



## A Comparison of Operational Arts: What NATO Stands to Learn by Looking Outside of Europe

Lieutenant Commander Alexander King, USN

### JCSP 50

#### Master of Defence Studies

##### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2024.

### PCEMI n° 50

#### Maîtrise en études de la défense

##### Avertissement

Les opinions exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

© Sa Majesté le Roi du chef du Canada, représenté par le ministre de la Défense nationale, 2024.

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 50 - PCEMI n° 50  
2023 - 2024

Master of Defence Studies – Maîtrise en études de la défense

**A Comparison of Operational Arts: What NATO Stands to Learn by Looking Outside of Europe**

**Lieutenant Commander Alexander King, USN**

*“This paper was written by a candidate attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.”*

*« La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale. »*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	2
<b>Foreword</b>	3
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>1. Introduction: What is NATO?</b>	4
<b>2. The When, What, and Why of Operational Art</b>	8
a. Napoleon, the Prussians, and the Birth of Operational Art	11
b. Jomini	18
c. Mahan	21
d. Jeune École	23
<b>3. NATO and the Europeans: Art's Modern Interpretation</b>	26
a. Allied Joint Publications (AJP)	27
b. Hybrid Warfare and the Grey Zee: Strategic Concept 2022 and MDO	30
<b>4. The Americans: Drivers of Change</b>	35
a. AirLand Battle	36
b. Joint Warfighting Concept and Multi-Domain Battle	37
<b>5. The Russians: Closer Than You Might Think</b>	41
a. Active Defense	41
b. Soviet Thought	44
c. Russia Resurgent	47
d. New-Type Warfare	49
<i>i. Information Warfare</i>	51
<i>ii. Reflexive Control</i>	52
<i>iii. Disorganization</i>	53
<i>iv. Seizing Early Advantage</i>	55
e. Thoughts on Russia	56
<b>6. The Chinese: Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery</b>	58
a. An Ancient Past	59
b. Adopting What Works	61
c. 21 <sup>st</sup> Century China	64
<i>i. Three Warfares</i>	65
<i>ii. System of Systems</i>	69
d. Thoughts on China	71
<b>7. Conclusion: What are We Supposed To Do With This?</b>	73
<b>Epilogue</b>	77
<b>References</b>	78

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concept of operational art through the following question: What can NATO's operational art gain by examining parallel structures in its chief adversaries? This paper explores an underlying assumption that NATO's current operational art is iterative; it is the evolutionary descendant of traditional European concepts pertaining to warfare. If this is true, the paper then argues such evolution must leave blind spots, or alternative perspectives – an infusion of the gene pool if one will. To address this question, and basic assumption, the paper explores four topics. After first framing what the topic of the paper is through doctrinal definitions, the paper opens the discussion through the history of operational art's conception. It looks at Napoleonic France before moving on to notable figures like Jomini and Mahan. The paper makes the argument operational art's roots lay in the modern nation-state and industrialization's changes to a state's capacity for war. The paper then explores the modern NATO alliances use of operational art, beginning with NATO doctrine and pausing momentarily on American nuances that set it apart philosophically. Once the stage is set, the paper addresses the chief adversaries of its fundamental question, Russia and China. Russian operational art is examined in the modernization of their methods from Imperial to modern state. Chinese, in a likewise historical manner, is examined from its ancient roots to today. What this paper found most enlightening is indeed how similar all interpretations of operational art seem to be. All four actors, NATO, US, Russian, and China follow very similar fundamentals, though admittedly in distinct and separate ways. NATO and the US focus on expensive, high-end technology and the commander. Both Russian and Chinese approaches incorporate advanced technology as well, but their focus is on information, more so in the case of China. The single distinguishing feature however, appears to be the Russian and Chinese integration of the military doctrines as an aspect of a whole-of-government effort. While possible in the West, their authoritarian style of government is much more able to operate with a unified mindset. This paper concludes that, while such a style has its efficiencies, it is antithetical to NATO and its members. It does stress however, that to meet the threat, NATO must be flexible and embrace change. Compounding on current pan-domain efforts, it must expand its doctrine to incorporate the less military facets of itself and its members. To fully incorporate Chinese and Russian lessons, NATO's operational art must embrace a willingness to compete with its rivals across the competition-conflict spectrum.

## FOREWORD

A defining characteristic of humanity is our tendency towards warfare. Like all animals, humans compete for the limited resources of their environment, often leading to violent conflict. What distinguishes humans in this respect, however, is the scale such conflicts can reach. Our social nature urges us to congregate into communities and societies, providing such collective benefits as security and prosperity. These groups, achieving a certain level of success sustaining themselves, radiate their identity outwards into the world, in spheres of influence. Eventually, these spheres interact with those of other groups, setting the stage for conflict over resources and influence. Such interactions are common in nature though, so what makes human war different?

Humans stand apart as animals particularly adapted for applying logic, learning from the past and applying those lessons to the future. Such reflection has enabled the scale of human violence to grow from singular violent acts or engagements into what we would consider as war. War is broadly defined as “a struggle or competition between opposing forces or for a particular end.”<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clarity, this paper will consider the ‘opposing forces’ to be states or alliances and the ‘ends’ to be resources and influence. An interesting aspect of war in this sense is its reflection of those that wage it. Just as war is a defining characteristic of humanity, war itself feels almost human; its basic nature is enduring while the ways it interacts with a changing world evolve across time.<sup>2</sup>

Military philosophers throughout history have observed war’s consistencies and worked to distill essential truths, constants in warfare to enable commanders to predictably plan and win conflicts. The resultant plethora of such literature has guided military education into the modern era and provides the basis of current doctrine, strategy, and tactics. Using the above definition’s parameters for war, this paper, framed around one particular alliance, will explore the application of these military philosophies. Through the lens of operational art, or an institution’s unique philosophy for conducting warfare, this paper will explore the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) approach. It will seek to discern benefits that may exist in embracing approaches employed by other entities to augment its own doctrine. An improved methodology for war-fighting, a more holistic style, could be beneficial towards meeting the evolving complexities of warfare. Put simply, this paper seeks an answer to three questions: What is operational art, how does NATO approach it, and how can the methods of other entities be positively incorporated into doctrine more suitable to the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s battlefields?

---

<sup>1</sup> “Definition of WAR,” March 7, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/war>.

<sup>2</sup> “Marine Corps Strategy (MCDP 1-1)” (U.S. Marine Corps, November 12, 1997), 9.

In pursuit of these answers, this work will first analyze what NATO is and why it exists. It will then address the idea of operational art broadly, starting from its historical origin and observing how different societies have come to understand it over time. To do so, we will discuss “allied” interpretations, a term used here interchangeably with “western,” using documents from NATO and some of its members. These will then be compared against those of non-NATO countries, specifically Russia and China. These two were chosen to explore an adversary’s mindset towards operations. Both nations represent the highest and most agreed upon threats to NATO’s interests. Israel and Ukraine could be present excellent case studies for future research. They represent outliers, non-member nations generally regarded as friendly to NATO, who’s military history uniquely blend western and Soviet thought. As such, they represent case studies for successes and pitfalls NATO might expect when trying to augment its western-style with those outside its traditional concepts.

Before proceeding, it is important to note what this paper will and will not be. It will not be an exhaustive or definitive work. There are an overwhelming amount of resources speaking towards operational art, it’s evolution, and its varied use by the world’s militaries. More can certainly be read on each of these individual topics, and each chapter will leave room for deeper research and investigation. Nor will this paper seek to propose a grand philosophical shift in NATO’s current definition of operational art. What this work will do, hopefully, is begin a conversation born of curiosity. This paper will work to answer the above proposed questions with some perspective on possible avenues to pursue more vigorously. Ideally, by the conclusion, the reader is intrigued enough to pick up the figurative ball and continue moving it down the field.

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### What is NATO?

To properly explore how NATO's future doctrine might be improved, it is helpful to reflect on how the current doctrine was reached. Let us first establish what NATO itself is. Exploring the alliance's creation and composition will provide insights into the why and how its current military philosophies are shaped.

NATO, like many in history, is a defensive alliance - a collection of generally like-minded nations cooperating to form an umbrella of mutual defense. It was born in the period between the Second World War and the nascent stages of the Cold War. European memories of war's destructive potential were fresh and fears abounded of an impending conflict in a Europe caught between opposing super powers. Western democracies united in a defensive bulwark against real and perceived threats from a rapidly expanding, communist Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR).<sup>3</sup> This, as well as combatting the return of national militarism on the continent and encouraging European political integration catalyzed the alliance's creation.<sup>4</sup> Coalescing in 1949 under the foundational Washington Treaty, NATO clearly exhibited the security desires of its members through fourteen concise articles. Most reflective of the Treaty's intent were Articles Five and Six, which obligated members to collectively defend against armed attacks targeting any of the other member's territory, forces, vessels, or aircraft.<sup>5</sup>

Such defensive pacts were not unique to the time NATO was born. Historical examples abound of defensive alliances forming and dissolving in response to various threats. Some of these will be discussed later in this paper as it contextualizes the birth of operational art. NATO is unique, however, in its scale and its endurance. It has grown from its initial narrow concept of "Western Europe plus North America," to now include most of Europe.<sup>6</sup> Existing for 75 years, NATO represents one of history's longest lasting military alliances.<sup>7</sup> Paired with the European Union (EU), it has seen one of the longest periods of relative peace in the continent as well.

---

<sup>3</sup> The founding members of NATO (1949) were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

<sup>4</sup> NATO, "A Short History of NATO," NATO, June 3, 2022, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_139339.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm).

<sup>5</sup> NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, October 19, 2023, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm).

<sup>6</sup> 20 countries have joined the original twelve through nine rounds of enlargement (1952-2024).

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Warren, "Alliance History and the Future of NATO: What the Last 500 Years of Alliance Behavior Tells Us About NATO's Path Forward," 21st Century Defense Initiative Policy Paper, Foreign Policy at Brookings (Brookings Institute, June 30, 2010), 54, <https://www.brookings.edu>.

Such a peace is perhaps the most unique aspect of NATO. European history is famous for its historical and convoluted fractiousness.<sup>8</sup> Most of the nations who would later align under NATO found themselves on opposite ends of numerous conflicts, from petty land squabbles to World Wars. Given these facts, NATO itself might seem counterintuitive. How have some of the of the world's most antagonistic militaries managed nearly eight decades of peace and cooperation? One answer, surprisingly, lies in the continent's history of friction.

Militaries from the ever-warring and alliance-shifting nations had ample opportunities to study war and its consistencies. At the time, each of these observations would be employed to seek some advantage over an enemy, evolving in line with the wars that were waged. The fluidity of political alliances ensured such military knowledge would eventually become widespread and reach a point of common-ness, a more-or-less European approach to warfare. From the sharply distinct methods utilized by the disparate militaries arose a generally equivalent system, used with differing effectiveness, but similar enough in nature to be transposed across national borders. NATO's genesis owed much to this common military knowledge. The nations comprising NATO more or less "spoke" the same military language, greatly aiding their capacity to integrate and interoperate – essentially making them better able to be enduring allies. Existential threats like the USSR provided the necessary impetus to break traditional barriers and move towards integration.

A key aspect of this "common military language" is an understanding of war on three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. Distinctions between the levels of war are philosophically nebulous; practically however, they guide the alliance's conception, planning, and execution of military tasks. Strategy and tactics are fairly well understood ideas. Strategy integrates the various tools of national power to meet national or multinational objectives.<sup>9</sup> Tactics, at the other end of the scale, focus on objectives achievable by specific units or forces.<sup>10</sup> In layman's terms, strategy concerns the high-level "why," tactics answer "with what." Bridging the two, answering the "how and when," lies the operational level of war. Operational art, the focus of this paper, answers four questions. These walk commanders and planners through an assessment of the ends, ways, means, and risks of their campaigns. They are:

- What are the objectives and desired end state? (Ends)

---

<sup>8</sup> Warren, 7.

<sup>9</sup> "US Joint Publication 3.0: Joint Operations (2011)," August 11, 2011. GL-16

<sup>10</sup> "US JP 3.0 (2011).", GL-17

- What sequence of actions is most likely to achieve those objectives and end state? (Ways)
- What resources are required to accomplish that sequence of actions? (Means)
- What is the likely chance of failure or unacceptable results in performing that sequence of actions? (Risk)<sup>11</sup>

This level of war, interestingly to the modern reader, is a relatively new concept and one whose existence is still debated by military philosophers. It is important to note this contention; however, this paper will not explore the issue. To maintain coherency, it must focus on its essential question of whether or not NATO can improve its concept of operational art. For the sake of argument, this paper embraces the existence of an operational level of war, the conduct of which can be considered an art and a science. The next chapter will discuss more deeply the concept of operational art and how NATO arrived to its current interpretation.

---

<sup>11</sup> “US Joint Publication 3.0: Joint Operations (2018),” October 22, 2018., II-4

## CHAPTER II: The When, What, and Why of Operational Art?

Practically speaking, NATO is a firm believer in the concept of an operational level of war. The alliance itself has specific literature regarding the planning and conduct of operations, specifically Allied Joint Publications (AJP)-3 and 5. Its members have similar documents in their own national doctrines. Interestingly, neither of these parent documents actually define the terms strategy or tactics, though each are used routinely throughout. What they do define however, are three terms concerning this middle level of war: operations, operation plans, and operational art. Operations are defined broadly as “sequence(s) of coordinated actions with a defined purpose;” an operation plan integrates and connects two or more operations. The third definition, operational art and the subject of this paper, is more fully defined. It is “the employment of forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles.”<sup>12</sup>

As one can see, significant thought and attention have been applied towards NATO’s understanding of an operational level of war. Why then, is its very existence contested, as referenced in the last chapter? While this paper will not delve into the myriad philosophical dissensions, one it will explore is that concerning the operational level of war’s new-ness to military thought. Throughout history, war has been visualized solely through strategic or tactical lenses. Leaders of militaries, societies, and nations developed strategic objectives to advance their interests. These objectives were then pursued via military tactics. The difference between then and now, was the absence of a middle, operational level that separated yet connected the other two.

The line between tactics and strategy were fairly clear, though both levels could simultaneously be the responsibilities of a military leader. Indeed, often the most famous generals in history, such as Alexander the Great, were those best able to integrate and coordinate the two themselves. Generally, however, understanding of the two levels was stratified. Strategy was, and remains, concerned with high-level objectives. Clausewitz famously viewed war as a “continuation of policy by other means...a political act, not merely a political instrument.”<sup>13</sup> This level of war was concerned with leadership choices, decisions like the movement of manpower and materiel across a theater of war. More importantly, they defined a war’s aim, ways in which campaigns were conducted, and prescribed the purposes and context of battles.<sup>14</sup> The lower level of war, the tactical,

---

<sup>12</sup> “Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations: Edition C Version 1” (NATO, February 2019)., LEX-8

<sup>13</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1918), 37.

<sup>14</sup> Claus Telp, *The Evolution of Operational Art, 1740-1813: From Frederick the Great to Napoleon* (Abingdon, Oxon, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 2.

was concerned with specifics. Here was where leaders focused on specific battles fought “in pursuit of strategic objectives.”<sup>15</sup>

Most of human history fundamentally understood war via these two levels. Early writings on strategy and tactics go back at least as far as Sun Tzu’s famous *Art of War*, written nearly 2,500 years ago. A few centuries later, the Greeks began using the root words ours are derived from, *strategos*, *strategia*, and *taktiké*.<sup>16</sup> These respectively distinguished a general’s thoughts and actions from orders or commands. As recently as the mid-eighteenth century, military thinkers saw them as distinctly separate. French General Maurice de Saxe, campaigning in the War of Austrian Succession summarized the delineations between as “the soldier’s trade and generalship.”<sup>17</sup> At the basic tactical level, soldiery was a trade skill anyone could be taught. Somewhat more arrogantly, he proposed that war’s higher strategic level, “was an art which required genius to use the military instrument in the most perceptive and subtle way.”<sup>18</sup> Though basic, such definitions are not necessarily outdated. In fact, theories from this era are still applicable, notably those of Prussian officer Dietrich Heinrich von Bulow.

