

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 12  
Number 10 *December*

Article 3

---

1959

# The Theory and Principles of War

J. A. Huston

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Huston, J. A. (1959) "The Theory and Principles of War," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 12 : No. 10 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol12/iss10/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

## **THE THEORY AND PRINCIPLES OF WAR**

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 26 August 1950 by  
*Professor J. A. Huston*

My theme this morning is stated to be "The Theory and Principles of War." I am going to try to consider just a little bit here something of the nature, the types, and the theory of war; something of the interrelationships between the use of force and policy in applying these theories; something as to how these apply to strategic considerations.

In thinking about war and its principles, theories and applications, how do we arrive at these things? How do we arrive at the principles to guide our thinking on war? It seems to me mainly that it is through a study of history — noting the points of similarity and contrast to all conclusions, testing these conclusions, revising our conclusions in the light of any new evidence. These conclusions always must be tentative; the principles must always be open-minded. Even the best established principles should remain open to question. I think we want to avoid the procedure which Admiral Mahan seems to suggest in his *Lessons of the War With Spain* where he says that history should be studied thoroughly to find copious illustrations of the principles. This might suggest a purely deductive approach in which we already have arrived at the principles, and we go out to search for examples to reaffirm them. I do not think that is what we really are after. We want to search for all kinds of examples in order to revise the principles where necessary, and reaffirm them if that is what the evidence points to. Experience is the raw material of imagination, and history is vicarious experience.

We want to look at these things in perspective. In doing so, I think we should apply what you might call two of the fundamental laws of history, if it can be said to have any laws. These fundamental laws which are present in governing any situation

are *continuity* and *change*. If someone says this situation is completely different from anything before, he cannot be right. When he says that this thing is exactly like a previous situation, that could not be right, either. These two things, although contradictory, are going together — change and continuity.

In this way we look, then, at times such as these when we are in the midst of profound change. Sometimes I think we get our thinking a little bit off center. Some people attempt to avoid the responsibilities of the present by retreating into the past in the name of tradition; others evade the demands of tradition by trying to escape into some unreal world of the present without any past or an even more unreal world of the future with neither a present nor a past. But please remember the past is the present — it is our thinking *now* on the past. It is the experience we have gained in the past with the experience which we have *now* based on the past. It is our traditions, our attitudes, our prejudices *now* that have developed out of the past which govern our thinking.

When we turn to war and inquire into its nature, we look at the use of force in the international community, and we can see it both as an instrument of policy and as a determinant of policy. As an instrument of policy, force may be used to defend territory or acquire territory — to defend the status quo. It may be used to support our diplomacy, along with propaganda, with economic pressure and so on. You will recall the oft-quoted statement of Clausewitz, "War is a continuation of policy by other means," and we should think of a war-diplomacy continuum. Force, it may be said, is "the gold reserve behind the currency of diplomacy." Finally, force as an instrument of policy also may be used for indirect or oblique results. For instance, a truculent foreign policy sometimes may be used to gain internal results for the regime concerned. On the eve of the Civil War in this country the Secretary of State prepared a memorandum for President Lincoln in which he proposed that we should go to war with Spain for Santo Domingo; in fact, he was willing to take on Spain and France both. The idea was that this would reunite the country — everybody would rally

around the flag to defend against a foreign foe. Napoleon III had ambition to keep his throne and often it seemed he was willing to engage in foreign adventures in order to do that. Mussolini's foreign adventures seemed sometimes to be aimed at reinforcing his position at home, and with Hitler it was the same way. The more success he had abroad, the more precarious and truculent foreign policy he followed successfully, the more support he could find at home. Perhaps we should think twice on matters of stirring revolution within the communist world on that matter. There is always that danger that the communist regime in the Soviet Union may be tempted to invite foreign adventures in order to unify the country at home to build up support for the regime. Possibly that is the explanation for the belligerent attitude of the Chinese Communists currently.

