics seemed particularly vulnerable in a tactical nuclear war. (Osgood 1979a: 106)

He added:

One trouble with all strategies of local war in Europe was that the Soviet Union showed virtually no inclination to be a partner to them. Rather, Soviet doctrine, published sources, and war manoeuvres, seemed rigidly geared to a strategy of blitzkrieg – a sudden offensive strike with conventional and nuclear (both battlefield and strategic) weapons intended to defeat and disorganize the NATO powers. Although Soviet military writings in the late 1960s envisaged the possibility of limited non-nuclear exchanges, they remained as hostile as ever to ideas of controlled escalation and intra-war bargaining by limited options of any kind, and especially by nuclear options. (Osgood 1979a: 107)

Air power thinking also underlay the question of what role nuclear weapons would play in relation to conventional weapons. The reversal of scenarios of the end of the 1950s from massive initial attack to gradual escalation from an initially conventional war (Heuser

1997: 3–14) went along with a debate about 'sword and shield'. Douhet saw the ground forces as a shield, there to hold up an enemy's aggression on the ground, while the air forces as sword would attack his vital parts, his cities, in strategic strikes. This view dominated NATO Strategy in the early 1950s, until the introduction of battlefield nuclear weapons could help NATO ground forces 'deny' enemy ground forces any conquest on the ground. If the enemy – the WTO – did not persist in its attack and did not start employing nuclear weapons on any level, a war might be terminated there without any need to resort to 'strategic' nuclear bombing by SAC.

Alternatively, with hugely increased conventional ground forces, the preferred US strategic option of the Kennedy administration would have been to try to repel a WTO attack with conventional forces only, using them as 'sword' to defeat aggression, while the nuclear forces (and assumed fear of nuclear escalation on all sides) would have acted as 'shield', or perhaps more accurately, a lid on escalation to a nuclear level. As noted above, the Europeans could not live with this Strategy, as in their experience even a conventional war on their territory was unbearable. This US–European debate marked the parting of ways of France and NATO where nuclear Strategy was concerned.

But for the other Europeans, too, deterrence by conventional or battlefield nuclear 'denial' was unacceptable. They insisted that NATO Strategy had to put an end to aggression as quickly as possible by bringing in the threat of nuclear escalation. There was here, always, a divergence of interests for Europeans and Americans; NATO always had a problem with the credibility of America's nuclear protection promise to its allies. Albert Wohlstetter thought that no nation would commit suicide for another; indeed, '[s]uicidal threats are *in general* not a reliable means' of deterrence (Wohlstetter 1983: 30). Once Soviet bombers and missiles could reach the USA, NATO always had to struggle with the credibility of any threat of nuclear use.

Political signalling for war termination, and the danger of escalation

Even in 1954, somebody had hit on the possible need to restore deterrence, once it had broken down. Not just recognising an either-or of deterrence or, in the absence of deterrence, war fighting, Warren

Amster, an American operations analyst, noted that there had to be three levels to deterrence:

1. deterrence to prevent the outbreak of war
2. 'to stop such a war, should it start' and
3. 'failing this, to carry out … destruction of the attacker's country' (q.i. Sherwin 1956: 135).

The US–European debate of the early 1960s was resolved by NATO – minus France – through a compromise between deterrence by denial, tactical use and deterrence by political signalling for the purpose of war termination. This was expressed in the political guidelines for first or early follow-on use of nuclear weapons by NATO, in which strategic nuclear weapons were indeed seen as a shield or lid, not to be resorted to except in extremis, in the great hope that war could be terminated through restoration of 'intra-war deterrence' through limited use of nuclear weapons by NATO. Targets would have been military, specifically not population centres. There was some debate as to where these targets should be. John P. Craven thought that the first use of nuclear weapons – as tactical use – was more likely to occur on sea against enemy ships, as collateral damage there would have been minimal (Craven 1980: 82). Thought was given to other options for such 'tactical' use with the possibility of avoiding escalation, although many strategists doubted that such a scenario was realistic (Bull 1980: 8). NATO finally agreed that as the purpose of such a first use of nuclear weapons would have been to *signal* to the USSR NATO's resolve, to expose the Soviet leadership's *miscalculations* about any lack of determination on the part of NATO to defend itself, the targets had better be of significant importance for the WTO's war effort, on land (Heuser 1997: 52–7).

The French, no longer included in NATO nuclear planning, felt compelled to make some concessions concerning the problem of how to get from nothing to all-out nuclear retaliation. Guy Brossollet, a French defence official, wrote a study on the *Non-Battle* (refusal of battle) which largely reflected official Strategy: taking up an idea developed by General Fourquet in the late 1960s, Brossollet argued that France needed to 'test' the adversary's intentions with conventional forces, but not in order to deny them conquest physically, only in order to show that they could not invade Western Europe without resistance. The threat of nuclear weapons was held to prevent escalation

after such a 'test', as surely the enemy would recoil from risking nuclear war. The 150 air-mobile units charged with conducting such 'tests' imagined by Guy Brossollet (which he called 'modules') would be deployed in depth and would aim to disrupt the enemy's advance, without seeking to defeat him in a major battle; they knew they were not capable of doing so. If these conventionally armed 'modules' proved unable to stop the enemy (that is, the enemy would accept the losses they inflicted and not believe that France was prepared to escalate to nuclear war), Brossollet (in keeping with operational French Strategy) counselled the use of short-range, low-yield nuclear weapons (the *Pluton* ground-launched missiles), again with the aim of 'testing' the adversary's resolve, not with the aim of defeating his onslaught. Only if the enemy proved determined to carry on would France use her strategic nuclear arsenal, held back until such a time as her last trump (Brossollet 1975). The 'test' is the only French concession to the need for an actual nuclear use plan to bolster the credibility of what is otherwise an all-or-nothing nuclear stance.

If initial nuclear use did not persuade the enemy that aggression promised no success, then NATO Strategy would have foreseen follow-on nuclear use. The concept of an escalation to several successive levels is associated with the work of the US strategist Herman Kahn. Famously, he elaborated on 'rungs' on an 'escalation ladder', emphasising that one could move up and down on this ladder, in the hope that the final (forty-fourth) rung of 'Spasm or insensate war' would never be reached (Kahn 1965). Kahn's concept owed something to Amster's 1950s ideas of calibrating nuclear responses (to minimise the danger of unintended escalation) by, for example, using just as many nuclear carriers in retaliation as the enemy had sent out, or hitting as many targets as the enemy (Sherwin 1956: 135).

The crucial objection to this approach, and indeed to any political signalling intention, which still holds today, was formulated in the same year by Thomas Schelling, ironically one of the thinkers with whom it originated. He cast doubt on the ability to signal such intentions to the adversary in the midst of the confusion invariably caused by any nuclear strikes in a war-time situation that was by definition confused (Schelling 1965: 228). Indeed there is no indication that the WTO would have agreed to 'play this game' rooted in economists' games theory. WTO Strategy did not differentiate in its responses to Western nuclear use – as far as we can see, its Strategy was completely

independent from Western action except for launch-on-warning, to which the response would have been pre-planned launches in large numbers, not differentiated responses (Heuser 1993).

Central to all of NATO Strategy was also the danger of self-deterrence. This was the reason why the early NATO Strategy of 'Massive Retaliation' was abandoned by all but France. As Bernard Brodie commented:

[P]rotagonists of the massive-retaliation doctrine [support] that position not because they preferred big wars to little ones but because they have been convinced that such a policy minimizes the danger of *any* war. It makes sense, they imply, to threaten a possibly suicidal reaction to aggression as long as the chance of aggression is thereby reduced almost to zero.

The problem is, however, 'its conspicuous lack of credibility' (Brodie 1959: 349f.). Others, too, doubted this credibility. Lawrence Freedman saw NATO Strategy in the early 1980s as a 'myth', a 'mixture of confusion and uncertainty'; in his magisterial work on the evolution of nuclear Strategy he came away with the 'sense of an enormous, and somewhat transparent, bluff' (Freedman 1989: 78–80, 157, 428). Paradoxically, the only logical way out of this dilemma was to introduce an element of irrationality, in Thomas Schelling's words, 'a threat that leaves something to chance'. Decision-makers might find it in their interest to convey the impression that war might escape their control (Schelling 1960: 83–118). We have here a third attitude to chance: the strategists of early modern Europe had tried to contain it through drill, planning and mathematics; Frederick II and Napoleon had tried to take advantage of its opportunities, and here it was introduced to try to render something credible which otherwise had little plausibility. Lawrence Freedman concluded his study on nuclear Strategy with the observation that the uncertainties as to whether nuclear deterrence would work in all future scenarios, and whether in political contexts as yet unforeseeable they would not lead to major disaster, could only leave untroubled those with an 'optimism unjustified by any historical or political perspective'.

[T]he position we have reached is one where stability depends on something that is more the antithesis of strategy than its apotheosis – on threats that things will get out of hand, that we might act irrationally, that

possibly through an inadvertence we could set in motion a process that in its development and conclusion would be beyond human control and comprehension … *C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la stratégie.* (Freedman 1989: 432f.)

The Soviets seem to have gone one step further, at least eliminating the paradox: reportedly, they introduced a 'Dead Hand' nuclear retaliation system that would have launched an all-out nuclear counteroffensive in case of a nuclear attack on the USSR, even if all Soviet command centres had been annihilated by the enemy, unstoppable by any human agency. This eliminated chance and the human element from the equation. But such a retaliatory strike was no meaningful Strategy in the sense in which we have used the term in this book, as no meaningful political ends, except crudest revenge, could have been achieved in this way. If the world had been immersed in radioactive nuclear winter for years after the explosion of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, as some scientists predicted, there could also be no meaningful victory.

Can nuclear war be won?

We have seen that nuclear weapons were from their first use linked by Brodie and other foresightful thinkers with the future need to deter, rather than fight, any major war. Sir John Slessor, shortly after his retirement from the RAF in 1952, wrote in *Air Force* magazine: 'I assure you that in my opinion everybody is going to lose the next war' (q.i. Budiansky 2003: 364). Caspar Weinberger, US Secretary of Defense, merely reiterated what by then was a mantra when in 1983 he told Congress that 'We, for our part, are under no illusions about the dangers of a nuclear war between major powers; we believe that neither side could win such a war' (q.i. Gray 1984: 7). It had taken some time for this realisation to spread in the West, however, and even today, there is no way of knowing whether this conclusion is universally accepted.

Between 1957 and the adoption of MC 14/3 in 1967, the Strategy document which would remain operational for NATO until the end of the Cold War, NATO gradually backed away from any hope of 'winning' a war against the Soviet Union, let alone 'defeating' it. At best, the war aim in a (it was *always* assumed) defensive war against the

Warsaw Pact was to bring aggression to a stop and, ideally, restore the status quo ante. But even the latter was a pious wish. By contrast, the WTO backed away from an offensive posture only with its Strategy of 1987, and only the draft Strategy of 1990 espoused as strategic aims, first, the prevention of all war, and second, should this fail, war termination. All previous WTO strategies had seen the ('historically inevitable') victory of socialism – even if defined as the survival of just a few socialists – as the war aim (Heuser 1998b).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the United States espoused a 'Countervailing Strategy' central to which was the aim of denying any aggressor victory – the fruits of aggression – through adroit force employment, including nuclear targeting (Makins 1981). One of its architects, Walter Slocombe, Deputy Undersecretary for Defense for Policy Planning, explained that the Strategy did 'not assume that the United States can "win" a limited nuclear war', but that it would 'ensure as best we can that the *Soviets* do not believe they could win such a war' (Slocombe 1981: 24).

There were Western strategists, however, who were impatient with the notion that nuclear war would be 'unwinnable', in particular Reagan advisers Colin Gray and Keith Payne. Admittedly, Gray had a modest definition of 'victory' as 'no more and certainly no less than that the United States achieves its political objectives (whatever they may be – and they may be quite modest)' (Gray 1984: 6). This is a very acceptable definition. If the conditions were met that any political objectives must be reasonable in relation to means, technology, risks and the avoidance of intolerable developments, then even NATO's Strategy aiming at 'war termination' (or the re-establishment of deterrence 'intra-war') would constitute a 'victory', thus defined. This does not, however, seem to have been enough for Gray and Payne, who challengingly claimed that 'Victory is Possible' in nuclear war, calling for the adoption of targeting principles to correspond to a 'Theory of Victory' (Gray 1979; Gray and Payne 1980).

Notwithstanding these two catchy titles, their argument had some plausibility, and took Catholic teaching on 'just war' as its key criteria. They rightly criticised the lack of coherence in the formulation of US Strategy in terms of military planning, weapons development and procurement and arms control, and the lack of planning beyond limited nuclear options for early use in war, as opposed to an integrated plan for what to do if further escalation became necessary

(short of, again, 'general nuclear response'). On the one hand, they advocated giving greater protection to the United States through civil defence (which was all but non-existent, compared with that of the USSR), and ballistic and air defences, thus paving the way for a welcoming of Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. They never ceased to stress the implausibility of any nuclear use that would result in hundreds of millions of American deaths through Soviet retaliation. On the other hand they advocated a shift away from the targeting of Soviet industry, especially its recovery ability, and the corresponding collateral damage among civilians, and towards the targeting of the relocation bunkers of the Soviet political and military leadership, communication centres, means of communication and other instruments of domestic control (Gray and Payne 1980; Gray 1984). But in the heightened sensitivity of this Second Cold War, the aggressive packaging of their recommendations in terms of 'victory' and 'warfighting' made many fearful of their views.

By contrast, there is a different tendency in Western thinking, rooted both in the anti-nuclear fears of the disarmers and in the political realism of Michael Howard and others who recognised even in the Cold War that nuclear disarmament might only make the world 'safe for conventional war'. It is the quest for ways to delegitimise and marginalise nuclear weapons, to reduce them to 'fleets in being' that will dampen the bellicosity of actors on the world scene, without themselves remaining a major risk to security (Yost 1990). The end of the Cold War was both caused by and made possible by massive nuclear arms reductions above all in the USA and the Soviet Union, but also in Britain and France, with enormous reductions also of US nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear NATO members, and corresponding withdrawal of Soviet weapons from the states of the defunct WTO (Smith 2002). Tactical (or non-strategic) nuclear weapons of all sorts disappeared from Europe virtually overnight, with France persuaded to follow suit; those strategists who had worked hard to bring about the strategies of the early 1980s briefly shed tears over the elimination of 'the wrong' weapons, while very quickly all sides were delighted with their removal (Garrett 1987; Davis 1988).

New initiatives were put forward of an ever more practical and decreasingly ideological nature on how to reduce nuclear arsenals further, until they might be little more than 'virtual', 'post-existential', perhaps even unassembled. Surprising individuals were among those

now seriously interested in the study of how nuclear weapons could be abolished, including Robert McNamara and the late Sir Michael Quinlan. The two or three 'realists' who immediately after the end of the Cold War proclaimed that nuclear proliferation would make the world safer, and that one might best start with Germany (Mearsheimer 1990), were booed down overwhelmingly, not least by Germans.

Russia in the 1990s moved to a deterrence by denial Strategy resembling that of the USA in the mid-1950s, when battlefield nuclear weapons were to be used to make up for conventional weapons and personnel deficiencies. By contrast, and with the exception of Israel, nuclear proliferation outside Europe has in each case gone together with a weighty political agenda in which the nuclear weapons, real or still aspired to, are a political weapon and not crucial to any military Strategy. Nevertheless, here as in Strategies for conventional wars that we shall discuss in the following chapters, the West may be very much out of line with the thinking in some other cultures of the world.

War taken to its absurd extreme

The possibilities of nuclear warfare have taken war to its most absurd extreme. For anybody valuing human life as much as liberty, which after all is nothing if there are no humans to enjoy it, or if humans can enjoy it only amid death and rubble, the Armageddon scenarios of the Cold War would have made no sense, if implemented.

We have seen, however, that 'merely conventional' weapons, with precision guidance, whether fired from land, sea or from aircraft, have reawakened old dreams of meting out divine justice upon tyrants, rogues and villains, ideally sparing non-combatants, and all preferably at no cost to oneself (called by the French *la guerre zéro morts*, war with zero deaths, naturally only on one's own side). A rough realisation of this dream was made possible by 'smart' missiles which America has put into use since the 1970s for precision targeting.

And yet it is difficult to accept the argument that 'limited nuclear use' with 'small-yield' nuclear weapons is possible merely because, so the argument goes, it would not amount to much more than the use of high-yield 'conventional' weapons such as fuel-air explosives. Both are in fact a quantum leap up from the 'conventional' weapons used in the World Wars and even in Korea and Vietnam, and this should not commend them to us. The Maxim gun, dynamite, air

bombardment and even nuclear weapons have not banned *all* war, let alone eliminated all the causes for wars. The British planners of 1945 were right, in that so far no *technological* defence has been found to counter nuclear weapons fully. Yet there is an answer, an asymmetric one, to enormously strong powers, even those operating with ultra-sophisticated technology, even to those owning nuclear weapons. This we shall explore in the next chapter.

Asymmetric or 'small' wars

15 | *From partisan warfare to people's war*

'The Way' means inducing the people to have the same aim as the leadership, so that they will share death and share life, without fear of danger.

(Sun Tzu *c*. 500–300 BCE: 1)

I prove to the conquering peoples the folly of wanting to invade a country where the threatened nation is disposed to … rise up spontaneously, *en masse.*

(Le Mière de Corvey 1823: xivf.)

Two meanings of 'small war'

Armies with state-of-the-art weaponry, fighting pitched battles against armies of similar size, similar organisation and similar equipment, both representing recognised states and governments, fighting according to unspoken or even legally encoded rules – these are the characteristics of what is thought of as conventional, symmetric warfare. At the high end of the quantitative spectrum, this is termed major war, and whole nations might be mobilised in its support. At the low end it may be a limited engagement like those of the 'cabinet wars' of the eighteenth century, often indecisive and perhaps even relatively clement on populations in general.

By contrast, this chapter deals with wars fought between parties that are fundamentally unequal, though not in all respects, as we shall see. Crucially – and increasingly over the centuries – they have been unequal in that one side has authority, a recognised claim to a monopoly of power and increasingly a state apparatus in some form, mostly including 'regular' armed forces, usually with more powerful weapons. The other side tends to lack all or most of those attributes, but by their very insurgence challenge the authority and position of their adversaries. The British officer Charles E. Callwell, who has many valuable insights to offer despite his sickeningly racist terminology,

distinguished three sub-categories: 'campaigns of conquest or annexation' against an enemy inferior usually in equipment and army size; 'campaigns for the suppression of insurrection or lawlessness or for the settlement of conquered or annexed territory'; and finally 'campaigns undertaken to wipe out an insult, to avenge a wrong, or to overthrow a dangerous enemy' (Callwell 1896/1906: 25). Of these, the second category is probably encountered most frequently today. While for the Western powers it usually means interference in the internal matters of a foreign country, for that country, 'an insurgency is a civil war', as the French theorist and practitioner David Galula (1919–67) realised (1964/2005: 2).

Since the early nineteenth century, many have used the term 'small war' synonymously for any asymmetric war. Using Callwell's word, small (or asymmetric) wars thus

include the partisan warfare which usually arises when trained soldiers are employed in the quelling of sedition and of insurrections in [developed] countries; they include campaigns of conquest when a Great Power adds the territory of [underdeveloped countries] to its possessions; and they include punitive expeditions against tribes bordering upon distant colonies. (Callwell 1896/1906: 24)

Asymmetry can of course come in all forms and variations, and exists also in many forms of 'regular' warfare: when Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, for example, there was clearly an asymmetry of numbers. The asymmetry examined in this chapter, however, concerns above all the claims to authority, and in most cases the wielding of this authority through the command of the entity's central 'regular' forces. Callwell explained this well: 'The expression "small war" has in reality no particular connection with the scale on which any campaign may be carried out; it is simply used to denote, in default of a better [term], operations of regular armies against irregular, or comparatively speaking irregular, forces' (Callwell 1896/1906: 21). At the outset of an insurgency, as Galula observed, the

overwhelming superiority in tangible assets favours the powers against whom it is staged: they have diplomatic recognition; legitimate power in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches; control of the administration and police; financial resources; industrial and agricultural

resources ... transport and communications facilities; use and control of the information and propaganda media; command of the armed forces

and the police. And yet the insurgents, with their blatant inferiority in all those dimensions, have moral factors on their side, which might ultimately bring them victory. In view of this, 'the insurgent needs so little to achieve so much whereas the counterinsurgent needs so much to achieve so little' (Galula 1964/2005: 3f., 46).

There is more semantic confusion in this subject area than anywhere else, as terminology has changed so often, even though the phenomenon of asymmetric war – in our limited sense of the organised uprising of 'the weak' against 'the strong' – is perennial. We must therefore start with definitions.

What we are dealing with in this chapter is sometimes claimed to be a 'new' form of war that has come to the fore since the end of the Cold War in 1989–91 (Kaldor 1999). Certainly, some technological aspects of these wars are new – the use of mobile phones and the Internet, for example. But in its essentials, the wars concerning us here are at least as old as any form of war and predate state formation. They are in themselves challenges to state formation, with its crucial aspect of establishing an internal monopoly on the use of armed force and a single central government. This is why they were so particularly widespread in Europe whenever there were no clearly recognised and functioning states, wherever state-forming processes were underway and whenever larger entities – empires – were disintegrating and fighting occurred over the future structures and borders of the remainder. There is not the space here to deal extensively with historical examples, but these go back at least to the insurgency of David against the Hebrew king Saul (around 1000 BCE?), to the rebellions by conquered peoples against Rome and to the many incursions into the Roman Empire by mounted nomads, which ultimately brought down both the West and a thousand years later the East Roman Empires (for historical examples, see Ellis 1975). Western culture was greatly influenced, for example, by the ultimately successful – and thus supposedly God-willed – insurgency of the Maccabee brothers and their supporters against the Hellenistic king Antiochus IV in Israel, and the nine-year civil war this triggered. In Western cultures, no opportunity would be lost to cite this example to justify insurgencies.

Today most military officers will think in this context of the Chinese sage Sun Tzu, who lived sometime between 500 and 300 BCE, as the starting point of all writing on asymmetric warfare. He particularly developed ideas of catching an adversary off guard, unbalancing him, avoiding central battle, while seeking to overcome him by indirect means:

A military operation involves deception … when [your enemies] are strong, avoid them … When their military leadership is obstreperous, you should irritate them to make them angry – then they will become impetuous and ignore their original strategy. Use humility to make them haughty. Tire them by flight. Cause division among them. Attack when they are unprepared, make your move when they do not expect it. Strike at their gaps, attack when they are lax, don't let them figure out how to prepare … The military has no constant form, just as water has no constant shape – adapt as you face the enemy, without letting them know beforehand what you are going to do. (Sun Tzu *c.* 500–300 BCE: 6–9)

Sun Tzu's ideas have been taken to form the basic pattern of an 'Eastern' style of war contrasted with the supposed 'Western' tradition of seeking major battle that Victor Davis Hanson has perhaps done most to publicise (see chapters 1–4).

Sun Tzu remained largely unknown in the West until the twentieth century, although he was first translated by a French missionary shortly before the French Revolution (Amiot 1772), and there are apocryphal stories that Napoleon read him. It is mainly after the Second World War that interest in him was engendered in the West through the confrontation with Mao's success against, first, the Japanese and then the Chinese Nationalist forces, and then the spread of Mao's ideas for the conduct of 'revolutionary war', which blended Sun Tzu and other Chinese sages with Clausewitz's 'people's war' (McNeilly 2001).

While we can find examples of asymmetric warfare in the West throughout the period covered in this book, it seems that until the end of the eighteenth century there is no specific Western literature on how to conduct such an uprising; the relevant literature comes from the side of those challenged by it. Machiavelli and later sixteenth-century writers such as Raymond Beccarie de Pavie, sieur de Fourquevaux, had already written about how to deal with occupied territories and with actual or potential 'rebels', as we shall see presently; the literature on what would much later be called 'counterinsurgency'

thus predates any Western writing – albeit not practice – on how to conduct an uprising and fight as weaker, irregular forces against a superior power.

Since its introduction during the Spanish–Dutch Eighty Years War, the term 'small war' has provided considerable terminological confusion for later generations. Sebastián de Covarrubias already uses it in his dictionary of 1611, re-edited in 1674, but the term to him meant feud or civil war (Covarrubias 1611/1943: 666). By the following century, the term was in wide usage, especially in French, where it was translated as '*la petite guerre*'. But now, and up to the French Revolution, it was used exclusively to denote special operations conducted by special forces acting in wars alongside regular armies. These were rooted in the practices of the Roman, the Byzantine and the Habsburg Empires of recruiting such special units from tribes who fought much like the Easterners encountered by the crusaders: they were lightly armed, employed hit-and-run tactics and could be used for reconnaissance, espionage, sabotage and ambushes. By the seventeenth and then the eighteenth centuries, the Habsburg practice of employing units made up entirely of men from such tribes was being emulated in other parts of Europe (Selig and Skaggs 1991: 12–14). These units were called *Partheyen* in German, *parties* in French, and their leader alone was called a *Partheygänger* or *partisan*. To repeat, 'partisan warfare', until well into the nineteenth century, thus meant what we now call the conduct of 'special operations'. Until the American War of Independence and then the Napoleonic Wars, partisan warfare was entirely devoid of ideology or other political content, but was professional warfare carried out by professional units specialising not in regular war and pitched battles but in irregular activities (Rink 1999). These professionals were also called *Jäger* (huntsmen or foresters) in German and, later, *chasseurs* in French; the terms survive today, where units of *Jäger* are still trained and earmarked for particular territories such as mountain warfare.

The classical texts on partisan warfare start with a *Treatise on Small War for Free Companies* by Armand François de la Croix (d. 1743), published by his son in 1752. It was followed in 1756 by *Small War* by Thomas-Auguste le Roy de Grandmaison (1715–1801) and in 1759 by *The Partisan* by the presumably Hungarian Captain de Jeney, who seems to have fought on the Austrian side in the Seven Years War. They were still being reprinted when further works were

published, such as those by the Prussians Georg Wilhelm Freiherr von Valentini and Friedrich Leopold Klipstein, both of 1799, which differ little in their prescriptions for the use of light troops, both cavalry and infantry, for special operations from those published before the French Revolution. The same can be said for Clausewitz's lectures on small war, held at the General War School in 1810–12, and for several of the works written well after the Napoleonic Wars but based on their experience (for example Decker 1822; Chrzanowski 1839; Davidov 1841). From the point of view of our enquiry into the political purpose of the use of force, these manuals reveal little about their authors' mindsets, but are primarily tactical-technical in nature, and follow in almost every way the narrow manual tradition that we have traced back to Vegetius and beyond.

Two wars or periods of war cumulatively changed 'small wars', in the sense of special operations conducted by professional special forces, to ideologically driven 'peoples' wars' (Clausewitz's term) or insurgencies, including operations by small bands of ideologically driven fighters with some degree of support from the local populations (Heuser 2010a). The first was the American War of Independence (1775–83), the second the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792–1815). In the first of these, irregular forces fought alongside regular armies on both sides, just as in wars of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. However, on the American side, the irregulars were ideologically motivated to fight for their own cause – freedom from British tutelage. Several American partisan leaders such as Daniel Morgan and Andrew Pickens had gained experience in the previous French and Indian Wars, and in many ways were copying tactics of the native American tribes (Starkey 1998; Schmidt 2003: 169). General Nathaniel Greene organised partisan bands to trouble the British redcoats in the swamps of Eastern Carolina, led among others by 'Swamp Fox' Francis Marion. Greene described his tactics in a terminology which sounds very pertinent to partisan warfare more than two centuries on:

I have been obliged to practice that by finesse which I dared not attempt by force … There are few generals that has [*sic*] run oftener or more lustily than I have done … But I have taken care not to run too far, and commonly I have run as fast forward as backward, to convince our Enemy that we were like a Crab, that could run either way … We fight, get beat, rise and fight again. (q.i. Weigley 1976: 36)

The question has been raised whether this early American experience with ideologically motivated irregular warfare had any effect on subsequent European changes in warfare: after all, as we have seen, French Revolutionary warfare was described by contemporaries as a large-scale version of small (or irregular) war (see chapter 5). Historian Peter Paret found little evidence for such a transatlantic transfer (Paret 1964). By contrast, the historians Selig and Skaggs have argued that with his emphasis on the combination of independent action and corporate discipline, the Hessian mercenary Johannes Ewald (1744–1813) brought back from his experience of fighting alongside the British in the American War of Independence ideas that would have an impact on the transformation of war in Europe (Selig and Skaggs 1991: 26–9; see also Schmidt 2003). Yet in their manuals on small war, neither Ewald nor his compatriot Andreas Emmerich (1737–1809) with his similar experiences in America addressed the strategic dimensions of warfare that characterised the works of a Machiavelli or a Guibert.

