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The US Army War College
QUARTERLY

PARAMETERS



Vol. 53 No. 3 Autumn 2023

Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

In Focus

A Historical Perspective on Today's Recruiting Crisis

Brian McAllister Linn

A Call to Action: Lessons from Ukraine for the Future Force

Katie Crombe and John A. Nagl

Strategic Challenges

Luke P. Bellocchi

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Kevin D. Stringer and Jelle J. H. Hooiveld

Wilson A. Jones

SRAD Director's Corner

US Army War College Russia-Ukraine War Study Project

Eric Hartunian

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The US Army War College
QUARTERLY
PARAMETERS

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From the Acting Editor in Chief

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 issue of *Parameters*. This issue includes two *In Focus* special commentaries, a *Strategic Challenges* forum, a *Historical Studies* forum, and the *SRAD Director's Corner*.

Dr. Antulio Echevarria has returned from his sabbatical and is reclaiming his role as the editor in chief of *Parameters*. So, this will be my last sojourn acting in his place. I wish to pass on a special note of thanks to the US Army War College Press and all our contributors. The Press team has been consistently steadfast and professional, producing quality articles, podcasts, book reviews, conference papers, collaborative studies, integrated research projects, monographs, websites, and book launch event webinars. I have been continually impressed with their performance. We also continue to receive high-quality submissions, and I am grateful for the talent of our contributors, editorial board members, and the many experts who serve as peer reviewers and provide us more editorial advice. My main mission since October 2022 was to keep the quality of the journal and other Press products on an even keel until Dr. Echevarria returned, and because of all the gifted staff, contributors, editorial board members, and peer reviewers that mission was never very difficult.

In our first *In Focus* special commentary, “A Historical Perspective on Today’s Recruiting Crisis,” Brian McAllister Linn analyzes the US Army’s successive recruiting crises spanning 150 years, identifies their consistent patterns and efforts to resolve them, and generates provocative arguments for why these crises continue to occur and why the US Army needs to revise its talent management approach. The second *In Focus* special commentary, “A Call to Action: Lessons from Ukraine for the Future Force,” by Katie Crombe and John A. Nagl argues that the US Army has reached a strategic inflection point and must embrace the Russia-Ukraine War as an opportunity to reorient the force into a forward-thinking and formidable Army that can succeed in multidomain, large-scale combat operations.

The issue’s first forum, *Strategic Challenges*, features three articles. Following up on his part one article on the geopolitical, economic, and soft-power reasons for the United States and its allies to regard Taiwan as strategically important, Luke P. Bellocchi reviews the development of US and allied policy statements on Taiwan from the invasion

of Ukraine in 2022 to the present in “The Strategic Importance of Taiwan to the United States and Its Allies: Part Two – A Focus on Policy since the Start of Russia-Ukraine War.” In the forum’s second article, Ryan J. Bridley and Kevin W. Matthews explore “The Impact of Antarctic Treaty Challenges on the US Military.” They analyze historical documents and press reports to examine these challenges and the role China and Russia are playing in the region. Finally, in “US-Russia Foreign Policy: Confronting Russia’s Geographic Anxieties,” Caitlin P. Irby analyzes Russia’s geography and its historical impact on Russian foreign policy to show how Russia geographically derives its foreign policy goals. Her proposed framework shows how the United States can build a constructive relationship with Russia and develop successful future strategies to achieve regional goals.

Our second forum, *Historical Studies*, features two essays. In their ideographic case study, “Urban Resistance to Occupation: An Underestimated Element of Land Warfare,” Kevin D. Stringer and Jelle J. H. Hooiveld provide insights into the Netherlands World War II urban resistance to German occupation. They highlight the feasibility of overt, guerilla-based activity during the final phase of conflict and how modern at-risk countries should develop and hone this Landpower activity. The forum’s second article, “The Chechen Kadyrovtsy’s Coercive Violence in Ukraine,” by Wilson A. Jones, analyzes coercive fratricidal violence, the Russo-Chechen relationship and military inequality theory, and the unique role the Kadyrovtsy have played in Russia’s military.

In the seventh installment of the *SRAD Director’s Corner*, “The US Army War College Russia-Ukraine War Study Project,” Eric Hartunian discusses the expansive project undertaken in 2022 to analyze the operational events and activities of the Russia-Ukraine War to understand the war’s strategic implications for the US Army and its role in the NATO Alliance. It is hoped the study will identify whether the war has revealed a shift in the character of war and how US and allied defense policies should adjust to this change. ~CCC

A Historical Perspective on Today's Recruiting Crisis

Brian McAllister Linn
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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the US Army's successive recruiting crises, identifies their consistent patterns and the efforts to resolve them, and makes three provocative arguments. First, there is a long-standing institutional tension between recruiting personnel for the combat arms and technical and administrative specialists. Second, many of today's talent management problems were first identified in a 1907 General Staff report and reiterated in subsequent studies. Third, the Army has pursued innovative recruitment strategies, but much of their success depended on factors outside the service's control. The essay concludes with four history-based recruiting lessons and an affirmation that the 2019 *Army People Strategy* recognizes the need for the Army to revise its talent management approach.

Keywords: recruitment, US Army history, personnel policy, talent management, *Army People Strategy*

Last year, the US Army missed its enlistment goals by 25 percent, prompting concerns that the service might shrink to 445,000 by the end of this year. The shortfalls are particularly serious in combat arms, most notably armor and infantry. Retired Lieutenant General David W. Barno, no alarmist, warned, "The all-volunteer force may finally have reached its breaking point."¹ The causes and consequences of this "recruiting crisis" have prompted vigorous and often vitriolic debate. Some pundits have accused the Army of excessive "wokeness" and others of excessive masculinity. But Army leadership recognizes that the recruitment crisis will not be resolved by partisan accusations or bumper-sticker solutions. It also accepts that dropping standards, a solution too often attempted in the past, is unacceptable if the service is to retain its qualitative superiority. The 2019 *Army People Strategy* makes this point in clear and unambiguous terms: "Human capabilities such as resiliency, critical thinking, comfort with

1. David Barno and Nora Benshael, "Addressing the U.S. Military Recruiting Crisis," War on the Rocks (website), March 10, 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/03/addressing-the-u-s-military-recruiting-crisis/>. For a sample of cultural explanations, see Lolita C. Baldor, "Army Sees Safety, Not 'Wokeness,' as Top Recruiting Obstacle," AP News (website), February 12, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-politics-military-and-defense-race-ethnicity-6548adcb0fee590f3427771d1e1eeea7>; David McCormick and James Cunningham, "The Military Recruitment Crisis Is a Symptom of Cultural Rot," *Wall Street Journal* (website), April 14, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-military-recruitment-crisis-is-a-symptom-of-cultural-rot-american-exceptionalism-patriotism-health-c0f69bda>; and Thomas Spoehr, "The Rise of Wokeness in the Military," *Imprimis* 51, nos. 6-7 (June-July 2022), <https://imprimis.hillisdale.edu/the-rise-of-wokeness-in-the-military/>. Except for specific citations, this essay is based on my recent book, *Real Soldiering: The US Army in the Aftermath of War, 1815-1980* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2023).

ambiguity, and the ability to accept prudent risk and adjust rapidly all define our profession.”²

Today, as always, the Army’s recruitment strategy must balance the often conflicting demands imposed by the immediate necessity of filling the most pressing vacancies, identifying those individuals with the potential for a military career, and predicting the service’s future personnel needs. It also has to resolve the perennial dilemma—going back over 200 years—that once the Army has met its immediate needs, the majority of volunteers (and draftees) try to avoid assignment to the combat arms. Finding the correct solutions to these challenges is no easy matter. To give just one example, an Army preparing for high-intensity ground operations in the Indo-Pacific in 2030 needs different talents than it would to police the borders and train allies. A final and fundamental question remains: can the Army’s self-identification with the combat infantry soldier coexist with its current role as one component of a doctrine—multidomain operations—that relies on military personnel who can apply the full spectrum of American technological supremacy?

From a historical perspective, today’s recruitment crisis has four commonalities dating back to the Army’s founding. First and foremost, recruitment problems are the norm, not the exception. Nostalgic references to a golden age where Americans were fit, patriotic, and motivated have been a staple of Army lore for well over a century, but they hardly reflect historical reality. For over 200 years, the peacetime service has suffered perennial recruiting crises, particularly in its “line” or combat branches. The circumstances contributing to positive enlistment levels—such as high unemployment and low wages in labor, enthusiasm for military life, and increased military pay and benefits—have been rare. Second, it is important not to confuse quantity with quality. Then and now, a 25 percent shortfall does not represent a shortage of applicants but a shortage of those with the potential to be effective soldiers. Even in the nineteenth century, when the service was often the employer of last resort and drew its rank-and-file from immigrants, unskilled laborers, and the urban poor, recruiters still rejected roughly three-quarters of the applicants. Third, in the past, a recruitment crisis represented both a source and symptom of the Army’s other personnel problems. Failing to acquire a sufficient number of talented enlistees often led to “skeleton” combat units and insufficient retention of quality enlisted personnel (as well as excessive resignation rates among junior officers). Finally, there has always been inherent tension between recruiting soldiers for immediate readiness—usually in the combat arms—and recruiting and retaining soldiers with essential technical-administrative

2. Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), *The Army People Strategy* (Washington, DC: HQDA, October 2019), 2, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/the_army_people_strategy_2019_10_11_signed_final.pdf.

skills to sustain the force. In the past, Army recruitment has often had to secure the former by promising access to preparation for the latter.

The institutional memory of the nineteenth-century Old Army is one of dusty, tough, long-service cavalry troopers engaged in perpetual campaigning against hostiles. On paper, the service prioritized the combat arms, with over 21,000 of the 25,000 authorized enlisted personnel in either the infantry, artillery, or cavalry. In reality, these numbers were more aspirational than real: one 1897 survey estimated the Army ranks totaled barely 20,000 soldiers.³ Nor did they represent the nation's finest. As one long-time recruitment officer confessed, "it is a fact, not to be disguised or refuted, that want drives nine-tenth of our recruits into the army."⁴ As it does today, the Army struggled with the public perception that, as William Tecumseh Sherman explained to Helmuth von Moltke, whereas in Germany soldiering was a patriotic duty, in the United States the public's expectation was that the government "must hire and pay soldiers just as it does in public works and improvements."⁵ Indeed, as far as both politicians and citizens were concerned, enlisted personnel were better employed in public works than in training for war.

Almost from the Army's inception, a two-tier reward system characterized its enlisted ranks. Like all bureaucracies, the service rewarded those members with the skills necessary to sustain it: administrative and technical specialists in what were designated the "staff" bureaus, such as finance, ordnance, adjutant general, and so forth. Within the combat, or "line," units, the Army's existential mission was continental defense. Thus, the most skilled and valued workforce was more likely to be found not on the frontier but in the coastal fortifications manning the artillery. Even in the West, the incessant demands of post maintenance required each company to find carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, farriers, and so forth, within its ranks. Exempt from many drill and guard duties, they spent the majority of their time in uniform plying their trades. Indeed, a persistent problem was tradesmen-soldiers refusing promotion because noncommissioned officer rank would reduce their pay and privileges.

3. Raoul Dupuy, "A Study of the Cavalry of the United States of America," *Journal of the U.S. Cavalry Association* 12, no. 49 (March 1899): 68–92. On military personnel, see Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784–1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

4. Charles B. Hall, "Recruits and Recruiting," *United Service* 2 (July 1889): 26–27.

5. William Tecumseh Sherman, marginalia in Francis Vinton Greene, "The Important Improvements in the Art of War during the Past Twenty Years and Their Probable Effect on Future Military Operations," *Journal of the Military Service Institution* 4, no. 13 (1883): 2–4, Francis Vinton Greene Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, NY.

The post-Spanish American War reforms initiated by Secretary of War Elihu Root (1899–1904) have long been credited as decisive steps toward an Army prepared for modern war against a rival great power. In reality, they played a major role in one of the Army's worst recruiting crises in its long history. Root dramatically increased the Army's size, but he even more dramatically increased its responsibilities. While annually deploying roughly a quarter of its troops overseas, it now had to build and maintain the new harbor defenses, provide advisers to the National Guard, and sustain a massive schooling system. In a decade of high wages and low unemployment, the Army could not attract a sufficient number of qualified recruits. Just two years after Root left office, his successor bluntly informed Congress, "this Army that we now have is nothing but a skeleton army."⁶ The following year, the combat arms could muster only 43,000 of their authorized strength of 63,000.

The perpetual recruitment crisis prompted the Acting Secretary of War to direct a General Staff officer, Johnson Hagood, to conduct the first systematic study of Army recruitment and retention. Published as a pamphlet in 1907, his findings still resonate over a century later. Dismissing romantic views of past patriotism, Hagood concluded:

In the first place, the American soldier in time of peace is very much like every other type of American citizen . . . he becomes a soldier, and he remains a soldier, for what he can get out of it. Just as soon as he decides that he can get more out of civil life than he can out of the Army, then he is going to refuse to enlist or to reenlist.⁷

His findings emphasized the Army's difficulty with attracting and retaining personnel with the occupational skills most valued in the civilian marketplace. Perhaps more troubling, he illustrated the glaring disparities between the nonspecialist military and civilian wages: one janitor now made six times what he did as a private. Hagood's report revealed how the recruiting crisis had hollowed out the Army's ranks. On the first page was a photograph of an infantry company with an authorized strength of 65 that could muster only nine men for a mandated route march.⁸

6. *Hearings before the Committee on Military Affairs of the United States Senate on the Army Appropriation Bill for the Fiscal Year 1906-7*, 59th Cong. (1906), 39.

7. Johnson Hagood, *Circular Relative to Pay of Officers and Enlisted Men of the Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 8.

8. Hagood, *Circular*, 1, 99.

In response to the manpower crisis, the Army made several innovations. It doubled the number of recruiters, increased advertising and publicity, and created the General Recruiting Service to consolidate enlistment, basic training, and assignment. Bolstered by the evidence presented in Hagood and others' studies, and taking advantage of sustained media support, the Army convinced Congress to raise pay across the ranks. Much to the frustration of those in the combat arms, the new pay scale greatly favored technical skills. A master gunner in the coastal artillery was paid the equivalent of a regimental sergeant major in the infantry, and a master electrician was paid well over twice as much. Indeed, coastal artillery was so valuable it was allocated a number of comparatively well-paid specialist ratings denied to other, less technical combat branches. Not surprisingly, the most technically inclined and ambitious career soldiers concentrated there, ensuring that other branches had to train their requirement of semiskilled craftsmen themselves to keep their posts and units going. Helped by the century's first financial meltdown—the Panic of 1907—the Army managed to recruit up to its requirements by 1909. But as economic prosperity returned, the Army once again struggled to meet its enlisted recruiting goals, a struggle compounded by 25 percent annual turnover, a 60 percent decline in reenlistments, and a desertion rate over 20 percent.⁹

The decade after World War I brought persistent recruiting problems. Overruling senior leadership's advice, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and Congress declared the peacetime Army would become the school of the nation. The service was compelled to accept the enlistment of illiterates and short-service recruits, even as recruitment propaganda promised young men ample reliable pay, comfortable quarters, schooling, and a trade that would guarantee them civilian employment. The initial results were encouraging: over 70,000 men enlisted between March and June 1919. But the following year, despite a massive advertising campaign and strong public support from politicians, business, and labor, the Army enlisted fewer than 24,000 men and continued to lose personnel faster than it could replace them. Compounding the Army's difficulties, Congress slashed funding for schooling and drastically cut personnel. Those who had enlisted and were not selected for the promised technical schools felt betrayed. That most were housed in squalid barracks, poorly fed, harshly treated, and relegated to poorly paid menial labor only increased their demoralization. As the economy boomed in the Roaring Twenties, the Army found it harder and harder to acquire and retain sufficient talent. Until the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, the service averaged a 40 percent annual

9. Harrison Summers Kerrick, "Our Military Resources vs. Our Military Power—National Assurance vs. National Insurance," *Journal of the Military Service Institution* 54, no. 189 (May-June 1914): 293–316; and "A Study of Desertion," 1920, US Army Heritage and Educational Center (USAHEC), Carlisle, PA.

turnover in the ranks, requiring it to secure 47,000 enlistments annually to maintain its 115,000 enlisted authorization.¹⁰

The Army's perennial recruitment problems in the 1920s were compounded by increasing demands for technical specialization in its troops. Although Army doctrine and leaders emphasized the importance of the infantry-artillery warfighting team that had triumphed on the Western Front, the service's talent management policies told a very different story. As in previous peacetime eras, to attract and retain high-quality technical specialists, the Army promised vocational training, promotion to higher rank, and entitlements. Both external and internal pressure to prioritize aviation unbalanced the service's reward structure. By the end of the decade, the Air Corps' enlisted ranks numbered 12,034 to the infantry's 41,259. But the new combat branch boasted 195 master sergeants to the infantry's 150, 1,029 staff sergeants to the infantry's 318, 225 technical sergeants to the infantry's 57, and 146 first-class and 289 second-class specialists to the infantry's 25 and 35.¹¹

The first years after the end of World War II brought one of the worst recruiting crises in Army history. Barely half a year after Japan's surrender, the service secretary warned,

Our new Army, as distinguished from the pre-war force, must be an Army of trained technicians competent to handle complicated mechanical equipment. To recruit such an army we must compete on more equal terms with business and industry. If we are unable to do so, we will be forced to take leftovers. . . . Already many of our recruits are below the standard that should be set, we dare not reject them for fear that better men will not be forthcoming.¹²

In 1949, 8th Army Headquarters reported a shocking 98 percent of its replacements had tested below the acceptable Army standard for intelligence. With a line worker in an auto factory making over twice a private's pay and much of the citizenry all too aware of the dangers of combat service, the service's recruiting campaign emphasized occupational training, employment security, steady pay, benefits, and early retirement—not fighting. Enlistees—very few of them veterans—subscribed to the Army's message. One 1948 survey found that,

10. Harry G. Dowdall, "Modern Recruiting—A Problem," *Infantry Journal* 36 (June 1930): 616–25; E. N. Woodbury, "Morale: Improving the Standard of the Enlisted Many," February 28, 1931, USAHEC; and Robert K. Griffith Jr., *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army: America's Experience with an All-Volunteer Army between the World Wars* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

11. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1930* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 312–13.

12. Robert P. Patterson to President, Sub: Increase in Pay for the Armed Forces, February 18, 1946, in Strategy and the Army Files, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 319, National Archives 2, College Park, MD.

as in the 1907 study, the great majority enlisted for personal improvement, not for any desire for a military life.¹³

Despite the Army's wish to return to an all-volunteer force—albeit one with far greater education and technical skills—the years immediately following World War II produced so few quality volunteers it was repeatedly forced to ask that Selective Service be extended. Peacetime conscription guaranteed the Army annual access to a cross section of young American males, from the barely functional to the college graduate. They entered a service busily transforming itself for the challenges of atomic war, a mission that required far greater levels of education and occupational skill than its predecessor. Between the immediate postwar and 1963, the number of Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) grew from barely 50 to over 400, much of the expansion due to requirements for specialists in rapidly evolving fields such as missiles, computers, electronics, and so forth.

Fortunately for the Army, conscription ensured that many—if not enough—enlistees entered the service with the education or occupational background to fulfill its need for specialists. Unfortunately, conscription did not solve other perennial problems. Personnel churn guaranteed perpetual instability: every three years, the Army replaced virtually all its privates and corporals. As before, the Army had to funnel a high proportion of its most educated and technically skilled soldiers into elite units. In the 1950s, perhaps the most elite was Army Air Defense Command (ARADCOM), responsible for the missile bases guarding American cities. Army Air Defense Command administered its own recruitment program, enticing the best and brightest with promises of education, high-tech training, and comfortable stateside billets. The rest of the Army rediscovered that the more demanding a soldier's technical specialty, and the more time the Army had invested in his training, the less likely he was to extend his service. The service did retain 80 percent of its career sergeants—many less educated than the privates in their companies—and attracted a large number of semiskilled food processors and truck drivers. But it could not retain over a tenth of its specialists in electronics and sometimes ran a 90 percent deficit in top administrative personnel.¹⁴

As the Army withdrew from Vietnam, it endured what may have been its worst manpower crisis. Bowing to antiwar sentiment, in the summer

13. *Attitudes of New Recruits in the Army*, Report 50-314Ra, US Army, Information and Education Division, Troop Attitude Research Branch, January 15, 1948, Box 1006, Entry 93, Record Group 330, National Archives, College Park, MD.

14. On the post-World War II Army, see Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GI's and the Atomic Battlefield* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). On technical specialties, see Harold Wool, *The Military Specialist: Skilled Manpower and the Armed Forces* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), 33–38.

of 1970, President Richard Nixon drastically cut Selective Service call-ups. The effect was immediate. The Army required 7,000 men per month for the combat arms and was lucky to get 400 volunteers; draftees provided the rest. By fall, the 82nd Airborne, the Army's sole remaining rapid response force, had to line out one of its three brigades to provide troops for Vietnam. The following year, the draft ended, and Congress suddenly decided to reduce enlisted strength by 50,000, accelerating personnel turmoil. Not only did the Army suffer a 25 percent cut in less than two years, but with the end of the draft, it also lost its primary enlistment incentive. The results were immediate: between February and March 1971, the number of volunteers dropped by 65 percent. One visitor to 7th Army discovered that the typical armored company could operate only 10 of its 17 tanks, and on any given day only a dozen of its 100 soldiers were available for training.¹⁵ Any assessment of the early success of the all-volunteer Army must take into consideration the prolonged crisis of the previous years.

Beginning in mid-1971, the Army's junior enlisted force transitioned from one drawn primarily from conscripts to one relying on volunteers. A combination of unprecedented factors—personnel cuts, pay raises, massive recruiting budgets, better housing, innovative local enlistment campaigns, enlistment options, educational benefits, high youth unemployment, and above all, the withdrawal from Vietnam—generated immediate positive results. The primary beneficiary was the combat arms. Encouraged by high bonuses and promises of less “chickenshit” regulations, the number of combat arms enlistments jumped from barely 3,000 in 1970 to almost 29,000 a year later.¹⁶

Unfortunately, this early success concealed a variety of fundamental misassumptions about the all-volunteer force that would soon contribute to yet another recruiting crisis. Perhaps the most egregious mistake was the economists' argument that soldiers, like other workers, sought to maximize their value on the job market. If the armed forces provided funding and benefits comparable to or better than the civilian sector's, a sufficient number of skilled or trainable young people would enlist and make the service a career. However rational this approach appeared to academics, it created the demoralizing perspective both inside and outside the armed forces that the nation placed no value on patriotism, service, esprit de corps,

15. Lloyd Norman, “Turbulence and Army Readiness,” *Army* 21, no. 7 (July 1971): 10–14; and Robert K. Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force, 1968–1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1997).

16. L. James Binder, “Front and Center: Who Is Joining Who? Snipe at Those Slogan-Makers, but They Know the Territory,” *Army* 22, no. 4 (April 1972): 6.

or other intangibles. The Army's recruitment slogans, including the notorious "Today's Army Wants to Join You," only confirmed this perception.¹⁷

By the end of 1973, the fallacies of both economic arguments and of the idea that initial recruiting success could be maintained were obvious. Despite high bonuses and fringe benefits, the number of high school graduate enlistees fell far below the target goal, with the combat arms experiencing a 38 percent shortfall. The promised pay and benefits did not keep up with rampaging inflation, nor could the service construct decent housing for career personnel. The service endured a number of recruiting scandals that, in one instance, forced it to discharge 16 percent of its enlistees. Disciplinary and racial tensions traumatized the ranks: some young men volunteered because they believed they could secure cheaper drugs in Europe. When in 1974 Congress insisted that over half of new enlistees be high school graduates and no more than 18 percent from the lowest testing range, the service not only missed its recruiting goal by 20,000 but also had to grant almost 50,000 early discharges. Two years later, Congress cut educational benefits, thus removing a prime incentive for enlistment, and the service continued to suffer recruiting shortages. Under enormous pressure to produce results, recruiters continued to accept far too many who were dropouts, physically unfit, or socially maladjusted.

The Army's cascading personnel problems led Chief of Staff Frederick C. Weyand to commission an extensive study of first enlistment recruitment and retention. Completed in early 1976, its fundamental conclusion replicated Hagood's of 70 years earlier: "[Young people] join the Army for their own purposes—job training, or self-development, or whatever—and not out of enthusiasm for the Army itself. They tend to see the Army as a temporary price they have to pay to accomplish these purposes."¹⁸ Following the logic of those economists who had first proposed abolishing the draft, young people avoided enlisting in the combat arms because it provided the least benefits in terms of both immediate and future occupational skills. By the later part of the decade, the Army was compelled to transfer soldiers into its fighting formations involuntarily. In 1976, it announced a mandatory reclassification of 14,000 noncommissioned officers into combat arms MOSs.

17. *Department of the Army Historical Report FY 72*, 58, 76. On the post-Vietnam Army, see Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009) and Beth Bailey, *An Army Afire: How the US Army Confronted Its Racial Crisis in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023).

18. "Attitudes and Motivations of First Termers toward Reenlistment," January 1976, Box 11A, Frederick C. Weyand Papers, USAHEC.

In fiscal year 1980, one out of every three reenlistees in the combat arms had been transferred from their original MOS.¹⁹

By the end of the decade, the future of the all-volunteer force was so dubious that Army Chief of Staff Edward C. “Shy” Meyer warned the nation was fielding a “hollow” force.²⁰ In 1979, the Army had its worst recruiting crisis since the end of World War II. It missed its quota by more than 10 percent, despite lowering the minimum for testing scores, educational requirements, physical fitness, and moral standards and extending eligibility to 17-year-olds. By 1980, barely 41 percent of enlisted personnel had a high school diploma. Compounding these problems, two scandals broke. The first was that the Army’s primary talent assessment standard—the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery—was so inaccurate (or *misnormed*) as to be useless. The Army, like all the armed forces, had accepted thousands of unqualified personnel. The second revelation was widespread abuse in Recruiting Command: one investigation of a random sample of recruits found that almost 40 percent had illegally enlisted.

Set against these enormous recruiting problems of the 1970s, the Army’s revival in the 1980s is an inspirational redemption tale exemplified by the highly successful “Be All You Can Be” commercial. But three cautions should be noted. First, the Army’s success was still due to the same inducements in education, training, living conditions, and so forth promised the original recruits of the all-volunteer force—and then withdrawn. Second, outside pressures—enormous and ultimately unsustainable defense budgets, economic recession, and high youth unemployment—drove young Americans into uniform as much as rediscovered patriotism. Three, much of the perceived success of the 1980s revival was based not on a standard today’s officers would be comfortable with but only in comparison to how bad things had been in the 1970s.

Today, it is tempting to look back with nostalgia to what, in memory, was the highly trained, highly motivated, combat-ready Desert Storm Army. But as early as 1993, Chief of Staff Gordon R. Sullivan warned the service was having a harder time acquiring and retaining talent. By the end of the decade, the Army was missing its recruitment and retention goals, run ragged by constant deployments, getting by with deteriorating materiel, and profoundly questioning its purpose. As today, most of these generally welcome factors—economic prosperity, high employment, and a lack of perceived national

19. “The Bulletin Board: Army Will Retrain 14,000 NCOs to Fill Combat Unit Slots,” *Army* 26 (January 1976): 10. For additional information on re-enlistees being moved from their original MOSs, see *Commanders Call*, Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 360-870 (September-October 1982).

20. On the “hollow army” debate, see Frank L. Jones, *A “Hollow Army” Reappraised: President Carter, Defense Budgets, and the Politics of Military Readiness* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012).

security threats—were outside the service’s control, but some, including a series of sexual harassment scandals, were the service’s responsibility.

Beyond the discouraging statistics predicting an imminent recruitment crisis, some senior leaders subscribed to the belief that the post–Cold War Army was getting too “soft.” It needed to recruit those seeking membership in a warrior band rather than transitory employees acquiring skills to sell in the marketplace. As today, the cultural emphasis on “warriorism” was contradicted by the service’s increasing interest in a future war scenario of full-spectrum dominance only possible with access to talent capable of mastering the latest electronic, communication, information, and other high-tech systems.²¹

This very brief survey of previous Army recruitment crises indicates several lessons worthy of consideration by those concerned about today’s personnel problems. First and foremost, the current recruitment crisis is nothing new. Indeed, it would be fair to say that since the beginning of the twentieth century, the peacetime volunteer Army has been in a crisis more often than not. Tempting as it is to blame “wokeness,” slacker mentality, Generation Z, or some other nebulous reason, the basic fact remains—as Hagood pointed out almost 120 years ago—that average recruits are very much like average Americans. They join the service for individual reasons, most based on expectations of personal benefit. Whether they are happy or unhappy, engaged or passing time, one-timers or career depends on the Army. As Hagood’s report implicitly recognized, and as later reports have confirmed, there is a great difference between job satisfaction—which an individual believes may be achieved in applying their trade—and job engagement, in which an individual believes their occupational skills can only be appreciated within a particular organization. For the Army, which lacks the flexibility and pay scales to compete with civilian employers in job satisfaction, it is crucial to emphasize job engagement.

A second conclusion is that while the service may portray its members as warriors, in practice it has recognized the necessity of accessing and retaining skilled labor. Almost from the Army’s beginning, these twin demands have created a de facto two-tier talent management system, with higher ranks, privileges, and pay for technical and administrative specialists. Until the Army can resolve the inherent contradiction of a recruitment campaign with the slogan “Warriors Wanted” while offering \$5,000 enlistment bonuses to potential cavalry scouts and \$40,000 bonuses to satellite communications systems operators, this two-tier system will continue to exist.²² If the Army

21. On the 1990s force, see David Fitzgerald, *Uncertain Warriors: The United States Army between the Cold War and the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

22. US Army, “Bonuses,” Army (website), n.d., accessed July 18, 2017, <https://www.goarmy.com/benefits/money/bonuses-earning-extra-money.html>.

can resolve its cultural emphasis on what warriors should look like with historical realities, it can acknowledge that not all—or even the majority—of active personnel need to fit an ideal physical standard. Could Audie Murphy have passed the 2019 Army Combat Fitness Test? As a corollary, if the Army truly wants combat soldiers, their pay and benefits need to be close approximations to those of its specialists. Any young American worth wearing the uniform can understand the message sent by grossly disproportional bonuses.

A third conclusion is that both a recruiting crisis and its resolution are often determined by factors outside the Army's means of control: the state of the economy, youth employment, public attitudes, recruitment budgets, pay and benefits, deployments, and so on. This reality does not mean that the Army should not seek to improve those factors that it does control. Historic enlisted gripes that date back two centuries—abusive or incompetent leadership, misassignment, renegeing on promised training or leave, make-work projects, and using soldiers as laborers—all contribute not only to poor retention but also to occurrences where, once released, soldiers will discourage other potential enlistees. But it does mean that the Army leadership should be cautious about blaming individuals and organizations for problems that have not been resolved for over 200 years.

A final conclusion is more optimistic. While still giving primacy to the Army's mission as the world's premier combat force, the *Army People Strategy* acknowledges that the service must shift its personnel policies from a system designed to fit a generic MOS to the correct "box" to one that effectively manages individual talents. The *Army People Strategy* highlights the diversity of threats, ranging from ground combat to cyber, and prioritizes "knowledge workers" who "add value and increase productivity through creative thinking and innovation."²³ It appreciates that in today's market economy, it is the Army's task to provide not just job satisfaction—which is readily transferable to another workplace—but personal fulfillment found only in uniform. If successfully implemented—and not co-opted by those seeking to build a mythical warrior—this new approach may succeed in transforming recruits who enlist for personal benefit into soldiers who become "all they can be" in the Army.

23. HQDA, *Army People Strategy*, 3.

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A Call to Action: Lessons from Ukraine for the Future Force

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ABSTRACT: Fifty years ago, the US Army faced a strategic inflection point after a failed counterinsurgency effort in Vietnam. In response to lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War, the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command was created to reorient thinking and doctrine around the conventional Soviet threat. Today's Army must embrace the Russo-Ukrainian conflict as an opportunity to reorient the force into one as forward-thinking and formidable as the Army that won Operation Desert Storm. This article suggests changes the Army should make to enable success in multidomain large-scale combat operations at today's strategic inflection point.

Keywords: strategic inflection point, Ukraine, multidomain operations (MDO), mission command, large-scale combat operations (LSCO)

Andrew S. Grove, president and CEO of the Intel Corporation, coined the phrase *strategic inflection* point in 1988 to describe a fundamental change in the well-being of an organization.¹ He visually depicted the inflection point as the exact moment when the nature of the organization changes in a subtle but profound and lasting fashion, leading to a path of growth or decline. At this juncture, adept and creative leaders recognize and accept this choice, advancing their organizations to meet the moment. Rigid, hesitant, or risk-averse leaders fail to accept this departure, leading to irrelevance and, ultimately, organizational failure.

Fifty years ago, in 1973, the United States Army faced a strategic inflection point. The US intervention in Vietnam left the Army demoralized, and American leadership watched as the Soviet-equipped Egyptian Armed Forces nearly defeated the US-equipped Israeli Defense Forces in the Yom Kippur War. In response, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army established the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)

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1. Andrew S. Grove, *Only the Paranoid Survive: How to Exploit the Crisis Points That Challenge Every Company* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1996), 32.

to reorient thinking and doctrine around the conventional Soviet threat. Chief of Staff of the United States Army (CSA) Creighton William Abrams Jr. selected General William E. DePuy, a revolutionary intellectual and combat leader, to spearhead the effort. DePuy's new organization was charged with studying the Yom Kippur War to develop concepts, drive procurement and materiel changes, and prepare the Army to fight a modern war.² Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Abrams, and DePuy recognized that the Army was at a critical juncture and that only a monumental shift could prepare the force for the changing character of war. It would be 50 years before the next great inflection point suggesting the need for doctrine and materiel changes emerged.

Fifty years later, the Army faces a new strategic inflection point, a choice to alter the fundamental way the US Army prepares for the next fight. As the Defense establishment emerges from 20 years of counterinsurgency operations and begins to embrace a future of large-scale combat operations, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict brings the changing character of warfare into sharp relief—a future of warfare marked by advanced autonomous weapons systems, artificial intelligence, and a casualty rate the United States has not experienced since World War II.

An American Army still grappling with the lessons from Afghanistan must embrace the Russo-Ukrainian conflict as an opportunity to drive progress toward the creation of a force and strategic direction as forward-thinking and formidable as the one TRADOC built for the United States ahead of Operation Desert Storm.³ In fall 2022, a team of faculty and students at the US Army War College assembled around this call to action. The team believed the Russia-Ukraine War unfolding in front of them was a wake-up call for the Army across the traditional warfighting functions that also required a culture change across the Army's education, training, and doctrine enterprise to embrace new lessons learned and to drive change across all echelons of the Army.

Education, Training, and the Roots of TRADOC

In his early experience in Normandy, DePuy saw his division lose 100 percent of its enlisted men and 150 percent of its officers in six weeks, providing him with a profound lesson on the ramifications of poor leadership and insufficient training. He spent the rest of his career focused on leader development, specifically

2. Henry G. Gole, *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

3. John A. Nagl, "Why America's Army Can't Win America's Wars," *Parameters* 52, no. 3 (Autumn 2022): 7–19, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol52/iss3/3/>.

on balancing the need for both training and education. DePuy saw the necessity of linking the *what* and *how* (training) with the *why* and *whether* (education) in a performance-oriented training environment.

Importantly, DePuy also reoriented doctrine after the Yom Kippur War toward fighting manuals that specifically taught both combat and support soldiers how the Army would fight on a modern battlefield at every level, from weapons teams to division headquarters.⁴ The goal of the manuals was to orient soldiers and officers on practical ways to optimize the US Army's weapons systems and minimize vulnerabilities to the enemy's systems. He wanted to bring combat development out of the ambiguous and distant future into real-time training that anticipated imminent threats.⁵ Finally, DePuy believed that careful selection and training of soldiers—including training leaders and units together—mattered in the drive for combat readiness. DePuy's legacy lives on in two commands today. The United States Army Futures Command has responsibility for transformation and innovation priorities and should certainly pay close attention to the war in Ukraine, but DePuy's brainchild, TRADOC, can lead the Army back to the basics of education, training, and doctrine development at the pace it was founded—a pace that drove ruthless prioritization and reassessment.

Why Now?

American military leadership recognizes the titanic shift in geopolitics, with General Mark A. Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, calling Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine the "greatest threat to peace and security of Europe and perhaps the world" in his 42 years of uniformed service.⁶ The conflict in Europe and the arrival of artificial intelligence and autonomous and hypersonic weapons systems point to fundamental changes in the character of war and the way military forces fight.⁷ As it did after the Yom Kippur War, the US Army must examine the Russia-Ukraine War to derive lessons learned for doctrine, organization, training, materiel, professional military education, and Army leader development—and it must integrate all those lessons into organizing,

4. Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen III, *Changing An Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired*, Center for Military History Publication (CMH Pub) 70-23 (Carlisle, PA: United States Military History Institute, 1988), 182–85, 188–89, https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-23/CMH_Pub_70-23.pdf.

5. Brownlee and Mullen, *Changing an Army*, 189.

6. Jim Garamone, "Potential for Great Power Conflict 'Increasing,' Milley Says," DOD News, U.S. Department of Defense (website), April 5, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2989958/potential-for-great-power-conflict-increasing-milley-says/>.

7. John Grady and Sam LaGrone, "CJCS Milley: Character of War in Midst of Fundamental Change," USNI News (website), December 4, 2020, <https://news.usni.org/2020/12/04/cjcs-milley-character-of-war-in-midst-of-fundamental-change>.

training, and equipping a force that can win future conflicts anywhere on the spectrum. At the request of TRADOC, a small team of faculty and students at the Army War College began an examination this year, leading to a handful of takeaways that merit further study in the areas of command and control, mission command, casualty replacement and reconstitution, artificial intelligence, intelligence and deception, and multidomain operations. While the War College team produced article-length analyses of each of these areas that we hope to publish soon, this article will hit the wavetops of each area in turn.

Command and Control

Twenty years of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in the Middle East, largely enabled by air, signals, and electromagnetic dominance, generated chains of command reliant on perfect, uncontested communication lines and an extraordinary and accurate common operating picture of the battlefield broadcast in real time to co-located staff in large Joint Operations Centers. The Russia-Ukraine War makes it clear that the electromagnetic signature emitted from the command posts of the past 20 years cannot survive against the pace and precision of an adversary who possesses sensor-based technologies, electronic warfare, and unmanned aerial systems or has access to satellite imagery; this includes nearly every state or nonstate actor the United States might find itself fighting in the near future. The Army must focus on developing command-and-control systems and mobile command posts that enable continuous movement, allow distributed collaboration, and synchronize across all warfighting functions to minimize electronic signature. Ukrainian battalion command posts reportedly consist of seven soldiers who dig in and jump twice daily; while that standard will be hard for the US Army to achieve, it points in a very different direction than the one we have been following for two decades of hardened command posts.⁸

Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast

Perhaps more important than fielding new command-and-control systems is the culture shift required to embrace distributed command and control, more commonly known as *mission command*. When Milley served as Chief of Staff of the Army, he explained mission command through a concept of “disciplined disobedience” in which subordinates are empowered to accomplish a mission to achieve the commander’s intended purpose—even if they must disobey a specific order or task to do so. Without perfect communication, a subordinate officer

8. US Army general officer discussion with Ukrainian battalion commander, early 2003, relayed to the authors.

or soldier must be trusted to make the right judgment call during battle, unencumbered by the need to seek approval for small adjustments.⁹

Mission command is not doctrine to be written, tested, and shelved. It must be lived, trained, rehearsed, and embraced as an integral part of daily operations and training in garrison and combat at every echelon. The advent of artificial intelligence affords the US military the opportunity to reimagine mission command and test it with virtual simulation environments. We cannot expect a brigade that micromanages garrison tasks to execute combat operations successfully at the attrition rate incurred in modern large-scale combat operations. Disciplined disobedience requires initiative both to provide and to understand the commander's intent, end states, constraints, and restraints. Leaders and followers must be brilliant at the basics but must also be able to embrace change and think critically. Trust is the essential ingredient in mission command, but changing the Army's organizational culture to encourage senior leaders to empower and support subordinates is an enormously difficult task that will require focused attention from senior Army leaders.¹⁰

Casualties, Replacements, and Reconstitutions

The Russia-Ukraine War is exposing significant vulnerabilities in the Army's strategic personnel depth and ability to withstand and replace casualties.¹¹ Army theater medical planners may anticipate a sustained rate of roughly 3,600 casualties per day, ranging from those killed in action to those wounded in action or suffering disease or other non-battle injuries.¹² With a 25 percent predicted replacement rate, the personnel system will require 800 new personnel each day. For context, the United States sustained about 50,000 casualties in two decades of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. In large-scale combat operations, the United States could experience that same number of casualties in two weeks.¹³

9. C. Todd Lopez, "Future War Requires 'Disciplined Disobedience,' Army Chief Says," Army (website), May 5, 2017, https://www.army.mil/article/187293/future_warfare_requires_disciplined_disobedience_army_chief_says.

10. Jamon K. Junius, "Mission Command in the Ukraine War" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

11. Brian Dukes, "Senior Leader Resilience and Replacement" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023); and Dennis Sarmiento, "Medical Implication of the Ukrainian War" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

12. Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), *Sustainment Operations*, Field Manual (FM) 4-0 (Washington DC: HQDA, July 2019), 4-4.

13. Department of Defense (DoD), *Casualty Status* (Washington, DC: DoD, May 22, 2023), <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf>.