Moltke in Germany said once on one occasion, "The stock exchange is so very influential that it may use armies in defense of its interests," — so we have war scares and peace scares, etc. — all kinds of references and use of force for indirect results as an instrument of policy.

Force also enters into the international community as a determinant of policy. Let us look into the traditional causes of war which usually are offered in general terms. There will be some kind of listing such as economic rivalry, imperialism, nationalism, national armaments, entangling alliances, militarism, etc., and there are others. Examining these a little bit more closely each may have certain application of its own — certain occasions I suppose where nomadic invasions, going over to get new grass lands or some other such thing when the economic motive may be paramount — but most of the time if we examine these things more closely, they have their greatest validity in the assumption that there is going to be war, thus imperialism, for natural resources, is justified on the basis not that we do not have access to those materials; in peacetime we can trade for resources anywhere, normally speaking. Why must it be necessary to acquire them by colonial acquisition? Because in wartime they may be

cut off by an unfriendly power. We need military bases; we need bases overseas — naval, air bases, and so on. Why? On the assumption that there is going to be war. The Russians looked upon the Dardenelles as being a key to their national interest. They must preserve the free passage of the Dardenelles. Why? In peacetime normally there is no closing of the Straits; they can have access. It is in time of war when they may be cut off that it becomes a matter of great concern, so that they are willing even to go to war, if necessary, in order to get something which they must have if there is a war. This is the sort of thing which you find, then — that the fear of war becomes fundamental in the cause of war itself — it is the very thing which one finds even in going back to— Thucydides — and incidentally, if one would acquaint himself with alliances, with military strategy, naval power *vs* land power, with morality *vs* expediency, I would refer him to Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War*. It reads like yesterday's headlines. There is one place where he writes: "In arriving at this decision and resolving to go to war, the Lacedaemonians were influenced, not so much by the speeches of their allies, as by the fear of the Athenians and of their increasing power." Fear of war itself, fundamentally.

General Tasker H. Bliss was a young army officer who was a member of the staff at the opening of the Naval War College. Later he went on to become Chief of Staff of the Army, served on the Supreme War Council at Versailles, and was a member of the American Peace Commission at Paris in 1919. General Bliss said, "You have noted that the one sole underlying cause of the disturbance is mutual fear." And Sir Ralph G. Hawtrey, British economist wrote nearly thirty years ago in the *Economic Aspects of Sovereignty*, "When I say that the principal cause of war is war itself, I mean that the aim for which war is judged worthwhile is most often something which itself affects military power."

Today we have seen war in all kinds of forms. The history of war has been formed in many different patterns. I suggest that we ought to think of a continuum of our policy — a diplomacy-

war spectrum. Thus the first step in ordinary peacetime relationships is in *diplomacy*. We seek the national interest in diplomacy. Diplomacy is concerned with negotiation, accommodation, and agreement, and here, of course, we have to consider the feasibility of negotiations in our time, what assumptions we can make, and the feasibility of such things as coexistence. For some reason that term has acquired an evil connotation. Why do we permit the Communists to take perfectly good words, apply their own definitions to them, and then we have to throw them out? Pretty soon we are not going to be able to be in favor of peace. Coexistence means that we both exist, and it still may have some relevance to the situation. The assumption of non-coexistence, of course, has to be that one of us must disappear; one or the other must survive; there is not room in this world for the two. But, you know, that same kind of assumption has occurred before, and never more with greater violence than with the rise of Islam and its rivalry with Christianity. Both of them preached holy war — holy war, the Crusades, fighting to the death in the name of religion, and there is no more violent war than one fought in the name of peaceful religion. They fought for a thousand years — one of them must go — one must be driven from the earth, so they had the great inroads into Europe, the fall of Constantinople, the siege of Vienna, and so on. Yet they finally found out that neither one could expel the other. They learned to coexist because they had to coexist, and now we find alliances among Islamic nations and Christian nations.