The second, even bigger laboratory of Strategy was that of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. In the royalist Vendée uprisings against the French Revolution and in the insurgencies in the Tyrol, in Spain, Russia and finally Prussia against the invasion and occupation by Napoleon and his allies, the insurgents were, by later standards, 'reactionary' – they rejected the innovations brought by the French – and they discovered nationalism for themselves. The most important among these was arguably the Spanish War of Independence (1808–12), more commonly known as the *Guerrilla*, which gave the Spanish term for 'small war' a different, politically loaded meaning that has lasted to this day. Historians have, however, underscored the complexity of this particular *Guerrilla* with a capital 'G'. It should be stressed again that it was primarily reactionary, Roman Catholic, aiming at the restoration of the status quo ante and especially the Bourbon royal family. The forces that rose up to fight the French comprised remainders of the former Spanish regular army, *miquelets* or *somatens* (home guards or reserves that had long existed), *partidas*, *cuadrillas*, *cuerpos francos* (free corps) or special forces that had served the crown before Napoleon's invasion, augmented by many volunteers. From this point onwards, a further semantic confusion arose – the Spanish noun '*guerrilla*' would mutate, via the intermediate expression 'parties of guerrilla', to denote, not 'small war',

but those waging it on the side of the rebels (Esdaile 2002; Moliner Prada 2005).

There were some politically 'progressive' insurgencies in the nineteenth century, such as the insurgencies culminating in revolutions in France in 1840, 1848 and 1871, and in combination with nationalism, the anti-Ottoman insurgencies (which became wars of independence) throughout the Balkans. Among peoples for whom the creation of a nation state (in either the ethnic or the political sense) was an aim, insurgencies against the (foreign) state power could be progressive, as in the nineteenth century in Latin America, but it could also have distinctly anti-democratic values, or anything in between, such as the Garibaldi-led insurgencies that culminated in the Italian Wars of Unification. The association of people's war and left-wing movements became strong during the Second World War and the Cold War, when communists tended to support any other movement directed, first, against the Axis powers, and later against Western colonial powers or the USA, even if the latter sought to export democracy. But even during the Cold War, communist insurgencies tended to have a strong element of nationalism – ceaselessly stressed by Vo Nguyen Giap (1911–) in Vietnam, for example, to the point of claiming Vietnamese antecedents in strategic thinking and rejecting support from foreign soldiers (Giap 1970a: 107, 1971: 25, 95).

After the end of the Cold War this identification of people's war and 'progressive' left-wing causes receded: it is still found in Latin America, but in other parts of the world – Afghanistan, Iraq, some African states – insurgencies against governments are extremely 'reactionary', especially where old tribal warlordism and/or Islam come into play.

There was a remarkable degree of personal continuity among those experiencing small wars or people's wars in different countries and contexts. As noted, Ewald and Emmerich had fought under British command in the American War of Independence; roughly thirty years later, Emmerich was executed at the age of 72 for attempting to stage an anti-Napoleonic insurgency back in his native Hesse. Jean Frédéric Auguste Le Mière de Corvey (1770–1832) had fought on the Revolutionaries' side against the insurgents of the Vendée. Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) had experienced the harassment of the invading Napoleonic army by Russian irregulars in the campaign of 1812 and the *grande armée*'s terrible losses (Clausewitz 1823), an

experience which resonates throughout his chapter on 'People's War' in *On War*. The Russian General Denis Vasilevich Davidov (1784– 1839) also drew on this campaign for his own otherwise fairly conventional theories on partisan war (Davidov 1841). The Pole Wojciech Chrzanowski (1793–1861) fought alongside Napoleon in this campaign and in the battles of Leipzig and Waterloo. Heinrich von Brandt (1789–1868), Le Mière de Corvey and Thomas Robert Bugeaud de la Piconnerie, Duke of Isly (1784–1849) had all fought – on opposite sides – in the Spanish War of Independence and drew their respective lessons from this experience, which Bugeaud de la Piconnerie subsequently applied to French colonial warfare. Several Spanish partisans of the *Guerrilla* of 1808–12 fought in the subsequent Carlist Wars in Spain, or left Europe and as *gauchos* joined wars of independence in Latin America against the Spanish and the Portuguese. In turn, prior to organising the Italian national movement, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82) had in 1837–48 fought as *corsaire* and *gaucho* for desperate causes in Latin America: for the Republica del Rio Grande Do Sul, for a rebellion against the Empire of Brazil, for the defence of the Republic of Uruguay, against the Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas. From this time he kept a red shirt (which his men also would later wear in Italy and France), a poncho from the *pampa*, a large *gaucho* hat. Such continuity of experience and application must have existed previously, and is reflected in the writings of educated officers on how to repress revolts but difficult to trace in any writings of rebel leaders before the late eighteenth century.

With the works of Auguste Blanqui (1805–81) and Garibaldi, works on how to conduct insurgencies themselves became ideologically laden. By the time of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (1928–67), well after the Second World War, the *guerrillero* became co-terminous with the social revolutionary, fighting for social justice (Che 1960/2003: 38–41). Che admitted that seen from the outside, *guerrilleros* might not look different from bandit gangs, who 'have all the characteristics of a guerrilla army, homogeneity, respect for the leader, valor, knowledge of the ground, and often, even good understanding of the tactics to be employed. The only thing missing is support of the people' (Che 1960/2003: 10). The support of the people, however, linked to the *guerrilleros*' fight for the people's interests, was the defining characteristic of revolutionary warfare (Galula 1964/2005: 4).

While in the nineteenth century, Britain and France had harshly repressed insurgencies in their own colonies, they had sympathised with national uprisings in Europe against the Ottoman, Russian and even Habsburg Empires. The First World War ushered in a period in which the Western liberal powers, especially Britain, France and the United States, were generally sympathetic to guerrilla uprisings, only one example of which was the British encouragement of the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire in the Great War itself. Then in the Second World War, the British and American governments and the French government in exile supported the resistance movements fighting against the Germans and Italians. The assumption that partisans were good and on 'our' side is still strong in C.N.M. Blair's work written for the British Ministry of Defence in 1957. Then NATO had plans, in case of a defeat of its regular forces at the hands of Warsaw Pact forces, to deny the enemy the fruits of his victory by supporting Europe-wide resistance movements, much as the American Office of Strategic Services and the British Special Operations Executive had done during the Second World War. While the examples discussed by Blair included operations that were hostile to the West – most notably in Malaya – the general gist of the book concerns lessons to be learned on how to stage uprisings.

It is only with the French and American experiences in Indochina and Algeria that this liberal perception of insurgencies as being worthy of support turned, and that most Western authors once again concentrated on how to counter such insurgencies, now almost always communist-led or supported. The insurgent side – waging 'revolutionary war', as both sides insisted (Galula 1964/2005: xiii) – was henceforth represented by communist authors, especially Mao Tsetung (1893–1976), Giap and 'Che' Guevara. For Giap as for other communist writers, only a 'war of liberation' could be a 'just war', and it had to link national liberation and world proletarian revolution (Giap 1970b: 16, 1971: 24f.).

Other terms used in connection with asymmetric warfare also shifted their meaning. In the nineteenth century, the word 'partisan' had graduated from referring solely to the leader of a detachment of irregular forces to referring to all its members. Through the pens of those who did not know Spanish, the *guerrillero* (partisan in this wider sense) turned into a *guerrilla*, in the process of this even often losing an 'r'; the same authors tend to talk tautologically about 'guerrilla

warfare'. During the twentieth century, 'guerrilla' often came to carry ideological weight through its association with 'revolutionary war'. Other words crept in, often linked to particular technology and organisation, such as the riflemen of the American Wars of the eighteenth century, the German *Freischütz* or sniper of the early nineteenth century (immortalised in the ghastly eponymous opera), translated exactly into the *francs-tireurs* of the Franco-Prussian War 1870/1 and of subsequent wars. Those fighting against *guerrilleros* or partisans liked to call them bandits or *banditi*, a word that made the rounds in the Italian *Risorgimento* (the various insurgencies and wars of national unity, 1815–61), *brigands* (as the French called Algerian insurgents in the 1830s) or *Banden*, the favourite word of the Wehrmacht in repressing local resistance in the Second World War. Thus some terms – such as 'insurgency' and 'counterinsurgency' (often abbreviated as COIN, '*Aufstandsbekämpfung*' in German, '*contreinsurrection*' in French) – remained neutral and descriptive, others – especially '*Bandenbekämpfung*' – acquired much ideological weight.

The mosquito and the lion: tactics

As noted above, prior to the nineteenth century there was little of political, let alone strategic dimension in the writings about insurgencies and irregular war listed above. Those of a 'special operations' character before the French Revolution always relied upon regular forces to bring about the decision in the war on the battlefield. Partisan tactics are well described in the anonymous eye-witness account of Richard the Lionheart's part in the Third Crusade, in which the crusaders, crossing Byzantine territory in Asia Minor on their way to the Holy Land, clashed with Turkish invaders. The account describes the hit-and-run tactics of the lightly armed Turkish horsemen. Whenever the crusaders pursued the Turks, these would flee, but as soon as their pursuers were out of breath, the Turks would turn about and set upon them. They were compared in this anonymous account with flies buzzing around their prey, flying off when they are shooed away, and returning to the attack as soon as one stopped going after them (Anon. *c.* 1200?/1997: 234f.). Two characteristics of these twelfth-century Turkish tactics became recurrent themes in partisan warfare, as we shall see: the use of light cavalry and the avoidance of pitched battles. The partisan detachments were by definition those units who avoided

a regular battle, but might rejoin the regular forces after their special duties had been carried out (Jeney 1759/1760: 104–6). Heinrich von Brandt likened the Napoleonic army on the Iberian Peninsula to the lion of Aesop's fable, who was plagued by the mosquito until he surrendered (Brandt 1823: 64). Only after the watershed of the Spanish War of Independence, when partisan warfare merged with insurgency, and Napoleon's doomed campaign in Russia, was it thought necessary to spell out that pitched battles had to be avoided by irregular fighters. Now the ranks of professionals were swelled with untrained volunteers. Le Mière de Corvey thus noted that:

Parties of *guerrillas* have to avoid clashes in the open, against disciplined troops, except if they are in the majority or can take the enemy by surprise. For in limiting oneself to conducting this partisan war in the mountains and countryside covered [in trees], one inflicts an enormous pain upon him without much risk. (Mière 1823: 100)

Clausewitz's people's war aimed to deny control of the land to an invader if the regular army had been defeated: 'Militia and bands of armed civilians cannot and should not be employed against the main enemy force – or indeed against any sizable enemy force. They are not supposed to pulverize the core but nibble at the shell and around the edges' (Clausewitz 1832/1976, VI: 26). According to his concepts, the militia (*Landsturm*) would wear the enemy down, but it would eventually be left to a re-formed regular army to bring about the decisive victory over the enemy forces (Clausewitz 1812/1966: 716–20). Chrzanowski's views were similar: his ideal scenario of a defensive war had partisans (referring now to all irregular fighters) fight alongside a regular army, if their country had not yet been completely occupied by enemy armed forces; the partisans would seek to fight in the enemy's rear or on his flanks. Chrzanowski assumed that the partisans would be organised in advance by the central government, from local levies. If the regular forces were defeated, the defence would become the task of the partisans. The longer a war dragged on, the better it would be for the partisans, and the more the enemy army would be weakened. Partisans must still avoid direct confrontation with the enemy's army. Instead, they should try to destroy their lines of communication, intercept high-ranking officers or officials travelling on their own and kill individual soldiers, which would force the enemy to go about only in big units. Little actions such as this, he thought,

would finally wear down even the strongest army (Chrzanowski 1839/1846: 5f., 10–12).

Enrico Gentilini (1806–?) in his pamphlet on partisan warfare of 1848 also gave a well-rounded list of tasks of partisans or *stracorridori*:

The principal objective of this warfare is to fall upon the enemy in those places which he cannot garrison with a considerable number of men; to torment him continually, tire him and deny supplies, without exposing oneself to serious risks … The main aim is to surprise the enemy's posts, throw his camp into disarray, assault him at night in his tents, attack him from above whilst he is on the march, surprise his convoys, cut his communications, be the first to occupy those places which one is almost sure the enemy wishes to take; destroy his arms and powder workshops and other military establishments … eliminate unsympathetic generals, suspect authorities, and hold to ransom that part of the population known to support the enemy, intercept the couriers, burn the magazines. (q.i. Ellis 1975: 82)

Garibaldi's model greatly resembled those of Le Mière de Corvey, Clausewitz and Chrzanowski, although there seems no evidence that he had read them. His prescriptions were extremely classical: don't allow the enemy to catch you, confuse him about your real intentions and with that purpose in mind, change camp sites, never move at the same time on successive days, march with as little baggage as possible, camp in well-hidden places, make a great show of setting off on main roads and then climb through bushes and over rocks to get to secondary roads, announce that you are going to X when in reality you set off for Y, make yourself entirely familiar with the terrain, observe the adversary. Garibaldi noted that the partisan leader had to take great care to look after his men, their food supplies, keep up their morale, recruit them with great discernment of their qualities. Garibaldi wanted more irregular troops – light infantrymen (*bersaglieri*) – for the main body of the Italian army, indeed, he wanted the whole army to be trained in the style of these light, easily deployable infantrymen. These could attack the enemy everywhere, masque the columns as they advanced and protect them against fire from the enemy's marksmen, allowing the columns to reach their aims and to spread out and approach the enemy. Each company in his view thus needed a unit of *bersaglieri*. Still, the main fighting in such a regular

army would be done by the column of regular soldiers (Garibaldi 1848/1984, 1866/1886).

Garibaldi's actual fighters were all volunteers: he asked very much of his dedicated followers, but never forced anybody to join up. In 1849, when they had to give up the besieged city of Rimini to the French, Garibaldi wanted to withdraw to Rome and appealed to his soldiers to come along, saying, 'Soldiers! What I offer those who want to follow me is this: hunger, the cold, thirst, no money, no roof, no ammunitions, but constant skirmishes, forced marches.' The only reward he offered the patriotic volunteers was 'glory' (q.i. Heyries 1998: 237f.). About half of Garibaldi's followers in the Italian Wars of Independence were of middle-class origins, with university degrees and highly idealistic. Conservative Italians of all social backgrounds were afraid of their revolutionary potential. Later in life, however, Garibaldi became keener to fight classical wars with little units of well-trained soldiers, resorting to bands only when no regular soldiers were available (Heyries 1998: 239).

At the same time as Garibaldi, Auguste Blanqui in France developed concepts of urban guerrilla, in time for the Commune of 1871 to implement some of his ideas. Obviously, urban insurgents would not have horses, but again, Blanqui emphasised attrition and the sparing use of force (Blanqui 1868). T.E. Lawrence in turn picked up the baton of theoretical writing about how to stage an insurgency and guerrilla warfare on the back of his own experience in the First World War, rightly noting that insurgencies had never previously been written about in English from the point of view of the insurgents (Lawrence 1920/2005: 272). From his experience, Lawrence drew the following generalisations about the 'Science of Guerrilla Warfare':

It must have a sophisticated alien enemy, in the form of a disciplined army of occupation too small to fulfil the doctrine of acreage: too few to adjust number to space, in order to dominate the whole area effectively from fortified posts. It must have a friendly population not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2 per cent active in a striking force, and 98 per cent passively sympathetic. The few active rebels must have the qualities of speed and endurance, ubiquity and independence of arteries of supply. They must have the technical equipment to destroy or paralyse the enemy's organised communications, for irregular war is fairly [Wilhelm von] Willisen's definition of strategy, 'the study of communication' in its

extreme degree, of attack where the enemy is not. In fifty words: granted mobility, security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy), time, and doctrine (the idea to convert every subject to friendliness), victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraic factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain. (Lawrence 1920/2005: 273)

There are several aspects of guerrilla which Lawrence was the first to articulate. These include the use of speed, mobility and space in depth, rather than clinging to strong points, however great their symbolism might be (in his case, Medina); patience and time, rather than the frantic quest for a quick, decisive victory so characteristic of Strategy on all sides on the eve of the First World War.

Similar descriptions, emphasising the need for fluidity, surprise, ambushes and so on are also found in the communists' writings. Sun Tzu's recommendations are clearly reflected in the following passage of Mao's *On Guerrilla Warfare*:

In guerrilla warfare, select the tactic of seeming to come from the east and attacking from the west; avoid the solid, attack the hollow; attack; withdraw; deliver a lightning blow, seek a lightning decision. When guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strike him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws. In guerrilla strategy, the enemy's rear, flanks, and other vulnerable spots are his vital points, and there he must be harassed, attacked, dispersed, exhausted and annihilated. (Mao 1937/2000: 46)

In Vietnam, Vo Nguyen Giap explained that the Communist Party had decreed the following Strategy: 'disperse and then regroup', 'mount ambushes', 'attack surprisingly' (Giap 1970a: 124). Mao famously compared guerrilla units

to innumerable gnats, which, by biting a giant both in front and in rear, ultimately exhaust him. They make themselves as unendurable as a group of cruel and hateful devils, and as they grow and attain gigantic proportions, they will find that their victim is not only exhausted but practically perishing. (Mao 1937/2000: 54)

Galula identified the force multiplier which made the gnats so powerful: in insurgencies and counterinsurgency warfare, every military action can have political effects that far outweigh its purely

military implications; a tactical move can carry strategic weight (Galula 1964/2005: 5). Tactical mistakes can therefore be difficult to compensate.

Bases and base areas

Again it was Lawrence who first articulated what in practice had been long known: 'rebellion must have an unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack' (Lawrence 1920/2005: 273). Lawrence's concepts of bases and the need for impenetrable, inviolable rear areas was taken up – or reinvented – by Mao (Mao 1937/2000: 52f.) and Giap. In the late 1940s, Mao's Red Army, now opposing the Nationalist Chinese forces, could again move from its hit-and-run tactics to the behaviour of a regular army, establishing itself firmly in 'base areas' which they began to defend against the regular-army enemy. The Red Army and the communist forces had in the meantime grown in strength. After the Second World War, the communists therefore changed their Strategy, and began to defend the area over which they held command against enemy attacks.

   In Vietnam, the guerrilla fighters started by establishing the liberated region of Viet Bac, then guerrilla bases in other regions. Rear bases were established in the mountains, then in the plains and springboards for attacks on the enemy's neuralgic points. To complement the rear bases in rural areas, Giap formulated the need to create revolutionary bases in the cities, because workers were, according to classical Marxist-Leninist teaching, the most politicised population. Giap never ceased to emphasise the importance of consolidating the rear, which depended entirely on the support of the local populations (Giap 1970a: 67f., 73–5, 1970b, 42–55, 1971: 59–76). Fusing all these areas together, the Vietnamese communists could proceed to found the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. They attempted to transfer their dual approach of creating guerrilla-dominated zones and actual guerrilla-held rear bases to South Vietnam ('liberated regions': Giap 1971: 62f.). The most important 'great rear area' for the 'liberation' of South Vietnam was of course, in Giap's terminology, Vietnam's socialist North. Indeed the socialist camp as a whole was Vietnam's vast rear area. This had to be consolidated, and the enemy's areas of domination had to be ceaselessly attacked (Giap 1971: 71, 75).

A repeated pattern in such insurgencies was that the rebels could hold out indefinitely when they had safe bases in remote and inaccessible areas within their own country. As air power and visual intelligence from the air grew in precision, however, the alternative grew in importance, namely to have safe havens outside one's own country, politically inaccessible to the counterinsurgency forces. Thus in the Greek Civil War, the rebels found refuge in Yugoslavia, until their retreat was barred when Tito closed the border in 1949. Upon this they were bombed into submission by the USAF in the Grammos and Vitsi mountains. In both Afghanistan wars of 1979–89 and 2001–, the Taliban retreated across the border into Pakistan when under pressure from the Soviets and NATO forces respectively. Defence bases are thus a strategic dimension of insurgencies.

Annihilating the enemy?

Lawrence consciously developed guerrilla tactics against the prevailing fashion of the day, which he associated with Foch's definition of modern war as 'to seek for the enemy's army, his centre of power, and destroy it in battle' (Lawrence 1920/2005: 264). Since the anti-Napoleonic wars, this terminology had haunted also writings on insurgency. Le Mière de Corvey wrote:

When undertaking a national war in order to preserve one's independence and to defend against a foreign invasion, one needs a war of extermination [sic], and the enemy must needs be expelled, or else the nation that defends itself has to be invaded, and the winner has the right to treat it as a conquered country. (Mière 1823: vii)

Lawrence by contrast first formulated the aim of pinning down, not killing (let alone *annihilating*) enemy forces, by letting them hold certain garrisons and harassing them and their supply lines in unexpected places, never confronting them in numbers. Lawrence's Arab allies were content, under his influence, not to prioritise killing Turks:

If they would go quietly, our war would end. If not, we would try to drive them out: in the last resort we would be compelled to the desperate course of blood, on the maxim of 'murder' war, but as cheaply as possible for

ourselves, since the Arabs were fighting for freedom, a pleasure only to be tasted by a man alive. (Lawrence 1920/2005: 264)

After Lawrence, however, the old hot-blooded quest for annihilation of the enemy returned in the literature on guerrilla. For Giap, for example, the strategic aim would always be to win against larger numbers, better equipment, to *annihilate* as many enemies as possible (Giap 1970a: 62, 102). Che Guevara was convinced that 'war is always a struggle in which each contender tries to annihilate the other' (Che 1960/2003). The radical terminology he used seems to have exceeded his actions in practice; in his essay of 1966 which was read out at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in the same year, he appealed to the communist rebels of the world to take the war into the homes of the enemy, to make war 'total' for him (Che 1968/2008: 173).

In reality insurgents can rarely hope to *annihilate* superior enemy forces, let alone wage 'Total War' according to the definition we have given in chapter 6. They can use terrorism, as was done so widely in the Algerian War and which saps the support of the population of a colonial power for its own colonial wars. However, terrorism, if practised against civilians, tends to alienate 'world opinion', and ultimately works against insurgents, unless the repression on the part of the counterinsurgents is even more spectacularly brutal.

Can guerrilla lead to victory? Phased guerrilla

Could partisans, could an insurgency win against regular forces by themselves? Lawrence had flirted with the notion that his Arabs might have achieved strategic victory by themselves, without external help (Lawrence 1920/2005: 272). This is a hotly debated subject. Can insurgents secure victory on their own, without regular forces engaged in major war bringing about a decision elsewhere, and if so, how?

August Rühle von Lilienstern, who himself had been a member of a partisan unit in the anti-Napoleonic wars, realised 'that war is *generally* composed of both forms of war … and the operations and endeavours that occur in campaigns partly belong to the realm of small war, partly to that of major war' (Rühle 1818: 1). Partisans before the French Revolution were always auxiliaries of larger, conventional forces. The Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon

was brought to an end by the victory of Wellington's regular armies. Enrico Gentilini emphasised the complementarity between partisans and regular forces. The partisans' missions included keeping intact their own regular army's communications, 'to watch over the enemy so that he does not take us [our own army] by surprise, and finally to reconnoitre … his positions'. He did not think partisan detachments could aim to do more than achieve 'minor successes' (q.i. Ellis 1975: 82). As we have seen, Le Mière de Corvey and the other writers of the early nineteenth century agreed with him.

When Lawrence was sent out to help Arabs organise resistance against the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the Arab forces on their own could not have defeated the Ottoman Turks; the big decisions in the First World War were brought about by the clashes of the regular armies elsewhere. Notwithstanding their leaders' optimism about them, Lawrence's Arabs and Tito's Partisans would hardly have prevailed in the two World Wars respectively if it had not been for the enemy's defeat by regular forces. The Yugoslavs liked to claim that they had liberated themselves, which the Soviets countered with the argument that the Balkans would not have been freed without the Red Army's overall victory over the Wehrmacht and the Soviet seizure of Berlin. A similar pattern applies even in the Cold War, even though the great East–West Third World War famously did not take place. Arguably the French defeat in Algeria and that of the French and the USA in Indochina were due to the larger context of the Cold War, which prevented both from lashing out as hard as they might have done, for fear of escalation to global – and even nuclear – war. As Galula put it, in a context of global ideological competition, 'revolutionary war' always had an international dimension (Galula 1964/2005: 3).

Callwell had paved the way to a different take on this problem by conceiving of different 'stages' or phases in the conquest of an underdeveloped country:

In the first stage the [superior, invading forces] overthrow the armies and levies which the rulers and chieftains in the invaded country gather for its defence …; in the second stage organized resistance has ceased, and is replaced by the war of ambushes and surprises, of murdered straggler and of stern reprisals …

that is, the insurgency phase (Callwell 1896/1906: 26).

The concept of phases could also be used to explain the swelling of an insurgent movement to the point where it could turn into an army and defeat the regular forces. In the 1930s and 1940s, people's war, plus the communist ingredient, became a potent mix as people's revolutionary war in the hands of Mao Tse-tung in China and the two Indochinese Marxists Giap and Truong Chinh. In both cases, there was a foreign occupying force in the country, Japan during the Second World War and in Indochina the French, who tried to re-establish themselves as colonial powers after the defeat of Japan. But in both countries, the communist insurgency ended up being directed just as much against indigenous powers, in the case of China, Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, in the case of Indochina the Emperor Bao Dai, and later the Diem regime backed by the USA. Writing in 1937, after the Japanese had brutally occupied all of China, Mao explained that: 'ours is the resistance of a semicolonial country against imperialism'.

The ideological problem with Mao's revolutionary war was that China fulfilled the revolutionary model of Karl Marx even less than did the Russian Revolution. China in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s consisted mainly of an agricultural economy, and not at all an industrialised society in which proletarian masses were impatient to overthrow a capitalist bourgeoisie. Moreover, as Mao noted, the rivals of the communist forces, under the Kuomintang's and Chiang Kai-shek's leadership, was strong: the Chinese Nationalists themselves exploited the potential for anti-colonialist sentiments in the population. The Red Army in turn was initially weak confronted with the regular forces of the Nationalist government.

According to classical Marxist-Leninist teaching, the country was thus in no way ripe for revolution. Moreover, the precedent of the Russian revolutionary war could not be applied in all details. But could there be two different models of revolutionary warfare? This in itself posed a serious problem for communist orthodoxy. Mao, however, decided that this doctrinal problem could be overcome, and devised his own doctrine for communist warfare. Mao defined all guerrilla as war 'fought by every class of men against invaders and oppressors' (Mao 1937/2000: 42, 58). He codified his own views of how to conduct an insurgency by describing seven progressive steps through which the movement had to pass in fighting against a foreign occupier:

1. Arousing and organizing the people.
2. Achieving internal unification politically.
3. Establishing bases.
4. Equipping forces.
5. Recovering national strength.
6. Destroying enemy's national strength.
7. Regaining lost territories.

The policy or Strategy was one of creating a united anti-Japanese front, the goal to achieve the complete emancipation of the Chinese people from foreign oppression, which in itself was seen as revolutionary by Mao. The support for this goal by the mass of the Chinese population was seen by him as critical (Mao 1937/2000: 42f.). In keeping with most European writers before him, Mao wrote:

There is in guerrilla warfare no such thing as a decisive battle; there is nothing comparable to the fixed, passive defence that characterizes orthodox war. In guerrilla warfare, the transformation of a moving situation into a positional defensive situation never arises. The general features of reconnaissance, partial deployment, general deployment, and development of the attack that are usual in mobile warfare are not common in guerrilla war … When we discuss the terms 'front' and 'rear' it must be remembered, that while guerrillas do have bases, their primary field of activity is in the enemy's rear areas. They themselves have no rear.

These guerrilla fighters' tasks were

to exterminate small forces of the enemy; to harass and weaken large forces; to attack enemy lines of communications; to establish bases capable of supporting independent operations in the enemy's rear, to force the enemy to disperse his strength; and to co-ordinate all these activities with those of the regular armies on distant battle fronts. (Mao 1937/ 2000: 52f.)

Mao did not prescribe a one-directional progress of revolutionary guerrilla warfare from one step to the next, but saw the possibility for the need to regress to an earlier stage, if circumstances required: 'guerrilla units formed from the people may gradually develop into regular units and, when operating as such, employ the tactics of orthodox mobile war'. Indeed, he even recognised that 'orthodox armies may,

due to changes in the situation, temporarily function as guerrilla [units]' (Mao 1937/2000: 54).

Writing a year later on the need to prepare for 'Protracted War', Mao no longer spoke of seven steps but of three stages of revolutionary warfare. He described China as being engaged in a first stage of resistance against the foreign occupier.