Bulow’s most significant contribution to military theory were his definitions of strategy and tactics which are still in current use today. He defined tactics as the science of movement within sight of the enemy army; he defined strategy as the science of movement out of sight of the enemy. He also expressed this relation in simple terms: tactics is about combat, strategy is not. Tactics would complete what strategy had prepared. Strategy would be implemented by tactics.<sup>19</sup>

After millennia of the seeming adequacy of a two-level understanding of warfare, why then do modern militaries insist on the existence of a third level? It seems the answer to this is, fittingly, due to the modernization of war. Starting roughly 300 years ago, fundamental societal shifts began that would forever change how wars were conducted. Following the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) the politics of Europe began slowly transitioning from dynastic monarchies into what would eventually become modern nation-states.<sup>20</sup> In this period, warfare evolved in two ways. Its execution was drastically changed through widening use of technology like firearms and artillery. Its conduct, however, was affected by “political and social change.”<sup>21</sup> Early conceptions of the two understood levels of war’s insufficiencies began to emerge in military writing and were

---

<sup>15</sup> Telp, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Hal Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age* (Princeton University Press, 2023), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Telp, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Telp, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Telp, 47.

<sup>20</sup> “Nation-State | Definition, Characteristics, & Politics | Britannica,” accessed March 14, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state>.

<sup>21</sup> Hal Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, n.d., 119

influenced by three evolving relationships. First were the relationships binding military and non-military developments in political, societal, and economic norms. Second were more nuanced understandings of connections between military theory and practice. Third and finally, was observing the previous two through the wars between eighteenth century Prussia and France.<sup>22</sup>

### ***II A: Napoleon, the Prussians, and the Birth of Operational Art***

The decades between 1740 and 1815 saw near constant contention between Prussia and France. France sought European hegemony and Prussia pushed to unite the disparate Germanic states into one, goals whose territorial ambitions guaranteed conflict between the two. Prussia, under the leadership of Frederick the Great, and pre-Revolutionary France fought under different philosophies shaped by their relative military strengths. Always overmatched in terms of sheer numbers, Prussia turned itself into a militarized society to balance the scales. They then used this supposedly superiorly trained force in strong defensive chokepoints across their theater of war. Utilizing interior lines, the Prussians were often able to leverage speed in their favor as well. These policies worked, at least in terms of holding off external threats, if not necessarily achieving their territorial goals.

Prior to and during the Revolutionary period, France's military relied heavily on its massive, though less aggressively trained, army. French generals, relying on principles like economy of force, concentration, and surprise, sought to crush their opponents on the field.<sup>23</sup> Such policies resulted in a relative stalemate between the two powers. French territory was not lost, but Prussia remained a constant thorn. Prussia maintained its relevance, but its limited manpower meant it was unable to endure a truly extended conflict.

This rough parity ended with the ascendancy of Napoleon Bonaparte in the discordant aftermath of the French Revolution. A bold and popular young general, Napoleon rose to prominence through continuous success on the battlefield. Technologically, he did not bring tools to bear his foes could not also field. What set him apart however were his methods for employing those tools and organizing his army. Most armies of the time were conceptualized as singular entities; that is to say the organizational structure of a given army functioned as a whole, and did not readily breakdown into effective subunits. This resulted in a deeply centralized command and control (C2) structure and meant the bulk of the army was meant to be employed collectively to realize true gains on the battlefield.

---

<sup>22</sup> Telp, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Telp, 40.

Two key evolutions Napoleon introduced were modifications to his army's concept of employment and his staff system's organizational structure. Both of these greatly reflected Napoleon's military personality and compounded on each other, leading to true innovations in warfare. Napoleon expanded on the Prussian adoption of all-arms divisions, creating major army subunits composed collectively of infantry, cavalry, and artillery forces. The change was a step away from earlier French designs, which tended to organize these forces into distinctly separate groups. This produced a marked improvement for campaign design; all-arms, or combined-arms in the modern usage, essentially created sub-armies capable of acting independently across space and time. Effectively, the practice resulted in divisions capable of maneuvering individually across more of a given theater, with the obvious security benefits such dispersal would provide. When employed against the more unitary armies of his day, Napoleon's divisions enjoyed sustained tactical advantages. They could more easily out flank a singular army and engage in those battles independently until reinforced with another division. This mobility put enemy lines of communication and retreat under constant threat. Enemies who refused to move and opted for stronger defensive postures, like a hedgehog with spikes pointed out, could be surrounded by multiple divisions and strangled.<sup>24</sup>

Eventually, these divisions nested under separate corps, in turn allowing the *Grand Armée* to truly be divided into fully competent subdivisions. The expanded capabilities of these forces prompted commanders to adapt their staff system. The army as a whole risked becoming clumsy as the generals worked to spread it across a theater. To truly exploit the army's potential, it was imperative the staff adjusted accordingly to manage the various campaigns. This evolution laid the groundwork for what would be later understood as operational art.<sup>25</sup> Instead of traditional staffs of assistants, advisors, and historians, Napoleon cultivated groups of specialists. Of particular note were his Aides-de-Camp. Experienced generals and experts in their relative army branches, Napoleon then familiarized them to the peculiarities of his campaign ideology. The result was senior staff trusted to conduct high-level, independent assignments like managing separate battles or negotiating treaties.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, the changes and increasing utility of the staffs and corps became reliant on each other to effectively work. An unsophisticated or slow staff would blunt the whole system's usefulness. A corps that wasn't functionally independent would negate any speed benefits a staff might have. Ultimately, these changes benefitted Napoleon in both time and space. His system enabled quick decision-making and propagation of orders. Dispersed troops received objectives, and commanders received updated reports, quicker

---

<sup>24</sup> Telp, 36.

<sup>25</sup> Telp, 35.

<sup>26</sup> "Napoleon's Transition to a Staff Model," The War College Library, July 13, 2010, <https://holf.org/warcollege2009/node/21>.

than those of Napoleon's European counterparts. In every respect then, Napoleon's *Grand Armée* maintained the initiative. The compounded qualities of these staffs and corps allowed the French to respond quicker, move faster, and position better than other actors.<sup>27</sup> These budding relationships between the military and its staffs, began introducing concepts that would eventually come to define operational art.<sup>28</sup>

As will become important again in later chapters, Napoleon's effectiveness as a leader relied on his perception at home and abroad. In a contentious Europe, his domestic popularity rested heavily on a continued perception of his success.<sup>29</sup> As a general, this defined his philosophy towards campaigns and operations. He designed systems best able to deliver rapid victories, with heavy reliance on his unique approach to campaigns. As a statesman, swift military victory granted him the power to dictate favorable peace terms. Furthermore, for a time at least, Napoleon was able to shape battlefields to his benefit by politically playing the great powers of the age against each other before any actual battle occurred. This politico-military symbiosis was captured clearly by military historian Claus Telp:

diplomacy combined with France's potential for rapid mobilization had secured the strategic as well as the operational initiative for Napoleon. These conditions improved prospects for operational art to deliver rapid and total victory.<sup>30</sup>

Uniting the various tools of state available to him brought Napoleon an edge to warfare over the other European great powers, in ways modern nations seek to emulate. Warfare, as Clausewitz noted, has a consistent nature; one of its consistencies being the human tendency to rapidly learn and adapt techniques that work for others.<sup>31</sup> To Napoleon's detriment, his counterparts in Prussia noted his use of operational art, and continued its evolution towards our current understanding.

Napoleon's overwhelming success grabbed the attention of his rivals, specifically the Prussians. They observed warfare changing in obvious and subtle ways. Most apparent, they witnessed the smooth transition from campaigns waged by whole armies to battlefields engaged independently and from all angles by divisions and corps.<sup>32</sup> They found inadequacies in their own system's capabilities as they sought to replicate these maneuvers. They noticed their planning cycle, divided structurally between strategy and tactics, provided insufficient detail and control. The division between the two levels of war blurred, and theorists began to suggest existing precepts were no longer adequate.

---

<sup>27</sup> Telp, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Telp, 63.

<sup>29</sup> Telp, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Telp, 55.

<sup>31</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 1:38.

<sup>32</sup> Telp, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 125.

Much as Napoleon had realized, the Prussians found war's complexity increasing, requiring a commensurate increase in the level of analysis applied to it. Strategy and tactics had begun merging, forming a continuum, as opposed to their previously strict stratification. High strategy and base tactics denoted the extremes; between them emerged a central, enabling level, an operational level of war.<sup>33</sup>

The two-level model of war transitioned to one with three levels, a concept which remains the modern west's application. Strategy's definition remained unchanged. It focused on political decisions including a war's aim, how men and materiel would be committed, and to what degree the enemy could be destroyed. Strategic instruments were therefore, the "wholes" of things, to mean a nation's whole army, whole navy, etc. The operational level of war focused on enabling specific strategic objectives in specific theaters. Its tools became the large, independent subsets of the "wholes," meaning here the divisions, corps, squadrons, etc. and their associated staffs. Operational art came to define the various methods in which a commander and their staff could execute operational functions. Finally, tactics were the conduct of warfare at the lowest level, conducted towards operational or strategic ends. Tactical instruments were those specific units engaged in actual combat.<sup>34</sup>

Napoleon, though an enemy, was at least a consistent teacher for the Prussians. He focused on concentration of force, mass, speed, and maneuver at all three levels of war. With diplomatic strategy, he deprived his enemies of allies to condition the battlefield to his own numeric advantage. Operationally, he fostered decisive results through quick movement, maneuver, and flexibility, positioning his advantaged forces against a more cumbersome enemy host. At the tactical level, his forces mutually supported each other through superior firepower and grand battery, pummeling the enemy from multiple angles before sweeping through.<sup>35</sup> Napoleon's used of operational art enabled him to overcome much of war's fog and friction, and the Prussians would work quickly to replicate those advantages themselves.<sup>36</sup>

One aspect the Prussians improved upon dealt with the military staff. Whereas Napoleon's staff was inarguably effective, in the end it was reliant on Napoleon himself. Incredibly over-centralized, its structure did not function properly without his direct input. While this ensured unity of command across campaigns, Napoleon's very success revealed the flaws in his system. As French military and social influence spread across Europe, Napoleon was stretched thin, limiting the detail to which he could manage his disparate objectives. Seeing this weakness, Prussian leaders adapted the general staff,

---

<sup>33</sup> Telp, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Telp, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Telp, 70.

<sup>36</sup> Telp, 75.

elevating it from a mere enabler of the singular commander. The Prussian staff, opposed to the “nervous system” of Napoleon’s, became the “brains of the army.”<sup>37</sup> They were enabled to create unique ideas whereas the French system focused on the expeditious dissemination of orders. The staff ensured coordination and building a common understanding of the environment, providing commanders with objectives. This dispersed responsibility increased flexibility by freeing commanders to make choices. The Prussian staff applied many principles associated with the modern concept of mission command, seeking to enable action over distance.<sup>38</sup> Increasingly large armies and campaign distances initially gave Napoleon the edge, but later Prussian theories better maximized their potential.

During the final years of Napoleon’s reign, he became overstretched, and his diplomatic gains were lost as the European powers united against him. While Napoleon had introduced the continent to the effective use of operational art, the Prussian style eventually proved more viable. In the west, specifically France, the United Kingdom, and the newly emergent United States however, Napoleon’s influence lived on. His contributions to operational art would gain new life and guide military thought into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## ***II.B: Jomini***

Antoine-Henri Jomini was an interesting man of history due mostly to the sheer number of different peoples he was able to interact with and later influence. A Swiss military officer and enthusiast of strategy, Jomini sought to be a part of Napoleon’s *Grande Armée*. While pursuing this dream, Jomini moved to Paris and began the first volume of his theory on operations. Though titled the *Treatise on Grand Tactics*, grand tactics in this sense applied to the movement of large bodies of troops, corps and armies, prior to and throughout a battle.<sup>39</sup> Like the Prussians would soon come to mirror, Jomini observed the evolving principles of an operational level of warfare and sought to capture the art of Napoleon’s use of it. Providing this document to French military leaders eventually gained his commission into the French army, where he continued his research and writings on the modernizing battlefield. Over the next six years, he wrote prolifically on military operations, always with Napoleon’s methods as the focal case studies.

*Treatise on Grand Military Operations: or a Critical and Military History of the Wars of Frederick the Great as Contrasted with the Modern System and Observations on*

---

<sup>37</sup> Telp, 98.

<sup>38</sup> “Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper: Mission Command. Second Edition” (Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7, January 2020), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Marc Allegret, “Jomini, Antoine Henri, Baron De,” *Revue Du Souvenir Napoleonin*, no. 434 (2001): 51–53, <https://www.napoleon.org/>.

*the possibility of war with Prussia and the operations which will probably take place* were two such books that quickly gained Napoleon's attention. So much so that Napoleon initially ordered publication halted. Ironically Napoleon viewed Jomini's insight and accurate interpretations of his methods as "tantamount to teaching [his] enemies [his] entire system of war."<sup>40</sup> Eventually however, Napoleon would come to accept Jomini, promoting him to Brigadier General and head of the *Grande Armée's* historical department. Unfortunately, internal politics eventually conspired to push Jomini out of French employ into that of the Russia, where he continued his dedicated investigations into operational warfare.

Ideas Jomini proposed were not necessarily new, but his method of explaining his insights was easy to digest. His seminal work *The Art of War* synthesized military knowledge from Hannibal to Napoleon, and presented his findings in clear and scientific ways.<sup>41</sup> Jomini argued the aim of war was to maintain the offensive initiative. One achieved this goal by massing a body of troops against key positions to ensure victory.<sup>42</sup> Two factors he expanded upon specifically were lines of operation and decisive points - factors still used today in the planning cycle of many militaries. In Jomini's era, lines of operations and lines of communication were often the same. A general would seek to possess key infrastructure - a port, a road, a railway, or a city for instance - for the same reasons an enemy would defend them. Such positions provided focus points and enabled logistics to move throughout a theater, necessitating their consolidation during operations.<sup>43</sup>

Decisive points were similarly defined in Jominian theory, in that they were particular, physical places that provided specific advantage. They strongly influenced a campaign or battle's results and Jomini divided them into three categories: strategic, operational and tactical. Dependent on the war's aims, strategic points could either aid one's own forces or hinder the opponent's. Following that pattern, they could also facilitate or degrade movement and maneuver as needed to properly shape a battlefield. Operational points, applying to single campaigns and theaters could be defined similarly. They could likewise be natural, such as the local landscape, or synthetic, here meaning the maneuvering of friendly and belligerent forces prior to battle. Finally, tactical points considered terrain, its proximity to a strategic objective, and how both side's forces were arranged on a prospective battlefield.<sup>44</sup> Jomini's observations of Napoleon, measured

---

<sup>40</sup> Allegret.

<sup>41</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 156.

<sup>42</sup> William Johnsen, Conrad Crane, and Jacqueline Whitt, "A Scientific Approach to War? Antoine-Henri Jomini," War Room: Great Strategists, accessed March 17, 2024, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/special-series/great-strategists/scientific-approach-to-war-jomini/>.

<sup>43</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 164.

<sup>44</sup> Brands, 157.

against other historical generals, solidified a growing understanding of operational warfare in military theory. As discussed earlier in the chapter, French enemies like Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom were quick to realize the potential of these new ideas and adapt them for their own practice.

Throughout his lifetime, Jomini directly influenced the doctrines of multiple nation's militaries. In France, he captured and documented Napoleon's techniques. His work prescribed them rational methodologies other militaries would soon emulate. During his 50 years of Russian employ, Jomini was a direct advisor to both Tsars Alexander I and Nicholas I. He helped the former found the Military Academy of St Petersburg and the advised the latter in the Crimean campaign. He was even the military instructor to another future Tsar, the young Alexander II.<sup>45</sup> Across the Atlantic, a newly emerged United States also observed French successes against the European powers. Jomini's writings, breaking this success down into replicable principles, were quickly adopted and formed the basis of the young nation's military education system.<sup>46</sup> Ardent students of Jominian ideas came to define an American interpretation of war's principles. One such believer was the naval historian Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, who's contributions continued the evolution of western operational art.