In diplomacy I think there may be some rules which apply, though we will not go into this with much detail as these are things for which you cannot write any strict rule book, but it seems to me that there are certain elementary rules which I may suggest, such as:

(1) Never get yourself into a position from which you cannot back down gracefully — don't put yourself into a position where you are going to lose face — that is not a rule to be applied only by some foreign power; it is for ourselves. By taking an une-

quivocal position on something, and then getting into a position where you have to back down, then you feel you cannot back down.

(2) Next, don't force your opponent into a position where he cannot back down gracefully. Here you see military tactics are not always the same as the diplomatic, for in the military you say you want to cut off the retreat of the enemy — destroy him. In diplomacy the objective is not to destroy him, but to arrive at an agreement, and here we want to help him to arrive at the agreement, not embarrass him. Sometimes we seem to engage our greatest diplomatic efforts in showing him we really stood up to him that time — we got him told — when we really ought to be aiming more in the direction of accommodation and agreement.

(3) Next, I should think we would want to compromise on minor issues in order to save major objectives. Sometimes we find ourselves bogged down on what may be nonessentials. We build up nonessentials until they become things we cannot compromise on. Theodore Roosevelt followed a practical rule. His was "trade the inevitable for a concession." When he saw the Japanese going into Korea in 1905 he saw that he could do nothing about this short of war and he knew that the nation was not in any position for war, but he was very much interested in protecting the Philippines, so he arrived at an agreement with the Japanese. The United States would respect their position in Korea and the Japanese would respect the United States' position in the Philippines. Now he did not lose anything; they were going into Korea anyway, and he gained a Japanese commitment to respect American rights in the Philippines; he traded the inevitable for a concession.

(4) Then, look at matters from the viewpoint of other nations, as well as your own, and (5) don't permit weak allies to make your decisions for you. That has been a dangerous thing from time to time. Athens and Sparta in the Peloponnesian War got involved through their allies; it was not Athens or Sparta that invaded one or the other; their allies got them into it. In World War I, it was not the German invasion of France or Russia, or the British coming in that got that war started; it was Austria and Serbia

— they brought in their allies. We may find ourselves committed in various parts of the world and it works both ways. Alliances are things which have to be handled in broad perspective and in mutual agreements. We may find ourselves in a position where we have given a blank check, and we may find our hand forced to back someone on a policy which we did not approve.

Now let us go on looking down the spectrum quickly. Of course, the next phase which has become common in our time is the "*cold war*," although that is a new name for a thing which has existed for a long time. There we are including such things as economic pressures, propaganda, subversion, armed demonstrations such as the movement of forces, even the application of a pacific blockade on occasion. It is what Churchill has called "All mischief short of war." This can be a very complex thing and requires a great deal of attention to it. Then we go on to the next step and these may run concurrently — it is not necessarily one or the other — you may have aspects of one and another — the *guerrilla war*. This may be a part of a big war, or it may be an independent action, but it seems to me that we have neglected somewhat full consideration of waging or defending against guerrilla war. In World War II General Eisenhower gave it as his estimate that the French maquis were equal to fifteen divisions in assisting the Allies. Tito's partisans or Mahailovic's Chetnicks were said to have tied down some thirty German divisions for a period of years after the Royal Army in Yugoslavia had capitulated in three days. When the Germans went into action they found that guerilla operations against them had taken a great toll. After World War II we have seen a continuation of this kind of warfare. It took nearly 200,000 Greek troops nearly three years to quell some 30,000 guerrillas. The French in Indo-China faced mostly guerrilla warfare. It is said that it cost France more than the total Marshall Plan aid given in four years, and the casualties among the officers were equal each year to most of the graduating class of St. Cyr. The French now are involved in a costly guerrilla war in Algeria. They deployed 500,000 troops and still could not get a decision in



guerrilla war. Now we find the same thing threatening in Laos. Here is something that requires some more of our attention, I think.