In this stage the form of fighting we should adopt is primarily mobile warfare, supplemented by guerrilla and positional warfare ... At the tail end of the first stage, the enemy will be forced to fix certain terminal points to his strategic offensive owing to his shortage of troops and our firm resistance, and upon reaching them he will stop his strategic offensive and enter the stage of safeguarding his occupied areas.

The crucial points of the first stage or phase of the Chinese revolutionary warfare, when the Red Army was weak and the enemy strong, was not to insist unduly on defending land at all cost. The Red Army in this first stage rejected any position warfare – fundamentally unfavourable to them – in favour of a flexible war of movement.

The second stage Mao defined as 'one of strategic stalemate':

[T]he enemy will attempt to safeguard the occupied areas and to make them his own by the fraudulent method of setting up puppet governments ... Taking advantage of the fact that the enemy's rear is unguarded, our guerrilla warfare will develop extensively in the first stage, and many base areas will be established, seriously threatening the enemy's consolidation of the occupied areas, and so in the second stage there will still be widespread fighting. In this stage, our form of fighting will be primarily guerrilla warfare, supplemented by mobile warfare.

He anticipated that the Chinese would still 'retain a large regular army', but that they would not be able to launch a strategic counter-offensive at this stage, because the enemy – the Japanese, later the Nationalists – would in all likelihood 'adopt a strategically defensive position in the big cities and along the main lines of communication under [their] occupation' while the Chinese would have inferior equipment to theirs. At this stage, some Chinese communist forces would have to be deployed along the front line, but most would be dispersed behind the enemy's rear. From there they could launch a guerrilla offensive against areas occupied by the enemy. Mao

envisaged that the fighting would be fierce and that 'the country will suffer serious devastation'. If the struggle went well, the guerrilla forces might hope to hold two-thirds of the territory, and even the final third remaining in enemy hands would be in part contested by both sides. Mao anticipated that this second stage would last quite a long time, something for which one had to prepare psychologically. Finally the third stage would see the great counteroffensive to recover the territories one had lost.

In the third stage, our war will no longer be one of strategic defensive, but will turn into a strategic counter-offensive manifesting itself in strategic offensives; and it will no longer be fought on strategically interior lines, but will shift gradually to strategically exterior lines … The third stage will be the last in the protracted war … Our primary form of fighting will still be mobile warfare, but positional warfare will rise to importance. While positional defence cannot be regarded as important in the first stage because of the prevailing circumstances, positional attack will become quite important in the third stage … In the third stage guerrilla warfare will again provide strategic support by supplementing mobile and positional warfare, but it will not be the primary form as in the second stage. (Mao 1938)

Mao's concept of stages or phases would greatly impress Western counterinsurgency writers from Galula (1964/2005: 29ff.) and Roger Trinquier (1961/2006 and 1968) to the authors of Field Manual 3-24 of 2006 (US Army and US Marine Corps 2006). Not all insurgents, however, plan their war on this pattern. Mao himself acknowledged this: he always went along with Clausewitz's (and, taken from Clausewitz, Lenin's) tenet that the wars of all eras were distinct and that no single recipe for their conduct could be prescribed for all of them (Mao 1937/2000: 49). Rather than involving himself in the debate between Stalin on the one hand and Tito and his Greek followers on the other in 1948–9 on how to prosecute the Greek Civil War, he sagely stuck to his line.

Mao also developed a concept of different speeds of operation which were designed to unbalance a stronger enemy. Strategically, his Red Army was clearly weaker than the Nationalist forces to begin with. Therefore, strategic encounters had to be ruled out, the large, decisive battle had to be avoided. Where the enemy was keen to stage a major encounter, the revolutionary forces had to seek to delay it as much as possible: they had to be patient, seeking to change the time

scale on a strategic level to one which would be to their advantage. On an operational and tactical level, however, they needed to transform the strategic superiority of the enemy into an operational and tactical inferiority. Here, quick, short operations were more advantageous to the enemy, so the aim of the communist forces was to harass him, and withdraw quickly, before the cumbersome large forces of the enemy could react properly to a surprise attack and could beat the communist aggressor by virtue of the regular forces' superior size and strength. The communist insurgents had the advantage, as in the First World War, the Arabs against the Turks, of choosing the time and place of their harassing attack: the regular army of the opponent thus had to be on its guard at all times, which sapped morale and created a permanent state of insecurity and tension.

The Vietnamese were the other practitioners and thinkers who contributed to the theoretical literature on how to conduct guerrilla, mainly through the doctrines of Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969) and Giap, who rose to become Minister of National Defence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Vice Prime Minister and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of North Vietnam. Unlike Mao, Giap did not believe in phases and saw guerrilla and regular war as going hand in hand, being carried on simultaneously and fluctuating from one to the other. He spoke of guerrilla and regular war as being 'enmeshed' like hair in a comb. As appropriate, one should form clandestine forces, groups of *guerrilleros* or larger guerrilla detachments (Giap 1970a: 120, 122, 125).

Che Guevara acknowledged that there were two different forms of guerrilla: one complementary to the operations of a big regular army (he cited Ukrainian partisans in the Second World War, fighting against the Germans, as an example), the other 'the case of an armed group engaged in struggle against the constituted power, whether colonial or not, which establishes itself as the only base and which builds itself up in rural areas'. It was this second sort that he was concerned with (Che 1960/2003: 11). He drew the lessons from the Cuban Revolution that the second form of insurgency, consisting of 'popular forces', could actually win a war against regular armed forces. However, he roundly dismissed the possibility of a victory brought about by guerrilla tactics alone, while adopting Mao's concept of phases: the last would simply not be guerrilla, but regular warfare (Che 1960/2003: 7–9, 13). The guerrilla, following Mao's

concept of phases, had to gather strength. Initially, it would be the fight of the *guerrilleros*, the 'armed nucleus, the fighting vanguard of the people'. But as the whole guerrilla was being fought to promote the interests of the people, the ranks of the *guerrilleros* would swell, until, ultimately, they could defeat the opposing regular army (Che 1960/2003: 10). Che Guevara conceived of the first phase as that in which the *guerrilleros* would harass the enemy, while concentrating on the avoidance of destruction by the enemy, operating from impenetrable redoubts and bases. Only in a second phase, when they had grown considerably in number, could they begin campaigns of attrition against the enemy. They would now strike at the enemy ceaselessly, not letting his soldiers sleep, attacking his lines of communications. For this the *guerrilleros* needed total support of the population, who had to be convinced that the partisans were invincible. In a final phase, the enemy's central bases could be attacked, and the enemy could be completely destroyed (Che 1960/2003: 14–16).

Che Guevara had the same problem as Mao, in that the Latin countries for which he was envisaging insurgencies did not comply with the Marxist-Leninist ideal of revolution arising in the cities of advanced industrial societies. Cuba had convinced him that 'In underdeveloped America', as in Russia and China, 'the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting.' But he also elaborated on concepts of urban guerrilla, probably as the first since Blanqui (Che 1960/2003: 8: 35ff.). If society as a whole was not yet ripe for a revolution, he argued that the *guerrilleros* could form the hearths (*focos*) of a movement, which could spread its fire over the entire country at any time (Che 1963/2003: 142–58). The practice did not bear out this hope, but insurgencies of one form or the other continue to characterise the political landscape of Latin America. Interestingly, however, it shows the possibility even for a Marxist of rethinking the concept of phases; despite US counterinsurgents' obsession with a three-phase guerrilla, it should not be taken for granted that all insurgents conceive of their enterprise in this way.

Force structures

While Lawrence's fighters were all volunteers, the Vietnamese after the Second World War resorted to as extensive a mobilisation of the population as possible. Giap, educated at the French grammar school

at Hue and at the University of Hanoi with its French ethos, was clearly disingenuous when claiming that the motto he adopted – 'each habitant is a soldier' – was an 'old saying' rather than a direct derivative of the French Revolutionary ideal that 'each citizen is a soldier' (Giap 1971: 38f.). Rather than referring to eighteenth-century French antecedents (see chapter 6), Giap preferred to refer to the Lenin quotation: 'To conduct war, it is necessary to mobilize all people's forces, to turn the entire country into a revolutionary bastion, to devote everything to the war, and to use all forces and national resources to protect the revolution.' Giap extrapolated from this that 'The entire country has fought the aggressor under the vanguard Party's leadership'; 'even the women must fight' (Giap 1970b, 14, 26, 1971: 38f.). In December 1946, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed:

Men and women, old and young, regardless of religious creed, political affiliation and nationality, all Vietnamese must stand up to fight the French colonialists to save the Fatherland! Those who have rifles will use their rifles, those who have swords will use their swords! Those who have no swords will use spades, hoes or sticks! (q.i. Giap 1971: 100)

Giap stressed the importance of loyal cadres, and the unity of the army and the people, among whom the fighters must be able to move freely (Giap 1970a: 52).

For Giap, there were three categories of forces: regular forces, regional forces and the popular militia.

- *The militia*: guerrilla forces, self-defence forces, organised village by village, factory, street, fighting with prudence or sophistication. Giap declared that being engaged in production also counted as fighting.
- *Regional forces*: these provided the hard core of defence of the region. They should work closely with the *guerrilleros*, partisans and regular troops. Their tasks: to annihilate the enemy, to promote the guerrilla, to defend the population.
- Finally *regular forces*: these should be mobile, fight where needed and where possible. They should include navy and air force. Their aim should be to annihilate [*sic*] the enemy forces (Giap 1970a: 53f.).

Che Guevara similarly stressed the identity of interests between *guerrilleros* and the oppressed classes for whom they were fighting

and, consequently, the lack of firm boundaries between them – as noted, he saw the fighters merely as the vanguard of the army that would by and by constitute itself (Che 1963/2003: 142–58).

Guerrilleros: Jesuits or bandits?

Indeed, a rigid categorisation and division between crack forces, main body of fighters and non-combatants is antithetical to an insurgency. Standard operational procedures, drill and automated masses make an adversary predictable. All of this is alien to irregular forces. Already de la Croix and his son had noted that one could not carry out partisan warfare with regular soldiers. The right men for the job had a tendency towards insubordination, and they would never fight in quite the same way as ordinary disciplined soldiers (Croix 1752: 44f.)

This lack of mechanical obedience and discipline, however, was at the same time an advantage: Clausewitz in his lectures on partisan warfare had stressed the need for exceptionally intelligent and flexible officers to lead partisan detachments (Clausewitz 1810–11/1966). Callwell, too, had recognised this:

The more irregular and the less organized the forces of the [insurgents] are, the more independent do they become of strategical rules. An army which disperses if it is beaten cannot be treated in the same way as an army which under such circumstances retreats in as compact and regular formation as the case admits of towards its base. (Callwell 1896/1906: 52)

Lawrence underscored this point even more, fully understanding the advantages of military 'indiscipline', ad-hocery and initiative: this made for subtleness: 'Guerrillas must be allowed liberal work-room … Guerrilla war is far more intellectual than a bayonet charge.' Lack of drill and robot-like discipline, lack of robot-like behaviour all contributed to the incalculability of the guerrilla operation, and were actually assets (Lawrence 1929/2005: 283).

Others were less confident that the *guerrilleros'* free spirit and tendency towards taking the initiative, often bordering on insubordination, was a good thing. From the Spanish War of Independence itself, the juntas were concerned about how to reintegrate the partisan units into their regular armies and struggled to keep control over them. This was the leitmotif of Jose Maria Carvajal's regulations for

partisans published on 11 June 1812, when the war against Napoleon was barely won (Carvajal 1812). Karl Marx, in studying the Spanish *Guerrilla*, had commented:

As to the guerrillas, it is evident that, having for some years figured upon the theatre of sanguinary contests, taken to roving habits, freely indulged all of their passions of hatred, revenge, and love of plunder, they must, in times of peace, form a most dangerous mob, always ready at a nod in the name of any party or principle, to step forward for him who is able to give them good pay or to afford them a pretext for plundering excursions. (q.i. Gerber 1988: 156)

The Prussian establishment, like the Spanish government, was very wary of the Schills and Lützows and other self-appointed freedom fighters in the anti-Napoleonic wars. Even those for whom the *guerrilleros* were fighting might by Conservative inclination turn against them at the smallest transgression, let alone when noble social revolutionaries lapsed into bandit ways. The communist writers on guerrilla therefore never ceased to stress the need for their fighters to behave well and to avoid giving credence to the enemy's inevitable accusations that they were merely bandits. Playing on the popular connotations of intelligence, sly machinations, but purity of spirit, personal lifestyle and intention, Che Guevara famously described the *guerrillero* as 'the Jesuit of war' (Che 1960/2003: 12). Only by living thus could they gain the loyal support of the population for whose good they were fighting.

Hearts and minds I

The need to operate within a benign population had already been commented upon by Emmerich and Ewald, and was standard fare even for the irregular partisans of the eighteenth century. From the Spanish War of Independence, guerrilla forces were fighting for what they saw as the population's cause. The need to treat the population for whom one was after all fighting well was thus spelled out over and over, from Garibaldi to the communist writers and practitioners of the twentieth century.

   Like the early modern writers dealing with regular war before them (see chapters 2–4), writers on guerrilla emphasised the need to treat

local populations well to secure their support. Like Davidov seven years before him, Gentilini urged good behaviour vis-à-vis locals:

It must be made a very serious offence for any [partisan] to enter their homes and disturb the peace of the occupants, show rudeness or shamelessly steal anything … By committing such an infamous act you will bring down upon yourselves the hatred of the inhabitants, and you will have many more enemies to contend with; and as well as being unable to carry out your own plans, you will put yourself into the very difficulties which should afflict the enemy. (q.i. Ellis 1975: 82)

In 1870 Garibaldi wrote instructions for the volunteers of the army of the Vosges, which he wanted to be the nucleus of a national army, and his objective was to transform this guerrilla into a popular insurrection. About the relationship between *guerrilleros* and population, he noted: 'The volunteers and partisans have to make themselves respected and loved by the population at all cost.' Mutual respect he saw as important everywhere, also within the armed forces (q.i. Heyries 1998: 242f.).

Mao defined the people as central to the guerrilla. Only with the full support of the population could a partisan move among it like a 'fish in water', without being caught (Mao 1937/2000: 93). Accordingly, his army had to put into practice 'Three Rules' and 'Eight Remarks' which proscribed stealing, selfish or unjust behaviour, dishonesty, immodest and inconsiderate behaviour (Mao 1937: 92). The struggle for the support of the population is also central to Ho Chi Minh's very similar 'Twelve Recommendations' of 5 April 1948, which added the prohibition of forced requisitions, perjury and contemptuous behaviour to the list, and urged fighters 'not to give offence to people's faith and customs (such as to lie down before the altar, to raise feet over the hearth, to play music in the house, etc.)', and as the basis of this, 'to study the customs of each region so as to be acquainted with them in order to create an atmosphere of sympathy, then gradually to explain to the people to abate their superstitions', to 'help the people in their daily work (harvesting, fetching firewood, carrying wood, sewing, etc.)', to educate them, and in turn to behave in a self-disciplined and respectful way (q.i. Giap 1974: vf.).

Che Guevara similarly described many ways in which the *guerrilleros* should gain the confidence and support of the peasants. An

important part of this was to begin the social revolution – usually turning on the redistribution of land – even while the fighting was still going on. In terms reminiscent of writings of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the former medical student admonished his fighters to show mercy to wounded enemies, up to and including the administration of first aid (Che 1960/2003: 25, 38–42). This contradicts his emphasis on the need to 'annihilate' the enemy's forces. The reality, however, both in Algeria and in Indochina/Vietnam, was one of brutal terrorisation of the population by both belligerent sides to secure their co-operation.

Brutality is a feature of insurgencies, especially if it is directed against an 'other' population perceived as 'colonisers', oppressors, ethnically or religiously different groups, whether foreign or locally born. No attempts are then usually made to win this 'other' population's hearts and minds, but terrorist attacks are particularly common here – witness Tamil Tiger terrorism practised in particular against the Singhalese in Sri Lanka from about 1980 to their final – equally brutal – repression in 2009, or the Palestinian suicide bombers in Israel in the early 2000s. As we shall see, 'hearts-and-minds' campaigns on both sides presuppose a perception of the populations thus wooed as 'part of us', and not as an intrinsic part of the repressive enemy group.

Defence in depth

Guerrilla Strategy could also be employed to defend a weak country against large-scale aggression. The earliest example of a full development of this subject, and one without direct influence on later Western traditions, can be found in East Roman (Byzantine) Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas's *Peri Paradrómes*.

Nikephoros' prescriptions placed heavy emphasis on intelligence – from the deployment of frontier guards who were not expected to be able to fend off the invaders, but to summon help, to the constant tracking of Arab raiding parties once they had penetrated into Byzantine territory. Apart from that, his book mainly prescribed what would later be regarded as irregular warfare against the intruders: ambushes, surprise attacks, bottling up the enemy forces in narrow passages when they are trying to get out of the Byzantine realm, attacks on their rearguard and baggage train, keeping as closely in

touch with them as possible while trying to elude enemy surprise attacks by going as far as changing one's own camp site several times during the night. This is a rare example of what one might call *symmetric* irregular warfare, even though both sides used what to them, at the time, were regular soldiers: from the eighth to tenth centuries, both the Arabs and the Byzantines were clearly using what would later be thought of as partisan warfare (Nikephoros mid-950s).

Analogous defensive concepts for states with weak armies were reinvented in the light of the heritage of the Spanish *Guerrilla*, and the Russian overall Strategy against the French in 1812, revolving around popular defence of a country in all its depth, to make occupation difficult for any invader. We have mentioned this above for the writings of Clausewitz, Le Mière de Corvey and Chrzanowski. We have seen in chapter 4 that Wilhelm von Willisen also contributed to the literature about defence in depth. The defensive aspect of this concept – a *levée en masse* to defend one's homeland against an invasion – was fully developed by Jean Jaurès for France as an alternative to the prevailing creed of the *offensive à outrance* (see chapter 7).

Similar concepts were developed by Sweden and Switzerland in the twentieth century, where the adult male population would, after a shorter period of active military service and training, remain a militia or territorial army, ready to organise themselves to form thousands of small resistance units to deny an occupying army full control of the country. Elements of this were present in the self-constituted resistance movements of the Second World War that formed against German and Italian occupation from the Channel to Russia. The Yugoslav and Greek partisans could rightly pride themselves, perhaps not on having defeated the Germans, but on having tied down many German divisions, thus weakening them in relation to the Red Army and the Western Allies (Roberts 1976).

A general mobilisation of the population through the Home Guard to resist a possible invasion of the British homeland during the Second World War was the subject of the writing of Tom Wintringham, a former commander of the British battalion in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. He was authorised by the British government to teach Local Defence Volunteers 'ungentlemanly warfare'. One of his works, *People's War* (1942), lays out his ideas about active resistance to potential occupation. But by June 1942 the British government ruled out any guerrilla activities for the Home Guard;

it seems that Wintringham's revolutionary ideas about homeland defence were matched, in the eyes of British authorities, by all-too revolutionary ambitions for British society, and again we see the pattern of suspicions about unconventional warfare that might not be sufficiently controllable by the powers that be (Purcell 2004).

The NATO member states were not blind to the possibilities that might be offered by such concepts of total defence. In concrete terms, NATO itself planned 'stay-behind' operations, of which unfairly perhaps the most famous is GLADIO, for the formation of resistance movements in many forms and on many levels, should a Third World War like its predecessor have led to partial surrender and the evacuation of Western and Southern Europe by US and British forces (Nuti and Riste 2007). This also contextualises C.N.M. Blair's study of resistance movements, written in the 1950s. Since then, however, the NATO powers have lost interest in this option. Alternative defence options to NATO's nuclear-cum-conventional deterrence strategies were put forward in several countries, relying heavily on concepts derived from guerrilla. They would not, however, become official policy in any NATO member state (see chapter 17). There is a nexus between this and the legal problems facing irregular fighters even today, as we shall see presently.

16 | *Counterinsurgency*

As a general rule the quelling of rebellion in distant colonies means protracted, thankless, invertebrate war … It is a singular feature of small wars that from the point of view of strategy the regular forces are upon the whole at a distinct disadvantage as compared to their antagonists.

(Callwell 1896/1906: 27, 85)

This is not the sort of struggle where you take a hill, plant the flag and go home with a victory parade … It's not war with a simple slogan.

(General David Petraeus, 11 September 2008[1])

The legal status of insurgents

Lucifer, the rebel angel, was expelled from Heaven by an angry God, and throughout its history, Christianity has treated rebellion against legitimate authority not only as an offence but as a capital crime. Insurgents threaten the very power structure of society. This is why medieval monarchs resorted to such brutal repression, and why insurgents were customarily treated so much more harshly if captured than regular soldiers. Grotius took great pains to emphasise that subjects had to accept injury inflicted upon them by rulers for the sake of not bringing instability to the society as a whole. Yet he argued that a prince issuing a command directly contrary to the law of God could be disobeyed, likewise a prince encroaching upon the rights of other parts of the government, such as a parliament ('Senate'), or the territory of another (Grotius 1625, I: 4). This could be seen as a legitimisation of the 'people's war' of resistance against an invasion force,

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[1] http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle-east/7610405.stm, accessed 13 September 2008.

once a regular army is defeated by the invaders, but had no lasting impact on international law.

Few civilisations, confronted with insurgents rebelling against what was perceived on the other side as legitimate authority, took them prisoner; most killed them out of hand. An attempt to change this was made in the American Civil War, where both sides had irregulars fighting for them. In 1863, Order 100 or the 'Lieber Code' was created among other things to stop summary executions of partisans upon their arrest. Henceforth, there was – in theory – to be no legal distinction between regular and irregular soldiers, and irregulars were to be given the same protection from martial law as regulars – including the right to a military trial (Beckett 2001: 30). But no international consensus on this point could be found, not least as by definition, irregulars also tended to break the *ius in bello* themselves: generally, they would not wear recognisable uniforms or other outward signs of being combatants, precisely so that they could pass as civilians and be able to hide more easily among the civilian population. Central to insurgencies is their illegality or semi-legality. The Hague Convention of 1899 struggled with this issue, but without a satisfactory result. So guerrilla fighters continued to be hunted down and, more often than not, killed immediately or after tortuous interrogation.

Until well into the second half of the twentieth century, international law posited that the population of a state occupied by (foreign) military forces after their victory in battle had a duty to obey the occupying powers, which by virtue of their victory became the sole legitimate authority in the state. This meant that anybody resisting the occupants was considered as an outlaw, and consequently was not protected by the laws of war which protect regular combatants: the latter were to be taken prisoner, not summarily executed, while irregular fighters had no such protection. The Hague Convention of 1907 allowed the recognition of militias and volunteer corps as protected by the 'laws, rights, and duties of war' if they:

1. were commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates;
2. had a fixed distinctive emblem recognizable at a distance;
3. carried arms openly; and
4. conducted their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.

The laudable aims here were clearly to protect civilians against reprisals aimed at combatants. But while militias and volunteer corps since the nineteenth century at the latest generally were distinctive armies and carried arms openly, this does not apply to partisans or insurgents, whose way of war turns on stealth, surprise and on hiding rather than facing an open confrontation – and this is done usually by blending into the non-combatant population. International law was formulated both to protect combatants after their surrender or capture and to protect civilians against the use of force aimed at combatants who were still fighting, which in turn is only possible if the differences between combatants and non-combatants are blatant. The Hague Convention of 1907 thus does not cover clandestine fighters or insurgents. This dilemma was recognised at the time, which is why a vague preamble was agreed upon with regard to 'cases not included in the Regulations [of the Hague Convention], the inhabitants and the belligerents remain under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity, and the dictates of the public conscience' (t.i. Roberts and Guelff 2000: 70–81). The Geneva Convention of 1949, while introducing many improvements in the protection of non-combatants and prisoners of war (that is, captured regular combatants), did little to enhance the rights of clandestine fighters or insurgents. While in principle the rights and privileges of protection of life are due even to spies and saboteurs, where granting such rights and privileges would be 'prejudicial to the security' of the state against whom the espionage or sabotage is directed, the rights and privileges can be ignored (Convention IV, Article 5: Roberts and Guelff 2000: 303).

Article 37 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions (to which crucial states, such as the USA and Israel, are not signatories) expressly prohibits 'perfidy', including 'the feigning of civilian, non-combatant status', and ruses such as 'the use of camouflage, decoys, mock operations and misinformation', all standard tools of guerrilla (Roberts and Guelff 2000: 442). Attempts were made to widen the application of the protection of the laws of war, to include armed forces responsible to 'a government or an authority not recognised by an adverse Party', paramilitaries or other 'persons who have taken part in hostilities' who claim the status of prisoners of war. By contrast, a spy – captured while engaging in espionage – has no protection, nor a mercenary.

The problem with clandestine operations was again tackled:

In order to promote the protection of the civilian population from the effects of hostilities, combatants are obliged to distinguish themselves from the civilian population while they are engaged in an attack or in a military operation preparatory to an attack. Recognizing, however, that there are situations in armed conflicts where, owing to the nature of the hostilities an armed combatant cannot so distinguish himself, he shall retain his status of combatant, provided that, in such situations, he carries his arms openly: (a) during each military engagement, and (b) during such time as he is visible to the adversary while he is engaged in a military deployment preceding the launching of an attack in which he is to participate. (Geneva Protocol I, 1977, Articles 43–7: Roberts and Guelff 2000: 444–7)

The great change introduced with the 1977 Additional Protocol I is thus that insurgents or factions in a civil war – if acting under and answerable to some higher, albeit self-proclaimed authority – can receive the same protection as combatants, even if the authority leading them is not recognised by the adversary. It is thus not until the late 1970s that international law accorded some protection to insurgents, provided the insurgency is recognised as an armed conflict (and provided the insurgents themselves operated within the above constraints).

What of the application of this protocol? Even at the outset of the twenty-first century, insurgents can still in practice be categorised as criminals by the occupants, and treated accordingly (for example, tried for murder rather than for a war crime, the latter of course excluding the open killing of an enemy combatant). The equation of insurgents with outlaws by their opponents thus enjoys not only great continuity and continuing popularity, but is also the underlying attitude explaining the particularly repressive treatment inflicted on captured insurgents, and even on non-combatants supporting them or merely not betraying them to the occupying power.

Brutal repression

There are many examples of counterinsurgency operations (COIN) in history, and they obviously go as far back as examples of insurgencies. The Romans repressed uprisings against them mercilessly, from the destruction of the town of Numantia on the Iberic Peninsula (153

BCE) to the suppression of the revolts of Vercingetorix by Caesar and of Boudicca by the early empire. These revolts would in the early nineteenth century be commemorated by the new nationalists of all these countries as shining examples for them to be emulated and avenged in their opposition against Napoleon.

British and Irish history in turn is particularly rich in terrible punishments wrought by the English upon populations for harbouring insurgents, matched by the medieval Scots and the Welsh, by their destructive raids on English border regions. The entire Eighty Years Dutch War of Independence against Spain was such an insurgency, and Spanish attempts to quell it with their cruelty fed the great Black Legend (*leyenda negra*) of Spanish brutality.

Extremes of cruelty were reached in the French Republic's treatment of the rebels of the Vendée. It consisted not only of a scorched-earth policy, but has been called genocide by some, as rebel villages were not only razed to the ground but their inhabitants were slaughtered indiscriminately, much the way burghers of towns and cities were butchered from antiquity to the early modern period if they refused to surrender to a besieging army. It is thought that about 150,000 Vendéeans were killed (Secher 2003).

The Vendée, in turn, provides crucial evidence for those who argue that Europeans actually exported to their colonies their home-grown penchant for massacring civilians as a counterinsurgency measure (Wagner 1995). Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in 1841: 'I have brought back from Africa the terrible impression that currently we are waging war in a far more barbarous way than the Arabs themselves' (q.i. Frémeaux 2003: 10f.). The commanding general in Algeria, Duvivier, in fighting the insurgents under Abd el-Kader, summed up French measures: 'for the past eleven years, we have knocked down the buildings, burnt the harvests, destroyed the trees, massacred men, women and children, with an ever growing fury'. In French colonial policies in northern Africa, pillage and the ever-present threat of atrocities were aimed at terrorising the tribes not only as a punishment for rebellion, but also to deter them from resorting to any form of insubordination (q.i. Frémeaux 2003: 11f.). Clearly, a form of 'state terrorism' was being practised. It is therefore not surprising to read Callwell praising the conduct of French General Lazare Hoche (1768–97) in the Vendée as a model to be emulated (Callwell 1896/1906: 41).