In addition to the disciplined disobedience required to execute effective mission command, the US Army is facing a dire combination of a recruiting shortfall and a shrinking Individual Ready Reserve. This recruiting shortfall, nearly 50 percent in the combat arms career management fields, is a longitudinal problem. Every infantry and armor soldier we do not recruit today is a strategic mobilization asset we will not have in 2031.¹⁴ The Individual Ready Reserve, which stood at 700,000 in 1973 and 450,000 in 1994, now stands at 76,000.¹⁵ These numbers cannot fill the existing gaps in the active force, let alone any casualty replacement or expansion during a large-scale combat operation. The implication is that the 1970s concept of an all-volunteer force has outlived its shelf life and does not align with the current operating environment. The technological revolution described below suggests this force has reached obsolescence. Large-scale combat operations troop requirements may well require a reconceptualization of the 1970s and 1980s volunteer force and a move toward partial conscription.¹⁶

Changing Character of War

Dramatically increased casualty rates, with resulting implications for force structure and manning requirements, are just one of the many dramatic changes in the character of war. The ubiquitous use of unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned surface vehicles, satellite imagery, sensor-based technologies, smartphones, commercial data links, and open-source intelligence is fundamentally changing the way armies will fight on the land domain in much the same way that unmanned aerial vehicles have changed the way air forces conduct operations in this century.¹⁷ These systems, coupled with emerging artificial intelligence platforms, dramatically accelerate the pace of modern war. Tools and tactics that were viewed as niche capabilities in previous conflicts are becoming primary weapons systems that require education and training to understand, exploit, and counter. Nonstate actors and less capable nation-states can now acquire and capitalize on technologies that bring David's powers closer to Goliath's.

Beyond the military changes, transnational corporations in the commercial sector are playing an operationally significant role in the artificial intelligence and information battlespace. These private companies are exponentially

14. Stephen K. Trynosky, "Paper TigIRR: The Army's Diminished Strategic Personnel Reserve in an Era of Great Power Competition" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023), 22.

15. Trynosky, "Paper TigIRR," 20.

16. Kent Park, "Was Fifty Years Long Enough? The All-Volunteer Force in an Era of Large-Scale Combat Operations" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

17. Jay Bradley, "Fires in the Ukraine War" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

increasing the effectiveness of intelligence processing, exploitation and dissemination, dynamic targeting, and fires. A public-private partnership founded on transparency is essential when preparing for and while engaging in conflict. This partnership should be formed in garrison, and training exercises with private companies should be incorporated into war games, planning, exercises, and experimentation to ensure that soldiers are familiar with the systems that may prove vital in future combat—and so that the private companies can gain a better understanding of what capabilities the military needs.¹⁸

Embrace Deception and Greater Use of Unclassified Intelligence

The incorporation of open-source and declassified intelligence into the information space immediately proved effective at the outset of the Ukrainian conflict, shifting domestic, international, and adversary reactions upon release. This technique will play an outsized role in future conflicts and, when advantageous, open-source intelligence should be integrated into intelligence fusion to ensure expedited dissemination to the public—always while ensuring the benefit of releasing the intelligence is worth the possible risk to sources and methods inherent to any declassification efforts. While many examples of the application of open-source information to the war in Ukraine cannot be discussed in this article, one that can is crowdsourcing possible war crimes to enable attribution and eventual prosecution of the perpetrators.¹⁹

Beyond open-source intelligence incorporation, Army professional military education and training must include basic instruction on deception operations, given the unparalleled transparency observed during operations in Ukraine. The Armed Forces of Ukraine are exceptionally skilled at deception across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, an effect that requires synergy and trust to integrate capabilities across domains.²⁰

Multidomain Operations

The US Army continues to make significant headway in the development of multidomain operations (MDO), with its third MDO task force having

18. Schuyler Moore and Mickey Reeve, “U.S. Central Command Holds a Press Briefing on Their Employment of Artificial Intelligence and Unmanned Systems” (transcript), U.S. Department of Defense (website), December 7, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3239281/us-central-command-holds-a-press-briefing-on-their-employment-of-artificial-int/>.

19. Deb Amos, “Open Source Intelligence Methods Are Being Used to Investigate War Crimes in Ukraine,” *NewsHour*, PBS (website), June 12, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/12/1104460678/open-source-intelligence-methods-are-being-used-to-investigate-war-crimes-in-ukr>.

20. Clay Huffman, “Intelligence in the Ukraine War” (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

achieved full operational capability in May 2023. These theater-specific task forces incorporate long-range precision effects including cyber, electronic warfare, intelligence, and long-range fires to counter hybrid threats from Russia and China.²¹ Although the MDO task forces are modernizing rapidly, the remainder of the Army must also understand and incorporate the tenets of multidomain operations that will characterize future wars. The communication and visualization requirements for an all-knowing, all-seeing MDO task force are significant and largely immobile, meaning the smaller maneuver units must understand the capabilities of an MDO task force without necessarily having unencumbered access to it. The smaller units must anticipate gaps in enemy defenses and exploit emergent advantages.²² Anticipation, exploitation, and mission command do not happen organically; all require education, training, and doctrine.

After examining multidomain operations during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the study team asserts that the Army should reassess the roles and responsibilities of headquarters at echelon to account for multidomain operations and other emerging organizational structures like the Penetration Division.²³ The Army must expand linkages between joint exercises, division-level warfighters, and combat training rotations to teach synchronization of convergence and combined arms within the context of multidomain operations.²⁴ DePuy's "how to fight" manuals of the past reinvented as chat platforms fueled by generative AI knowledge bases and layered on top of National Training Center rotations, division and corps warfighter exercises, and small-unit training would serve as the ultimate convergence activity.

So What?

Grove believed that a strategic inflection point rarely announces itself but rather presents as a choice to bring clarity to chaos and take a new path, one that allows the organization to meet the moment rather than follow a comfortable but dead-end road. Today's Army is reminiscent of the Army of 1973, rife with experience, knowledge, and opportunities to change. TRADOC was established to transform the Army into

21. Charles McEnany, "Multi-Domain Task Forces: A Glimpse at the Army of 2035," Association of the United States Army (website), March 2, 2022, <https://www.ausa.org/publications/multi-domain-task-forces-glimpse-army-2035>.

22. Jesse L. Skates, "Multi-Domain Operations at Division and Below," *Military Review* (January-February 2021), 68-75, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/January-February-2021/Skates-Multi-Domain-Ops/>.

23. Nathan A. Jennings, "Considering the Penetration Division: Implications for Multi-Domain Operations," Land Warfare Paper 145 (Arlington, VA: Association of the United States Army, 2022), <https://www.ausa.org/publications/considering-penetration-division-implications-multi-domain-operations>.

24. Steve Chadwick, "MDO and the Ukrainian War" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

the best-trained, -equipped, -led, and -organized land power in the world. DePuy's experiences in World War II and Vietnam and his study of the Yom Kippur War shaped his belief that transforming the Army into a land power capable of defeating a modern enemy required an Army-wide conceptual and doctrinal overhaul. He believed that officers must be intellectually capable and placed a premium on those who could solve problems with speed and quickly institutionalize change across the organization.

The Army of 2023 faces a similar inflection point, an opportunity to reassess the professional military education soldiers and officers are receiving across the TRADOC Centers of Excellence, their training experiences at the national training centers, and the daily training and education they receive throughout their careers. The AirLand Battle concept derived from the Yom Kippur War (after the failed foray into Active Defense) may now morph into artificial intelligence land battle informed by the Russia-Ukraine War and a future of largely unmanned or remotely manned ground combat vehicles. The Army must look at the scaffolding of everything from the basic courses to war colleges and orient lessons on what is being learned today, incorporating real-time, wartime action into the classroom and simulated battlefields. Although modernization is often focused on the material aspect of progress, the heavy lifting occurs when integrating new material with doctrine, organization, training, leadership, personnel, and facilities. To remain relevant to the pace of the rapidly changing character of war, TRADOC must lead this initiative now, adapting education and training in real time. Although crisis acts as a useful crucible for innovation, the US Army must ensure it captures these rapid changes in a manner that can be immediately written into doctrine, implemented in training, and woven into the daily lives of soldiers in garrison and combat.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine are buying lessons with blood that not only preserve their freedom but can also help the US Army deter and, if necessary, fight and win future wars at a lower cost of life and treasure.²⁵ It would dishonor those soldiers' sacrifices and the memory of General DePuy not to pay full attention.

25. Volodymyr Grabchak and Myra Naqvi, "Ukrainian History and Perspective" (Strategic Research Paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2023).

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The Strategic Importance of Taiwan to the United States and Its Allies: Part Two – Policy since the Start of the Russia-Ukraine War

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ABSTRACT: Taiwan has become increasingly important to the United States and its allies as the Russia-Ukraine War has united democracies against authoritarian expansionism and indeed has developed an international democracy-authoritarianism dynamic in global affairs. Part one of this article clearly outlined the geopolitical, economic, and soft-power reasons why Taiwan is strategically important. Part two reviews the development of US and allied policy statements on Taiwan—from the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 to the present—and provides policymakers and military strategists with incremental but realistic recommendations for understanding the current dynamic of the region and fashioning responses to deter further authoritarian aggression.

Keywords: Taiwan, China, Russia, Ukraine, *National Security Strategy*, Biden

Toward the end of 2022, Congress passed, and the president signed, the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which includes a section titled the “Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act.”¹ That section authorizes \$2 billion in grants and loans annually to Taiwan for five years and authorizes \$1 billion a year for military stockpiles to be sent to Taiwan in case of an emergency.² The significant and unambiguous increase in funding and materiel support signals concern over Taiwan’s defensive needs, but the reasons for that anxiety are not so clearly articulated.

The Russia-Ukraine War has increased uneasiness that authoritarian regimes such as China will take advantage of the United States’ and Europe’s concentration on Ukraine to take action against their rivals,

1. P.L. 117-263, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, H.R. 7900 (2022), <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/fy23-ndaa-bill-text>; and Jim Gamarone, “Biden Signs National Defense Authorization Act into Law,” U.S. Department of Defense (website), December 23, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3252968/biden-signs-national-defense-authorization-act-into-law/>.

2. John Feng, “Joe Biden Prepares to Sign Off on \$10Bn Taiwan Security Package,” *Newsweek* (website), December 8, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/joe-biden-national-defense-authorization-act-2023-taiwan-security-defense-bill-china-1765635>.

such as Taiwan, if not properly deterred. These concerns appear justified, given that China's response to the National Defense Authorization Act involved sending even more warplanes and warships around Taiwan than their past responses to the United States' and Taiwan's perceived "provocations."³ More recently, China reacted to a visit by the then Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan by conducting extensive military exercises—including launching missiles over northern Taiwan—and had a similar reaction to current Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy's meeting with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen in April. It would behoove military planners to familiarize themselves with the strategic environment quickly, should tensions over the waters and airspace surrounding Taiwan increase further.

The war in Ukraine has brought to light subtle changes in diplomatic wording and incremental maneuvers from the previous US position articulated in the One China Policy (OCP). Some policy reinterpretations are grounded in fundamental changes to Taiwan's domestic politics, that is, what the people of Taiwan want from their relationship with the United States and China. While part one of this article reviewed the factors that make Taiwan strategically important, part two will make the case that the United States has begun to shift its policy in how it regards Taiwan while also trying to avoid military confrontation. Through a review of US policy toward Taiwan from the Nixon administration to current official statements brought on in part by the Ukraine conflict, this article provides policymakers with thoughts on how to manage this delicate balance.

The US One China Policy

The origins and dynamics of US-China relations are shaped by the US One China Policy, which can only be explained in the historical context that led to Taiwan becoming a *de facto* independent state.⁴ In 1911, as imperial governance in China collapsed, and colonial powers took advantage during China's "century of humiliation," revolutionaries founded the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) to take its place.⁵ Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek led the effort to unite China from what

3. Jennifer Jett, "China Sends 71 Warplanes and 7 Ships toward Taiwan in 24 Hours," *NBC News* (website), December 26, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-taiwan-us-defense-spending-bill-rcna63221>.

4. For more information on the US One China Policy, see Luke P. Bellocchi, "Innovation in Education – The U.S. One China Policy: A Primer for Professional Military Education Faculty," *Campaigning: The Journal of the Joint Forces Staff College*, Joint Forces Staff College (website), May 11, 2022, <https://jfsc.ndu.edu/Media/Campaigning-Journals/Academic-Journals-View/Article/3026633/the-us-one-china-policy-a-primer-for-professional-military-education-faculty/>.

5. *Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on "China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy"* (2011) (testimony of Alison A. Kaufman, China Analyst, Center for Naval Analyses), <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf>.

had devolved into “warlording” states, including confronting a significant communist military force led by Mao Zedong. As World War II broke out, the ROC was an important US ally, but political infighting, logistical challenges, and noncooperation with communist forces worked against significant challenges to the invading Japanese. These issues undercut Allied confidence in Chiang’s capability and weakened postwar support.⁶ After Japan’s surrender, Chiang quickly became re-embroiled in a civil war against Mao’s communist forces. Ultimately, the communist forces prevailed and founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC, China). Chiang’s remnant forces retreated to Taiwan, along with a significant refugee population, to join a larger indigenous population on the island. Taiwan had been an integral part of the Japanese Empire since the late 1800s until Japan relinquished its claim to it and other possessions under the terms of surrender to the Allies and the Treaty of Peace with Japan (though the sovereignty of these possessions was left undetermined).

At this point, most other countries, including the United States and the United Nations, recognized only the ROC government as the legitimate government of China. In 1972, however, President Richard Nixon visited Beijing to capitalize on the rift between the communists in the PRC and the Soviet Union. Although a joint communiqué was issued at the end of the visit, no formal diplomatic relations were established between the United States and the PRC. The communiqué stated, in part, that the United States only acknowledged the Chinese position that Taiwan was part of China (wisely leaving wiggle room on the issue of Taiwan’s status). This acknowledgment is repeated in two subsequent communiqués, one of which established formal diplomatic relations. Conceding the need for the United States to deal directly with the world’s most populous nation, President Jimmy Carter recognized the PRC in 1979 as the sole government of China, and he relinquished ties to the ROC government in Taiwan, which included abrogating the mutual defense treaty in force at the time. Subsequent statements continued to acknowledge the Chinese position on the sovereignty of Taiwan but also confirmed the US commitment to sell arms to Taiwan out of concern that a former ally, a noncommunist state, and a strategically important island would fall to China. Ever since, Taiwan has, in effect, been a *de facto*, separately governed entity that has continued to trade internationally while only being diplomatically recognized by a handful of countries.

6. Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China’s World War II 1937–1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2023), 296–314; and “Forgotten Ally? China and the United States in World War II” (slideshow), *CNN* (website), September 1, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/31/asia/gallery/china-us-cooperation-ww2/index.html>.

The US One China Policy, the foundation for diplomatic relations between China and the United States, is confusing because of its nomenclature. The White House often refers to it as “our” One China Policy, which implies a Chinese-US agreed-upon understanding, when in reality, “our” only refers to US policy. While the joint communiqués have a mutual understanding that there is one China (not an East, West, or some other China), the part that is not agreed upon is the status of Taiwan. In fact, China officially refers to the understanding as the “One China Principle,” so it is better to understand “our” (meaning the United States) One China Policy as created by and belonging to the United States.

The US One China Policy is almost always now stated by the White House in conjunction with the Taiwan Relations Act, joint communiqués, and the Six Assurances. The Taiwan Relations Act, passed when diplomatic relations were severed with the ROC, provides that the United States will continue to sell arms to Taiwan, with the expectation that any resolution of the Taiwan question would be peaceful; it also establishes unofficial institutions to continue quasi-diplomatic relations with the government in Taiwan. In 1982, then President Ronald Reagan provided the “Six Assurances” to Taiwan via diplomatic cable, which included a commitment to continued arms sales and a statement that “there is no change in our longstanding position on the issue of sovereignty over Taiwan.” These assurances have been repeated in subsequent administrations. President Bill Clinton also stated—and his statement has been repeated—that any US resolution of the sovereignty issue would be made with the assent of the people of Taiwan.⁷

Although officials often state there is no change in policy, these other documents and statements refine the OCP without directly contradicting it. The construct of the OCP, however, appears to have changed since the original reason for negotiating a *détente* with the PRC—to have a buffer against the Soviet Union—is no longer part of the strategic environment. Instead, fundamental changes in Taiwan have transformed the country into a vibrant democracy whose populace views itself as distinctly Taiwanese.

Fundamental Changes in Taiwan’s Domestic Politics

Given that military hostilities with the PRC persisted after the ROC’s retreat to Taiwan in 1949, the ROC was governed under martial law until 1987. Taiwanese presidents Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui instituted major reforms to allow for free elections on the island. Since then,

7. See Bellocchi, “U.S. One China Policy.”

Taiwan has developed into a dynamic democracy that has seen the presidency change between political parties several times. Taiwan, an island about the size of Belgium populated by 24 million people, has a diverse ethnic composition, which significantly impacts Taiwan's electoral politics.

Although Chiang Kai-shek brought his army and a significant number of refugees to the island in 1949, most of the population of Taiwan had centuries-old genealogical roots as Taiwanese. Those who consider themselves Taiwanese or indigenous to the island have their own languages, most of which are believed to be related to Fujianese rather than Mandarin Chinese or are aboriginal and minority languages.⁸ In recent polls, more than 60 percent of Taiwan inhabitants describe themselves as "Taiwanese," while less than 5 percent call themselves "Chinese," and less than a third call themselves both.⁹ Other polls show that only 1.3 percent of the population has any desire to unify with China.¹⁰ Most Taiwan residents have indicated no interest in declaring formal independence for fear of provoking the PRC into a war. One might surmise, then, that should the PRC renounce the use of force in its relations with Taiwan, such polling would probably have quite different results.

In modern Taiwan, even the descendants of those who retreated to Taiwan in 1949 find fewer connections to mainland China, and many have called for declaring outright independence from China.¹¹ Although it is difficult to discern people's true preferences through polling that is influenced by PRC intimidation, polling toward independence increased significantly around 2019 and 2020, and the majority preference is for the status quo. In Taiwan's vibrant and free democracy, the Democratic Progressive Party has won the presidency four times—including the current administration of President Tsai Ing-wen—most recently on a platform that has declared Taiwan a de facto independent country for over 70 years. In the past, it appears the United States pressured the Democratic Progressive Party leadership

8. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Languages of Taiwan," <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan/Languages>; Reuters, "Gene Study Links Polynesians to Taiwan," *NBC News* (website), July 4, 2005, <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna8464488>; and Ka'iwakiloumoku Pacific Indigenous Institute, Digital Collection: *Pacific Conversations*, episode 5, "Indigenous Taiwan, Birthplace of Polynesian Languages and Pacific Navigation," Ka'iwakiloumoku Pacific Indigenous Institute (website), February 21, 2022, <https://kaiwakiloumoku.ksbe.edu/article/pacific-conversations-indigenous-taiwan-birthplace-of-polynesian-language>.

9. National Chengchi University, Election Study Center, Data Archives, Taiwan/Chinese Identity, <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7800&id=6961>.

10. John Feng, "Taiwan's Desire for Unification with China Near Record Low as Tensions Rise," *Newsweek* (website), July 14, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/taiwan-china-politics-identity-independence-unification-public-opinion-polling-1724546>.

11. Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, "In Taiwan, Views of Mainland China Mostly Negative," Pew Research Center (website), May 12, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/05/12/in-taiwan-views-of-mainland-china-mostly-negative/>; Chen Yu-fu and Jonathan Chin, "Nearly 90 Percent of Public Identify with Taiwan: Poll," *Taipei Times* (website), August 11, 2021, <https://www.taipetitimes.com/News/front/archives/2021/08/11/2003762406>; and "Poll: Taiwanese Distance Themselves from Chinese Identity," AP News (website), May 12, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-china-mao-zedong-international-news-asia-pacific-c8a1f7669442b2b86ddff1563c3bd0e9>.

to state that they would not formally declare independence or hold a referendum on the question in an apparent effort to stave off a PRC military reaction.¹²

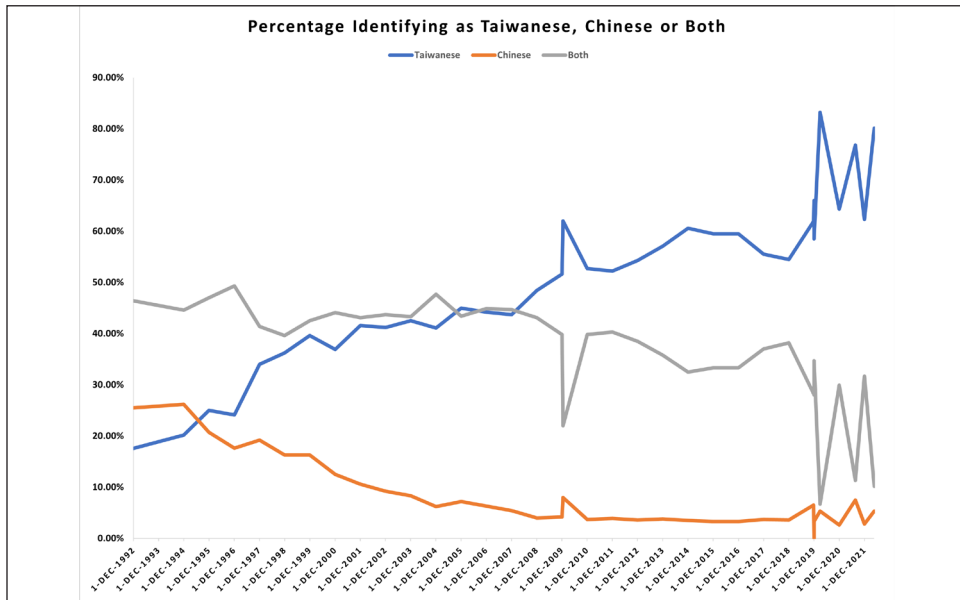


Figure 1. Taiwan population identification as Taiwanese, Chinese or both

(Data based on: Pew Research Center, “Most in Taiwan Identify as Taiwanese, but There Are Large Partisan Differences,” Pew Research Center [website], May 11, 2020, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/05/12/in-taiwan-views-of-mainland-china-mostly-negative/pg_2020-05-12_taiwan_0-11/; Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation, “April 2022 Public Opinion Poll – English Excerpt,” April 26, 2022, <https://www.tpof.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/20220426-TPOF-April-2022-Public-Opinion-Poll-%E2%80%93-English-Excerpt.pdf>; “Changes in Taiwanese/Chinese Identity [1992–2022],” Election Study Center, National Chengchi University [website], January 13, 2023, <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7800&cid=6961>; and Commonwealth Magazine, 2010 and 2019 polls [as translated], <https://www.cw.com.tw/article/5098353>, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100323105730/http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2009/new/dec/16/today-t1.htm>.)

Any implication of or movement toward the recognition of Taiwanese sovereignty has historically generated violent responses from China. For example, in 1995, China conducted a series of so-called missile tests around Taiwan to intimidate the government against democratic liberalization.¹³ China took a similar approach in 1996, intending to warn the electorate against choosing a pro-independence candidate. The PRC intimidation

12. Monique Chu and Ko Shu-ling, “We Trust Chen on Plebiscite Pledge, US Institute Says,” *Taipei Times* (website), June 24, 2003, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2003/06/24/2003056520>.

13. Kristen Gunness and Phillip C. Saunders, *Averting Escalation and Avoiding War: Lessons from the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press [NDU], 2022), 8–36, <https://inss.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/3253834/averting-escalation-and-avoiding-war-lessons-from-the-19951996-taiwan-strait-cr/>.

efforts have often backfired, causing the population to distance itself from any PRC “overtures.”¹⁴

Most recently, the PRC engaged in a series of military exercises and missile tests around Taiwan in response to Pelosi’s August 2022 visit. Coincidentally, Taiwan held mayoral and county elections on November 26, 2022, which indicated mixed shifts in public opinion. Although some analysts found the result somewhat of a defeat for the ruling party, other analysts suggested the shift signaled a hesitance of the electorate to provoke military action over what some might say is a purely symbolic visit, despite growing defiance of China.¹⁵ Other analysts have characterized the elections as simply local, with outcomes shaped by regional problems—such as crime and traffic—and by local personalities.¹⁶ Regardless, it is not parochial politics but rather the international dynamics associated with large-scale conflict in Ukraine that have brought Taiwan’s democracy and sovereignty into focus.

The Russia-Ukraine Conflict’s Effect on the Taiwan Straits Situation

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed the dynamic between China, Taiwan, and US allies in the region. Start with the widely held premise that PRC President Xi Jinping holds a near-dictatorial grasp on China greater than any other leader since Deng Xiaoping and that Xi’s foreign policy decisions are probably made with little or no resistance from his advisers.¹⁷ It is clear that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Xi discussed Putin’s plan to invade Ukraine beforehand and that Xi believed Putin’s assessment that the invasion would be a fait accompli within days of its start.¹⁸ There may have even been an implied level of at least rhetorical support (despite China’s constant visceral attacks on any entity it sees as violating its sovereignty

14. Amy Qin and Amy Chang Chien, “‘We are Taiwanese’: China’s Growing Menace Hardens Island’s Identity,” *New York Times* (website), January 22, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/world/asia/taiwan-china-identity.html>; and Feng, “Taiwan’s Desire for Unification.”

15. Nathan Batto, “Reactions to the 2022 Elections,” *Frozen Garlic* (blog), November 28, 2022, <https://frozengarlic.wordpress.com/2022/11/28/reactions-to-the-2022-elections/>; Brian Hioe, “Are the 2022 Election Results Simply a 2018 Redux?,” *Taiwan Insight* (website), University of Nottingham: Taiwan Studies Programme, November 29, 2022, <https://taiwaninsight.org/2022/11/29/are-the-2022-election-results-simply-2018-redux/>.

16. Batto, “Reactions to the 2022 Elections”; and Hioe, “2018 Redux?”

17. Sue-lin Wong, “Xi Jinping: The Making of a Dictator,” *Economist* (website), October 19, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/1843/2022/10/19/xi-jinping-the-making-of-a-dictator>; Voice of America (VOA), “US Officials Agree: China’s Xi Is a Dictator,” VOA News (website), June 25, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-officials-agree-china-s-xi-is-a-dictator/7152326.html>.

18. Grant Newsham, “Xi Jinping Might Think He Can Handle His Own ‘Ukraine,’” *Diplomat* (website), July 12, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/xi-jinping-might-think-he-can-handle-his-own-ukraine/>.

and interfering in internal affairs due to China's "century of humiliation").¹⁹ Xi made assumptions about Russian credibility and capability and is now in a quagmire of his own making. China now finds itself weighed down in several ways. Its partner Russia is being economically drained by a war it can ill afford to wage; the fact that China might gain some short-term economic benefits from buying cheaper Russian raw materials does not balance against the fact that its partner is somewhat incapacitated.

Further, China has prided itself on waging what it calls the Three Warfares, one of which is lawfare—however, it now finds itself on the moral low ground with regard to its long-standing arguments on sovereignty.²⁰ If the goals of invasion had been accomplished quickly, the invasion might have just become a footnote in history, and there might have been a world condemnation, but little more than symbolic. Prior to the invasion, Xi may have thought the invasion of Ukraine would serve as a test case for what would happen if the PRC were to take Taiwan by force. According to the CIA, Xi has ordered the PLA to be prepared to invade Taiwan by 2027, and China has conducted plenty of military exercises around Taiwan over the years.²¹ Xi might hope for a rapid takeover followed by condemnation but little else in terms of real impact on China. Based on what happened with the Tiananmen Square incident, there might have been symbolic sanctions of one sort or another, but the United Nations would be stalemated, as China and Russia maintain permanent veto power on the security council.²² So far, the world reaction

19. Edward Wong and Julian Barnes, "China Asked Russia to Delay Ukraine War until after Olympics, U.S. Officials Say," *New York Times* (website), March 2, 2022; "President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin Sign Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Cooperation for the New Era and Stress Settling the Ukraine Crisis through Dialogue," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (website), March 22, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202303/t20230322_11046088.html; and Kaufman testimony.

20. See Department of Defense (DoD), *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2011: A Report to Congress Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2011).

21. Matt Salmon and Shay Stautz, "American Power and the Defense of Taiwan," Foreign Policy Research Institute (website), March 9, 2023, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/03/american-power-and-the-defense-of-taiwan/>; Michael Martina and David Brunnstrom, "CIA Chief Warns against Underestimating Xi's Ambitions toward Taiwan," February 2, 2023, Reuters (website), <https://www.reuters.com/world/cia-chief-says-chinas-xi-little-sobered-by-ukraine-war-2023-02-02/>; and Bonny Lin et al., "Tracking China's April 2023 Military Exercises around Taiwan," *China Power Project*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (website), last updated May 11, 2023, <https://chinapower.csis.org/tracking-chinas-april-2023-military-exercises-around-taiwan/>.

22. Ted Galen Carpenter, "George H. W. Bush's Shameful Kowtow to China: A Cautionary Tale," Cato Institute (website), May 27, 2020, <https://www.cato.org/commentary/george-hw-bushs-shameful-kowtow-china-cautionary-tale>; and Richard C. Bush, "Commentary: 30 Years after Tiananmen Square, a Look Back on Congress' Forceful Response," Brookings (website), May 29, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/05/29/30-years-after-tiananmen-square-a-look-back-on-congress-forceful-response/>.

has certainly been to warn the PRC against attempting such a scenario with Taiwan, which is discussed later in this piece.

Nonetheless, Europe is distracted by a major invasion in proximity to the borders of its major powers, and they are exhausting their supply of armament grants to Ukraine. Moreover, Taiwan is far from Europe, and the European Union is the PRC's largest trading partner (and vice versa), reaching €1.9 billion daily so that any sanction would be a double-edged sword for Europe's economy.²³ The fact that there is so much trade with China might appear to prevent intervention, but it also means many countries have a vital stake in deterring a conflict. Any protracted conflict over Taiwan will plunge the world economy into a tailspin. The war in Ukraine directly involves two major economies, but not the world's top three, plus a host of other tiger economies in the region, such as South Korea.²⁴ Cooler heads and those with economic interests in China are keenly aware of these facts and almost definitely prefer to avoid conflict over something they see as inevitable—unification with Taiwan. Like other countries in the region, if China's economy continues to grow, Beijing believes at least those entities in the immediate region will become clients of China (much as in ancient times when China was known as the Middle Kingdom). Whether Xi is that patient is another matter.

Xi has shied away from any overt support of Russia and scrambled to shore up China's diplomatic position. He has refrained from supplying Russia with armaments or military supplies, and even recently, he has stated plainly that the PRC opposes the use of any kind of nuclear weapon in the conflict. It is hard to calculate what domestic political pressures might lead Xi to advance an invasion plan, regardless of the lessons discussed above. Even the People's Liberation Army—which many speculate is far more realistic about its ability to invade Taiwan—may simply follow orders in the current system (much like some would say the Russian military did with Putin's invasion orders).²⁵ Thus, the world reaction to the Ukraine situation might ring loudly among PRC leadership, but that does not mean it has had the same effect on Xi himself. Further, as President Joe Biden's statements and other policy statements appear to be moving Taiwan further from reach, Xi may be considering other factors.

23. Büşra Toprak, "EU-China Relations: Rivals or Partners?," *Politics Today* (website), November 11, 2022, <https://politicstoday.org/eu-china-relations-rivals-or-partners/>.

24. Caleb Silver, "The Top 25 Economies in the World," *Investopedia* (website), September 1, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/>.

25. Carl Ford, former Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research (INR), Comments to Joint Forces Staff College, November 2022; and Andrew Scobell, "China's Calculus on the Use of Force: Futures, Costs, Benefits, Risks, and Goals," in *Crossing the Strait: China's Military Prepares for War with Taiwan*, ed. Joel Wuthnow et al. (Washington, DC: NDU Press, 2022), 65–84, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/crossing-the-strait/crossing-the-strait.pdf>.

Policy Statements since Ukraine

There have been numerous other changes since the war in Ukraine started—in many ways driven by the war and changes in the strategic environment. First, US policy statements and the publication of the first full Biden-Harris administration *National Security Strategy* (NSS) indicate an immediate focus on the Taiwan question and subtle changes in policy. Second, in August 2022, the PRC reacted vehemently against Pelosi's visit to Taiwan by raining missiles over and conducting a mock blockade of the island. Then, in October 2022, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) held its 20th National Congress, in which Taiwan was mentioned numerous times as a strategic imperative for the PRC. Japan and Australia have recently made more far-reaching statements about the defense of Taiwan than ever before. Lastly, reactions from Europe have mimicked these regional allied statements, again in contrast to their disjointed and passive reactions in the past. While the significance of all these statements is not to be understated, they instead indicate an escalation from an issue that many in the past wished would quietly go away to what could be a calamitous collision course.

US Policy Statements and the *National Security Strategy*

US policy statements on Taiwan have ranged from what the president has stated on the topic to the more formal *National Security Strategy* issued by White House staff.

The President's Statements

One of the clearest policy statements on national security is what the president says about it. Notably, on four occasions in the past two years, President Biden has stated that the United States has a commitment to defend Taiwan—and it is worth noting that President George W. Bush made a similar declaration in 2001.²⁶ Less than a month after Pelosi's visit, Biden provided the strongest of these assurances in response to a question from CBS News about whether "US forces, US men and women, would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion." He stated: "Yes, if in fact, there was an unprecedented attack."²⁷ Some pundits at first dismissed his words

26. Kelly Wallace, "Bush Pledges Whatever It Takes to Defend Taiwan," *CNN* (website), April 25, 2001, <https://edition.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/04/24/bush.taiwan.ab/>.

27. "Biden Tells 60 Minutes U.S. Troops Would Defend Taiwan, but White House Says This Is Not Official U.S. Policy," *60 Minutes Overtime, CBS News* (website), September 18, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-joe-biden-taiwan-60-minutes-2022-09-18/>, as quoted in Frances Mao, "Biden Again Says US Would Defend Taiwan if China Attacks," *BBC* (website), September 19, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62951347>; and Kevin Liptak, "Biden's Past Promises for US to Defend Taiwan under Microscope in Meeting with China's Xi," *CNN* (website), November 14, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/13/politics/joe-biden-taiwan/index.html>.

as offhand remarks, and the White House press office continually voiced that there had been no change in policy.²⁸ When a president makes the same commitment four times, it is hard to dismiss its meaning flippantly. The official statements that no policy change had occurred provide plenty of wiggle room—they neither contradict the president’s statement nor the US One China Policy. Although the United States abrogated the mutual defense treaty it had with the government of Taiwan in 1979, nothing in the communiqués prohibits a unilateral decision to defend Taiwan. Reinforcing the president’s statements is the latest National Security Strategy.

Interim National Security Strategy

One of the biggest indicators of national policymakers’ concerns over an issue is in what light the concern is mentioned in the *NSS* if it is mentioned at all. In the *Interim NSS*, published in 2021 before the Ukraine conflict started, Taiwan is mentioned only once:

We will support Taiwan, a leading democracy, and a critical economic and security partner, in line with longstanding American commitments. We will ensure that U.S. companies do not sacrifice American values in doing business in China. And we will stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity, including in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet.²⁹

This quote would indicate that at the time, the administration believed Taiwan to be an important enough issue to include in the *NSS* (by far, most countries are not usually mentioned at all), but there is no indication of how critical an issue it is. Rather, the focus is on the need to support democracy and human rights. Although the implication is that the policy will *ensure* (rather than just assure) the restriction of US company dealings in China, there are no specifics. It is unclear whether any redlines would trigger such action.

Current National Security Strategy

In contrast, the latest *NSS*, published in October 2022, makes seven statements regarding Taiwan—the character of which is more drastic and designed to maximize deterrent effects against China to take action in any way similar to Russia’s action

28. Kevin Liptak, “Biden’s Past Promises for US to Defend Taiwan under Microscope in Meeting with China’s Xi,” *CNN* (website), November 14, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/13/politics/joe-biden-taiwan/index.html>.

29. Joseph R. Biden Jr., *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington, DC: White House, March 2021), 21, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/>.

against Ukraine. The first statement in the 2022 *NSS* implies that the White House expects NATO and the EU to counter PRC aggression in an “active” way (see quote below). What “active” means and how the United States will get European countries to comply is not clear, but it seems to be having an effect, which will be discussed later.

U.S. interests are best served when our European allies and partners play *an active role* in the Indo-Pacific, including in supporting freedom of navigation and maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.³⁰

Europe

There has been discussion in the national security policy arena about at least individual members of NATO taking a larger part in Asian affairs.³¹ Regardless of the effect, the National Security Council is clearly reminding Europe that instability and conflict in major commercial shipping lanes will affect them in no small manner. With global integration, crippling economies in Asia would almost certainly turn the world economy into a Charybdis—especially during COVID-19 recovery and the costs created by the war in Ukraine. Most economies that have provided debt-driven stimulus in recent years are well-aware that the global economy is teetering on a delicate balance.³²

Moreover, with the United States and European allies’ attention on supplying Ukraine with large-scale armaments, there is a concern that China may take advantage of a perceived lack of allied and partner military capacity to gain a foothold in Taiwan. The United States, therefore, is urging Europe to remain steadfast because another deterrence failure would be a blow to democracy and the economy worldwide.

We have an abiding interest in maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, which is critical to regional and global security and prosperity and a matter of international concern and attention.³³

30. Joseph R. Biden Jr., *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, October 2022), 17, (author emphasis added) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/8-November-Combined-PDF-for-Upload.pdf>.

31. Henry Foy, “NATO Holds First Dedicated Talks on China Threat to Taiwan,” *Financial Times* (website), November 30, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/d7fa2d2b-53be-4175-bf2b-92af5defa622>; and Marshall Reid, “Recent NATO Debate Highlights the Growing Transatlantic Dialogue on Taiwan,” *Global Taiwan Brief* 7, no. 24 (December 2022): 7–9, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/12/recent-nato-debate-highlights-growing-the-transatlantic-dialogue-on-taiwan/>.

32. Hannah Ward-Glenton, “IMF Cuts Global Growth Forecast for Next Year, Warns ‘The Worst Is Yet to Come,’” *CNBC* (website), October 11, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/10/11/imf-cuts-global-growth-forecast-for-2023-warns-worst-is-yet-to-come.html>.

33. Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 24.

In this second mention of Taiwan in the *NSS*, the emphasis is again on global security and prosperity. This quote also provides a level of concern—critical. Any dictionary could provide an appropriate definition to apply here, but generally, *critical* would indicate a situation that could potentially bring about negative consequences and chain reactions.

We oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side, and do not support Taiwan independence.³⁴

Status Quo

This wording has been used before, as demonstrated in prior *NSS* and White House statements. In simple terms, this language has been telegraphing to the PRC not to invade Taiwan and telegraphs to Taiwan not to declare independence. It could also be seen as a quid pro quo: if the PRC does not attempt to take Taiwan (by whatever means), the United States will pressure Taiwan not to seek formal independence. Whether this status quo is an acceptable bargain for either side is questionable.

On the PRC side, we can speculate that at least some see the absorption of Taiwan into China as an inevitability and see no reason to send the region into a military conflict (especially those who have a stake in economic stability). In other words, the “status quo” is a moving strategic environment that favors the PRC, assuming the PRC’s economy continues to grow at a rapid rate (alongside its military capability) and nearby economies get absorbed into its economic orbit. Indeed, one might ask if the above statement reflects a traditionally short-term US interest in avoiding armed conflict while knowing time and authoritarian gray-zone tactics weigh adversely.

There is analysis, however, that some elements in the PRC are calling for immediate action on the Taiwan question.³⁵ In any case, the PRC has no qualms about pushing the envelope with military incursions, engaging in gray-zone tactics, or otherwise trying to coerce Taiwan into accepting a political arrangement with the PRC—all designed to co-opt Taiwan into China sooner.

On the Taiwan side, most of the population appears to want to avoid any military conflict with a nominal declaration of independence but feel bullied by their giant neighbor and believe they should have the freedom to decide their destiny. A significant portion of the population is calling for more independent recognition on the international stage and protection against PRC incursions.

34. Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 24.

35. Chen Yu-fu and Kayleigh Madjar, “MAC Says China Plans to Ramp up Unification Call,” *Taipei Times* (website), November 23, 2021, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2021/11/23/2003768355>.

The leadership of Taiwan is aware that this recognition cannot be done without support from major powers, in an affront to the PRC. In response, there appears to be support—at least from the United States—of the idea that Taiwan should have a seat at places like the World Health Organization to handle pandemic issues.³⁶ The statement above indicates that a *de facto* independent Taiwan and minor pushes for international recognition are acceptable for the foreseeable future.

We remain committed to our one China policy, which is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances.³⁷

Again, the United States clearly specifies “our” OCP (as opposed to a US-China OCP) but, as has been the trend, mentions the Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances along with it. The statement raises arguments over whether there have been changes to our OCP over different administrations. Arguably, there have been statements that seem to favor closer relations with China at the expense of Taiwan or in its favor, and much of this dialogue was tainted by anachronistic perceptions of the ideology of the government in Taiwan when it was under martial law. Since Taiwan has become an open democracy, this attitude has seemed to change, and there appears to be more bipartisan consensus. Other scholarly works review whether changes in policy have been made. It might be fair to say that the basic components of the policy remain intact: the acknowledgment (rather than recognition) of the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China, the United States’ continued provision of arms for Taiwan’s defense, and the pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the issue.

Strategic Context

What has changed is the strategic context of previous statements. That Taiwan is now a full-fledged democracy with a population that overwhelmingly identifies as separate from China is one such change. Harsh political crackdowns on Hong Kong have completely undermined China’s olive branch to treat Taiwan according to a “one-country, two-systems” manner. The military balance across the Straits 40 years ago ensured Taiwan could defend itself and avoid blockade and harassment. Now, China can sustain long-term blockades and attacks if needed, and the development of its blue-water navy is sure to increase this capability. This change has also startled regional actors into increasing their defensive resources. The economic growth of China and the international interdependence that goes with it mean armed conflict in the region will have global consequences.

36. Nike Ching, “US Rallies Support to Back Taiwan’s WHO Bid,” VOA News (website), May 6, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/east-asia-pacific_us-rallies-support-back-taiwans-who-bid/6188834.html.

37. Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 24.

So, in effect, to avoid short-term conflict, it seems a convenient claim that there has been no change in policy, but as the United States pivots its attention to Asia, and as political maneuvers are made, one might surmise that this suggestion may not last long and may question whether the United States will be left with fewer options in the long term.

And we will uphold our *commitments* under the Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan's self-defense and to maintain *our* capacity to resist *any* resort to force or coercion against Taiwan.³⁸

Commitments

In the NSS's last mentions of Taiwan, the word *commitments* conveys the idea that there is more to the US relationship with Taiwan than occasional arms sales. Moreover, using the word *our* regarding commitments and capacity might imply there is an *allied capacity* (rather than just a US capacity) to resist force against Taiwan. This statement might also imply that the United States recognized or prearranged a joint allied response. The last phrase, "to resist any resort to force or coercion," implies *any* use of force—such as the recent mock blockade and missile demonstration—however brief, would lead to the increased armament of Taiwan (and indeed it has).³⁹ The FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes \$12 billion in grants and loans for Taiwan over the next five years to buy US arms.⁴⁰ Note that the unclassified version of the *National Defense Strategy* also discusses the US position to support Taiwan in countering the PRC's increasingly aggressive coercive activity.⁴¹ Lastly, it is also worthy of note that this NSS definitively refers to the Senkaku Islands as part of Japan ("We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan under our mutual security treaty, which covers the Senkaku Islands"). Since PRC military exercises around Taiwan come so close to these islands, any misdirection could lead to an activation of this commitment.

38. Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 24 (author added emphasis)..

39. Kathrin Hille, "China's Military Response to Pelosi Visit Raises Escalation Fears," *Financial Times* (website), August 3, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/4c97b3c5-bf30-4971-ba7c-9ad5e74389b7>.

40. P.L. 117-263.

41. DoD, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2022), <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF>.

Table 1. Comparison of statements on Taiwan in each *National Security Strategy* from 2002–22

Past National Security Strategies					
Biden NSS Year 2022	U.S. interests are best served when our European allies and partners play an active role in the Indo-Pacific, including in supporting freedom of navigation and maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.	We have an abiding interest in maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, which is critical to regional and global security and prosperity and a matter of international concern and attention.	We oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side, and do not support Taiwan independence.	We remain committed to our One China policy, which is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances.	And we will uphold our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan's self-defense and to maintain our capacity to resist any resort to force or coercion against Taiwan.
Biden NSS Year 2021 <i>*Interim NSS</i>	We will support Taiwan, a leading democracy, and a critical economic and security partner, in line with longstanding American commitments.				
Trump NSS Year 2017	We will maintain our strong ties with Taiwan in accordance with our "One China" policy, including our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide for Taiwan's legitimate defense needs and deter coercion.				
Obama NSS Year 2015	No mention				
Obama NSS Year 2010	We will "encourage continued reduction in tension between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan."				

Table 1. Comparison of statements on Taiwan in each *National Security Strategy* from 2002–22 (continued)

Past National Security Strategies					
G. W. Bush NSS Year 2006	Our assistance efforts will also highlight and build on the lessons learned from successful examples of wise development and economic policy choices, such as the ROK, Taiwan, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Chile, and Botswana.	China and Taiwan must also resolve their differences peacefully, without coercion and without unilateral action by either China or Taiwan.			
G. W. Bush NSS Year 2002	When we see democratic processes take hold among our friends in Taiwan or in the Republic of Korea, and see elected leaders replace generals in Latin America and Africa, we see examples of how authoritarian systems can evolve.	The United States has led the way in completing the accession of China and a democratic Taiwan to the World Trade Organization.	... we have profound disagreements [with PRC]. Our commitment to the self-defense of Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act is one.		

To contrast and review some recent *NSS* statements on Taiwan, the Trump administration made this mention in 2017:

We will maintain our strong ties with Taiwan in accordance with our “One China” policy, including our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide for Taiwan’s legitimate defense needs and deter coercion.⁴²

This statement is more or less the same as the statements above, though it does frame the relationship with Taiwan as having “strong ties.” Notice the statement does not mention the Six Assurances or the communiqués, and “One China” is in quotes, whereas the current *NSS* does not capitalize

42. Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, December 2017), 47, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

“one.” In either case, the TRA is mentioned, and the change in its traditional label might indicate a change in formality or adjustment.

During the Obama administration, the 2015 *NSS* did not mention Taiwan at all, and the 2010 *NSS* simply stated that we would “encourage continued reduction in tension between the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan.” Although the Obama administration made statements (though scant action) concerning the need to pivot foreign policy toward Asia, presumably because of a rising PRC, what role Taiwan would play in the envisioned scheme of this pivot is not clear, except to avoid provocation.

In the 2006 *NSS* from the George W. Bush administration, there are three mentions of Taiwan:

Our assistance efforts will also highlight and build on the lessons learned from successful examples of wise development and economic policy choices, such as the ROK, Taiwan, Ireland, Poland, Slovakia, Chile, and Botswana.

China and Taiwan must also resolve their differences peacefully, without coercion and without unilateral action by either China or Taiwan.⁴³

The 2002 *NSS* from the same administration has four mentions of Taiwan:

When we see democratic processes take hold among *our friends* in Taiwan or in the Republic of Korea, and see elected leaders replace generals in Latin America and Africa, we see examples of how authoritarian systems can evolve.

The United States has led the way in completing the accession of China and a democratic Taiwan to the World Trade Organization.

. . . [W]e have profound disagreements [with the PRC]. Our *commitment* to the self-defense of Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act is one.⁴⁴

43. George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, March 2006), 34, 42, <https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nss/nss2006.pdf>.

44. Bush, *National Security Strategy*, 3, 18, 28 (author emphasis added).

These statements together indicate a position more closely related to the current one, emphasizing peace but also a commitment to Taiwan and a recognition of Taiwan's status as a successfully developed democracy. It also seems to imply that if Taiwan can transform into a democracy from an authoritarian regime, so could the PRC (and what an example Taiwan could be to the people of the People's Republic).

Pelosi's Trip to Taiwan

On August 2, 2022, China reacted vehemently to Pelosi visiting Taiwan, the first speaker of the United States House of Representatives to visit the island since Newt Gingrich, who went in 1997. Back then, the PRC response was purely rhetorical and seemed to indicate that it did not care about legislative branch visits.

This time, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said: "Those who play with fire will perish by it. We would like to once again admonish the U.S. that we are fully prepared for any eventuality and the PLA will never sit idly by."

These words were followed up by military action between August 4 and 7. The PRC military forces conducted a temporary or mock blockade of Taiwan, and numerous missiles were shot above and over the capital city, Taipei. These actions involved naval deployments around Taiwan, live-fire drills, ballistic-missile launches over Taiwan, and increased air sorties. Figure 2 shows six of seven zones that the PRC announced would include military drills during these days. These zones include some of the most utilized commercial waterways and aviation lanes in the region. A PRC carrier group with a nuclear submarine passed through the Taiwan Straits and engaged in live-fire drills.

The PLA fired 11 missiles into areas around Taiwan, with four of them flying above the island's populated areas. Japan complained that for the first time, several of the missiles landed in its exclusive economic zone in the Yaeyama Islands.

Meanwhile, the United States sent the USS *Ronald Reagan* carrier strike group to conduct military operations in the nearby Philippines Sea (but canceled a test of the Minuteman II missile). During the Pelosi trip, the USS *Tripoli*, with 20 F-35 stealth fighters on board, patrolled near Taiwan. On August 7, Taiwan announced live-fire exercises in Pingtung County.

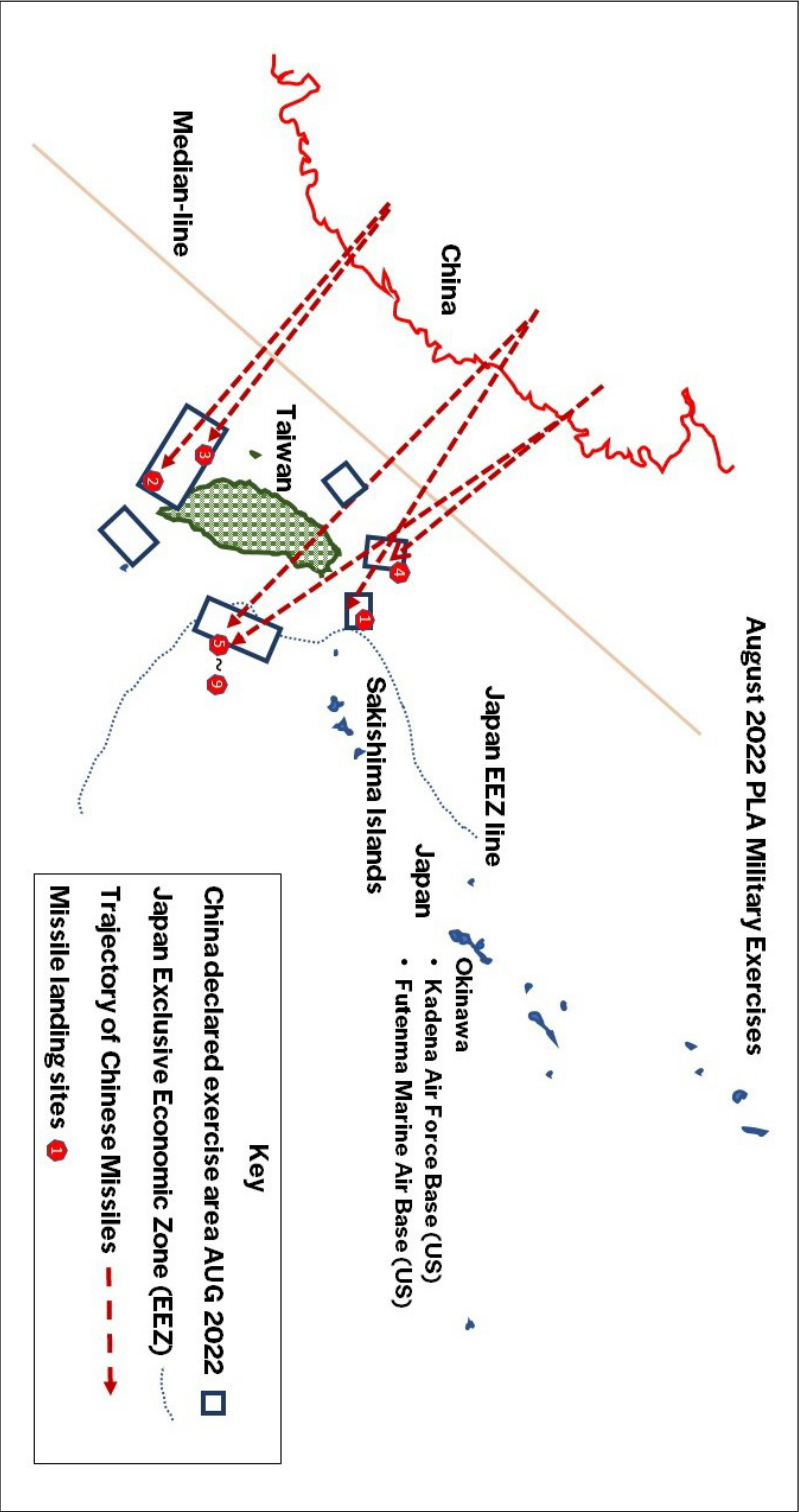


Figure 2. Location of PRC military drills surrounding Taiwan after Pelosi's trip
(Based on the following sources: PRC state media and Japan Ministry of Defense data)

A number of other more minor drills were announced days later. The White House summoned the PRC ambassador to complain officially about the reckless behavior and the danger it posed to international shipping in response to a peaceful visit, while the PRC summoned the US ambassador to complain about Pelosi's visit. A National Security Council spokesperson stated:

We felt it was important to bring the ambassador in, to make clear our positions about their provocative actions . . . [and] we condemn the military actions. We also made clear to the ambassador that Beijing's actions are concern not only to us, but to Taiwan and to the rest of the world. And made clear that—we wanted to make sure that he knew how much the international community was also opposed to this.

Kevin McCarthy, the newly elected speaker of the United States House of Representatives, met with Tsai on April 5, 2023, in California. China again responded with bellicose rhetoric and military drills held around Taiwan, though only for three days this time. Perhaps PRC leadership believed it had to respond somehow but became wary of the global response to military drills in August.

People's Republic of China – Chinese Communist Party 20th National Congress

In October 2022, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) held its 20th National Congress. In its report, Taiwan was mentioned numerous times as a strategic imperative for the PRC:

In response to separatist activities aimed at “Taiwan independence” and gross provocations of external interference in Taiwan affairs, we have resolutely fought against separatism and countered interference, demonstrating our resolve and ability to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to oppose “Taiwan independence.”

We have put forward an overall policy framework for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era and . . . [w]e have resolutely opposed separatist activities aimed at “Taiwan independence” and foreign interference.

[P]olicies of peaceful reunification and *One Country, Two Systems* are the *best way* to realize reunification across the Taiwan Strait; national reunification with people from all political parties, sectors, and social strata in Taiwan, and we will work with them to promote peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

We will continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort, *but we will never promise to renounce the use of force*, and *we reserve the option of taking all measures necessary*.

We will stand closely with our Taiwan compatriots, give firm support to patriots in Taiwan who desire unification, and join hands to keep pace with the trends of history.⁴⁵

These statements are not new, per se, but they vehemently single out Taiwan's independence forces, and the implication is that outside interference is solely to blame for this attitude. In other words, there is a vehement reaction to any suggestion that anyone in Taiwan would want to be anything but part of China. After all, the so-called patriots who desire unification are the ones who recognize China's view that the trend of history is for China to become the Middle Kingdom once again (that is, that all political entities will wish to be in its favor if not a part of it). The means the PRC proposes are through cultural exchanges and the like and the repeated offer of "one country, two systems"—something now well beyond an acceptable solution for Taiwan, given the recent suppression in Hong Kong.

Compared to the previous CCP National Congress report, the tone has become exasperated. For example, the previous report states, "We have made fresh progress in work related to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan," responded "as appropriate . . . to separatist movements," and "safeguarded peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."⁴⁶ The tone consistently advocates a peaceful solution and *force* with regard to Taiwan is not mentioned.

45. Xi Jinping, *Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China* (Beijing: October 16, 2022), 3, 10, 51, 52 (author added emphasis), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/202210/t20221025_10791908.html.

46. Xi Jinping, *Report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China* (Beijing: October 18, 2017), 5, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Xi_Jinping's_report_at_19th_CPC_National_Congress.pdf.

Xi, for his part, reiterated at the recent Congress that although the PRC is “striving for the prospect of peaceful unification with Taiwan,” China would never “promise to give up the use of force to take Taiwan,” and he encouraged the PLA to prepare for war and to ensure invasion capability by 2027.⁴⁷ American policymakers have warned that these statements are not to be taken lightly.⁴⁸ Thus, the hoped-for bargain intended to restrain Taiwan from de jure independence in return for China’s promise of nonviolent resolution has not yet been accepted—so much so that Xi appears to be rethinking the approach, as demonstrated by Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan.⁴⁹

Regional Allies’ Counterreaction to PRC Blockade Drills

Japan and Australia have made more far-reaching statements about the defense of Taiwan than ever before. As stated above, Australian Defence Minister Peter Dutton said on November 13 that it would be “inconceivable that we wouldn’t support the US in an action if the US chose to take that action” with regards to Taiwan.⁵⁰ Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida described the PRC military exercises after Pelosi’s visit as a “grave problem.”⁵¹

In addition, allies and partners demonstrated solidarity by issuing a joint statement. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa condemned China’s military exercises after their in-person meeting in Phnom Penh, at the 55th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting.⁵²

November 14, 2021, the United States and Japan held large-scale joint military exercises around the island of Tokunoshima with 36,000 soldiers representing the Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom in what some

47. Michael Martina and David Brunnstrom, “CIA Chief Warns against Underestimating Xi’s Ambitions toward Taiwan,” Reuters (website), February 2, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/cia-chief-says-chinas-xi-little-sobered-by-ukraine-war-2023-02-02/>.

48. Matthew Loh, “Xi Jinping Is ‘Preparing the Chinese People for War,’ Trump-era National Security Advisor Says,” Business Insider (website), January 3, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-national-security-adviser-mcmaster-xi-preparing-chinese-people-war-2023-1>.

49. Asia News, “Xi Set to Bid Farewell to ‘One Country, Two Systems’ Formula for Taiwan,” PIME Asia News (website), January 27, 2023, <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Xi-set-to-bid-farewell-to-one-country-two-systems-formula-for-Taiwan-57619.html>; and Jianli Yang, “Will Xi Jinping Make Taiwan a New Offer?,” *Diplomat* (website), February 7, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/will-xi-jinping-make-taiwan-a-new-offer/>.

50. Colin Clark, “Aussies Would Join US to Defend Taiwan; Defense Minister Says ‘Inconceivable’ They Wouldn’t,” *Multimedia Report: Defense in Asia/Pacific*, Breaking Defense (website), November 15, 2021, <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/11/aussies-would-join-us-to-defend-taiwan-defense-minister-says-inconceivable-they-wouldnt/>.

51. Thomas Maresca, “Japan Slams China’s ‘Grave’ Military Exercises over Taiwan; Nancy Pelosi Wraps Asia Visit in Tokyo,” *MSN* (website), August 5, 2022, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/japan-slams-china-s-grave-military-exercises-over-taiwan-nancy-pelosi-wraps-asia-visit-in-tokyo/ar-AA10kSBi>.

52. Press Trust of India, “US, Australia, Japan Urge China to Cease Military Exercises around Taiwan,” *Business Today* (website), August 7, 2022, <https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/trends/story/us-australia-japan-urge-china-to-cease-military-exercises-around-taiwan-343975-2022-08-07>.

see as a response to the PRC's exercises.⁵³ Nevertheless, the US Department of Defense has had to admit that the PRC's incursions into Taiwan's air defense zone that doubled from the previous year to 1,727—including drones and nuclear-capable bombers—has become the “new normal,” implying there will be no immediate kinetic attempt to thwart them.⁵⁴

Reactions from Europe

Although European reactions to Chinese aggression in the Taiwan region were often sidelined in the past, since early last year, European countries and the European Union (EU) have seemed to recognize both the US position that the Taiwan question is a global concern and the call for greater pushback against China. In response to the PRC's reaction to the Pelosi visit, the EU Parliament condemned PRC exercises in passing resolution 424-14.⁵⁵ Although the EU sent its first-ever legislative delegation to Taiwan the year before, the Pelosi trip seems to have sparked a wave of defiant visitors to Taiwan, including Tennessee Senator Marsha Blackburn (who stated, “We will not be bullied”), Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey, Indiana governor Eric Holcomb, member of Japan's ruling party Keiji Furuya, French senators. and a delegation from Lithuania.⁵⁶ More high-level visits are scheduled in the near future.⁵⁷

53. Clyde Hughes, “US, Japan Hold Joint Exercise in Shadowed China,” United Press International (website), November 14, 2022, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/11/14/Japan-United-States-joint-exercise-China/7391668436430.

54. Mark Satter (@marksatter), “NEW: The Pentagon assesses that increased Chinese military posturing around Taiwan is the ‘new normal,’ prompted by Speaker Pelosi’s visit to the island in August,” Twitter (website), November 29, 2022, 4:50 p.m., <https://twitter.com/marksatter/status/1597709490325192704>; and Staff Writer with Agence France-Presse, “China’s Air Incursions into Taiwan Zone Doubled in 2022,” Defense Post (website), January 2, 2023, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2023/01/02/china-incursions-doubled-taiwan-2022>.

55. Ralph Jennings, “EU Seeks to Strengthen Taiwan’s ‘Silicon Shield’ as Military Tensions with China Threaten Chip Supply,” *South China Morning Post* (website), September 16, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3192759/eu-seeks-strengthen-taiwans-silicon-shield-military-tensions>.

56. Helen Davidson, “The Pelosi Effect: Foreign Delegations Queue Up to Visit Taiwan in Defiance of China,” *Guardian* (website), August 27, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/27/the-pelosi-effect-foreign-delegations-queue-up-to-visit-taiwan-in-defiance-of-china>; News Wires, “Delegation of French Senators Arrives in Taiwan,” France 24 (website), September 9, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220907-delegation-of-french-senators-arrive-in-taiwan>; Al Drago, “Sen. Markey Leads Delegation to Taiwan, 12 Days after Pelosi Trip,” *USA Today* (website), August 14, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/08/14/taiwan-visit-markey-lawmakers-pelosi/10322870002/>; and Huizhong Wu, “EU Lawmakers Meet Taiwan Premier in First Official Visit,” AP News (website), November 3, 2021, last updated November 6, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-china-taiwan-european-union-tsai-ing-wen-7d3646b91187590f4edc34b4b3ea5d10>.

57. Jens Kastner, “Germany to Send Cabinet Member to Taiwan for First Time in Decades,” *Nikkei Asia* (website), December 22, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Germany-to-send-cabinet-member-to-Taiwan-for-first-time-in-decades>.

In August 2022, the G7 foreign ministers and the High Representative of the European Union condemned the exercises:

We call on the PRC not to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the region, and to resolve cross-Strait differences by peaceful means. There is no change in the respective one China policies, where applicable, and basic positions on Taiwan of the G7 members.⁵⁸

Lastly, the reactions from Europe have mimicked these regional allied statements, again in contrast to their disjointed and passive reactions in the past. Sources indicate German Chancellor Olaf Scholz warned Beijing during his recent trip there that there would be deep consequences to any military attempt against Taiwan. According to one source, “No Chinese leader has ever heard anything like this from a German chancellor on an issue of core interest to Beijing.” European Council President Charles Michel delivered a similar message on Taiwan when he met Xi a month later.

One German diplomat described the message to China as: “If you continue down the path of confrontation, then you are going to see more, and not less, engagement with Taiwan.”⁵⁹

Conclusion and Recommendations for Action

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has dramatically changed the strategic environment in the region surrounding Taiwan and focused the attention of world leaders on the strategic importance of Taiwan to the global economy and the league of democratic societies opposing authoritarian expansionism. Taiwan is geopolitically wedged between two democratic US allies—including the world’s third-largest economy—and lies along a vital commercial route for global shipping, making it a key control point for the PRC as it seeks to expand naval power into the Pacific. In addition, Taiwan serves as a beacon of democracy, especially to people in China, and as an example of a successfully transformed democratic society. Lastly, as a member of global democratic societies, the loss of Taiwan to the PRC—by whatever means—will signal to US allies a failure of America’s resolve. Japan has already

58. “G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on Preserving Peace and Stability across the Taiwan Strait,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (website), August 4, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e_000433.html; and Department of State, “G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on Preserving Peace and Stability across the Taiwan Strait,” Office of the Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State (website), August 3, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/g7-foreign-ministers-statement-on-preserving-peace-and-stability-across-the-taiwan-strait/>.

59. This section is primarily based on Noah Barkin, “Watching China in Europe – January 2023,” Asia Program, German Marshall Fund (website), January 2023, <https://www.gmfus.org/news/watching-china-europe-january-2023>.

decided to double its military budget in response to regional tensions and a possible perception of a weakened US response. As indicated in the current *NSS*, the United States expects Europe to engage and deter any PRC attempts to take advantage of a distracting Ukraine war, the depletion of war material, global economic fragility, and possible exhaustion to expand its “new normal” military encirclement of Taiwan. Although the 2022 CCP Congress continued to press for unification with Taiwan through outdated modes, the visit of Pelosi (and McCarthy’s meeting) and the PRC’s militaristic reaction have only caused Taiwanese and world leaders to become ever more defiant to its overtures. Russian aggression and the risk of tepid US commitments warrant renewed consideration of options to protect US interests in the region and deter authoritarian aggression.

The United States has, in debating degrees of “strategic ambiguity” versus “strategic clarity,” missed the point. Ambiguity and clarity are aligned with the gray zone. The United States should increase the development of its gray-zone strategies tailored to the pursuits of strategic interests—whether those interests are geopolitical, commercial, or ideological. China has effectively strategized and operated in the gray zone for more than a decade. The war in Ukraine has led to calls for increased political posturing to signal the West’s commitment to Taiwan, using the *NSS* to call on European partners to play an active role and to go beyond visiting Taiwan in defiance of PRC threats. Winning in the gray zone, however, will take more than a war of symbolism; it will require deft action.

The United States has made some recent incremental gray-zone moves by sending Marine guards to protect our de facto embassy in Taiwan (the American Institute in Taiwan, or AIT), increased arms sales, supported Taiwan’s entry into organizations that do not require statehood, and even enrolled Taiwanese students into its military staff colleges. The *NSS* calls for a strategy to expand our capacity to safeguard a strategically important island for the United States and its allies and to do so, the following modifications should also be considered (each of which could be developed in further studies):

1. Expand diplomatic agreements with Taiwan from trade and basic de facto embassy arrangements to include arms sales agreements that have exercise-level interoperability and joint force coordination in blockade- and invasion-type scenarios.
2. Set out the sales agreement terms for unofficial military-to-military protocol in the use of newly acquired arms.

3. Support further entry of Taiwan into organizations that require statehood or recast organizations to omit that requirement (for example, observer or regional status) or to create new organizations that represent democratic societies in dichotomy against authoritarianism (an international league of democracies).
4. Press further military engagements at military staff colleges—to include staff familiarization trips to Taiwan—to pursue mutual understanding of force structure.
5. Press allied nations such as Japan to engage in the same level of exchange described above (that is, Australia, Japan, and the Philippines should consider exchanging students at their military staff colleges, providing armament sales with trainers and operational exercises, upgrading their diplomatic presence and agreements to include military protocol, and supporting or creating official international organizations that advance democracy).
6. Encourage European allies and partners to play an *active role* in doing the same.

Taiwan, for its part, must consider extending and expanding its military reserve capability and its training for civilian resistance efforts (perhaps learning from NATO's newest membership applicant, Sweden, which has taught civil defense for years). This expansion would apply not only to its military but to its law enforcement and civil authorities as well.⁶⁰ It should actively engage in learning from other democracies on the front lines of authoritarianism, such as South Korea and Ukraine, about ways to bolster its reserve components and readiness for kinetic engagement, and thereby its willingness to fight and win. Like these cultures, it must demonstrate resolve if it wishes to deter conflict. It should devote a portion of its formal education and reserve capacity to becoming a weapons-familiar and defense-postured culture.

Taiwan's military must actively seek to learn interoperability and coordination with other nations to sustain itself in a conflict. If the people of Taiwan continue

60. See Anne-Françoise Hivert, "In Neutral Sweden, Civil Defense and Citizens Gear Up for Possibility of War," *Le Monde* (website), March 15, 2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/02/16/in-neutral-sweden-civil-defense-and-citizens-gear-up-for-possibility-of-war_6016004_4.html; and Jon Henley, "Sweden Distributes 'Be Prepared for War' Leaflet to All 4.8m Homes," *Guardian* (website), May 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/21/sweden-distributes-be-prepared-for-war-cyber-terror-attack-leaflet-to-every-home>.

to have commercial success and demonstrate a democratic way of life, they will go a long way toward resisting the forces of authoritarianism. They may also actively participate and urge their leaders to institute the measures above.

Part one of this article reviewed the basics of why Taiwan is strategically important, and part two demonstrates how this reality is reflected in US and Chinese statements and posturing. The first part reviewed four solid reasons the United States and allied nations should find Taiwan strategically important, from a realist and a liberalist perspective. First, it is militarily important because of its geographic proximity to two US allies, Japan and the Philippines, and an increasingly aggressive PRC that logically seeks a safe passage into the open Pacific for its growing blue-water fleet and wants to drive a geographic wedge between US allies. Besides having been the launch point for Japan's invasion of the Philippines during World War II, Taiwan also lies along the defensive First Island Chain and within anti-ship missile range of Japan's Senkaku Islands. Second, Taiwan's economy remains an Asian Tiger, with an economy four times larger than that of prewar Ukraine. Its semiconductor industry is recognized as producing 90 percent of the most sophisticated products in the global supply chain, disruption to which would halt downstream production and would cost over \$1 trillion per year.⁶¹ Over 88 percent of the world's largest container ships pass through the Taiwan Strait, with few viable alternative routes. Third, Taiwan remains a beacon of democracy for the people of China through its example and social media interactions in a common Mandarin language. Lastly, Taiwan has become a credibility watch point for US allies and partners, especially considering authoritarian expansion via the invasion of Ukraine. Other countries will question whether the United States can continue to guarantee freedom on the high seas or whether China's growing military capabilities will indeed challenge its primacy in the Pacific. Failure to deter further authoritarian expansionism will test US credibility for a liberal world order.

The second part of the article concentrated on how the Russia-Ukraine War has impacted how policymakers view Taiwan's strategic importance. It began with a quick review of the development of America's One China Policy and how its basis was grounded in reasons that no longer exist but seems to have adopted new developments that acknowledge Taiwan's homegrown evolution into a lively democracy. Besides Biden unmistakably stating four times that the United States is committed to Taiwan's security, the current NSS now plainly urges European

61. *To Receive Testimony on Worldwide Threats: Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee* (2023) (testimony of Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence), 86, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/23-44_05-04-2023.pdf.

allies to play an “active role” in maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait that is “critical to global security and prosperity.”⁶² Seven mentions of Taiwan adopt a stance that recognizes a democracy-authoritarianism dynamic in the international system partly brought on by the invasion of Ukraine.

In this background, high-level meetings between Tsai and Pelosi and later McCarthy have taken place. Rather than acquiescing to PRC protests as world leaders have done in the past, there has been increasing defiance over Chinese protests and military responses, with increasing official visits and recognition—perhaps reinforcing Xi’s miscalculation in supporting Russia’s invasion that has clearly backfired. Perhaps in part to solidify this miscalculation, the Biden-Harris administration has twice invited Taiwan to a summit of democratic nations; it remains to be seen whether the summit will become an organizational alternative to formal UN recognition of Taiwan’s legitimate democratic status. Regardless, it reinforces the statements and actions recognizing the strategic importance of Taiwan to the United States and its allies.

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62. Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 17, 24.

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The Impact of Antarctic Treaty Challenges on the US Military

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ABSTRACT: The Antarctic Treaty of 1961 largely prevented conflicts on the continent, but growing pressure on the treaty system could affect the global community and the United States. This article utilizes historical documents and press reports to examine these challenges, which include ice deterioration, unreported and unregulated fishing, resource extraction preparation, and hostilities between treaty members. Given that these challenges involve China and Russia, it is in the United States' interest to understand them and the potential request for US military intervention to maintain global security and treaty interests.

Keywords: Antarctica, Antarctic Treaty, sea levels, unreported and unregulated fishing, global power competition

Despite being the fifth-largest continent, Antarctica remains somewhat unknown to the general population and is unlike any place in the world. In the winter, the average temperature is -67°F on the interior ice sheet and -13°F on the coast. In the summer, the average temperature rises to -17°F for the interior and 32°F for the coast, leading to the thaw of coastal ice between seasons.¹ Despite these constant changes in the temperature, inland Antarctica remains the coldest location in the world due to it being the continent with the highest elevation.² The high elevation leads to frigid air dropping to the coast, which creates the world's fastest constant wind speed of 200 miles per hour. For comparison, the sustained wind speed of a category 5 hurricane is 157 miles per hour.³

Due to the harsh conditions, the first officially recorded Antarctic exploration efforts began only 200 years ago. In 1773, British explorer James Cook crossed the Antarctic Circle at 66.5 degrees south latitude, the line of latitude marking the most northern point of the continent. After the crossing, Cook

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Antarctica," n.d., accessed August 24, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctica/Climate>; and Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), "Ice Sheets," Australian Antarctic Program Antarctica (website), last updated September 9, 2021, <https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/ice-and-atmosphere/ice-sheet/>.

2. Michon Scott, "Antarctica Is Colder Than the Arctic, but It's Still Losing Ice," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climate.gov (website), March 12, 2019, <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/features/antarctica-colder-arctic-it%E2%80%99s-still-losing-ice>.

3. "Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale," National Hurricane Center and Central Pacific Hurricane Center (website), n.d., accessed August 27, 2022, <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php>.

chose not to look for land as he felt the region was too dangerous and offered few valuable resources.⁴ Over the next century, a handful of explorers braved the Antarctic and the imminent threat of starvation and exposure. By the 1950s, several countries had claimed territory and established outposts, and in 1952 tensions over Antarctica's Hope Bay nearly erupted into war. In response, the Antarctic Treaty was created, and for the duration of the Cold War, the treaty prevented violent conflict and nuclear testing while promoting scientific research.⁵

In recent decades, the threat of climate change and the rise of new world powers have created new challenges for the treaty, involving membership complications, protecting the continent's environment and resources, and growing adversarial relations between treaty members—all of which may affect US security interests. This article provides background on Antarctica as a continent, the actions leading to the creation of the Antarctic Treaty, the regulations established following the treaty's ratification, and the challenges that emerged from the treaty. Finally, it proposes how today's potential challenges may concern the United States and the US military's role in responding to them within the US *National Defense Strategy*.

The Antarctic Treaty

In the 1950s, Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom claimed various territories on the continent, some of which overlapped. After a war nearly erupted in 1952 between Argentina and the United Kingdom over Hope Bay, the global community unified over actions concerning the continent.⁶ In 1959, the seven countries that held continental territories, along with Belgium, Japan, South Africa, the Soviet Union, and the United States, signed the Antarctica Treaty.⁷ The treaty states:

4. Stephen Baines, "What Was Captain Cook Looking for When He Crossed the Antarctic Circle in 1773?" History Press (website), n.d., accessed August 27, 2022, <https://thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/what-was-captain-cook-looking-for-when-he-crossed-the-antarctic-circle-in-1773/>; and Erin Blakemore, "Who Really Discovered Antarctica? Depends on Who You Ask," *National Geographic* (website), January 27, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/who-discovered-antarctica-depends-who-ask>.

5. Walter Sullivan, "1948 British-Argentine Clashes in Antarctic Ended Peacefully," *New York Times* (website), May 24, 1982, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/24/world/1948-british-argentine-clashes-in-antarctic-ended-peacefully.html>.

6. Sullivan, "1948 British-Argentine Clashes."

7. "Conference on Antarctica – Final Act," December 1, 1959, in *Compilation of Key Documents of the Antarctic Treaty System*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires, AR: Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, 2021), 9–20, http://documents.ats.aq/atcm43/ww/ATCM43_ww008_e.pdf.

The continent is to be used only for peaceful ambitions, such as scientific research. This use excludes military base construction, conventional and nuclear weapons testing, and radioactive waste storage.

All research information—to include personnel, tests, studies, and results—will be shared with other nations' research stations and the global community, to include the United Nations.

Each treaty member has the right to inspect the other members' facilities and equipment or explore any part of the continent, whenever it chooses—however, a member conducting an inspection must notify the other members beforehand.

Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom may maintain their original territorial claims, despite some of their claims overlapping.

Disputes between parties should be resolved through peaceful means. If a dispute is still unable to be resolved, the International Court of Justice may review the case.

The treaty may be revised at any time if there is unanimous agreement among its members.

Treaty membership may be offered to a state within the UN or to one that receives unanimous consent from treaty members.⁸

These regulations enabled the treaty's success in several respects. While the United States and the Soviet Union established research facilities after the treaty was enacted, the agreement prevented outright military activities from occurring and thus mitigated the spread of the Cold War. By focusing on advancing scientific studies, countries developed a mutual interest in maintaining a working relationship. This arrangement was enhanced by treaty members executing the right to inspect one another, instilling a sense

8. Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty (ATS), "The Antarctic Treaty," December 1, 1959, in *Compilation of Key Documents of the Antarctic Treaty System*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires, AR: ATS, 2021), 21–27, https://documents.ats.aq/keydocs/vol_1/vol1_2_AT_Antarctic_Treaty_e.pdf.

of openness and cooperation. The treaty was also written in broad enough terms that supported relatively easy updates. As a result, the treaty now holds 29 consultative members with voting rights and 26 non-consultative members who do not possess voting rights but may still participate in consultative conferences.⁹ There are also 1,100 to 5,000 people living on the continent, depending on the season.¹⁰ Although Antarctica has remained free of armed conflicts, the treaty faces substantial challenges due to treaty membership complications, efforts to protect the continent's environment and resources, and strife between countries.¹¹

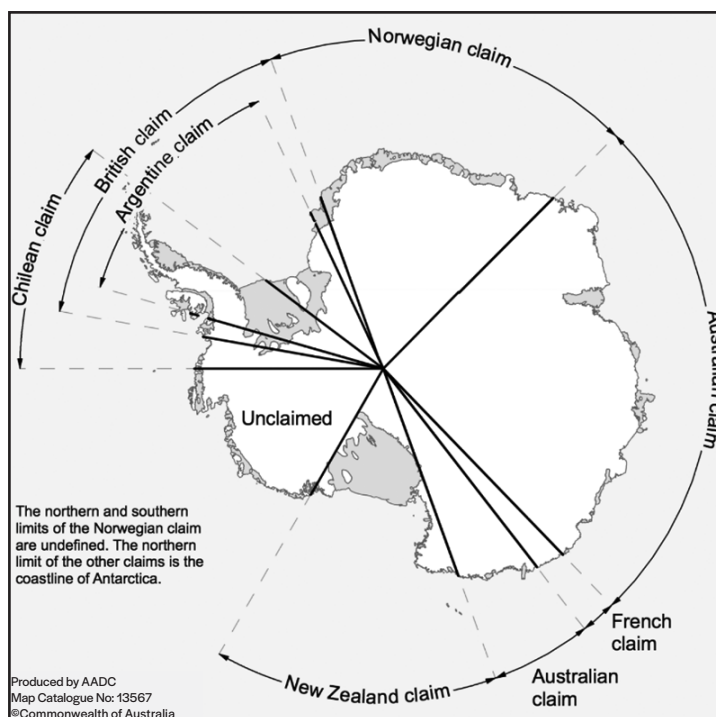


Figure 1. Antarctic territorial claims

(Reprinted with permission of the Australian Antarctic Division. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Source: Australian Antarctic Program [website], April 14, 2016, <https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/law-and-treaty/history/antarctic-territorial-claims/>).

Challenge 1: Rising Sea Levels and Treaty Membership

Earth's temperature derives from sunlight reaching its surface, with some sunlight reflected back to space. This process is offset by high concentrations of global emissions, such as carbon dioxide, that absorb reflected sunlight

9. "Parties," Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty (ATS) (website), accessed September 16, 2022, <https://www.ats.aq/devAS/Parties?lang=e>.

10. "Antarctica," in *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), accessed August 2, 2022, last updated May 16, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/antarctica/>.

11. "The Future of the Antarctic Treaty," UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (website), January 31, 2022, YouTube video, 23:38–24:33, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWgVPCB76a4&t=649s>.

heat rather than allow it to escape the atmosphere. This leads to atmospheric warming and increases in ocean heat, which accounts for 90 percent of the world's surface heat accumulation.¹² The 2016–21 period marked the warmest global temperatures in recorded history, but scientists predict the temperature for the 2022–26 period will be warmer.¹³

These temperature changes severely impact Antarctica's landscape. According to NASA glaciologist Joseph A. MacGregor, Antarctica lost 250 gigatons of ice in 2019, which is roughly equal to the loss of 200 ice-filled Olympic-sized swimming pools per minute.¹⁴ Ice shelves, large ice platforms connected to land that prevent glaciers on land from falling into the ocean, are also disintegrating.¹⁵ Numerous examples demonstrate this disintegration, including an ice shelf the size of Rhode Island collapsing in 2002, an ice shelf developing a 110-mile crack in 2017, and an ice shelf nearly three-quarters of a mile in height dissolving in 2022.¹⁶ As ice shelves break down, the glaciers they once enclosed on land will accelerate toward the ocean.

The trend of significant amounts of Antarctic ice being lost to the ocean is not expected to change soon. As Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization Petteri Taalas stated, "The last time the Earth experienced a comparable concentration of [carbon dioxide] was 3–5 million years ago, when the temperature was 2–3°C warmer and sea level was 10–20 meters higher than now."¹⁷ Today, the rise in current temperature appears likely, as the 2021 UN *Emissions Gap Report* warned that even if the countries who signed the Paris Agreement meet their current pledges on restricting emissions, global temperatures will still rise

12. "Basics of Climate Change," United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (website), last updated August 19, 2022, <https://www.epa.gov/climatechange-science/basics-climate-change>; "United in Science: We are Heading in the Wrong Direction," United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (website), September 13, 2022, <https://unfccc.int/news/united-in-science-we-are-heading-in-the-wrong-direction>; and "Global Climate Indicators: Ocean Heat Content, Acidification, Deoxygenation, and Blue Carbon," World Meteorological Organization (website), 2022, https://public.wmo.int/en/resources/bulletin/Ocean_Climate_Nexus/Climate%20Indicators.

13. "United in Science."

14. "Antarctica Is Losing Ice at an Accelerating Rate. How Much Will Sea Levels Rise?," *NewsHour*, PBS (website), April 10, 2019, YouTube video; 0:48–1:54, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=YRe1ymYR45k>.

15. California Institute of Technology, "Climate Change: NASA Studies Find Previously Unknown Loss of Antarctic Ice," Jet Propulsion Laboratory, NASA (website), August 10, 2022, <https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/nasa-studies-find-previously-unknown-loss-of-antarctic-ice>.

16. "Antarctica Is Losing Ice," 6:20–6:49; and Thomas Sumner, "Crack in Antarctica's Larsen C Ice Shelf Forks," *Science Ticker* (blog), Science News (website), May 2, 2017, <https://www.sciencenews.org/blog/science-ticker/crack-antarcticas-larsen-c-ice-shelf-splits-two>; and "Record Heat Sends Sea Ice into Retreat, Worrying Scientists," UN Environment Programme (UNEP) (website), April 12, 2022, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/record-heat-sends-sea-ice-retreat-worrying-scientists>.

17. "Rise in Greenhouse Gas Concentrations Jeopardizes Paris Agreement Temperature Targets," UNFCCC (website), October 25, 2021, <https://unfccc.int/news/rise-in-greenhouse-gas-concentrations-jeopardizes-paris-agreement-temperature-targets>.

over 2.5°C by 2100.¹⁸ This temperature rise will likely continue melting Antarctica's ice into the ocean, escalating water levels and inflicting an upsurge of global humanitarian challenges.

Impoverished and congested countries with ocean shores will potentially be the hardest struck by rising water levels and, in turn, may request humanitarian support. Bangladesh, the eighth-most populous country, with approximately 170 million citizens inhabiting an area the size of Iowa, possesses a long ocean coastline. Many Bangladeshis live in river basins susceptible to ocean sea rise.¹⁹ Should sea levels continue to rise, the United Nations expects that 17 percent of the country's citizens will be displaced. This displacement could cause a mass migration of Bangladeshis to overpopulated urban areas or countries like India, which are experiencing a large influx of undocumented immigrants.²⁰

Another country likely to be challenged by increasing sea levels is Nigeria. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is expected to become the third most populous country in the world before 2050.²¹ Lagos, the country's most populous city, is next to the Atlantic Ocean, and 14 million people reside in its slums. The slums are located on plains prone to flooding, and Eko Atlantic, the city's flood-preventing construction project, may further damage residents' homes. The project plans to build an elevated complex with modern amenities such as sterile water, individual power generation, and wide roads with tree lines. A barrier built to shield the complex from rising water was successful for its residents, but it deflected water into neighboring slums, exacerbating erosion and flooding issues for poor communities.²²

The challenges faced by Bangladesh and Nigeria allude to the possibility that if water levels rise, many governments may not be prepared or may enact plans that leave many citizens unprotected or endangered. This situation could then offer insurgency groups such as ISIS–West Africa and Boko Haram

18. "Record Heat Sends Sea Ice into Retreat, Worrying Scientists," UNEP (website), April 17, 2023, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/record-heat-sends-sea-ice-retreat-worrying-scientists>; and UNEP, *Emissions Gap Report 2021: The Heat is On – A World of Climate Promises Not Yet Delivered* (Nairobi, KE: UNEP, 2021), xvi, 36, <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2021>.