Then we go to the limited war — non-atomic. It is a question whether this thing is going to be in the future or not; we have seen some examples. Actually limited wars were generally the pattern of wars up until World War I and World War II, with the exception of the Napoleonic Wars. There were a few world wars, of course — general wars, but usually they were limited — limited in objectives; that is the thing that generally limits them — limited in objective. The objective of the American colonies in the Revolution was their independence, not to conquer England, not to overthrow the government, but simply to slice off a part of the empire, and they could win that by defending themselves. All they had to do was to defend the colonies; they did not have to launch any overseas expedition to get a decision. The war of 1812 was supposedly to protect commerce. Again there was no expedition for conquering England. Some developed an ambition to conquer Canada, but they got over that pretty soon. In the Spanish-American war in 1898, the objective was to free Cuba; it was not to conquer the Spanish peninsula in an overseas expedition to Europe; it was a limited objective. We expanded that a little bit when we took over in the Philippines, but still there was a limited conflict. World War I and World War II — that was a change for us. Now the objective became total destruction of the enemy. Yet we have had a recent great example of a limited war in Korea — limited war undertaken for a limited objective. There has been a lot of recrimination since then; some people expanded the objective in their own minds, but as long as we held to that limited objective, we held steadfastly to a limited war.

The next question is whether we can expect another part of the continuum to include such a thing as *limited war — atomic*. Some think that will be the case in the future. Indeed, we must plan on that sort of thing from the American point of view because therein at the moment, perhaps lies our greatest relative strength; but one question remains where it will be possible to

limit atomic war. With these things we cannot be sure, but we had better be prepared in either case, so again we have to keep this in mind as a possibility of a limited conflict while using tactical atomic weapons.

*General War — non-atomic:* This would be in the pattern of World War II. It is a sort of thing which I would not expect, yet we had World War II without the use of poisonous gases, etc., as people point out, though I think that that is a little bit of a different order of business. I doubt whether we shall go into general war non-atomic, but it certainly is a possibility. I just would not dismiss it without any thought.

Then, of course, we get on to the one which all of these other things are intended to prevent — that is the *total war*. *Total war* — this idea of the nation in arms, really came into prominence in the wars of the French Revolution actually. But now with the thermonuclear weapon it has come into a whole new level, a whole new aspect, and it has become the dread hanging over the world as the sword of Damocles.

In searching for a theory of war, we should focus our attention on the purposes for which it is waged, and the general principles which govern our attitude in its conduct. And to guide our thinking about war, I am going to suggest five principles.

The first of these is what I might call the *principle of political purpose*. In recent times there has been an attitude on the part of many Americans that the purpose of war is simply victory. "In war there is no substitute for victory," we are told. Wars are not fought simply to improve our standing in the won-lost record. They have deep underlying political purposes and these must remain paramount. It is the failure to look beyond the immediate destruction of the enemy to these political consequences which leads directly to the situations where we are repeatedly telling ourselves we win the war and lose the peace. The destruction of enemy forces may be an intermediate objective for military operations, but not always is it the objective of the war. Clausewitz has been read out of context and misinterpreted to support the idea

that the destruction of the enemy forces is the ultimate objective. Mahan has been taken out of context or is misinterpreted to support the idea that the main object of a navy at all times should be to destroy the enemy's fleet. Reading a little further in Clausewitz we find this statement:

"The war of a community — of whole nations, and particularly of civilized nations — always starts from a political motive. It is, therefore, a political act. Now if it were a perfect unrestrained and absolute expression of force, as we had to deduce it from its mere conception, then the moment it is called forth by policy it would step into the place of policy, and as something quite independent of it would set it aside, and only follow its own laws . . . This is how the thing has been really viewed hitherto whenever a want of harmony between policy and the conduct of a war has led to theoretical distinctions of the kind. But it is not so, and the idea is radically false . . . Now, if we reflect that war has its root in a political object, then naturally this original motive which called it into existence should also continue the first and highest consideration in its conduct. Still, the political object is no despotic lawgiver on that account; it must accommodate itself to the nature of the means, and though changes in these means may involve modifications in the political objective, the latter always retains a prior right to consideration. Policy, therefore, is interwoven with the whole action of the war, and must exercise a continuous influence upon it, as far as the nature of the forces liberated by it will permit . . . the political view is the object. War is the means, and the means must always include the object in our conception."