One of the most infamous examples of this practice are the orders given by the Wehrmacht Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel (1882–1946) in September 1941 to deal with insurgents:

We must undertake without delay the most rigorous measures to affirm the authority of the occupying power and to avoid an extension of these attacks. We must never lose sight of the fact that, in occupied countries, a human life is worth less than nothing and that intimidation is only possible through extraordinarily harsh measures. When taking reprisals for the death of a German soldier, the execution of 50 to 100 Communists is essential … The method of execution should reinforce yet more the impact of the punishment. (q.i. Ellis 1975: 149)

The Wehrmacht also burned down villages as reprisals, and in an inverted variation of Greek and Roman practice, slaughtered women, children and old people, taking off the men as slave labourers (Jungfer and Meyer 1997; Arnold 2005). German commanders in the East expressly decided that the justifications for resistance which the Hague Convention did accord to people who had not had the time to organise a classic defence were to be ignored (HIS 1996: 138). Keitel was sentenced to death by the Nuremberg tribunal as a major war criminal.

Having lost Indochina, in the subsequent fight to keep Algeria, the French responded with brutality: they resorted to torture and swift executions of suspects (Trinquier 1961/2006: 20). During the Indochina War, in the French school for counterinsurgency in northern Indochina, there was an inscription on a wall: 'Never forget – the enemy does not fight this war in accordance with French Army Rules' (Fall 1965: 13).

It has become a well-established tradition to contrast this with the success of the British in Malaya, where the British managed to isolate the insurgents from the passive population, protect the latter from the insurgents and implement social and economic reforms that addressed most existing grievances (Thompson 1966; Cable 1986; Stubbs 1989; Nagl 2002). It helped immensely that the rebels in Malaya formed an ethnically visibly distinct group, as they were nearly all Chinese. Almost identical methods were applied by the British in Kenya against the Mau Mau (1952–6), who again came from a distinct ethnic group, the Kikuyu, with a total of 1.5 million members. The Mau Mau themselves numbered at most 20,000. This time, it was the Kikuyu who

were moved to fortified villages which they had to build themselves under very difficult conditions; a further 70,000 Kikuyu were moved into detention camps, and the hardships that came with the move and the construction of the villages in the middle of nowhere with no infrastructure led to an estimated 100,000 deaths among them (Markel 2006; Anderson 2005).

High-casualty repression did not end here, however. It became a particular hallmark of COIN in Latin America, Africa and Asia. In 1982 General Efraín Montt of Guatemala promised in a memorable expression that to deal with the insurgency in his country, he would 'dry up the human sea in which the guerrilla fish swim', echoing Mao's metaphor (q.i. Valentino *et al*. 2004: 399). Next to more humane approaches, this theme also resonates in the very considerable literature which has been published since the beginning of the 'war against terror', with its specific targeting of Afghanistan since 2001 and the beginning of the Iraqi insurgency in 2004. The metaphor employed was that of 'draining the swamp', in direct reference to earlier British exploits, despite the concession that this form of 'collective punishment' is morally repulsive (Markel 2006: 47). As we shall see, however, it is the non-punitive alternative based on persuasion and incentives that has become the basis for consensus.

Hunting the insurgents and becoming like them?

The most immediate pressing problem of counterinsurgency has always been how to find and capture the insurgents. To hunt down insurgents, as we have seen, regular armies were mostly useless. One of the secrets of the success of counterinsurgency has been seen by many writers in the transformation of the hunters into quasi-*guerrilleros* themselves, sharing the insurgents' same rough lifestyle. In the mid-1890s, Spanish General Valeriano Weyler (1838–1930) brought new ideas and methods to bear against the long-successful insurgents in Cuba, by transforming the operating patterns of the regular forces to mirror those of the guerrilla fighters (Ellis 1975: 102f.).

In the Second World War, the German Wehrmacht issued a manual *On Fighting Bands* (1944). It set down the need to hunt down insurgents with special 'hunting commandos' (*Jagdkommandos*) that were to chase the guerrilla fighters until they could round them up on convenient killing grounds surrounded by the commandos (*Kessel*). The

qualities this required in the commandos come very close to those of the guerrilla fighters themselves:

The fighting of bands is no second-rate fight. It requires soldiers who are particularly agile, cunning, fighting like hunters, hardened and frugal. Only continual vigilance protects troops from serious casualties … A hunting section should not be smaller than a platoon nor stronger than a company. Fights with superior forces should be avoided … Hunting is an intensified, indefatigable kind of pursuit, its aim is outrunning, bringing to a stand and crushing or capturing the prey. (q.i. Ellis 1975: 149)

On another level also, counterinsurgent forces are faced with the question as to whether they need to become like those they are fighting in order to be able to subdue them. We have already noted that many rules of war are not obeyed by guerrilla fighters. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, commanders of counterinsurgency forces often felt this gave them the right to respond in kind. The British Field Services Regulations in 1912 stated:

In campaigns against savages, the armaments, tactics, and characteristics of the enemy, and the nature of theatre of operations demand that the normal application of the principles of regular warfare be considerably modified. (q.i. Moreman 1996: 109)

As human rights and humanitarian conventions became more explicitly codified in the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, counterinsurgency forces felt that they were obliged to fight with one hand tied behind their backs if in contrast to the insurgents they were obliged to follow proper rules of engagement, uphold the laws of war and all associated conventions; otherwise they would be criticised as no better morally than those they were fighting. This problem was always particularly pronounced when the guerrilla fighters resorted to terrorist acts against civilians associated with those they were fighting against, such as the terrorist acts committed by the Algerian Liberation Movement (FLN) against French *colons* in the 'white' parts of Algiers. In Algeria the French decided to abandon 'civilised rules of conduct'. This clearly worked against them, both in the medium and in the long term. Tactically, it was successful: the French made significant strides towards controlling Algeria again militarily – they even liked to think that they had almost won the war

and were betrayed by de Gaulle (Galula 1964/2005: 69). Strategically, in the sense of achieving the political aims, it was extremely counterproductive, as it consolidated public opinion against the French in Algeria, but also increased sympathy worldwide for the Algerian struggle to achieve independence, while such sympathy had been undermined originally by the FLN's use of terrorism against French civilians.

It is thus a general pattern that guerrilla warfare asymmetrically pits a weak force circumventing the rules and limitations of regular war against a much stronger opponent whose *forte* is precisely that of regular warfare. The Goliath will always have the tendency to exploit his natural strengths to counter the guerrilla fighters, to 'capitalize on our asymmetric advantages' (Ancker and Burke 2003: 25). In the case of the US armed forces, this would mean, *inter alia*, capitalising on superior firepower – the heavy-handed approach which proved so counterproductive both in Vietnam and Iraq. In fact, the Goliath has to try to become more like the nimble-footed and agile David whom he is fighting, if he does not want to risk losing the main prize: the population of the country in which the guerrilla is waged.

Hearts and minds II

Concerns about winning over the sympathy of the populations in fought-over territories and towns goes back to Livy, whose views on the subject were taken up by Machiavelli in his discussion of 'The Management of Conquered Peoples': 'subject peoples should be generously treated or wiped out' (Machiavelli 1531/1998: 349). While practice often differed, the authors of the Renaissance, including Machiavelli himself, advocated the first of these options, recoiling from the latter. Thus Machiavelli, listing historical examples and their consequences, pronounced against the constructions of fortresses with the purpose of holding down the local population:

[W]hen a prince or a republic is afraid of its subjects and fears they may rebel, the root cause of this fear must lie in the hatred which such subjects have for their rulers … due to their misbehaviour; a misbehaviour which is due to their fancying they can hold them by force, or to their foolish way of governing them.

In dealing with any rebellion thus caused by poor governance, he conceded that brutality might bring short-term rewards for the oppressors, but warned that even those utterly reduced to poverty and disarmed could rise again, driven by the fury over this treatment; moreover, 'If you kill their leaders and suppress all other signs of insurrection, like the heads of the Hydra other leaders will arise' (Machiavelli 1531/1998: 353–356).

A very different approach to fighting down insurgents can be found in writings on the art of war that devote space to the pacification of a conquered country at the end of hostilities. Several works of the sixteenth century deal with this issue. All writing on *The Art of War*, the Italian Bernardino Rocca (1582) and the two Frenchmen Fourquevaux (1548/1549), and François de Saillans (1589/1591) insisted on the great need for discipline among soldiers, especially at the end of and after hostilities. Fourquevaux in his career had been both a general and a French ambassador to Spain. This helps explain why he was one of the rare military men who discussed the art of war not merely in terms of winning battles, but also of securing the political aims of the war itself. He prescribed the banishment of 'certain citizens' from occupied towns so as to prevent them from organising an uprising. Like most contemporary authors, he was extremely concerned to prevent any pillaging and other misconduct in the countryside, and to prevent atrocities after the capture of a town. He proscribed the destruction of the possessions of townsfolk, and any misconduct against women, 'for there is no crime that dooth so much offend the hearts of the people, as to see their wiues seduced or forced' (Fourquevaux 1548/1589: 212: 260).

A contemporary of theirs was the Spaniard Bernardino de Mendoza, who in his *Theory and Practice of War* dealt specifically with how to fight insurgencies. He gave very reasonable advice on a number of points. An insurgency had to be fought as quickly as possible, he argued, lest it spread throughout the country. He assumed, incidentally, that among the insurgents would be found a prince's vassals, that is, leading members of the aristocracy. Accordingly, he cautioned against fighting them in open battle, unless the prince was very certain that he would prevail in such a contest of armed force. In any other situation, he strongly urged that the prince should negotiate a peace with the vassals. In case the prince was victorious, however, he recommended that the leaders of the insurgency should be dealt

with severely, but to make an example of them, not out of vengeance. The pacification of the land he thought possible only if the prince paired justice and clemency, castigating the heads of the insurgent movement, but pardoning the mass of insurgents, for, he argued, 'it is not possible to punish a multitude' (Mendoza 1595/1597: 30). We see here and in the writings of the authors considered below an underlying understanding for and sympathy with insurgents, who, in this humanist view, might well have good reason to rise up in protest against poor government and injustice.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Paul Hay du Chastelet put his mind to dealing with insurgencies of the type which he described as civil war. France had seen its measure of these, and Hay thought it was up to princes and magistrates to prevent them through good governance and through preventing resentments caused by encroachments upon the rights of citizens. If a civil war broke out, the government should react flexibly, according to the laws of medicine, which administered cures according to the overall state of the patient. Different countries, he noted, had different customs; the Spanish never forgave rebels, while the French always pardoned them. Hay recommended to his king incessant negotiations with the rebel leaders to find mutually acceptable compromises (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 265–71).

Mendoza influenced the earliest truly great author of comprehensive ideas on counterinsurgency: Santa Cruz de Marcenado. A leading military officer, diplomat and finally governor of one of the Spanish possessions in North Africa, he was another one of the very rare writers on Strategy to consider military measures in the light of their political outcome. One of his eleven volumes of *Military and Political Reflections* was dedicated entirely to the subject of 'Rebellions' or insurgencies from the point of view of the government trying to suppress them (Santa Cruz de Marcenado 1724–30 [1727]/2004, VIII).

Following Livy, he stated his conviction that insurgencies are unlikely to succeed or are less dangerous if they are not brought about by poor government; therefore, government should be 'gentle and just' (Santa Cruz de Marcenado 1724–30 [1727]/2004, VIII: ch. 1). The conflict might not be resolved unless at least a fair part of the grievances was first addressed. Like Hay, Santa Cruz emphasised the need to act quickly to stamp out a rebellion, as the tide would turn in favour of the rebels the longer it took the counterinsurgency forces to

gain the upper hand (ch. 45). This phenomenon was rediscovered in the early twenty-first century, when analysts of the Iraq fiasco would speak of 'occupation fatigue' which would set in unless quick, positive results were produced by the benign occupiers (Ford 2005: 54). In dealing with an occupied population, Santa Cruz, like Mao and Ho after him, advocated respect for traditional customs, laws, religion and privileges of the region concerned (chs. 2, 10). He spoke out firmly against punishment of rebels without a regular trial, as that would undermine the rule of law (ch. 4). If people complained about the treatment they received in an area occupied by the military, he advocated changing the garrison, even the military commander (chs. 5, 6). He recommended entertaining the people in some way – clearly thinking of the Roman *panem et circenses* to turn their minds away from insurrection (ch. 13). To get potential rebels off the streets, he advocated recruiting unemployed youngsters into the army (ch. 33). To avoid the instrumentalisation of malcontentment by foreign powers, Santa Cruz urged controlling borders and roads leading abroad (ch. 34). Dangerous individuals, he thought, should be taken hostage and removed from their normal environment in which they could help plot the insurgency; they should, however, be treated well in their isolation. Rebels, where they could be seized, should be taken prisoner, but other rebels should be offered pardon if they went home within a given number of days (chs. 42, 53, 59, 62). He underlined that the physical extermination of the rebels was not the aim, but the curbing of the rebellion: today's rebels would ideally be tomorrow's productive citizens (ch. 43). Accordingly, he advised avoiding bloody reprisals, as they merely served to create martyrs for the cause and increased support for the insurgency (ch. 50). Santa Cruz proposed the promulgation of articles aimed mainly at disarming the insurgents and the population in general (who might or might not decide to support the insurgents), while issuing passports to members of the public moving about on normal business to distinguish them from the rebels, who should be intercepted in their movements. Secret meetings should be prohibited, but for those observing the rules, a guarantee of their lives and property should be given (ch. 55).

Crucially, the population should be given a stake in the order assaulted by the rebels, by looking to the economic welfare of the region: trade, manufacture and all other production should be protected and encouraged to improve the economic well-being of the

area, tax reliefs should be granted and to bring the potentially dis-affected population over to the side of enlightenment and truth – assuming, of course, that the legitimate government represented these values – Santa Cruz recommended the establishment of schools and universities to enlighten the populations of the areas concerned (ch. 61).

Santa Cruz thus recognised that in combating insurgents, a reign of terror would not ultimately lead to a change of heart of the locals. But, as Clausewitz would say a century later, prevailing in war means imposing one's will upon the enemy, and how much easier to impose one's will if the enemy can be convinced that he can live with, per-haps even thrive in, the new situation? What Santa Cruz was clearly advocating was giving the population of the area concerned a stake in a reformed state which the counterinsurgency tried to establish (state-building!) and defend.

This is perhaps the most important line of thinking on counter-insurgency, but there is no evidence that Santa Cruz de Marcenado's writings were much read. For one, they have not been translated into English to this day. There is an isolated recognition in the work of Henry Humphry Evans Lloyd that insurgencies ('revolts') are caused by 'injuries, real and supposed', and that these injuries have been inflicted upon the insurgents by a sovereign authority whom they therefore aim to destroy. '[I]t is during this contest that the greatest efforts are made, because there is no alternative; freedom or slavery is the result of it.' Accordingly,

if you persevere in attacking them, and treat them with cruelty and contempt, they will not be satisfied with any conditions you may grant them, but, moved by revenge, which is a very active principle, pursue their oppressors to destruction. (Lloyd 1781/2005: 453)

After Lloyd, Le Mière de Corvey opined: 'if one wants to preserve one's conquest, one has to treat the defeated gently, that is the only way to gain their loyalty. Unfortunately, all the wars in which the *levée en masse* has been used, are fed by some fanaticism, be it a pol-itical spirit, a religious one, etc.; without this [ideologisation], there would not have been wars of extermination the results of which are horrible.' In a footnote, Le Mière gave the example of the atrocities with which Charlemagne had dealt with the Saxons during their

forced conversion; he clearly did not approve of this king to whom posterity gave the title 'the Great' (Mière 1823: vii–ix).

Clausewitz had already hit on the importance of winning the population's support. He thus also recognised it as a war aim 'to win over public opinion'. Initially, he proposed to do this through crude force, through crushing victories and the seizure of the capital (Clausewitz 1810–11/1966: 1070). Later Clausewitz commented on

what an enormous contribution the heart and temper ['*Gesinnung*': disposition, opinion] of a nation can make to the sum total of its politics, war potential and fighting strength. Now that governments have been conscious of these resources, we cannot expect them to remain unused in the future, whether the war is fought in self-defence or in order to satisfy intense ambitions. (Clausewitz 1832/1976: 220)

Cast more in the humanist mould of thinking of Santa Cruz, but without knowledge of his writing, some of the most interesting writers on this subject came from France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1895 General François Jacques André Duchemin described French operations in Indochina in flowery but enlightened language:

The pirate [insurgent] is a plant which grows only on certain soil. The most efficient method is to render the ground unsuitable to him … There are no pirates in completely organised countries. To pluck wild plants is not sufficient: one must plough the conquered soil, enclose it and then sow it with the good grain, which is the only way to make it unsuitable to the tares. The same happens on the land desolated by piracy: armed occupation, with or without armed combat, ploughs it; the establishment of a military belt encloses and isolates it; finally the reconstitution and equipment of the population, the installation of markets and cultures, the construction of roads, sow the good grain and make the conquered region unsuitable to the pirate; if it is not the latter himself who, transformed, co-operates in this evolutionary process. (q.i. Gottman 1941: 242)

The same spirit of enlightened self-interest is reflected in the writings of General Joseph Galliéni (1849–1916) and Marshal Hubert Lyautey (1854–1934), although not necessarily always put into practice by the French. Lyautey advocated 'peaceful penetration' of the hostile populations or occupied areas, writing an article in

1900 on 'The Colonial Role of the Army', in which he argued about Morocco:

The best means for achieving pacification in our new colony is provided by combined application of force and politics. It must be remembered that, in the course of our colonial struggle, we should turn to destruction only as a last resort, and only as a preliminary to better reconstruction. We must always treat the country and its inhabitants with consideration, since the former is destined to receive our future colonial enterprises and the latter will be our main agents and collaborators in the development or our enterprises. Every time that the necessities of war force one of our colonial officers to take action against a village or inhabited centre, his first concern, once submission of the inhabitants has been achieved, should be reconstruction of the village, creation of a market, and establishment of a school. It is by combined use of politics and force that pacification of a country and its future organisation will be achieved. Political action is by far the most important. It derives its greater power from organisation of the country and its inhabitants. (q.i. Gottman 1941: 243)

At much the same time, an American commentator on US operations in the Philippines wrote that '[I]f army officers and the army have had to know something of the art of war, they have had to know and use far more of the art of pacification. In the Philippines their work was four-fifths peace and one fifth war-making' (q.i. Linn 2002: 519).

Despite the much earlier antecedents, the term struggle for 'the hearts and minds' is said to have been coined by the British high commissioner in Malaya, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer, during the 'emergency' of 1948–57. He spoke of the need to 'win the hearts and minds of the population' (q.i. Lapping 1985: 224). The phrase subsequently became hackneyed, to the point where Americans talked about 'WHAMing' the peasantry in Vietnam (Johnson 1973: 41). In practice, however, this happened rarely: the Briton Robert Thompson and the Australian Robert O'Neill criticised precisely the failure of the Americans, in the Vietnam War, to engage earlier in the battle for the support of the Vietnamese population itself (O'Neill 1968; Thompson 1970). Thompson pointed to the futility of attempting to crush an insurrection, if the resulting situation or state was politically and economically not feasible. He emphasised moreover that the government, however outraged its own forces might be by atrocities committed by partisans, had to stay on the side of legality at all times: if

one was trying to set up a state of law, one could not give it credibility if one acted oneself unlawfully in the process of setting it up or restoring it. Thus he saw trials to which the public was not admitted or executions under martial law as signs only of the weakness of a government and of the danger that it would soon collapse completely. No government, he felt, could impose itself and win the sympathy of the local population if it engaged in torture or execution of terrorists, as both remained criminal offences in a state of law. Moreover, Thompson thought that to be successful, the leaders of a counterinsurgency (particularly the foreign leaders) had to have a comprehensive master-plan which would help them keep focused on what sort of society and economy they were seeking to create: you could never, he argued, merely go back to the status quo ante (Thompson 1970).

Galula and his compatriot Roger Trinquier (1908–86) pointed out, however, that in 'revolutionary war', there may be a battle for the support of the population about whom these wars were ostensibly being fought, but the population would more often than not be terrorised by the partisans into giving their support. Both Galula and Trinquier emphasised the need to protect the population from the bullying and terror of the insurgent leaders in their quest for support (Trinquier 1961/2006: 27; Galula 1964/2005: 52f.). What the French had sought to do, in Indochina and Algeria, had been to turn the insurgents' own weapons against them: terror, illegitimacy, torture (Trinquier 1961/2006: 20, 68ff., 1968), something Galula strongly condemned, pointing at the asymmetry of moral judgement regarding insurgent and counterinsurgency actions.

For two decades after the fall of Vietnam, the whole subject area of counterinsurgency felt too sore for American official strategists to give it serious thought. A turning point came in the early 2000s. The American Field Manual Interim 3-07.22 of 2004 already rightly reflected a new awareness of cultural specificity and its enormous importance in warfare, especially counterinsurgency. Starting in a very Clausewitzian vein, it argued that:

The center of gravity in counterinsurgency operations is the population. Therefore, understanding the local society and gaining its support is critical to success. For U.S. forces to operate effectively among a local population and gain and maintain their support, it is important to develop a thorough understanding of the society and its culture, including its history,

tribal/family/social structure, values, religions, customs, and needs. (US Army 2004)

A mental gate opened with the experiences of Iraq in 2004 for a flood of publications on counterinsurgency. May it suffice here to home in on the centre of the shift in thinking which led to the adoption in the USA in December 2006 of a new counterinsurgency field manual (FM 3-24; US Army and US Marine Corps 2006). The team who had produced it had been led by Generals David Petraeus and James Mattis. Petraeus himself had experienced the insurgency and civil war in Iraq in 2004 and formulated fourteen recommendations, prophesying the tenor of the field manual. They converge closely with the emphasis on respect for local customs we have already found in Santa Cruz, but also in Mao and Ho. Besides drawing on his own experience, Petraeus, who himself holds a Ph D, was influenced both by historians of past COIN campaigns and by the anthropologist Montgomery McFate:

1. Delegate as much as possible to the locals, so that they feel ownership of what is being done – an idea that can be traced to T.E. Lawrence.
2. Visible improvements in the country concerned have to be effected quickly, otherwise the population will conclude that things were better before the counterinsurgency operations got under way.
3. Financial investment in reconstruction is of prime importance.
4. 'Increasing the number of stakeholders' in the new order 'is critical to success.'
5. A military operation must only be carried out if it is clear that the political (and psychological) costs (for example, through collateral damage, civilian casualties and so forth) do not outweigh the military gains.
6. Intelligence on the identity, movements and whereabouts of the insurgent fighters is crucial, so that they can be targeted individually and discriminately, without accidentally hurting civilians among whom they are hiding.
7. The military as much as NGOs or specialised units must engage in state-building ('nation-building', in US terminology) or civic action, that is, in activities designed to improve the infrastructure and the living conditions of the population in general and to mend the social fabric, and regenerate or strengthen trust in the forces of law.

8. It is not enough to create new police forces – to back them, the ministries of justice, the interior and so forth have to be reformed, as well as the administrations serving them.

9. Cultural awareness is crucial in order not to alienate the local population.

10. Counterinsurgency is only successful when economic and social recovery and the improvement of living conditions go along with military success.

11. For a military force engaging in counterinsurgency operations in a foreign country to help a friendly government, the ultimate success depends on the behaviour and acceptance of the local leaders.

12. The implementation of all the above points depends on the awareness and adroitness of junior commanders.

13. On all levels, especially junior levels, the military leaders have to show initiative, flexibility, imagination and ability to innovate.

14. 'A leader's most important task is to set the right tone', to emphasise the importance of non-fighting tasks over purely military missions and to avoid over-reactions to especially trying situations (Petraeus 2006).

Conclusions

The flood of literature on this topic has by no means dried up, although a consensus seems to have been established that in counterinsurgency, it is crucial to focus on the needs and interest of the population of that area. 'Hearts and minds' may sound too soppy for some – 'providing security' may be more appropriate (Lynn 2005: 24). David Edelstein in his study of military occupations from 1815 to 2003 also put it prosaically: COIN will only be successful if the occupied population recognises the need for occupation, feels solidarity with the occupiers in the face of a threat common to both sides and has 'a credible guarantee' that the occupiers will 'withdraw and return control to an indigenous government in a timely manner' (Edelstein 2004: 51).

Or, in the words of McFate and her fellow anthropologist Andrea Jackson:

To win support counterinsurgents must be able to selectively provide security – or take it away. [COIN] forces must become the arbiter of economic

well-being by providing goods, services, and income – or by taking them away. [COIN] forces must develop and disseminate narratives, symbols, and messages that resonate with the population's pre-existing cultural system or counter those of the opposition. And finally, counterinsurgents must co-opt existing traditional leaders whose authority can augment the legitimacy of the government or prevent the opposition from co-opting them. (McFate and Jackson 2006: 13)

An unresolved tension exists between playing on local customs and traditions on the one hand and the aims on the other to build states with democratic institutions practising good governance and ensuring human rights – these in themselves may be incompatible with the local customs and traditions.

But the central consensus is there: only the side that puts the population's interests first will ultimately win them over – terror will bring about temporary conformity and obedience, but not long-term success. When COIN forces are seen as occupiers, or when insurgents are seen as brutal oppressors, people may be cowed into co-operation, but it will not become a self-sustaining force in that society (McFate and Jackson 2006: 18). COIN cannot be seen as a zero-sum game, and above all, the winners must be the local population, not the foreign states intervening in their country.

In the context of small wars, writers realised early on that the key to lasting success had to be the pacification of a country or region, not by the brute imposition of force, but by holding out a better deal to the population. The people had to be persuaded that they did not need to support rebels in order to see an improvement of their lives and an addressing of their grievances. Persuasion, not the imposition of one's will (which in chapter 1 we have seen to be by consensus the essence of most definitions of military Strategy these days) is at the heart of success in asymmetric warfare. As we shall see in the following chapter, after 1945, this realisation would spread to liberal thinking about other warfare, too.

The quest for new paradigms after the World Wars

17 | *Wars without victories, victories without peace*

[T]he field of battle is the only tribunal before which states plead their cause; but victory, by gaining the suit, does not decide in favour of the cause. Though the treaty of peace puts an end to the present war, it does not abolish a state of war (a state where continually new pretences for war are found).

(Immanuel Kant 1795/1796: 24)

Indirect strategy seeks to obtain a result by methods other than military victory.

(General André Beaufre 1963/1965: 108)

The First World War as turning point?

The major theme of this chapter does not start with Hiroshima in 1945. We could trace it back to Jaurès's and August Bebel's reactions to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1. But it is even more clearly present in reactions to the war of which contemporaries had ardently hoped that it would be '*la der des ders*', the last of its kind, and which despite hecatombs of casualties failed to produce a lasting peace. As J.F.C. Fuller concluded from this experience, '[e]xacted peace can be no more than an armistice' (Fuller 1961: 153). The strong perception of the futility of the sacrifices of that Great War by those who had fought in it and later witnessed Hitler's attempts to reverse all its outcomes greatly influenced strategic thinkers.

Another line of thinking concludes from the ravages caused by war that little can be worth such destruction and misery. As wars mobilised entire nations whose populations were growing exponentially, and entire industrialised state economies, the degree of destruction grew in turn. Polish-born intellectual Jan Bloch (1899) thus argued that the cost of war and destruction for advanced societies was so high that few causes could warrant it. Yet the Great

War soon showed that governments did not necessarily follow this logic.

After Bloch, and especially after the watershed of the First World War, Norman Angell and others tried to think about how to limit or even ban war. There was agreement, expressed for example in the foundation of the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House in London, that a better understanding of interstate relations was needed to ward off the repetition of this disaster (Howard 1979). In a reawakening of the eighteenth-century quest for institutionalised peace, which we have seen particularly in the proposals of Saint Pierre and Kant, but as a concrete after-effect of the Great War, in 1928 French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand and US Secretary of State Frank Kellogg had signed a 'pact' named after them, outlawing war. At the time, there was an important strand of opinion among foreign policy makers and international lawyers that this was the right way to go, and many other countries adhered to the pact – without any legally binding consequences, however. The war-weariness which this reflected in the following decade greatly contributed to the appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s.

As all that had been won by the liberal states through the sacrifices of the First World War was turning to ashes with the outbreak of the Second World War, Liddell Hart wrote even in 1939, echoing Machiavelli, that the more violence one used, the greater resistance would become. Violence tended

to consolidate the enemy's troops and people behind their leaders … The more intent you appear to impose a peace entirely of your own choosing, by conquest, the stiffer the obstacle you will raise in your path … if and when you reach your military goal, the more you ask of the defeated side the more trouble you will have, and the more cause you will provide for an ultimate attempt to reverse the settlement achieved by war.

A military victory, even one achieved at greatest cost, did not automatically mean lasting achievement of one's war aims: most notably, the Versailles Peace Treaty had not brought a lasting peace. 'Force is a vicious spiral – unless its application is controlled by the most carefully reasoned calculation. Thus war, which begins by denying reason, comes to vindicate it – throughout all phases of the struggle' (Liddell Hart 1944: 177). Nuclear weapons were thus not the

only factor cautioning against major war. They were in some respects the manifestation of something greater, but they brought the message home to those who had not yet learnt it by 1939.