### ***II C: Mahan***

Alfred Thayer Mahan defined the United States' modern approach to Naval strategy and operations. During much of his life, his nation's presence on the international stage was limited. Though a relative hegemon in the western hemisphere, European powers paid little attention to the young country. Mahan studied these powers, judging their histories through their wars and their politics. He endeavored to contextualize their success, and what America could emulate to gain prominence on the international stage.<sup>47</sup> Mahan researched the development of western powers, from ancient Greece and Rome, to his contemporary France and Great Britain.<sup>48</sup>

His research led him to two conclusions. First, famously, was his insistence on the primacy of naval power to place a nation on the world stage. Mahan's seminal work, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, discussed the relationships between the sea, trade, and national power.<sup>49</sup> Navies, unique among the services, were as much tools of

---

<sup>45</sup> Eman Vovsi, "A.-H. Baron de Jomini in 1813: The Rubicon Crossed," accessed March 17, 2024, [https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/Swiss/c\\_Jomini.html](https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/Swiss/c_Jomini.html).

<sup>46</sup> Johnsen, Crane, and Whitt, "A Scientific Approach to War?"

<sup>47</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 170.

<sup>48</sup> Brands, 179.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Jamison, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: 'The Influence of Sea Power Upon History' as Strategy, Grand Strategy, and Polemic - Classics of Strategy and Diplomacy," *Classics of Strategy and Diplomacy*, February 9, 2022, <https://classicsofstrategy.com/>.

diplomacy as they were for the military. A given nation, able to extend its commerce beyond its shores, and strongly defend said commerce, was a nation that would prosper.<sup>50</sup>

His second conclusion proposed strategy, as he would define it, was the ultimate decider of military success. He agreed with Jomini's assessment that poor strategy would negate a general's skill or a soldier's valor. While they may achieve decisive victories, he wrote, poorly guided strategy would eventually lead a power to failure in pursuit of its war aims.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, he asserted strategy was a whole of government affair. Civil and military leaders were jointly responsible in peacetime as well as war for properly preparing their navies for success.<sup>52</sup> With such a strong emphasis on strategy, how then do Mahan's theories benefit the exploration of operational art this paper is intended as?

Mahan wrote in an age where a delineation of operations inside the stratego-tactical continuum was still fairly new. The third level of war's distinct character was still far from common practice. Many military writers of the time continued to blend usage of the three levels between the traditional two. Nonetheless, Mahan ardently accepted many Jominian principles of warfare; many ways he described strategy have since come to nest under current understandings of operational art. For example, Mahan's chief "strategic" concepts were concentration of force and offensive action. A navy, stronger and more capable of engagement than the enemy's, was key to victory at sea. He also espoused the logic of Jomini's lines of operation and decisive points, waging naval war as a power against power competition. Mahanian naval strategy contested the superior force against weak points, engaging key targets in order to achieve decisive victory. A powerful Navy could keep war away from home while removing a rival's access to its own lines of communication, degrading its ability to fight.<sup>53</sup> In modern terminology, Mahanian strategy urged the operational principles of sea control and sea denial, in pursuit of overall maritime superiority.

Mahan's writings were a product of their time. Strong senses of nationalism pervaded the western world; Mahan was not an innocent in this respect. He saw America on the precipice of greatness. Already a strong land power with a surging economy, America's greater world influence was hamstrung by its relative lack of maritime power. Its Navy, poorly equipped and largely defunct remnants of the Civil War, struggled to enforce its laws and protect its commercial assets. *Sea Power* struck a chord with its home audience, causing an almost instantaneous increase in attention and funding allocated to building true sea power.

---

<sup>50</sup> Jamison.

<sup>51</sup> A. T. (Alfred Thayer) Mahan, *Naval Administration and Warfare: Some General Principles, with Other Essays* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1908), 235, <http://archive.org/details/navaladministrat00maha>.

<sup>52</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 178.

<sup>53</sup> Brands, 180.

## II.D: *Jeune École*

One final note in our abridged history of operational art's development is a competing perspective to the big power theories of the age - a group of concepts collectively referred as the *Jeune École*. Like Mahan's theories, it was product of the increased focus on naval strength at the close of the nineteenth century. Its ideas, however, countered the preeminence of large navies. Alfred Thayer Mahan and his British counterpart Sir Julian Corbett supported rival interpretations on the purpose of powerful navies. Whereas Mahan pushed the decisive offensive, Corbett urged a more cautious, defensive approach.<sup>54</sup> Both agreed however, "the object of naval warfare must always be...either to secure the command of the sea or to prevent the enemy from securing it."<sup>55</sup> These two popular theorists were men of their times –products of increased nationalism, and their countries – both with navy's capable to projecting influence across the globe. The *Jeune École*, the Young School, developed in the resultant niche, was a school of war for those nations unable to support large navies.

The school arose in France specifically as a counter to the dominance of the British Royal Navy. An historic land-power, France was unable to directly compete with the British at sea and developed practices to mitigate this disparity. They embraced what modern audiences would understand as asymmetric warfare.<sup>56</sup> Instead of directly engaging the definitively superior Royal Navy, the French school proposed attacking weaker merchant shipping. This was warfare the French Navy could effectively maintain for longer periods of time. By crippling the British economy, the French, in theory could outlast British "will" to fight.<sup>57</sup> Proponents of the school also foresaw the obsolescence of fleet-on-fleet warfare. As new technology became standardized, quantity would achieve its own quality, even if the numbers were composed of less-advanced assets. The operational principles of speed, maneuverability, and mass were the foundational cornerstones of this school.<sup>58</sup> They guided French naval development through the late nineteenth century. Ultimately, the *Jeune École* lost in the West to more traditionally appealing theories of power like those of Mahan and Corbett. Later chapters, however, will explore the school's resurgence in the modern era outside of the west and what the West can learn from its evolution.

---

<sup>54</sup> Brands, 181.

<sup>55</sup> Julian Stafford Corbett, "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy," <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15076/15076-h/15076-h.htm>, 91, accessed March 19, 2024, <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/15076/pg15076-images.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Hugues Canuel, "From a Prestige Fleet to the *Jeune École*," *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 1 (2018): 2, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol71/iss1/7>.

<sup>57</sup> Canuel, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Canuel, 14.

### **CHAPTER III: NATO and the Europeans: Art's Modern Interpretation**

The era between the writers of the previous chapter and today saw some of the most world-changing events of human history. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century opened with seeming promise for the future. The world's various communities and peoples became more connected than ever before through inventions like the radio, automobile, and airplane. Large, steel, engine-powered and ocean-going ships plowed the seas and brought continents closer together. Unfortunately, the increased efficiencies for travel and communication also better enabled enemies to wage war. The first half of the century saw war's industrialization, mechanization, and the entry of societies into a war planner's calculus. Larger quantities of soldiers were required to maintain such a war's demands; domestic industries supported the war effort, and at times civilian centers found themselves as military targets.

Before proceeding, it must be clarified that this paper assumes two things. First it is written for readers in, or connected to, a NATO member's armed forces. Second, inherent in the nature of the first assumption, this paper trusts its readers' relative familiarity with general NATO doctrine. More detail can certainly be found in the actual publications, but the focus of this paper is to educate those familiar with their own documents to thoughts from outside their bias. Therefore, to summarize quite a lot of history and important events, the culminating expression of the previously mentioned military evolution was the emergence of atomic weapons and two opposing world-hegemons. The Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in the east were counter-balanced in the west by the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). For the remainder of the century, the two rival alliances constantly pushed both their physical militaries and war-fighting theories to outperform the enemy's, should a direct conflict arise. This chapter will discuss NATO's approach to operational art. As the history to the concept has already been discussed, this chapter will focus on NATO's current interpretation and where it seems to be shifting its focus for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Coming chapters will discuss how the theoretical descendants of Soviet thought, in modern Russia, and ancient philosophy, in modern China, have similarly evolved their processes in the modern era.

#### ***III.A: Allied Joint Publications (AJP)***

The most obvious resource for NATO's concept of operations and their art are the Allied Joint Publications. NATO's publications and those of its members codify theory into doctrine in an effort to develop a common, readily accessible understanding and process for approaching war planning. There are a myriad of these documents, this paper will focus specifically on the 3.0 and 5.0 versions, respectively titled Conduct and

Planning of Operations. Collectively, these documents constitute over 300 pages of dedicated thought solely focused on operations, their flow, and the logistics necessary to ensure proper execution. This chapter will broadly summarize their concepts and show their evolutionary development.

The most obvious starting point for understanding NATO's use of operational art is how it defines the term. AJP 3.0 therefore is useful in providing the left and right limits of the idea. Here, the operational level of war is "the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or areas of operations."<sup>59</sup> This definition shows a clear link to the earlier theories introduced in the last chapter. It serves to somewhat validate the emergence of this third, middle-level of war by continuing to define operations as large, planned actions in support of a wider goal. The publication builds on the lessons of Napoleon and the Prussians to posit the commander as the keystone for conducting operations. The commander, due to their increased situational awareness and perspective, are critical for conducting operational art in order to link tactical effects with strategic goals. NATO thus defines its operational art as "the employment of forces to achieve strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations and battles."<sup>60</sup> The definition is a bit dense but in essence connects three subjects: forces, strategic aims, and the efforts required to connect the two.

NATO operational art shows a clear connection to its cultural roots. Theories rooted in historical European battlefields show obvious thematic consistencies in the arts of western militaries today. The lessons of the past remain foundational to NATO, and more broadly western, understandings, of operations and their art. Elements of operational art defined by Jomini persist today and are deeply integrated into western planning methods. Concepts like decisive points, lines of operation, and interior/exterior lines remain in the various planning models. Principles like concentration of force and offensive action provide the framework of western military education. As one author wrote, "the similarities between Jomini's version of these elements and their modern counterparts offer positive evidence for the triumph of the essential."<sup>61</sup> Modern differences do exist, but those, generally, can be interpreted as evolutions rather than departures from the definitions of the past. One such example can be found in the conceptualization of decisive points. Jomini perceived them as "capable of exercising a marked influence either upon the result of the campaign or upon a single enterprise."<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> "AJP-3, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations: Edition C Version 1, UK Change 1" (UK Ministry of Defence, February 2019), 1–3.

<sup>60</sup> "UK AJP-3," 1–3.

<sup>61</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 163.

<sup>62</sup> Brands, 163.

Modern western doctrine tightens the definition without losing the original meaning. Doctrine labels them as “key terrain, key events, critical factors, or functions that, when acted upon, enable the commander to gain a marked advantage over an enemy or contribute materially to achieving success.”<sup>63</sup>

A significant aspect of current NATO thinking regards its continued focus on the primacy of armed forces as the catalyst of military action. They are “deployed and employed in accordance with strategy to achieve military strategic objectives.”<sup>64</sup> These forces require sustainment, planning, and integration through various staff actions to effectively utilize. As mentioned earlier, another defining aspect of NATO thought situates the commander as the focal point. The commander defines the force and resource requirements, levels of acceptable risk, and serves as a direct liaison to their relevant counterparts across the theater. At first glance, the commander’s centrality is forebodingly reminiscent of Napoleon’s approach, employing heavy titles like Supreme Allied Commander. Modern western thought does not dedicate the same degree of reliance on high-leadership though. Indeed, while the commander remains critical for connecting operations to strategy, bridging tactics with operations is delegated to lower levels. Concepts like mission command empower lower-level leaders to act and retain flexibility, employing lessons learned from Prussian operational art. NATO doctrine utilizes supported and supporting relationships to allow “headquarters and forces to complement each other to best effect.”<sup>65</sup>

To conduct operations, NATO and the west categorize their forces into separate battlespaces or domains. No doctrinal definition exists, but domains are regarded as “critical macro manoeuvre space whose access or control is vital to the freedom of action and superiority required by the mission.”<sup>66</sup> Physical domains occupy the maritime, land, air, and space theaters. Their non-physical counterparts include information, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, and time.<sup>67</sup> Each domain has distinct, though often overlapping and integrated, responsibilities. This is especially true with the non-physical domains, where military assets in the distinct physical domains may employ multiple non-physical tools. Operational plans therefore, are constructed to reflect this format. They define specific tasks and responsibilities to each domain’s commanders and how they support each other in pursuit of common objectives.

---

<sup>63</sup> “US Joint Publication 5.0: Joint Planning (2020),” December 1, 2020, IV-32

<sup>64</sup> “AJP 3-0,” 1-2

<sup>65</sup> “AJP 3-0,” 1-3

<sup>66</sup> Dr Jeffrey M Reilly, “Multidomain Operations: A Subtle but Significant Transition in Military Thought,” *Air & Space Power Journal* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 71, [https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-30\\_Issue-1/ASPJ-Spring-2016.pdf](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-30_Issue-1/ASPJ-Spring-2016.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> “AJP 3-0,” C-3

### ***III.B: Hybrid Warfare and the Grey Zone: Strategic Concept 2022 and MDO***

Traditional Western practice drew strong lines of separation between the many domains. At least until World War I, roles and responsibilities assigned to armies and navies were distinct and generally clear cut. During this time, the apex of any concept of “joint-ess” was essentially limited to naval ships transporting army soldiers or bombarding coastal forts. Once ashore, the army went off and conducted its ground warfare, leaving the navy to handle everything offshore. The divides between the military and other aspects of policy, like economy and politics, were even more concrete. Though Clausewitz argued war was an ultimate extension of political tools, the military and political spheres functioned nearly independently of each other outside of shared strategic objectives.<sup>68</sup>

20<sup>th</sup> Century world militaries found themselves confronted with a growing number of critical domains to concern themselves with. Submarines, aircraft, satellites, and the internet all fundamentally changed warfare, and thus operational art, with their introduction. Each of these technologies presented challenging paradoxes; while they all became critical at providing an edge, they all equally opened new avenues for adversaries to exploit. The evolving technology and methods of conducting warfare also began to necessitate other tools beyond the military’s. Concepts like DIME, or the combination of diplomatic, information, military, and economic factors more greatly defined the breadth of competitive environments requiring coordination. Operational art was forced to evolve. The tenets of Jomini, Mahan, and Clausewitz remained relevant, but effectively acting across all the domains of war required new ways of planning.<sup>69</sup>

In the West, this most current version of strategy and operational art is referred to as hybrid warfare.<sup>70</sup> Various doctrine has emerged describing how NATO identifies its strengths and weaknesses in the domains and the need to operate across them all. Though the western alliance enjoyed uncontested military supremacy at the close of the last century, its adversaries have worked to erode that advantage.<sup>71</sup> Answering the challenge, NATO’s doctrine has adopted the concept of *Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)* into their *Strategic Concept* publications. The US is building its version under the moniker *Multi-Domain Battle (MDB)* and the *Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC)*.

---

<sup>68</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 1:37.

<sup>69</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 163.

<sup>70</sup> “NATO Review - Hybrid Warfare – New Threats, Complexity, and ‘Trust’ as the Antidote,” NATO Review, November 30, 2021, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/11/30/hybrid-warfare-new-threats-complexity-and-trust-as-the-antidote/index.html>.

<sup>71</sup> James Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” n.d., 8.