"War is simply the continuation of politics by other means."  
If you asked who said that, I'm sure you would say Clausewitz.

In fact, I just said that he said it a little while ago, but this quotation happens to be taken from the lectures of Mao-Tse-Tung *On the Protracted War*, and he is quoting Lenin. War is simply the continuation of politics by other means.

Now, getting back to General Bliss again, he said after World War I, "We whipped Germany not for the mere sake and pleasure of whipping her, but in order to destroy an iniquitous system and to bring about a better condition in the world."

Our concentration on the enemy forces as the object of war has led to what Liddell Hart has called the "Napoleonic fallacy." That is the failure to recognize that the emotional and economic attachments that a nation may have for a particular area or city may be so great that its loss can mean the loss of the war. This has been true of Paris. Whenever Paris has fallen, France has fallen. In 1814 when Napoleon left Paris only lightly guarded in order to pursue the enemy in eastern France the allies made straight for Paris, and a week after they entered the capital, the emperor abdicated.

In World War II the decision to turn away from Berlin was because it had lost its military significance. It lost its significance as a military objective, but we overlooked the political significance of Berlin. General Patton was turned away from Prague and General Eisenhower gave it as his recommendation that we do not go to Berlin at the time that Prime Minister Churchill was urging such steps. It was of the greatest importance for the western allies to enter Berlin. As a nation we have failed to keep in mind the political significance. In the Far East the decision to go for Luzon rather than Formosa was partly political. During the Korean conflict a number of decisions had political implications, and though we liked to draw a distinct line and say that the military commander makes military decisions and the political authorities make the political decisions, so therefore the military commander has no responsibility for the political objective, yet we cannot make any such line. The decision to cross the 38th parallel, the decision to go to the Yalu River, the decision to bomb North

Korean power plants along the Yalu while truce negotiations were going on — all these had essential political implications.

The second guiding principle that I want to suggest is the principle of *indivisibility*. We must look at war in its total setting. Action in one part of the world cannot be isolated from implications in other parts of the world. When the communists struck in Korea, we not only took action in the Far East, but we also sent reinforcements to Europe. Military operations cannot be isolated from the political - diplomatic - geographic - economic-technological-psychological factors. All must be considered as a part of the whole.

Operations in one theater affect those in another in global conflict. Even before our entry into World War II we had taken the strategic decision that if war came we should beat Hitler first. Nevertheless, after our entry into the war, competition among the major theaters for manpower, supplies, and facilities quickly developed. On the one hand there was the alleged "pull to the Pacific" which was said to be delaying operations in the European area, though in fact the Pacific war did not turn out to be really a major drag on the war in Europe. On the other hand, there was the supposed de-emphasis on operations in the Pacific in favor of the war in Europe. But now it seems quite likely that the Japanese were defeated as quickly as if it had not been the declared purpose of the Allies to defeat Germany first. The limiting factors on the campaigns of Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur in 1943 and 1944 were aircraft carriers and land bases for aircraft, and these depended in turn upon the substantial rebuilding of the United States fleet. It is doubtful that the war in Europe seriously delayed the shipbuilding program, and until the new carriers and supporting vessels were ready, the diversion of additional ground forces and supplies to the Pacific could have had little effect. After the new Essex-class carriers began to arrive in the Pacific in 1943, we could resume offensive operations.

