

# War as an Instrument of Policy

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Past, Present,  
and Future

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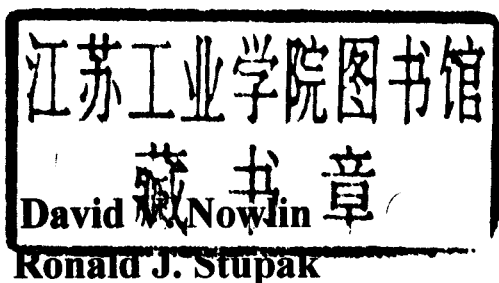
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*Past, Present, and Future*

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## **Abbreviations**

<b>AOR</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>
<b>ANC</b>	<b>African National Congress</b>
<b>ARCENT</b>	<b>Army Component Commander, Central Command</b>
<b>ASUW</b>	<b>Antisurface Warfare</b>
<b>CENTCOM</b>	<b>Central Command</b>
<b>CIA</b>	<b>Central Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>CINC</b>	<b>Commander in Chief</b>
<b>CINCCENT</b>	<b>Commander in Chief, Central Command</b>
<b>CJCS</b>	<b>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff</b>
<b>COIN</b>	<b>Counterinsurgency</b>
<b>CRAF</b>	<b>Civil Reserve Air Fleet</b>
<b>CSI</b>	<b>Chief of Staff, Intelligence</b>
<b>FAPLA</b>	<b>Popular Forces for the Liberation of Angola (Military wing of the MPLA)</b>
<b>FNLA</b>	<b>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola)</b>
<b>GOC</b>	<b>General Officer Commanding</b>
<b>ICAF</b>	<b>Industrial College of the Armed Forces</b>
<b>JCS</b>	<b>Joint Chiefs of Staff</b>
<b>JFACC</b>	<b>Joint Force Air Component Commander</b>
<b>KTO</b>	<b>Kuwaiti Theater of Operations</b>
<b>LOC</b>	<b>Line of Communications</b>

<b>MCM</b>	<b>Mine Countermeasures</b>
<b>MEF</b>	<b>Marine Expeditionary Force</b>
<b>MK</b>	<b>Umkhonto we Sizwe (armed wing of the ANC)</b>
<b>MPLA</b>	<b>Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)</b>
<b>NBC</b>	<b>Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical</b>
<b>NCA</b>	<b>National Command Authority</b>
<b>NDU</b>	<b>National Defense University</b>
<b>NIS</b>	<b>National Intelligence Service</b>
<b>NP</b>	<b>National Party</b>
<b>NSC</b>	<b>National Security College</b>
<b>NWC</b>	<b>National War College</b>
<b>OAU</b>	<b>Organization of African Unity</b>
<b>OI</b>	<b>Operations Instruction</b>
<b>PA</b>	<b>Public Administration</b>
<b>PLAN</b>	<b>People's Liberation Army of Namibia</b>
<b>PMC</b>	<b>Political Military Council</b>
<b>RGFC</b>	<b>Republican Guard Forces Command</b>
<b>ROE</b>	<b>Rules of Engagement</b>
<b>RSA</b>	<b>Republic of South Africa</b>
<b>SAAF</b>	<b>South African Air Force</b>
<b>SAC</b>	<b>Strategic Air Command</b>

<b>SACP</b>	<b>South African Communist Party</b>
<b>SADF</b>	<b>South African Defence Force</b>
<b>SAI</b>	<b>South African Infantry</b>
<b>SAM</b>	<b>Surface to Air Missile</b>
<b>SAP</b>	<b>South African Police</b>
<b>SSC</b>	<b>State Security Council</b>
<b>SWA</b>	<b>South West Africa</b>
<b>SWAPO</b>	<b>South West Africa People's Organization</b>
<b>UNITA</b>	<b>União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)</b>
<b>UNSC</b>	<b>United Nations Security Council</b>

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## Foreword

*War as an Instrument of Policy: Past, Present, and Future* is a well-considered attempt to provide a rational, structured approach to the question of whether and how to use military power. The authors' thesis is that application of the classic principles of war can not only lead to success on the battlefield, but also provide the basis for good decision making at the highest levels of government where the military and civilian leaders come together. They do this by analyzing the principles of war and applying them to the Angola campaign of 1987 and Operation Desert Storm in 1990.