MDO and the JWC are not necessarily new concepts. Their origins trace back to the Cold War as NATO and the US debated how best to meet the Soviet threats. The Soviets and other actors, then and now, perceived a sense of military, technological and capacity, inferiority to the West. To balance the scales in their favor, competition in the “grey zone” became, and remains, commonplace. The grey zone concerns efforts below the level of war that work to undermine an adversary. These include political intrigue, information and psychological operations, economic coercion, and even the use of proxy groups to enact violence on the state’s behalf. The grey zone’s strength is its ambiguous nature, no singular act enough to warrant an adversary’s call to arms, but the cumulative effects degrading them over time.<sup>72</sup>

Hybrid warfare works to counter grey zone activities by fusing the various elements of a state’s power. Synchronizing efforts across the DIME construct to counter-exploit an adversary’s own shortcomings.<sup>73</sup> Hybrid war and the grey zone as terms are interchangeable, though they seem to carry some political weight. Whereas hybrid war often describes allied approaches, grey zone is largely relegated to adversary actions. Despite this, embracing a wider understanding of competition is common to NATO and modern nations. As NATO cites from Sun Tzu, “the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”<sup>74</sup>

NATO’s *2022 Strategic Concept* defines three groups of tasks: deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.<sup>75</sup> All three push the blended employment of military and non-military means in integrated strategies. Operational planners then employ those tools to enable conditions favoring NATO and its ability to define competition instead of its adversaries.<sup>76</sup> *Multi-Domain Operations* describe how the military is envisioned in this overarching, integrated concept. MDO expands upon the concept of joint-warfare. Joint operations combined the efforts of the distinct services in their respective domains. MDO expands upon it to integrate their efforts with those of non-military tools, across all domains. This major shift empowers NATO’s military to “prepare, plan, orchestrate, and execute coordinated activities” in conjunction with other non-military actors.<sup>77</sup> In the fullest expression of operational art’s “concentration of forces” principle, MDO, ideally, will synchronize all tools at NATO’s employ to shape the environment to the alliance’s maximum advantage.

---

<sup>72</sup> Black et al., 11.

<sup>73</sup> Black et al., 2.

<sup>74</sup> “NATO Review - Hybrid Warfare.”

<sup>75</sup> “NATO 2022 Strategic Concept” (NATO, June 29, 2022), 1, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> “NATO 2022 Strategic Concept,” 6.

<sup>77</sup> Paolo Giordano, “Multi-Domain Operations in NATO - Explained,” NATO’s ACT, October 5, 2023, <https://www.act.nato.int/article/mdo-in-nato-explained/>.

Perhaps a key difference to NATO and the countries it will be weighed against in the next chapters are the fundamental ways in which they view their purpose and threats. NATO, despite some counter-arguments, is a defensive alliance. By treaty, NATO's military action is largely conducted as a response to aggression, rather than its initiator.<sup>78</sup> Opponents may dispute the reality of that assertion, perceiving NATO's involvement in the Balkans, Afghanistan, or Ukraine as that of an instigator. Nonetheless, NATO builds its plans and conducts its exercises under the assumption it did not start the war. Jomini and Clausewitz would stress the necessity of maintaining the initiative in battle.<sup>79</sup> The following chapters will discuss whether or not this foundational tenet of operational art is available to NATO. If it is not, it will seek to ascertain what alternatives are available to the alliance in pursuit of maintaining its ultimate advantage.

---

<sup>78</sup> "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept," 4.

<sup>79</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 1:183.

## CHAPTER IV: The Americans: Drivers of Change

While NATO is the focus of this paper, it is prudent to momentarily discuss American doctrine as a separate entity. The United States is a founding member of the alliance and fully involved in its operation. However, the US shares two unique distinctions that require attention. First, unlike many of its European counterparts like the UK, American publications do not inherently nest under those of NATO. For the most part, the documents align, and the American ones support and incorporate most of NATO's. Fundamentally though, the US insists upon maintaining its freedom of action around the world and not limiting its doctrine to the North Atlantic and European theaters. Second, many of the theories in the following chapters, though responses to NATO and the West, are specifically concerned with countering the United States. For Russia and China particularly, the singular power of the US military makes it the largest single threat that must be accounted for in a conflict.

US history with operational art is complicated. As a young nation, American theorists were enamored by the works of Jomini and Mahan; their arguments were implemented into military education and US doctrine. Until World War II, the works of these men broadly defined the US approach to war planning and campaigning. Surprisingly, American success in the war would negatively impact operational art's place in military study. Through the war and with the advent of the atomic bomb, the US had cemented its status as a super power. The nation felt both unbeatable yet terrified of Soviet employment of their own nuclear weapons in a war. In this interim period, for about two decades after the war, American focus on operational art waned in favor of the concepts of total, nuclear war. Not much art, it would seem, was required in launching volleys of long-missiles capable of utterly destroying an enemy. Struggles in Vietnam and other post-colonial proxy wars, however, would sufficiently shock American institutions, reinvigorating operational art's appeal.<sup>80</sup>

### *IV.A: AirLand Battle*

Failures in Vietnam prompted intense efforts by American strategists to understand what went wrong and how to prevent its recurrence. In doing so, many theorists turned towards a study of recent German uses of operational arts in the second World War. The admittedly impressive feats the German army had become famous for intrigued an American audience unfamiliar with losing and eager to regain their preeminence. In these studies, Americans were introduced to the writings of Clausewitz.

---

<sup>80</sup> Steve Leonard and Rebecca Jensen, "Back to the Future: Rediscovering Operational Art in an Era of Great Power Competition," Modern War Institute, September 10, 2021, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/back-to-the-future-rediscovering-operational-art-in-an-era-of-great-power-competition/>.

Clausewitz had until then suffered a lack of western attention when compared to Jomini, due both to America's early closeness to France and a lack of his works' translation into English. *On War* became immensely popular, heavily taught in US institutions, and largely defined US military thought for the rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>81</sup>

One way Clausewitzian concepts and emerging forays into joint operations converged was through AirLand Battle. Envisioned as the primary US and NATO strategy against Soviet aggression in Europe, AirLand Battle combined two ideas: Integrated Battle and the Extended Battlefield.<sup>82</sup> The former integrated all air and ground assets available to create synchronized effects on an enemy. The latter was concerned with simultaneously engaging all levels of an enemy's forces. Combined, these two would overwhelm the opponent and ensure allied victory. The collapse of the USSR before a major conflict erupted prevented AirLand Battle's employment as originally intended. Aspects of it however, coupled with revolutionary new technologies like stealth and data links, were put to use in the First Gulf War.<sup>83</sup> The coalition's resultant speed and effectiveness were overwhelmingly successful and forecast a new century of western peerless-ness. NATO's operational art seemed preeminent. Later chapters will show this very success was double-edged, and prompted immediate adoption and evolution by NATO's rivals to meet the challenge.

#### ***IV.B: Joint Warfighting Concept and Multi-Domain Battle***

US doctrine is defined through its *Joint Publications (JP)*, as discussed earlier. The doctrine builds upon the standards of the individual services and blends warfighting philosophy, theory, and practical experience.<sup>84</sup> Evident in such doctrine are their connections to traditional European understandings of operational art. They define nine inherent principles of joint operations, terms any reader of Jomini and Clausewitz would be familiar with. These principles include ideas such as economy of force, mass, maneuver, and surprise.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, they demonstrate American theory's return to operational art by stressing it as a fundamental aspect of modern warfare. The introductory chapter to JP 3.0 claims US success relies on "adaptive and thinking professionals" who can "design, plan, organize, train for, and execute" missions to meet the new and existing challenges of combat.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 134.

<sup>82</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 7.

<sup>83</sup> Black et al., 7.

<sup>84</sup> "US JP 3.0 (2018).", I-1

<sup>85</sup> "US JP 3.0 (2018).", I-2

<sup>86</sup> "US JP 3.0 (2011).", I-1

While JP 3.0 remains a valid and guiding source of doctrine for US military operations, the future of American doctrine will be defined through the *Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC)*.<sup>87</sup> The concept's aim is to fully establish the US military as a modern and adaptive force, stressing innovation, prioritization, and expedited acquisition as key updates for guiding this evolution.<sup>88</sup> JWC fully shifts US focus from the insurgency wars of recent decades and fully positions itself to face the security concerns of peer-level adversaries. Like NATO's MDO, JWC's vision encompasses synchronized and continuous operations across the span of domains. To do so, it embraces the operational art tenets of "agility, adaptability, and combat credibility," to capitalize on advantages over adversaries.<sup>89</sup> One specific challenge JWC works to resolve concerns logistical support in contested, high-end warfare, environments. In this example, the growing fusion of the facets of DIME are evident; part of the solution incorporates commercial capabilities to cover military gaps or provide for flexibility or cost savings unavailable from a purely military solution.<sup>90</sup> Just as superior logistics capabilities factored into early operational art theories, so too do they remain critically important for modern practitioners.

*Multi-Domain Battle (MDB)* continues this modernized integration philosophy. Conceived as "an operational concept with strategic and tactical implications," MDB, like JWC, is designed as the next step beyond joint warfare. Like NATO's MDO, MDB aims to bring the many facets of state power to bear against both traditional and grey zone threats.<sup>91</sup> In theory, MDB will enable Joint Force Commanders (JFC) to employ truly complementary forces across all domains. To fulfill this holistic approach, MDB has three components: calibrated force posture, employment of resilient formations, and convergence of capabilities. The first is a recognition that not all battles are the same, and when including hybrid war, not all wars are either. This component necessitates a combined employment of forces that are forward deployed, expeditionary, and supported by partner nations to ensure the right tools are utilized. The second component "demands formations capable of conducting semi-independent, dispersed, mutually supporting, cross-domain operations and operational and tactical levels."<sup>92</sup> A clear endorsement of the push towards mission command principles, this component spreads forces across a theater with a level of autonomy while retaining the capability to mass them at an advantageous time. The final component seems to be the "most modern" of the three in

---

<sup>87</sup> "US JP 3.0 (2011)," III-1

<sup>88</sup> Christopher W Grady, "Sharpening Our Competitive Edge: Honing Our Warfighting Capabilities Through the Joint War," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Forum, no. 111 (October 30, 2023): 16, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/>.

<sup>89</sup> Grady, 17.

<sup>90</sup> Grady, 18.

<sup>91</sup> "Multi-Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century. Version 1.0" (US Army, December 2017), 1, [https://www.tradoc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MDB\\_Evolutionfor21st.pdf](https://www.tradoc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MDB_Evolutionfor21st.pdf).

<sup>92</sup> "Multi-Domain Battle," 2.

that it concerns fusing efforts across the politico-military spectrum. Such integration would allow the “Joint Force to maneuver and achieve objectives, exploit opportunities, or create dilemmas for the enemy.”<sup>93</sup> In simple guidance for operational planners, MDB has three fundamental objectives. These are to make denied spaces contested spaces, defeat enemy campaign, and consolidate gains. A key difference from older plans, one of MDB’s selling points is to contextualize operations among wider political strategy. Though this may seem like a small clarification, MDB more keenly acknowledges the continuum of competition, urges deterrence, and accepts victory defined in de-escalation and political resolutions.<sup>94</sup>

MDO, MDB, JWC, and other similar concepts are all answers to the same dilemma: the rapidly expanding and interrelated realms of competition and conflict. NATO and its members are clearly greatly concerned and are leveraging resources and thought towards finding resolutions to these modern security concerns. Though the militaries and their operational arts have continued to evolve, these newest publications indicate many consistencies and “truths” in western art. Principles like speed, concentration of forces, and logistics remain core concepts today as they would have for Napoleon. With this understanding of Western consistency regarding its operational art, the coming chapters will look at the chief challengers to NATO’s security. Through first touching upon their unique histories, this paper will then observe current assessments of their doctrines and distill differences, if any, that might exist. Just as “multi-domain” seems to have arisen in response to grey-zone threats, so too might actual adversary doctrine be a source of positive evolution.

---

<sup>93</sup> “Multi-Domain Battle,” 2.

<sup>94</sup> Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” 12.

## CHAPTER V: The Russians: Closer Than You Might Think

### *V.A: Active Defense*

Russia has long been viewed by Europeans (and NATO) as the counterpoint to “Western” thought. Many in the west would assume the “Russian version” of theories differ substantially from their counterparts in NATO. Counterintuitively to those of us in the West perhaps, Russian military doctrine shares a long historical relationship with ours. Similarities and departures between the two could be symbolized by a tree shared between two neighbors. The underlying structure is shared, while each neighbor chooses different branches to nurture or cull.

During the period in time the opening chapters of this book focused on, Russian politics were as entwined in European affairs as those of France, Prussia, and Austria. In fact, the preeminent writers like Clausewitz and Jomini grounded their theories through battles fought between the three. Indeed, both military authors each saw service in at least two of these contestants as alliances and personal ambitions fluctuated. This is perhaps the source of the first major branch on this metaphorical tree of common operational art. Both Eastern (here meaning Russian) and Western doctrines of the nineteenth century incorporated lessons captured by these authors. The Americans, in particular, were introduced to Jomini through their ally in France. He was equally recognized in Russia, where he personally held sway over military education, as discussed in Chapter II. It is important to note this history of common military language. Just as they inform a deeper understanding of NATO’s modern theory, so they do for modern day Russia’s. Later sections of this chapter will discuss more deeply the evolution of Russian operational art through the Soviet era before continuing on to present day and possible futures. First, though, it will move on to discuss modern Russian operational arts as understood prior to the war in Ukraine. Future research will more accurately apply lessons learned from this war into possible redefinitions of Russia’s conception of its art.

Modern Russian operational art exists under a framework known as “active defense.” Active Defense, in concept, integrates various aspects of war, from military theory and strategic goals to preparation, prevention, and operations.<sup>95</sup> Following similar trends in the West after the second World War, active defense shifts emphasis away from decisive ground offensives. Instead, it focuses on the aerospace domain, a concept called “maneuver defense,” and other forms of warfare that do not require direct

---

<sup>95</sup> Michael Kofman et al., “Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts” (CNA Russia Studies Program, August 6, 2021), i.

engagement – known as noncontact warfare.<sup>96</sup> Maneuver defense and noncontact warfare may be unfamiliar terms to western audiences, so the concepts must be clarified.

Western military readers generally understand the principle of maneuver as offensive in nature. Russian interpretation reverses such logic and employs the concept's strengths as tools of defense. Instead of maneuvering to gain the best advantage, here it is incorporated to minimize risk. Maneuver defense seeks to trade space for time. By having no concentrated points of defense, or centers of gravity, enemies can no longer win decisive victories.<sup>97</sup> Territory is sacrificed in order to degrade the enemy while preserving their own forces. As the enemy is spread across a wider battlespace they would be forced to reinforce logistics nodes, which in turn provide ready targets for Russian fires.<sup>98</sup> This technique creates space for ambushes, barriers, and concentrating fires, all in pursuit of unraveling an opponent's operational plan and exhausting its forces.<sup>99</sup> Ultimately maneuver defense is designed to allow Russian forces to control the initiative, engaging on their terms and controlling the flow of battle.

Noncontact warfare mirrors the principles of maneuver defense in that it seeks to free Russian forces from direct engagement and force an opponent to campaign on Russian terms. Disorganization is inflicted amongst the opponent and is coupled with long-range fires and strikes upon operational and strategic targets.<sup>100</sup> Russia's goal in active defense is to dissuade enemies through risk, by imposing costs proportionally excessive to any benefits they might pursue.<sup>101</sup> Active defense leverages the warfare principles of surprise, decisiveness, and continuity of action. It combines fire, strike, maneuver, and asymmetric measures to exploit vulnerabilities and nullify perceived advantages.<sup>102</sup>

Western audiences are likely to assume Russia sees NATO as a whole, and the US specifically, as its primary opponents. What might be counterintuitive to them however, is that Russia sees itself as the militarily and technologically inferior force. In this light active defense, then, is sound theory. Through it, Russia intends to deter or win a war before it even starts, yet it also defines how then to campaign should those efforts fail.<sup>103</sup> The next sections will dive deeper into Russian operation art. First they will observe the last century's Soviet thought. They will then move to modern day, and how

---

<sup>96</sup> Kofman et al. i

<sup>97</sup> Kofman et al., 16.

<sup>98</sup> Kofman et al., 14.

<sup>99</sup> Kofman et al., 15.