19. "Bangladesh Population 2022," World Population Review (website), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/bangladesh-population>; "Bangladesh," in *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), accessed July 26, 2023, last updated July 18, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/bangladesh/#geography>.

20. Wing Ka Ho, "The Looming Threat of Sea Level Rise in Bangladesh," Earth.Org (website), July 14, 2022, <https://earth.org/sea-level-rise-in-bangladesh/>; and Sanjeev Tripathi, "Illegal Immigration from Bangladesh to India: Toward a Comprehensive Solution," Carnegie India (website), June 29, 2016, <https://carnegieindia.org/2016/06/29/illegal-immigration-from-bangladesh-to-india-toward-comprehensive-solution-pub-63931>.

21. "Nigeria Population 2022," World Population Review (website), accessed September 15, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population>.

22. Kimberley Anh Thomas and Benjamin P. Warner, "Weaponizing Vulnerability to Climate Change," *Global Environmental Change* 57 (July 2019): 2–4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2019.101928>.

an even greater opportunity to challenge domestic security measures.²³ Should countries receive security threats or economic and infrastructural damage from the rising water created by Antarctica's melting ice, the Antarctic Treaty could receive more interest as a forum to shape international solutions, address rising sea levels, and provide other forums for dealing with domestic issues stemming from climate changes tied to the continent.

The second paragraph of the Antarctic Treaty states, “[It] is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord.”²⁴ The original issues addressed in the treaty were contemporary Cold War-era concerns, including sovereign claims, military bases, and the nuclear waste disposal.²⁵ While the melting of ice caps was not included within the original text, it was likely not envisioned that future international tensions arising from the environmental impact of rising sea levels would make Antarctica the origin of international discord. Notably, greater participation of smaller and previously nonaligned countries in international security forums provides a critical modern context for potentially updating the security issues and the signatories of the Antarctic Treaty.

A treaty seeks to address security issues of a particular time, and treaties that persist have a forum for participants to gather and address emerging issues. The Antarctic Treaty brings together the Consultative Parties (signatories) within a recurring meeting framework known as the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM).²⁶ According to Article IX of the treaty, the Consultative Parties meet “for the purpose of exchanging information, consulting together on matters of common interest pertaining to Antarctica, and formulating and considering, and recommending to their Governments, measures in furtherance of the principles and objectives of the Treaty”²⁷ Concurrent to the ATCM are the Committee of Environmental Protection (CEP) meetings, which address climate change issues concerning Antarctica.²⁸ While the treaty specifies that the Antarctic region is south of 60 degrees south latitude, it indirectly speaks to associated global ecosystems.²⁹

23. Thomas and Warner, “Weaponizing Vulnerability,” 8; and “Boko Haram, Including JAS and ISIS-WA,” *European Union Agency for Asylum* (website), February 2019, <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria/121-boko-haram-including-jas-and-isis-wa>.

24. ATS, “Antarctic Treaty,” 21–25.

25. ATS, “Antarctic Treaty,” 21–27.

26. “ATCM and Other Meetings,” ATS (website), accessed May 29, 2023, <https://www.ats.aq/e/atcm.html>.

27. ATS, “Antarctic Treaty,” 24.

28. “The Committee for Environmental Protection,” ATS (website), accessed June 8, 2023, <https://www.ats.aq/e/committee.html>.

29. ATS, “Antarctic Treaty,” 23.

The combination of the ATCM and the CEP provides governance for new issues, specifically climate change, to be addressed by participants of the Antarctic Treaty.³⁰

The melting of the ice caps is observable, and its impacts are associated with climate changes worldwide.³¹ This fact provides less developed countries a pathway to seek participation in formats such as the Antarctic Treaty, as evidenced by the recent implementation of global environmental protection agreements such as the Paris Agreement and Kyoto Protocol.³² As such, the treaty system may also consider asking its most affluent members, including the United States, for support in addressing systemic issues tied to climate change. This request would be an opportunity for American embassies to deepen relations with foreign governments and create pathways for humanitarian and security support from US combatant commands.³³ While providing combatant command support would incur a cost in military personnel and funds for the United States, it would offer an opportunity for increased access, basing, and overflight through mutual defense agreements (MDAs) with countries in Africa and South Asia by way of collaboration and extending goodwill.³⁴

If the treaty places less emphasis on contributing to scientific studies and more emphasis on addressing flood concerns tied to Antarctica's melting ice, there could be ramifications that affect the US military. A melting Antarctica may force the Treaty Secretariat to decide whether or not to extend membership to affected nations. If the decision is made to stop adding members, the treaty risks receiving condemnation from the global community. Of the 54 African countries, 38 have coastlines, but South Africa is the only country with consultative or non-consultative membership.³⁵ Of the 11 southeastern Asia countries, only Malaysia is a member, despite the other 10 countries having ocean coastlines or being islands.³⁶

30. "ATCM and Other Meetings," ATS (website), accessed May 29, 2023, <https://www.ats.aq/e/atcm.html>; and "Committee for Environmental Protection."

31. "Climate Change Indicators: Snow and Ice," United States Environmental Protection Agency (website), August 1, 2022, <https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators/snow-ice>.

32. Lindsay Maizland, "Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures," Council on Foreign Relations (website), November 4, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements>.

33. Department of Defense (DoD), *Foreign Humanitarian Assistance*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-29 (Washington, DC: DoD, 2019): II-6, II-9, II-19, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_29.pdf.

34. Renanah M. Joyce and Brian Blankenship, "Access Denied? The Future of U.S. Basing in a Contested World," War on the Rocks (website), February 1, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/02/access-denied-the-future-of-u-s-basing-in-a-contested-world/>; and DoD, *Joint Planning*, JP 5-0 (Washington, DC: DoD, 2020), I-6, I-24, I-25, III-29, IV-44, https://irp.fas.org/doddir/dod/jp5_0.pdf.

35. Jason Shvili, "How Many Countries Are There in Africa?," World Atlas (website), March 15, 2021, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-many-countries-are-in-africa.html>; and "Coastal Countries of Africa," Maps of World (website), n.d., accessed September 16, 2022, <https://www.mapsofworld.com/africa/thematic/coastal-countries.html>; and "Parties."

36. Barbara Watson Andaya, "Introduction to Southeast Asia: History, Geography, and Livelihood," Asia Society (website), n.d., accessed September 18, 2022, <https://asiasociety.org/education/introduction-southeast-asia>; and "Parties."

Treaty membership in the past was usually based on the scientific offerings a country could offer with regard to Antarctica. Countries that can provide significant scientific support are likely more affluent and able to instill more protection mechanisms against rising sea levels.³⁷ If membership is not extended to the countries most affected by Antarctica's environmental changes, the treaty members may be labeled dismissive of impoverished countries in considerable danger from rising sea levels. Yet, if more members are invited, the Treaty Secretariat will be forced to consider more diverging interests. If membership is offered to flood-threatened countries, the number of members could significantly increase. An interest in flood threats would complicate current signatories' interests, as the treaty may ask its members to support other countries' flood-tied security, economic, and humanitarian issues. This request could serve as a transition from diplomatic to military activity for the United States. If the State Department received a request to support flood-tied issues, it could, in turn, request support from the Department of Defense and its combatant commands to provide security or humanitarian assistance to other countries in exchange for access, basing, and overflight. This type of activity would change the global power competition landscape.

Challenge 2: Environmental and Resource Conservation

The treaty's original members understood Antarctica contained territorial claims to natural resources but refrained from discussing them in-depth so they could focus on collaboration.³⁸ This approach mostly worked, but some treaty members have exploited this ambiguity. In particular, the treaty faces challenges with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and potential mineral resources extraction preparations.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing threatens ecosystems as it depletes maritime areas of biodiversity and can often be conducted in areas belonging to impoverished countries, which have few surveillance capabilities.³⁹ Further, IUU fishing, often transnational and sponsored by state governments or organized crime groups, can create economic and food insecurity.⁴⁰ This type of fishing applies to locations below the 60th parallel south and the Antarctic Convergence, a line connecting multiple points of latitude and longitude in which

37. "Future of the Antarctic Treaty," 16:38–17:23, 41:41–42:04.

38. "Future of the Antarctic Treaty," 5:45–6:06, 7:00–7:09, 14:14–14:41.

39. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, *International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing* (Rome: FAO, 2001), 1, 3, <https://www.fao.org/3/Y1224E/y1224e.pdf>

40. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Fisheries Crime* (Vienna: UNODC, 2015), 3-5, https://www.unodc.org/documents/about-unodc/Campaigns/Fisheries/focus_sheet_PRINT.pdf.

cold Antarctic waters flow and sink under warmer waters from the north.⁴¹ Within this area are many types of “marine living resources,” which the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) Commission defines as “the population of fin fish, molluscs, crustaceans and all other species of living organisms, including birds”⁴²

The commission has 27 members and 10 acceding members and is responsible for preserving Antarctic aquatic life on behalf of the Antarctic Treaty.⁴³ To fulfill this obligation, the commission researches marine species and instills fishing catch limits. It has also established marine protected areas tied to the South Orkney Islands and the Ross Sea to preserve sea life.⁴⁴ The CCAMLR Commission articulates a desire for cohesion among its members who execute marine protected area inspections and surveillance.⁴⁵ It is aware, however, that IUU fishing undermines its effectiveness, and at the 41st Meeting of the Commission, US representation stated, “[Collaboration] is now holding back progress. Countries that have prioritised their individual needs have weakened our ability to meet the shared conservation objectives on which this body [the CCAMLR Commission] was founded.”⁴⁶ Other members echoed this view in 2022, and should dissension grow, the commission may unintentionally permit more opportunities for IUU fishing activities.⁴⁷

Illegal fishing increased significantly in the Southern Ocean in the 1980s, generating \$150 billion of global revenue yearly.⁴⁸ One type of fish targeted in the Southern Ocean is the Patagonian toothfish, also known as Chilean sea bass, for which fishermen receive high payments and a minimum of 22,000 tons are caught

41. “Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources,” in *Compilation of Key Documents of the Antarctic Treaty System*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires, AR: ATS, 2021), 121, https://documents.ats.aq/atcm43/ww/ATCM43_ww008_e.pdf; and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Antarctic Convergence,” accessed April 22, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctic-Convergence>.

42. “Antarctic Marine Living Resources,” 121.

43. “About CCAMLR,” Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) (website), last updated October 20, 2022, <https://www.ccamlr.org/en/organisation>; and “Membership,” CCAMLR (website), last updated October 20, 2022, <https://www.ccamlr.org/en/organisation/who-involved-ccamlr>.

44. “Fisheries,” CCAMLR (website), last updated May 31, 2017, <https://www.ccamlr.org/en/fisheries/fisheries>; and “Marine Protected Areas,” CCAMLR (website), last updated July 3, 2020, <https://www.ccamlr.org/en/science/marine-protected-areas-mpas>.

45. Conservation Measure 91-05 (2016): Ross Sea Region Protected Area, CCAMLR (2016), 6, 7, <https://cm.ccamlr.org/measure-91-05-2016>.

46. Conservation Measure 10-05 (2022): Catch Documentation Scheme for *Dissostichus* spp., CCAMLR (2022), 1, <https://cm.ccamlr.org/en/measure-10-05-2022>; and CCAMLR, *Report of the Forty-First Meeting of the Commission* (Hobart, AU: CCAMLR, November 4, 2022), 5, <https://meetings.ccamlr.org/system/files/meeting-reports/e-cc-41-rep.pdf>.

47. CCAMLR, *Report of the Forty-First Meeting of the Commission*, 2–4.

48. Huw Thomas, “To Fight Illegal Fishing, Follow the Money,” Pew (website), June 19, 2018, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/06/19/to-fight-illegal-fishing-follow-the-money>.

annually.⁴⁹ The toothfish is caught from an elongated fishing line with numerous subsidiary lines that often entangle and kill birds, turtles, and other marine wildlife.⁵⁰ The catching of the toothfish presents a unique challenge to the Antarctic Treaty. While the treaty aims to preserve wildlife, it also requires unanimous consent from its members to enact a ruling. In 2021, Russia vetoed a proposal to limit toothfish catches, and in 2022, the United Kingdom distributed its domestic license for catching toothfish without international approval.⁵¹ If the treaty cannot establish diplomatic consent among official foreign governments toward illegal fishing, it will be difficult to thwart illegal fishing operations.

Illegal fishers can operate for several reasons. They often receive financial and logistical assistance from governments or organized crime groups with a planning system that supports laundering and fraudulent activities.⁵² Many IUU vessels fish in international waters where state navies and coast guards have limited or no authority, and some of the groups most active in pursuing IUU vessels are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Sea Shepherd.⁵³ Sea Shepherd demonstrated its importance in 2015 when its crews discovered the *Thunder*, the world's most wanted illegal fishing vessel. After receiving the radio request to turn itself in, the *Thunder* fled and abandoned 44 miles of illegal netting containing 1,400 fish.⁵⁴ While trying to avoid capture, it burned potential evidence, flew a Nigerian flag from its mast, and radioed to the Sea Shepherd ships that it was registered with the Nigerian

49. *Patagonian Toothfish* (report), Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Monterey, CA: Monterey Bay Aquarium, September 4, 2019), 7, https://www.seafoodwatch.org/globalassets/sfw-data-blocks/reports/S/MBA_SeafoodWatch_ChileanSeabassReport.pdf.

50. "Overfishing," Discovering Antarctica (website), accessed October 9, 2022, <https://discoveringantarctica.org.uk/challenges/sustainability/overfishing/>; International Southern Oceans Longline Fisheries Information Clearing House (ISOFISH), *The Involvement of Mauritius in the Trade in Patagonian Toothfish from Illegal and Unregulated Longline Fishing in the Southern Ocean and What Might Be Done about It*, ISOFISH, Information Clearing House Occasional Report no. 1, 3rd ed. (Hobart, AU: ISOFISH, August 1998), 10, <https://www.colto.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Report-No.-1-Mauritius.pdf>; and US Department of Commerce and US Department of State, "Chilean Sea Bass Frequently Asked Questions" (fact sheet), NOAA (website), accessed October 17, 2022, https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/dam-migration/chilean_sea_bass_fact_sheet.pdf.

51. Nick Perry, "Russia May Again Block Antarctic Marine Protections," AP News (website), October 27, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/science-health-china-new-zealand-europe-5658031102973723c1a035b66dfd6aa3>; and Karen McVeigh, "US Accuses UK of Exploiting Russia Tensions to Fish Highly Prized Species," *Guardian* (website), June 24, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jun/24/us-accuses-uk-of-exploiting-russia-tensions-to-fish-highly-prized-species>.

52. Teale N. Phelps Bondaroff, Wietse van der Werf, and Tuesday Reitano, *The Illegal Fishing and Organized Crime Nexus: Illegal Fishing as Transnational Organized Crime* (Geneva, CH: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime and The Black Fish, April 2015), 24, 39, https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/background-information/NGO/GIATOC-Blackfish/Fishing_Crime.pdf.

53. "Front Lines: Sea Shepherd Is Taking the Fight to Illegal Fishing," Sea Shepherd (website), accessed July 29, 2023, <https://seashepherd.org/iuu/>; and United States International Trade Commission (USITC), *Seafood Obtained via Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing: U.S. Imports and Economic Impact on U.S. Commercial Fisheries*, publication no. 5168, investigation no. 332-575 (Washington, DC: USITC, February 2021), 51, <https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5168.pdf>.

54. "Poaching Vessel, *Thunder*, Sinks in Suspicious Circumstances," Sea Shepherd Global (website), April 6, 2015, https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/latest-news/thunder_sinks_in_suspicious_circumstances/; and "Interpol Takes Custody of Evidence against *Thunder* from Sea Shepherd," Sea Shepherd Global (website), March 5, 2015, https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/latest-news/interpol_takes_custody_of_evidence_against_thunder/.

government to fish. Upon notification of the *Thunder's* activities, the Nigerian government withdrew the ship's registry, as the Sea Shepherd's ships pursued and gathered evidence from the *Thunder* for three months and 10,000 miles until it surrendered.⁵⁵ Nongovernmental organizations like Sea Shepherd enforce international laws protecting the high seas, and the capture of the *Thunder* was impressive.⁵⁶ However, there are thousands of illegal fishing vessels across the globe, including the Southern Ocean, which far outnumber the NGO ships conducting patrols. Further, an illegal fishing vessel can create a new identity by arriving in a port, switching crews and captains, and changing its name, numbers, and state flag.⁵⁷ With limited patrols provided by the treaty system and the CAMLR Commission in this expansive area, the number of illegal fishing expeditions sponsored by crime organizations and governments will likely grow if they are not further addressed.

A separate maritime activity that is not experiencing illegalities but is increasing at a rate that may cause issues is krill fishing. Krill are shrimp-like crustaceans that number in the hundreds of trillions in the Southern Ocean and are critical to the Antarctic ecosystem, serving as a food source for whales, fish, seals, and birds.⁵⁸ Humans also use them as a food source for cultivated aquatic animals, such as salmon and sea bass, and they emit an oil used in wound ointments and pet food products.⁵⁹ The treaty authorizes krill fishing so long as it is conducted within four designated zones near the Antarctic Peninsula and caps vessels at 620,000 combined tons of krill per year. While fishers did not reach the limit in 2020, vessels from Chile, China, South Korea, and Ukraine caught 450,000 tons—the largest catch in decades. China's particularly noteworthy 2020 catch doubled from 2019.⁶⁰ With room offered for more annual catches, the estimated weight of Antarctica's krill being roughly 400 million tons (the same weight as the world's cattle), and China needing

55. Ian Urbina, "The Dark Fleet," in *The Outlaw Ocean*, October 3, 2022, produced by the Outlaw Ocean Project and Ryan French, podcast, 9:27–9:52, 19:58–20:12, 23:05–23:55, 29:05–29:12, <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/cbc-podcasts/1068-the-outlaw-ocean/episode/15939947-episode-2-the-dark-fleet>.

56. "Our Mission," Sea Shepherd Global (website), accessed May 11, 2023, <https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/who-we-are/our-mission/>.

57. "Sea Shepherd Shuts Down Operations of the *Thunder* and Confiscates Illegal Gear," Sea Shepherd Global (website), February 7, 2015, https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/latest-news/sea_shepherd_shuts_down_operations_of_thunder/; and Urbina, "Dark Fleet," 17:20–1807.

58. Association of Responsible Krill Harvesting Companies (ARK), "ARK Commits to Voluntary Restrictions in the Antarctic Peninsula to Ensure Long-Term Sustainability of Krill Fisheries," ARK (website), July 13, 2018, <https://www.ark-krill.org/news/ark-commits-to-voluntary-measures/>; and Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), "Protecting Ecologically Important Krill in the Southern Ocean from Overfishing," ScienceDaily (website), October 16, 2020, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/10/201016100916.htm.

59. AWI, "Protecting Ecologically Important Krill."

60. Gloria Dickie, "Insight: In Antarctica, Does a Burgeoning Krill Fishery Threaten Wildlife?," Reuters (website), February 24, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/antarctica-does-burgeoning-krill-fishery-threaten-wildlife-2022-02-24/>.

to feed its 1.4 billion population, krill fishing will also likely increase.⁶¹ Adherence to krill fishing regulations, not currently an issue for the treaty, could become one in the near future.

Countries are seeing the prospects of fishing in remote areas with large reserves. Some actors may first test krill fishing treaty regulations by fishing in undesignated areas or by hauling more than allowed. Countries possessing veto power within the treaty or countries who feel potential treaty reprisal is worth the risk of acquiring a greater food supply will more likely undertake this activity. China exemplified this behavior in 2018. It utilized 700 illegal fishing vessels to catch squid in North Korean waters and appears at least partially responsible for the 80 percent decline of squid in South Korean and Japanese waters since 2003.⁶² While China may not deploy 700 vessels to Antarctica, it has demonstrated a willingness to disregard other regional countries' boundaries. Thus, it may be inclined to do the same in Antarctica, which is remote and not owned by any country. In return, the treaty system may desire more enforcement of its regulations and may consider requesting maritime and aerial patrols from its members, including the United States. Such measures could require personnel, equipment, and training support from the US Navy and Air Force and offer the United States an opportunity to align more closely with South American countries affected by Antarctic IUU fishing. This event would provide the United States with an opportunity to pursue its *2022 National Defense Strategy* priority of "detering aggression" through "resilience" of supporting partners and resisting adversaries across multiple domains.⁶³ It would also enable the United States to utilize aerial and naval assets to address another *National Defense Strategy* priority, deterring perceived adversarial "aggression."⁶⁴

While krill fishing may offer a challenge for the treaty in the next few years, potential resource extraction is an issue that will need to be addressed in the long term. The Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities, a convention of the Antarctic Treaty, defines "mineral resources" as "non-living natural non-renewable resources, including fossil fuels, metallic and non-metallic minerals."⁶⁵ Enacted in 1988,

61. Dickie, "Insight"; and "Population, Total – China," World Bank (website), accessed December 2, 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=CN>.

62. Jaeyoon Park et al., "Illuminating Dark Fleets," Indo-Pacific Defense Forum (website), September 22, 2021, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/09/illuminating-dark-fleets/>.

63. DoD, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2022), 7–8, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-national-defense-strategy-npr-mdr.pdf>.

64. DoD, *2022 National Defense Strategy*, 1, 9–10.

65. Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (1988), 3, https://documents.ats.aq/recatt/att311_e.pdf.

the treaty's Protocol on Environmental Protection states in Article 7, "Any activity relating to mineral resources, other than scientific research, shall be prohibited."⁶⁶ Yet, in the same treaty, Article 27 provides, "If, after the expiration of 50 years from the date of entry into force of this Protocol, any of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties so requests by a communication addressed to the Depositary, a conference shall be held . . . to review the operation of this Protocol."⁶⁷ In short, the treaty prohibits the removal of mineral resources until 2048. While this prohibition stops activities like mining and drilling, there are ways within treaty limits that countries can position themselves to extract minerals after 2048.

In 2020, Russia employed a state-owned company to conduct seismic surveys 2,700 miles in length off the eastern Antarctic coast and announced it did so to learn about the available quantity of gas and oil. From these activities, Russia determined there may be 70 billion tons of hydrocarbons in the surveyed areas.⁶⁸ Even if Russia does not remove natural resources from the continent before 2048, it is still positioning itself to understand the most advantageous drilling and extraction sites. Further, the US Department of State announced that "exploration for hydrocarbons on the continental margins around Antarctica is foreseeable, and commercial exploitation is a possibility in the longer term."⁶⁹

Environmental and resource conservation presents various issues for the Antarctic Treaty to address in the present, near term, and long term. The treaty may need to consider deterrents to thwart illegal fishing, as there are far more illegal fishing vessels than maritime and aerial patrol vehicles provided by state governments and NGOs. Further, as fishing in the Southern Ocean becomes more lucrative, the treaty may encounter more instances of countries refusing to follow its international policies. To address this problem, the treaty system may feel compelled to establish more pronounced deterrents and could consider requesting naval and aerial patrols from the United States. This possibility could offer the United States opportunities to engage in diplomacy and utilize its military to protect other

66. ATS, The Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Madrid, ES: ATS, October 4, 1991), 5, <https://www.ats.aq/e/protocol.html>.

67. ATS, Protocol on Environmental Protection, 5.

68. Mateusz Kubiak, "Russian Drilling in the Antarctic," Warsaw Institute (website), June 1, 2020, <https://warsawinstitute.org/russian-drilling-antarctic/>.

69. Department of State (DoS), "Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities," in *Antarctic Treaty Handbook: Regulations of Antarctic Mineral Resources* (Washington, DC: DoS, 2017), 448, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/15282.pdf>.

states' economic and security interests, all while strengthening its international influence and possibly decreasing adversarial influence.

Challenge 3: Hostilities and Military Activities

Hostilities are growing between treaty members, especially as most countries choose not to accept the original territorial claims articulated by the treaty.⁷⁰ With these disagreements, several countries are enacting aggressive measures that potentially skirt the lines of Antarctic Treaty regulations or outright disobey them, thereby creating hostilities between states.

In the past few years, Russia executed actions that can be viewed as creating dissension within the treaty members.⁷¹ In 2020, a New Zealand plane patrolling the continent's protected Ross Sea identified a Russian vessel fishing when fishing was not authorized by the treaty's CAMLR Commission.⁷² The United States asked Russia to allow the CAMLR Commission to release its fishing vessel's positional data during the accused fishing timeframe, while New Zealand provided evidence of the vessel's activities.⁷³ Following the incident, New Zealand asserted that the vessel should be listed as illegal.⁷⁴ Instead, the vessel received no retribution because Russia threatened to veto the action before it could be presented.⁷⁵ Should diplomacy like this become more common, affronted treaty members may feel the need to assert themselves more aggressively.⁷⁶

On October 10, 2022, Russian forces launched a major missile offensive against Ukraine, a fellow Antarctic Treaty member, and demolished part

70. "Antarctic Region," DoS (website), accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/key-topics-office-of-ocean-and-polar-affairs/antarctic/>.

71. "No Warmth for Russia at Diplomatic Conference on Antarctica," AP News (website), May 26, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-germany-antarctica-government-and-politics-df4e24da3b1391769dc4747c50236827>; Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and Tom Wheeler, *To the Ends of the Earth: Antarctica, the Antarctic Treaty, and the South Africa*, South African Institute of International Affairs [SAIIA] Research Report 23 (Johannesburg, SA: SAIIA, March 2016), 23–24, 48–49, <https://saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/To-the-Ends-of-the-Earth.pdf>; and CCAMLR, *Report of the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Commission* (North Hobart, AU: CCAMLR, November 2020), 3–5, <https://meetings.ccamlr.org/system/files/e-cc-39-rep.pdf>.

72. Department of Commerce (DoC) and NOAA, *Improving International Fisheries Management: 2021 Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: DoC and NOAA, August 2021), 27, <https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-08/2021ReporttoCongressonImprovingInternationalFisheriesManagement.pdf>.

73. Mathieu Boulègue, *The Militarization of Russian Polar Politics* (London: Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House, June 2022), https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/2022-06-06-militarization-russian-polar-politics-boulegue_0.pdf; and NOAA, *Improving International Fisheries Management*, 27.

74. CCAMLR, *Report of the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Commission*, 3–4.

75. Boulègue, *Russian Polar Politics*; and Liz Allen, "Russian Vessel Suspected of Illegal Fishing in Antarctic Waters Will Face No Consequences," *Forbes* (website), October 31, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/allenelizabeth/2020/10/31/russian-vessel-suspected-of-illegal-fishing-in-antarctic-waters-will-face-no-consequences/amp/>.

76. Boulègue, *Russian Polar Politics*.

of the Antarctic research facility in Kyiv.⁷⁷ On October 24, 2022, during a global in-person CAMLR Commission meeting held in Tasmania, Australia, a mass walkout of international delegates occurred when Russian representatives began speaking.⁷⁸ Ukraine's delegate expressed appreciation for the walkout's participants and stated, "A state that kills the civilian population, destroys the air and ground civilian infrastructure of another country and defiantly violates the basic provisions of international law should definitely be limited in its right to participate in international organizations such as CCAMLR."⁷⁹ Commission representatives from Australia, the EU, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States also offered official statements of support for Ukraine during the meeting.⁸⁰ With Russia's refusal to comply with a treaty inspection, invasion of a fellow treaty member, and subsequent retaliation from other treaty members, the treaty system may feel compelled to review the rules concerning deterrence or enforcement. Otherwise, there may be additional cavalier actions, and the treaty could receive condemnation from members who feel slighted for adhering to policies disregarded by other members.

Likewise, China is the focal point of current issues tied to the treaty.⁸¹ In 2021, China established an Antarctic research base on Inexpressible Island, Australian-claimed territory.⁸² This action lends credibility to the Office of the Secretary of Defense's assertion that China is "increasing its presence in the Antarctic through scientific projects, commercial ventures, and infrastructure and capability investments, likely intended to strengthen its position for future claims to natural resources and maritime access."⁸³ When China established the research base, Australia responded by approving AUD\$800 million to purchase ships, helicopters, and unmanned

77. Heiner Kubny, "Ukrainian Antarctic Office Partially Destroyed by Missile Attack," *Polar Journal* (website), October 17, 2022, <https://polarjournal.ch/en/2022/10/17/ukrainian-antarctic-office-partially-destroyed-by-missile-attack/>; and Perry, "Russia May Again Block."

78. Perry, "Russia May Again Block."

79. Nick Perry, "Russia, China Block Plans for Antarctic Marine Protections," *AP News* (website), November 4, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-china-new-zealand-united-states-oceans-857b3438cbeec35b68a4b125fbc9373a>; and "Russia, Ukraine among Countries Meeting in Tasmania over Future of Antarctic Waters," *Australian Broadcasting Company* (website), October 27, 2023, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-10-27/russia-may-again-block-antarctic-marine-protections/101585316>.

80. *CCAMLR Report of the Forty-First Meeting of the Commission*, 2–4.

81. *CCAMLR Report of the Forty-First Meeting of the Commission*, 31, 35–36.

82. Matthew Cranston and Michael Smith, "US Rings Alarm on China's Antarctic Interests," *Australian Financial Review (AFR)* (website), October 27, 2022, <https://www.afr.com/world/north-america/us-rings-alarm-on-china-s-antarctic-interests-20221027-p5btb6>.

83. DoD, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2022), 142, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Nov/29/2003122279/-1/-1/1/2022-military-and-security-developments-involving-the-peoples-republic-of-china.pdf>.

aerial vehicles for employment on the continent.⁸⁴ While Australia will use these vehicles for conservation and scientific activities, it appears intent on deterring potential adversaries from encroaching on its claimed territory. This conclusion is based on Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's 2022 statements, "We need to keep eyes in Antarctica because there are others who have different objectives to us" and "for Australia's defense interests . . . you need the capabilities that enable you to keep potential adversaries as far away from Australia as you possibly can. And that obviously meant an increased focus on our naval and our aerial capabilities."⁸⁵ The countries' resistance toward each other signals a potential inclination of some countries to exert a greater presence, whether by creating a new installation or by enhancing the presence of military vehicles. Should these inclinations continue, there is a greater chance of an increased military presence or a military incident in which antagonism between countries could heighten.

Although it does not engage in activities that would violate the treaty, the United States displays a considerable commitment to the continent. The National Science Foundation's US Antarctic Program researches the continent while using different aerial vehicles to ferry equipment and personnel between the continent to Chile and New Zealand.⁸⁶ The New York Air National Guard's 109th Airlift Wing has deployed to Antarctica at least once a year since 1988. From 2020–21, it flew six missions to the continent for medevac support and to transport researchers and equipment. During this time, rather than redeploy to their home station as usual between missions, the unit's forward personnel remained in Antarctica for three months, providing logistical support to personnel on the continent.⁸⁷ The 109th Airlift Wing representatives also met with Brazilian Air Force

84. Cranston and Smith, "US Rings Alarm"; and Phillip Coorey, "PM Pledges \$804m to Fight Cold War in Antarctica," *AFR* (website), February 21, 2022, <https://www.afr.com/politics/federal/pm-pledges-804m-to-fight-cold-war-in-antarctica-20220221-p59yax>.

85. Kirsty Needham, "Australia Says Plane Had 'Right' to Watch China Navy Vessel in Its Waters," Reuters (website), February 22, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-plane-had-right-watch-china-navy-vessel-its-waters-pm-morrison-2022-02-22/>; and Scott Morrison and Miles Yu, "Australia's Role in the China Struggle: A Conversation with Scott Morrison," China Center, Hudson Institute (website), December 6, 2022, YouTube video, 44:38–45:08, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=QGcbczrUNCg&pp=ygUfaHVkc29uIGluc3RpdHV0ZSBzY290dCBtb3JyaXNvbG%3D%3D>.

86. "About NSF," National Science Foundation (NSF) (website), accessed April 30, 2023, <https://new.nsf.gov/about>; "Antarctic Sciences," NSF (website), accessed April 30, 2023, <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/ant/index.jsp>; and "United States Antarctic Program (USAP) Aircraft," NSF (website), accessed April 30, 2023, <https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/support/usapairc.jsp>.

87. Raymond F. Shields Jr., New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA), *2021 Annual Report* (Latham, NY: New York DMNA, February 2022), 48–49, http://dmna.ny.gov/annual/NYNG_annual_report_2021.pdf.

counterparts in Rio de Janeiro in 2019 to discuss their Antarctic-tied missions and flight operations.⁸⁸

The United States holds considerable influence on the continent through its military-supported operations and international relations. It runs the only research station at the actual geographic South Pole at the center of the continent, the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, where it conducts astrophysics, meteorology, and aeronomy testing. The US Palmer Station operates in territory claimed by the United Kingdom. The US McMurdo Station is in Antarctic territory claimed by New Zealand and works closely with the nearby New Zealand Scott Base. In addition, the United States and Australia built an astronomical observatory on the Antarctic Plateau's highest point, and both countries signed a joint statement backing the establishment of marine protected areas around the continent.⁸⁹ While these partnerships align with the treaty, they may cause Russia and China to feel the United States is challenging their influence, especially with the United States already backing other security alliances that resist Russia's and China's foreign military endeavors.⁹⁰ Both countries, therefore, may be more willing to undermine the treaty as long as they advance their domestic and global interests.

When boundaries are violated and foreign interests are challenged, state governments are more likely to consider military options. The treaty was designed to promote international cooperation. Today, however, clear hostilities challenge the treaty's framework and the signatories' relationships with each other. If this situation continues, treaty members may feel the need to enact measures more drastic than diplomacy.⁹¹ The treaty system might become more willing to ask members to provide military support capable of convincing other members to comply with regulations. The United States and its military may be an attractive option for treaty officials, especially if this option can neutralize the actions of powerful members who defy regulations.

88. Shields, *2019 Annual Report*, 53; and Jaclyn Lyons, "NY Air Guard, Brazil Partner on Antarctic Flying," Air National Guard (website), October 2, 2019, <https://www.ang.af.mil/Media/Article-Display/Article/1977915/ny-air-guard-brazil-partner-on-antarctic-flying/>.

89. Tim Stephens, "Australia and the United States in Antarctica: Warm Partners on the Coldest Continent," United States Studies Centre (website), December 6, 2016, <https://www.usssc.edu/au/analysis/australia-and-the-united-states-in-antarctica-warm-partners-on-the-coldest-continent>; and Nick Routley, "Slices of the Pie: Mapping Territorial Claims in Antarctica," Visual Capitalist (website), February 20, 2021, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapping-territorial-claims-in-antarctica/>.

90. DoD, *Military and Security Developments*, 8, 14; and Joseph R. Biden Jr., *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2022), 24, 26, 41, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/8-November-Combined-PDF-for-Upload.pdf>.

91. Morrison and Yu, "Australia's Role in the China Struggle," 12:30-16:28; and Biden, *National Security Strategy*, 16-17.

Conclusion

The Antarctic Treaty was created to foster peaceful international research activities, limit military expansion, and ensure Antarctica did not become a theater for nuclear weapons testing or waste disposal.⁹² These Cold War security concerns were largely addressed. Since then, the treaty's membership has quadrupled in size, with more members possessing diverging and conflicting interests, including those tied to the impacts of climate change.⁹³ There is no indication that this trend will stop, and if unaddressed, international compliance with the treaty may continue to face challenges. This situation could lead to treaty members reexamining which issues to manage and a potential request from the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting for a more pronounced emphasis on security issues to ensure treaty compliance. This reappraisal could include implementing humanitarian and security support to address the rise of ocean levels from Antarctica's melting ice or establishing naval and aerial patrols to deter IUU fishing, mineral extraction, and other aggressive military activities. In turn, such developments could offer the United States opportunities to engage with nations in Africa, South America, and South Asia and generate approaches for improving deterrence against potential adversarial activities tied to Antarctica. These are potential scenarios. American policymakers and military leadership should monitor the issues tied to Antarctica and the Antarctic Treaty to understand the support the United States may be asked to provide and any potential risks or opportunities.

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92. ATS, "Antarctic Treaty," 21–27.

93. ATS, "Antarctic Treaty," 1; and "Parties."

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Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. "The Antarctic Treaty." December 1, 1959. In *Compilation of Key Documents of the Antarctic Treaty System*, 5th ed., 21–27. Buenos Aires, AR: Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, 2021. https://documents.ats.aq/keydocs/vol_1/vol1_2_AT_Antarctic_Treaty_e.pdf.

Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. "Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources." May 20, 1980. In *Compilation of Key Documents of the Antarctic Treaty System*, 5th edition, 121–36. Buenos Aires, AR: Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, 2021. https://documents.ats.aq/atcm43/ww/ATCM43_ww008_e.pdf.

Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. Madrid, ES: Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, October 4, 1991. <https://www.ats.aq/e/protocol.html>.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "United in Science: We are Heading in the Wrong Direction." Geneva, CH: United Nations, September 13, 2022. <https://unfccc.int/news/united-in-science-we-are-heading-in-the-wrong-direction>.

US-Russia Foreign Policy: Confronting Russia's Geographic Anxieties

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ABSTRACT: The United States must place Russia's focus on geographic concerns at the center of future strategy development to build a constructive relationship with Russia and achieve US regional goals. This article analyzes Russia's geography and historical impact on Russian foreign policy, outlines Moscow's current foreign policy goals, and highlights underlying concerns for US policymakers and military practitioners. By pursuing policies that support Russian goals of economic integration, mitigation of demographic concerns, and security of national borders, the United States can set the foundation for productive engagement on critical issues.

Keywords: US-Russian relations, geopolitics, military strategy, demographics, diplomacy, geography, economic investment

Russia has an old proverb: “The past is a lighthouse, not a port.”¹ American foreign policy on Russia has steered toward a metaphoric lighthouse for decades and failed to prevent the invasions of Ukraine and Georgia three times in the past 15 years.² Prudence requires an analysis of the causes of these failures to avoid repeating them in the future. While significant academic research has considered the relevance of geography in Russian defense thinking, US policy does not engage with the Russian preoccupation with geographic circumstances. Where Russia derives significant anxiety from the geographic insecurity of its borders, its unpredictable access to global trade routes via waterways and ports, and its demographic fragility, the United States primarily focuses on engaging Russia on topics of interest to the United States, such as democracy, human rights, and cybersecurity.³

To shape a Europe and Eurasia conducive to US policy goals, the United States must place Russia's geographic position at the center of its Russia strategy.

1. “Russian Proverb,” Goodreads (website), accessed June 3, 2023, https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/8252550.Russian_proverb.

2. Natia Seskuria, “Argument: Russia Is Reenacting Its Georgia Playbook in Ukraine,” *Foreign Policy* (website), February 22, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/22/russia-ukraine-invasion-georgia-2008-south-ossetia-tskhinvali/>.

3. Tim Marshall, “Russia and the Curse of Geography,” *Atlantic* (website), October 31, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/russia-geography-ukraine-syria/413248/>; and “Briefing Room: U.S.-Russia Relations: ‘Reset’ Fact Sheet,” White House (website), June 24, 2010, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/us-russia-relations-reset-fact-sheet>.

This article first analyzes the key role of geography in Russia's military strategy and approach to foreign policy. The second half of the article draws on this analysis to advance three avenues that the United States and its partners and allies should consider in shaping future interactions with Russia. These policies address Russia's underlying concerns and establish a foundation for future engagement in accordance with US interests in the region.

Geography and Strategy

Richard M. Medina and George F. Hepner of the Geospatial Intelligence Research Lab argue that “the need for geographical knowledge and understanding is greater than ever and ignoring that need will eventually lead to extreme failures in policy.”⁴ Geography as a discipline has two major categories: physical geography and human geography. Physical geography consists of the spatial distribution of physical phenomena, such as biology (flora and fauna), hydrology, climatology, geology, and terrain. Human geography consists of the spatial distribution of human characteristics, such as industry, demographics, political features (borders or alliances), and military forces.⁵

Within physical geography, certain subdisciplines influence Russia and its foreign policy. Regarding hydrology, navigable waterways allow for the safe, cheap, and abundant transportation of materials and people. Good ports allow for the same across larger bodies of water. Access to water and the ability to transport goods across water serve as the basis for today's globalized economy.⁶ As such, Russia routinely applies political pressure to gain access to hydrographic features, especially warm-water ports. Geology also heavily influences Russia's actions. A phenomenon known as “the resource curse” frequently occurs when countries that rely on exporting raw materials (including geologic resources) suffer from economic and political instability due to fluctuations in the market.⁷ This instability creates unrest that manifests in coups, civil wars, or other forms of violence, which have historically afflicted Russia.⁸ In terms of terrain, the relatively flat, indefensible North European plain has seen frequent military campaigns due to the ease

4. Richard M. Medina and George F. Hepner, “A Note on the State of Geography and Geospatial Intelligence,” National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (website), March 11, 2015, https://www.nga.mil/news/A_Note_on_the_State_of_Geography_and_Geospatial_In.html.

5. Caitlyn Finlayson, *World Regional Geography* (self-pub., 2016), LibreTexts (website), 1.7.1–1.7.2.

6. Peter Zeihan, *The Accidental Superpower: The Next Generation of American Preeminence and the Coming Global Disorder* (New York: Twelve, 2014).

7. Natural Resource Governance Institute (NGRI), “The Resource Curse: The Political and Economic Challenges of Natural Resource Wealth,” *NGRI Reader*, March 2015, https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/nrgi_Resource-Curse.pdf.

8. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior Is Almost Always Good Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011).

with which armies can move across it, as evidenced by repeated invasions of Russia originating in Western Europe.⁹

Historically, scholars and military strategists focused on Russia's physical geography, but its human geography plays an equally important role. The distribution of economic activity (for example, oil pipelines) to various countries shapes its policy goals and objectives. Demographics, consisting of many characteristics, including ethnicity, age, gender, and more, influence many different types of government policy. The average age of a population determines the number of working- or military-age people.¹⁰ The distribution of military resources can enable or deter conflict. The sales of military equipment can often serve as a proxy for a country's political might, so much so that Russia earned the moniker "arsenal of autocracy."¹¹ Borders, the most obvious expression of political geography, changed frequently throughout Russian history and remain contested in parts of the former Soviet Union.¹² All of these geographic factors influence Russia's foreign policy.

Geography Is Key to Russia's Perspective

Geography looms large in the consciousness of Russia's leaders and their perceptions of Russia's advantages and disadvantages on the global stage. History punished Russian leaders who failed to account for their geography and has rewarded those who attempted to tame the human and physical geography of the region.

The impact of geography on the Russian state dates back to the mid-thirteenth century when the Mongol invasion across the largely unobstructed European plain nearly destroyed the Slavic people. The Slavic peoples spent the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reconsolidating in Moscow and began their expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the Russian Empire expanding across Siberia. During this period, Russia faced few obstacles regarding native populations but recognized the importance of ethnic distribution and pushed Slavic migrants to populate the desolate regions of northern Siberia.¹³ This strategy of changing the human geography to suit Russian

9. Marshall, "Curse of Geography."

10. Bradley A. Thayer, "Considering Population and War: A Critical and Neglected Aspect of Conflict Studies," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 364, no. 1532 (October 2009): 3081–92, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2009.0151>.

11. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Why America Should Really Fear Russia's Armata T-14 Tank," *National Interest* (website), May 8, 2015, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-america-should-really-fear-russias-armata-t-14-tank-12836>.

12. David Lewis, "Strategic Culture and Geography: Russia's Southern Seas after Crimea," George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (website), July 2019, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/de/node/1177>.

13. Joel Quam and Scott Campbell, "Russian Domain," in *The Western World: Daily Readings on Geography* (College of DuPage Digital Press, 2020).

political objectives continued in the form of the Russification policies practiced by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.¹⁴ After conquering Siberia, Russia finally consolidated enough strength to challenge the Ottoman Empire to the south in the eighteenth century, and Catherine the Great secured Sevastopol on the Black Sea in 1783.¹⁵ Sevastopol provided Russia its first true warm-water port and cemented Catherine among the pantheon of great Russian leaders.¹⁶ Following Catherine, Russia struggled to defend itself during the nineteenth century. Napoleon threatened Russian security with the 1812 invasion, as did multiple European powers in the Crimean War of the 1850s.¹⁷ Threats, which continued into the twentieth-century wars with Germany in World War I and World War II, reemphasized the geographic vulnerability of Russia.¹⁸

The history of the Russian Geographical Society provides a useful allegory for the impact of geographic thinking on Russian leaders. The organization was founded in 1845 by Russian Admiral Fyodor Petrovich, Count (Graf) Litke, as “the free corporation that is open for people who love their homeland and have indestructible belief in the future of Russia and the Russians.” This founding highlights the early linkages between the Russian military, nationalism, and geographic thought. The first two presidents of the society were grand dukes of Russia, who were senior members of the Romanov family. Under the Soviet Union, the organization expanded to include 17 regional offices. Today the chairman of the board of trustees is Vladimir Putin, and the society’s president is Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu.¹⁹ Clearly the ideological ties between geography and security of the state remain and feature significantly in leadership decisions.

14. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Russification Policies,” n.d., accessed May 24, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Russian-Empire/Russification-policy>.

15. Quam and Campbell, “Russian Domain.”

16. Tanvi Chauhan, “Why Are Warm-Water Ports Important to Russian Security?: The Cases of Sevastopol and Tartus Compared,” *Air Force Journal of European, Middle Eastern, and African Affairs* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 57–76, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/JEMEAA/Journals/Volume-02_Issue-1/Chauhan.pdf.

17. “Jun 24, 1812 CE: Napoleon Invades Russia,” National Geographic Society (website), n.d., last updated May 20, 2022, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/napoleon-invades-russia/>; and *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Crimean War,” n.d., accessed May 24, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Crimean-War>.

18. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *World War I: Historical Map of the Eastern Front during World War I*, accessed May 24, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Eastern-Front-World-War-I-history#/media/1/668465/236180>; and History.com Editors, “Operation Barbarossa,” History (website), n.d., last updated November 14, 2022, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/operation-barbarossa>.

19. “History,” Russian Geographical Society (website), n.d., accessed May 22, 2023, <https://www.rgo.ru/en/society/history>.

Today Putin's public statements echo a philosophy shaped by Russia's geographic realities. In 2021, Putin published his essay "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," in which he claimed that Ukraine and Russia share a human and physical geographic history and that any differences between the two groups are the result of foreign interference. He reiterated this point in the buildup to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, stating that Ukraine was "entirely created by Russia."²⁰

The most significant geographic feature that causes anxiety for Russian leaders involves a lack of defensible geography. Russia's location on the European Plain leaves it vulnerable to attack. Historically, Russia has fought to defend its territory from various invaders across this plain, first from the Mongols and, most recently, from the Germans in World War II. Even during the Cold War, while Russia concentrated on facing a threat from NATO, tensions with China in 1969 resulted in massive militarization along its border, a brief border skirmish, and the threat of nuclear war.²¹ The flatness and general lack of significant terrain of the European Plain create an environment with few impediments to military operations.²²

While Russia's large land mass serves as a source of national pride, its limited access to water is a source of national angst. Russia's navigable rivers exist entirely west of the Ural Mountains, leaving large swaths of territory without the cheap and easy access to economic markets provided by bulk riverine transportation. Additionally, while Russia has approximately 23,000 miles of coastline, the majority sits along the Arctic Ocean, to which ice restricts access during much of the year.²³ With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia lost control of nearly 2,000 miles of Black Sea coastline, its sole access to warm-water transit routes.²⁴ While the Black Sea provides critical warm-water port access for Russia, it is susceptible to disruption because access into and out of the sea is restricted by the maritime choke points of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Strait controlled by Türkiye (a NATO member). The challenges associated with transporting goods internally to Russia

20. Max Fisher, "Word by Word and between the Lines: A Close Look at Putin's Speech" *New York Times* (website), February 23, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/23/world/europe/putin-speech-russia-ukraine.html>.

21. Allen S. Whiting, "Sino-Soviet Hostilities and Implications for US Policy," August 16, 1969, in *The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict, 1969: U.S. Reactions and Diplomatic Maneuvers*, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book, no. 49, ed. William Burr (National Security Archive, 2001), <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB49/sino.sov.9.pdf>.

22. Zeihan, *Accidental Superpower*.

23. "Russia," Arctic Institute (website), n.d., last updated August 1, 2022, <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/countries/russia/>.

24. Lewis, "Russia's Southern Seas."

and exporting goods to the global market increase the costs of basic economic activities and limit Russia's potential growth and global influence.²⁵

Part of why access to global markets remains critical for Russia lies in its geographic resources. Russia's economy suffers from the "resource curse" of relying on exports, particularly oil and natural gas. For the last 20 years, the health of the Russian economy has reflected the global price of oil and natural gas. Additionally, because Russia cannot access ocean shipping routes, it must rely on pipelines and agreements with the countries those pipelines cross to export its oil and natural gas. Increasingly, global concern regarding climate change and the associated move toward renewable energy sources leaves Russia with a shrinking market for its primary exports, threatening economic growth and its standard of living.²⁶

The final geographic factor that strategically concerns Russia consists of human geography and demographics. Russia's population has declined by approximately 2 million people since 1991, and its current birth rate of 1.5 children per woman of childbearing age means the trend will likely continue.²⁷ A declining population means Russia will have a smaller working-age population to run its economy and a smaller military to defend its borders, threatening the government's stability and the nation's sovereignty. More acutely, the faster decline of the Ukrainian population relative to the Russian population created a temporal window where Russia maintained an advantage over Ukraine. This decline led Ukraine to pursue EU and NATO integration aggressively to deter Russian hostility. Ultimately, this action antagonized Russia by increasing the Russian perception that NATO poses a threat.²⁸

These geographic factors drive Russia's end states for its foreign policy. Russia seeks defensible borders like those they had during the Soviet era when they controlled the Baltic Sea, the Carpathian Mountains, the Black Sea, the Caucasus Mountains, and the Tien Shan Mountains. Russia wants to maintain and expand access to global markets

25. Rob Bailey and Laura Wellesley, *Chokepoints and Vulnerabilities in Global Food Trade*, Chatham House Report (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2017), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2017/06/chokepoints-and-vulnerabilities-global-food-trade-0/2-chokepoints-global-food-trade>.

26. Eleonora Sokolsky, "Russia's Resource Curse: The Effects of Oil on Democracy 1998–2008," *Undergraduate Journal of International Studies* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 69–84, <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/ujis/article/view/31932/35851>.

27. Cyrielle Cabot, "Population Decline in Russia: 'Putin Has No Choice But to Win' in Ukraine," France24 (website), May 24, 2022, <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220524-population-decline-in-russia-putin-has-no-other-choice-but-to-win-in-ukraine>; and "Fertility Rate, Total (Births per Woman)," World Bank (website), n.d., accessed August 31, 2022, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>.

28. Lyman Stone, "The Demography of War: Ukraine vs. Russia," *Institute for Family Studies* (blog), March 22, 2022, <https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-demography-of-war-ukraine-vs-russia>.

by controlling warm-water ports and oil and natural gas pipelines to support its economy. Russia also seeks to expand its working-age population to support the economy and military. Russian aggression in the former Soviet Union in the past 20 years illustrates how Russia seeks to achieve these aims.²⁹ In order to forge new productive relationships with Russia and improve stability in the region, the United States must develop policies that acknowledge these concerns and interests.

A Russia-centric Policy for the Future

History demonstrated that Russia's geographic condition has heavily influenced Russian foreign policy. The current war in Ukraine reflects the same Russian anxieties that drove foreign policy for centuries. While the spectrum of outcomes could range from complete Russian victory to partial victory to outright defeat, the war's outcome seems unlikely to address the underlying geographic realities.

Despite the variations in outcomes of the current war, the geographic conditions that contributed to the Russian threat perception will remain unchanged, and the history of Russian leadership indicates that physical expansion to control more of the European Plain, warm-water ports, or young workers would remain politically desirable for any leader. Currently, Putin and Western leaders seem unwilling to engage diplomatically about the future of Russia, but Russia retains too much national power to ignore forever. While the conditions under which a change in power occurs (including who replaces Putin) might dictate when and how the United States and its allies engage with a future Russian state, the geographic anxieties of Russia remain, including the insecurity of Russia's borders, the Russian economy's ability to export goods globally or regionally without access to warm-water ports, and an accelerated decline in the Russian population. Geographically, climate change could affect Russia in mostly positive ways in the future. Estimates suggest that Russian agricultural land could quadruple by 2080, and the melting of polar sea ice could open Russian ports to trade along the Arctic trade route.³⁰

Unless the United States departs from policy precedent with Russia, we can expect the behaviors of Russia's leaders to continue to detract from US interests through aggressive military action, disruptive political influence operations in the United States and allied countries, and closer relations with China. Shifting to a policy that acknowledges

29. Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography."

30. Abrahm Lustgarten, "How Russia Wins the Climate Crisis," *New York Times* (website), December 16, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/16/magazine/russia-climate-migration-crisis.html>.

and addresses Russia's geographically derived anxieties over time through iterative trust-building exchanges could set the stage to alter over 100 years of mistrust and aggression. The United States should prepare to reestablish productive diplomatic relations with Russia to achieve this goal. While rapprochement with Russia will likely remain politically impossible as long as Putin remains president, the United States should prepare to engage as soon as Putin departs office, regardless of who replaces him and the status of the Russia-Ukraine War at that time.

Russian Access to Trade without Ports

A successful US strategy must address Russia's lack of global economic integration. Greater economic integration will alleviate some of Russia's anxieties about its lack of warm-water port access. The United States should pursue two investment areas to improve Russian economic integration.

First, the United States should invest in efforts to diversify the Russian economy away from dependence on oil and natural gas exports.³¹ The simplest transition could involve a shift from oil and natural gas to renewable energy sources. Assessments suggest that Russia has the potential to become entirely self-sufficient in domestic renewable energy and an exporter of renewable energy based on a combination of wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass sources.³² Current technology for the distribution of renewable energy does not rely on port access and therefore offers Russia an export supportable by its geography.³³ Transitioning away from energy export dependence is particularly urgent for Russia, given estimates that Russian oil production will drop by 42 percent by 2035 and that demand in Western Europe and the United States (which combined currently make up Russia's second-largest market) will decline with their green-energy transition.³⁴ Additionally, since electricity markets tend to have a more limited reach, Russia can concentrate on its regional market and worry less about competition there than in the globalized oil and natural-gas market.

31. Yuri V. Simachev et al., "Industrial Policy in Russia: How to Open a New Window of Opportunity?" (conference paper, XIX April International Scientific Conference of National Research University Higher School of Economics on Economic and Social Development, Moscow, September 2018), <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Yuri-Simachev/publication/327836905>.

32. Ephraim Bonah Agyekum et al., "Decarbonize Russia – A Best-Worst Method Approach for Assessing the Renewable Energy Potentials, Opportunities and Challenges," *Energy Reports* 7 (July 2021): 4498–4515, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.egyr.2021.07.039>.

33. Brett Smith, "How Electricity Can Travel Long Distances with Minimal Power Loss," *AZoMaterials* (website), July 10, 2019, <https://www.azom.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=18258>.

34. Alex Kimani, "Analysts Predict 42% Decline in Russian Oil Production by 2035," *OilPrice.com* (website), February 5, 2023, <https://oilprice.com/Energy/Crude-Oil/Analysts-Predict-42-Decline-In-Russian-Oil-Production-By-2035.html>; and "Energy Insights Outlook Overview: Global Oil Supply & Demand Outlook to 2035," *Energy Solutions*, McKinsey and Company (website), n.d., accessed May 25, 2023, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/oil-and-gas/how-we-help-clients/energy-insights/global-oil-supply-demand-outlook-to-2035---removed>.

Russia's highly educated population, robust industrial base, and abundant natural resources present an opportunity to invest in advanced manufacturing and technological development.³⁵ Russia's history of machine manufacturing combined with the world's fourth-largest reserves of rare-earth metals and other raw materials makes the country a logical location for high-technology development, which would retain global relevance for decades.³⁶

Additionally, the expansion of Russian agricultural land caused by climate change could allow Russia to increase its share of global food production as agricultural land closer to the equator becomes increasingly less productive.³⁷ These economic sectors provide viable alternatives to the export dependence on oil and natural gas and alleviate concerns about warm-water port access.

In support of these efforts, Russia will require financial investment in meaningful infrastructure projects that expand Russia's ability to ship commercial goods from the country's interior to global or regional markets.³⁸ These investments could include high-speed railroads across eastern Russia and port investments along the Arctic coast.³⁹ These investments increase the price competitiveness of products produced in Russia and reduce the country's dependence on port access.

US and allied investment would have to confront the obstacles presented by the war and earlier sanctions. Many European allies will financially commit to rebuilding Ukraine and strongly oppose providing money to bolster the Russian economy.⁴⁰ Encouraging investment in Russia will also require a reversal of post-2008 US policy sanctions based on Russian military actions in Georgia and Ukraine. Unfortunately, many of these sanctions further isolated the Russian economy, and instead of forcing Russia to the negotiating table, they increased Russia's perceived urgency to secure territorial gains. A continuation of sanctions to induce concessions or liberal reforms in Russia is unlikely to succeed even after Putin's eventual departure because Russia has spent the years since 2014 (when the sanctions were first enacted) insulating its economy and finding alternative sources of finance.

35. Howard J. Shatz, "Commentary: Russia's Tragic Failure to Reform Its Economy," *RAND Blog*, RAND Corporation (website), April 7, 2022, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/04/russias-tragic-failure-to-reform-its-economy.html>. First published in *Moscow Times*, April 7, 2022.

36. Ashleigh Cotting, Toby Woodall, and Jose Miguel Fidel Javier, "Russia Struggling to Capitalize on Rare Earth Reserves," S&P Global Market Intelligence (website), July 3, 2019, <https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/russia-struggling-to-capitalize-on-rare-earth-reserves-52525919>.

37. Lustgarten, "How Russia Wins."

38. "Russia's Physical and Social Infrastructure: Implications for Future Development," National Intelligence Council, December 2000, <https://irp.fas.org/nic/russia.html>.

39. Lustgarten, "How Russia Wins."

40. Pavel K. Baev, "Research: Time for the West to Think about How to Engage with Defeated Russia," Brookings (website), November 15, 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/time-for-the-west-to-think-about-how-to-engage-with-defeated-russia/>.

These alternative sources include China, and the deepening of this relationship runs additional risks.⁴¹ If Russian dependence on China increases, China could demand access to oil, natural gas, mineral resources, and agricultural products that China currently lacks or purchases for higher prices.⁴² Low-cost Russian resourcing of the Chinese economy and military would decrease US leverage over China and potentially prolong the period of strategic competition between China and the United States.

The United States should commit to providing the primary financing of Russian projects while relying heavily on European allies to support diplomatic initiatives despite significant domestic opposition to these policies. The rising prospect of conflict with China would force the US government to allocate resources between rebuilding a future with Russia and preparing for military escalation with China. Despite this seeming competition for resources, a weakened Russia remains diplomatically, economically, and militarily vulnerable to Chinese expansion in the East, where China could seek control of Russian oil, natural gas, and agricultural land.⁴³ As such, investment in Russian economic strength supports America's goals of countering Chinese malign behavior.

East Asian allies such as Japan and South Korea could provide additional financial support. They will face heavy domestic pressures, however, as they also suffer from poor demographics and contracting economic growth.⁴⁴ There are opportunities to promote mutual gain with East Asian allies by enabling Japan and South Korea to focus on high-end technological capabilities with a smaller, more specialized workforce while supporting the growth of mid-tier technological development in Russia.⁴⁵ This supporting infrastructure could lie on top of exportable Russian natural resources via Russia's eastern ports and cut the length of maritime supply lines to Japan and South Korea.⁴⁶ While Japan and South Korea could

41. Anatoly Kurmanaev and Stanley Reed, "How Russia Is Surviving the Tightening Grip on Its Oil Revenue," *New York Times* (website), February 7, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/business/russia-oil-embargo.html>.

42. Ishaan Tharoor, "Today's Worldview: China Has a Hand in Sri Lanka's Economic Calamity," *Washington Post* (website), July 20, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/20/sri-lanka-china-debt-trap/>.

43. Jonathan E. Hillman, *China and Russia: Economic Unequals*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (website), July 15, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-and-russia-economic-unequals>.

44. Jung H. Pak and Ethan Jewell, "Commentary: South Korea and Japan Have More in Common Than They Think," Brookings (website), September 5, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/south-korea-and-japan-have-more-in-common-than-they-think/>.

45. "Market News: Trends in Japan's Manufacturing and Machinery Industry," Insights, Market Prospects (website), June 8, 2021, <https://www.market-prospects.com/articles/trends-in-japan-manufacturing>.

46. Yuka Obayashi, "Explainer: How Will Japan Resolve Shipping Insurance for Russian LNG Imports?," Reuters (website), December 29, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/how-will-japan-resolve-shipping-insurance-russian-lng-imports-2022-12-29/>.

attempt to build supporting relationships with countries in Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia does not provide the wealth of natural resources accessible via Russia's large landmass.⁴⁷

Addressing Demographics through Technology and Governance

While Russia derives significant anxiety from its physical geographic conditions, it is perhaps the human geographic conditions of demography that pose the greatest threat to long-term stability in Russia. American economic investments could also help Russia address these issues. Automation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning can potentially decrease the skill level and number of people required to work in high-profit industries.⁴⁸ American and allied private businesses, particularly Japanese or German companies facing similar demographic challenges, could partner with Russian companies to address multiple Russian concerns stemming from their demographic circumstances. The US government could utilize public-private partnerships, government contracts, oversight requirements, and conditional clauses, to induce private companies to further these initiatives.⁴⁹

Diplomatically, multiple US and allied initiatives could assist Russia in optimizing gains from economic investments. Multiple studies have identified Russian centralized government control of the economy as a hindrance to Russian economic advancement. American and allied good governance initiatives, particularly those partnering with other former Soviet states that have successfully modernized their economies (such as Estonia), could provide a “post-Putin” Russian government with the tools to govern the country and economy more effectively.⁵⁰

In recent decades the United States focused on promoting democracy and human rights, which has created limited opportunities for engagement with Russia. In the 2002 *National Security Strategy*, the Bush administration wrote, “We are also increasingly united by common values. Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future”⁵¹ Even after Russia's invasion of Georgia, President Obama's 2009 speech

47. Satsuki Kaneko, “Japan and ASEAN to Study Data Sharing on Supply Chain Risks,” *Nikkei Asia* (website), January 5, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-and-ASEAN-to-study-data-sharing-on-supply-chain-risks>.

48. Hiroaki Sasaki, “Growth with Automation Capital and Declining Population,” *Economics Letters* 222 (January 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2022.110958>.

49. Sebastian Backup and Dominic Waughray, “Argument: How to Reverse the World's Trust Deficit Disorder,” *Foreign Policy* (website), January 16, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/01/16/public-private-partnership-wef-davos-world-trust-deficit-disorder/>.

50. Sergey Aleksashenko, “Commentary: Rebuilding the Russian Economy: Is a Lack of Policy the Right Policy?,” Brookings (website), September 25, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/rebuilding-the-russian-economy-is-a-lack-of-policy-the-right-policy/>.

51. George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: White House, September 2002), <https://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2002.pdf>.

in Moscow highlighted “a system where the universal rights of human beings are respected, and violations of those rights are opposed” and in the 2010 *National Security Strategy* stated that “We support efforts within Russia to promote the rule of law, accountable government, and universal values.”⁵² These efforts ignored Russian geographically derived concerns and ultimately failed to create meaningful engagement with Russia, resulting in the invasions of Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 and 2014.

Working on anti-corruption and administrative efficiency and competence with a focus on economic output instead of exclusively focusing on democracy and human rights will build trust and goodwill with whatever Russian government comes after the war by acknowledging their concerns and enabling the Russian government to address those concerns more effectively without resorting to violence. While some will argue that neglecting democracy and human rights undermines the values of the United States, the United States cannot press the Russian government to improve the lives of the Russian people without a standing relationship. The United States must establish a relationship and garner influence before appeals will make any difference in the lives of ordinary Russians.⁵³ Furthermore, a more competent and less corrupt government will improve the lives of Russian citizens even without advances in democracy and human rights.

Securing Russian Borders

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States engaged in a strategy of expanding NATO, in part justifying the move by claiming the possibility of future Russian aggression and thereby reinforcing Russia’s perception that NATO existed specifically to wage war against Russia.⁵⁴ In April 2008, the United States stated in conjunction with NATO regarding Georgia and Ukraine that “these countries will become members of NATO.”⁵⁵ These actions again reinforced Russia’s perception that NATO sought to encircle and destroy Russia. Expanding NATO membership to Ukraine after this conflict would continue the cycle of grievance for Russia and decrease the likelihood of future engagement on any subject.

52. Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, May 2010), 44, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

53. Thomas Graham, “Let Russia Be Russia: The Case for a More Pragmatic Approach to Moscow,” *Foreign Affairs* (website), October 15, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2019-10-15/let-russia-be-russia>.

54. Sarotte, “How to Enlarge NATO,” 7–41.

55. David Brunnstrom and Susan Cornwell, “NATO Promises Ukraine, Georgia Entry One Day,” Reuters (website), April 3, 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato/nato-promises-ukraine-georgia-entry-one-day-idUSL0179714620080403>.

During the buildup to the war in Ukraine, Russia requested a legally binding security agreement but offered unacceptable terms to NATO member states.⁵⁶ While Russia remains unlikely to trust security guarantees from NATO, nonaggression treaties with individual NATO members that border Russia (such as Finland, Norway, and the Baltic states) could provide assurances about the security of Russia's western border. Alternatively, policies rejected during the original NATO expansion debate, such as the "NATO-Russia Charter," Partnership for Peace, and the "alliance with an alliance" construct for Ukraine, Russia, and other former Soviet states, could allow the United States to acknowledge Russia's concerns about continued NATO expansion and engender opportunities for future engagement.⁵⁷

Most of the policies outlined in previous sections would offer US and allied assistance to Russia. In exchange, the United States should demand denuclearization and a degree of demilitarization. As part of the demand for demilitarization, the United States would have to provide security agreements similar to the guarantees made to Japan after World War II. While Japan wrote a new constitution banning an offensive military, Russia should retain a small military force, and restrictions on size and capability should ease over time.⁵⁸ With nonaggression pacts signed with countries along its western border, Russia could reposture its remaining forces toward securing eastern border regions with China. While Russia will likely retain transactional relations with China, their historical animosity and competition for resources on the East Asian landmass make them uncomfortable partners, and increasing Russia's ability to prioritize its eastern security provides another area for cooperation between the United States and Russia.⁵⁹

The most notable difference between this scenario and the post-World War II period lies in the assumption that Russia will not be conquered. Even if Russia loses the war in Ukraine, it remains highly unlikely that a foreign army will threaten the Russian government in Moscow.⁶⁰ Given this assumption, Russia will naturally oppose any agreement to disarm

56. Steven Pifer, "Russia's Draft Agreements with NATO and the United States: Intended for Rejection?," Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University (website), December 21, 2021, <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/russia%E2%80%99s-draft-agreements-nato-and-united-states-intended-rejection>. First published in the *Order from Chaos* blog, Brookings (website), December 21, 2021.

57. M. E. Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95," *International Security* 44, no. 1 (Summer 2019): 7–41, <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/44/1/7/12232>.

58. Kirk Spitzer, "Japan Ends Ban on Military Self-Defense," *Time* (website), July 1, 2014, <https://time.com/2946076/japan-ends-ban-on-military-self-defense/>.

59. Editorial Board, "Opinion: What's America's Winning Hand If Russia Plays the China Card?" *New York Times* (website), July 21, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/21/opinion/russia-china-trump.html>.

60. Peter A. Wilson and William Courtney, "How the War in Ukraine Could End Sooner Than Expected," *RAND Blog*, RAND Corporation (website), January 17, 2023, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2023/01/how-the-war-in-ukraine-could-end-sooner-than-expected.html>.

and make itself more vulnerable. Russia would not agree to denuclearization and demilitarization overnight but could potentially agree after a series of trust-building initiatives that provide small to modest amounts of economic investment and political engagement in exchange for decreases in nuclear stockpiles and military capacity. American initiatives could mirror the US approach during the Cold War when a détente led to a series of nuclear weapon and missile treaties over the course of a decade.⁶¹ The most significant step would involve meeting with a potentially objectionable successor to Putin with an offer that did not simply demand concessions from Russia. While the United States could disengage and allow military and economic isolation and demographics to decay Russian state power, this course of action risks Russia weaponizing its remaining capabilities, including cyberattacks on US and allied interests, inciting uprisings in nearby countries, and selling arms to US adversaries.⁶²

Conclusion

While many aspects of the future Russo-US relationship remain in flux and will depend on the outcome of the current conflict, the motivations for Russia's actions will not disappear.⁶³ The United States has historically pursued a Russia policy focused on a narrow set of US interests, resulting in a lack of engagement and influence on Russian decision making.⁶⁴ The consequences of this lack of engagement include over \$2.8 trillion lost from the global economy, hundreds of thousands of dead and wounded, and millions of Ukrainians displaced from their homes due to the war.⁶⁵ Russia's focus on geographic concerns will remain unchanged regardless of who ultimately replaces Putin. If the United States continues

61. "1949–2021 U.S.-Russia Nuclear Arms Control" (timeline), Council on Foreign Relations (website), n.d., <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-russia-nuclear-arms-control>.

62. Robert S. Mueller III, *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, March 2019), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/download>; and Chris Massaro, "US Warns Russian-Linked Actors Seeking to 'Foment Manufactured Insurrection' in European Country," Fox News (website), March 10, 2023, <https://www.foxnews.com/world/us-warns-russian-linked-actors-seeking-foment-manufactured-insurrection-european-country>; Lama Fakih, "Russia Makes a Killing Off Its Military Support to Assad," Human Rights Watch (website), March 13, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/13/russia-makes-killing-its-military-support-assad>. First published in *New Atlanticist* (blog), Atlantic Council (website), March 12, 2018.

63. John O'Loughlin, Gerard Toal, and Kristin M. Bakke, "To Russia with Love: The Majority of Crimeans Are Still Glad for Their Annexation," *Foreign Affairs* (website), April 3, 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2020-04-03/russia-love>.

64. Obama, *NSS*.

65. Paul Hannon, "Russia's War in Ukraine to Cost Global Economy \$2.8 Trillion, OECD Says," *Wall Street Journal* (website), September 26, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russias-war-in-ukraine-to-cost-global-economy-2-8-trillion-oecd-says-11664177401>; "Ukraine War: US Estimates 200,000 Military Casualties on All Sides," BBC (website), November 10, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63580372>; and Erol Yayboke, Anastasia Strouboulis, and Abigail Edwards, "Critical Questions: Update on Forced Displacement around Ukraine," CSIS (website), October 3, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/update-forced-displacement-around-ukraine>.

to fail at productively engaging the Russian government, it increases the risk of the collapse of territorial control within Russia and the continuation of asymmetric threats emanating from Russia. Within Russia, central government control can mitigate global threats, such as terrorist groups operating out of the Caucasus Mountains and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.⁶⁶ Externally, even a weakened Russia could continue to mount covert campaigns to destabilize neighboring countries and US alliances through cyberattacks and information warfare.⁶⁷ Given these threats, attempts at addressing Russia's geographically derived anxieties sooner rather than later would best promote US interests in the region.

Russia will retain relevance in the future due to its size, natural resources, conventional and irregular military capacity, and historical relationships with US allies.⁶⁸ If the United States pursues policies that support Russian goals of economic integration, mitigation of demographic concerns, and securing national borders, US leadership can set the foundation for productive engagement on issues critical to American interests. The United States spent decades enacting foreign policy that resulted in an aggressive Russia. Without addressing Russia's geographically derived anxieties, the United States will continue crashing into the lighthouse of the past.

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66. Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, "What If Russia Loses? A Defeat for Moscow Won't Be a Clear Victory for the West," *Atlantic* (website), March 4, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/what-if-russia-loses>.

67. Alexander Tanas, "Moldovan Government Quits amid Economic Turmoil, Russia Tensions," Reuters (website), February 10, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moldovan-prime-minister-announces-government-resignation-2023-02-10/>.

68. Editorial Board, "Opinion: After War, After Putin, What's Next for Russia?," *Washington Post* (website), October 12, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/10/12/russia-future-after-putin-ukraine/>.

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Urban Resistance to Occupation: An Underestimated Element of Land Warfare

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ABSTRACT: Due to a global trend toward urbanization and Russian and Chinese aggression toward Ukraine and Taiwan, respectively, urban resistance to occupation merits greater study. The research here presents a much-needed and unique analysis of Dutch-language primary sources on the Netherlands' World War II urban resistance to occupation. It provides deeper insights into the occupation experiences of a highly urbanized, densely populated country in which clandestine underground and auxiliary elements played paramount roles in resistance efforts for most of the occupation period. It also illustrates the feasibility of overt, guerrilla-based activity in urban environments during the final phase of a conflict and offers insights into an understudied Landpower activity that modern at-risk countries should develop and hone.

Keywords: resistance to occupation, *Resistance Operating Concept*, underground, special operations forces, megacity

With the world trending toward urbanization and Russia and China acting aggressively toward Ukraine and Taiwan, respectively, the conduct of irregular warfare in built-up environments—specifically, urban resistance to occupation (RTO)—merits greater study and emphasis in the Landpower domain. The objective of this paper is threefold: to encourage the incorporation of RTO capabilities into the national security planning of relevant US allies and partners against potential Russian or Chinese aggression, to offer an ideographic case study to catalyze deeper thinking in an area that possesses an underdeveloped theoretical base, and to contribute to the literature reservoir on urban resistance to occupation in both specificity and variety.

This examination begins with clarifications on terminology and a review of the limited nature of urban irregular warfare theory. It then proceeds to a discussion of the need for fresh and broader literature on this subject and subsequently highlights two limitations to the study of urban resistance that constrain research on this theme. Then, the article discusses the implications of urban terrain for clandestine resistance to occupation and conducts a deeper analysis of the case of urban resistance to occupation in World War II Netherlands, with an emphasis on the period

1944–45. This historical case, which has received relatively little attention in the literature, is by nature ideographic, meaning the case offers a broad and deep description of urban resistance to occupation. Such a description can contribute to further theory development as well as offer lessons for future consideration.¹

Chief among the case lessons are:

- the significance of tradecraft for longer-term survival in the urban resistance zone,
- the requirement for conventional ground force commanders to plan and prepare for liaison and collaboration with resistance organizations during major combat operations to employ the organizations' capabilities effectively, and
- the need for allied or national special operations forces or designated land force units to conduct security force assistance in peacetime to prepare selected elements of a threatened population for stay-behind resistance operations in urban terrain in the event of occupation.

Such activities are becoming increasingly relevant for countries like Estonia, Georgia, Moldova, Mongolia, and Taiwan that face potential occupation from a proximate adversary.²

Terminology

Recently, academic sources have conflated urban warfare and resistance and its implications for Landpower.³ Overt resistance to invasion and clandestine resistance to occupation in urban areas differ markedly.⁴ The definition of resistance to occupation is “the use of cellular formations and clandestine tradecraft to mask the resistance organization among the

1. Harry Eckstein, “Case Study and Theory in Political Science,” in *Case Study Method*, ed. Roger Gomm, Martyn Hammersley, and Peter Foster (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009), 119–64.

2. Vitalie Calugareanu and Robert Schwartz, “Russia Steps Up Threats against Republic of Moldova,” *Deutsche Welle* (website), February 4, 2023, <https://www.dw.com/en/russia-steps-up-threats-against-republic-of-moldova/a-64612019>; and Mark Cancian et al., *The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2023).

3. Brian Mehan and Maciej Klisz, “Integrating Territorial Defence Forces into National Resistance Efforts: Lessons of the Polish Home Army’s Role within the World War II Polish Underground State and the Post-War Polish Independence Underground,” *Journal on Baltic Security* 8, no. 1 (2022): 95–119; and Derek Jones and J. Bryant Love, “Resilience and Resistance 2.0: Initial Lessons of Ukraine and the Implications of Resilience and Resistance Efforts to Deter and Respond to Invasion and Occupation by Revisionist Powers,” *Security Theory and Practice* 18, no. 3 (September 2022): 21–40.

4. Monika Lipert-Sowa and Derek Jones, “A Response: The Promises and Pitfalls of Developing Pre-Crisis Clandestine Underground Resistance Organisations Based on Lessons of the World War II Polish Underground State,” *Journal on Baltic Security* 8, no. 1 (2022): 8–28.

human terrain, often in an urban environment, while it conducts armed and nonviolent activities at the time and place of its choosing to maximize its ambiguity and stay viable throughout the occupation.”⁵ The resistance organization typically operates in clandestine action cells “in urban terrain or when under pressure from the occupier.”⁶ Urban combined arms battles like the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43), Grozny (1999–2000), the First and Second Battles of Fallujah (2004), and Mariupol (2022) characterize the resistance to invasion category: overt combat and warfighting operations. The RTO Landpower activity, typically of a clandestine nature, is found in examples like occupied Warsaw (1939–45) and Northern Ireland (1968–98).

This investigation concentrates on clandestine resistance to occupation in urban environments where the aggressor has already seized the built-up area or metropole and has begun exercising physical control and political governance over the population. For clarity and uniformity, this article uses a multinational definition of resistance that focuses on the nation-state, not insurgent groups, and in which resistance is “a nation’s organized, whole-of-society effort, encompassing the full range of activities from nonviolent to violent, led by a legally established government (potentially exiled/displaced or shadow) to reestablish independence and autonomy within its sovereign territory that has been wholly or partially occupied by a foreign power.”⁷

Urban Irregular Warfare Theory

Urban resistance to occupation appears to have an underdeveloped theoretical base for current land warfare. Theories of urban irregular warfare, which mostly emerged from terrorist and insurgent thinkers in the 1960s, were a dialectic outgrowth and rejection of rural-based revolutionary warfare theory espoused by Cuban insurgent Che Guevara and French academic Régis Debray. The two primary urban insurgency theorists were Spanish-born author Abraham Guillén and Brazilian guerrilla leader Carlos Marighella. Guillén advocated protracted popular urban warfare in his many writings.⁸ Marighella, who was the most prominent proponent and practitioner of urban

5. Lipert-Sowa and Jones, “A Response,” 8–28; and Derek Jones, *Understanding the Form, Function, and Logic of Clandestine Insurgent and Terrorist Networks: The First Step in Effective Counternetwork Operations*, Joint Special Operations University Report 12-3 (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2012), 37.

6. Jones and Love, “Resilience and Resistance 2.0,” 21–40.

7. Otto C. Fiala, ed., *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)* (Stockholm: Swedish Defence University, 2019), 21.

8. Abraham Guillén, *Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla*, trans. and ed. Donald C. Hodges (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1973).

irregular warfare, published his iconic *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* in 1969.⁹ Marighella promulgated the use of urban environments for violent action to catalyze national political revolution and change.¹⁰ Nevertheless, a close study of Mao Zedong, Carl von Clausewitz, and actual urban-based insurgencies demonstrated the concept is a theoretical and practical failure.¹¹ Reasons abounded for the defeat of these urban revolutions, but the primary ones were a significant presence of security forces in urban areas, insurgent vulnerability to defectors, mass arrests, and other police measures, as well as insufficient emphasis on the underground's security and secrecy.¹²

To address the twenty-first-century environment with great-power competition rather than insurgent revolutions, the 2019 Resistance Operating Concept (ROC), published by the Swedish Defence University and US Special Operations Command Europe, investigates primarily European-based World War II and Cold War historical examples and offers an applied theory of resistance and resilience in a single volume.¹³ The Resistance Operating Concept took these resistance experiences and placed the cases within a framework for application for national governments seeking to integrate RTO preparation into national security planning. Unfortunately, the Resistance Operating Concept narrowed its focus to primarily partisan or guerrilla-based resistance examples conducted mainly in nonurban and rural environments. Although the ROC writing team was aware of this limitation, time and resource constraints precluded wider research on vignettes with greater urban and underground components. One of the authors of this article was the US Special Operations Command Europe project leader for the publication of the Resistance Operating Concept. Feedback from several resistance-oriented symposiums in Eastern Europe post-publication confirmed the Resistance Operating Concept's inadequate coverage of urban resistance to occupation. Academics and practitioners at symposiums in Czechia, Georgia, and Hungary provided consistent feedback on this gap from 2021–22.

Although Anthony Joes asserts that urban guerrilla warfare has never achieved unambiguous success, the global trend of urbanization coupled with the concurrent reduction of nonurban terrain for resistance operations requires an obligatory twenty-first-century reevaluation of urban spaces

9. Carlos Marighella, *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (Utrecht, NL: Foreign Languages Press, 2016); and Robert Moss, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare*, Adelphi Papers no. 79 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1971), 3.

10. Bard O'Neill, "Insurgent Strategies: An Examination of Four Approaches," in *American Defense Policy*, ed. John E. Endicott and Roy W. Stafford Jr. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

11. Anthony James Joes, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 7.

12. Joes, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare*, 86–87.

13. Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept*.

for the conduct of resistance to occupation.¹⁴ For if the ultimate goal during an occupation is to maintain the survivability of the resistance organization until its political goals—in this case, the restitution of state sovereignty from an occupying military power—have been achieved, then metropolitan areas may offer the only possible sanctuary until liberation. Unfortunately, insufficient literature has been devoted to this topic.

Literature

This article addresses a specific area of study and practice—namely, urban resistance to occupation—that lacks focused and current literature from a wider variety of historical examples. Much has been written about guerrilla- or partisan-based resistance in World War II in France, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, but urban operations are often addressed only peripherally.¹⁵ Poland (1939–45) is the exception, yet the vast literature on this historical example potentially skews the broader study of the phenomenon.

For example, the World War II-era Polish Underground State provides an exemplar of enduring survivability in the face of a highly effective and repressive German occupation regime. Two points are salient. First, the Polish Home Army headquarters remained operational in Warsaw throughout all of World War II against a highly adept and brutal German security apparatus, showing longer-term viability is possible in urban environments.¹⁶ Incredibly, the Polish resistance even survived the razing of Warsaw in 1944.¹⁷ Second, through evolving clandestine tactics and procedures, the Polish Underground State was able to maintain “the flawless functionality of the Polish state” while under occupation.¹⁸ Interestingly, besides its military component, the Polish Underground State conducted secret education, media, and cultural activities to maintain the resiliency of the population.¹⁹ This latter point demonstrates the need to examine the nonmilitary components of resistance in urban environments to reinforce citizen resilience and preserve population support and morale.

Yet other illustrative cases that might be useful do not give much insight into urban resistance to occupation. For instance, the Irish Republican Army campaign against perceived British occupation from 1969 to 1998 offers

14. Joes, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare*, 157.

15. Halik Kochanski, *Resistance: The Underground War in Europe, 1939–1945* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2022); and M. R. D. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operations Executive, 1940–1946* (London: Bodley Head, 2014).

16. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History*, 213.

17. Katarzyna Utracka, “The Phenomenon of the Polish Underground State,” *Warsaw Institute Review* (website), December 4, 2019, <https://warsawinstitute.org/phenomenon-polish-underground-state/>.

18. Utracka, “Polish Underground State.”

19. Utracka, “Polish Underground State.”

insights into organizational adaptability and survivability derived through tradecraft and adaptive learning against a technologically advanced opponent, but most sources do not delve deeply into these matters.²⁰ Similarly, when the histories of the stay-behind organizations of the Cold War mention urban operations, the references are often only tangential to questions of underground strategy, organization, and missions. In addition, these cases were not tested in the crucible of an actual occupation.²¹ The book *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990*, which documents the Cold War stay-behind activities of the US Special Forces Berlin Detachment from 1956 to 1990, contains a discussion of preparation for urban resistance to occupation that is probably the most comprehensive.²² Yet the discussion relegates the focus on urban resistance to occupation to a secondary effort, given the spotlight on the history of this unique Special Forces unit. Hence, the deeper analysis in this article of Dutch urban resistance efforts in the latter part of World War II refreshes a literature base on a theme that is highly relevant to current land warfare and in need of more scholarship.