After the Second World War came the foundation of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, the RAND Corporation in California (the name comes from 'Research and Development') and several other institutes or university departments from Scandinavia and the Netherlands to Australia devoted to peace research or polemology. The latter was the term which Gaston Bouthoul used for his institute in France, meaning science of war or war studies. Their aims were the same, whatever their names (peace studies or war studies), as expressed by Liddell Hart and Bouthoul: 'If you want peace, study war' (Liddell Hart 1954; Bouthoul 1976).

A new dichotomy went along with this disillusionment with major war. As Liddell Hart put it, if one's own

object of war is to obtain a better peace … it is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire … [Therefore] if you concentrate exclusively on victory, with no thought for the after-effect … it is almost certain that the peace will be a bad one, containing the germs of another war.

Therefore, '[v]ictory in the true sense implies that the state of peace, and of one's people, is better after the war than before' (q.i. Kennedy 1991: 2f.). Augustine of Hippo had said much the same one and a half millennia earlier.

Several authors in the Augustinian tradition had in the past stressed that wars should not be fought unless they were just. But they tended to focus on the just cause, and less on the right intention, or the reasonable expectation of achieving an end-state of peace that was better than the initial situation, without incurring disproportionate cost in terms of suffering, death and destruction in getting from the beginning of war to its end (see chapters 2 and 3). Later, casting aside any obligation to justify their actions to a greater moral authority, many princes of the modern age, and later 'realists' and statesmen of other persuasions, felt little need to articulate more than their unilateral, subjective interest to justify going to war. In the late Cold War, the 'Weinberger Doctrine' formulated by the then US Secretary of Defense in 1986 as guidance to Strategy, while sensible in many ways,

did not dwell on any just cause, legitimate authority or right intentions. It mentioned only the principle of 'last resort', that is, that war should be undertaken only if all other options had failed, a principle derived from Roman legal practice (Russell 1975: 4f.).

By contrast, the movement to outlaw war after the Second World War led to the Charter of the United Nations outlawing the use of force as a furthering of one's own state's interests, except in self-defence against aggression, which by extension branded the aggressor as an outlaw (UN Charter 1945, Chapter VII, Article 51). And yet it was only at the turn to the new millennium that the concept of 'grand strategy', as Paul Kennedy rightly remarked, was linked with peace as much as with war (Kennedy 1991: 4). The concept of a 'better peace' was clarified by the UN's 'Secure World' report of 2004, commissioned by the Secretary-General: the authors declared that the use of force might be condoned by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII, if all of five criteria were met. These are that the threat must be serious enough, that the purpose of the use of force must be only to halt or prevent the threat in question, that it is the last resort, that proportionate means are applied (that is, not more than necessary) and that the consequences of action are likely to address the threat, and will not be worse than the consequences of inaction (UN 2004: 58). This sets crucial parameters for Strategy: the use of force cannot be seen as legitimate if its consequences are worse than the wrong it was supposed to undo. The document reflects a remarkable continuity in 'Western' – now purportedly global – ethics and thinking about war since Roman times, notwithstanding Western deviations in the age of total war.

Causes, conduct and ethics of wars since 1945

Only citizens of the most cozened states of the world will associate the 'Cold War' with a 'long peace' that has supposedly given way to a period of 'new wars'. There were dozens of hot wars during the Cold War, and tens of millions of casualties, more still counting intra-state wars and persecutions. Some, such as the Korean War, the several Arab–Israeli wars, the Iran–Iraq War 1980–8, and since the end of the Cold War, the Ethiopia–Eritrea War 1998–2000 and the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, easily fall into the same category as the major wars of previous centuries with regular armies clashing in

major battles. Measured by nineteenth-century standards, they can bear comparison with Moltke's wars against Austria and Denmark or the Crimean War, and they were major wars for the countries on whose territories they were fought. From the perspective of at least one side, they had aspects in common with the two World Wars. They were 'limited' only in that, while taking place in the nuclear age, they were not fought with nuclear weapons. A simple either–or categorisation of 'limited'–'unlimited' hardly does them justice. Genocidal (Ludendorffian 'total') war aims have shown themselves to be perfectly possible in local wars waged with limited manpower without major battles, and limited territorial war aims were perfectly compatible with major tank battles in the Arab–Israeli wars or the Ethiopia–Eritrea War.

What was distinctive during the Cold War, notwithstanding their 'containment' and the more honestly named 'roll-back' Strategies (Heuser 1989), was that the Western states tended to be on the reactive side. The wars that did occur were interpreted by the West 'as a part of a worldwide struggle between communism' and the West. At a second glance, however, as British Field Marshal Lord Carver noted rightly, most of the wars of the Cold War

were not directly concerned with the struggle between these opposing systems or ideologies, unless the fight against colonialism or imperialism is considered as having been instigated, as opposed to merely supported, by communism. The principal causes of these wars were either the contest between imperial authorities, attempting to maintain that authority, and the nationalist movements which challenged it, or the struggle for power between rival elements of the population as the imperial authority withdrew … These rivalries were at times based on differences of political outlook, but almost all were heavily influenced by racial, historical and cultural differences. (Carver 1990: 290)

This characterisation of wars post-1945 also fits the wars since 1991, especially if one slightly widens the definition by integrating the fact that perceived racial (or better: ethnic), historical and cultural (including religious) conflicts between 'rival elements of the population' usually flared up whenever an authoritarian or other strong regime collapsed. This accounts for the explosion of Yugoslavia after the death of Tito, or the periodic outbursts of violence in African countries at times of presidential elections. Such wars occurred both

before and since the end of the Cold War. It is misleading to call them 'new wars', even if the Internet or mobile phones have added a new touch here and there. What has changed with the end of the Cold War is not the nature of these wars, but the fact that Western powers could intervene in local conflicts, even, as in the case of Kosovo, against the wish of Russia, without having to fear that this might escalate into a nuclear apocalypse. But curiously, self-limitations in the conduct of such operations would now replace what in the Cold War had been the fear of nuclear war. And this has its roots in the ethical shift back to pre-nineteenth-century values that had taken place.

The consequence of the outlawing of aggressive war by the UN Charter was that after 1945, few wars have been properly declared (Brodie 1973: 229). Thus, as James Cable observed, '[t]he foreign offices of the world, or their legal advisers, were so impressed by the Nuremberg Judgment' on the German war crimes, and indeed the pronouncement of the Tokyo war crimes tribunal, that henceforth they eschewed entering into a legal situation through the declaration of war in which *ius in bello* applied, by which they might later be judged (Cable 1971: 12). Many wars since 1945 were neither formally begun nor formally ended; they were described as 'emergency', 'troubles', 'crisis', 'affair'. With casualty figures comparable to losses in major wars, however, they were clearly wars, if defined as the use of violence by one organised group against another (Heuser 2008). This applied particularly to violence used by governments against unwanted segments of their own populations, in democide as defined by R.J. Rummel, that thrived in extremist ideologies, be they racist, hyper-nationalist or communist. They tended to occur in contexts seen by the perpetrators as war threatening the survival of their own narrowly defined group, even if the war was undeclared or was a 'Cold War' ideological struggle. As the most important battleground in the Cold War, just as in the wars of religion in early modern times, was 'in our minds' (Rees 1964: xvi), it seemed all the more reason for fanatics to suppress opposition by annihilating it.

While genocide and democide were still taking place in communist and other authoritarian states in numbers too terrible to contemplate (Rummel 1992), in liberal democratic states, much thinking about war developed in the opposite direction, that indicated by the Briand–Kellogg Pact and the UN Charter. US strategist Bernard Brodie observed that while attitudes to war 'in our western civilization' had

changed remarkably little over the millennia, they have changed … rapidly
in the half century since World War I, and with especial force since the
coming of nuclear weapons. Where war was once accepted as inevitably a
part of the human conditions, regrettable … but offering valued compensa-
tions in opportunities for valor and human greatness – or, more recently, in
opportunities for the ascendancy of superior peoples – the modern attitude
has moved towards rejection of the concept of war as a means of resolving
international or other disputes.

Instead, he found that after 1945, 'justifications of war and of prepara-
tions for war appear to be confined largely to self-defense – expanded
by the superpowers to include defense of client states – or, in a very
few instances, correction of what is conceived to be the most bla-
tant injustice' (Brodie 1973: 274). Brodie also remarked that, in the
Cold War, the words 'glory' and 'honour' all but disappeared from
debates about Strategy (Brodie 1973: 229). Indeed, when towards the
end of the Cold War, a British field marshal would write in defence
of the military that 'Their profession is an honourable one' (Carver
1990: 300), the word is used almost apologetically, not as the rally-
ing cry to arms that it was from antiquity until the Second World
War. Instead, the term 'security' had ubiquitously replaced the term
'honour', and, as Brodie found, could be harnessed to just about any
cause (Brodie 1973: 274, 345–55), what the 'critical security studies'
school would later refer to as the 'securitization' of subjects (Buzan *et
al.* 1998). Richard Betts has recently made the same observation with
regard to the buzzword 'credibility', especially in relation to NATO,
used to justify the threat or use of force where previously honour or
loss of face might have been invoked (Betts 2000: 49). But the con-
text was here that unless the firm positions which NATO took and
its implicit threats were credible in small contingencies, it could not
deter major war.

   Side by side with this there continued to be the Napoleonic para-
digm of the 'pursuit of victory' in war as the guiding principle, which
Brian Bond rightly traces 'from Napoleon to Saddam Hussein' (Bond
1996). On the whole, militaries in the Western world continued to
plan for 'victory', but the list of exceptions to this grew. In 1954, the
American *Field Service Regulations* FM 100–5 introduced the con-
cept of 'wars of limited objective', and relinquished the term 'victory'
as a war aim: 'Victory alone as an aim of war cannot be justified,
since in itself victory does not always assure the realization of national

objectives' (q.i. Summers 1982: 67). It was also in the mid-1950s that
NATO dropped the concept of victory from its war aims in case of
a Warsaw Pact attack (Heuser 1998b: 311–28). In the final stages of
its campaign in Algeria, France decided consciously not to use all its
might to retain this colony. Equally the USA in Vietnam arguably did
not aim for 'victory' (Gray 1979: 71), and of course any notion of a
military 'victory' is alien to the peace-keeping operations which came
into being since 1945 and then became ever more frequent, and ever
longer.

Even in regular war, the means available for the pursuit of vic-
tory were capped. In the 1950s planners still assumed that nuclear
weapons would be available – especially in an East–West war, but
not only there – like any other munitions. By the early 1960s, how-
ever, perceptions and terminology had changed: 'limited war' came
to mean 'conventional war' in American parlance. What is more,
the assumption was henceforth that all war other than a Third
World War would be, had to be limited. And a Third World War,
it was fervently hoped, would 'not take place' (Gallois 1976: 113).
It also became clear by then at the latest that it was difficult for the
military to plan and organise simultaneously for conventional and
nuclear operations, as NATO did for its defence throughout the Cold
War. It meant that during the first phase of conventional defence –
which everybody hoped would not escalate to nuclear war – NATO
forces could not fight even with all conventional means available: for
example, a number of aircraft had to be kept back from conventional
missions to be ready for nuclear missions. This led many air offic-
ers to resent the nuclear dimension, as they felt they had to fight the
perhaps all-important conventional phase with one hand tied behind
their back (Trachtenberg 1986: 760). Similar feelings were expressed
by naval officers (see chapter 11).

The West did not renounce the use of force altogether – the chief les-
son of the fight against Hitler's Germany, at least for Britain, France
and the USA, balanced the pacifist sentiments that had firmly estab-
lished themselves in the trenches of Flanders in 1914–18 and, before
that, in the American Civil War. This lesson was that there were con-
texts in which war was just and warranted, and the freedom of one's
own civilisations was worth defending even at the cost of millions of
lives (although perhaps not tens of millions). As Field Marshal Lord
Carver put it,

It is as well to remind those who quote the injunction in the Sermon on the Mount to 'turn the other cheek …' that … if evil is not resisted, it will prevail. That is the justification for the use of force to deter, and if necessary, to defeat those who turn to it to further their own ends. (Carver 1990: 300)

The Soviet Union had retained a similar lesson from its Great Patriotic War, except that its leadership was willing to accept much higher casualties than the West. By contrast, this lesson did not come naturally to the Germans, Austrians or Italians, who only after the Second World War internalised a profoundly pacifist stance with concessions only to the right to self-defence (Heuser 1999: 154–91).

Even after the Second World War, police actions, wars against aggressors, rogue states or insurgencies perceived as illegitimate were undertaken quite readily by the colonial powers in retreat, or by the self-appointed world policemen, the USA, Britain, France and indeed the USSR (in Afghanistan). Yet the assumption was shared on all sides that these actions must not turn into a major war, and especially not a nuclear war. There was a growing consensus since the early 1950s that only the ultimate issue of Western freedom and survival – and on the Eastern side, the very survival of socialism – could warrant the risk of nuclear war. Dissenters questioned that even this was a cause worth risking the end of civilisation for.

This is the solution to the 'riddle' which Liddell Hart set out to solve, when he wondered why it was that:

On this side of the [Iron] curtain, the language used about Soviet policy is stronger than was ever addressed to Hitler before war came, but what even Americans say is mild compared with the abusive terms the Russians hurl at American policy. In the light of history, it hardly seems that such intense friction and mutual suspicion can go on indefinitely without resulting in an explosion. (Liddell Hart 1950: 90)

In this context, there was a new, odd employment of *ancien régime* balance-of-power thinking. In the 'realist' mode of thinking, ideology is discounted and all states are thought equally selfish, but capable, out of pure self-interest, of co-operating temporarily with other states to pull down another power who is poised to bid for regional or world domination. To such a mindset, a 'balance of powers' even with an ideological enemy, is an acceptable world order. In the Cold

War, 'balance of power' thinking took a new twist (Betts 1987: 14f., 20, 91, 175–9). It was neatly summed up in Tom Lehrer's 'Nuclear Proliferation Song': after the USA, 'Russia got the bomb, and that was OK, / 'cause the balance of powers was preserved that way.' A variant of this perception is that of 'spheres of influence', on the agreement of which Churchill and Stalin constructed the post-Second World War order, in Moscow in December 1944. In the middle of one of the greatest ideological conflicts ever, many on the liberal side would rather concede moral equivalence to the other than risk blowing up the world.

The return of spectator-sport warfare

What, if anything, has changed since the end of the Cold War? Spheres of influence still seem accepted to a large extent, although the Russian sphere has contracted significantly. America is in many ways the world hegemon, but not to the extent that it would or could risk a major war to defend Georgia against Russia or Taiwan against the People's Republic of China. The spectre of a Third World War has paled. By contrast, the surprise betrayed by many at renewed manifestations of more limited forms of war that had receded somewhat during the Cold War is unjustified. They had clearly been unduly mesmerised by the spectre of the apocalypse that did not happen. Neither the Gulf War of 1990/1, nor the Wars of Secession in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, nor the genocide in Rwanda, nor the short campaign and ensuing quagmire in Iraq 2003 was essentially 'new'. Least new is the phenomenon of terrorism, well known long before 9/11, the attacks with hijacked aircraft against buildings in New York and Washington in 2001. 'Anarchists' famously used terrorism in Moscow, Paris and London before the First World War, and from the 1950s to the 1990s, European states had repeatedly suffered terrorist attacks on a smaller scale. This was usually a mix of the same fervent anti-Western reactionary nationalism or religious fanaticism that characterised 9/11 and now takes the guise of Islamism throughout Africa and Asia, with ultra-left political splinter groups like the Red Army Faction in West Germany or the Red Brigades in Italy, who were usually supported with training, weapons or finance from within the communist world. Even the USA had experienced terrorist attacks, such as the bombing of buildings in the 1970s by the radical left 'Weathermen',

the bank robberies, murders and VIP kidnappings in the same dec-
ade carried out in the US by the 'Symbionese Liberation Army', the
Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 and an earlier attempt by Al Qaeda
to blow up the World Trade Center.

All these types of conflict had more dimensions than merely the
conflict between communism and liberalism. Thus their principal
patterns have not changed with the end of the Cold War, except for
the subtraction of communist or American financing which used to
fuel most local conflicts in the Cold War. The Rwandan civil war at
the end of the twentieth century proved that the Nazi genocide was
not made possible only by good railway logistics, by hard-working
civil servants, obedient SS or Wehrmacht units and superior German
industrial technology. The war aim of genocide, we had to learn, can
be pursued successfully with primitive machetes.

As Edward Rice has shown, it is *not* true that 'Wars of the Third
Kind' – wars within underdeveloped states – have spread only since
the end of the Cold War (Rice 1990). They have been a very long-
term phenomenon, at best disrupted by periods of colonialism. It
is true that most wars of the present are 'Wars of the Third Kind',
and that in those wars, '[t]here are no set strategies and tactics.
Innovation, surprise, and unpredictability are necessities and virtues'.
Modern weapons technology of a very expensive sort rarely plays a
role, the emphasis is on improvised explosive devices, small arms and
Kalashnikovs. The distinction between civilians and soldiers disap-
pears, not least in civilian casualty figures of 90 per cent in intra-state
wars (Holsti 1996: 37).

What has changed for the West is that it is now *less directly* impli-
cated in most wars of the present. These 'Wars of the Third Kind'
take place locally, for local reasons and aims, between local factions,
they are rarely directed against former colonial powers; they do not
threaten to bring on the end of the world and the three terrorist attacks
of 9/11, the Madrid bombing in March 2004 and 7/7 (on London's
public transport in 2005) are sad but negligible occurrences compared
quantitatively with the casualties suffered in any war. That they oc-
cupy so much political space in the West is a matter of Western choice,
not of necessity. Indeed, the West can 'choose' to become involved in
these wars or stand aloof, a notion going back to the great medieval
Jewish theologian Moses Maimonides (12th century/1940: 320). The
West can look on, almost as 'spectators' to war, just as H.G. Wells

described Europe looking on during the Boer War (see chapter 12). According to Colin McInnes the 'spectator-sport warfare' of the present has the following characteristics:

1. The localization of war, leading to expeditionary strategies and force requirements.
2. The targeting in war of an enemy leadership or regime, not society.
3. The requirement to minimize collateral damage.
4. The requirement to minimize risk and exposure for both Western society and its armed forces.
5. The belief that the enemy armed forces are no longer the target in war or necessarily the means to victory. (McInnes 2002: 143)

From a Western point of view, argues General Sir Rupert Smith,

War no longer exists. Confrontation, conflict and combat undoubtedly exist all around the world … and states still have armed forces which they use as a symbol of power. None the less … war as battle in a field between men and machinery, war as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs: such war no longer exists … [A] paradigm shift in war has undoubtedly occurred: from armies with comparable forces doing battle on a field to strategic confrontation between a range of combatants, not all of which are armies, and using different types of weapons, often improvised. The old paradigm was that of interstate industrial war. The new one is the paradigm of war amongst the people. (Smith 2005: 1, 3)

We see here again the dominance of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century model of warfare, against which current wars are measured, therefore seeming new to some observers. Taking a larger perspective, however, Martin van Creveld first noted that the current wars look more like a return to much *older* forms of war, perhaps to the most original forms of war, the sub-state, pre-state wars, with warring groups vying for power, much as in Europe between the fall of the West Roman Empire and the end of the Thirty Years War (Creveld 1991). What *is* relatively new is the detachment that the Western powers have from these wars, which for them are wars of choice, as Lawrence Freedman put it (1993). Only if oil or narcotics are involved is the West directly affected, only if the war destabilises a volatile region with weapons of mass destruction can a case for direct concern be constructed. But held up against the previous

colonial withdrawal wars or the communist threat in the Cold War, the actual effects on and potential threats to the West are significantly smaller since 1991, to the point where it is difficult to explain to a Belgian or Canadian or US Mid-Western electorate why they should feel concerned.

The relinquishment of the Napoleonic paradigm

'Violent conflict aiming at military victory' was the Strategy characteristic of the Napoleonic era, wrote General André Beaufre in the early 1960s. With 'Wagnerian romanticism', strategists of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries had distorted Clausewitz's analysis of Napoleon's recipe for success into the mistaken notion that this was 'the only orthodox strategy' which 'gave birth to the two great World Wars … both of which showed up the limitations of the Clausewitz-Napoleon strategy'. But then, 'haunted by the two fruitless catastrophes of 1914–18 and 1939–45 and now armed with all the resources of modern science', he thought humanity might 'have found a method of preventing a repetition of these catastrophes': nuclear deterrence to ban major, albeit not small wars (Beaufre 1963/1965: 28, 104).

As we saw in the previous chapters, the time since Napoleon had seen three ideas come to dominate strategic writing: one was that of the total mobilisation of one's own nation and national resources for war and the second was the quest for a decisive battle leading to the imposition of one's will on the crushed enemy. The third, which grew through Social Darwinist and racist notions and combined in the West with the desire to sidestep the enemy's military, was to target the enemy's civilians, or in its extreme form, at the hands of Hitler, to enslave and annihilate entire populations.

With its roots going at least as deep as the First World War, but shaken into explosive growth by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a new guiding idea came to dominate strategic thinking, even though many strategists did not immediately realise how all-pervasive its implications were in the global communist–liberal confrontation. It was, in short, the idea that in a world of nuclear powers, the aim could no longer be the annihilation of the enemy in any form, nor even the uncompromising imposition of one's will, as the enemy – or his bigger ally – would have the means either to prevent this or to wreak

an unbearable nuclear revenge. Liddell Hart wrote after the Second World War that, 'old concepts and old definitions of Strategy have become not only obsolete but non-sensical with the development of nuclear weapons. To aim at winning a war, to take victory as your object, is no more than a state of lunacy' (Liddell Hart 1960: 66). Martin van Creveld in 1999 even thought that the Western abandonment of the quest for victory was due entirely to the invention of nuclear weapons:

From the beginning of history, political organizations going to war against each other could hope to preserve themselves by defeating the enemy and gaining a victory; but now, assuming only that the vanquished side will retain a handful of weapons ready for use, the link between victory and self-preservation has been cut. (Creveld 1999: 337)

The new dominating theme became the search for outcomes of mutual advantage (Schelling 1960), or for outcomes with which both sides could live. In the view of US strategist Morton Halperin, the existence of thermonuclear weapons meant that the two superpowers now had a vital interest to avoid either an 'explosion' (meaning 'the sudden transformation of a local war into a central war by the unleashing of strategic nuclear forces') or 'expansion' (meaning 'a gradual increase in the level of military force employed'); 'explosion' and 'expansion' together he defined as 'escalation' (Halperin 1963: 3), which *must* be avoided.

The superpowers could no longer aspire to clear-cut victories, in the sense of a unilateral imposition of one's will upon a disarmed enemy against his will, or a clear-cut 'zero-sum game': the realisation dawned on strategic thinkers that wars did not necessarily promise lasting victory. The outcomes of wars could still include a temporary armistice, hailed as a victory by one side or the other. But as neither side could totally 'disarm' the other, or 'bomb' the other 'back into the Stone Age' for fear of retaliation (whatever the rhetoric), even a temporarily defeated enemy would come back to the charge within a matter of years. Demonstrations of this were the Vietnam War after the Tet Offensive and even after the LINEBACKER bombings, the Arab–Israeli Wars and the conflicts between India and Pakistan or Ethiopia and Eritrea. The arrival of nuclear weapons thus changed many people's thinking, here sooner, there later, from Brodie in

1945 to Reagan and Gorbachev in the early 1980s. Philosophers and strategists pondered life under the perpetual threat of the nuclear destruction of the world, peace movements formed as never before, anti-nuclear demonstrations marked the outlook and passive culture of whole generations.

Even in 1952, the British nuclear-scientist-turned-strategist P.M.S. Blackett pronounced that total war had been abolished with the invention of thermonuclear weapons (Blackett 1956: 5). Slessor in 1958 cautiously rephrased Blackett's verdict: '*major all-out* war has abolished itself with the advent of nuclear weapons' (Slessor 1958: 320; my emphasis). French thinkers went further. After the loss of France's colonial empire removed the direct obligation to respond to smaller contingencies except in wars of choice, several French strategists professed their belief right up to the end of the Cold War that 'war is dead' (Le Borgne 1987). They only gradually gave up their Europe-focused optimism at the end of the Cold War, re-engaging in warfare in the hope that it could be a war with zero casualties (*la guerre zéro morts*), until we now find French military authors returning to the consensus that wars are again quite 'probable' (Desportes 2008).

Back in the late 1950s, Harvard-historian-turned-strategist Henry Kissinger had begun to suspect that nuclear weapons were irrelevant in the conflicts between a nuclear power and a non-nuclear power, especially if the latter was underdeveloped (Kissinger 1957: 127). Perhaps the West had put too much emphasis on nuclear deterrence, resulting in its defeats on a conventional level. This was due, in the words of Captain Stephen Roskill,

to the fact that the Russian leaders know perfectly well that, unless they provoke us to an altogether insupportable extent, it is inconceivable that we should initiate the use of nuclear weapons. Thus, while we have … a deterrent which … can never be used to support our policy on any secondary issue, they are able to … extend their zones of political and economic domination with little hindrance … in the era of nuclear parity, in a period of 'cold war', or in a conflict for limited purpose, a strategy based mainly on nuclear power cannot be effective. (Roskill 1962: 251)

As global peace was difficult to achieve, the first aim was to limit wars that *were* taking place, to stop them from becoming nuclear.

The return of limited wars

We owe the differentiation between 'limited' and 'unlimited' war to Clausewitz, or rather to Guibert (1772/1977: 149f.). Much credit must go to Sir Julian Corbett for having imported this concept into the strategic thinking of the twentieth century (see chapter 1). It had been dismissed as completely outdated, however, by the 'realist' strategists writing on the eve of the First World War and in the interwar period, notably by Jean Colin (1911/1912: 322–46), von der Goltz (1895/1899: 5–7) and of course Erich Ludendorff (1935: 15f.). The 'realist' belief in the prevalence of Total War was initially reinforced, not questioned, by the First World War. Bernard Brodie rightly observed that 'Following World War I it became axiomatic that modern war means total war.' And this 'seemed to be confirmed and reinforced by World War II' (Brodie 1959: 307f.). Even on the eve of the twenty-first century, American strategists would see 'modern war' as coterminous with world war (Murray 1999: 75).

As Americans are culturally prone to a Manichaean view of a perpetual fight of good against evil, they assumed, in the words of historian David Rees,

that all states are equally interested in peace, that force and 'power politics' are always to be detected in international relations, and that the conflicting policies of countries and power groups can usually be harmonised by the same means that govern internal domestic differences – due process, reason, common sense, elementary morality and institutions such as the United Nations.

If another state would not abide by these rules, the American proclivity to see it as 'evil' came to the fore again, and it had to be fought accordingly. War, as seen by Americans,

can only be justified when fought as a crusade against tyrants in a mood of righteous indignation. Then, maximum force must be used to end the conflict as quickly as possible, and so total wars fought by democracies quickly take on an ideological character as witness the two great wars of the [twentieth] century. (Rees 1964: xi)

In similar terms, US strategic analyst Alexander George noted that

conditioned by World Wars I and II, many Americans viewed war … as a moral crusade against an aggressor. There was little room in such an image of war for limiting one's objectives or limiting the means one employed to achieve them … The image of war as a moral crusade encouraged the belief that when war broke out, military factors and military judgment should have great weight, if indeed not dominate, in shaping policies for the conduct of the war. (George 1971: 1f.)

Confronted with enemies representing absolute evil, the use of 'maximum force' with the aim to annihilate the enemy's armies and to overthrow his regime became the 'American way of war'. It had crystallised since the American Civil War and was very much a manifestation of the Napoleonic paradigm. The US military had a pronounced preference for all-out war aiming at total victory, regardless of political aims (Kissinger 1957: 90; Brodie 1959: 315; Osgood 1979a: 99).

Yet the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), and soon after it the Second World War, the Greek Civil War (1946–9), the Berlin Airlift (1948–9), the French Indochina War (1946–54) and the Malay Emergency (1948–60) demonstrated that 'limited war' existed, forms of war that were 'modern' in many respects and yet could not be put in the category of the World Wars. Shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War, Basil Liddell Hart asked, almost paraphrasing Clausewitz's thinking on absolute and real war:

Can war be limited? *Logic* says – 'No. War is the sphere of violence, and it would be illogical to hesitate in using any extreme of violence that can help you to win the war.' *History* replies – 'Such logic makes nonsense. You go to war to win the peace, not just for the sake of fighting. Extremes of violence may frustrate your purpose, so that victory becomes a boomerang. Moreover it is a matter of historical fact that war has been limited in many ways'. (Liddell Hart 1950: 366)

Initially, as the Korean War broke out, policy analysts, and political and military leaders throughout NATO feared that this might be merely the first in a series of Moscow-led moves which would culminate in an invasion of North Atlantic Treaty territory (Osgood 1979a: 96). But when the outbreak of war in the Far Eastern peninsula remained an isolated case, strategic thinkers turned to Clausewitz's writing about 'limited war' for an explanation. Rees claimed that 'the

Korean war was the first important war in American history that was not a crusade'. At any rate, it was not, as previous wars, fought until the total defeat of the enemy (Rees 1964: xi).