<sup>100</sup> Kofman et al., 13.

<sup>101</sup> Kofman et al., "Russian Military Strategy.", i

<sup>102</sup> Kofman et al., ii

<sup>103</sup> Kofman et al., 10.

Russia has blended Soviet thought and lessons learned through observing Western successes.

### ***V.B: Soviet Thought***

This paper opened with the assertion that operational art is a product of late-18<sup>th</sup> Century European continental warfare. In truth, such a perspective is relatively new. Until recently, credit for operational art's conception was given to Soviet military theorists, credit still given by many academics in the West. Regardless of where the philosophy may have actually been conceived, the Soviet Union does at least deserve recognition for coining the term.<sup>104</sup> The USSR of the late 1970s saw similar re-embrace of operational art as the West did, as discussed in the American chapter. Prior to then, just as the US military drifted away from operational art in the post-war decades, so too did Soviet thought in the half-century following their revolution.

Before the revolutionary ascendance of communists, Russian operational thinking was fairly strong. A product of direct influence from Jomini and other European thinkers, Imperial Russian theorists expanded upon their philosophies and adapted them to Russian use. One such theorist was Aleksandr Andreevich Svechin, a General in the Red Army. Born nearly 100 years before the term would become commonly accepted, Svechin's theories showed an appreciation for the operational level of war and the intentional planning behind its successful execution. Some academics even credit him with coining the term "operational art."<sup>105</sup> He predicted, due to technological changes, future wars would no longer be decided by singular battles. Operational art, he insisted, was needed to conduct sustained, coordinated battles over the breadth of the war across both time and space.<sup>106</sup>

Unlike Jomini's celebrity in America, Svechin was more enamored with the works of Clausewitz and another Prussian writer Hans Delbrück.<sup>107</sup> Like Clausewitz, Svechin perceived strategy and warfare to be intimately connected with politics. Expanding upon the theory though, he envisioned an idea that would eventually lead to grey zone and hybrid warfare. He viewed the political goal of warfare as breaking an adversary state's cohesion.<sup>108</sup> By breaking a nation into contentious political fragments, one could win a war without necessarily needing to fight.

---

<sup>104</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 130.

<sup>105</sup> Steve Leonard and Jensen, "Back to the Future."

<sup>106</sup> Beatrice Heuser and Paul O'Neill, "Alexander Svechin: Soviet Strategic Thought," Talking Strategy Podcasts, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://rusi.orghttps://rusi.org>.

<sup>107</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

<sup>108</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

Interestingly, Svechin and Clausewitz's relationship was more connected than mere theorist and ready student. Many of the principles upon which Clausewitz wrote, such as the strength of a defensive strategy, were the results of observing Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia.<sup>109</sup> This defensive mindset was emblematic of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian thought, and seems to be quite an enduring one. The next section, studying modern Russia's military theory, will show how fundamental that cultural mindset remains by expanding on "active defense."<sup>110</sup>

From Hans Delbrück, Svechin imported the delineation of war into two categories, those of attrition and those of annihilation.<sup>111</sup> The former, ultimately worked to crumble an adversary's will to continue and conclude the war on favorable terms for the victor. The second was focused on destruction, on the elimination of a given threat.<sup>112</sup> Based on his interpretation of both Clausewitz and Delbrück, Svechin argued for the former's adoption by the USSR.<sup>113</sup>

Another notable theorist from Russian history was Vladimir Triandafillov. He conceived of "deep operation," though the concept may remind western audiences of AirLand Battle. Deep operation synchronizes multiple engagements on all adversary defenses by air and artillery, coupled with an armored ground attack to surround, penetrate, and destroy. In Triandafillov's view, a long campaign would connect multiple "deep operations," all ultimately focused on crippling an enemy's critical logistical capabilities.<sup>114</sup>

For a time, Svechin's theories lost traction in Soviet Russia. Military writers who endorsed German theories (here meaning Clausewitz and Delbrück) were declared enemies of the state and executed.<sup>115</sup> After his execution, Svechin's work went unsupported for nearly 50 years. The 1970s and 80s saw a resurgence in his appeal and ready adoption into the USSR's doctrine.<sup>116</sup> Modern Russian doctrine, like NATO's, is heavily informed by its past. Strong connections to Clausewitz, and a resurgence in the esteem of its own thinkers like Svechin, still inform Russian strategy and are cited often to lend legitimacy to current theories. Many devastating invasions throughout the last two centuries, the Cold War's extremes, and the seemingly unstoppable-ness of the West after

---

<sup>109</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

<sup>110</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

<sup>111</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

<sup>112</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 127.

<sup>113</sup> Brands, 126.

<sup>114</sup> Carlo J. V. Caro, "The Truth About the Evolution of Russian Military Doctrine," Text, The National Interest (The Center for the National Interest, July 1, 2022), <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/truth-about-evolution-russian-military-doctrine-203327>.

<sup>115</sup> Heuser and O'Neill, "Alexander Svechin."

<sup>116</sup> Heuser and O'Neill.

the Gulf War's success heavily influence contemporary thought. The importance of politics, imperatives of security at home and a buffer from adversaries, and the blended nature of competition and conflict provide the basis for Russian strategy today.<sup>117</sup>

### *V.C: Russia Resurgent*

Modern Russian military thought shows clear influence from its Soviet past, taking the extensive military traditions of the USSR and contemporizing them. It applies new technologies and theories to meet its security concerns, both old and new. A primary concern modern Russian leaders share with their Soviet predecessors is a fear of encirclement. The Soviets perceived an existential threat imposed by surrounding capitalist nations and alliances. Similarly, modern day Russia sees the same threat in NATO's expansion and appeal in previously Soviet satellite states.<sup>118</sup> Current and emerging theories also incorporate popular trends in western militaries, chiefly conceiving operations as across multiple domains. Russia's 2014 Military Doctrine understands modern warfare through three primary characteristics. First, modern war integrates force and information with external, non-military measures. Second, due to this first characteristic, modern militaries must incorporate systems to manage information. Finally, militaries must be capable of conducting "simultaneous effects on the enemy to the full depth of his territory in global information space."<sup>119</sup>

In 2019, Russian General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, promulgated his directions for future Russian strategy. These included focuses on integration, information, telecommunications technologies, and unmanned assets. Through these, he sought to improve Command and Control (C2) and combat effectiveness of Russian forces.<sup>120</sup>

It is important here to note significant discrepancies between actual Russian military theory and how the West has come to interpret it. First and foremost, regarding Gerasimov himself, many Western analysts have come to label his military modernization projects as the "Gerasimov Doctrine." In truth, no such naming convention exists in Russian literature; it was coined in western academia while trying to match observations of Russia with current Western concepts of hybrid warfare.<sup>121</sup> Another such term, applied in the West with no true use in Russia, is Anti-Access Area

---

<sup>117</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 47.

<sup>118</sup> Black et al., 58.

<sup>119</sup> Black et al., 52.

<sup>120</sup> Black et al., 52.

<sup>121</sup> Ofer Fridman, "On the 'Gerasimov Doctrine': Why the West Fails to Beat Russia to the Punch," *PRISM*, *PRISM*, 8, no. 2 (October 4, 2019): 101.

Denial (A2AD). While the Russian military does indeed employ integrated air-defense systems (IADS), A2AD more accurately describes Chinese doctrines and intentions than Russian.<sup>122</sup> As the point of this paper is to understand foreign operational arts to improve upon its own, it is important NATO audiences first correctly interpret them. Understanding different techniques by equating them to familiar ones will fail to grasp any nuance that sets them apart.

Russian doctrine, in reality, does not mirror Western thought. It does however, seek to answer the same universal challenges facing modern militaries. Modern warfare has moved beyond its traditionally physical domains. Like in the West, Russian theorists understand warfare must incorporate new realms like information and space. As mentioned before, they also view this reality through the lens of possessing the militarily inferior force. Therefore, their resultant doctrine encourages decisive operations meant to disorient opponents and overwhelm them; ultimately, these strategies seek to seize early advantage in a conflict and break an adversary's will to fight.<sup>123</sup>

#### ***V.D: New-Type Warfare***

21<sup>st</sup> Century Russian military theory is referred to as “New-Type Warfare.” Whereas historic Imperial and Soviet thought strictly compartmentalized strategy, operations, and tactics, New-Type Warfare blurs the three. Instead, they are interpreted on a continuum, with scalable objectives based on the needs of the state. This in turn allows military decision making to be simplified “to essentially three commands: ‘detect,’ ‘decide,’ and ‘destroy.’ ”<sup>124</sup> In truth, New-Type Warfare is an umbrella term, in that it is the over-arching name given to a collection of concepts. Among these are Information Warfare, Reflexive Control, Disorganization, and Seizing Early Advantage.

New-Type Warfare is similar to emerging Western concepts of hybrid warfare and pan-domain operations. Like hybrid warfare, it too is spread across the full range of tools the Russian state has available; interestingly however, Russians seem to reject this term.<sup>125</sup> What also distinguishes it specifically, is a focus on asymmetric operations - waged in the physical, electromagnetic, and information spheres - and reinforced through Russia's nuclear umbrella. Effectively, this theory seeks to influence an opponent's choice-making and risk calculus in ways favorable to Russian operations. If successful,

---

<sup>122</sup> Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” 51.

<sup>123</sup> Black et al., 15.

<sup>124</sup> Charles Bartles, “Foreword—How to Evaluate the Modernized Russian Military's Performance in Ukraine,” Jamestown, accessed March 25, 2024, <https://jamestown.org/program/foreword-how-to-evaluate-the-modernized-russian-militarys-performance-in-ukraine/>.

<sup>125</sup> Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” 53.

New-Type Warfare endeavors to negatively impact an adversary's strategic behavior, minimizing their employment of kinetic force.<sup>126</sup>

While they do not align perfectly, New-Type Warfare and western MDI/MDO do share similarities. Both seek more cohesive and integrated forces and emphasize new avenues of competition and conflict. Deliberate focuses on cyber and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence are shared as well. Russia views such tools as crucial for creating advantages, particularly in the initial stages of conflict, at the operational level, and at the strategic-political level. In the competition phase or opening of a conflict, cyber espionage and intelligence gathering directly impact operational planning. At the operational level, these same tools can be applied aggressively, as attacks to cripple or disrupt adversary C2. Finally, at the highest levels, cyber and information operations can be coordinated to sow disorganization and decision paralysis amongst the international community.<sup>127</sup>

Though referred to as “new-type,” these concepts build upon historical Russian employment of deception, disinformation, and political gamesmanship. Remembering Russian self-perceptions as the inferior force in a conflict with NATO, New-Type Warfare potentially seems to be a modernization of tenets from the *Jeune École*. Russian theorists interpret their adversary's as technologically superior, yet heavily reliant on said technology. They view western militaries as heavily complicated and inter-reliant systems. Therefore, their doctrine seeks to cripple opponents at weak nodes instead of participating in direct force-on-force engagements. Their “weaker” systems aim to succeed through greater adaptability and flexibility than their enemies.<sup>128</sup> In a way, Russians view asymmetric warfare as a preferred means of balancing out western superiority than direct competition.

### ***V.D.i: Information Warfare***

As has been made clear, New-Type Warfare places heavy focus on employing information as a military asset. Exploitation of the information environment is seen as key to seizing advantage through asymmetric means.<sup>129</sup> Interestingly, in this regard, Russian concerns resemble those in the West. NATO countries generally agree on the existence and malicious nature of Russian information operations. They shouldn't be

---

<sup>126</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, “Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy,” *Proliferation Papers* 54 (November 2015): 9, <https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp54adamsky.pdf>.

<sup>127</sup> Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” 54.

<sup>128</sup> Black et al., 54.

<sup>129</sup> Black et al., 55.

shocked to realize then, that Russia considers their reverse employment to be a major security concern. Western employment of such tactics worries Russia's ruling elite as they fear a fostering of dissent in their domestic spaces.<sup>130</sup>

Russian theory realizes the revolutionary power information has to change the operating environment. It puts intentional effort then into proactively influencing the will and cohesion of enemies while simultaneously minimizing such effects at home. Across the entire spectrum of conflict and competition, Russian information operations target adversary economies, governance systems, and societies as a whole. They do this by dividing these operations into two classifications: information-technical and information-psychological.

One could associate the former with pursuing effects in the cyber environment. The latter affects the general public, confusing the thoughts and actions of an adversary's leaders and populace. A key tenet of New-Type Warfare however, "cross-domain synergies," sees these two efforts increasingly merged.<sup>131</sup> For example, a publicized cyber attack against infrastructure or government institutions could feasibly induce panic or a loss of confidence in that nation's leadership. Similarly, advertising the existence of impressive new weaponry (real or otherwise) could seriously impact an adversary's military planning and risk calculus.

#### ***V.D.ii: Reflexive Control***

Russia's information operations are constructive in nature, meaning purposefully created for consumption by an adversary. Though they endeavor to interrupt foreign interference, their primary goals are to undermine enemy societies and disrupt effective planning. This is referred to as having "reflexive control" of the enemy. Reflexive control, as a concept, covers all measures employed to incite an adversary to make poor choices. Applied perfectly, the concept would induce a given target to "voluntarily make a predetermined decision" suiting Russian aims.<sup>132</sup> Influencing an opponent's military calculus, strategic goals, or public sentiment are all methods Russia uses to maintain its advantages and control the operational environment.<sup>133</sup> These methods enable Russia to coercively dictate the flow of engagements, encouraging opponents to make decisions in error, thus supporting Russian operational designs.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> Black et al., 55.

<sup>131</sup> Black et al., 55.

<sup>132</sup> Ronald Sprang, "Russian Operational Art, New Type Warfare, and Reflexive Control," *Small Wars Journal*, September 4, 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 55.

<sup>134</sup> Sprang, "Russian Operational Art."

As another tenet of New-Type Warfare, reflexive control seamlessly functions across the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war to create opportunities for exploitation.<sup>135</sup> Valid targets exist at all echelons, from the lowest contractors to senior military officers and government employees. Poking any number of pressure points among chosen targets to coerce a desired action are key aspects of this principle. Reflexive control speaks heavily to operational art, in that it is chiefly limited by its employer's creativity. Russian theory interprets conflict and competition holistically, and encourages the commanders' creative interpretations of an adversary's systems and options available to break them down.<sup>136</sup>

#### ***V.D.iii: Disorganization***

The idea of Disorganization works to negatively impact the C2 capabilities and advantages of Russia's opponents. This paper emphasized earlier that A2AD as a denial strategy is nonexistent in Russian doctrine. Disorganization though, conceptualizes how they might deny or delay foreign access to their territory. Like information warfare, reflexive control, and active defense, this idea works to raise adversary costs and spread confusion. Russian forces capitalize on this to maneuver and create the room to engage on more advantageous terms. Ideally, this would allow them to reach their goals quickly or force a favorable political settlement.<sup>137</sup>

Breaking down enemy C2 serves to cripple the interoperability of its various components and forces. Disorganization works to weaken access to lines of communication, integration of forces, or similarly system-reliant aspects of an adversary's capabilities. This creates a relative superiority in planning efforts, enabling them to maintain or regain the initiative. The Russian military has multiple tools, both kinetic and non-kinetic, to achieve this objective. Degradation of the electromagnetic spectrum, cyber-attacks, and disinformation campaigns all constitute non-kinetic options. Kinetic options include long-range artillery, various high-end missile systems, or any number of advanced air, land, and sea platforms able to project power and deny adversarial use of a given space. This continues the Russian theme of imposing excessive risks upon an enemy. Through disorganization, Russian commanders work to "deter or inflict unacceptable consequences" upon their opponents.<sup>138</sup> Another repeated theme, that of utilizing a commander's creativity, is present. Though Russia retains a fairly centralized military with clear hierarchy, both reflexive control and disorganization lend

---

<sup>135</sup> Sprang.

<sup>136</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 56.

<sup>137</sup> Black et al., 56.