The third principle I should like to suggest is the principle of *relativity*. In war all things must be considered relative to the time, the place, the situation.

Timing is of the essence in war and diplomacy. Look at Hitler's activity before World War II — the timing of the reoccupation of the Rhineland, the Czechoslovakian crisis — they seemed to be examples of masterful timing. They were for the moment; of course, in the long run Hitler had some difficulties, but at the moment it was a great triumph.

In logistics timing is essential. In procurement the decision to standardize and go into mass production is a critical matter of timing. If it is taken too early we find ourselves using obsolete equipment; if we take it too late we may find that we may have developed superior equipment, but not enough of it to do any good. We can judge that timing, of course, only by looking at the situation as a whole.

In this matter, of relativity, I think it depends again, as I said, on the time, the place, the situation. Sometimes in our thinking we tend to go on overemphasizing one thing against another from time to time. We become air-minded at one point and all the maps become obsolete; this is the air age, and the shrinking globe, and we are much impressed by the use of air transportation such as in the Pacific airlift in support of the Korean conflict. But the air age really had not arrived yet insofar as normal transportation was concerned. Sometimes examples intended to emphasize how the world has shrunk in point of time-distance seem to be a little exaggerated. It might be suggested, for example, that Tokyo is now is closer to San Francisco, in time, than Philadelphia was to New York during the days of the Revolution. This was held to be true because an airplane in 1950 could span the Pacific more quickly than a horse-drawn coach could go from New York to Philadelphia in 1780. But this comparison is not altogether a fair one. It compares a very special method of transportation with a common method of transportation. An army might march from New York to Philadelphia in a matter of five to seven days in 1780, but in the 1950's no army could reach Tokyo from San Francisco in anything like that time. It took nine days after the first warning for the first elements of the 2nd Infantry Division to begin moving

from Tacoma in July 1950, and it took twenty-nine days for the whole division to complete preparations and sail, and it was thirty-four days from the time that the first ships sailed from Tacoma until the last tactical unit arrived at Pusan.

Now, air transportation commonly is considered rapid transportation, but during the Korean conflict the amount of aircraft that were available made air transportation very much slower for general purposes than the Victory ships. For example, let us say that we wanted to deliver some 15,000 tons of high priority cargo needed within thirty days to support the Inchon landing. Two Victory ships could deliver that in the required time — thirty days — allowing time for loading, sailing, unloading. The airlift with the available aircraft could not have delivered this in less than five months. The C-54 could carry about five tons on Pacific flights; about 200 could be counted on for sustained operations at the peak; each could make about three round-trips a month.

The relative cost was even more exaggerated. For each five tons of air cargo the C-54 carried across the Pacific, it consumed about eighteen tons of gasoline. Two Victory ships transporting 15,000 tons of cargo from San Francisco to Yokahama would consume approximately 7,000 barrels of fuel oil — 14,000 for the round trip. C-54 aircraft carrying the same tonnage over the same route would consume about 1,140,000 barrels of high grade aviation gasoline for the flights in both directions. The Victory ships carry enough fuel to make two such round trips; aircraft had to refuel frequently at bases served by tankers. Thus, to move 15,000 tons of cargo to Japan by sea required two ships; to move it by air required 3,000 air flights, plus eight ships to carry the gasoline.

Even success in battle is relative depending on the point of view. For example, the British and the Americans were so impressed by the German airborne invasions of Crete that this led directly to the expansion of the airborne effort in the United States and Britain. The Germans considered the Crete operations so costly that they never attempted another major airborne operation during the war. On the other hand, the Allies considered the airborne

attack upon Sicily a near failure — that is when we got into a little bit of trouble between the surface and the air of our own forces. General Eisenhower then stated frankly after this experience, that he did not believe in the airborne division, and several officers had similar recommendations. Yet the German general, Kesslering, commander in the area, reported that the paratroops had seriously delayed the movement of German reserves. General Kurt Student, commander of German paratroops, gave it as his opinion that the Herman Goering Division would have hurled the initial seaborne units back into the sea if airborne troops had not blocked it. He may have been trying to excuse himself, but that was the opinion which he stated.