Korea raised great problems for American Strategy. Total war always aims for 'overthrowing the enemy leadership', what has since become known as 'regime change'. It invariably strengthens resistance on the part of the adversary; he is still in control of the armed forces and internal security forces. It may well introduce an element of civil war. For Kissinger, this was irreconcilable with superpower conflict in a nuclear world (Kissinger 1957: 127). Presidents Truman and Eisenhower thought on the same lines. In Korea, contrary to the American way of war, the United States government settled for only a partial victory. It deliberately restricted the nature and scope of its intervention in order to avoid a direct armed encounter with the Soviet Union or a protracted war with China (Osgood 1979a: 96).

American strategic theorists were well aware that limited wars had occurred before the nuclear age. Charles E. Osgood noted that '[l]imited wars are as old as the history of mankind, as ubiquitous as armed conflict'. Indeed, upon reflection Osgood realised that wars 'fought to annihilate, to completely defeat or dominate, the adversary' had actually been 'momentous and rare'. What was distinct since 1945, however, was that 'strategies of limited war … are derived particularly from the fear of nuclear destruction and the exigencies of the Cold War' (Osgood 1979a: 93). This was why Korea was the 'first modern limited war' (Brodie 1973: 63; see also Halperin 1963: 2).

Osgood's widely accepted definition of 'limited war' was that it had to be limited 'in both means and ends'. Initially, American planners did not discount entirely the use of nuclear weapons in limited war (Kissinger 1957: 137–45; Osgood 1979a: 95). As we have seen in chapter 14, this idea was abandoned in the early 1960s, and henceforth 'limited war' was taken to mean a war fought without nuclear weapons.

Even before Vietnam, American strategists identified the difficulties of 'winning' such a war that was limited from a US perspective, if 'victory' was defined in the Clausewitzian sense of imposing one's will upon the enemy. Henry Kissinger wrote:

A limited war … is fought for specific political objectives which, by their very existence, tend to establish a relationship between the force to be

employed and the goal to be attained. It reflects an attempt to *affect* the opponents' will, not to *crush* it, to make the conditions to be imposed seem more attractive than continued resistance, to strike for specific goals and not for complete annihilation. (Kissinger 1957: 120)

In other words, limited wars had to be wars of *persuasion*, where arguments and incentives complemented limited use of force.

Rees explained that, 'Limited war is … political war par excellence, in that "purely military" considerations are excluded' (Rees 1964: xvi). A limited war, according to Osgood,

is fought for ends far short of the complete subordination of one state's will to another's, by means which involve far less than the total military resources of the belligerents and which leave the civilians life and the armed forces of the belligerents largely intact … limited war is not only a matter of degree but also a matter of national perspective, since a local war that is limited from the standpoint of external participants might be total from the standpoint of the local belligerents, as in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Clearly, the Western definition of limited war … reflects not some universal reality but the interests of the Western allies, and especially of the United States, in a particular period of international conflict. (Osgood 1979a: 94)

It thus became clear quickly to a few strategists that what was limited war – occasionally referred to as 'local war' (Halperin 1963: 2) – for the USA was hardly limited for Korea and other countries on whose territories the war was fought. In the words of Bernard Brodie: 'What is a limited war to us, limited in terms of emotional as well as material commitments, may be total war to our opponents and to one or more of our allies; thus, their demonstration of "resolve" may well exceed ours' (Brodie 1959: 315). This foreshadowed the configuration that would characterise the Vietnam War, where the Americans, notwithstanding their superior weaponry and forces, had a limited commitment and were ultimately defeated by an inferior adversary with a greater commitment, an adversary who tried to mobilise totally for this war (see chapter 15).

But short of achieving a victory in the traditional way of winning a war militarily, could one side or the other further its aims? Western strategists thought that this might well be the case, but for the communist side rather than the American, which was so wedded to the

Napoleonic paradigm. Writing just after the end of the Korean War, while France was still up to its neck in colonial withdrawal wars, French Vice Admiral Pierre Barjot asked:

[M]ay not the hydrogen bomb incite Communism to take recourse exclusively to conventional weapons, speculating on the psychological self-deterrence of the Western powers … [as] to unleash the H-bomb which would lead to the suicide of humanity? … The risk of setting the world ablaze has brought about a return to limited wars. (Barjot 1955: 229)

Limited war was thus not to the advantage of the West, which would in such a context be self-deterred from using its nuclear weapons. Osgood explained this in terms of two strands of 'limited war' thinking. One was the Western strand, using force with restraint to deter and contain the other side, in the hope of avoiding general war. 'The other strand, inspired by Mao Tse-tung and Third-World nationalism and propounded by revolutionary nationalists, sought to use guerrilla warfare' to fight for independence against Western colonialism. It uses 'limited means – the Strategy of insurgency – to achieve total political conquest' (Osgood 1979a: 93). This strand was proving remarkably successful, even in the face of Western counterinsurgency. In the Cold War it was seen, perhaps excessively, in the context of the ideological strife which made each side support any state, faction or group as long as that was also locked in conflict with the other side. France and the USA emerged particularly scarred. Overall, the Western track record was not good, from Indonesia and Indochina/ Vietnam to Algeria, and the wars of Angola and Mozambique against Portugal.

   In view of the traumatic experiences of Indochina and Algeria, it was a French strategist who applied a particularly systematic analysis to the problem of Strategy in the nuclear age, and to limited wars.

General Beaufre and the systematic reconsideration of Strategy

General André Beaufre was a friend of Liddell Hart's, and his work was influenced in part by Liddell Hart's thinking about the 'indirect approach' in Strategy (see chapter 7). Beaufre's *Strategy of Action* of 1966 complements his earlier book on the 'strategy of deterrence'; he

saw these as two opposite Strategies. His 'strategy of action' included coercion through the use of armed force, or merely its threat. As Beaufre explained, 'action is always based upon a dialectic between the possible gain and the possible loss, a balance sheet between the expectation of success and the fear of the risks involved' (Beaufre 1966/1967: 28, 32)

Beaufre distinguished 'five levels of action':

1. Complete peace.
2. The cold war levels:
   (a) the level of insidious intervention
   (b) the level of overt intervention
3. The levels involving the use of armed force:
   (a) the conventional war level (ranging from limited military intervention to full-scale military war)
   (b) the nuclear war level, ranging from warning shots to the nuclear paroxysm. (Beaufre 1966/1967: 62)

Beaufre drew attention to complications to Strategy-making arising from conflicting political objectives (Beaufre 1966/1967: 70). Following Clausewitz, he prescribed a systematic approach, starting with the diagnosis of the political situation, followed by setting out one's political and strategic objectives, drawing up a balance sheet of one's own objectives and means and the adversary's objectives and means and finishing with a plan of action that would allow for different phases of operation. These had to include the whole range of actions from the preparation of domestic public opinion and the appeal to international opinion in order to isolate the enemy, and then diplomatic and military action, ideally achieving concessions without the shedding of blood (Beaufre 1966/1967: 83–101). Sun Tzu and all the Western Fabians would have approved (see chapter 4).

Using his earlier definition of 'modes', Beaufre described 'direct and indirect "modes" of action', as part of a 'total strategy' comprising all 'modes'. One mode of action for him was the 'total strategic manoeuvre' consisting of 'actions which may be carried out in fields other than military in order to render maximum assistance to the military action' (Beaufre 1966/1967: 102–27). As Beaufre explained:

The concept of total strategy in the indirect 'mode' is extremely logical but it differs considerably from the habits formed in the nineteenth century

when direct strategy was the normal method of action … [It means] using the minimum of force and military resources, the art of maximum exploitation of the narrow margin of freedom of action left to us by nuclear or political deterrence in order to achieve the desired, frequently large-scale, results … [I]ndirect strategy amounts to a tough form of negotiation. (Beaufre 1966/1967: 112f., 115)

Taking up Liddell Hart's idea of the indirect approach, Beaufre explained that: 'the new fundamental principle is that limited war, on the material level of forces … is unlimited on the psychological and moral level … The new strategy is a very indirect military strategy where the psychological decision is sought directly by the preponderant application of psychological means' (Beaufre 1972: 42). After an overview of warfare in previous centuries, Beaufre opined that:

[O]nly by a pseudo-Clausewitzian aberration have we been led to believe that cases existed where one aim was clearly predominant over all the others. 'Winning the war' is not a political aim; as Liddell Hart has clearly demonstrated, the real political aim is the type of peace to follow the war. (Beaufre 1966/1967: 24)

Here again we see the relinquishment of the belief that 'victory' in a military sense alone was the be-all and end-all of war.

   Indeed, Beaufre thought that war 'under the sign of a Clausewitzian strategy, is today impossible' in view of the extremes to which nuclear weapons would take it: 'In conventional warfare, the defeat of armed forces and the occupation of territory were the signal of capitulation. This convention has lost a good part of its validity.' In the Second World War, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Chinese, all occupied by enemy forces, 'resisted for years … waging guerrilla war'. After the end of the worldwide conflagration, the Vietnamese with much inferior weapons managed to hold their own successively against the French and the Americans, and the Algerians against the French. The outcomes of these conflicts were determined less and less by 'military victory. In such a situation, one sees that the strategy of limited war is essentially different from conventional war: the conventional war aims to win, *limited war aims to convince*' (Beaufre 1972: 41). Here Beaufre was echoing the Spanish philosopher and writer Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936), who famously told General Franco's nationalists, 'you may be winning, but you have not convinced [me]'. True victory in an ideological context, one

might deduce from this, would only be one in which the other side is not militarily beaten, but persuaded to accept a new situation.

Coercion

If persuasion in an entirely non-violent political sense failed, how could force be brought to bear on any situation in the nuclear age? This is the subject of much literature, especially in the Anglosphere, on 'coercion', introduced above all by Thomas Schelling (1966) and Alexander George, who wrote:

Traditionally force and threats of force have been used in several ways in order to influence the calculations and behaviour of opponents in world politics. We can identify at least four general Strategies:

1. The quick, decisive military strategy
2. Coercive diplomacy
3. Strategy of attrition
4. Test of capabilities within very restrictive ground rules. (George 1971: 16–21)

George did not claim that this was a new invention, but on the contrary pointed out that the essentials of the Strategy of coercive diplomacy

have long been known, although the coercive diplomacy of an earlier era … was not articulated systematically. Rather, it was part of the conventional wisdom of those who engaged in statecraft and diplomacy, implicit in what they did and occasionally discussed in memoirs rather than explicated in scholarly works. (George 1971: 21)

Coercive diplomacy in his terminology could be both offensive and defensive. A defensive use of coercive diplomacy would be the attempt

to persuade an opponent to stop doing something he is already doing … or to undo what he has already accomplished. In contrast to this defensive use of the strategy, coercion may also be employed offensively to get the opponent to do something he has not done and does not want to do – to make him pay a price, give up territory – in order to avoid the threatened sanctions. An analogy here is the robber who persuades his victim to turn over his money peacefully.

In other words, this was 'diplomatic blackmail' (George 1971: 24); where nuclear weapons are involved in this process, 'diplomatic black-mail' would become 'nuclear blackmail' (Betts 1987: 13f.). Thomas Schelling explained:

The bargaining power that comes from the physical harm a nation can do to another nation is reflected in notions like deterrence, retaliation and reprisal, terrorism and wars of nerve, nuclear blackmail, armistice and sur-render, as well as in reciprocal efforts to restrain that harm in the treatment of prisoners, in the limitation of war, and in the regulation of armaments. Military force can sometimes be used to achieve an objective forcibly, with-out persuasion or intimidation; usually, though … military *potential* is used to influence other[s] … by the harm it *could* do to them [my emphasis]. It … can be used for evil or in self-protection, even in the pursuit of peace; but used as bargaining power it is part of diplomacy – the uglier, more negative, less civilized part of diplomacy – nevertheless, diplomacy.

The fear of nuclear escalation of any local war did not prevent powers from 'trying it on', from rattling their sabres, or putting pressure on smaller powers.

There is no traditional name for this kind of diplomacy. It is not 'military strategy' which has usually meant the art or science of military victory, and while the object of victory has traditionally been described as 'imposing one's will on the enemy', how to do that has typically received less attention than the conduct of campaigns and wars. It is a part of diplomacy that, at least in [the USA], was abnormal and episodic, not central and continuous, and that was often abdicated to the military when war was imminent or in progress.

Since 1945, however, 'this part of diplomacy' had become 'central and continuous; in the United States there has been a revolution in the relations of military to foreign policy'. In his book Schelling tried to identify 'principles that underlie this diplomacy of violence', trying to ascertain

how countries do use their capacity for violence as a bargaining power, or at least how they try to use it, what the difficulties and dangers are and some of the causes of success or failure. Success to some extent, failure even more, is not an exclusively competitive notion; when violence is involved,

the interests even of adversaries overlap. Without the overlap there would be no bargaining, just a tug-of-war. (Schelling 1966: vf.)

Here again, we find the idea that it is necessary to part company with any unilateral imposition of one's will upon the enemy, and to build on interests held in common with the adversary.

Semantic confusion persists in view of different definitions: many authors use 'coercion', 'coercive diplomacy' and 'compellence' interchangeably. According to Lawrence Freedman's comprehensive synthesis on the subject, 'coercion' should be 'defined as the deliberate and purposive use of overt threats to influence another's strategic choices. The term was chosen to distinguish it from both compellence, which is but one variant of coercion, and coercive diplomacy.' Building on the definitions by George and Schelling, Freedman suggests the following use of the terms *compellence* and *deterrence*, as the aggressive and defensive sub-modes of *coercion*: 'compellence' should be used for a '*forcible* offence' such as 'taking something, occupying a place or disarming an enemy or a territory, by some direct action that the enemy is unable to block'. This might include 'his withdrawal or his acquiescence, or his collaboration by an action that threatens to hurt, often one that could not forcibly accomplish its aim but that, nevertheless, can hurt enough to induce compliance'. Thus:

Deterrence involves a demand of inaction and *compellence* a demand of action. Deterrence involves explaining what must not be done and the consequence if it is – and then waiting. The overt act is up to the opponent. Compellence, in contrast, usually involves *initiating* an action (or an irrevocable commitment to action) that can cease, or become harmless, only if the opponent responds. (Freedman 1998: 18f.)

Freedman himself diverged from Alexander George by arguing that 'coercive activity is not inherently defensive or offensive (for this depends essentially on the objectives being pursued) nor does it necessarily involve modest force'. Freedman put more emphasis on 'the importance of counter-coercion and the influence of specific acts of coercion on strategic relationships over the long term' (Freedman 1998: 3f.).

Analysing the considerable literature on coercion, Robert Pape usefully grouped it into four broad schools or 'families'. The first of these

focused on the comparable strength of resolve and reputation for determination. This 'family' included Fred Iklé (1964) and Schelling himself (1966). The second of Pape's 'families' emphasised 'the balance of interests' and indeed stakes in a dispute, which serves to explain how a militarily stronger power might not prevail when pitted against a weaker power that has little to lose and is completely committed to a cause. Pape included Osgood and Tucker (1967), with their comprehensive study of 'force' or 'military power' in its practical, but also legal and moral dimension, answering in the negative the question of whether 'force' and 'war' were obsolete in the nuclear age. Here Pape also listed George *et al*.'s work on the *Limits of Coercive Diplomacy* (1971). Pape's third 'family' of strategists had pondered particularly 'the vulnerability of the adversary's civilian population to air attack' and the leverage that might be gained from threatening it. These were the early air theorists who urged upon their governments a city bombing Strategy, including, of course, Douhet (1921), J.F.C. Fuller (1923), with many thinkers of this era well summed up by Quester (1966). It also included Liddell Hart at his worst, when he advocated city bombing, with *Paris, or the Future of War* (1925). Pape's fourth 'family' 'points to the balance of forces: striking military targets in the adversary's homeland shifts the military balance, thereby compelling the victim to modify its behaviour'. Here Pape named Edward Luttwak and Paul Nitze (Pape 1996: 7), but Richard Betts's work (1987) should also be included in this category. Pape then examined the relative success in using 'threats to civilians ("punishment") and threats of military failure ("denial")' for the purposes of deterrence or coercion.

Punishment threatens to inflict costs heavier than the value of anything the challenger could gain, and denial threatens to defeat the adventure, so that the challenger gains nothing but must still suffer the cost of the conflict. (Pape 1996: 7)

Pape examined historical cases, concluding,

Leaders are often drawn to military coercion because it is perceived as a quick and cheap solution to otherwise difficult and expensive international problems. Nonetheless, statesmen very often overestimate the prospects for successful coercion and underestimate the costs. Coercive attempts often fail, even when assailants have superior capability and inflict great

punishment on the target state. Famous failures include German attempts to coerce Britain in 1917 and again in 1940, the French occupation of the Rhineland in 1923–1924, Italian efforts to coerce Ethiopia in [1935], the American embargo against Japan in 1941, Allied bombing of Germany in World War II, American efforts against North Vietnam from 1965 to 1968, and Soviet operations against the Afghan rebels from 1979 to 1988.

By contrast, Pape found 'virtually no instances in which coercion was not tried when a credible claim can be made that it would likely have succeeded' (Pape 1996: 2).

Analytically, it is rarely justifiable to reduce complex negotiations to the one sub-category of coercion. As Freedman noted, it is difficult to distinguish between, say, Iraq in the late 1980s trying to persuade Kuwait to write off Iraqi debts by diplomatic means alone – when Iraq's superior armed forces always loomed in the background – and actual threats of invasion (Freedman 1998: 18). In both cases, force plays a role; the psychological impact of latent threats, however, may vary depending on the perception of the target of that threat. Compellence, like deterrence, may to some extent lie in the eye of the beholder.

A purely defensive posture in the parlance of the US political scientists could also be termed 'suasion' or 'dissuasion' (the latter being also the French word for 'deterrence'). With such an aim in mind, a different way to achieve it was taken by those Europeans studying the issue, a more practical, *matériel*-orientated approach.

Defensive defence and the relinquishment of victory

The nuclear age had brought forth the disarmers, advocating the elimination of nuclear weapons and the reduction – ideally elimination – of armaments, following the precedents of arms limitations treaties of the interwar period. Soon after the Second World War, Liddell Hart, for example, advocated the abolition of all 'weapons of mass destruction', but also of heavy tanks and heavy guns, admitting that this was difficult for him to write as he was a great fan of mechanised armies:

As a military theorist, one had seen in armoured mobility the solution of the military problem of reviving the power of the offensive. But when one came to look at the problem from the wider point of view – of peaceful nations wishing to check aggression – the sensible solution was to nullify such a

rebirth by abolishing the means of it … The core of the whole disarmament problem lies in *convincing* the aggressive that victory is unattainable from the start. The most effective means is to annul the chances of successful attack. To sterilise offensive potency is to sterilise war itself. (Liddell Hart 1950: 354, 358; my emphasis)

Also in the 1950s, a number of strategists like Liddell Hart tried to think of ways in which East–West tensions could be structurally contained through force structures, especially along the Central Front, that might not lend themselves to scenarios of provocation and escalation. Upon retiring from the RAF, Sir John Slessor put forward alternative proposals for the structure of the German Bundeswehr created in 1955 (Dean 1987/8: 65). British military historian Michael Howard developed ideas of Western disengagement from the Continent, in reaction to Polish proposals, known as the Rapacky Plan (Howard 1958). In the 1970s the retired Brigadier Kenneth Hunt, under the aegis of the IISS, worked on force structures which might bring more stability to the Central Front areas without looking like an open invitation for the Warsaw Pact to invade. Military historians John Keegan and Trevor Dupuy, much like Hunt, thought about hardware solutions, in their case focusing on fortifications and obstacles (Dean 1987/8: 65, 77). Even at the very end of the Cold War, some of the finest British strategists, Ken Booth and John Baylis from the University of Wales, examined alternative defence plans to those developed by NATO (Booth and Baylis 1989).

Sparked off by the last peak in East–West tensions, there was a further increase in publications on options of defending against a major (that is, Warsaw Pact) attack with conventional means only. In Britain, the Alternative Defence Commission undertook serious critical studies of how to remodel British defence to make it work without nuclear weapons; they concluded that it meant the need for a very much larger conventional force, and indeed the reintroduction of conscription (Alternative Defence Commission 1983, 1985). Other authors came from neutral countries (Austria, Sweden), from peace research institutes or from parties on the left and peace movements in NATO countries. General Emil Spannocchini, Chief of the Austrian Army, very seriously examined low-intensity, guerrilla warfare options for his country in the light of the writings and applied Strategies of Mao, Giap and Tito, turning essentially on a double denial: denying the

enemy a major, decisive battle (which he would win, in view of his superiority), but also denying the enemy the successful occupation of the country. We have seen how these concepts have their roots in the Spanish and Russian resistance against Napoleon (see chapter 15). Any small country with a mountain redoubt or otherwise inaccessible areas had a chance of retreating to it and holding out against even a major adversary by denying him total control of the country, and by irritating him, guerrilla-fashion, with continual skirmishes; if the Swiss had espoused this concept, why not Austria (Spannocchini and Brossollet 1976)? At the end of the Cold War, authors from Scandinavian countries both within and outside NATO examined such options (Boserup 1990; Crenzien 1990; Nokkala 1991).

In Germany, a number of ex-Bundeswehr officers such as General Gerd Schmückle, Brigadier Eckart Afheldt and Siegfried Freundl; peace researchers from universities and think tanks, such as the nuclear- physicist-turned-peace-activist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, the retired Brigadier Schmückle and Albrecht von Müller; the university lecturers Theodor Ebert, Götz Neuneck and Dieter Lutz; and staff from the Social Sciences Research Institute of the Bundeswehr, tried to think through similar concepts. They all sought to get away from NATO's reliance on nuclear deterrence, built on the threat to use them if necessary (Hannig 1984). The alternatives put forward usually involved asymmetric responses: guerrilla tactics, small units inflicting pin-pricks on the enemy, denying him the control of the country rather than giving battle, setting up early versions of electronically connected networks that could operate independently, if necessary, while consciously avoiding any military configurations, deployments and weapons systems which might be perceived as aggressive (Afheldt 1976, 1983). Some of the writing was inspired by guerrilla and counter-guerrilla manuals. Like guerrilla fighters, such small defensive units would have relied heavily upon the indirect support of the indigenous population and administration, who were, however, barred by international law from offering active resistance themselves – quite a complicated equation (Weizsäcker 1984; Schmückle and von Müller 1988; Møller 1991).

'Defensive defence' Strategies tended not, however, given any serious consideration by governments of NATO member states, as they were so utterly at variance with nuclear-deterrence-based NATO Strategy. Moreover, in pointing out the differences between European and

American interests (Afheldt 1983: 164–208, 289–306), they were seen as undermining Alliance solidarity. Finally, they would have favoured the Soviet Union: until 1987 the Warsaw Treaty Organisation had a war-winning Strategy in which it would have used all its forces, possibly merely in a conventional mode, but nonetheless with enormous firepower, to crush any opposition to its supposedly defensive invasion of Western European NATO territory (Heuser 1993, 1998b). By contrast, these concepts would have been of extreme interest in reconstructing European defences after the end of the Cold War, especially in the former Warsaw Pact countries that in several waves joined NATO. Non-provocative forces, 'structurally unable to attack' (Schmückle and von Müller), configured in such a way might have made it considerably easier for Russia to accept the transformation of European security in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. But even in these entirely changed circumstances, they were not given much consideration.

What both Cold War NATO Strategies from the mid-1950s and defensive defence had in common was that neither aimed at *victory* as a war aim (Heuser 1998b). US Field Manual FM 100-5 of 1954 had already omitted the term, and FM 100–5 of 1962 replaced the concept of limited war with that of limited means. The manual postulated that: 'The essential objective of United States military forces will be to terminate the conflict rapidly and decisively in a manner best calculated to prevent its spread to general (nuclear) war' (q.i. Summers 1982: 69). As Western strategists focused increasingly on persuasion, deterrence, non-offensive defence and even coercive diplomacy, the classical, medieval and modern paradigm of war as a legitimate instrument of state politics was indeed receding. Most Western theoreticians and policy-makers came to agree that victory could not be a meaningful concept in all-out nuclear war (Kissinger 1957: 86, 90). The same realisation crept into the Soviet Strategy debate, although it did not become dominant until the late 1980s. In January 1964, two authors writing in Soviet military journals, Major General N. Sushko and Major Kondratkov, challenged the orthodox doctrine that war continued to be the continuation of politics by rational means: they argued that 'on account of its clear character of destruction and annihilation', nuclear war had 'ceased to be a reliable means to reach political aims, whatever these may be' (q.i. Dahm 1970: 394). Both were subsequently disavowed, but the ensuing debates about the maxim

that 'war is a rational tool of politics' was a touchstone for Soviet orthodoxy, and the abandonment of this maxim marked the collapse of this ideology in Europe (Heuser 2002: 143–50). Russian Strategy rediscovered victory in 1993, when their 'Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation' once more spelled out the defeat of an enemy as a war aim. By contrast, for most Western liberals in the early twenty-first century, *victory* (like 'glory') seems of little value as a thing in itself, as the price at which it might come seems disproportionate to the gains and as it does not guarantee peace.

18 | *No end of history: the dialectic continues*

In war, there is no substitute for victory.
     (General Douglas MacArthur 1951)

Do you want to win, or do you want peace?
          (Martti Ahtisaari, q.i. Lyall 2008)

The Napoleonic paradigm strikes back: Summers's Clausewitzian critique

At the end of the Cold War, the euphoric hope spread that the collapse of Soviet-led communism might mean the end of ideological strife in the world. Assuming that no new (or old) ideology (or religion) would rise up to challenge liberal democracy as 'best of all possible' systems, to paraphrase Voltaire, and assuming that wars originated mainly from ideological disagreement, one could argue that this was, in a Hegelian or Marxist sense, the end of dialectical history (Fukuyama 1989). But the dialectical debate between those who favour the abandonment of the Napoleonic paradigm and those to whom it is the only thing that makes sense in military terms continues.

Not even all Western strategists found this cultural shift in the West easy to accept, as we have seen in the context of the evolution of air power after 1945. In 1982 Edward Luttwak deplored the fact that

the West has become comfortably habituated to defeat, Victory is viewed with great suspicion, if not outright hostility. After all, if the right- thinking are to achieve their great aim of abolishing war they must first persuade us that victory is futile, or, better still, actually harmful. To use Stalinist language, one might say that the struggle against war requires the prior destruction of the very idea of victory. (Luttwak 1982: 17)

His criticism, crucially, highlights the fact that this Western shift of perceptions is unparalleled by thinking in many other countries and cultures. Indeed, Robert Cooper argues that it is not even shared widely within the USA, which is still operating very much as a 'modern' state that fiercely defends its right to use force as it sees fit, with or without a mandate from the world's higher authority, the UN, which has now taken the place of God in the just war theology of old. For Cooper, it is only Europeans that have acquired a 'post-modern' mindset leading them to renounce the use of force to settle their own quarrels by force. Even he rightly points out that the peaceful European Union's central problem is its coexistence on one planet with 'modern' states that have not renounced the use of force, and with 'pre-modern' entities aspiring to statehood and a state monopoly of the use of force, but in reality torn by rivalling claims to power (Cooper 2000).

Especially before the end of the Cold War, it was not only strategic theorists like Edward Luttwak, Colin Gray and Keith Payne who found the culture shift in the West, or in the EU plus perhaps Japan, Australia, New Zealand and some elements of the American intelligentsia, problematic. Above all the American military found it trying to live with wars without victory, more so than, for example, the United Kingdom with its long history of imperial policing. In 1982, US Colonel Harry G. Summers published 'A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War', which he called *On Strategy*. This publicised the US Army War College's own critical analysis of the Vietnam War and drew heavily on Clausewitz, implicitly dismissing the sophisticated theories of the political use of the military instrument for 'coercion' discussed above.

What were the reasons of American failure in Vietnam? 'One of the most frustrating aspects of the Vietnam War from the Army's point of view is that as far as logistics and tactics were concerned we succeeded in everything we set out to do … How could we have succeeded so well, yet failed so miserably?' (Summers 1982: 1). Colonel Summers drew up a long list of reasons, each time correlating them to passages from *On War* for enlightenment. First, Summers pointed to the confusion of what Clausewitz called the mere 'preparation for war, and war proper', the latter requiring the intelligent application of fighting forces, equipment and so forth in the war itself – the employment of the armed forces to secure the objectives of policy. Secondly, Summers underlined that the political objectives themselves were

flawed, as they did not meet Clausewitz's criterion for what constitutes appropriate ends of Strategy: the choice of 'objectives that will finally lead to peace' (Summers 1982: 4).