<sup>138</sup> Black et al., 56.

themselves to creativity. Imaginative commanders most effectively induce enemy confusion and paralysis to gain maximum advantage.<sup>139</sup>

#### ***V.D.iv: Seizing Early Advantage***

The final aspect of New-Type Warfare concerns a timeframe Russians refer to as the “Initial Period of War” (IPW).<sup>140</sup> Success in the IPW is seen as a critical prelude to ultimate success in a conflict. Tracing its roots from Jomini, through Soviet theorists, and reinforced by American actions in the first Gulf War, seizing early advantage is key to Russian success. This is done through two main strategies.

First, effectively employing reflexive control and disorganization clouds actual Russian capabilities and intentions prior to conflict.<sup>141</sup> This allows Russia to then act in unpredictable ways across all domains. Feasibly, such action, employed rapidly or covertly, could sufficiently disrupt an enemy to ward them away from continuing their engagement. Second, the readiness of its forces directly affects Russia’s ability to act quickly, completely, and decisively. High readiness forces enable Russian utilization of its many assets and capabilities faster than an adversary is able to, keeping early advantage in Russian hands.<sup>142</sup> Combining the two techniques pursues the over-arching New-Type Warfare objective of quick and favorable resolutions in lieu of protracted warfare.<sup>143</sup>

#### ***V.E: Thoughts on Russia***

Russian operational art shows clear similarities with, and influences by, Western concepts. Both systems stem from a shared “European” military history. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, we again see similarities. Russia took note of US and NATO successes in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.<sup>144</sup> For Russian leaders, these successes were both educational and points of apprehension. Their updated theories evolved Soviet thought to embrace advanced technology, component integration and cross-domain operations.<sup>145</sup> Modern Russian doctrine envisions modern war in broadly the same ways as NATO might, though its means of meeting the challenges differ.

---

<sup>139</sup> Black et al., 56.

<sup>140</sup> Black et al., 15.

<sup>141</sup> Black et al., 57.

<sup>142</sup> Black et al., 57.

<sup>143</sup> Black et al., 57.

<sup>144</sup> Black et al., 48.

<sup>145</sup> Black et al., 15.

First, Russia does not categorize domains in the same manner the West does. In fact, the Russian military is divided by function, as opposed to physical environments. Their aerospace defense force, for example, is responsible for the range of overhead threats, from air defense to anti-satellite actions. Reflecting this method of division, Russian operational art employs forces as a system, and seeks to break those of its adversaries. Rather than deny specific domains, Russia would instead act to cripple an enemy's critical nodes across the full spectrum of its resources.<sup>146</sup> Russian operational art also appears less "morally" restrained than in the West; warfare is seen as holistic in nature, involving all the tools of the state.<sup>147</sup> The theaters of competition and conflict are one and the same; Russian willingness to engage in what the West calls the "grey zone" reflects their self-interpretation as the militarily inferior force. By embracing the tenets of deep operations, New-Type Warfare, and active defense, Russian operational art seeks to dissuade adversaries from fully committing to a war. "Winning" before the battle even begins - or very quickly after, and effectively neutralizing concerted enemy will to fight are key to ensuring Russia's survival.

---

<sup>146</sup> "It's Time to Talk About A2/AD: Rethinking the Russian Military Challenge," War on the Rocks, September 5, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/its-time-to-talk-about-a2-ad-rethinking-the-russian-military-challenge/>.

<sup>147</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 54.

## CHAPTER VI: The Chinese: Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Flattery

The United States has identified China, or at least its ruling party, as its pacing threat.<sup>148</sup> It identifies it as the West's most pressing near-peer competitor, and has largely shifted security focus to the Indo-Pacific Theater. NATO has also moved in this direction, citing China's economic and political coercion's as threats to European interests as well.<sup>149</sup> Critics may argue that NATO's only true state-level threat, due to its treaty limitations, is likely to remain with Russia.<sup>150</sup> In an increasingly overlapping globalized world, however, China's ability to impact Europe no longer relies on mere geographic proximity. Despite the seeming magnitude of this concern, western military education on China is relatively weak, especially when compared to literature on Russia, Germany, and classical western history.<sup>151</sup> Chinese military history extends back over 2500 years; there is a high probability somewhere in that history are military thoughts distinctively different from those in the west. Philosophers like Confucius, Lao Tzu, Sun Tzu, and Mao Zedong brought distinctly Chinese perspectives to warfare and continue to inform Chinese decisions and strategy.<sup>152</sup>

Modern theories from this country blend China's rich past with successful foreign theories to create blends with distinctly Chinese flavors. Unlike Russian concepts of domains, Chinese definitions more closely resemble Western ones, and emerging Chinese theories are broadly similar to MDO. For the distinctly Chinese aspect, their doctrines have embraced information as the primary domain over the West's current preoccupation with cyber and space.<sup>153</sup> This chapter will look at Chinese history and how it informs their contemporary operational art. It will start with Sun Tzu's famous work, move into 20<sup>th</sup> Century adoptions of western ideas, and finish with contemporary theories. It will seek to distill whether or not, over the span of millennia, differences truly exist today between NATO and Chinese operational art.

---

<sup>148</sup> "(1) So Why Do We Consider China to Be Our Pacing Threat? - Red Diamond Newsletters - Operational Environment and Threat Analysis Directorate," APAN Community, accessed April 28, 2024, <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/operational-environment-and-threat-analysis-directorate/w/red-diamond-newsletters/34320/1-so-why-do-we-consider-china-to-be-our-pacing-threat/>.

<sup>149</sup> "NATO Declares China a Security Challenge for the First Time," *Al Jazeera*, June 30, 2022, sec. Politics, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/30/nato-names-china-a-strategic-priority-for-the-first-time>.

<sup>150</sup> NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty."

<sup>151</sup> Rob Hafen, "Chinese Operational Art: The Primacy of the Human Dimension," *Military Review*, no. November-December (2023): 106, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2023/Chinese-Operational-Art/>.

<sup>152</sup> Hafen, 106.

<sup>153</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 18.

### *VI.A: An Ancient Past*

Chinese history is deep. Stretching at least back to 1600 BCE, China is one of the oldest countries in the world still in existence.<sup>154</sup> As such, it has seen its fair share of warfare and has a military tradition rivaling that of European history. Perhaps the most famous of Chinese martial philosophers is known as Sun Tzu and his work, *Art of War*. As a matter of perspective, whereas Clausewitz's famous *On War* was published in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Sun Tzu's work was roughly a contemporary of the Roman Republic.<sup>155</sup> The book has gained popularity recently amongst western militaries, though perhaps it's still more familiar as a buzzword in corporate strategy. In reality the work, conceived during China's Warring States Period, has remained heavily influential to military philosophy in the country to this this day.

*Art of War* describes for the commander how best to win a war through the interrelations of human factors, deception, and strategic or relative advantage. The book labels these principles Tao, Shih, Cheng, and Chi'i.<sup>156</sup> Tao refers to the intangible effects of, and ways to exploit, the human dimension of friendly and enemy forces. Shih as a concept, refers to seizing advantages both in a strategic sense or relatively through maneuver. Cheng and Chi'i are supportive yet opposing ideas comparable to the Taoist concepts of Yin and Yang. The former addresses conventional or orthodox methods, while the latter incorporates unconventional means. In *Art of War*, Sun Tzu stresses effective understanding and utilization of these four principles is the key to success, going so far as to endorse winning without needing to fight as the ultimate victory.<sup>157</sup>

Though undeniably influential, Sun Tzu did not represent the totality of historic Chinese wisdom regarding warfare. Over the centuries, various others passed down idioms collectively known as the 36 Stratagems, which were finally codified into a single list in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>158</sup> Many of these spanned across the strategy-operations-tactics spectrum and modern readers would recognize their presence today in Chinese theory. One, named Kill with a Borrowed Knife, suggests pursuing non-attribution, or causing damage to an adversary via a third party. Another, The Cicada Sloughs its Skin, is a recommendation to abandon distinguishing features for inconspicuousness. In more modern terms, this seems evident in the slow evolution of Chinese economic policies. As the USSR declined and fell, China transitioned from a communist command economy to

---

<sup>154</sup> "10 Oldest Countries in the World," HowStuffWorks, November 13, 2023, <https://history.howstuffworks.com/world-history/oldest-countries-in-the-world.htm>.

<sup>155</sup> Hafen, "Chinese Operational Art," 104.

<sup>156</sup> Hafen, 107.

<sup>157</sup> Stephen Kaufman, *Art of War: The Definitive Interpretation of Sun Tzu's Classic Book of Strategy* (Tuttle Publishing, 1996), 69.

<sup>158</sup> Hafen, "Chinese Operational Art," 108.

state capitalism. This coincided with western conviction in the democratizing effects of neoliberalism, and rapidly increased the nation's wealth and ability to compete as a great power.

The 36 Stratagems delineated six specifically for operational considerations. While centuries old, they might better resonate with a western reader when contextualized using China's actions in the Korean War. For example, Climb the Roof and Remove the Ladder describes cutting off adversary lines of communication. This is evident when studying the Chinese army's overextension of UN forces beyond their operational reach during the harsh Korean winter.<sup>159</sup> The remaining stratagems are similar, in that they encourage principles of operational art even Clausewitz would agree with. These include avoiding an enemy's strengths, creating and exploiting advantages, and the use of deception.<sup>160</sup> While similar enough in nature to western theories, their method of capturing the ideas and executing the actions seem distinctly Chinese. Next, this paper will discuss how these "Chinese" principles met and blended with those from the West as China entered the modern world.

### ***VI.B: Adopting What Works***

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century opened with a severely beset China. European colonialism and economic "strong-manning" were followed by Japanese invasion and aggression until the end of World War II. Western readers familiar with America's strained relationship with China today may be surprised to learn this earlier period was one of strong cooperation between the two.<sup>161</sup> US policy countered the expansion of European empires and dedicated forces were deployed to China during the Second World War to support efforts against the Japanese. Even following the war, it was American insistence that afforded a seat in the UN Security Council to China. This warm relationship cooled significantly with China's transition to communism. Ironically, this is also the period most associated with Chinese adoption of western theories of operational art. While Sun Tzu was indeed a strong influence on Mao Zedong's military efforts, so too was Clausewitz.<sup>162</sup> Like Svechin and the Soviets, *On War's* co-mingling of war and policy appealed to Mao.<sup>163</sup>

Mao's affinity for both of these works greatly aided his revolutionary efforts. There were many reasons communist forces ultimately succeeded over the nationalists in

---

<sup>159</sup> Hafen, 109.

<sup>160</sup> Hafen, 110.

<sup>161</sup> Dean Cheng, "The Complicated History of U.S. Relations with China," The Heritage Foundation, accessed April 28, 2024, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/the-complicated-history-us-relations-china>.

<sup>162</sup> Gary Bjorge, "Moving the Enemy: Operational Art in the Chinese PLA's Huai Hai Campaign," *Army University Press*, Leavenworth Papers, no. 22 (2003): 6.

<sup>163</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 126.

China, though at first it seemed unlikely. Nationalist forces under Chiang Kai-Shek were numerically superior and supported by the US. This backing afforded them better equipment, superior air power, and international support. When it came to operational art however, the communists led by Mao Zedong, were superior. Incorporating ideals from sources like Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, his Red Army enjoyed a stronger political-military cohesion than their adversary. They were able to capitalize on principles like speed and flexibility to ultimately enjoy relative numerical superiority, or concentrations of force, at decisive points.<sup>164</sup>

Following Mao's success, China's privileged position with the US quickly disintegrated, beginning to recover somewhat only in the 1970s. Despite this complicated relationship, Chinese doctrine pulls heavily from American history. China saw in America a formula for success. American resources and industry led to its seemingly inevitable surpassing of Britain's power.<sup>165</sup> By 1945, American theories on sea power were undeniable factors in its economic rise and politico-military clout on the world stage. Mahan's theories on Sea Power came to dominate Chinese naval discourse, though there is evidence of his slow replacement in esteem by his rival, Julian Corbett.<sup>166</sup> As the Chinese sought a place on the stage of Great Powers, they observed and fostered many foreign ideas seen as keys to success. Studying Mahan and Corbett, for example, helped Chinese practitioners to "understand the strategic thought of the great maritime powers."<sup>167</sup> Western influence perhaps most influenced modern China in the same way it did for modern Russia – through the overwhelming success of the First Gulf War.<sup>168</sup>

The sheer effectiveness of the NATO coalition's strategy and operational art floored the international audience, particularly those concerned with the perceived threats posed by Western strength. While China did indeed take note of the advantages capable technology brought, many of their subsequent doctrines paid attention to a different lesson: the success of information warfare.<sup>169</sup> The precision and effectiveness of American technology was broadcast to the world through international news networks. US statesmen endeavored tirelessly to paint the war as just; Iraq was the aggressor and the global community broadly supported the coalition's efforts. Coalition information and

---

<sup>164</sup> Bjorge, "Moving the Enemy," 268.

<sup>165</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 175.

<sup>166</sup> James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "China's Navy: A Turn to Corbett?," *US Naval Institute: Proceedings*, December 2010, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2010/december/chinas-navy-turn-corbett>.

<sup>167</sup> Holmes and Yoshihara.

<sup>168</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 18.

<sup>169</sup> Peter Mattis, "China's 'Three Warfares' in Perspective," *War on the Rocks*, January 30, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/chinas-three-warfares-perspective/>.

psychological efforts even led Iraqi commanders to surrender or retreat without a fight.<sup>170</sup> Through this war, Chinese military theorists learned to appreciate information's power to meet Sun Tzu's ideal of victory without battle. They would take these lessons and apply them in the coming decades, in pursuit of their vision of a powerful China in the new century.

### ***VI.C: 21<sup>st</sup> Century China***

Broad parallels can be drawn between modern Chinese theories and the Western concepts of whole-of-government, comprehensive, or integrated. Terms like “unrestricted warfare” or the “three warfares” doctrine have often been associated with these roughly similar ideas, with key differences.<sup>171</sup> The most important of these is the level of “whole” the Chinese government represents. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) are integrated in ways inherently different than one might associate the United States Government and its national army.<sup>172</sup> This paper has, and will continue to refer to doctrine originating from China as “Chinese.” It must clarify however, that in truth they represent the thinking of the CCP more-so than the general public of China, as the sole governing party of the nation's resources.

Before proceeding to a deeper explanation of Chinese doctrinal pursuits in the following sections, a rough conceptualization of their operational concepts is as follows. In the simplest terms, China mirrors Russia's embrace of information's power in war. They elevate the concept though, by working to “informatize and intelligentize” their use of it. These terms are most likely unfamiliar to the western reader, for two reasons. The first is simply their definitions. The two concepts envision maximizing the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the tools of war to greatly enhance processing power and speed decision making. The second, is their genesis. China's capitalization on the technology's capability to offset threat imbalances stems from the little-known US strategy of Third Offset.<sup>173</sup> The Third Offset's creators saw legitimate threats in Chinese and Russian improvement of their abilities to wage war. The American strategy's goal was to leverage emerging and advanced US technology like AI and unmanned systems to meet and exceed their adversaries' advances.<sup>174</sup> For the Chinese at least, their literature defines informatized and intelligentized as:

---

<sup>170</sup> Mattis.

<sup>171</sup> Black et al., “Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea,” 16.

<sup>172</sup> Black et al., 17.

<sup>173</sup> Yatsuzuka Masaaki, “PLA's Intelligentized Warfare: The Politics on China's Military Strategy,” *National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan* 2 (2022): 22.

<sup>174</sup> Gian Gentile et al., “A History of the Third Offset, 2014–2018” (RAND Corporation, March 31, 2021), x, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA454-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA454-1.html).

integrated warfare waged in land, sea, air, space, electromagnetic, cyber, and cognitive domains using intelligent weaponry and equipment and their associated operations methods, underpinned by the Internet of Things (IOT)<sup>175</sup>

Understanding these overarching goals help contextualize the following two concepts in Chinese doctrine: The Three Warfares and System of Systems ideology.