Limitations and the Dutch Opportunity

The study of urban resistance to occupation has two potentially major limitations. First, in Western states, the tactics, techniques, and procedures that govern resistance to occupation in urban environments are often classified and not accessible to the researcher. Second, this phenomenon, which has not been an area of primary national security concern for the past two decades, suffers from neglect and practitioners' lack of expertise. This latter challenge results from special operations forces or intelligence organizations, which would typically organize and lead such efforts, having been diverted to other missions during the war on terrorism.

For example, US Army Special Forces, the key mission of which is unconventional warfare and the development of resistance networks, has had limited opportunities to establish clandestine undergrounds

20. Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA: A History* (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1993); James Dingley, *The IRA: The Irish Republican Army* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012); and Thomas A. Marks, "Counterinsurgency and Operational Art," *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement* 13, no. 3 (2005): 168–211.

21. Kevin D. Stringer, "Building a Stay-Behind Resistance Organization: The Case of Cold War Switzerland against the Soviet Union," *Joint Force Quarterly* 86 (July 2017): 109–14; Olav Riste, "'Stay Behind': A Clandestine Cold War Phenomenon," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16, no. 4 (Fall 2014): 35–59; Leopoldo Nuti and Olav Riste, "Introduction – Strategy of 'Stay Behind,'" *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 7 (December 2007): 929–1024; and Tamir Sinai, "Eyes on Target: 'Stay-Behind' Forces during the Cold War," *War in History* 28, no. 3 (July 2021): 681–700.

22. James Stejskal, *Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990* (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2020).

for the conduct of resistance to occupation in urban areas given Special Forces' focus on direct action or foreign internal defense roles against violent extremist organizations in the Middle East since 2001. This overall unsatisfactory state of practitioner affairs limits comprehensive study of RTO phenomena and results in the need to use imperfect and incomplete sources for the analysis of resistance to occupation in urban areas as well as selective historical examples to paint the contours of this irregular warfare challenge in the land warfare domain.

Urbanization is one of the four “megatrends” author David Kilcullen postulates will characterize twenty-first-century warfare.²³ The phenomenal and relentless process of urbanization has implications for the conduct of urban resistance to occupation in Europe and worldwide. First, the location of the population determines where the battle for political control and sovereignty takes place. The urban population, defined as the percentage of the total population living in urban areas, in Central and Eastern European countries is typically over 60 percent.²⁴ Many European cities and surrounding regions grow together to form conurbations, which amplify the urban effect.²⁵ This trend was already evident during World War II, when Europe, with its large urban centers and advanced road and rail systems, provided less rural cover and concealment for guerrillas than East Asia.²⁶ But this same urbanization phenomenon occurred in Asia and Africa in the postwar era and has been further accelerating in the twenty-first century.

The authors of this article selected the Dutch case study because it has received relatively little attention, yet the case study provides the opportunity for deeper insights into urban resistance experiences. World War II Netherlands was a highly urbanized and densely populated environment in which the clandestine underground and auxiliary elements, as opposed to the associated guerrilla or partisan components,

23. David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Joes, *Urban Guerrilla Warfare*, 1–2.

24. “Germany,” *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), updated July 18, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/germany/>; “Poland,” *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), updated July 17, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/poland/>; “Estonia,” *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), updated July 14, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/estonia/>; and “Bulgaria,” *World Factbook* (Washington, DC: CIA, continuously updated), updated July 18, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/bulgaria/>.

25. John English, *On Infantry* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), 201–2.

26. Aaron Bank, *OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (New York: Pocket Books, 1987), 165.

played the paramount role in hindering the German occupier for most of the occupation period.

Case Study: The Netherlands and Urban Terrain in 1940

By the end of the 1930s, along with Belgium, the Netherlands was by far the most densely populated country in Western Europe.²⁷ This environment made the country a unique urban resistance theater in World War II. This situation was confirmed by the British head of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force mission to the Dutch government, who simply characterized the whole country as “one large garden city.”²⁸ Within this figurative megacity, an urban resistance developed that was engaged, equipped, advised, and mobilized by mainly Dutch special operations forces.

Besides its dense population, the Netherlands was already a highly developed, industrialized country with an excellent infrastructure. The ports and cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam possessed many important shipbuilding, engineering, and food-manufacturing companies. Another important industrial center was the Twente region, bordering Germany in the east. The remaining parts of the country primarily consisted of flat, agricultural lands, though they were interspersed with numerous local and urban trading centers.²⁹ Due to its small size and intensive use of the land, only eight percent of the Netherlands was still forested by the 1940s.³⁰

After the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent outbreak of World War II, the Dutch government retained its policy of neutrality. A foreign power had not occupied the Netherlands since the Napoleonic era. Nevertheless, the Dutch army mobilized in August 1939 as a precaution. This army was, to a large extent, composed of undertrained draftees who were short of weapons and equipment. Ultimately, the intention to remain neutral was overridden in the early morning of May 10, 1940, when German troops crossed the Dutch border. Several days later, the Luftwaffe bombed Rotterdam, inflicting heavy civilian casualties. In the face of further

27. M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in the Low Countries* (London: St. Ermin's Press, 2001), 6–7.

28. J. K. Edwards to F. E. Morgan, memorandum, December 13, 1944, SMN/Fead/7, National Archives, London.

29. Kees Ribbens, *Verleden tijd: Nederland in de Jaren Dertig* (Zaltbommel, NL: Robas, 1992), 34–36; and J. A. Romein et al., *De lage landen bij de zee* (Utrecht, NL: W. de Haan, 1934), 541.

30. Martijn Boosten, “Nederlands bos(beheer): Al 250 jaar in ontwikkeling,” *Vakblad Natuur Bos Landschap* 127 (September 2016): 13.

German threats to attack Dutch cities, the commander of the Dutch army announced his decision to surrender the country that same day.³¹

Early Development of the Dutch Resistance

Since Adolf Hitler viewed the Dutch as a Germanic people, he immediately ordered the incorporation of the Netherlands into the Third Reich. At the end of May 1940, the initial German military administration was replaced by a civilian commissioner.³² The main goals of the German occupiers were to transform the Netherlands into a Nazi state and to exploit the Dutch economy for the benefit of the German war machine.³³ In the early phase of the occupation, the Germans chose a gentle approach, keeping interference in Dutch society to a minimum and hoping to win the support of the people. But in the months after the initial Dutch capitulation, the first underground groups emerged. Indeed, one of the first civilian resistance acts began during the early hours of the German invasion.³⁴ In the first year of occupation, the underground groups mainly focused on preparatory activities: building up resistance networks and collecting weapons and intelligence. Unorganized, minor acts of sabotage, such as cutting telephone wires and slashing the tires of German vehicles, spread throughout the country.³⁵

Due to the Dutch policy of neutrality, no prewar arrangements had been made for a stay-behind organization that would activate after an invasion. During the early days of the occupation, no radio communication channels existed between occupied Netherlands and the Dutch government-in-exile. This situation meant Dutch civilians who intended to resist the German occupier in an active or offensive way had to develop resistance methods and tactics without any prior training, experience, or external support. One major problem was a shortage of weapons and explosives: the Germans had requisitioned or confiscated most of the weapons that circulated in the country. Also, numerous German police and counterintelligence units such as the Gestapo, Sicherheitsdienst, and Abwehr—

31. C. M. Schulten, *Verzet in Nederland 1940–1945: “En verpletterd wordt het juk”* (Amsterdam: Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 1995), 32–33.

32. Schulten, *Verzet in Nederland*, 32–38.

33. Louis de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog 1939–1945*, deel 7, Mei’ 43 – Juni ’44 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 2:1030.

34. J. J. Jurrissen, *rapport betreffende het doorrijden van Duitse pantserreinen op 10 mei 1940* [report on the passage of German armored trains on May 10, 1940], June 13, 1940, in the authors’ possession.

35. Schulten, *Verzet in Nederland*, 61.

assisted by collaborationist police forces, Nazi police auxiliaries, and native informants—began exercising strict control over the civilian population.³⁶

Due to the unfavorable demographic and geographic circumstances, Dutch resisters quickly realized they could not just detach from society. Establishing guerrilla bases in the countryside was out of the question in this small, urban, and populated country.³⁷ Although rural Netherlands was a safe haven for passive resistance groups and those in hiding, urban environments became the default hotbeds for active resistance units. In Amsterdam, for instance, a resistance group called CS-6 came into being that specialized in “customized guerrilla” actions in built-up areas.³⁸ The group’s members carried out assassinations of Dutch collaborators, conducted small-scale raids, and sabotaged enemy assets. Unfortunately, by the end of 1943, the occupier had infiltrated and eliminated CS-6, but other resistance groups continued these operations and effectively replaced the group.³⁹

Meanwhile, attempts to deploy British-trained Dutch agents in occupied Netherlands to support resistance groups failed miserably. Between 1941 and 1943, the well-functioning German security services swiftly captured most of these personnel, many of whom were sent by the British Special Operations Executive.⁴⁰

The Development and Actions of Dutch Urban Resistance during 1944–45

Whereas the Allied powers did not call upon the Dutch resistance and general population to carry out open or large-scale activities during the initial occupation years, this direction changed in the second half of 1944. After the successful Allied invasion in France, ground forces speedily advanced toward Belgium and the Netherlands during the summer of 1944. In early September 1944, Allied planners prepared Operation Market Garden, which aimed to establish a bridgehead over the Rhine River at the Dutch city of Arnhem, creating an Allied invasion route into Germany’s industrial heartland. To hamper transportation of German reinforcements and equipment via railways to the front line, the Dutch government-in-exile called

36. Jelle J. H. Hooiveld, *Dutch Courage: Special Forces in the Netherlands 1944–45* (Stroud, UK: Amberley Publishing, 2016), 24.

37. Kurt Zentner, *Illustrierte geschichte des widerstandes in Deutschland und Europa, 1933–1945* (Munich: Südwest, 1966), 27.

38. K. De Graaf to D. M. Borger, May 5, 1972, in the authors’ possession.

39. Withuis Jolande, “Patchwork Politics in the Netherlands, 1946–50: Women, Gender and the World War II Trauma,” *Women’s History Review* 3, no. 3 (1994): 293–313.

40. Foot, *SOE in the Low Countries*, 85.

for a nationwide railway strike. This action was extremely successful from a military perspective because almost all railway personnel ceased working and went into hiding.⁴¹ The majority of German reinforcements coming from the west of the country, were forced to travel to the front line by other, more time-consuming means during the first crucial days of the operation.⁴² Subsequently, inter-Allied Jedburgh teams that were attached to conventional airborne divisions successfully mobilized Dutch resistance and civilians inside the airhead. The American commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, Major General James Gavin, who had seen Dutch civilians eagerly supporting his forces in and around the city of Nijmegen, described the resistance's performance as "exemplary."⁴³ Unfortunately, Operation Market Garden ultimately failed, which delayed the liberation of the rest of the Netherlands.

The failure of the Allied powers to liberate the Netherlands quickly offered Dutch personnel from the recently created Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten, or Special Operations Bureau, an opportunity to continue the Allied powers' operations and expand the bureau's footprint across the country. Many of these personnel worked inside major Dutch cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague, instructing resistance members and coordinating their operations.⁴⁴ Built-up environments offered anonymity and the ability to blend into the populace. Moreover, plenty of sabotage targets, such as government and distribution offices, collaborators, and industrial objects, were available.⁴⁵ Working in built-up areas required extreme secrecy, excellent command of the local language, and superb tradecraft skills. A Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten agent who instructed resistance members in Rotterdam recalled, "When lecturing members, I always put security first, whatever their work was. Without being security-minded you are absolutely stuck and can't work."⁴⁶ Besides security, resistance cadres provided training in subjects such as sabotage, weapon handling, and street-fighting tactics.⁴⁷ Firing weapons was out of the question in these urban locations. Exceptionally, in several urban areas, underground soundproof basements were used for small-scale, live-fire exercises. Out of necessity, Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten agents often used public places such

41. Hooiveld, *Dutch Courage*, 63–64.

42. Christ Klep and Ben Schoenmaker, *De bevrijding van Nederland 1944–1945: Oorlog op de flank* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgeverij, 1995), 151.

43. Hooiveld, *Dutch Courage*, 126.

44. "Netherlands October 1944 – May 1945," Special Operations Executive War Diary 49, HS7/276, National Archives, London.

45. Rogier van Aerde et al., *Het grote gebod: Gedenboek van het verzet in LO en LKP* (Kampen, NL, and Bilthoven, NL: J. H. Kok N.V. and H. Nelissen, 1951), 547.

46. "Report Mission, Shooting," March 18, 1945, Special Operations Executive personnel file J. H. Luykenaar, National Archives, London.

47. "Report Mission, Shooting," March 18, 1945; and "Report Mission Monopoly," June 29, 1945, Special Operations Executive personnel file G. de Stoppelaar, National Archives, London.

as swimming pools to train resistance groups.⁴⁸ Notably, around April 1945, in heavily urbanized Rotterdam, some 5,000 urban guerrillas were clandestinely formed and trained to act on Allied orders.⁴⁹ The Germans surrendered before the Allied powers reached Rotterdam, however, and this large Dutch resistance organization was not ordered to mobilize en masse. Although this development was a major disappointment to the resistance, most of its members kept discipline and refrained from unauthorized action.⁵⁰

Due to the postponement of the liberation of the Netherlands, the Allied high command did not issue national or regional offensive orders to the Dutch resistance to engage in large-scale activities in support of Allied conventional forces in the autumn or winter of 1944–45. But this situation did not mean the Dutch underground, which a solid core of Dutch Bureau Bijzondere Opdrachten agents was now supporting, refrained from action. In several cities, Dutch resistance fighters conducted urban operations. In November 1944, the resistance in the Twente region seized over *f*46 million—equivalent to roughly USD\$314 million in 2023—in the city of Almelo in the biggest bank robbery in Dutch history.⁵¹ Later that month, Allied air forces bombed the Amsterdam office of the notorious Sicherheitsdienst based on the targeting information provided by the local urban resistance. The resistance in the city of Leeuwarden, in northern Netherlands, freed over 50 political prisoners in a highly successful prison raid in December 1944. Another striking example of resistance efforts was the sinking of various major ships that had been confiscated by the Germans in the harbor of Rotterdam.⁵²

Also noteworthy were Allied efforts, which proved to be ineffectual, to involve the Dutch resistance in battling the threat of V-weapons from key German military installations. From early September 1944 onward, occupied Netherlands became an important launch site for these German terror weapons, which were aimed primarily at London and Antwerp. The areas surrounding these firing points were extremely well guarded. Without heavy weapons or the ability to organize into larger groups due to tight German control, Dutch resistance could not attack these weapon systems directly. Hence, resistance groups attempted to disrupt German supply routes to these sites. But due to the high concentration of roads and railways in occupied Netherlands, the Germans could easily bypass sabotage locations

48. “Report Mission Shooting,” May 25, 1945, Special Operations Executive personnel file J. H. Luykenaar, National Archives, London.

49. J. L. van der Pauw, *Guerrilla in Rotterdam* (The Hague: Sdu Uitgeverij, 1995), 340.

50. Van der Pauw, *Guerrilla in Rotterdam*, 347–64.

51. Hooiveld, *Dutch Courage*, 146.

52. Van der Pauw, *Guerrilla in Rotterdam*, 195–96, 241.

and use alternate roads and railways.⁵³ This condition severely limited the long-term effect of such sabotage on enemy rocket operations.

Analysis and Lessons for Landpower

Resistance to occupation in an urban area against a vicious and thorough adversary is an activity fraught with risks. Distilling key lessons from the in-depth Dutch case yields some urban resistance principles for consideration and further research. First, the Dutch example demonstrates the significance of tradecraft for longer-term survival in the urban resistance zone. In the Netherlands, for most of the occupation period, the resistance operated clandestinely rather than overtly. Despite the high concentration of German security forces, built-up areas proved to be fertile hatcheries for resistance groups and their clandestine activities. This case also illustrates Dutch special forces sent behind enemy lines to aid the resistance were able to survive and operate in a densely populated urban environment over a long period. Command of the national language, knowledge of the local culture, and a credible cover enabled the forces to blend into the populace.

But today, technology complicates this situation. Unlike the German occupier in World War II, current-day adversaries use modern surveillance technology, ranging from biometrics to artificial intelligence, in urban environments. For example, facial recognition, a biometric technology that enables the automated identification of a person, will create new and complex security challenges for current and future resistance members and their embedded special operations forces. A low-key digital footprint in both personal and professional life through all stages of conflict becomes an obvious precondition for the successful survival of the twenty-first-century urban resister and his support network. In confirmation, China—a global facial recognition giant—has increasingly focused the training of its special operations forces and police forces on urban warfare and urban counterinsurgency using such technology.⁵⁴ Similarly, a preliminary lesson from the Russian occupation of Ukraine is “any resistance network established prior to a conflict must be invisible to the bureaucracy of the state, or else it risks exposure through the capture of a state’s records.”⁵⁵ These threats require a vigorous inventory

53 C. Huurman, *Het spoorwegbedrijf in oorlogstijd, 1939–’45* (Rosmalen, NL: Uitgeverij Uquilair, 2001), 378–79.

54 Elsa B. Kania and Ian Burns McCaslin, *The PLA’s Evolving Outlook on Urban Warfare: Learning, Training, and Implications for Taiwan* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, April 2022), 25–26; and Phil Stewart, “China Racing for AI Military Edge over US: Report,” Reuters (website), November 28, 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-ai-idUSKBN1DS0G5.

55 Jack Watling, Oleksandr Danyluk, and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons from Russia’s Unconventional Operations during the Russo-Ukrainian War, February 2022 – February 2023* (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, March 2023), 34.

and evaluation of the extensive range of modern countermeasures applicable to the digital and physical domains to augment the tradecraft skills of urban resisters and special operations forces.

Second, calibrating resistance activities to focus on economic sabotage, political subversion, and intelligence gathering seemed to contribute to longer-term survivability in metropolitan areas—especially in the beginning, by avoiding extreme reprisals at the nascent stages of urban resistance development. Indeed, many Dutch resistance members were reluctant to carry out assassinations and direct action against enemy personnel. As typical urban resistance actions, these types of missions usually resulted in heavy reprisals, such as mass shootings of political prisoners.⁵⁶ Discrete, nontraceable acts of sabotage proved to be less risky during the first years of the occupation. According to Henk Veeneklaas, a highly decorated, key member of the Dutch resistance, in the early stages of an occupation, small, densely populated urban areas are most suited for such economic warfare and subversive actions against an occupier. Veeneklaas, holder of the Military Order of William, the highest military decoration in the Netherlands, was a leading member in the Dutch resistance who was later involved in the creation of the Cold War Dutch stay-behind organization.⁵⁷ These activities, which are usually lower profile, allow the resistance to germinate, develop, and gain experience. This perspective finds support from a recent report of initial lessons learned from the Russian occupation of Ukraine. To survive, Ukrainian resistance networks avoid direct action unless liberation is imminent. Rather, Ukrainian RTO activities concentrate on conducting reconnaissance, gathering intelligence, and understanding the enemy's occupation system.⁵⁸

The digital and cyber domains of economic warfare and sabotage cannot be ignored in the twenty-first-century urban environment. Whereas World War II Dutch urban sabotage revolved around damage to physical objects, modern-day resisters should have offensive cyber skills to maximize the disruptive effect on the adversary and targeted urban infrastructure. This requirement also means special operations forces attached to these resistance groups should bring such knowledge and competence to the table.

56. Ruud Huyskamp, *Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: German Oppression, Dutch Resistance, and the Tragedy at De Woeste Hoeve* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 2011).

57. Jelle J. H. Hooiveld, "De beginfase van de 'O'-tak van de Nederlandse stay-behind-organisatie," *Militaire Spectator* 189, no. 7/8 (July 2020): 372–85; and G. M. H. Veeneklaas, "Report on Preparation for Clandestine Warfare in the Netherlands," June 19, 1948, in the authors' possession.

58. Watling, Danyluk, and Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons*, 30, 34.

Fortunately, US Army Special Operations Command has begun to explore this developmental area with its Space-Cyber-Special Operations Forces triad.⁵⁹

Third, urban resistance leadership needs to consider carefully when to move from clandestine to overt operations. This decision, which is heavily driven by the proximity of large-scale, conventional liberation forces, aims to avoid the resistance organization becoming fixed and destroyed by occupation security forces, as in World War II Warsaw. In the final weeks of the occupation, Dutch resistance groups gave valuable support to Allied ground forces during the liberation of several cities and built-up areas. As mentioned, resistance forces were actively involved in the liberation of the city Nijmegen and its surroundings. Another example is the city of Deventer. Canadian ground forces gave the “extremely well-organized Dutch underground” much credit for the speedy clearing of the town, which also partly saved the city’s critical infrastructure.⁶⁰ Lastly, after the fighting had ceased, liberated resistance forces were often valuable assets in relieving conventional soldiers of urban guard duties and other tasks for which insufficient military personnel were available.⁶¹

Hence, given the aforementioned examples, conventional ground force commanders must plan and prepare to liaise and collaborate with resistance organizations during major combat operations to employ the organizations’ capabilities effectively.⁶² The current Russia-Ukraine War opaquely demonstrates the force multiplier benefits of this type of cooperation. The important preparatory role of special operations forces as well as their ability to act as a tactical communications link between advancing ground forces and resistance groups in the final phase of a conflict must be stressed. Furthermore, modern urban resistance forces equipped with highly effective, compact, and portable weapons can potentially contribute even more than their World War II predecessors during the overt liberation phase of operations.

Finally, no prewar arrangements had been made for a stay-behind organization in the Netherlands that could activate after an invasion. On their own initiative, Dutch civilians were forced to develop resistance

59. Jen Judson, “Army Space, Cyber, and Special Operations Commands Form ‘Triad’ to Strike Anywhere, Anytime,” *Defense News* (website), August 11, 2022, <https://www.defensenews.com/smr/space-missile-defense/2022/08/11/army-space-cyber-and-special-operations-commands-form-triad-to-strike-anywhere-anytime/>.

60. C. P. Stacey, *Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War*, vol. 3 (Ottawa, CA: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1960), 551; and K. H. Vos et al., *Deventer 1940–1945: Het begin, de donkere jaren en de bevrijding* (Deventer, NL: Arko Boeken, 1985), 127.

61. Captain T. J. Allen, notes on the takeover by the Dutch Military Government, quoted in Historical Section, *The German Surrender*, May 1945, Report no. 56 (Ottawa, CA: Canadian Army Headquarters, April 1958), 35–36.

62. Kevin D. Stringer, “Force Integration in Resistance Operations: Dutch Jedburghs and US Alamo Scouts,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 102 (July 2021): 90–95.

methods and tactics without any prior training, experience, or external support. The absence of large, rural areas inaccessible to the Germans made the concentration, training, and employment of large groups of guerrillas impossible in the Netherlands. Hence, resistance organizations were forced to seek the security and operational maneuver space of urban environments. Though twenty-first-century technologies enable the adversary to exercise control in new ways, modern special operations forces or designated land force units—allied or national—need to conduct security force assistance to prepare selected elements of a threatened population in peacetime for stay-behind resistance operations in urban terrain in the event of an occupation. For countries like Georgia, Moldova, Mongolia, and Taiwan, this preparation is prudent and relevant, given the adversarial threats they face. Equally, these countries' partner states should examine how to contribute to the development of such land warfare capability in the academic and practitioner realms for successful urban resistance to occupation, considering the twenty-first-century resources of state adversaries.

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The Chechen Kadyrovtsy's Coercive Violence in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT: Russia pioneered exploiting civilian inequalities to maximize military effectiveness in Chechnya, contributing to the Kadyrovtsy blocking detachments observed in Ukraine. Kadyrovtsy, pro-Russian Chechens, are drawn from a unique political order enabling this specialized military role. Military inequality literature typically ignores how minority-ethnic forces often serve in specialized combat roles. Understanding the Chechen Wars, the Kadyrov regime, and living standards in Russia helps explain these minority-ethnic blocking detachments in Ukraine. Analysis of this vital section of Putin's regime offers actionable recommendations for Western actors to undermine Russian military efforts and identifies the potential risks of those actions.

Keywords: Chechnya, Russia, Kadyrov, military inequality theory, blocking detachments

Multiple sources have corroborated pro-Russian Chechen forces called Kadyrovtsy deploying coercive fratricidal violence in Ukraine.¹ This phenomenon describes soldiers organized into blocking detachments or anti-retreat forces that discipline their comrades to maintain military order.² Kadyrovtsy are documented using physical discipline, torture, and executions against unmotivated or retreating Russian forces. Coercive violence in any context is worthy of analysis as a tactic of desperate commanders who regard their troops as expendable.³ Today's Kadyrovtsy, however, break significantly with existing coercive violence literature. Typically, core ethnic troops coerce disadvantaged and expendable minority ethnic troops, whereas Kadyrovtsy are from Russia's Chechen population.⁴ Understanding the Chechen conflict clarifies this reversal and why the Kadyrovtsy play this unique role in Russia's military.

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1. Mia Jankowicz, "Ukraine Claims Ramzan Kadyrov's Troops Killed 3 Russian Troops Who No Longer Wanted to Fight," *Business Insider* (website), April 21, 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/ukraine-says-kadyrov-troops-killed-russia-soldiers-refuse-fight-2022-4>.

2. Jason Lyall and Yuri M. Zhukov, "Fratricidal Coercion in Modern War," *Social Science Research Network* (website), November 4, 2021, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3956923>.

3. Lyall and Zhukov, "Fratricidal Coercion."

4. Jason Lyall, "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 1 (February 2010): 1–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27798537>.

More generally, the Ukraine conflict has created an urgency to understand how Russia deploys its military forces to pursue the political ends of war. The Chechen Wars, as the largest post-Soviet conflict besides Ukraine, provide the most analogous comparison. In Chechnya, Russian military and political strategies evolved to create an effective collaborator regime by exploiting ethnic divisions. The pro-Russian Kadyrov dictatorship and its military forces, the Kadyrovtsy (meaning “followers of Kadyrov”), provided effective and expendable fighters essential to Russia achieving its political goals.⁵ The complex Kadyrov-Russia relationship was engineered by Vladimir Putin, including through Putin’s personal relationship with current Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. Analyzing Chechnya and the Chechen Wars provides insight into how Russia’s sitting government approaches military engagements, clarifies the Kadyrovtsy’s actions in Ukraine, and enables the creation of actionable strategies to counter Russian aggression.

Theory

Jason Lyall’s research on military inequality and its relationship to coercive violence provides an ideal theoretical framework to understand Kadyrovtsy performance. In *Divided Armies*, Lyall examines the relationship between civilian ethnic divisions and military specialization, arguing that existing civilian inequalities can create privileged core ethnic troops and contrasting minority ethnic troops who experience greater discrimination and exploitation. The latter receives worse training and equipment, is classified as more expendable by commanders, and demonstrates less motivation to fight for their oppressors.⁶ Lyall establishes that these exploited minority ethnic forces generally perform worse and experience more coercive violence than core ethnic forces. Lyall’s research has its critics, but it is consistent with existing research on divisions and discrimination in militaries.⁷

Lyall’s work especially focuses on coercive violence, in this context referring to the application of fratricidal violence to motivate or punish underperforming allied units. Coercive violence has a strong history in Russia, including blocking detachments authorized to execute retreating units during World War II.⁸ Fratricidal violence is typically employed in desperate circumstances when commanders lack alternative solutions to motivate troops, with blocking detachments almost invariably consisting

5. Moshe Gammer, *The Lone Wolf and the Bear: Three Centuries of Chechen Defiance of Russian Rule* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2005).

6. Jason Lyall, *Divided Armies: Inequality and Battlefield Performance in Modern War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), <https://doi-org.usawc.idm.oclc.org/10.2307/j.ctvn96h88>.

7. Douglas M. Gibler and Steven V. Miller, “An Appraisal of Project Mars and the *Divided Armies* Argument,” *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqac011>.

8. Lyall and Zhukov, “Fratricidal Coercion.”

of trusted core ethnic forces.⁹ The value commanders place on their troops impacts their willingness to deploy coercive violence, which contributes to minority ethnic troops disproportionately experiencing coercive violence.¹⁰ These historical trends are challenged by minority ethnic Kadyrovtsy applying coercive violence against ethnic Russian troops in Ukraine.

Chechnya and the Kadyrovtsy

The contemporary Russo-Chechen relationship demonstrates core and minority ethnic inequality as described by Lyall, and these cultural and material differences impact Kadyrovtsy military deployments. Unlike Russia, Chechen society is Islamic and tribal, with *teip* (clan) values and a traditional code of ethics reinforcing family-tribal loyalty.¹¹ These values influence warrior traditions, including *ch'ir* (blood feud), which obliges clansmen to avenge wronged members.¹² Historically, Russia has exploited these cultural differences to demonize Chechens as radical Islamic warriors, contributing to genocidal violence, which contribute to today's uneasy Russo-Chechen relationship.¹³

The most recent Russo-Chechen conflict began with the Soviet Union's collapse. Chechnya declared independence from Russia, leading to the First Chechen War (1994–96) and the Second Chechen War (1999–2009/disputed), which ultimately reestablished Russian Federation control.¹⁴ These conflicts featured conventional Russian victories followed by Chechen insurgencies, where Russian-led counterinsurgency efforts were ineffective.¹⁵ Russia adjusted by working closely with collaborators in the Second Chechen War, installing the Kadyrov family to control Chechnya and manage the insurgency.¹⁶ The wars deeply affected Chechen society, killing hundreds of thousands, destroying living standards, and contributing to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. This fundamentalist movement, commonly called Wahhabism, would radicalize the separatist movement and link

9. Lyall and Zhukov, "Fratricidal Coercion."

10. Lyall, *Divided Armies*.

11. Mairbek Vatchagaev, "Sufism in Chechnya: Its Influence on Contemporary Society," in *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 220–35.

12. Mikhail Roshchin, "Kidnapping and Hostage Taking between the Two Chechen Wars (1997–1999)," in *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 118–32.

13. John Russell, "Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens before and since 9/11," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 101–116, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993766>.

14. Elina Driscoll, "Insurgency in the North Caucasus: Lessons of the First Chechen War," *Small Wars Journal* (website), July 26, 2020, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/insurgency-north-caucasus-lessons-first-chechen-war>.

15. Driscoll, "Insurgency in the North Caucasus."

16. Svante E. Cornell, "The War against Terrorism and the Conflict in Chechnya: A Case for Distinction," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 27, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2003): 167–84, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45289246>.

Chechnya with terrorism.¹⁷ The threat of extremism played an important role in dividing Chechnya politically, helping the Kadyrov family rise to power, and serving Russian interests.

The Kadyrov family belongs to *teip* Benoy, one of the largest in Chechnya, providing them significant clan-based political support.¹⁸ In the First Chechen War, Akhmad Kadyrov was an anti-Russian Chechen warlord. During the interwar period, Akhmad served as Chechnya's grand mufti and was an outspoken opponent of Wahhabism, making him a well-known, respected, and relatively moderate religious and military leader.¹⁹ Kadyrov's opposition to Chechnya's growing Wahhabi politics contributed to his criticisms of independent Chechnya, influencing his 1999 defection to Russia with other disaffected warlords. Russia then selected Akhmad Kadyrov to lead its pro-Russian Chechen government, as he had both the political and material means for the role. Installing the Kadyrovs meant the Kadyrovtsy could manage the conflict and form a reintegrated Chechen government to achieve Russia's political war goals.²⁰

After Akhmad's 2004 assassination, his son Ramzan Kadyrov inherited command of the Kadyrovtsy. With Putin's support and Kadyrovtsy intimidation, Ramzan became Chechnya's leader by 2007 and remains in command today.²¹ Despite Putin's personal relationship with Ramzan, Chechnya maintains a unique position in Russia, exercising unique autonomy and even defying Federation laws. This autonomy extends to the Kadyrovtsy, who are primarily loyal to the Kadyrov family, not the Russian state.²² Kadyrov's Chechnya ranked among the Federation's poorest provinces and the world's most repressive and corrupt regimes, far worse than Russia individually.²³ Rule of law is extremely limited as policing revolves around Kadyrovtsy torture and reprisals, despite the conflict's official end.²⁴ To appeal to nationalist and religious supporters,

17. Miriam Lansky, "Daghestan and Chechnya: The Wahhabi Challenge to the State," *SAIS Review* (1989–2003) 22, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2002): 167–92, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26996418>.

18. Ekaterina Sokirianskaya, "State and Violence in Chechnya (1997–1999)," in *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 93–117.

19. Emil Souleimanov, "An Ethnography of Counterinsurgency: Kadyrovtsy and Russia's Policy of Chechenization," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 2 (2015): 91–114, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1060586X.2014.900976>.

20. Nicolas Werth, "The 'Chechen Problem': Handling an Awkward Legacy, 1918–1958," *Contemporary European History* 15, no. 3 (August 2006): 347–66, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20081316>; and Cornell, "War against Terrorism."

21. John Russell, "Ramzan Kadyrov's 'Illiberal' Peace in Chechnya," *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 133–51.

22. Liz Fuller, "Kadyrov's Chechnya Appears Exempt from Russian Funding Cuts," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (website), July 30, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/caucasus-report-kadyrov-chechnya-exempt-funding-cuts/28648698.html>.

23. Freedom House, *Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies, 2009* (report, Washington, DC, and New York: Freedom House 2009), https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/WoW2009.pdf.

24. Aldamova, "Chechens Suffer Torture Hell."

Kadyrov ignores Federation laws governing conscription and state secularism.²⁵ Kadyrovtsy intimidate and assassinate regime critics abroad, especially targeting the Chechen diaspora in Europe.²⁶ Although Kadyrov's political and military structures defy Moscow, the Putin administration tolerates this dysfunctional situation because Kadyrov effectively suppresses Chechen separatism.

The Chechen Wars

In both Chechen Wars, Russia's overwhelming advantages in numbers, weaponry, and firepower led to conventional victories but struggled to address subsequent Chechen insurgencies. In the First Chechen War, Russian leadership anticipated military action would crush disorganized resistance, but they instead faced a protracted insurgency due to significant Russian military deficiencies and active Chechen preparation for unconventional war.²⁷ To bolster its forces, the Chechen government authorized raising local militias, among them the Kadyrovtsy.²⁸ Warlord militias were augmented by local and tribal support networks.²⁹ From the beginning of both wars, Russia faced intense guerrilla resistance that hampered its advance. Importantly, Chechnya in the First Chechen War was politically united against Russia, despite internal divisions. Although Chechnya's secular nationalist government faced significant opposition, especially from Wahhabi factions, opposition dissipated to ensure Chechnya's independence.³⁰

In both wars, Russia relied on collective civilian reprisals, specifically filtration camps and *zachistka* (cleansing) operations, which only solidified Chechen resistance.³¹ Filtration camps separated the general population from insurgents through mass arrests and detention, while *zachistka* describes military sweeps of areas featuring or suspected to host partisans.³² These tactics featured organized looting, rape, mass hostage-taking, torture,

25. Maria Brock and Emil Edenborg, "'You Cannot Oppress Those Who Do Not Exist': Gay Persecution in Chechnya and the Politics of In/visibility," *Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 2020): 673–700, <https://read.dukeupress.edu/glq/article/26/4/673/166742/You-Cannot-Oppress-Those-Who-Do-Not-Exist-Gay>.

26. Zhalavdi Geriev, "Revenge without Borders: How the Kadyrov Regime Makes Its Social Media Critics Disappear," openDemocracy (website), October 22, 2020, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/chechnya-social-media-critics-persecution/>.

27. Dale R. Herspring, "The Russian Military: Three Years On," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 28, no. 2 (June 1995): 163–82, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45301927>.

28. Stephen Shenfield, "Chechnya at a Turning Point," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 8, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2001): 63–69, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24590175>.

29. Carlotta Gall and Thomas de Waal, *Chechnya: A Small Victorious War* (London: Pan Original, 1997).

30. Dianne Leigh Sumner, "Success of Terrorism in War: The Case of Chechnya," in *Chechnya Revisited*, ed. Yu. K. Nikolaev (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2004).

31. Yuri M. Zhukov, "Counterinsurgency in a Non-Democratic State: The Russian Example," in *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency*, ed. Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn (New York: Routledge, 2012), 286–300.

32. Zhukov, "Counterinsurgency."

housing destruction, and reprisal killings.³³ Russian counterinsurgency policy, mirroring methods used by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, was for civilian repression to disincentivize popular support for insurgents.³⁴

Violence against civilians, however, risks encouraging resistance if civilian mistreatment motivates insurgent support and recruitment.³⁵ In both wars, Russia failed to target civilian insurgent support networks selectively, causing cycles of Chechen insurgent action and Russian reprisals.³⁶ There was effectively no Chechen language fluency in Russian forces, and troops were ignorant, hostile, or prejudiced against Chechnya's religious and cultural organizations—making reprisals indiscriminate. Russian action has been characterized as genocidal, killing approximately one in four Chechens between 1994 and 2005.³⁷ Post-conflict studies indicate more Chechens—bolstered by *teip* honor and *ch'ir*—were motivated to fight by Russian reprisals than by the cause of independence itself.³⁸ Indiscriminate Russian actions motivated insurgent growth instead of intimidating the population.

The First Chechen War ended due to opposition by the Russian public, though Russia still possessed ample military forces.³⁹ Mid-1990s Russian media freedom increased public demoralization, as it publicized casualties, reported on Russian-conducted atrocities, and contradicted official government narratives of progress.⁴⁰ The then Russian president Boris Yeltsin's popularity dropped below 10 percent, largely due to the Chechen crisis, and in 1996, insurgents recaptured Chechnya's capital, Grozny.⁴¹ This final humiliation and absence of a political mandate for war motivated Russia's subsequent withdrawal agreement.

In the Second Chechen War, Russia's strategy relied on Kadyrovtsy collaborator fighters, enabling the "Chechenization" or indigenization of the war.⁴² Several changes within Russia and Chechnya allowed for this approach. Shortly after the Second Chechen War began in August

33. Amandine Regamey, "Rereading Human Rights Reports: Material Violence in Chechnya, 1999–2001," *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 201–19.

34. Joss Meakins, "The Other Side of the COIN: The Russians in Chechnya," *Small Wars Journal* (website), January 13, 2017, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-other-side-of-the-coin-the-russians-in-chechnya>.

35. Lyall, "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents?"

36. Aglaya Snetkov, *Russia's Security Policy under Putin: A Critical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2014), <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9780203559390/russia-security-policy-putin-aglaya-snetkov>.

37. Snetkov, *Russia's Security Policy under Putin*.

38. Meakins, "Russians in Chechnya."

39. Ben Fowkes, "Introduction," in *Russia and Chechnia: The Permanent Crisis – Essays on Russo–Chechen Relations*, ed. Ben Fowkes (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 1–24.

40. Snetkov, *Russia's Security Policy under Putin*.

41. Olga Oliker, *Russia's Chechen Wars 1994–2000: Lessons from Urban Combat* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001), https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1289.html.

42. Souleimanov, "Ethnography of Counterinsurgency."

1999, Yeltsin resigned, and Putin became Russia's leader. Initially unproven, Putin's pledge to handle Russia's Caucasian problems helped secure his position.⁴³ Putin instituted a wartime media blackout, limiting the war's impact on public support.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, interwar Chechnya was a failed state featuring armed internal conflict.⁴⁵ This environment encouraged dissatisfied warlords to collaborate with Russia as they became Chechnya's new ruling class and enjoyed Russian support in their disputes. Russia, in return, received local partners to combat the Chechen insurgency. In June 2000, Akhmad Kadyrov was appointed leader of Chechnya, and his Kadyrovtsy and other collaborator forces then joined the fight against separatists.⁴⁶

As Russia faced a pronounced lack of human intelligence, Chechen collaborators, including the Kadyrovtsy, served as police and military auxiliaries to the Russian Army. Their leading roles as translators and guides helped Russia avoid attacks, located insurgent strongholds, and increased overall counterinsurgency effectiveness.⁴⁷ Both Russian-led and Kadyrovtsy-led counterinsurgency tactics featured similar *zachistka* sweeps and collective punishments methods.⁴⁸ The Kadyrovtsy, however, spoke Chechen, understood cultural dynamics, and could appeal to local allies for intelligence and material aid. The Kadyrovtsy served as a force multiplier in counterinsurgency operations that directed civilian intimidation productively, accurately targeting insurgent supporters and families rather than the general population.⁴⁹

In 2001, Russia officially adopted a policy of Chechenization, explicitly committing to withdrawing troops and making Chechens responsible for their governance and security.⁵⁰ By this stage, Kadyrov rule through Kadyrovtsy military power was sufficient for withdrawals not to destabilize Chechnya. Removing Federation troops directly addressed Russia's public support problem, as casualties became contained to ethnic Chechens in Chechnya rather than uniformed majority ethnic Russians from across the Federation. Until 2004, Kadyrovtsy formations were not part of official Russian units,

43. Dasha Nicolson, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters from the North Caucasus: Understanding Islamic State Influence in the Region," *Connections* 16, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 69–88, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26867927>.

44. Zhukov, "Counterinsurgency."

45. Vladimir Shlapentokh, "The Terrorist Basayev as a Major Political Actor in Russia," *World Affairs* 167, no. 4 (Spring 2005): 139–45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20672721>.

46. Mark Kramer, "Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 2 (March 2005): 209–90.

47. Kramer, "Guerrilla Warfare."

48. Lyall, "Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents?."

49. Zhukov, "Counterinsurgency."

50. Snetkov, *Russia's Security Policy under Putin*.

and many paramilitary fighters remain unofficial to this day.⁵¹ This quasi-official status aided Russia's ability to understate conflict casualties, as these deaths were easily concealed and rarely investigated.