A third mistake was identified by Summers as the failure of the US government to mobilise the American people's support for the war effort, pointing at Clausewitz's analysis of the difference between the eighteenth-century cabinet wars and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which in his view had been so successful because war had become 'the business of the people'. Americans thus saw Vietnam as '[President] Johnson's war' or 'Nixon's war' (Summers 1982: 6). This criticism was not just Summers's: British journalist Henry Brandon had talked to leading US civilian and military men in Saigon in late 1967 and asked them about US public opinion; all answered that that was not for them to consider, but for the US President. Brandon objected:

But foreign policy begins at home. The fact that President Johnson ignored American public opinion and disregarded the mounting opposition to the war as he fought it … aroused deep mistrust in government and in the military. The war was seen by many as unnecessary; by others as immoral. It inflamed the already restless youth and created an atmosphere conducive to violence whether on the university campuses or in the black ghettos. (q.i. Brodie 1973: 439f.)

Bernard Brodie commented that 'Brandon was pointing to what was obviously a failure in strategy', to the point where 'American performance in Vietnam was adversely affected. The fighting morale of American troops began to decline conspicuously even before their numbers were reduced' (Brodie 1973: 440). This failure to mobilize popular support for the American war effort in Summers's view lay in the fact that the key military figures, '[w]ith World War II fresh in their minds … equated mobilizing national will with total war, and they believed total war unthinkable in a nuclear age'. They disregarded the fact that the USA had fought several limited wars in the nineteenth century, and that each had involved the mobilisation of public support (Summers 1982: 13). In Vietnam the USA had been much less committed to the war than were its opponents.

With regard to the formulation of Strategy, its application in war and the conduct of the war itself, Summers again identified several reasons for America's failure. Instead of concentrating on classical,

Clausewitzian Strategy, US leaders had concentrated on technology – *matériel* –, 'the internal organization of the army, and the mechanism of its movements' (Summers 1982: 3). The Strategy formulated by the civilians, according to Summers, failed to define war aims which were realistically achievable. He accused the Johnson and Nixon administrations of having been overly concerned with the danger of an escalation of the conflict through Chinese intervention (as had happened in the Korean War) or even Soviet intervention, either of which might have led to nuclear war. As Henry Kissinger observed on this point:

The paradox we never solved was that we had entered the Korean War because we were afraid that to fail to do so would produce a much graver danger to Europe in the near future. But then the very reluctance to face an all-out onslaught on Europe severely circumscribed the risks we were prepared to run to prevail in Korea … Ten years later we encountered the same dilemmas in Vietnam. Once more we became involved because we considered the warfare in Indochina the manifestation of a coordinated global Communist strategy. Again we sought to limit our risks because the very global challenge of which Indochina seemed to be a part also made Vietnam appear as an unprofitable place for a showdown. (Kissinger 1979: 64)

Central to Harry Summers's critique of US Strategy in Vietnam was, of course, the relinquishment of the concept of 'victory'. He argued that the USA from the beginning declared the limits of its involvement in Vietnam, something on which its adversaries could base their own Strategy.

Summers concluded that the resulting Strategy sought excessively to localise US military action to South Vietnam with initially only severely circumscribed air action against North Vietnam. Instead of concentrating on North Vietnam as the enemy's centre of gravity, then, the successive US governments focused on 'counterinsurgency', limited to the territory of South Vietnam (Summers 1982: 174, 177). Summers saw analogies in the Korean War, where the US leadership had been extremely cautious about air attacks on Chinese territory – reflecting the general 'limited war' theme of escalation avoidance. Until the early 1970s, the USA did little to fight against the true centre of its opponent's gravity, North Vietnam itself, the 'great rear area', as Giap called it (see chapter 15). Actions against the North were limited to air strikes and naval operations. General Maxwell Taylor told the

US Senate in 1966 that it was not the US objective to defeat North Vietnam, but merely 'to cause them to mend their ways'. Dismissing the danger of a massive escalation of the war at least within the region, Summers complained that victory against the principal adversary was thus excluded as an objective (Summers 1982: 103). For fear of spreading the war to other parts of Asia, the USA regarded China as taboo, and only used air strikes against Laos and Cambodia, avoiding a ground invasion, even though both countries were sources of supplies to the Vietnamese communists. Summers criticised the fact that the USA thus focused fighting on the 'minor centre of gravity' – the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese armed forces, while sanctuarising the 'major centre of gravity', thus failing to adopt a Strategy that could lead to US strategic success. 'Ironically, our tactical successes [in South Vietnam] did not prevent our strategic failure and North Vietnam's tactical failures did not prevent their strategic success' (Summers 1982: 88–91, 129).

Finally, Summers underlined the conclusions of a former commander of the US forces in South Vietnam and subsequent Chief of Staff, General Frederick C. Weyand: in Vietnam, the military had been 'called upon to perform political, economic and social tasks beyond its capability while at the same time it was limited in its authority to accomplish those military tasks of which it was capable' (q.i. Summers 1982: 79). In Summers's view, only the South Vietnamese themselves might have succeeded in the state-building tasks which the Americans decided to shoulder in the South, as only they had a credible long-term stake in the country.

Summers's lecture tours on this subject were well received – the US military itself went through a major rethink about US Strategy, and with Summers's Clausewitzian analysis reached the conclusion that in Vietnam, it had been asked to do the impossible and stopped from doing what it did best – namely fight large-scale wars with massive technological superiorities, in the quest for victory, not for political signalling. The outcome of this revision was the AirLand Battle doctrine, developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and given official endorsement with Field Manual 100-5 *Operations* of 1982. It implicitly reintroduced the concept of victory:

This doctrine is based upon securing or retaining the initiative and exercising it aggressively to *defeat* the enemy. Destruction of the opposing force

is achieved by throwing the enemy off balance with powerful initial blows struck against critical units and areas whose loss will degrade the coherence of enemy operations. (Batschelet 2002; my emphasis)

When the US tried to turn AirLand Battle into the basic operational doctrine for NATO, it had to be substantially modified for several reasons. Victory and defeat were no more acceptable to America's European Allies during this period – the last big crisis of the Cold War – than in the previous two decades. Moreover, European allies objected to the deep (counter-) strike element by land forces. While AirLand Battle included the option of counterattacking on land with deep enveloping movements to get behind the first echelon of attacking enemy forces, this was removed from the NATO concept, follow-on-forces-attack (FOFA), as NATO members did not want to be accused of aggressive planning for NATO forces to cross the Iron Curtain and move into Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) territory (Gouré and Cooper 1984).

Either way, fortunately no opportunity presented itself to the US or NATO to apply these new doctrines before the Cold War drew to a close in Europe, in what was clearly a 'win-win situation' for all sides, as the Third World War had indeed not taken place. Just after the end of the Cold War, however, the opportunity would present itself to put major aspects of AirLand Battle to the test in a different context in Iraq.

Major war since 1945

As noted above, the Korean War was a major war in all respects other than the abstention by the West from using atomic bombs. For the Vietnamese, France's Indochina War of nine years was major, and the Tet Offensive of 1968 surely qualifies the eight-year war with US involvement as a 'major war', even when measured with the yardstick of Moltke's wars in the 1860s. So were the Arab–Israeli Wars, even though they lasted days rather than months or years; in 1956 and in 1967, the Israelis made impressive demonstrations of what they had learnt from the *Blitzkrieg* operations of the Wehrmacht. Then in 1991, something much akin to AirLand Battle was applied by the USA in the First Gulf War against Iraq. While the air bombing campaign had partly divergent priorities from the 1982 concepts

of AirLand Battle (see chapter 13), here again was a Strategy that made the most of the American *forte*: overwhelming firepower, superior technology, mass, all in pursuit of a crushing military victory. Summers seemed amply vindicated: this resounding military success was celebrated as the post-1945 apogee of the 'American way of war', a comeback of the Napoleonic–Clausewitzian paradigm. America's huge military and technological superiority had been brought to bear on an enemy, the forces had acted together, a huge air campaign had prepared the way for a ground invasion which met hardly any resistance and the American military felt it could shake off the galling experience of failure associated with their Vietnam experience and walk tall again. This allowed US strategic thinkers to focus for a while on their preferred way of war – based on technological solutions to politico- military problems.

This phase coincided, not accidentally, with a wave of military-technological innovations, another 'revolution in military affairs'. Strategists threw themselves into technological topics, much like the *matériel* school in maritime Strategy in the late nineteenth century (see chapter 9), or the technology experts in air and nuclear Strategy, and the buzzwords were 'network-centric warfare' and the like. Yet in studying major US wars in the twentieth century, analyst Stephen Biddle reminded his readers of the many other predictions of revolutionary change as a result of technological innovation in the past, which had proved wrong or exaggerated: from Hieram Maxim, who thought that his gun would make war too horrible to envisage, and Alfred Nobel, who thought dynamite would prohibit war because it would make it too terrible, to Jan Bloch, who thought major war obsolete, to the *Jeune École* of French naval Strategy, who thought the torpedo would make the capital ship obsolete and would revolutionise naval warfare, the post-First World War air power thinkers like Douhet, who thought warfare on the ground would be reduced to almost no importance and who believed that the Second World War could be won in weeks with a 'knockout blow' from the air, and to those who thought major war would be impossible once the atom bomb had been invented (Biddle 2004: 198f.). This is not to say that 'network-centric warfare' was an insignificant innovation – it simply did not provide the key breakthrough solution to US warfare at the turn of the millennium.

Rather than being an amazing departure in warfare, the First Gulf War was at best the perfection of a long-standing tradition (Rosen forthcoming). The casualties on the coalition side were around 200 dead and 750 wounded, a low record to be beaten only by NATO performance in the Kosovo conflict, with no combatant deaths on the allied side; but Kosovo was not by any stretch of the imagination the sort of major war in which the US military specialised. What was still very traditional about the Gulf War of 1991 was the attitude of the US military to enemy casualties. As in the air bombing of the Second World War or in Korea, and like the military of any country in any pre-1945 war, the US military still gloated about enemy casualties.

In Vietnam, the enemy was treated as a statistic in the 'body counts' that were supposed to feed figures into the computers of operations analysis. In Summers's view, it was courting moral outrage to bureaucratise the language used by the military to describe their actions: 'We did not kill the enemy, we "inflicted casualties"; we did not destroy things, we "neutralized targets".' What was new was that the bloody truth behind these euphemisms (many of which were neither neologisms nor unique to the Vietnam War) was brought home to millions of television spectators every evening. The incongruence between the language of government and military pronouncements and the visible horror of the war eroded what little public support there had ever been (Summers 1982: 35–7).

In the First Gulf War, the US armed forces thought it wise to go to the opposite extreme in not publicising enemy casualty numbers. But this went hand in hand with at best indifference to them, which revolted sensitive elements of Western public opinion. The pictures of the burnt-out retreating Iraqi vehicles and charred bodies on the road to Basra, let alone civilians killed as 'collateral damage', challenged this one-sided approach among the publics of liberal states.

More critically still, once more victory did not bring lasting peace. In the years 1991–2003, in the absence of a proper post-war settlement, Iraq could not be given a stake in any 'peace'. It was a period in which the UN continued to seek to exact compliance from Iraq on a range of points. The UN's Strategy was to lay aside military means – with the exception of the patrols of the no-fly zone, and the enforcement of sanctions, which were supposed to change Saddam Hussein's policies through economic pressure. The

consequences were no less drastic than military action, however, and on a smaller scale had effects similar to the allied blockade of Germany in the First World War. According to estimates by the International Red Cross, the sanctions imposed between 1989 and 1999 led to significant increases in infant mortality rates (ICRC 1999), of which Iraqis themselves were very aware, staging frequent *anti-Western* protests about them. Arguably this was due more to how the regime chose to use the UN's 'Oil-for-Food Programme' than to a deliberate UN policy to withhold vital medicines and food. Nevertheless, how could the results be tolerated given that the UN Security Council's measures aimed to coerce Iraq's oppressive regime, not punish the population?

When at the time of the Second Gulf War, ostensibly fought (like Western involvement in the Yugoslav Wars and Afghanistan from 2001) for the benefit of an oppressed people, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld shrugged off the looting unleashed by the US-led coalition's invasion with the words 'stuff happens', public revulsion in the West ensued. Memories resurfaced of the infamous US officer's justification from the Vietnam War – 'we had to destroy the village to save it'. Was this 'effects-based' Western Strategy?

Moreover, if 'war in the age of globalisation is conducted on behalf of a universalised notion of mankind, rather than on behalf of a culturally specific community that exists among others', then, as Reading academic Andreas Behncke put it, 'the enemy [regime] has become a criminalised and morally inferior agent' (Behncke 2006: 937). If by implication Western powers intervene as police forces, they have to prevent collateral damage among the public they are there to protect. There can be no 'enemy nation' in this model; the loss of even one 'innocent bystander' is a catastrophe. In addition, the 'world police forces' must not create unnecessary obstacles to the most important goal – peace, in the form of post-war reconstruction, state building and the rehabilitation of the people for whom the intervention was effected.

The return of small wars

Small wars had never disappeared, least of all in the Cold War (see chapter 15), but with the waning of the fear of a Third World War, they once again claimed the liberal states' full attention. With the

Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, an old debate that had existed during the Vietnam War came to the fore again: what was the West doing in intervening, especially as the intervention was justified exclusively on 'humanitarian' grounds? Whose interests was it serving? Western powers were no longer directly involved as colonial powers. Instead, their intervention was so clearly defined as being *in support of* the local populations, not against them, that 'collateral damage' of any sort became intolerable, and incompatible with the fundamental aims of intervention. Unlike the First Gulf War, Yugoslavia was not, as one US general had infamously explained to CNN, a matter of 'us against the In'juns'. There were no battlefield victories to be won, massive firepower mattered little (except in the air campaign to end the crisis over Kosovo), and AirLand Battle-type concepts had no applicability. This had little to do with high tech, and much to do with history and violent politics, more so than Western powers were accustomed to in their own 'post-modern' societies. And, as Stephen Biddle notes, low-intensity wars cannot be won by high tech alone (Biddle 2004: 199–202).

The next round of the US and British debates about Strategy, in the early 2000s, thus took place with a different focus – it concerned not the FM 100–5 series of field manuals for major war, but FM3-24 on *Counterinsurgency* (see chapter 16). So with Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, against the background of Islamic fundamentalists' hatred of the West, the pendulum swung away again from *matériel* (or new technology) and back towards the 'soft' approach to Strategy – historical analysis, analysis of the background of the conflict, anthropological keys to the understanding of societies. The focus shifted from military victory to gaining the support – if not the hearts and minds – of the majority of the populations. Military victory, in such a context, is meaningless, as General Sir Mike Jackson, heading NATO's Kosovo force, told a journalist in 2000, when asked when he expected 'victory' in Kosovo. Post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation, peace-building, peace-keeping and, above all, the transformation of bellicose cultures into peaceful ones takes decades, not weeks or months. By contrast, 'exit strategies' tend to use the wrong time scales, corresponding to terms in office of the Western leaders who initiated such campaigns, not to the time frames needed for cultures to be changed.

Conscripts or professional armies?

The new concept of Western armies acting as world police forces calls for soldiers different from those of the high firepower mass armies that confronted the Warsaw Pact under the threat of nuclear war. But what forces does one need for policing the world? Even before the Second World War, Basil Liddle Hart, J.F.C. Fuller and Charles de Gaulle had called for professional armies as a means of *limiting* warfare. The two Britons at any rate returned to this call in the 1950s, just as NATO doctrine first embraced the creed that the defence of Western Europe in the nuclear age required mass armies. Even in 1950, Liddell Hart was passionately opposed to the 'prehistoric mammoth', the 'antiquated idea' of a conscript army, on which he blamed the horrors of the major wars of 1864–1945 (Liddell Hart 1950: 324–330). He also thought it incompatible with liberty and the individualism of civilised societies, arguing that:

Conscription immensely increases the power of the State over the individual. It has been of great service to dictators as a means of enslaving the people to their own purposes. Liberty-loving peoples are foolish if they help to preserve such a system as a natural and proper custom. For conscription has been the cancer of civilisation. (Liddell Hart 1950: 338)

Two countries that saw themselves as world policemen and that with their seats on the UN Security Council were given authority to play this role, the United Kingdom, with its long tradition in this matter, and the USA had already abandoned conscription during the Cold War – one after Korea, the other after Vietnam. They did so for exactly the reason that Guibert had identified 200 years earlier, namely, that one cannot easily fight expeditionary wars overseas with conscript armies.

The debate about professional versus conscript forces had raged in France throughout the nineteenth century. During the Cold War, France seemed firmly wedded to mass armies – to a large extent for philosophical and domestic political reasons: de Gaulle as creator of the Fifth Republic in 1958 abandoned his earlier views and espoused the dogma of the citizen-soldier to place his state firmly in the Republican tradition (see chapter 6). France thenceforth tried to do both – be a world policeman and retain conscription – and ran into serious problems. Indochina was fought with professional

forces; Algeria with conscripts who pushed French public opinion to favour giving up. The First Gulf War of 1991, however, demonstrated to France after the end of the Cold War how much better British (let alone the remaining superpower's) professional forces were adapted to this sort of operation, and was crucial in moving the country to give up its hallowed Republican tradition of conscription a decade later. It is probably a sign of France's confidence in its republicanism that at the turn of the millennium, she could move to a professional army without massive debate, soul-searching or protests.

In Germany, one of the (debatable) explanations of the catastrophe of the Third Reich was that the (professional) Reichswehr had submitted all too meekly to the rule of the National Socialists, when a citizen-soldier army, imbued with the ideals of democracy, might have stood up against this regime and defended democratic values and law against orders from above. This notion – and the US and NATO Strategy at the time which called for more conventional forces – led to the creation of the Bundeswehr in the mid-1950s as a mass, conscript army. Most European NATO members – all those geared mainly towards the defence of their own territory against Warsaw Pact invasion – had conscript armies until the end of the Cold War to offset the WTO's mass armies. That something other than this rationale was involved in the case of the Bundeswehr, however, can be illustrated by the fact that since 1991, most European armies have abandoned conscription and moved towards professional armies, while only Germany, together with Greece and Turkey, who eye each other wearily across the Aegean, refuse to budge.

But there is a third option. Taking up ideas like those of de Gaulle in the early 1930s, Liddell Hart in 1950 wrote about the feasibility of an 'international force', effectively a standing army at the command of the UN. Its forces, he thought, could use just one single language – the French Foreign Legion had shown this was possible – and ideally should have standardised weapons, first perhaps with different countries supplying different types of weapons, one tanks, another aircraft, or, later, different countries co-operating to provide components of weapons systems. 'This would pave the way for the international authority itself to take over the manufacture of the major weapons – which would be the safest system.' He did not think that, being multi-national, it would suffer from a lack of nationalist fervour.

They could well develop their own *esprit de corps* and pride, like the French Foreign Legion. Moreover,

> the importance of pugnacity is decreasing in the more modern types of force, and replaced by the dispassionate determination that accompanies pride in craftsmanship. Pugnacity matters less in a tankman than in an infantryman. It is not required in the artilleryman … Patriotic ardour will hardly improve [the] aim [of a bomber crew]. The more mechanical that weapons become, the less will the absence of a national spirit be felt.

Liddell Hart wanted this international force ideally to take charge of the world's 'more powerful offensive weapons, especially the longer-range ones', so that this force could impose the decisions 'of the international authority'. He opined 'that there can be no security for any nation without a partial surrender of national rights to a higher authority in which each shares' (Liddell Hart 1950: 345–8).

The debate about a UN standing force has resurfaced periodically, most recently after the end of the Cold War with UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace. It foundered, however, on the sovereigntist resistance of major state governments (especially the Permanent Five Members of the Security Council) which want to control their own armed forces and keep the UN subordinate to their decision-making.

De facto most of the armed forces of the Western countries today are professional – even the Bundeswehr, which has token conscripts, but for its operations abroad relies on professionals in all-volunteer units. International forces like the ones which de Gaulle and Liddell Hart dreamed of exist, except that they are today still under national command, operating in coalitions, or else they are private military companies, usually in the pay of states just like mercenaries of old. Their tasks include some dangerous patrolling, and even raiding missions and actual battles, such as that in Helmand Province in Afghanistan in mid-2006. There is little left in such contexts of the militarism which made the Bismarck–Moltke wars, the American Civil War and the First World War possible. Gone is the lure of great gains to be made by war that made it a lucrative business for its princes. We see a return, however, of war entrepreneurs much like those who had made profitable business from Antiquity to the nineteenth century.

Something that has not changed – notwithstanding the UN's attempts to create a UN standing force – is the close attachment of armed forces to states, making them a particularly easy instrument for states to control and use – much easier than the economy, exchange rates or other instruments of foreign policy. There is thus still, as General Sir Michael Rose noted critically, a tendency to turn intractable foreign policy problems into something to be tackled by military force. The former commander of UNPROFOR in Bosnia agreed with Liddell Hart, who had said: 'The more I reflect on the experience of history, the more I come to see the instability of solutions achieved by force' (Rose 1999: 10). But in view of the recession of the state in many other areas, states clearly cling to their monopoly on the use of force – and to armed force as an instrument of statecraft – more determinedly than to just about any other prerequisite of statehood.

This must, however, be offset against the overall cultural shift in the West, where attitudes to armed forces are concerned. A decade after the end of the Cold War, the British military historian Jeremy Black turned his gaze to the present and future of war, and rather than a 'revolution in military affairs', he saw a 'revolution in attitudes towards the military'. The end of the Cold War had come with a decline of willingness to serve in the military, a gradual move from conscript armies to professional armies with few exceptions throughout the Western world – including, as we have seen, the abandonment of the French Revolutionary ideal of the 'nation in arms' and every citizen as a solider – women gaining access to the military and new policing and social-worker roles for soldiers, all of which profoundly challenge the old role model of the military. Although old ideas and stereotypes of male heroism in soldiering are still reinforced through films, novels and electronic games, attitudes are shifting (Black 2004: 13–20). The military today in liberal societies is seen and respected more as a professional fire brigade or a police force, there to protect security and fight rogue states, than as warriors or a special social caste that was once supposedly the hallmark of all Indo-European societies. Christian Churches are embarrassed today by the medieval ideal of the crusader which Pope Urban II created. Chivalry remains part of the cultural memory in terms of protecting the weak, not primarily of killing others. The pretty coats which rendered soldiery attractive in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are replaced by practical but dreary camouflage outfits; and the annual Trooping of the Colour in

London, the Edinburgh Tattoo or the 14 July parade in France are about all that remains of this colourful pageantry. Indeed, there are European countries that stage no military parades. Militarism has subsided together with the Social Darwinist rage of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Future developments

To reiterate, all this is probably true only for liberal states, not for many other cultures in the world, where new ideals of suicide warriors-of-God or martyrs for one's own ethnic group/race seem to flourish along with militarism, cultural intolerance and bellicose mentalities. It is useful to remind ourselves, as did Emperor Charles V, with his global empire on which the sun did not set, that 'Peace … is beautiful to utter, but difficult to have, for everyone knows that one cannot have it without *the enemy's consent*. [To gain this consent] one must perform great labours, which is easy to say but difficult to do' (q.i. Brandi 1937: 190; my emphasis).

Nor have we reached the end of history in the sense of universal consensus on the best system of government and order of society within the West. The evidence examined in this book underscores the multi-directional development of thinking about war and Strategy over time. If the past saw no one-way development, it is unlikely that the future will. All we can do is to conclude that at present, the trend in Western thinking is one that, starting with the First World War but strongly reinforced by Hiroshima, has turned its back on the cult of the offensive or of major war and decisive battles as the solution for long-standing political problems. Instead, we see the use of force, comparable to police action against violent criminals, as a necessary evil for the protection of world society and local communities, and aim to limit casualties on all sides, struggling to establish a viable peace. This could still be the result simply of 'considerations of expediency and utility' rather than a more deeply rooted transformation of attitudes in the West, as Osgood and Tucker warned (1967: 358f.).

In that wondrous trinity of victory, peace and justice, which any Strategy that stands in the just war tradition should aim to bring together, liberal societies are in danger today of forgetting that peace, too, is not an end in itself. Peace without justice is no more likely to endure than victory without a mutually acceptable peace, seen by all

sides as built on some degree of justice. The Western peace movements tried to banish this thought, and were partly taken by surprise at the commitment with which peoples in the communist world rose up against the status quo, risking violent repression, in 1989–91. Equally, many in the 'post-modern states' of Europe (Cooper 2000) that had left behind the nationalism of the 1789–1945 era, were surprised to find people willing to sacrifice what they perceived as an unacceptable peace, go to war, kill and die for nationalism, as was demonstrated in Yugoslavia in 1991–9. Nor could Americans understand the Islamic opposition to the American-dominated peaceful new world order that came into being in 1991 with the disappearance of the Soviet Union as superpower. Worthy of our full support as it is, the Western change of mentality in the last hundred years is a delicate plant. It will require great efforts to protect and nurture it, so that it can flower and spread its seeds to create a more benign world.

19 | *Epilogue: Strategy-making versus bureaucratic politics*

[I]ntramural struggles over policy can consume so much time and attention that dealing with external realities can become secondary.

(Clifford 1991: 93)

Where you stand depends on where you sit.

(Miles 1978: 399)

Policy and Strategy in practice

If we review the recorded wars of human history, it is rarely, if ever, possible to point to any precise dividing line between politics and the use of armed force as its tool. Much writing about Strategy presupposes that there is none: the ideal for Guibert, Clausewitz and many others was a Strategy-making process in which the supreme political decision-maker was identical with the supreme military commander, in the tradition of Alexander the Great, Gustavus Adolphus, Frederick II of Prussia or Napoleon. Once it became clear that the norm was that the two were not identical, many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century military men, led by Prussian military thinkers, postulated that politics (and diplomacy) had no role to play once war had been declared, and could only resume its functions once war had been ended by victory/defeat or armistice (Lossau 1815: 7). This assumption (which originated in Prussia, but was not confined to it) was largely a function of the contempt in which the age of militarism held politics, politicians, ministers, diplomats and civilians in general. The Second World War would prove a watershed in this respect. Since then, the demands of politics and technical possibilities and limitations of warfare have had too many mutual implications to be seen as separable, particularly when with the spread of democracy, public opinion matters more than ever before.

The one-time strategic adviser and US Secretary of Defense Henry Kissinger, himself a historian of the nineteenth century, wrote in the Cold War:

A separation of strategy and policy can only be achieved to the detriment of both. It causes military power to become identified with the most absolute applications of power and it tempts diplomacy into an over-concern with finesse. Since the difficult problems of national policy are in the area where political, economic, psychological and military factors overlap we should give up the fiction that there is such a thing as 'purely' military advice.

Nor did he believe in the existence of 'purely' political considerations (Kissinger 1957: 422).

The vast literature that is the product of research on decision-making processes in international relations (with particular attention paid to decisions for war and peace) indicates that matters are more complex still. The Clausewitzian model according to which governments make decisions about the use of military force with clear political objects in mind is in itself a crude over-simplification: any one decision-maker will have several objectives, some mutually exclusive or conflicting, and any group of decision-makers will have even more heterogeneous objectives ranging from the promotion of their own career to the interests of the state they lead or the protection of international order and peace. They may have very mistaken views about the possibilities offered by the military means available to them, or about the convictions, ideology, interests, intentions and capabilities of their adversaries, and a host of other factors. Their perceptions and thus their objectives may change over time, and this is likely to be a function of their appreciation of the evolution of the military conflict itself. Particularly at the outset of war, and during critical situations, decision-makers, not blessed with the historian's benefit of hindsight, tend to stumble blindly in the dark, above all concerned with surviving the crisis and preventing the worst from happening. It is thus rarely (if ever) the case that the decision to go to war is a pure function of threat assessments, assessments of one's own and of the adversary's available means and of clear political war aims, with clear military aims derived from them that can still be clearly recognised at the end of hostilities (Bull 1961: 49).

John Hattendorf rightly noted that Strategy throughout history, especially in the centuries before bureaucracy came to dominate, when applied in practice, was rarely fully thought through on an analytical level. 'The practitioners of strategy are those at the highest levels, who, in the crises of the moment, often do not explicitly record why they take the actions they do.' What scholars with their penchant for patterns and logically coherent ideas may identify as strategic concepts may just be traditions, passed on almost as if by osmosis rather than articulated principle, or what is perceived in a particular culture as the 'obvious' or 'commonsensical' thing to do – where passive culture dominates active culture. The inspiration of the moment upon which a supreme commander draws is usually due to 'long and conscientious self-culture in the line of his profession' of which he may not be fully conscious (Hattendorf 2000: 1, 21, 127).