For the Germans, Crete was the end of major airborne operations. For the Allies, Sicily was very nearly the end, but more hopeful counsel prevailed, and later came the great invasions of Normandy, Holland and across the Rhine.

Again, this principle of relatively applies to preparedness. Military preparedness never can be absolute. It always must be relative, for no one can foresee the future sufficiently to foretell exactly what is going to be required, or what the enemy is going to be, or what the situation is going to be. As Walter Mills has pointed out, the French Marshal Leboeuf in 1870 was "ready to the last gaitor button," but he lost the war. The German general staff had achieved total preparedness by 1914, but still lost the war. Estimates of preparedness will have meaning only relative to the capabilities of a potential enemy, and relative to the time and place of anticipated operations.

Now, the fourth principle which I suggest to guide our thinking along these lines, is the principle of *flexibility*. We must permit no hard and fast preconceptions to govern our conduct of war. In 1914 the European general staffs seemed pretty much to have forgotten this principle. After the Austrian declaration of war, the Russian foreign minister wanted to limit the action to partial mobilization near the Austrian border, but the generals said for technical reasons this was impossible. The only thing they could



do would be to order general mobilization extending to the German border as well; otherwise everything would be all mixed up. The German ambassador said that if Russia continued her mobilization, Germany would mobilize, and mobilization meant war. But the Russian generals said that any attempt to halt mobilization would disrupt their organization. The Kaiser and Chancellor in Germany suggested that their forces should march only against Russia. The Chief of the general staff said that their plans were the result of years of work. Once planned, they could not possibly be changed.

In the Spanish-American war the American planners figured on the troop-carrying capacity of the transports assembled at Tampa. They figured 23,000 men for them. The way they arrived at their figures was by calculating the capacity of British transports; but this had no relation to the ships which were down there, for they had not been converted for troop use, and they only had room for 17,000. Absolute chaos reigned on the beaches down there. That may be one reason they were so successful in Cuba — even the Spaniards could not figure out what in the world they were doing.

Flexibility means the ability to adjust to the situation, to make the best use of the means available, to apply experience in one field to another.

Finally, the consideration which I think we need to keep in mind in completing our pentagon of guiding principles is the principle of *minimum force*. This is not the old principle of war that you always read about as the "economy of force." That is stated, "In order to concentrate superior combat strength in one place economy of force must be exercised in other places." The idea was to strike with the maximum of force. What I am trying to say is that only the minimum of force necessary to do the job should be used. This has become essential in an age where the thermonuclear bombs stand in the background. It made little sense for the Army Air Forces in World War II to drop fifty times (according to the postwar calculations of the United States Strategic Bombing Sur-

vey) as many bombs on Cologne in December 1944 as was necessary to knock out the transportation system there. On the moral grounds, going back to the principle which St. Augustine gave for a "just war," *only so much force must be used as is necessary for achieving the object*. Moreover, serious political implications are involved, and implications for the economy are involved. The factor of logistical limitation which becomes such a tremendously growing problem every year further demands the use of the minimum of force which can accomplish the mission.

And so, in our strategic considerations as a whole, our national strategy depends on political objectives, depends on the means available, depends on the capabilities of the enemy or potential enemy, depends on the relative factors of time and space. Our national objective must be the safety and well-being of the United States and the protection of political freedom and economic resources. The political purpose must be kept paramount. We are not interested in a contest for its own sake. We must keep in mind all the elements of national strategy and the worldwide implications for the allies, for potential enemies, for neutrals, of what we do and what we say. Flexibility requires forces of multiple capability — a more flexible military defense organization. The very serious consequences of thermonuclear war require the greatest restraint in use of atomic weapons, and adherence to principle of minimum force.