Chechenization has been described as a success in "normalization," that is, making conflict palatable to a war-adverse public.⁵² Politically, Chechenization transformed the conflict from a military occupation into civilian policing and counterterrorism, technically equivalent to anywhere else in the Federation. Militarily, Kadyrovtsy action defeated a population-centric insurgency with the effective deployment of violence to disincentivize civilian insurgent support.⁵³ When Chechnya's secular government-in-exile disbanded in 2007, the insurgency became absorbed by jihadists, who later become Daesh affiliates, further undermining civilian sympathy for insurgents.⁵⁴

While 2009 is often cited as the conflict's end date, certain jihadi factions were not defeated until 2017. Low-level violence and Kadyrovtsy brutality continue today, though this is officially classified as civil unrest and counterterrorism.⁵⁵ Combined with media censorship in Chechnya, Russia's narrative of progress and normalization matched low official casualties and declining conflict incidents. There is no large-scale Russian public outcry against violence contained to an ethnic-minority provincial backwater, especially since Kadyrov rule replaced open warfare.

Ukraine

Russia's goals and challenges in Ukraine bear strong similarities to those of the Chechen conflict. In Ukraine, Russia claims to fight for the defense of co-ethnics and control of rightful or historical territory. Russia's major concern has been maintaining popular support, hence its classification of the conflict as a "special military operation" and its limitation troop deployments.⁵⁶ To help address these challenges, Kadyrovtsy have been present in Ukraine since 2014.⁵⁷ Since February 2022, Kadyrovtsy deployed in Ukraine have acted as blocking detachments against Russian forces and those of the Russian-backed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DPR-LPR).

51. Darrell Slider, "Putin's 'Southern Strategy': Dmitry Kozak and the Dilemmas of Recentralization," *Journal of Post Soviet Affairs* 24, no. 2 (2008): 177–91, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2747/1060-586X.24.2.177>.

52. Snetkov, *Russia's Security Policy under Putin*.

53. Souleimanov, "Ethnography of Counterinsurgency."

54. Julie Wilhelmsen, "Exclusion and Inclusion: The Core of Chechen Mobilization to Jihad," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14, no. 2 (April 2020): 27–41, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26910405>.

55. Nicolson, "Foreign Terrorist Fighters."

56. Karolina Hird et al., *Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 28* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, September 28, 2022), <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-28>.

57. Mark Galeotti, *Armies of Russia's War in Ukraine* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2019).

Allegedly, the Kadyrovtsy have beaten and executed DPR-LPR and Russian Army troops retreating or deserting in response to military setbacks in Ukraine.⁵⁸ That Russians (ethnic core) are among the Kadyrovtsy's (ethnic minority) victims is a reversal of military inequality theory's assumptions.

The victims of Kadyrovtsy coercive violence in Ukraine are Russian Army recruits or separatist militiamen with the lowest levels of training, arming, and motivation.⁵⁹ Separatist mass conscription since February 2022 has affected all parts of the regional population, pressing both ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians into separatist service.⁶⁰ Evidence indicates the DPR-LPR militaries struggle to manage this significant increase in numbers, worsening pre-2022 logistical strains.⁶¹ The recent DPR-LPR conscripts, with minimal training, poor equipment, and questionable loyalty, unsurprisingly exhibit poor combat performance. As DPR-LPR forces are drawn from an unrecognized separatist government in Ukraine, separatist losses easily concealed and minimally affect Russian war support relative to Federation troop deaths. Before 2022, DPR-LPR forces served as the conflict's primary combatants and were essential to Russia's war justification of liberating co-ethnics. Since 2022, Donbas collaborators are no longer needed, as the Russian Army manages combat and as cultural and linguistic similarities mean local collaborators are not needed, as in Chechnya. These facts incentivize Russia to use separatist forces disposably, despite Russia's stated aim to protect Donbas co-ethnics.

The other element of Russian forces in Ukraine, the Russian Army, does not reflect the Russian population. It disproportionately includes poor and rural ethnic Russians and Federation minorities from impoverished backgrounds similar to Chechnya.⁶² The poorest Russian provinces source a disproportionate number of conscripts in Ukraine, providing up to six times their per capita share of recruits.⁶³ This heavy burden has contributed to protests and draft riots across Russia's North Caucasus and Far East regions.⁶⁴ Other literature establishes how brutal hazing (*dedovshchina*), corrupt officers, and low pay contribute

58. Special Operations Forces Report (SOFREP), *Chechen "Kadyrovtsy" Unit in Bucha Killed Wounded Russian Soldiers along with Civilians*, Special Operations Forces Report, May 2, 2022, <https://sofrep.com/news/chechen-kadyrovtsy-unit-in-bucha-killed-wounded-russian-soldiers-along-with-civilians/>.

59. Hird, *Russian Offensive Campaign* (2022).

60. Hird, *Russian Offensive Campaign* (2022).

61. Daniel Flynn, ed., "Insight: Conscripts Sent to Fight by Pro-Russia Donbas Get Little Training, Old Rifles, Poor Supplies," Reuters (website), April 4, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/conscripts-sent-fight-by-pro-russia-donbas-get-little-training-old-rifles-poor-2022-04-04/>.

62. Michael Lokshin and Ruslan Yemtsov, *Who Bears the Cost of Russia's Military Draft?*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3547 (research report, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02490>.

63. Sonya Savina and Katya Bonch-Osmolovskaya, *Kakie regioni otdali bolshe vsego muzhchin na voinu* [Which Regions Gave the Most Men to the War], trans. from Russian, ed. Alesya Marakhovskaya, *iStories* [Important Stories] (website), October 5, 2022, <https://storage.googleapis.com/istories/stories/2022/10/05/kakie-regioni-otdali-bolshe-vsego-muzhchin-na-voinu/index.html>.

64. Savina and Bonch-Osmolovskaya, *Kakie regioni*.

to low reenlistment rates.⁶⁵ Reforms have sought to improve these issues, but military corruption remains endemic.⁶⁶ While military service offers material benefits and advancement to poor Russians, including significant enlistment bonuses since 2022, these benefits must be contextualized with low civilian living standards.⁶⁷ Additionally, Russian prisoners have been released in exchange for service in Ukraine.⁶⁸ Recruits from underprivileged populations, in Russia, and in general, are more likely to be treated as expendable by their military leaders.

Evidence indicates Russia's leadership treats such forces as expendable. The June 2023 Kakhovka Dam explosion—presumably caused by Russia—flooded Russian positions, caused significant casualties, and serves as an extreme example of Russian commanders' belief in troop expendability.⁶⁹ This attitude, however, is reflected primarily toward low-quality Russian forces, particularly separatists, who have been deployed in high-casualty probing attacks and initial assault roles.⁷⁰ There are undoubtedly high-quality Russian forces that are well-trained, motivated, and capable in combat. Russia also possesses unreliable and unmotivated troops; these troops are disproportionately represented by underserved civilians, especially from minority ethnic backgrounds. Kadyrovtsy coercive violence has only been reported to target low-quality DPR-LPR and Russian Army troops who refuse to attack or retreat, rather than Russia's professional contract soldiers who reliably follow orders.⁷¹

Comparatively, the Kadyrovtsy are an essential military force to Russia, both for their domestic capabilities in Chechnya and for their blocking detachment abilities in Ukraine. The Kadyrovtsy are critical to Russian control in Chechnya, incentivizing Russia to minimize their losses. Additionally, Chechnya's political environment makes the Kadyrovtsy ideal

65. Margarete Klein, "Military Implications of the Georgia War: Russian Armed Forces in Need of Reform," SWP Research Paper, in *The Caucasian Crisis: International Perceptions and Policy Implications for Germany and Europe* ed. Hans-Hennings Schröder, trans. Deborah Bowen (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, November 2008), 12–18, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=5524.

66. Barndollar, "Best or Worst of Both Worlds?."

67. Todd Prince, "Sweetening a Bitter Pill: Russia Offers Debt Breaks, Other Benefits to Entice Draftees," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (website), September 28, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-mobilization-incentives-draft-ukraine-war/32056473.html>.

68. Guy Falconbridge, ed., "Russia's Wagner Mercenaries Halt Prisoner Recruitment Campaign – Prigozhin," Reuters (website), February 9, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-wagner-mercenaries-halt-prisoner-recruitment-campaign-founder-prigozhin-2023-02-09/>.

69. Karolina Hird et al., *Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 6, 2023* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, June 6, 2023), <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-6-2023>.

70. Stanislav Kibalnyk, "Donbas Youth Exploited by Russia in War against Ukraine," Geneva Solutions (website), May 18, 2022, <https://genevasolutions.news/ukraine-stories/donbas-youth-exploited-by-russia-in-war-against-ukraine>.

71. SOFREP, *Chechen "Kadyrovtsy" Unit*.

blocking detachments. Chechnya is relatively isolated from the rest of Russian society.⁷² Kadyrovtsy veterans will return to Chechnya after Ukraine, where lack of interaction with the troops they brutalized, plus the Kadyrov regime's power, protects them from reprisals. Russian soldiers in a blocking detachment would not enjoy similar post-conflict protection, making them potentially less willing to apply coercive violence. Kadyrovtsy are already experienced in using coercive discipline in their ranks, and Russo-Chechen enmity reduces reluctance to apply this violence.⁷³ The Putin regime's deployment of Kadyrovtsy as blocking detachments is logical, as these Chechens are reliable and experienced users of coercive violence. For these reasons, ethnic minority Kadyrovtsy are deployed in low-casualty blocking detachments roles despite military inequality theory's assumptions about minority ethnic troops.

As an authoritarian state, Russia may not desire reforms for combat effectiveness, preferring a divided but loyal military.⁷⁴ Additional strategies for this control include domestic repression, widespread media manipulation, and censorship to maintain war support, as seen before in Chechnya. Regardless of the outcome in Ukraine, Russia's strategy shows a willingness to deploy naked violence against less-than-loyal troops and to repress domestic opponents, an intensification of policies used while fighting in Chechnya. The future of Putin's regime likely depends on this continued repression. Intensifying domestic repression may motivate further ethnic separatism in the Federation's minority regions, promoting more secession wars or the empowerment of local strongmen in the style of Kadyrov.

Russia has not fielded a united force in Ukraine, deploying Russian Army units alongside Kadyrovtsy, DPR-LPR separatists, and Wagner Group mercenaries. There is an observable hierarchy within these forces, designated into expendable and nonexpendable categories. The former group, including separatists, ex-convicts, mercenaries, and fresh conscripts, has low levels of training and equipment and is used for probing attacks and first-wave assaults on Ukrainian positions.⁷⁵ The nonexpendable troops, including professional contract soldiers, Airborne Forces (VDV), Spetsnaz units, and other well-armed and competent elements, then attack softened Ukrainian positions with intelligence on exploitable weaknesses. As expendable troops are aware of their high-casualty role, Kadyrovtsy blocking detachments are essential to ensuring their motivation.⁷⁶

72. Werth, "The 'Chechen Problem.'"

73. Aldamova, "Chechens Suffer Torture Hell."

74. Caitlin Talmadge, *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt20d89pv>.

75. Olivia Yanchik, "Human Wave Tactics Are Demoralizing the Russian Army in Ukraine," *Ukraine Alert* (blog), Atlantic Council (website), April 8, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/human-wave-tactics-are-demoralizing-the-russian-army-in-ukraine/>.

76. SOFREP, *Chechen "Kadyrovtsy" Unit*.

Russia maximizes battlefield effectiveness by deploying poor-quality troops in high-casualty roles to preserve its competent forces.

The divisions in Russia's forces extend to Russia's commanders. Additionally, to Kadyrov, Wagner Group owner Yevgeny Prigozhin, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov, separatist commanders, and other military figures have competed to offset blame for Russian military failures. The noted Prigozhin-Shoigu feud culminated in the June 2023 Wagner Group rebellion. Kadyrov has increasingly praised Putin's war direction and reiterated this support during the rebellion.⁷⁷ Without Prigozhin—an important Putin lieutenant—Kadyrov's relative importance and influence will increase. Wagner, as a private military contractor, offered Russia plausible deniability for international military actions. With Wagner's elimination, unofficial Kadyrovtsy formations will likely fill this gap. Kadyrovtsy have previously been documented in such quasi-official deployments in Syria supporting the Assad regime and in Ukraine before 2022.⁷⁸

Strategic Proposals

Observed Russian infighting and military shortcomings offer opportunities for Western actors. Disaffected commanders and fighters, particularly ex-Wagner members, can be enticed to defect with the correct offer of material benefits, personal protection, and amnesties for possible war crimes. Russian defectors would add to Ukrainian strength and offer important military intelligence. Attritional warfare is not an optimal Ukrainian strategy given Russia's numerical advantages. As expendable Russian troops already exhibit severe morale problems, offering amnesties and evacuation from combat zones is a viable strategy to cause mass Russian desertions. Propaganda reinforcing poor living conditions and high casualties would be extremely effective. Such strategies conserve Ukrainian military resources for more determined Russian units, such as the Kadyrovtsy. Forcing Kadyrovtsy desertions is more challenging. Should Kadyrov lose power, Kadyrovtsy fighters would lose state protection and face reprisals from the Chechen people, reinforcing fighter loyalty to the political order that protects them.⁷⁹

The Kadyrovtsy, as a crucial pillar of the Putin regime, must be destroyed as a military force. Deliberately targeting these essential Russian military elements is a maximally effective use of Ukrainian force. Ukrainian missile and drone attacks, including those going into Russia,

77. Hird, *Russian Offensive* (2023).

78. Galeotti, *Armies of Russia's War in Ukraine*.

79. Meakins, "Russians in Chechnya."

already pursue the high-value infrastructure and personnel targets that direct the Russian military.⁸⁰ Targeting Kadyrovtsy units and commanders in Ukraine and military installations in Chechnya is an actionable extension of this policy. Russian air defenses are unlikely to focus on Chechnya relative to major population zones.

Western support for a Kadyrov alternative in Chechnya would open a second front against Russia, diverting resources from Ukraine. In 2022, Ukraine recognized Chechnya as a state occupied by Russia.⁸¹ The previous failure of Chechen independence is related in large part to its inability to gain recognition, thus, Western states should join in recognizing a secular, independent Chechnya. Anti-Russia Chechens have been fighting with Ukraine since 2014. Existing military aid to Ukraine should be extended to these groups. Battlefield experience would contribute to the legitimacy of the government-in-exile these Chechens represent. The significant Chechen diaspora, which emerged primarily from the two Chechen Wars, is a source of support and manpower for these efforts.⁸² However, they generally experience lower living standards typical of other refugees in Western states and live in fear of Kadyrovtsy reprisal violence.⁸³ Eliminating Russian and Kadyrovtsy agents abroad is essential to ensuring the Chechen diaspora's security. The Ukrainian refugee crisis has already brought the importance of refugee support into focus, and extending this support to exiled Chechens would improve their pro-Western and pro-Ukrainian orientation.

Potentially, such groups could be inserted into Chechnya to reignite the anti-Russia insurgency, similar to the May 2023 Belgorod incursion.⁸⁴ The situation in Chechnya, however, is unlike Belgorod, and such an operation is not currently feasible. Chechnya is far from the front, there is not an organized resistance for them to reinforce, and fighters living abroad for many years would struggle to build a popular insurgency. Removing Kadyrov requires the destruction of Kadyrovtsy fighting power, which is best achieved in Ukraine through high-value target hunting.

Regions of Russia similar to Chechnya could be targeted for equivalent secessionist support. North Caucasus regions populated by Islamic non-Russians, which have previously exhibited armed separatist movements, may prove the most responsive.⁸⁵ There are, however, significant risks attached to supporting Russian separatists. Russia would interpret such support as an existential threat, and rather

80. Hird, *Russian Offensive* (2023).

81. Grzegorz Kuczyński, "Ukrainian Lawmakers Recognize Independence of Chechen Republic of Ichkeria," Warsaw Institute (website), November 1, 2022, <https://warsawinstitute.org/ukrainian-lawmakers-recognize-independence-of-chechen-republic-of-ichkeria/>.

82. Alice Szczepanikova, "Chechen Refugees in Europe: How Three Generations of Women Settle in Exile," in *Chechnya at War and Beyond*, ed. Anne Le Huérou et al. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 257–72.

83. Szczepanikova, "Chechen Refugees."

84. Hird, *Russian Offensive* (2023).

85. Driscoll, "Insurgency in the North Caucasus."

than inspire separatism, aid to separatists could rally government support. Russian diplomatic condemnation is certain. Russian proxy support in Western military peripheries is possible but unlikely for the duration of the Ukraine War. Even if these separatist movements achieve independence, there is no guarantee they would be Western-aligned. Russia today exerts significant influence in former Soviet Central Asia. Although Russian influence in Central Asia has declined due to Ukraine, there is now growing Chinese influence rather than Western orientation in this region.⁸⁶

Blowback, meaning explicitly negative unintended consequences from covert operations, is a further risk of supporting Russian separatists. Western support for the Afghan mujahideen is an analogous example. Military aid was provided to anti-Soviet forces, but no economic aid was provided to rebuild after Soviet withdrawal, creating an environment for the Taliban's rise and the war on terrorism.⁸⁷ Devastated interwar Chechnya followed a similar path, descending into warlordism and extremism and falling to renewed Russian aggression. Chechnya is a deeply conservative and Islamic society like Afghanistan, with a recent history of Islamic extremism. Support for separatists, in Chechnya or elsewhere, must not stop with military aid but must extend to rebuilding economies and transitioning fighters to civilian employment. Integrating new states into Western economic and defense blocs prevents domestic deterioration and extremism, protects those states from renewed Russian aggression, and minimizes the influence of actors like China.

Essential Russian units in Ukraine, especially the Kadyrovtsy, should be eliminated immediately. Building a program to support Chechens and other Russian separatists would severely complicate Russian war efforts. However, ensuring such regions remain free, stable, and Western-oriented in the long run demands multi-decade investment and far deeper strategic analysis than this article can offer.

Conclusions

The war in Ukraine is ongoing, and Russian strategy continues to adjust. However, the Chechen Wars offer lessons for observed Russian action and possible avenues to complicate Russian efforts. Russia today is a neo-imperial state, defined as a place where a political core dominates a periphery. For empires to rule effectively, they engage in divide-and-rule policies that pit dominated peripheries against each other. Ethnic Russians dominate cultural, economic, and political power, suppress other groups from accessing power, and deploy a divided military to expand their rule

86. Carla Freeman, Gavin Helf, and Alison McFarland, "China Looks to Fill a Void in Central Asia," United States Institute of Peace (website), May 25, 2023, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/05/china-looks-fill-void-central-asia>.

87. George Crile, *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003).

over exterior groups. This divisive neo-imperial system makes the Russian Federation susceptible to balkanization, much like the Soviet Union.

Russia's authoritarian politics, endemic corruption, and mobilization policies have created many underequipped, badly led, and poorly motivated troops, in contrast to its competent forces. Russia's problems in Ukraine are not solely due to its divided military, as the invasion strategy and troop commitments were unsuitable for a major conventional war. Addressing Russia's overall military problems requires fundamentally reforming Russia's military and society, which could take decades and could not improve the lack of planning and logistics evident in Ukraine. The simpler solution, immediately deployable in Ukraine, is to coerce poor-quality troops into battle with Kadyrovtsy blocking detachments.

The Kadyrovtsy's unique deployment and use of coercive violence must be understood within the Russo-Chechen relationship and military inequality theory. However, existing military inequality literature overestimates the core minority relationship as dichotomous. In practice, states and societies consist of multiple ethnic groups with varying levels of equality, which is reflected in a divided military. Under certain conditions, the typical core minority relationship can be reversed, as with the minority ethnic Kadyrovtsy applying coercive violence.

Future research should expand on military inequality theory and the layered complexity of core minority relationships. Historical counterexamples relevant to expanding military inequality theory include nineteenth-century ethnic partisans, the recruitment of martial races, and American Buffalo Soldiers, groups that received special armaments, privileges, command independence, or fought by specialized in-group standards. The last example featured soldiers designated as second-class citizens who were deployed to fight other ethnic groups considered to be of even lesser value, highlighting the tiered element of civilian-military divisions. These examples and the Kadyrovtsy demonstrate that a minority ethnic civilian status does not necessarily prevent specialized or elite military statuses.

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US Army War College Russia-Ukraine War Study Project

Eric Hartunian

ABSTRACT: The Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College is analyzing the operational events and activities of the Russia-Ukraine War to understand the war's strategic implications for the US Army and its role within the NATO Alliance. Analysis will further inform theater and national US strategy and may benefit Army doctrine and concepts vis-à-vis the Russian threat. It will also examine how US and allied defense policies should adjust to the current character of war. Lessons learned from Ukraine are relevant to the evolving challenge in the Pacific in the near term and are opportunities for the United States to progress in terms of integrated deterrence and the provision of assistance with and through partners.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine War, NATO, Indo-Pacific, integrated deterrence, logistics, US Army, operations, strategy

There is no shortage of quality reporting and research on the now year-and-a-half-old war in Ukraine. The focus of these reports spans the range of political and military topics and the spectrum of tactical to strategic—everything from traditional deterrence and nuclear weapons use to weaponized drones and artificial intelligence and commercial space technology. So, do we really need another study on the Russia-Ukraine War? Of course we do.

The Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College embarked on an expansive Russia-Ukraine War study project in 2022 that will analyze operational events and activities—using appropriate evidence and information—to understand strategic implications for the US Army and its role within the NATO Alliance. Analysis will further inform theater and national US strategy and may benefit Army doctrine and concepts vis-à-vis the Russian threat. Importantly, the team's analysis will move beyond using “Russian ineptitude” to rationalize operational outcomes, instead examining whether the character of war itself has changed and whether or how US and allied defense policies should adjust.

Integrated deterrence is being put to the test in this conflict, and in many ways, Ukraine serves as a laboratory for the Army to see this concept

play out and to understand the Army's role in the integrated deterrence landscape. Clearly, deterrence activities preinvasion were insufficient to prevent the war. The critical part allies play in integrated deterrence, however, validates the Army's role in delivering capabilities to them in ways that enable success. Part of this ongoing study will look at how the Army strengthens integrated deterrence in Ukraine with intelligence sharing, training, and lethal capabilities and how these activities can translate to the Indo-Pacific theater.

As NATO member states contribute to Ukraine in various ways—with weapons and munitions, training, intelligence sharing, and so forth—some real shortcomings are being exposed, particularly in the weapons and ammunition space. While the United States and member states are cutting deep into their stockpiles, they must strike a balance with maintaining their defensive capabilities.¹ This problem has critical implications for the defense industrial base and the need to maintain sufficient quantities of munitions, particularly with the massive reliance on artillery by both sides.² Congress is already taking action to strengthen mechanisms to bolster production, but supply-chain issues increase difficulty on that front, and production timelines can take months, if not years.³

This is not a new problem—the war in Ukraine is only validating what researchers have been discussing for some time in relation to a Taiwan scenario.⁴ As Congress passes authorizations to increase the industrial base's capacity for materiel production, we still have questions about the ability to sustain prolonged large-scale combat operations in distant theaters. In addition to production challenges, the tremendous logistical challenges of shipping across the ocean in potentially nonpermissive environments create more issues. Despite a robust and long-standing network of European allies to assist in that endeavor, contested logistics remains a challenge and strategic vulnerability.⁵ This situation is further exacerbated in the Indo-Pacific.

1. Sanya Mansoor, "Why the West Is Getting Nervous about Ammunition Shortages for Ukraine," *TIME* (website), March 16, 2023, <https://time.com/6263802/ukraine-west-ammunition-shortages/>.

2. Cynthia Cook, "Reviving the Arsenal of Democracy: Steps for Surging Defense Industrial Capacity," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) (website), March 14, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/reviving-arsenal-democracy-steps-surging-defense-industrial-capacity>.

3. Loren Thompson, "Ukraine, Taiwan Challenges Spur Efforts to Strengthen Munitions Industrial Base," *Forbes* (website), May 12, 2023, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2023/05/12/ukraine-taiwan-challenges-spur-efforts-to-strengthen-munitions-industrial-base/?sh=50057c49226b>; and David Saw, "Demand and Supply – The Complexities of Artillery and Ammunition Supply in the War in Ukraine," *European Security and Defence* (website), January 30, 2023, <https://euro-sd.com/2023/01/articles/29154/demand-and-supply-the-complexities-of-artillery-and-ammunition-supply-in-the-war-in-ukraine/>.

4. Seth G. Jones, "The U.S. Defense Industrial Base Is Not Prepared for a Possible Conflict with China," CSIS (website), n.d., <https://features.csis.org/preparing-the-US-industrial-base-to-deter-conflict-with-china/>.

5. Anna Dowd, Dominik P. Jankowski, and Cynthia Cook, "European Warfighting Resilience and NATO Race of Logistics Ensuring That Europe Has the Fuel It Needs to Fight the Next War," CSIS (website), June 28, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/european-warfighting-resilience-and-nato-race-logistics-ensuring-europe-has-fuel-it-needs>.

The West's continued supply of increasingly advanced and capable weapons systems is threading a strategic needle of sorts—attempting to increase Ukraine's capability and lethality all while seeking to avoid Russia's murky red lines and avoid unproductive escalation. This endeavor has been successful so far, but the balance between avoiding escalation and implementing incrementalism with capabilities raises questions about strategic risk and conflict termination. In addition to weapons and munitions supplies, training and interoperability are of particular importance to the Army. The West's weapons-system contributions to the Ukrainians bring respective training and maintenance requirements. The speed at which the Army can deliver on both is critical to enabling the success of our partners. There are some imperfect similarities here with US military hardware sales to Taiwan as well, albeit outside the context of an armed conflict.

With a focus on Ukraine and Taiwan, it is important to continue to keep in mind the strategic implications relevant to the Army. The lessons learned from Ukraine are relevant to the evolving challenge in the Pacific in the near term and are also opportunities for the United States to take evolutionary leaps in the way the military constructs integrated deterrence and provides assistance with and through partners.

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Book Reviews

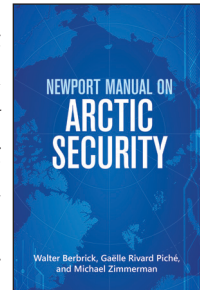
ARCTIC ISSUES

Newport Manual on Arctic Security

by Walter Berberick, Gaëlle Rivard Piché, and Michael D. Zimmerman

Reviewed by Mr. Mark E. Rosen, captain, US Navy Judge Advocate General Corps (retired),
and senior vice president and general counsel, CNA Corporation

In the *Newport Manual*, the authors valiantly attempt to catalogue the issue sets pertaining to the Arctic from a security, economic, and political perspective and make policy suggestions. The book does a particularly good job of explaining the impact of indigenous people and their representatives and how these groups will possibly be used by outsiders (such as China) to drive a wedge between indigenous governments and their nation states. Another thing worth noting was the extraordinary care used in describing the maze of international agreements (especially in the maritime field). The legal descriptions and the footnotes are incredibly useful, too.



The authors did an excellent job of tracking the military operations and exercises held in the region and groups (such as the Coast Guard forum) that have been used effectively in the past. I wish the authors had talked about the security issues associated with China's increased physical and economic presence in the region, including how the "Arctic Eight" (Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States) will deal with illegal fishing, given that the high-seas fishing agreement is not legally binding and most exclusive economic zones are incapable of being monitored. Also, how should the Arctic Eight deal with increased foreign investment—especially from China? What are the political ramifications of a large industrial or shipping accident that resulted in major pollution?

The book is organized into three parts—awareness, confidence-building measures, and capabilities. It is further divided into 30 principles. The authors assert in principle 3 that a "greater emphasis on sea power is essential. While it is true that the Arctic is a maritime region and its economic activity takes place near the coast, the authors wisely argue that policymakers should have a nuanced view when it comes to increased force levels or such things as freedom of navigation operations. The authors also suggest a bigger role for the Arctic Council to promote transparency regarding foreign investments and research activities and possibly some form of burden sharing, since the Arctic littoral countries would bear the brunt of any type of environmental calamity.

Part two, “Confidence-Building Measures,” was my favorite. In it, the authors unveiled ideas to reduce the risk of war and promote cooperation in the Arctic. The establishment of a regional air defense identification zone to prevent surprises arising from military aircraft movements near a border seems an especially good idea given that this is perhaps greatest source of friction and concern. One thing not discussed in detail was collaborative confidence-building measures among the Arctic littoral states to have open dialogue and establish plans to address the common risks associated with marine oil and gas exploration, poor charts and navigation aids, and non-Polar Code compliant vessels and mining.

The last part, “Capabilities,” addresses the ability of states to manage the issues discussed. The section begins with a review of the Arctic policies (including acquisition plans) of various states. This review was especially good in tracing regional military build ups, but the section on Russia was brief. Given that Russia is cited as a major security concern, the book should have spent more time discussing specifics about Russia’s build up and distinguishing between routine modernization and genuine expansion. The section does not address the huge risks to the marine environment from near-shore development, mining, and oil and gas development (and how they can be abated). In contrast, the section on “Indigenous knowledge” was excellent in cataloging shortfalls in relations between security officials and indigenous peoples and how these people can be integrated (with mutual benefit) into existing security architectures. The section about information sharing did a good job of explaining the importance of maritime domain awareness and the urgent need for sharing among states. The section does not, however, address the two most pressing issues: (1) how to integrate Russia into the maritime domain awareness scheme and (2) how to create financial and other incentives for all to be part of the network. Finally, the sections on icebreakers and pooling resources make an excellent case for creating a multinational icebreaker force and exploring how states without those platforms can help contribute other capabilities to share in ice breaking support.

The concluding section knits things together and includes the key takeaway that the United States and other Arctic players have more to lose than gain by isolating one or more states, including Russia. That perspective is a courageous stand policymakers should study closely. The authors circle back to the question of governance and security and advocate for some sort of security forum to prevent an arms race and curtail dangerous military activities. Prevention of a major shipping or industrial accident should be part of those discussions.

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022 • 228 pages • \$49.95

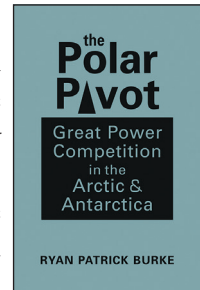
Keywords: Arctic, Arctic Eight, Russia, security, maritime domain awareness

The Polar Pivot: Great Power Competition in the Arctic and Antarctica

by Ryan Patrick Burke

Reviewed by Captain Mark T. Vicik, US Army military intelligence officer

Ryan Burke illuminates emerging security challenges in the polar regions to highlight a gap in America's national defense posture in *The Polar Pivot*. Burke leverages his expertise in defense policy and grand strategy to develop a new security narrative for the Arctic and Antarctica. He provides various unique academic frameworks to assess the importance of the polar regions, measure the relative power of state actors, and predict the future trajectory of security issues in the poles. His process, which he refers to as the "polar pivot," identifies Russia and China as strategic threats in the polar regions and justifies a series of policy prescriptions to refocus the defense community on the poles (21).



Burke outlines the history of international competition in the poles to demonstrate the significance of these regions in the emerging era of great-power competition. To describe the potential drivers of increased polar tension, he lays out a new framework called the "Four Cs" (45ff). He models his framework on Mike Sfraga's Arctic Seven Cs, which define key considerations for analyzing Arctic issues. Burke offers additional concerns—commons, claims, covenants, and cosmos—that could bring states from the last of Sfraga's Seven Cs, competition, into confrontation or conflict. While Burke acknowledges differences between the northern and southern polar regions, he develops his Four Cs framework to highlight concerns pertinent to both poles, allowing him to discuss Arctic and Antarctic issues in parallel throughout his work. A framework that captures northern and southern polar security concerns is uniquely valuable to the national defense community. Recently, academics and policymakers have increased their focus on Arctic security challenges but have failed to do the same for Antarctica. Burke's framework offers a platform to build Antarctic considerations into newly developing Arctic security policy, potentially rectifying this shortfall.

After establishing the interests at play through the Four Cs, Burke assesses the relative power of state actors in the poles using the second of his unique academic frameworks, a typology that groups polar actors by their capability and intent to exert influence in the regions. His typology, governed by Anne-Marie Brady's definition of a "polar great power," defines China, Russia, and the United States as the only three nations meeting the criteria for polar great powers (77). These states have the capability

and intent to project significant power into the poles. He discusses Russian and Chinese polar activities to understand their strategic objectives. He also highlights attempts by Moscow and Beijing to disrupt international norms and stresses their revisionist agendas to establish the threat they pose to the stability of the polar regions.

Having framed the key national interests at stake, Burke prescribes a new national strategy founded on an increased polar focus to address these challenges. This national readjustment, the eponymous “polar pivot,” would be built on a general change in US grand strategy and a series of specific policy recommendations. *The Polar Pivot* is grounded in a strategy of “transactional balancing” (20). Modeled after John Mearsheimer’s theories on offensive realism and offshore balancing, Burke’s transactional balancing approach provides a strategy specifically tailored to the global commons, which includes Antarctica and much of the Arctic. Transactional balancing assumes the ultimate failure of treaty-based organizations in the polar regions and instead maintains the balance of power through a series of bilateral transactions. While Burke’s disregard for the value of multinational institutions can appear extreme at times, his proposed strategy offers an interesting alternative to the blind reliance on international organizations characteristic of post–Cold War US polar policy.

Perhaps the most interesting proposal is an update to the Department of Defense’s unified combatant command structure to include a “Polar Command” (POLCOM) (212). Burke’s POLCOM proposal is an attempt to rectify the ambiguity and disunity of command authority in the polar region since the Arctic is currently shared by two geographic combatant commands, and Antarctica is shared by three, which could impede an effective military response to threats in the regions. He creates a seventh geographic combatant command split into POLCOM North, with consolidated authority over the Arctic, and POLCOM South, with the same responsibility in Antarctica. Overall, *The Polar Pivot* provides a uniquely realist perspective on polar security that is largely absent from existing scholarship. Members of the defense community seeking to understand emerging national security challenges in the polar regions should strongly consider reading his work.

Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2022 • 261 pages • \$98.00

Keywords: Mike Sfraga, Arctic, Antarctica, Russia, China, John Mearsheimer

IRREGULAR WARFARE

Enemies Near and Far: How Jihadist Groups Strategize, Plot, and Learn

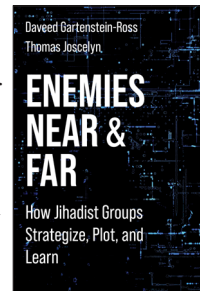
by Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Thomas Joscelyn

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, director of research and analysis,
managing partner, C/O Futures LLC

Part of Bruce Hoffman's Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare series, *Enemies Near & Far* is an absolute gem and maintains the high academic standards of this body of literature. Clearly the authors put much effort, resources, and expertise into this project's creation and execution. The authors have extensive backgrounds in international jihadi terrorism analysis. The book's research and writing were underwritten by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and related entities, which provided the authors with the necessary time to craft a high-quality product.

This work provides insights into jihadi groups' organizational learning in a more sweeping and generalized manner over time, as opposed to a specific case-study or time-period approach (19). The authors present an overview of the process of organizational, as opposed to individual, learning and then explain the book's approach and methodology. The core of this process is articulated in "the violent non-state actor technology adoption curve," which highlights its early adoption, iteration, breakthrough, and competition phases (see fig. 2.3, p. 39). The authors then view and interpret the case-study chapters within their respective contexts and within this qualitative research design with various factors influencing this learning: organizational structure, intragroup communication, membership of an organization, organizational culture and learning mechanisms, and external environment (32–38). These chapters, while at times long, contain a wealth of detail and are best read one at a time and then reflected upon. Nuggets include Hezbollah vehicle-borne improvised explosive device training, intelligence, and related support provided to al-Qaeda in Al-Biqā (also known as Bekaa or Beqaa) in the 1990s—linked back to Iran (68, 326) and Taliban and Haqqani links in Pakistan to al-Qaeda (337).

The book's findings and projections range from the expected to the more surprising. The authors highlight al-Qaeda's and ISIS's strategic evolutions with



a more generalized jihadist strategic evolution discussion focused on where they will operate, how they will present (or market) themselves, and the possibility of an AQ-ISIS rapprochement. The authors then discuss jihadist tactical evolution and learning patterns. Gartenstein-Ross and Joscelyn then look at evolution potentials focusing on drones (a no-brainer, given extensive past ISIS use) and AI (which is up for debate but hedged by limitations to deepfake apps and virtual agents), with a final discussion focused on the strategic countering of these jihadist organizations and a warning about consensus errors within counterterrorism analysis. Overall, the findings and arguments in the book appear balanced and well-developed. No disagreement exists with the policy suggestions of focusing on targeting individual jihadi “innovators and terrorist entrepreneurs” and that terrorist safe havens should be a priority for governmental elimination efforts. For many in the field, however, this notion may appear as a priori knowledge (396–97).

The work is first-rate but not necessarily a good fit for general-public or even undergraduate reading levels. Rather, it has great utility for postgraduate educational consumption and would be very useful for war college and other graduate program international-security courses focusing on contemporary (late 1990s to present-day) jihadi, Sunni-based terrorism. Given the sometimes daunting density of information in the work, chapter 10 should be read prior to the case-study chapters so readers can better understand and appreciate the context of the work’s lessons learned and projections.

In summation, *Enemies Near & Far* represents some of the best new scholarship related to our country’s post-9/11 focus on international terrorism and jihadi insurgency. Gartenstein-Ross considers the book “a worthy swan song,” which is most apropos (401). Given the Department of Defense’s recent shift to great-power conflict centered on authoritarian state competitors like Russia and China, such works may be less relevant than before, but both al-Qaeda and ISIS are still active in many regions of the world. Although presently beaten-down, these entities are attempting to reconstitute themselves and still have a lot of fight left in them. Hence, this work will have enduring utility for many years to come.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2022 • 512 pages • \$30.00

Keywords: organizational learning, jihadis, terrorism, ISIS, al-Qaeda, post-9/11

Understanding Urban Warfare

by Liam Collins and John Spencer

Reviewed by Dr. John P. Sullivan, instructor, Safe Communities Institute,
University of Southern California

Urban warfare is a present and future concern for militaries worldwide. Traditional approaches to warfare seek to avoid urban operations due to the difficulties they present. This avoidance is often reinforced by referencing Sun Tzu's dictum to avoid urban engagements as stated in chapter 3, "Attack by Stratagem," in *The Art of War*, "The rule is, not to besiege walled cities if it can possibly be avoided." The complexities of urban operations reinforce this view. These challenges include urban density. Density, as described by Russell W. Glenn in *Heavy Matter* (RAND, 2000), includes several interactive densities: density of population, structures, potential firing positions, command and control systems, friendly and enemy forces, line of sight issues, and compression of decision times. Notwithstanding these challenges, cities have historically been the scenes of decisive battles and, as this text argues, will likely continue to be in the future.



The text is a collection of interviews conducted by the Modern War Institute at West Point with subject matter experts on combat in cities and urban warfare. The primary authors (essentially contributors and editors) of the work, Liam Collins and John Spencer, are both retired military officers and scholars of urban operations. Collins is a executive director of the Madison Policy Forum, founding director of the Modern War Institute and a former director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. He served as a career special forces officer, retiring from the US Army as a colonel. He holds a doctor of philosophy degree from Princeton University. John Spencer is chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute, and director of Urban Warfare Training with the 40th Infantry Division, California National Guard, where he serves as a colonel (California). Spencer is an infantry soldier and has held ranks from private to sergeant first class and second lieutenant to major. He was a fellow with the Chief of Staff of the Army's Strategic Studies Group and served as deputy director of the Modern War Institute.

Understanding Urban Warfare is divided into two parts. Part one, "Understanding the Operational Environment," includes interviews with key urban operations specialists. Chapters on "Understanding the City" with David Kilcullen, "Feral Cities" with Robert Norton, "Global Cities" with Saskia Sassen, "Smart Cities" with Sokwoo Rhee, "Megacities and the Military" with

Patrick Mahaney, and “Beneath the City” with Daphne Richemond-Barak. These discussions set the stage for the case studies provided in the following section.

Part two, “Operational Case Studies,” builds upon the previous contextual content to illuminate the challenges found in urban combat. The first interview, “The Battle of Ortona,” with Jayson Geroux, recounts the World War II battle, illustrating tactical innovations such as house-borne improvised explosive devices, mouseholing, and the creative use of explosive concrete-penetrating weapons. “The Battle of Mogadishu” with Lee Van Ardsdale, Larry Perino, and Kyle Lamb provided first hand perspective on that pivotal urban battle. Lieutenant General James E. Rainey covers the Second Battle of Fallujah, where he served as a battalion commander. The key insight here is that even when many civilians evacuate, clearing a city is still a time-consuming evolution. “Rebuilding Fallujah” with Leonard DeFrancisci discusses the critical importance of civil affairs during the Second Battle of Fallujah.

Louis DiMarco recounts the lessons of “The Battle of Ramadi,” where counterinsurgency principles of clear, hold, and rebuild were applied. “The Battle of Sadr City,” with Rob MacMillan, provides insights into the rapid transition from stability operations to high-intensity offensive operations.

The final two interviews, “The Battle of Marawi,” with Charles Knight, and “The Battle of Shusha,” with John Spencer, provide insightful contemporary cases. Knight’s assessment of the Marawi “siege” dissects the brutal contest between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (and integrated police components) and the Islamic State in the Philippines (ISP). The operational tempo of clearing the entire city and the importance of fully integrated information operation is highlighted. In the chapter “The Battle of Shusha,” which took place during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, Spencer reminds us that urban battle is not solely a megacity threat but that dense urban terrain complicates action in cities of all sizes.

Understanding Urban Warfare is an excellent primer on the challenges of urban warfare. Seasoned “urbanistas” (scholars of urban operations) and newcomers to the issue will benefit from the text. Its useful insights are often reinforced with tactical diagrams and clarifying dialogue. The work concludes with a set of observations and recommendations. All of these observations are valid, however, two of the recommendations are especially worth highlighting one global: “Militaries Must Allocate Considerably More Resources to Understanding and Preparing for Urban Warfare” (359); and one specific to the United States: “Assign the U.S. Army as the Executive Agent to Ensure the U.S. Military is Adequately Preparing for Urban Operation” (359).

London: Howgate Publishing, 2022 • 392 pages • \$29.95

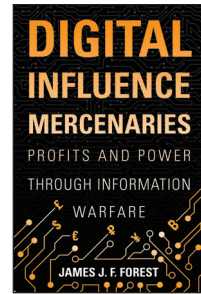
Keywords: urban warfare, *The Art of War*, Heavy Matter, Modern War Institute, urbanistas

Digital Influence Mercenaries: Profits and Power through Information Warfare

by James J. F. Forest

Reviewed by Dr. Ofer Fridman, senior lecturer in War Studies,
King's College London

Unlike most books in this field, brimming with fancy, yet confusing illustrations and technical slang—the understanding of which requires a doctoral degree in computer science—James J. F. Forest's *Digital Influence Mercenaries* reads like a thriller. In his previous books, Forest proved himself as a writer capable of turning the most complicated topics into meticulously researched, detailed, accessible stories. In *Digital Influence Mercenaries*, Forest's skills manifest again. Both novices and information warfare experts should read his work.