This explains why Colin Gray sees Strategy as 'the bridge that relates military power to political purpose; it is neither military power *per se* nor political purpose … [S]trategy … [is] the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy' (Gray 1999a: 17). Richard Betts argues that it cannot really be more than such a bridge, as any greater degree of 'integration of policy and operations is a prescription for civil-military tension' (Betts 2001/2: 28). In view of the different cultures of bureaucratic decision-making in government and international organisations, and the decision-making by politicians and the military, greater integration would be like the unstable mix of oil and water.

Strategic concepts formally adopted by governments rarely existed in a formal written form before the late nineteenth century. Since their usage has become widespread, they have been characterised more by contradictions and compromises resulting from bureaucratic politics than by a logical application of explicit principles; indeed, this is why Richard Betts has found that often there is no Strategy in any way like that defined in chapter 1 and that 'Strategy' is 'an illusion' (Betts 2000). One therefore has to be aware of the corporate character of any government document that is taken to reflect or define government 'strategy'. Such documents, as the British Admiral Richard Hill observed astutely, are 'a distillation of compromises' (Hill 2006: 161); it accounts for the ambiguity John Baylis identified as central to British strategy (Baylis 1995).

It is a deficiency of most definitions of 'strategy' that they assume that the (mainly) two entities contending with each other are monolithic.

In looking at the making of Strategy, to use Newton's expression, the definitions assume a black box: decisions are made within it, but the principles and rules by which they are made are subject to the logic of political ends, in a particular geographic setting, with particular means available (armed forces, on the basis of a particular economy, population, wealth …). If this were so, we would have reason to be surprised at the incoherence of so many Strategy decisions. We have already mentioned the evolution of economies, states, administrative apparatuses of states (civil service, tax collection, investment in infrastructure …), and technology as variables. But there is a further variable, which applied as much to Gustavus Adolphus' decision-making as to Frederick II's, as to the coalitions fighting against Napoleon: the multitude of actors. This variable has an internal and an external dimension. The external dimension of this variable is the older one: it is other entities (principalities, kingdoms, republics, empires …) interacting with the belligerents. It is potential and actual allies of either side, their attempts to draw political, economic or other advantage from the situation, by becoming belligerents themselves or by blackmailing one or both the belligerents with the threat of joining the other side – with the whole spectrum of alliance politics, interstate relations and diplomacy. Machiavelli, in discussing historical examples, found that an alliance or 'league is governed by a council, which must needs be slower in arriving at any decision than are those who dwell within one and the same' country (Machiavelli 1531/1998: 268). In the seventeenth century Paul Hay du Chastelet was advising Louis XIV:

Alliances with monarchies are preferable to the friendship of republics as the latter act with excessive slowness, their prudence is timid, they are excessively cautious before committing themselves, their council-meetings are never secret, there are always hidden desires and interests which trouble the governments, and it is rarely the case that all those who have authority in [government] affairs have the same inclinations and sentiments, to the point that at every turn there are new difficulties. By contrast, in monarchies, all is decided by the behaviour and will of one single person …, so that everything is done with greater promptness and more authority than in republics, except when a prince thinks that his advantage in protecting his allies is not sufficiently at stake to stand by his alliance treaties. Instead, the spirit of republics only has as a principle [governing] all its movements nothing but utility, which one prefers on all occasion to that which would give more glory and greater esteem to the state. (Hay du Chastelet 1668/1757: 185f.)

After Napoleon's defeat, the Concert of Europe as a formal mechanism of concertation between several states introduced a new dimension to alliance politics in the nineteenth century, and since 1918 the League of Nations and since 1945 the United Nations and a growing number of international organisations have given some framework to interstate relations. In short, these are what the British naval specialist Fred Jane called 'international complications' (Jane 1906: 163).

Such 'international complications' arising from alliance relations have a crucial effect on the conduct of military operations, where so much depends on command structures – which ally's commanders can overrule commanders from other allied states? – which in turn tend to depend on the mix of alliance forces – which ally contributes most, and to whom are smaller numbers subordinated? In the light of the Elizabethan wars on the Continent, Matthew Sutcliffe noted:

Whoever ... meaneth to winne honor in the succour of his friends abroad, let him as much as he can endeuour to cary with him a sufficient force. Small numbers are neither esteemed of enemies, nor friends. Into the field they dare not come, for they are too fewe and too weake; being penned up in cities they famish. If our friends be stronger than our ayde, then are they commaunded by them. If any of their leaders want gouernement, our men that are put to all hard services, pay the prise of their folly. If any calamitie happen to their army, our people first feele it. They shift to them selves, being in their owne countrey; ours are slayne both of enemies and friendes, and if victuals ware scant they sterve first. (Sutcliffe 1593: 104f.)

Three and a half centuries later, Charles de Gaulle, with his scepticism about alliances derived from his experience in the Second World War, would not have expressed this very differently.

The internal manifestation of this variable is collective policy-making, in which even a President of the US, France, Russia or Finland, or a Prime Minister of Britain, Norway or Australia cannot overrule internal opposition – from opposition or the government's own ministers, officials or military – in the way in which a tyrant, a dictator and to a lesser extent any monarch, appointed by the Grace of God, could (and even then, tyrannicide and regicide existed). Today there may be a supreme decision-maker with whom 'the buck stops', and yet decision-making in democracies (or even dictatorial oligarchies) is a bargaining process which adds entirely new rationales to the making of Strategy. And here, as political scientists have long emphasised, political and personal battles enter into the picture and, equally importantly, bureaucratic politics.

From the seventeenth century, but especially from the mid nine-teenth century, until the present, as bureaucracies grew in all states and technology became ever more complex, and with it procurement decisions, government decision-making became correspondingly more complex. Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) and Frederick II of Prussia, who had the great advantage of being able to make decisions all by himself, thought that if a general wanted to do noth-ing, all he needed to do was summon a council of war, where all the opinions voiced by those consulted would be sure to cancel each other out and create stalemate (Frederick II 1882: 89). Guibert, with his own extensive experience of government decision-making, wrote in the mid eighteenth century:

In almost all states of Europe, the different branches of administration are governed by particular ministers, whose interests and views jar, and are reciprocally detrimental to each other; each of them is occupied exclusively with his object. One might imagine the other departments belonged to a different nation. Happy, indeed, are those States where the ministers, jealous of each other, do not act as open enemies. (Guibert 1772/1781: xiii)

Napoleon himself is credited with the maxim that:

When war is begun, the presence of a deliberative body is a nuisance and often fatal. The turbulent, the ambitious, those who want to be talked about, and to be popular, and dominant, raise themselves up by their own authority to be advocates of the people. As counsellors of the prince, they defend those who are not attacked, they claim to know all, want to deter-mine all, direct all. Successively, they become censors, creators of factions, and rebels. (Napoleon 1906: 142–4)

In addition to the competition between rivalling ministers, interser vice rivalry in societies with armies *and* navies may well have existed in some modest form for centuries. All of this, taken together under the heading of bureaucratic politics, has become ever more pronounced and is crucial to any understanding of the configuration and equip-ment of armed forces, leaving reasons of Strategy, let alone any grand strategic concept, well behind.

The fight over money and government spending, especially on wars, was already at the centre of the tense relations between Tudor and Stuart monarchs and their parliaments, culminating in the

English Civil War. The fight for money and thus resources between the institutions and organisations concerned with military policy took its place centre stage from the end of the nineteenth century. Henceforth, Strategy was never again just about relations with the enemy. Henceforth, increasingly, Strategy was made, especially in peacetime, to further the interests of one's state vis-à-vis others (allies included), government vs. opposition, one minister against another, one section of a ministry against another, the different branches of the armed forces among themselves, navy vs. army, paratroopers vs. marines, tank units vs. lightly armed infantry, and so on. In democracies, Strategy – often reflected in White Papers or Blue Books – was increasingly the product of committee work, with the agencies concerned represented, the final document being much less a work of logical coherence than of compromise, balancing the vested interests represented at the drafting table. Meanwhile, there were ever-fluctuating and evolving collective views on Strategy, sub-issues and related issues, often communicated by osmosis rather than reasoning, through 'group think' (Janis 1982) engendered by frequent meetings in camera, by commonly read newspapers and the odd pertinent lecture remembered dimly from staff college or listened to in one of the think tanks. As Admiral Hill reflected, strategic principles that were supposed to answer perceived and ever-evolving strategic problems are usually the final outcome of such committee work, usually supplemented by 'late-night gossip' in the Ministry of Defence, 'and philosophising over cheap sherry, with nearly all the ideas discarded next day but a nugget or two remaining. Nothing was ever written down; what was worthwhile stuck in the mind' (Hill 1986: 5).

Add to this the proclivity of armed forces to fight wars not in ways that are most appropriate to reach the desired end state with regard to the adversary. Given any say in the matter, they prefer to fight the wars they have prepared for, for which they have acquired equipment, for which they have configured and which they want to play out in reality. Similarly, diplomats want to prove the usefulness of the treaty or the international organisation they have promoted, so it *must* be the answer to the security problem of the day. Add to this 'public opinion' – another black box in need of opening up. The media chip in, furnishing fresh or old but reinforced arguments for one decision or another. A myriad individual and institutional interests come into play, each eloquently defended in the ever more

complex decision-making process within states and among states. Different 'black boxes' in which Strategy is made produce such varied results that they can no longer be explained in the simple terms of old definitions of Strategy. Strategy-making becomes absorbed by all forms of political interplay, which can be distinguished from normal politics only in that the use of force or the threat of the use of force play a central role.

John Hattendorf has summarised the way in which Strategy is made in the leading world hegemon today, the USA. This is little more than an example of any democratic policy-making progress, albeit on a larger scale than in Britain, Poland or Italy, let alone Estonia or Slovenia. Hattendorf sees strategic decision-making as taking place in four areas:

1. The state's grand Strategy on the highest political level is formulated by the President and modified or supported by Congress.
2. Arms procurement, along with statements on the need for these weapons and their role in various conflict scenarios, is undertaken by each of the services, within a budget agreed within the government and in general terms with Congress, and coordinated by the US Secretary of Defense.
3. Contingency plans for a spectrum of imaginable scenarios of war or military intervention are made under the auspices of and according to the terms of reference defined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
4. 'Operational planning, the preparation of precise plans for wartime operations, is done by ... various ... commanders in chief' and by specially designated teams under their supervision.

As Hattendorf has rightly remarked, in theory, these areas 'should directly complement one another' (Hattendorf 2000: 201f.). In practice, however, there is any amount of friction (Hattendorf 2004). This arises from the interaction of diverging bureaucratic interest, from alliance politics, from the moving of the goalposts over time (planning for grand Strategy should in theory dominate the three other areas, but while planning there is being carried on within the parameters defined by grand Strategy, grand Strategy itself might change in reaction to new external or internal events) or the different time frames particular to these different areas (a presidency in a democracy may last five years, whereas a planning-to-deployment-to-scrapping cycle for large weapons systems, tanks, aircraft or submarines and surface

vessels must be measured in terms of several decades). In practice, one might thus see a Strategy that was agreed upon in year x being implemented by some countries and services in years $x+4$ to $x+6$, while, in the meantime, by year $x+2$ Strategy had shifted. To give a concrete example, NATO's Strategy of symmetric response to the Soviet-cum-satellite threat was agreed at Lisbon in 1952. On the basis of this, the Federal Republic of Germany was admitted to NATO in 1954, and its army, the Bundeswehr, was set up between 1955 and 1958. In 1954, however, NATO adopted 'Massive Retaliation', opting to meet Soviet conventional aggression asymmetrically with nuclear answers, shifting the emphasis away from mass armies to high tech forces, equipped with nuclear weapons which the Bundeswehr was not to have. What use was the Bundeswehr as a mass army in such a Strategy? Intra-alliance friction ensued (Heuser 1997).

Turning to procurement, the implementation of decisions in this area made in year x might only be fully completed by year $x+30$, if they are not cancelled or modified along the way; where major weapons systems are concerned, there is usually a point when large-scale modifications cannot be made any longer and where the cancellation costs would be absurdly high. So any Strategy has to operate on the basis of procurement decisions connected with a grand Strategy several times removed. Thus NATO and the Warsaw Pact were deeply committed to a grand Strategy of détente while the US and Soviet missile stocks were still being built up to unprecedented numbers, undermining the very policies prevailing at the time.

This also means that military planners never think they have the quantity and quality of arms they need. Since complex weapons systems take several years to get from the drawing board to deployment, military planners have a tendency to feel unready for war, which they prefer to imagine as taking place in five or ten years' time, after the next Five Year Plan, after the next procurement spree. The replacement of one type of tank, frigate, fighter aircraft and so on by another never takes place in a short period of, say, months, but (especially in peacetime) more usually over years, which means there are always some old weapons systems operating alongside the new ones, logistical and interoperability complications arising from this and some military men inexperienced in the use of either type of equipment. Ironically, while Strategy-making has come to be dominated by debates about the implications of ever-newer technologies and the appropriateness

of weapons systems, the implementation of any Strategy is hugely hampered by the time gap between planning and execution.

In the process of government Strategy-making, one would expect a logical ('Cartesian') deduction from first principles, as sketched in André Beaufre's work (see chapter 17): starting with a definition of grand Strategy, then moving on to analyse what part in pursuing it military power might play, how exercised and with what means – and what part of those means would be affordable. Instead Strategy-makers have a tendency to 'enter that sequence halfway through' (Richard Hill), not questioning many unspoken assumptions and 'gut instincts' (Geoffrey Till) – about means, the way to use military power and so forth – which are all too often taken for granted, often anachronistically so (Till 1994a: 184; Hill 2006: 162).

Peacetime alliance politics and Strategy conducted through international organisations, a novelty of the post-Second World War era, have created a new and very powerful dimension of bureaucratic politics. In times of peace before 1945, politics had been a game to be played by the two or three services, plus forceful politicians in government opposing each other (a particularly strong dimension in democracies with coalition governments like France), plus the military-industrial complex. In the post-1945 world there has been the additional, higher playing field on the international level, where national prestige is a huge consideration in alliance relations, where thousands of little deals are made, linking procurement, bases and wrangling over the assignment of command posts and the delimitations of their geographic and other competences (Maloney 1995).

To give an example, a state may decide to join in a UN-led military intervention or peace-keeping operation, not primarily in order to help resolve a conflict somewhere or to stop bloodshed and stabilise a precarious situation. While such aims will be somewhere on the list, other considerations may well predominate, such as the influence this state may wield in this operation and beyond this operation (precisely *because* of its involvement in this operation) on other international issues, in the UN and other international forums. The state may wish to strengthen the UN or another collective security organisation, or indeed contribute to the effectiveness of one as opposed to another (Till 1994a: 192). It may wish to benefit from training together with other, well- or better-equipped powers; it may hope to benefit from sharing information, or even technology, in the process. Its navy or

air force or army may want to prove that it is needed and can perform in earnest. Many considerations of this kind may serve to put the resolution of the conflict itself and the fate of its direct participants and victims further down on any list of priorities, usually at their cost. While such reasoning would have been entirely familiar to Frederick II of Prussia, some of the motivations seem quite 'frivolous' to those like Kant primarily concerned with limiting the miseries brought by war. This need not merely be the victims themselves, or the Red Cross that tries to keep the survivors alive, but 'public opinion' or 'international opinion' in general. Appeals to such a public in turn can have an impact, in democracies with an uncontrolled press, on government decision-making.

The frailty of human logic

In his 'theory of interdependent decision', Thomas Schelling assumes 'cool-headed' behaviour underlying threats and responses, reprisals, brinkmanship, cheating, trusting and so forth as that is more helpful for his theorising (albeit less realistic). He calls this 'rational behaviour'.

Rationality is a collection of attributes, and departures from complete rationality may be in many different directions. Irrationality can imply a disorderly and inconsistent value system, faulty calculation, an inability to receive messages or to communicate efficiently, it can imply random or haphazard influences in the reaching of decisions or the transmission of them, or in the receipt or conveyance of information; and it sometimes merely reflects the collective nature of a decision among individuals who do not have identical value systems and whose organizational arrangements and communication systems do not cause them to act like a single entity. (Schelling 1960: 16)

There are several problems with these assumptions about rationality. No value system is entirely orderly and consistent. No communication can ever be guaranteed to be efficient, there can never be certainty that in complex negotiations one has been understood fully or that one has understood fully. No group of decision-makers will ever act entirely like a single entity. By contrast, conflict-engendering values – such as national pride – may well be *shared* by opposed nations, and yet produce only conflict. Individual decision-makers

who are supposed to be allies may well *share* the goal of self-promotion at the expense of everyone else. It is thus not always, as is so often claimed, *differences* in culture, values or in the quite rational conclusions drawn from these that account for their eagerness to wage war; instead, this may be due to *shared* bellicose values, a *shared* emphasis on 'honour' rather than peace, and *shared* simple selfishness and disregard for the suffering this will bring upon others.

What wonder, therefore, that Strategy in practice rarely follows the precepts laid out by strategic thinkers. In fact, their writings – even if the authors are major establishment figures or responsible for the education of future decision-makers – exercise at best an indirect influence on the making of Strategy. Even Frederick II of Prussia, who was in the enviable position of being strategic thinker, supreme decision maker and commander-in-chief in one, could not implement the Strategy of short, sharp wars that he himself thought most desirable. Instead, the major contribution of strategic thinkers is perhaps that they create a framework for a (partly public, partly internal governmental) debate which in turn plays a part – but only a part – in the processes of decision-making on Strategy. It is other factors, such as financial limits or the narrow interests of all the entities involved in Strategy-making, that have by far the greater impact in each concrete case. One could only change that, as Kant suggested, if decision-makers were forced at least to listen to the moral philosophers (Kant 1795/1797: 43–5) – we might add, the strategists and international lawyers – which of course they are not. (A cynic might say that on the occasions that they do, decision-makers are just as likely to misunderstand or misapply arguments made by strategic thinkers than to be constructively influenced by them).

Either way, those *thinking war* will always hope for it to be neater, more coherent, purposeful, goal-oriented than it turns out to be in practice. In reality, even if the most logical, coherent and humane Strategy were applied throughout – and, to switch register, with the most just cause, authority and intention – in view of the suffering it causes, there is no such thing as a good war, to paraphrase Benjamin Franklin.

20 | *Summaries and conclusions*

The first chapter of this book listed a series of questions which have been addressed along the way, but overall answers must be given now, based on the findings of this book.

From antiquity to the Thirty Years War, and again in the age dominated by the Napoleonic paradigm, most writers on war assumed that it is an inevitable part of the world. Many sought ways to limit it, and a few, writing especially in the Enlightenment and again in the twentieth century, even hoped that it could be abolished altogether through binding legal arrangements and restructurings of societies. The abolitionists and the limiters met in making efforts to reduce the pain and suffering caused by war. Some merely sought ways to offset their own side's weakness, like some maritime strategists of secondary powers. Several Roman Catholic thinkers like Bonet in the fourteenth century and Hay du Chastelet in the seventeenth, as well as Moltke and the other 'realists' and Social Darwinists from the mid nineteenth century onwards, not only dismissed alternative solutions to war but positively welcomed it as part of God's or Nature's great design. They tended to favour battles and the offensive. As we might expect, the limiters largely advocated defence, deterrence and indirect approaches to reaching one's goal. Complicating the picture, however, some limiters advocated seizing the initiative by instigating offensive and decisive battles, or using terror, including the bombing of cities, in the hope of offsetting their own perceived weakness or shortening the war. Both sides were driven by their view of the world and their ideologies. Technology could generally be used to defend arguments on either side.

Although there is a solid tradition stretching from Cicero to the UN that urges princes or other governments not to wage wars that do not fulfil criteria for being 'just', wars were fought for all conceivable reasons, ranging from the narrow family interests of princely houses to perceived 'national' or even 'racial' causes. The more limited the

group whose interests were being fought for, the less the emotional engagement of the population, the greater the need for a professional, paid army to fight such wars. The more the masses had been mobilised by religion or other ideologies to think of a cause as their own, the greater the tendency towards total war. Atrocities against civilians and mass slaughter on battlefields (as opposed to the observance of an armistice once one side surrendered) thus generally went along with ideologically motivated wars, from religious wars (Kortüm 2001) to nationalist and 'racial' wars – for atrocities to be committed, it was usually sufficient if only one side saw them thus (Foley 2001). Convincing oneself that one was dealing with 'sub-humans', eternal enemy species or heathens/heretics and so forth hated by someone's own enraged deity always whipped up the fighting spirit, and so did the belief that one's own defeat would lead to the rule of some Empire of Evil.

The treatment of 'enemy' populations varied accordingly. If they were seen as valuable assets for one's own economy, or potential good subjects, they were sometimes spared or, in the worst case, enslaved. If they were seen as inherently evil, or as competitors for limited resources, this could quickly lead to atrocities or even genocide. In the Christian tradition, atrocities were always legislated against except if the victims were heretics (refusing to see the 'errors of their ways'), rebels or had themselves (really or supposedly) oppressed Christians. Most early modern writers admonished their readers to treat enemy civilians with clemency. Notwithstanding such admonitions, atrocities occurred frequently as soldiers got out of hand, explanations for which must be sought in the realms of psychology or biology, not reason. Atrocities on a genocidal scale were also at times ordered by princes and other legitimate governments, or at least condoned. There was a relative lull in atrocities in Europe (outside the Ottoman Empire) from 1648 until 1914. As the drift to Total War in its racist dimension did away with the taboo of maltreating civilians, sea power made it possible to starve them through blockades, and then air power to bomb them. There were parallel developments in ground warfare. Ideology here clearly drove technology, not vice versa, and technology gave racists and nationalist Social Darwinists new ideas of how they could pursue their aims.

There was a correlation also between ideology and who should do the fighting. Those who wanted to limit war might opt for either a

militia – the citizen-soldier or conscript – in the hope of adopting a clearly defensive Strategy, in the tradition of the young Guibert and Jaurès. Or they might want a professional army, properly paid and well disciplined and thus not prone to get out of hand, who could be sent abroad to carry out the policies of their government or even an international organisation working for peace to oppose aggression, in the tradition of the older Guibert, Liddell Hart and the young de Gaulle. Curiously, this meant that the very defensive thinkers' commitment to citizen armies could coincide with the views of ultra-offensive, nationalistic and expansionist thinkers.

They diverged greatly on the importance of battle. Until the French Revolution, opinion on the desirability and centrality of battle was divided. Most writers counselled prudence. Either way, battles and battlefield victory were seen as instrumental to something else, not as an aim in themselves. By contrast, from Napoleon until Castex and Guderian, a paradigm predominated in which battle was seen as central, inevitable and the only way to bring about a decision, with all too little thought given to how a subsequent peace should be secured. This, if any, was the age of a supposed 'Western way of war', but it was a short period in the few millennia for which we have historical evidence (Weltman 1995). By contrast, the indirect, political use of latent military power, the perpetual preparation of battles which one hoped would never have to take place, in the form of deterrence, coercion, suasion and so on, while used in previous centuries, came to dominate from 1945, hand in hand with a widening of the concept of Strategy explicitly to include policies in times of peace and any policies with military dimensions.

Small wars of the insurgency, civil war and people's war type existed throughout, side by side with major war, sometimes as the more common form, especially prior to the re-establishment of state structures in Europe after the Middle Ages, receding at other times, as in Europe – but not on other continents – between 1918 and 1991. Even in this period, small wars in the form of insurgencies against superior state military power troubled major Western powers in other theatres. In dealing with such insurgencies, lines of thought with regard to the need for persuasion, and indeed mutually advantageous or 'win-win' outcomes – above all, peace settlements in the interest of the populations affected – were developed that in turn influenced Western thinking about war in general after the watershed of the two World Wars.

Thinking about Strategy in relation to the peace one wanted to achieve and could realistically expect should have come part and parcel with the Romano-Christian just war tradition. There were traces of it in the works of writers of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, but it was not as central as it should have been. Military men in particular concentrated on warfare rather than on its effects and what was to be achieved by it politically. Concerns about long-term stability were more central to writing on insurgencies (small wars of the people's war type) before they were extended, mainly after 1945, to wars more generally. By contrast, most strategic theory concerning major war between 1792 and 1945 was dominated by the Napoleonic paradigm: it was focused on decisive battle and sought to 'impose one's will on the enemy' in a 'zero-sum' fashion (you win, I lose; I win, you lose). The post-1945 shift back to concerns to limit war is usually attributed to the invention of nuclear weapons, but has its roots in an earlier war-weariness, the waning of Western nationalism and militarism and the growth of humanitarian awareness. In view of the long-standing compartmentalisation of thinking about the conduct of war – traditionally relegated to military professionals – and politics or international law – traditionally engaged in by civilians – there is much that remains to be explored in the relationship between the conduct of war and the achievement of a just and therefore lasting peace.

In the context of the need to remain within international law, the division of war into four levels – political, strategic, operational, tactical – as borrowed from Soviet doctrine may be difficult to maintain. As we have seen in chapter 13, in air strikes, a tactical mishap can acquire strategic dimensions, and the same can be seen in counterinsurgency, where accidental collateral damage, or the misbehaviour of counterinsurgency forces, can do damage on a strategic or even political level when the benevolence of the population is so central to success. So the question arises in this context, too, whether Strategy must not be rethought and its levels redefined.

Finally, we have tracked down the origins and traced the history of some ideas in Strategy, surfacing and disappearing again, to resurface in another area, like colours in a woven carpet. Naval and maritime Strategy was in part derived from more general, or land-focused writing about war, but at the same time influenced to a much greater extent by geography and the peculiarities of states concerned. Air power and

nuclear Strategy in turn were strongly derived from previous naval theory, adapting primarily the concepts of blockade, deterrence and the 'fleet in being'. The Napoleonic paradigm resonated through both naval and air power thinking, although there were important dissenting views, especially concerning the uses of sea power.

We have found, perhaps with some surprise, that there is not always a neat correlation between a basically humanitarian and ethical approach to war in a particular culture and the Strategies advocated or even adopted by its armed forces. We found examples of this oddity in the *Jeune École*'s cynical advocacy of targeting even vessels with civilians on board, which admittedly never seriously dominated French operational Strategy, and the French and British practice of naval blockades to starve the enemy's civilian populations. We saw it in the surprisingly restrained and – initially – reasonable Strategies of Tirpitz with his deterrent fleet, which he admittedly soon abandoned, but also in the Strategies advocated in the interwar years by Wegener, Assmann and Groos. We saw it in the Social Darwinist tenor of Trenchard's and the RAF's city bombing Strategy, also during that period, which contrasted with the restrained and international law abiding doctrine of the Wehrmacht, admittedly discarded at the first shot of the Second World War. We saw them in the initially quite restrained development of the Soviet Red Fleet and indeed the Chinese fleet in the Cold War, and the former's conversion to an explicit statement of its roles outside major war contexts. These examples caution against any a-priori assumptions that a liberal power would necessarily pursue a 'liberal way of war', which may be another myth worth exploding, or that authoritarian powers, even of the expansionistic sort, are necessarily as streamlined in their thinking and planning and as unitary in action as their ideology suggests, even if aspiring to be totalitarian. Each case deserves a closer look, and the overall ideology of the society out of which a Strategy is born is only one factor that will determine this child's features.

The broad picture that emerges is one of fluctuation, not constants. Today's relatively humanitarian and ethical approach to Strategy, in keeping with ethical concepts going back to Antiquity which were present but often neglected in the intervening centuries, is thus unlikely to last, unless we work hard, generation after generation, to make it last. Nor is it shared in all parts of the world. We can make every effort to spread it, but we will be up against great odds,

which is not an excuse for not trying. Ultimately, as it took many so long to recognise, a stable world order in which the use of force is as severely circumscribed and regulated as police action, and in which peace can be maintained while legitimate needs can be satisfied and grievances can be addressed through mechanisms not involving bloodshed, is beneficial to all sides. As Michael Howard has argued, it took many generations to hit upon 'the invention of peace' and to develop the rudimentary underpinnings of a world peace order. Its future depends on the successful establishment and survival of a 'world community' sharing the same 'cultural norms' and above all the quest for peace to maintain it. Peace as such, he argues, 'is not an order natural to mankind: it is artificial, intricate and highly volatile' (Howard 2001: 104f.).

If we wish to nurture it and persuade others to share this value, we would do well to discard the notion derived from Clausewitz that the aims of Strategy should be 'to impose our will' unilaterally upon the enemy. Even if force is used, what ultimately is needed is the enemy's willingness to be persuaded to accept a new situation, which they will only do if they have a stake in it, and the prospect of a better life. We can only win lastingly through convincing, as Unamuno implied, and we can only win ultimately if the other side benefits as well.

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