### ***VI.C.i: Three Warfares***

China sees the West, the US in particular, as its chief military threat and seeks to resolve conflicts without the need for combat. As such they focus on capabilities that employ all instruments of national power to meet three objectives. First, they seek to cause dissention among the American people. Second, they endeavor to separate the US from its allies and partners. The final objective is to ultimately challenge American military superiority.<sup>176</sup> One method they have employed is the often mis-cited Three Warfares. The theory most recently evolved from the work *Political Work Guidelines for the People's Liberation Army* in 2003. Here, shifts to public opinion, psychological, and legal warfares crystallized under the Three Warfares moniker.<sup>177</sup> As they slowly trickled westwards, the notion became shorthand for how the West understood Chinese hybrid warfare.<sup>178</sup> While conceptually this holds water, the nuance lies in how the West sees the relationships of power in its design. Instead of a PLA doctrine, Three Warfares is better explained as CCP doctrine in which the PLA is a key player.<sup>179</sup> NATO readers are familiar with national forces functioning as politically agnostic defenders of the state's sovereignty and public interest. This is not the case in China, and the CCP is functionally the rudder of the ship-of-state, and possible the ship itself. Mistakenly judging PLA doctrine through the frame of its Western counterparts, analysts risk a bias blindness and fail to appreciate the operational infrastructure built by the CCP at all levels. In the words of Jamestown Foundation Fellow Peter Matthis, "it is a purely military view that lacks a clear concept for appreciating political warfare."<sup>180</sup>

To understand the politics of Three Warfares, one must go back to the policies of Mao Zedong. Concepts that would eventually culminate in this theory resulted from a history of critiques Mao laid on western operational art and strategy. In his essay *On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party*, Mao clarified:

---

<sup>175</sup> Yatsuzuka Masaaki, "NIDS China Security Report 2021: China's Military Strategy in the New Era" (National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, 2020), 2, [https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/chinareport/pdf/china\\_report\\_EN\\_web\\_2021\\_A01.pdf](https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/chinareport/pdf/china_report_EN_web_2021_A01.pdf).

<sup>176</sup> "So Why Do We Consider China."

<sup>177</sup> Matthis, "China's Three Warfares."

<sup>178</sup> Matthis.

<sup>179</sup> Matthis.

<sup>180</sup> Matthis.

[The West] thinks the task of the Red Army...is merely to fight. They do not understand the Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution...The Red fights not merely for the sake of fighting but in order to...help [the masses, i.e. the CCP] establish revolutionary political power.<sup>181</sup>

Three Warfare, in truth, leverages influence operations for political power. The first warfare concerns the media and public opinion. It works to shape public opinion domestically and internationally, such as sponsoring research in foreign academic institutions.<sup>182</sup> It also has a specific domestic function of energizing or mobilizing the Chinese public to signal collective resolve and deter foreign incursions. The second warfare's objective is influencing foreign decision making, particularly how they approach China policy.<sup>183</sup> Here the PLA does have a pronounced role in terms of leveraging its capabilities. While foreign decision makers may not have recent combat examples demonstrating the quality of the Chinese military, it still creates a risk calculus in their minds. For example, a highly publicized anti-ship ballistic missile or "carrier-killer" test forces American leadership to make decisions. Do they continue to deploy their ships, while convincing their allies they can defend themselves? Do they instead not deploy the ship and thus sacrifice their legitimacy in the region? The question is certainly a tough one; should a missile launch and be successful, the immediate strategic, operational, and tactical losses of 6,000 personnel and a \$4.5 billion investment are far reaching. The third warfare relies on existing tools of the rules-based international order. Examples of this include reinforcement of "Chinese" waters in the South China Sea and extending military reach through artificial islands claimed as territory. By creating legal precedent for Chinese actions in an international context, or using domestic laws to signal intentions, this third warfare seeks to justify and normalize Chinese efforts.<sup>184</sup>

The operational art of Three Warfares is more deeply understood through their context. The doctrine's umbrella objective is political influence operations, with particular interest in the United States, for two reasons. The first is the preservation of CCP power and authority. Party leadership understands its primary threats are ideological, and as such cannot be defeated kinetically – a lesson the West learned through its recent wars against terror. Article 2 of 2015's National Security Law defines

---

<sup>181</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party (December 1929)," in *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963), 52.

<sup>182</sup> Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "This Beijing-Linked Billionaire Is Funding Policy Research at Washington's Most Influential Institutions," *Foreign Policy* (blog), May 22, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/11/28/this-beijing-linked-billionaire-is-funding-policy-research-at-washingtons-most-influential-institutions-china-dc/>.

<sup>183</sup> Michael Raska, "Hybrid Warfare with Chinese Characteristics," *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* CO15262, no. 262 (December 2, 2015): 2, [www.rsis.edu.sg](http://www.rsis.edu.sg).

<sup>184</sup> Mattis, "China's Three Warfares."

the high degree to which the CCP perceives threats to “ensure a continued state of security” and thus require deliberate action.<sup>185</sup> The second purpose of influence lies in CCP’s lack of faith in the PLA’s ability to protect the state through its own means.<sup>186</sup> Through various exercises, observations, and analysis, the state party has found its military arm currently wanting (though rapidly reaching parity) in comparison to Western capabilities. In order to meet such threats then, foreign policy makers become the targets of interest for influence campaigns. Dissuading them from engaging China with force is the surest way to prevent war for the CCP and leave interactions with China at the level of competition.

### *VI.C.ii: System of Systems*

The PLA, and more accurately the CCP, classify domestic and foreign capabilities as “systems.” Each system has inherent strengths, weaknesses, and relationships that define their employment. Not only does systems warfare fundamentally understand adversaries through this lens, it promises that finding the weak points and crippling them will do the same to an enemy’s capability and will to fight.<sup>187</sup> This “new” warfare is evolutionary, in that is most accurately understood as an adaptation from older Chinese operational principles. In the PLA’s most recent re-interpretations of Sun Tzu, Mao, and Western observations, systems warfare reinvigorates many traditional strategies. These are the objectives of preclusion, isolation, and sanctuary in all domains and levels of war.<sup>188</sup>

Preclusion is the use of asymmetry to consistently keep an adversary and their forces off balance. At the same time, preclusion seeks to deny physical swaths of geography to the enemy’s use, particularly through the use of long-range, standoff, and reconnaissance-strike, capabilities. Isolation, as the name implies, pursues the effect of cutting off nodes of adversary forces from each other and from their command systems. Through jamming and electronic warfare, psychological operations, and rapid maneuver and encirclement, isolation might be the most obvious version of “attack the enemy’s weak points” concept. Finally, sanctuary is self-protection. Defensive planning, information and deception operations, along with physical barriers to impede an

---

<sup>185</sup> “National Security Law of the People’s Republic of China: Updated from 1July, 2015,” China Services Info, December 11, 2018, <https://govt.chinadaily.com.cn/s/201812/11/WS5c0f1b56498eefb3fe46e8c9/national-security-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2015-effective.html>.

<sup>186</sup> Mattis, “China’s Three Warfares.”

<sup>187</sup> “PLA Systems Warfare - Red Diamond Newsletters - Operational Environment and Threat Analysis Directorate,” *APAN Community*, Red Diamond Newsletters, December 2021 Special Edition, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://community.apan.org/>.

<sup>188</sup> “PLA Systems Warfare.”

adversary achieving its objectives, define sanctuary's purpose.

Western analysts have noted systems warfare's similarities to their own theories. In the US, the definition and utility American planners find in center of gravity analysis are similar in application to this Chinese idea. The objectives of both concepts include identifying enemy strengths to avoid, and their weaknesses to engage and destabilize.<sup>189</sup> However, there are notable differences in the two. American doctrine is written with the human operators as essential tools in operational success. The Chinese counterpart sees them more as system subcomponents, to be assessed and neutralized as any other subcomponent would be. From the Chinese perspective, the key to winning is identifying and breaking an enemy's key networks.<sup>190</sup> To more clearly visualize this objective, system of systems warfare would target sensors instead of aircraft, or C2 nodes over maneuver forces.

The other key difference is the inherent flexibility Chinese system of systems warfare can call upon, in ways Western forces cannot. Roughly similar to the Western concept of "task forces" the PLA creates custom forces designed for a given conflict and specific weak points. These operational systems have five main subcomponents: a command system, strike system, information warfare system, intelligence system, and support system.<sup>191</sup> These are operationalized with two guiding principles: maintaining bespoke capabilities under a single command, and employing them asymmetrically to defeat enemy vulnerabilities.

System of systems warfare, and Chinese doctrine in general with its unique connection to the CCP, presents the West with multiple problems to resolve. Western operational art has to contend with Chinese challenges, and determine appropriate responses, across the full competition-conflict spectrum.<sup>192</sup> Chinese competition strategy through non-military avenues takes attention. Meanwhile, NATO's militaries are also distracted by rapidly diminishing technological and capacity-related advantages they have enjoyed in the 30 years since the USSR's collapse.

#### ***VI.D: Thoughts on China***

Modern Chinese doctrine presents the same problem to the West and NATO as Russia's. Quite often, what the West considers "doctrines" are in fact interpretations and observations, considered in comparison to Western ideas. This does not negate the value

---

<sup>189</sup> "US JP 5.0.", IV-22

<sup>190</sup> "PLA Systems Warfare."

<sup>191</sup> "PLA Systems Warfare."

<sup>192</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 17.

of studying what has been written in the West; it does however, serve to complicate an accurate understanding of possible threats posed by China and, in turn, develop effective operational art to counter it. When researching the two nations, the differences between the US or NATO and China seem to pale in some respects when compared to their similarities. Definite, distinct, and observable cultural differences clearly exist between the two sides. At the same time however, both occupy the highest places of Great Power Competition and look to their pasts to chart ways forward in an uncertain future. They share many of the same inspirations theoretically, doctrinally, and organizationally.<sup>193</sup> Judging the differences in doctrine, maybe the biggest difference lies in their specific focuses. Whereas Western efforts embrace high-end, technologically centric solutions, those in China have historically focused on lower-cost, manpower-centric ones. The greatest threat then, might be the threat a nation poses who is comfortable fighting cheaply. Finding themselves able to afford similarly expensive capabilities as the West now, might they be able to elicit a better “bang for their buck” than NATO can?

---

<sup>193</sup> Hafen, “Chinese Operational Art,” 106.

## CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

### What Are We Supposed To Do With This?

Before concluding, this paper must first acknowledge just how limited it truly is. Each chapter and its component sections could individually be distinct and separate books in their own right. Study and discussion on operational art is vast, as they are for the nations this paper focused on. To meet the requirements and restrictions of this paper, many topics have been summarized, abridged, or completely skipped to provide a base, a readable introduction to the casually familiar professional reader. In truth, this paper was written less to inform any particular audience than it was a catalyst for its author to learn and interpret an unfamiliar concept and set of connections. With the limited nature of this work in mind, some conclusions are reachable, and perhaps even actionable.

Russian operational art has its roots in the same theories as NATO's and their shared history serves as a common starting point for analysis. Figures like Clausewitz and Jomini directly influenced both of these powers, yet each had unique interpretations. Russia's modern understanding of operational art builds on lessons learned during Soviet and contemporary campaigns. It takes observations of Western, and even Chinese, developments and failures and applies them to its own holistic model.<sup>194</sup> Like NATO's MDO, Russia's emerging theories seek increased integration and cooperation amongst its many tools. Unlike NATO's current art though, Russia's is much more fully a whole-of-government endeavor.<sup>195</sup> Whereas NATO shows dedicated efforts to evolve its operational art similarly, the very nature of the alliance, functioning on the willingness of its members, limits its full adoption of this practice. All tools of the Russian state are able to be coordinated, as envisioned by New-Type Warfare, in order to afford them "time, space, and operational advantages."<sup>196</sup>

China, like Russia, shares a complex history with warfare and developed uniquely Chinese theories on how to wage it. They have also learned from others, particularly the US and NATO. They have applied what works in their situation to create a hybridized approach, aspects of which may both resonate with a Western audience yet seem entirely foreign to. Whether Three Warfares or Systems of Systems, they have become the West's metric against which to judge its own capabilities. MDO itself is a product of Chinese A2/AD concerns.<sup>197</sup> Western "shifts to the Indo-Pacific" are obviously hedging resources

---

<sup>194</sup> Black et al., "Multi-Domain Integration in Defense: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea," 16.

<sup>195</sup> Black et al., 14.

<sup>196</sup> Black et al., 15.

<sup>197</sup> Hafen, "Chinese Operational Art," 105.

on containing the threats Chinese operational arts and strategy represent.

The most obvious lesson from studying Russia and China is that conventional warfare and thus conventionally powerful militaries, are no longer the default necessities for victory. Hybrid warfare, the grey zone, and systems warfare all spread the state's strategic objectives across the totality of the tools they have available to make use of. As such, NATO's adaptability is being tested.<sup>198</sup> NATO's MDO acknowledges this reality and endeavors to meet this modern challenge. In reality though, hybridized operational art in the West remains significantly less doctrinally ingrained than in its competitors.<sup>199</sup> MDO's success relies on effective integration across the operational levels of NATO's integrated forces and independent members. In addition to the newest tech, the alliance must "manage the cognitive burden...and attitude to uncertainty," to full more fully realize the potential advantages MDO may permit.<sup>200</sup>

Possibly the greatest lesson to learn from this analysis is the sheer effect perspective has had on different militaries and their method of developing operational art. Many of the tendencies observed in modern Russian and Chinese craft are direct results of observing "what works" in the west and co-opting those tools for their own purposes. On the other hand, Western biases have largely influenced how aspects of foreign operational art and strategy are interpreted. There seems to be a Western tendency to frame Russian and Chinese actions, both in terms of deterrence and doctrine, in relation to how it would approach a given situation itself. Western definitions of Russian A2/AD and Chinese Three Warfares are prime examples. The former assigns, and works to resolve, a term and strategy nonexistent in Russian doctrine. The latter, while indeed the correct term, is applied in Western understanding - inverted from Chinese execution. Such tendencies to bound unfamiliar concepts in more understandable ways is logical and does help simplify a given problem. Problems arise however when such interpretations do not then continue past the surface level. Perhaps, more than any other recommendation, NATO's best path towards improving its operational art is to ensure it more fully understands the intentions of its competitors.

In closing, the need for NATO to continue its tradition of adapting to the world's challenges is best summarized by NATO itself. No specific need to change its operational art exists beyond the need to stay relevant in a continuously changing landscape:

Since its founding in 1949, the transatlantic Alliance's flexibility, embedded in its original Treaty, has allowed it to suit the different requirements of different times. In the 1950s, the Alliance was a purely defensive organisation. In the 1960s, NATO

---

<sup>198</sup> NATO, "A Short History of NATO."

<sup>199</sup> Brands, *The New Makers of Modern Strategy*, 167.

<sup>200</sup> NATO, "A Short History of NATO."

became a political instrument for détente. In the 1990s, the Alliance was a tool for the stabilisation of Eastern Europe and Central Asia through the incorporation of new partners and Allies. In the first half of the 21st century, NATO faces an ever-growing number of new threats. As the foundation stone of transatlantic peace and freedom, NATO must be ready to meet these challenges.<sup>201</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup> NATO.

## EPILOGUE

While this paper felt exhaustive while researching and writing, it only scratches the surface of its subject matter. So much more could be written in the pursuit of what NATO, or anyone truly, could learn by studying the methods of others outside their tradition. Should this paper be continued, the next step would explore the operational arts of some countries whose militaries already blend the theories of East and West. Israel is a prime example, many of those who returned after its Independence brought with them their military experiences in Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union. For similar reasons, Ukraine would be another insightful case study. Long a part of the Russian sphere of influence, Ukraine has gradually shift towards the European Union and NATO in the decades since the USSR's collapse. Coupled with its newfound and intimate familiarity with NATO weapons systems, due to its current war, make a prime example of a confluence of ideas. A final recommendation would be to examine the nuances in which the operational art of Australia might differ from its NATO peers. While culturally Western, Australia's unique geography and political focus on particularly Pacific concerns. One might expect subtle variations in their methods of utilizing operational art from the Eurocentric tendencies of the NATO alliance. Many options exist. Through whichever lens a future researcher may take a topic such as this one, they will not fail to find source material on learnable lessons.