Digital influence researchers can learn one important lesson from Forest's monograph: how to present a complicated problem shaped by sophisticated technology to those with no technical background. For the last two decades, the professional language of cyber experts has alienated political decisionmakers responsible for guarding citizens from malicious actors generating influence for profit or for power. From that perspective, *Digital Influence Mercenaries* is a helpful oasis in the desert of the political, professional, and legal discourse on the nature and character of digital influence, as everyone involved in this discourse can understand Forest's authoritative and knowledgeable presentation of the problem.

Forest's academic objectivity makes this book particularly useful to the policy-making community. He focuses on the phenomenon of digital mercenaries—who they are, and how and why they operate. He pays much less attention to their benefactors, making his argument accessible to everyone regardless of their political beliefs. In the same spirit of political objectivity, he refrains from offering political, legal, or other recommendations. While the last chapter attempts to offer a glimpse into future challenges and how to confront them, Forest stops short of offering direct recommendations. Instead, he concludes that “the future looks promising for digital influence mercenaries,” unless some “unimaginably huge changes in America and worldwide” prevent it (169). The book leaves the decision on the nature and

character of the “unimaginably huge changes” required to transform this future to the readers.

The timing of *Digital Influence Mercenaries* could not be better. On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin started a war, which very quickly escalated into a geopolitical earthquake. Since the beginning of the war, many writers have spilled much ink discussing the detrimental effects of the shock waves from war in Ukraine on the economic, political, security, immigration, and other foundations of the global order, which the COVID-19 pandemic had already weakened. Unsurprisingly, when the rumble of Russian artillery began echoing just across Poland’s eastern border, the media sidelined the issue of malign digital influence. But that does not mean the problem has disappeared—rather the opposite. Regardless of when, where, and how the guns fall silent in Ukraine, the shock waves of this geopolitical earthquake have already created economic, political, and societal grievances (within NATO member states and worldwide) that different political actors would use to pursue their goals through digital influence.

On the one hand, the war in Ukraine has made the future of digital influence mercenaries even more promising than Forest suggests in this book, sent to press months before Russian tanks crossed the Ukrainian border. On the other, no one can control, predict, or foresee the direction, consequences, and implications of geopolitical earthquakes. The French Revolution, World War I, or the end of the Cold War shook the existing global order and led to geopolitical transformations that helped revive societies by transforming outdated institutions and overcoming systemic obstacles. While we still do not know the magnitude of the current earthquake in Ukraine, it offers many opportunities for previously unimaginable transformations, including in the field of digital influence.

Digital Influence Mercenaries, therefore, has arrived at the right time. It brings much-needed depth, clarity, and nuance to a field in which a generational gap and a lack in technical background create a plague of misunderstandings. Forest’s accessible presentation of the problem offers the desperately needed common language between professionals, policymakers, and legislators. *Digital Influence Mercenaries* deprives its readers of an “I don’t understand the problem” excuse, and this—for better or for worse—is its biggest achievement.

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022 • 264 pages • \$39.95

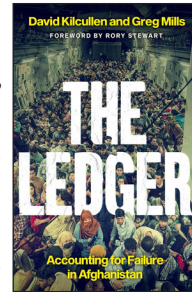
Keywords: digital influence, technology, Ukraine, NATO, Cold War

The Ledger: Accounting for Failure in Afghanistan

David Kilcullen and Greg Mills

Reviewed by Jeffrey D. McCausland, US Army colonel (retired),
and national security consultant for CBS Radio and Television

David Kilcullen and Greg Mills take their experience in counterinsurgency and stability operations worldwide, including more than 16 years in Afghanistan, to explain America's failure in Afghanistan. They analyze the wars in Afghanistan and offer a reasonable history of American policy in the region for the past four decades. They begin with the Soviet invasion in 1979 and end with the withdrawal by the United States and its allied partners in the fall of 2021.



The Ledger is authoritative and relevant for senior members of the defense community in the United States and worldwide. It is one of the first attempts to explain America's longest war and how, following the invasion, succeeding presidents and their administrations failed. Hopefully, this book and others that follow will serve as a cautionary tale for future policymakers.

The authors' central question is clear—how could highly experienced and educated military officers and policymakers make such catastrophic errors? They argue that America (and the international community more broadly) tried to accomplish the impossible. They maintain that the mission in Afghanistan required the integration of a strategy with four complex requirements: (1) a military component to provide security in the country; (2) a diplomatic effort in the region that focused largely on Pakistan, which over time was both a Washington ally and a Taliban supporter; (3) an economic and development effort to raise a significant portion of the population from abject poverty, provide education, reduce the production of narcotics, and so forth; and most importantly, (4) a political component to build a state and a government that over time could gain the support of most of the population and provide the basic services required.

They draw five lessons about counterinsurgency from the Soviet experience, International Security Assistance Force, Vietnam, and so forth. First, the fighting cannot end without a political settlement, and it is best to be in the strongest position when negotiations occur. Second, if the insurgents are still fighting for territory, they are winning. Third, it is extremely hard for an insurgency to survive absent a haven. Fourth, the government must strive for development that benefits the entire population. Without a functioning government, resentment and

increased opposition to the government will occur. Finally, victory depends on understanding the nature and distribution of power in society.

The authors suggest America's fundamental error may have been our ambition to change Afghanistan without understanding its history, culture, and demography. Many policymakers likely never thought understanding Afghanistan was necessary.

The authors sought to achieve too much in a single volume. The book describes Soviet failures in Afghanistan, the failures by the Bush administration in the aftermath of the initial invasion, the failures of succeeding administrations to adjust strategy, and the final withdrawal from the country in the fall of 2021. It then draws broader lessons about counterinsurgencies in Africa, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

While their analysis of the failed thinking of American politicians and military leaders is appropriate, they are not as severe in their critique of Afghan leaders. President Ashraf Ghani's greatest failure may have been that he could not believe the United States and NATO would leave. Their analysis of why the Afghan Army collapsed in August and September 2021 focuses on the withdrawal of US material assistance. While this withdrawal was important, the most recent Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report found that the last-minute wholesale restructuring of Afghanistan's security institutions between March and June 2021 undermined the Afghan Army's morale and ability to respond effectively to the Taliban offensive. President Ghani reshuffled his security leadership in early 2021 and focused on placing his allies and fellow Pashtuns in key positions in the Afghan security hierarchy. This may suggest an additional lesson: you cannot win a war for someone else. You can help them win it, but they must create solid structures that will gain popular support.

As the first serious attempt at the analysis of America's longest war, *The Ledger* hopefully sets the stage for others to follow. It might be our greatest error to try and forget the tragedy that was Afghanistan. *The Ledger* provides a sober reminder of the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles's description of the siege of Troy. One of his characters, the mythological hero Ajax, reflects:

Far-stretching, endless Time/Brings forth all hidden things/And
buries that which once did shine/The firm resolve falters, the
sacred oath is shattered/And let none say, "It cannot happen here."

Publisher: Hurst and Company, London, 2021 • 352 pages • \$19.95

Keywords: Afghanistan, Soviet Union, NATO, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Vietnam

White Sun War: The Campaign for Taiwan

by Mick Ryan

Reviewed by Colonel Jonathan Klug, US Army, assistant professor,
Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, US Army War College

In the summer of 1986, Tom Clancy's novel *Red Storm Rising* debuted at number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list as it brought to life World War III, although a nonnuclear version. Similarly, Retired Australian Major General Mick Ryan's new novel *White Sun War* offers a realistic and gripping "historical" account of a war for Taiwan set in 2028. Where Clancy had the Warsaw Pact and NATO, Ryan pits communist China against a coalition of Taiwan, the United States, Australia, Japan, and others. A longtime strategic commentator with 35 years of real-world experience, Ryan's vision of a war in the near future is firmly grounded. He deftly uses fiction to explore the potential challenges of warfare and leadership in 2028.



Ryan's extrapolation of current trends creates a plausible and believable backdrop to his story. For example, the fighting for Taiwan occurs across all domains: cyber, space, maritime, air, and land. This approach aligns with current military concepts, such as the Army's multidomain operations, and practices in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. Ryan's vision of warfare also relies on another strength of this book as he incorporates plausible future technology, such as human-machine teaming and advanced drones and how the belligerents employ them. As one example of many instances, the Chinese employ massive numbers of swarming drones, including the land-based so-called "beetles." Moreover, Ryan makes it a point to explore just how difficult leadership at different levels will be in this kind of war.

In addition to fighting across domains, new technology, and leadership challenges, Ryan includes strategic and operational concerns. He touches upon naval battles that secure the sea line of communication for the defenders of the northern end of Taiwan, which holds against the Chinese offensive. Conversely, the Chinese secure the sea line of communication to the southern end of Taiwan, which helps maintain the forward momentum of the Chinese offensive on that end of the island. Ryan also underscores the importance of what he calls "strategic bastions," which serve as protected power projection bases, vital as the Chinese will seek to contest their foes in the

forward area and within their homelands. This Chinese approach also attests to the importance of setting the theater during competition and setting the joint operations area during armed conflict; protection will take on an unprecedented level of importance. Finally, Ryan does an admirable job depicting both sides as they progress through learning cycles. These processes are vital in determining who has the advantage, as military history repeatedly demonstrates (U-boats versus Allied antisubmarine warfare, line versus column infantry formations, aircraft versus air defense, tank armor versus attack capabilities, and many others).

Ryan's novel does a great service by exploring essential aspects of future conflict in an enjoyable yet educational way. The strength of his book is its ability to provide a realistic answer to one of today's great "What if?" questions: "What if China invades Taiwan?" It does not delve into the "why" but deeply into the "how." *White Sun War* is a must read for military leaders and security professionals concerned with contemporary and future warfare, especially with China. This book would be especially useful as a case study for professional military education to provide fictional concreteness, so to speak, to discussions of potential challenges inherent in the battlefields of tomorrow.

Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2023 • 352 pages • \$22.95

Keywords: China, Taiwan, drones, space, World War III

MILITARY HISTORY

Victory through Influence: Origins of Psychological Operations in the US Army

by Jared M. Tracy

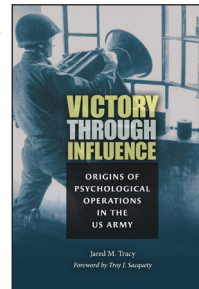
Reviewed by Robert S. Burrell assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies
at Joint Special Operations University

Jared M. Tracy, deputy command historian for the US Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), North Carolina, describes in his book, *Victory through Influence*, how psychological warfare developed during World War I through the Korean War and highlights the principal actors, not the general officer leadership, who conducted psychological warfare.

The author labels Heber Blankenhorn the father of American psychological operations and details his activities to undermine enemy morale. In this conflict, leaflets constituted the primary means of communications with enemy soldiers, and psychological warfare experimented with balloons as a means of distribution. Despite evidence that psychological operations heightened the surrender of many enemy troops and, in tandem, saved many American lives, the US Army dismantled its tables of organization and equipment following the Great War.

The next period discusses psychological operations in North Africa and the Italian campaigns during World War II—which Tracy lumps together as the “Mediterranean.” While the Office of Strategic Services and Office of War Information targeted enemy populations, US Army psychological operations remained directed solely on enemy soldiers. Delivery methods included radio programs, leaflets, and loudspeakers. With only a few hundred soldiers, psychological operations delivered millions of leaflets. To keep pace with the US Army’s advance, the psychological warfare units outfitted trucks that could make leaflets on the spot to adjust quickly to the enemy situation.

If operations in the Mediterranean were ad hoc, those conducted during and after the invasion of France realized the first real integration of psychological operations with conventional operations. In addition to radio and leaflets, the Army experimented with outfitting tanks with loudspeakers to bring the message closer to the front lines and distributed four billion throughout Europe. Most importantly, commanders integrated psychological operations as a nonlethal fire in conjunction with conventional warfare. As the war turned sour for the Axis, there were more prisoners of war.



Psychological operations distributed leaflets on the proper procedures for surrender and even proper pronunciation of the English word “surrender.”

World War II solidified the requirement for psychological warfare, particularly the successful activities carried out on the Western Front. After the war, the US Army maintained psychological operations as a recognized and essential element in warfare, with tables of organization for both active and reserve service. The US military remained generally unprepared for conventional war in Korea and preoccupied with strategic nuclear capabilities. Consequently, the number of psychological warfare soldiers dwindled during peacetime. The US Army’s psychological capabilities continued to vacillate between alignment either with civil affairs or intelligence. Consequently, when the Korean War erupted, the Eighth Army had to organize, man, and equip for psychological warfare. But once it did, psychological operations quickly produced results. Leaflets remained the mainstay with the Army dropping 587 million in 1951, 637 million in 1952, and 627 million in 1953. As the front lines stabilized along the 38th parallel, loudspeaker broadcasts became the norm. Unlike the Axis defeats in World War II, the stalemate in the later stage of the Korean War did not bring about massive numbers of surrendering communist soldiers. Tracy adds another chapter on the Korean War period that examines psychological warfare carried out at strategic commands like those of the Far East Command and the United Nations.

In the end, the title of Tracy’s book, though clever, is misleading. Victory in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War was not won through influence. Psychological operations became an important element within the US Army, a capability that enhanced enemy surrender, particularly in conjunction with American tactical victories on the battlefield. In turn, surrendering troops lowered the number of Allied casualties and preserved lives. I was disappointed that Tracy did not research psychological warfare carried out by Southwest Pacific Area Command in World War II, which he writes off as “handled by non-Army organizations” (7). While Southwest Pacific Area Command developed psychological warfare late in 1944, it did wield these types of activities prior to its invasion of the Philippines. I would also have liked more examples of the leaflets utilized in all three conflicts.

I recommend this book to those in the influence field of study, particularly those at US Army Special Operations Command, US Cyber Command, and the interagency. It provides an authoritative narrative and is heavily researched and clearly articulated. It covers important early and foundational periods of the influence profession, which provides added context to today’s complex information environment.

College Station: Texas A&M, 2022 • 263 pages • \$47.00

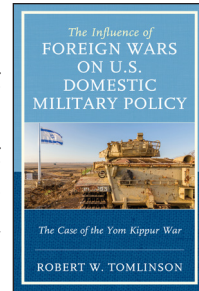
Keywords: psychological operations, World War I, World War II, Office of Strategic Services, Office of War Information

The Influence of Foreign Wars on U.S. Domestic Military Policy: The Case of the Yom Kippur War

by Robert W. Tomlinson

Reviewed by Major Zachary Griffiths, Army Staff

Robert Tomlinson, in his new book, *The Influence of Foreign Wars on U.S. Domestic Military Policy*, makes a compelling case for learning from foreign wars and making the services into organizations that learn from other people's wars. Using the Yom Kippur War as a case study, Tomlinson asks how the US military learned lessons and whether it subsequently increased organizational effectiveness and mission accomplishment.



Themes in this book closely connect to other recent works. For example, *Other People's Wars* (Georgetown University Press, 2021) by Bruce L. Sterling compares four cases of American learning from foreign wars, while *Adaptation Under Fire* (Oxford University Press, 2020) by David Barno and Nora Bensahel focuses on American learning during our wars. Unlike those works, Tomlinson's succinct volume focuses on just one case.

Tomlinson's work offers three significant insights. First, the services must become learning organizations. He finds that the Army and Air Force were learning organizations, but the Navy was not. While the Army and Air Force learned as organizations because they integrated systems thinking, mastered their craft, employed mental models, shared a vision, and learned as a team, the Navy only partially met the personal mastery requirement, while also failing to employ mental models or share a service vision. Second, he argues the United States must draw indirect lessons from foreign wars that might "offer indications of how our adversaries might fight in the future" (92). Finally, he concludes that strong and thoughtful leadership is a prerequisite to "establish and maintain a learning organization" (91). These conclusions have clear relevance today, as the United States reorients from the post-9/11 wars just as the Army of 1973 reoriented from Vietnam.

The Influence of Foreign Wars has several strengths. First, it clearly prescribes how to learn from foreign wars by comparing the successes of the services in the Yom Kippur War. Second, by drawing on a single, well-known case and using a clear methodology, Tomlinson substantiates his argument effectively. Throughout, Tomlinson explicitly follows the learning organization frameworks presented in *Learning from Conflict*

(Praeger, 1998) by Richard Duncan Downie and *The Fifth Discipline* (Currency, 2006) by Peter M. Senge. Finally, the bibliography presents readers interested in understanding organizational change from indirect experience a great starting point for further reading.

Despite these strengths, *The Influence of Foreign Wars* has two significant weaknesses. First, it is almost tautological to state that learning organizations learned lessons better. Insights into *how* to foster learning cultures in the services would be more helpful. Tomlinson builds on the frameworks of Downie and Senge by arguing for leadership's importance but could do more to explain its role. According to Tomlinson, General Donn A. Starry succeeded by convincing others of the importance of his vision and by skillfully working with foreign officials, but Admiral Elmo Zumwalt failed because of "institutional resistance" (91). A better explanation of how Starry succeeded and Zumwalt failed could illuminate the path to learning organizations for today's service leaders.

Second, *The Influence of Foreign Wars* could more comprehensively detail how lessons learned increased organizational effectiveness. The validity of lessons for American services is mentioned throughout the book, but Tomlinson neglects to present it among the key takeaways in his conclusion. Rather than accepting lessons outright, the Air Force adapted maintenance "procedures and organizational structures to meet its own unique needs" (52) and also "debat[ed] and vet[ted] the PME [professional military education] changes made in the force because of the conflict" (59). Not all lessons from all wars are applicable to the United States, and determining which lessons are valid and building consensus around those points deserve greater attention.

The Influence of Foreign Wars effectively complements other works on learning from foreign wars. Scholars and instructors of military adaptation and innovation should add this volume to their library or consider adding it to their syllabi. Anyone seeking to drive change based on lessons from foreign wars, especially the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, should read this book.

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022 • 118 pages • \$85.00

Keywords: lessons learned, organizational effectiveness, Yom Kippur War, learning organizations, General Donn A. Starry, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

Dying to Learn: Wartime Lessons from the Western Front

by Michael A. Hunzeker

Reviewed by James D. Scudieri, PhD, senior research historian,
Strategic Studies Institute

Michael A. Hunzeker's *Dying to Learn* is a multidisciplinary analysis of how British, French, and German wartime armies learned a century ago and the relevancy of that experience to understand future war today (3).

The book first outlines a social science methodology in detail. The armies tried to learn, at differing speeds and success rates, to implement three critical techniques: assault tactics, combined arms, and elastic defense in depth (6).

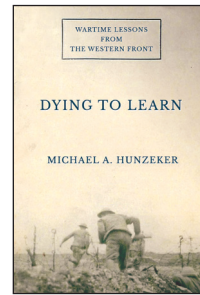
Assessment, Command, and Training (ACT) Theory assesses an organizational structure's systematic impact on wartime learning; the Army functions as a huge search engine (7–10). This wartime learning requires exploration (“experimentation”), selection, and action (22–24). Three attributes especially concern battlefield effectiveness and doctrinal learning: 1) independent, prestigious, and rigorous doctrinal assessment mechanism; 2) moderate delegation of command practices; 3) and centralized control over training (26–27).

Chapter 2 features a succinct, sweeping assessment of what happened on the Western Front—and why. This chapter debunks a decades-old narrative and demonstrates great synthesis, especially among the concerted analyses begun before and during the centenary. This synthesis mentions numerous external impacts on the learning abilities of armies. The Western Front was a deadly confluence of firepower, troop density, and strategic (operational) vice tactical mobility.

ACT Theory interprets how the British, French, and Germans attempted to master assault tactics, combined arms, and elastic defense (45–46). The first three chapters often showcase the thesis that the Germans were the fastest, most effective learners (7, 45).

The depth and breadth reflect Hunzeker's research in primary sources and the most recent, comprehensive historiography. While well-documented in endnotes, the lack of a bibliography makes it frustrating to search for cited sources later.

The book wanders in one aspect. The introduction's consideration of the US Marine Corps in Iraq and claims of a Marine Corps bottom-



up initiative and top-down intellectual framework for the 2006 publication of Counterinsurgency Operations, Army Field Manual 3-24, is a bit of hyperbole (1–2). The conclusion then adds brief but distracting and, at times, too shallow case studies of the US Army in Vietnam and Iraq to apply ACT Theory to more modern conflicts (176–86). For example, the showcase of Combat Developments Command as an assessment mechanism for the Vietnam War is misleading (179–80). The Command had no real impact on troop unit developments. While it did develop the new air assault doctrine, it was otherwise focused on futures. The Army then abolished that Command in 1973.

The major challenge with *Dying to Learn* is the ACT Theory itself. The three key attributes and three critical techniques are stand-alone requirements, central to the book's thesis, and successful prerequisites to deem an army learned well and in a timely manner. The ACT Theory resembles a decision support matrix. What if staff omitted key criteria or weighted the wrong criteria? Here, that latter criterion is centralized training. Moreover, the conclusion makes no fewer than eight claims of successful prediction (170–72, 185, 189).

Defeat alone may not serve as *prima facie* evidence of unsound German learning. That defeat yet begs the question: why? Tactical expertise cannot compensate for operational and strategic shortcomings, but tactical skill may fail to deliver operational success. How then were the Germans the fastest, most effective learners?

The ACT Theory thus contains elements of excessive admiration of German storm-troop tactics, somewhat akin to later obsessions with the success of German blitzkrieg. Furthermore, external factors alone do not explain German defeat. The Imperial German Armies on the Western Front lost tactically, besides operationally and strategically. The ACT Theory also does not account for individual or collective morale and resiliency. Comparative analysis should address the progressive deterioration in German morale from 1916 to the end of the war. The answers were not just Allied technological solutions versus German people solutions. Technology could not triumph alone.

That said, *Dying to Learn* is a valuable and impressive academic and practitioner's analysis. It is not easy reading. The author demonstrates the value of institutional, organizational, and doctrinal study, however unexciting the topics are for many. The specialist will make frequent consultation of the endnotes.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021 245 pages \$39.95

Keywords: ACT Theory, Marine Corps, Vietnam, World War I, Britain, France, Germany

TERRORISM

Terror in Transition: Leadership and Succession in Terrorist Organizations

by Tricia L. Bacon and Elizabeth Grimm

Reviewed by Dr. Kamal A. Beyoghlou, adjunct professor of international security
and cross-cultural communication, Elliott School of International Affairs,
George Washington University

This book is part of Columbia University's Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare Series, whose editor, Bruce Hoffman, is a distinguished and seasoned scholar on domestic and international terrorism. *Terror in Transition* addresses how and why religious-based terror groups and organizations survive following the deaths of their founders. The basic assumption is that the way a given successor "positions himself vis-à-vis the founder" is key (3). The authors set the stage for what follows, identifying five types of successors: the caretaker—a temporary torchbearer for a passing founder; the signaler—a legacy message changer; the fixer—a different direction tactician and operational leader; the visionary—a strategic thinker of new ends, ways, and means; and the figurehead—a decentralized figure whose power is diffuse among many. The same section provides operational definitions of leadership, organizations, and succession within the realm of terrorist groups. This book contributes to the existing literature on terrorist groups by addressing the rarely discussed issue of succession, thereby serving as a useful handbook for counterterrorism and anti-terrorism tactics and operations and adding to the ongoing debate on whether the terrorism scourge should be contained and managed or defeated. This book's implicit value lies in the fact that terrorism was, is, and remains an evolutionary phenomenon requiring constant vigilance.



Chapter 1 provides a framework for analyzing the role of organizational and structural leadership in terms of its centrality and shortcomings. Chapter 2 defines the relationships between founders of terror groups and their followers and highlights the significance and implications of transition and continuity. Chapters 3–6 highlight similarities and differences between selectively identified groups, including the Ku Klux Klan; Egyptian Islamic Jihad; al-Qaeda in Iraq and its successor, the Islamic State of Iraq; and al-Shabab of Somalia. Chapter 7, "Pathways and Possibilities,"

focuses on lessons learned. The conclusion is only a summary of the main points raised in previous chapters, with one short section highlighting limitations of the book and suggestions for future research followed by a short narrative section ironically labeled “Conclusion.” The book culminates in two appendices listing religious terrorist groups, their founders, and successor types, most of which are not directly connected to the case studies.

Because the book’s focus is on religious-based terrorist groups, the chapter about the Ku Klux Klan seems to be out of place, given the racist nature of this domestic American group. While the book revolves around succession of terrorist groups and organizations, it falls short of capturing one thread that runs through all the cases studies.

Important structural changes to al-Qaeda’s *modus operandi* occurred in al-Qaeda following effective counterterrorism measures by the United States and its allies since September 11, 2001, and again following the death of its founder, Osama bin Laden, in 2011. As a result, al-Qaeda has all but abandoned its originally centralized vertical hierarchical successor structures—top-down quasi-military leadership styles—in favor of more horizontally loose and more diffused decentralized forms of leadership styles, stand-alone functional cells, and more egalitarian leadership structures. The latter, however, remains highly committed to bin Laden’s original and “eternal” message. The book also needs a more serious focus on the linkage between successors and their other salient ideological roots (beyond religion), namely, ethnic and national domestic spillover rivalries that, today, also feature strongly in personality and leadership styles and motivations of would-be successors. This book is a bit fragmented; no argument ties all the case studies together. It tells readers about important insights but leaves them wondering why understanding terrorism succession is important. The two appendices do not add value to the recurring themes of the book. Two final questions come to mind: Does it matter if counterterrorism and anti-terrorism practitioners eliminate the founders of terrorism? What are the implications of targeting these founders? The book does lay down, however, an important conceptual and knowledge-based foundation, which will undoubtedly be built on for years to come.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2022 • 300 pages • \$32.00

Keywords: terrorism, leadership, al-Qaeda, counterterrorism, al-Shahab, Islamic State

The Islamic State in Africa: The Emergence, Evolution, and Future of the Next Jihadist Battlefront

by Jason Warner, Ryan O'Farrell, Héní Nsaibia, and Ryan Cummings

Reviewed by Dr. Heather S. Gregg, professor of irregular warfare, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, senior fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute

The Islamic State's (IS) loss of territorial control over its self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq in 2018, followed by the demise of its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a 2019 US-led military raid, appeared to spell the end of one of the bloodiest and most successful transnational terrorist enterprises in history. Jason Warner's extensive look at the Islamic State's persisting presence on the African continent in his book, *The Islamic State in Africa*, however, suggests governments and coalitions focused on defeating the Islamic State should refrain from declaring victory. Warner and his colleagues investigate a puzzling development in Africa: various groups pledging their allegiance to the Islamic State and transforming into either *wilayat* ("provinces") or affiliates, despite the Islamic State's major defeats.



To research why African affiliates continue to use the Islamic State brand, the authors look across nine groups pledged to the Islamic State and investigate them in three periods: pre-*bayah* ("oath of allegiance"); *bayah*; and post-*bayah*, up to al-Baghdadi's death. Within the pre-*bayah* period, the authors consider the effects of what they call the "democratization of jihad," referring to the choices made available by the rise of the Islamic State in Africa for groups to affiliate with either the Islamic State or al-Qaeda or to go it alone (10). They ask the critical question of what each group stood to gain by pledging allegiance to the Islamic State and consider material resources (such as money), legitimacy, and reputational gains. Within the *bayah* period, they consider "affiliate utility validation," which includes: the process by which "IS Central" (the leadership in Iraq and Syria) granted full *wilaya* status to pledging affiliates; how this process changed over time; and how IS Central and the specific group profited from their relationship (10). Within the post-*bayah* period, the authors examine the complex relationship between IS Central and provinces and affiliates in Africa—what they call "sovereign subordinates," or somewhat autonomous groups connected to IS Central—and what these groups stood to gain from that relationship as IS Central declined (10).

To populate this complex research design, the authors draw from an array of qualitative and quantitative sources, including: Islamic State videos and

propaganda; interviews with individuals and government officials fighting IS affiliates in Africa; media sources; and subject matter experts.

The authors conclude African groups persist in using the IS brand because “benefits [continue] to come to African affiliates mostly through branding, and not through material transfers” (10). They project, broadly speaking, IS-affiliated groups will persist in Africa: “From our perspective, there is little reason to believe that the phenomenon of local insurgencies in Africa affiliating themselves with the Islamic State will not continue” (138). They do not expect the number of *wilayat* to grow, however, nor do they predict IS Central will relocate to Africa, given the complexity of moving people and materiel, rather, “the Islamic State’s core leadership is very much likely to remain a primarily Iraqi organization” (138). Despite this assessment, the social and political instability plaguing much of Africa—and the insurgent groups this unrest produces—may create an opportunity for the Islamic State, or at least its ideology, to maintain its relevance and presence on the continent.

These significant findings for counterterrorism operations and strategy suggest efforts to attack terrorist financing or use “leadership decapitation”—that is, to kill or capture key leaders—may not undermine transnational terrorism’s appeal if these efforts do not damage the enterprise’s brand. African *wilayat* and affiliates benefit from the Islamic State’s legitimacy and reputational aspects despite considerable material and operational degradation. Counterterrorism strategy should focus on undermining nonmaterial motivations for groups joining transnational terrorist movements, such as reputational gains and legitimacy. Somewhat ironically, kinetic counterterrorism operations aimed at attacking transnational terrorist enterprises may feed nonmaterial motives by demonstrating these groups require Western countries’ and coalitions’ attention to counter.

This book offers an impressive, sweeping look at the rise of the Islamic State on the African continent. Although somewhat complicated, Warner and his colleagues’ imposition of an analytical framework allows for comparison across groups—a difficult task given the specific timelines and regional factors within each *wilaya* and affiliate. The book’s inclusion of lesser-studied groups—especially in Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of the Congo—lend particular value. The use of regional experts to draft specific chapters and the authors’ extensive research across multiple types of sources make *The Islamic State of Africa* the go-to book for anyone wishing to understand transnational terrorism in Africa in general and the Islamic State’s presence on the continent in particular.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2022 • 288 pages • \$45.00

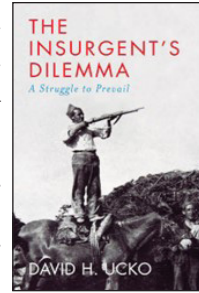
Keywords: Islamic State, Africa, terrorism, counterterrorism, al-Qaeda

The Insurgent's Dilemma: A Struggle to Prevail

by David H. Ucko

Reviewed by Dr. John P. Sullivan, instructor, Safe Communities Institute,
University of Southern California

Insurgency presents a complex, persistent facet of conflict and competition for governance. Although largely thought of as a military problem, certain realities make insurgency a whole-of-society issue. In *The Insurgent's Dilemma*, David H. Ucko takes a deep dive into the nature and utility of contemporary terrorism.



Ucko convincingly argues that today's insurgents rarely win. He first quotes Henry Kissinger's post-Vietnam comments, "[t]he guerilla wins if he does not lose" and "[t]he conventional army loses if it does not win" (1). From those observations to the present day, changes in global geopolitical conditions, insurgency, and its constant companion, terrorism, have led to continued, nondecisive struggles encompassing the state and insurgents' inability to win and presenting the dilemma that drives insurgent adaptation. Violence remains part of the toolkit, but with new, hybrid uses, which Ucko presents (sometimes interactively) as adaptive strategic strategies exacerbating contemporary uprisings: *localized*, *infiltrative*, and *ideational insurgencies* (9).

Ucko sets the stage by recounting the traditional logic of insurgency and illuminates the influence of Mao Tse-tung, Che Guevara, and the Vietnamese trio of Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Truong Chinh. He then discusses these seminal influences in light of later challenges posed—and faced—by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Islamic State.

Ucko goes on to describe localized insurgencies where criminals and other state challengers create para-states at the peripheries of states. Gangs such as the Comando Vermelho in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, the Primeiro Comando da Capital in São Paulo, MS-13 in El Salvador, or Moqtada al-Sadr's Jaish al-Mahdi Shia militia in Baghdad challenge state solvency by waging criminal insurgencies. These insurgents moderate violence by localizing conflict and creating an equilibrium of stratified sovereignty in both urban and rural spaces.

Chapter 4 discusses *state infiltration*, also known as *infiltrative insurgency*, as a means of limiting state reactions. The rise of the Cocaleros in Bolivia, culminating in the regime of Evo Morales in Bolivia, exemplifies this method. Ucko examines the use of legal means, such as Adolf Hitler's strategy of seizing power in Germany, or contemporary examples of coopting political movements or front organizations by militias, for example, the Provisional Irish Republic

Army and Sinn Féin in Ireland, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the Unión Patriótica in Colombia, or the Muttahida Qaumi Movement in Pakistan. Chapter 5 looks at ideational insurgency and its reliance on the “Digital Counter-State.” The digital realm presents insurgents a venue to wage influence operations cloaked in relative obscurity and plausible deniability as they shape their preferred reality of disinformation and misinformation. *Leaderless resistance* results when direct violent action or *propaganda of the deed* combines with propaganda to shift primary loyalties and political fortunes. In the January 6 US Capitol attack, support for the then President Donald J. Trump’s efforts to invalidate the 2020 presidential election involved sedition by Oathkeepers and Proud Boys militias (130–32). The calls for stochastic terrorism merged with conspiracy theories, such as QAnon, presenting venues for division and denying reality in preference for radical ideology.

After defining the problem, Ucko presents challenges and potential ways to manage these insurgent approaches. First, he explores ways to counter and manage localized insurgencies through traditional means such as “Clear, Hold, Build,” via cases studies of Sri Lanka’s effective eradication of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam insurgency and Colombia’s pacification of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Ucko details both rural and urban dimensions of this struggle, with an emphasis on pacifying gangs and mitigating crime wars in El Salvador, Haiti, and Brazil.

In chapter 7, Ucko addresses challenges of “Countering Infiltrative Insurgency,” including a notable and relevant treatment of Karl Popper’s 1945 discussion of “the paradox of tolerance” regarding the Weimar Republic (195). Then, as now, anticipatory defenses are needed (but remain elusive).

“Dueling Narratives” is the theme of chapter 8. Ucko explores countering and disrupting ideational insurgency through law enforcement and deplatforming or suppressing seditious, false, or hateful content. When considering the role of preventing and countering violent extremism, the challenges are clearly complex and contentious.

Ucko closes by indicating insurgency has evolved and remains a salient challenge. As always, counterinsurgency demands a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, with perceived legitimacy critical to a successful outcome. This text contributes to the understanding of contemporary terrorism and would form an essential component of any curriculum for understanding both insurgency and counterinsurgency.

London: Hurst Publishers, 2022 • 328 pages • \$39.95

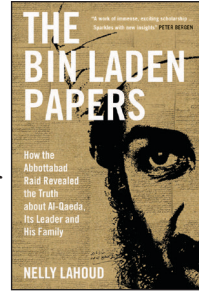
Keywords: violence, insurgency, counterinsurgency, Sinn Féin, Bolivia

The Bin Laden Papers: How the Abbottabad Raid Revealed the Truth about Al-Qaeda, Its Leader and His Family

by Nelly Lahoud

Reviewed by Dr. John A. Nagl, professor of warfighting studies, US Army War College.

The attacks on Washington and New York by al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, may be the most effective military operation in history when measured by return on investment. For the cost of several hundred thousand dollars and the lives of 19 operatives, the terror group inflicted billions of dollars of damage on what it viewed as “the far enemy” while killing nearly 3,000 innocents in the costliest attack on US soil in American history.



The American response was infinitely more expensive than the attack that engendered it. America invaded Afghanistan, toppling the Taliban that sheltered al-Qaeda’s leaders, and then (entirely unnecessarily) invaded Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. The cost of the wars that followed 9/11 will likely exceed \$5 trillion, and the reverberations they set in motion in the Middle East show no signs of ending in our lifetimes.

About a decade after 9-11, Navy SEALs invaded bin Laden’s hideout near Abbottabad, Pakistan, killing him and capturing 500,000 documents that provided actionable intelligence leading to the deaths of other al-Qaeda operatives. The majority have now been declassified, and student of Islamic terrorism Nelly Lahoud has read them in their original language—Arabic.

The revelations are staggering, including a much closer relationship than had been suspected between bin Laden and Mullah Omar, the Taliban’s leader and provider of safe haven to al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. The missive suggests that in return for bin Laden’s role in assassinating Afghan resistance leader Ahmad Shah Masood on September 9, 2001, Omar refused to hand bin Laden over to the United States. Al-Qaeda expected a few American cruise missile strikes as a reprisal for the 9/11 attacks, but Mullah Omar did not believe an American invasion was in the offing. When it came, many al-Qaeda leaders fled to Iran. Others, including bin Laden, crossed the border into Pakistan.

Despite the safe harbor bin Laden enjoyed ensconced in a safe house in Abbottabad, not far from Pakistan’s version of West Point, al-Qaeda was decimated by Pakistan’s security services: “around 600 brothers, perhaps even more, were captured” wrote Khaled al-Habib, military commander of al-Qaeda, in 2004. (43) Bin Laden was surprised by the ferocity of Pakistan’s response and by its decision to allow the United States to conduct drone attacks that further dismantled al-Qaeda inside Pakistan.

Pakistan's efforts contributed to what is perhaps the most stunning insight Lahoud draws from the papers: that al-Qaeda was rendered combat ineffective in the wake of the American attacks on Afghanistan in 2001. The documents in *The Bin Laden Papers* demonstrate that al-Qaeda could not conduct international terror attacks against the United States after September 11, 2001, except the attacks in Mombasa, Kenya, in November 2002 that had been set in motion prior to its assault on America. The bombings in Madrid in 2004 and in London the following year, though attributed to al-Qaeda, were conducted by local terrorists who claimed the al-Qaeda banner to enhance their stature.

This is the bombshell revelation of Lahoud's work, and one that bears careful study for all students of the past two decades of war. Al-Qaeda, which had demonstrated the ability to conduct international terror attacks before September 11 with its bombings of the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya in 1998 and the USS *Cole* in Yemen two years later, lost its international reach after being evicted from Afghanistan in late 2001. Its brand name benefited from the September 11 attacks and the ensuing appeal of the jihadi cause spawned affiliates in Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and a half dozen countries in Africa. Al-Qaeda central, led by bin Laden until his death in 2011, had no operational influence on these fighters, however, and often struggled with them over their decision to fight the "near enemy" rather than aim at the United States.

Reading *The Bin Laden Papers* makes it difficult not to conclude that the war on terrorism was largely misguided and that the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 gave new life to an international jihadi movement that was already on the ropes—if not on the mat. The contribution Lahoud's work makes to understanding our enemy is invaluable, particularly if it helps prevent a future American overreaction that results in thousands of deaths and trillions of dollars misspent in pursuit of an enemy who has already been defeated.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. • 362 pages • \$28.00

Keywords: USS *Cole*, Tanzania, bin Laden, Somalia, Yemen

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US Army War College

The US Army War College educates and develops leaders for service at the strategic level while advancing knowledge in the global application of Landpower.

The purpose of the US Army War College is to produce graduates who are skilled critical thinkers and complex problem solvers in the global application of Landpower. Concurrently, it is our duty to the Army to act as a "think factory" for commanders and civilian leaders at the strategic level worldwide and routinely engage in discourse and debate on the role of ground forces in achieving national security objectives.



The School of Strategic Landpower provides support to the US Army War College's purpose, mission, vision, and the academic teaching departments through the initiation, coordination, and management of academic-related policy, plans, programs, and procedures, with emphasis on curriculum development, execution, and evaluation; planning and execution of independent and/or interdepartmental academic programs; student and faculty development; and performance of academic-related functions as may be directed by the commandant.



The US Army Heritage and Education Center engages, inspires, and informs the Army, the American people, and global partners with a unique and enduring source of knowledge and thought.



The Center for Strategic Leadership provides strategic education, ideas, doctrine, and capabilities to the Army, the Joint Force, and the nation. The Army, Joint Force, and national partners recognize the Center for Strategic Leadership as a strategic laboratory that generates and cultivates strategic thought, tests strategic theories, sustains strategic doctrine, educates strategic leaders, and supports strategic decision making.



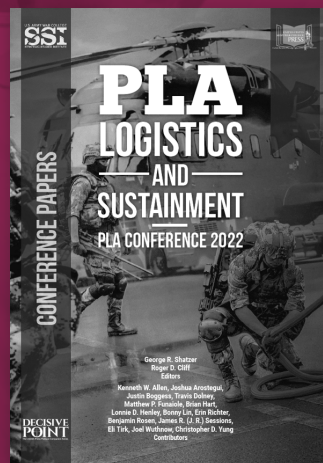
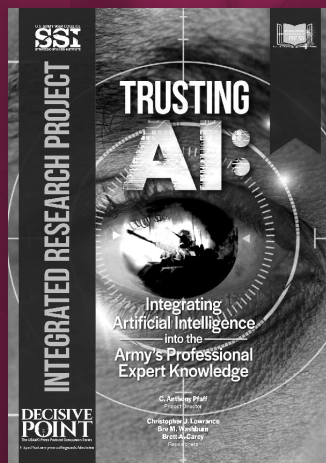
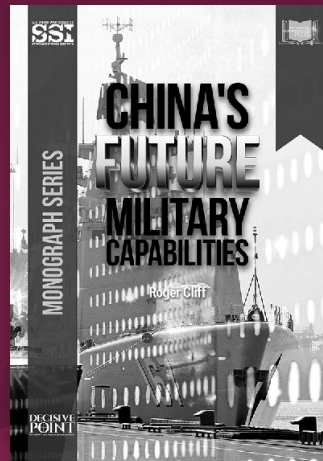
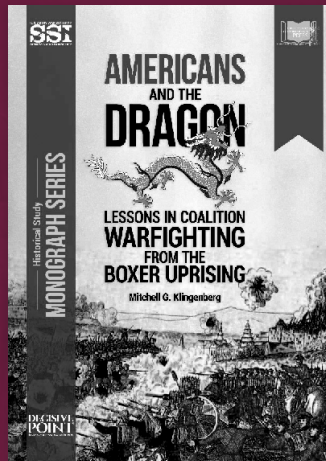
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