## REFERENCES

- Adamsky, Dmitry (Dima). “Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy.” *Proliferation Papers* 54 (November 2015).  
<https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/pp54adamsky.pdf>.
- “AJP-3, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations: Edition C Version 1, UK Change 1.” UK Ministry of Defence, February 2019.
- Al Jazeera*. “NATO Declares China a Security Challenge for the First Time.” June 30, 2022, sec. Politics. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/30/nato-names-china-a-strategic-priority-for-the-first-time>.
- Allegret, Marc. “Jomini, Antoine Henri, Baron De.” *Revue Du Souvenir Napoleonin*, no. 434 (2001): 51–53. <https://www.napoleon.org/>.
- Allen-Ebrahimian, Bethany. “This Beijing-Linked Billionaire Is Funding Policy Research at Washington’s Most Influential Institutions.” *Foreign Policy* (blog), May 22, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/11/28/this-beijing-linked-billionaire-is-funding-policy-research-at-washingtons-most-influential-institutions-china-dc/>.
- Allied Command Transformation. “NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept.” Accessed March 11, 2024. <https://www.act.nato.int/our-work/nato-warfighting-capstone-concept/>.
- “Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations: Edition C Version 1.” NATO, February 2019.
- APAN Community. “(1) So Why Do We Consider China to Be Our Pacing Threat? - Red Diamond Newsletters - Operational Environment and Threat Analysis Directorate.” Accessed April 28, 2024. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/operational-environment-and-threat-analysis-directorate/w/red-diamond-newsletters/34320/1-so-why-do-we-consider-china-to-be-our-pacing-threat/>.
- Aronsson, Lisa, and Brett Swaney. “Priorities for NATO Partnerships in an Era of Strategic Competition.” *INSS Strategic Perspectives*, no. 40 (December 2022): 1-39, V.  
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2769542878/abstract/205F152E18EC4E32PQ/1>.
- “ATP 7-100.3 C1: Chinese Tactics.” Headquarters, Department of the Army, November 24, 2021.
- Bartles, Charles. “Foreword—How to Evaluate the Modernized Russian Military’s Performance in Ukraine.” Jamestown. Accessed March 25, 2024.

<https://jamestown.org/program/foreword-how-to-evaluate-the-modernized-russian-militarys-performance-in-ukraine/>.

- Bjorge, Gary. "Moving the Enemy: Operational Art in the Chinese PLA's Huai Hai Campaign." *Army University Press*, Leavenworth Papers, no. 22 (2003): 282.
- Black, James, Alice Lynch, Kristian Gustafson, David Blagden, Pauline Paillé, and Fiona Quimbre. "Multi-Domain Integration in Defence: Conceptual Approaches and Lessons from Russia, China, Iran and North Korea." RAND Corporation, January 20, 2022.
- Blythe Jr, Wilson C. "A History of Operational Art." *Military Review*, December 2018. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2018/Blythe-Operational-Art/>.
- Brands, Hal. *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*. Princeton University Press, 2023.
- Burke, Edmund J., Kristen Gunness, Cortez A. III Cooper, and Mark Cozad. "People's Liberation Army Operational Concepts." RAND Corporation, September 29, 2020. <https://www.rand.org/>.
- Canuel, Hugues. "From a Prestige Fleet to the Jeune Ecole." *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 1 (2018). <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol71/iss1/7>.
- Caro, Carlo J. V. "The Truth About the Evolution of Russian Military Doctrine." Text. *The National Interest*. The Center for the National Interest, July 1, 2022. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/truth-about-evolution-russian-military-doctrine-203327>.
- Cheng, Dean. "The Complicated History of U.S. Relations with China." The Heritage Foundation. Accessed April 28, 2024. <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/the-complicated-history-us-relations-china>.
- China Services Info. "National Security Law of the People's Republic of China: Updated from 1July, 2015," December 11, 2018. <https://govt.chinadaily.com.cn/s/201812/11/WS5c0f1b56498eefb3fe46e8c9/national-security-law-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-2015-effective.html>.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Vol. 1. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1918.
- "Clausewitz: War as Politics by Other Means | Online Library of Liberty," n.d. Accessed March 14, 2024.

- Corbett, Julian Stafford. "Some Principles of Maritime Strategy."  
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15076/15076-h/15076-h.htm>. Accessed March 19, 2024. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/15076/pg15076-images.html>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H., and Grace Hwang. "CSIS: 'NATO and Ukraine - Reshaping NATO to Meet Russian and Chinese Challenge.'" *Targeted News Service*, February 16, 2022.  
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2629332673/citation/DEF9094CA36C438DPQ/1>.
- "Definition of WAR," March 7, 2024. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/war>.
- Doshi, Rush. *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Forbes, Andrew. "The Future of Sea Power: Proceedings of the RAN Sea Power Conference 2015." *Sea Power Centre-Australia*, 2015.
- Fridman, Ofer. "On the 'Gerasimov Doctrine': Why the West Fails to Beat Russia to the Punch." *PRISM*, PRISM, 8, no. 2 (October 4, 2019).
- Friedman, B.A. "Finding the Right Model: The Joint Force, the People's Liberation Army, and Information Warfare." *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 6, no. 3 (April 24, 2023): 1–17. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/>.
- Gentile, Gian, Michael Shurkin, Alexandra T. Evans, Michelle Gris , Mark Hvizda, and Rebecca Jensen. "A History of the Third Offset, 2014–2018." Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, March 31, 2021.  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA454-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA454-1.html).
- Giordano, Paolo. "Multi-Domain Operations in NATO - Explained." NATO's ACT, October 5, 2023. <https://www.act.nato.int/article/mdo-in-nato-explained/>.
- Grady, Christopher W. "Sharpening Our Competitive Edge: Honing Our Warfighting Capabilities Through the Joint War." *Joint Force Quarterly*, Forum, no. 111 (October 30, 2023): 16–24. <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/>.
- Hafen, Rob. "Chinese Operational Art: The Primacy of the Human Dimension." *Military Review*, no. November-December (2023): 103–12.  
<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2023/Chinese-Operational-Art/>.
- Heuser, Beatrice, and Paul O'Neill. "Alexander Svechin: Soviet Strategic Thought." Talking Strategy Podcasts. Accessed March 13, 2024.  
<https://rusi.org><https://rusi.org>.

- Holmes, James, and Toshi Yoshihara. "China's Navy: A Turn to Corbett?" *US Naval Institute: Proceedings*, December 2010.  
<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2010/december/chinas-navy-turn-corbett>.
- Horwath, Rich. "The Origin of Strategy." Strategic Thinking Insitute, 2006.  
<https://www.strategyskills.com/>.
- HowStuffWorks. "10 Oldest Countries in the World," November 13, 2023.  
<https://history.howstuffworks.com/world-history/oldest-countries-in-the-world.htm>.
- "Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper: Mission Command. Second Edition."  
 Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7, January 2020.
- Jamison, Thomas. "Alfred Thayer Mahan: 'The Influence of Sea Power Upon History' as Strategy, Grand Strategy, and Polemic - Classics of Strategy and Diplomacy." *Classics of Strategy and Diplomacy*, February 9, 2022.  
<https://classicsofstrategy.com/>.
- Johnsen, Bill. "A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO WAR? ANTOINE-HENRI JOMINI (GREAT STRATEGISTS)." *War Room - U.S. Army War College* (blog), September 5, 2019. <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/special-series/great-strategists/scientific-approach-to-war-jomini/>.
- Johnsen, William, Conrad Crane, and Jacqueline Whitt. "A Scientific Approach to War? Antoine-Henri Jomini." *War Room: Great Strategists*. Accessed March 17, 2024.  
<https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/special-series/great-strategists/scientific-approach-to-war-jomini/>.
- Kaufman, Stephen. *Art of War : The Definitive Interpretation of Sun Tzu's Classic Book of Strategy*. Tuttle Publishing, 1996.
- Kawakami, Yasuhiro. "Dissecting Russia's Operational Art in UkraineHow Disjointed Ends, Ways, and Means Have Shackled Moscow's Operational Warfare | List of Articles." *International Information Network Analysis | SPF*, May 19, 2022.  
[https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/kawakami\\_02.html](https://www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/kawakami_02.html).
- Kofman, Michael, Anya Fink, Dmitry Gorenburg, Mary Chesnut, Jeffrey Edmonds, and Julian Waller. "Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts." *CNA Russia Studies Program*, August 6, 2021.
- Lambeth, Benjamin S. "Operation Allied Force: Lessons for the Future." *RAND Corporation*, January 1, 2001.  
[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB75.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB75.html).

- Larson, Henrik. "Afghanistan's Significance for NATO Strategy." *The RUSI Journal* 167, no. 4/5 (2022): 40–49.
- Mahan, A. T. (Alfred Thayer). *Naval Administration and Warfare: Some General Principles, with Other Essays*. London : Sampson Low, Marston, 1908.  
<http://archive.org/details/navaladministrat00maha>.
- "Marine Corps Strategy (MCDP 1-1)." U.S. Marine Corps, November 12, 1997.
- Masaaki, Yatsuzuka. "NIDS China Security Report 2021: China's Military Strategy in the New Era." National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, 2020.  
[https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/chinareport/pdf/china\\_report\\_EN\\_web\\_2021\\_A01.pdf](https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/chinareport/pdf/china_report_EN_web_2021_A01.pdf).
- . "PLA's Intelligitized Warfare: The Politics on China's Military Strategy." *National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan* 2 (2022).
- Mattis, Peter. "China's 'Three Warfares' in Perspective." War on the Rocks, January 30, 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/chinas-three-warfares-perspective/>.
- Muir, Gordon. "The Duke of Marlborough and the Paradox of Campaigning in Long Wars." *Joint Force Quarterly : JFQ*, no. 98 (Third Quarter 2020): 88–95.  
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2454694418/abstract/3BEC77F49B724432PQ/1>.
- "Multi-Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century. Version 1.0." US Army, December 2017. [https://www.tradoc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MDB\\_Evolutionfor21st.pdf](https://www.tradoc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MDB_Evolutionfor21st.pdf).
- "Nation-State | Definition, Characteristics, & Politics | Britannica." Accessed March 14, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state>.
- NATO. "A Short History of NATO." NATO, June 3, 2022.  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_139339.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_139339.htm).
- . "NATO Member Countries." NATO. Accessed November 26, 2023.  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52044.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm).
- . "Soviet Military Campaigns." North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Accessed March 13, 2024. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_138298.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_138298.htm).
- . "The North Atlantic Treaty." North Atlantic Treaty Organization, October 19, 2023. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm).
- "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept." NATO, June 29, 2022.  
[https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf).

- NATO Review. “NATO Review - Hybrid Warfare – New Threats, Complexity, and ‘Trust’ as the Antidote,” November 30, 2021.  
<https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/11/30/hybrid-warfare-new-threats-complexity-and-trust-as-the-antidote/index.html>.
- Olsen, John Andreas, Martin van Creveld, and Andrew Scobell. “The Chinese Way of War.” In *The Evolution of Operational Art : From Napoleon to the Present*, 195–221. New York, USA: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- “PLA Systems Warfare - Red Diamond Newsletters - Operational Environment and Threat Analysis Directorate.” *APAN Community*, Red Diamond Newsletters, December 2021 Special Edition. Accessed March 13, 2024.  
<https://community.apan.org/>.
- Raska, Michael. “Hybrid Warfare with Chinese Characteristics.” *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies* CO15262, no. 262 (December 2, 2015). [www.rsis.edu.sg](http://www.rsis.edu.sg).
- Reilly, Dr Jeffrey M. “Multidomain Operations: A Subtle but Significant Transition in Military Thought.” *Air & Space Power Journal* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 61–73.  
[https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-30\\_Issue-1/ASPJ-Spring-2016.pdf](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ/journals/Volume-30_Issue-1/ASPJ-Spring-2016.pdf).
- Scott, Michael. “Back to the Basics: Why the West Should Reconsider the Nature of War.” *Wild Blue Yonder Online Journal*, April 15, 2022.  
<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Wild-Blue-Yonder/Article-Display/Article/2980403/back-to-the-basics-why-the-west-should-reconsider-the-nature-of-war/>.
- Shinji, Yamaguchi, Yatsuzuka Masaaki, and Momma Rira. “China’s Quest for Control of the Cognitive Domain and Gray Zone Situations,” n.d.
- Shirkin, Michael. “Admiral Raoul Castex: The Naval Strategist for Non-Hegemons.” *War on the Rocks*, March 13, 2024. <https://warontherocks.com/>.
- Simms, Courtney. “Timeless Strategy: A Review of Sun Tzu’s ‘The Art of War.’” *Medium* (blog), February 10, 2024. <https://medium.com/@courtneysimms/timeless-strategy-a-review-of-sun-tzus-the-art-of-war-363811d53dea>.
- Sprang, Ronald. “Russian Operational Art, New Type Warfare, and Reflexive Control.” *Small Wars Journal*, September 4, 2018.
- Steve Leonard, and Rebecca Jensen. “Back to the Future: Rediscovering Operational Art in an Era of Great Power Competition.” *Modern War Institute*, September 10, 2021.  
<https://mwi.westpoint.edu/back-to-the-future-rediscovering-operational-art-in-an-era-of-great-power-competition/>.

- Stone, David R. "Misreading Svechin: Attrition, Annihilation, and Historicism." *The Journal of Military History* 76, no. 3 (July 2012): 673–93.
- Telp, Claus. *The Evolution of Operational Art, 1740-1813: From Frederick the Great to Napoleon*. Abingdon, Oxon, UNITED STATES: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005.
- The War College Library. "Napoleon's Transition to a Staff Model," July 13, 2010. <https://holf.org/warcollege2009/node/21>.
- Thornton, Rod. "The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare: Responding to Russian Information Warfare." *The RUSI Journal* 160, no. 4 (July 4, 2015): 40–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2015.1079047>.
- Tse-tung, Mao. "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party (December 1929)." In *Selected Military Writings of Mao Tse-Tung*, 1st ed., 1:51–62. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1963.
- "US Joint Publication 3.0: Joint Operations (2011)," August 11, 2011.
- "US Joint Publication 3.0: Joint Operations (2018)," October 22, 2018.
- "US Joint Publication 5.0: Joint Planning (2020)," December 1, 2020.
- USC US-China Institute. "U.S. Army, Chinese Tactics," August 9, 2021. <https://china.usc.edu/>.
- Vego, Milan. "Operations Short of War and Operational Art." *JPME Today*, no. JFQ 98 (2020).
- Vovsi, Eman. "A.-H. Baron de Jomini in 1813: The Rubicon Crossed." Accessed March 17, 2024. [https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/Swiss/c\\_Jomini.html](https://www.napoleon-series.org/research/biographies/Swiss/c_Jomini.html).
- War on the Rocks. "It's Time to Talk About A2/AD: Rethinking the Russian Military Challenge," September 5, 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/its-time-to-talk-about-a2-ad-rethinking-the-russian-military-challenge/>.
- Warren, Patrick. "Alliance History and the Future of NATO: What the Last 500 Years of Alliance Behavior Tells Us About NATO's Path Forward." 21st Century Defense Initiative Policy Paper. Foreign Policy at Brookings. Brookings Institute, June 30, 2010. <https://www.brookings.edu>.
- What is NATO? "What Is NATO?" Accessed March 12, 2024. <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>.

Петрова, Елица. "History of Military Strategic Thought." *Annals of Spiru Haret University Economic Series* 15 (September 22, 2016): 35.  
<https://doi.org/10.26458/1542>.