Principles of war are nothing more than "lessons learned." A problem with any attempt to produce a useful and valid compendium of "lessons learned" is correlation: how similar are the situations; how similar are the tools to be used in dealing with them. The problem is compounded by the human tendency to see things through the lenses of our experience. This is no less true when attempting to assemble the "lessons learned" of war. The wars of today are like and yet unlike the wars of yesterday; certainly, many of the tools of war--weapons, methods of communication, and the like--are different. The classic writers on war, Baron Antoine Jomini and Karl von Clausewitz, were products of the Napoleonic era, having served in Napoleon's army in a number of his most famous campaigns. Another, Captain B.H. Liddell Hart, was a product of WWI, and his extensive writings on all wars were likely to have been influenced by that experience. Given all this, is it still possible to speak of a set of immutable *principles* of war from the past that will serve us well into the future? The authors make a persuasive case that it is not only possible but necessary to do so.

My own acquaintance with the classic principles of war came almost immediately upon my arrival as a cadet at West Point in the summer of 1954, one year after the Korean cease-fire of July 27, 1953. The "Nine

Principles of War" were tenets of faith, to be memorized and put to use. I remember studying the great campaigns of history, from Miltiades's tactics at the Battle of Marathon some 500 years B.C., to the Battle of the Bulge in WWII, with the maps in one hand and the Nine Principles of War in the other. Later, during my year in Vietnam, which began just after the Tet offensive of 1968, I marveled at how consistently those principles had been violated.

What the authors have done in this book is stimulate me to push their ideas even further. Thus what follows is a series of "yes, and's" meant to acknowledge their contribution and cry for extensions.

The first "yes, and" has to do with the "everybody is like us" trap. We tend to view war from the standpoint of a great democracy whose record of warfare for a long time has been defensive or protective rather than offensive or aggressive. All of the democracies tend to negotiate in good faith first (not just present nonnegotiable demands), leaving war as a last, and overwhelmingly avoided, resort. But many nations of the world, the ones we are likely to have the most difficulty with, are not democracies. For nondemocratic nations, war is less an extension of "national policy by other means" than the ultimate extension of ego. Our forefathers were wise to set up a government of distributed egos rather than allow the accumulation of too much ego in one place. Perhaps we need some subset of the classic war principles, or even a new set of principles, to deal with "Great Ego" wars. Ego tends never to go away, leaving problems of war termination and ensuing "state-of-peace" tensions to fester for a number of administrations, even when we win. When we lose, the opportunity for infinite grief goes up infinitely.

Another "yes, and" has to do with setting *bounds* on the principles. As I see it, each of the principles has a "too little/too much" aspect that deserves some analysis. For example, too little Unity of Command leads to anarchy and chaos. Too much can lead to excessive risk-taking and lack of consideration of alternatives. How does one achieve an optimum balance? How does one know one has found it?

In the modern age, one cannot overlook the double-edged sword of technology. A report written after the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, based upon interviews with Israeli government and military officials, outlined the Israelis' worst deficiencies. Surprisingly (to me, at least), at the top of the list was "not knowing where our own troops were." Second was "not knowing where the enemy was." Technology can fix the first one. At any Eddie Bauer store it is possible to buy a hand-held receiver for \$400 or so, which, by tuning in several Global Positioning Satellites, can result in position location within less than 30 meters. Every soldier (or at least, every squad leader) can have one. It would then be possible for commanders to have the same information in near real time.



But would commanders have the discipline not to indulge the human passion for overcontrol? As noted by the authors, battalion commanders in Vietnam tried to direct battlefield operations from a helicopter; worse, President Johnson tried to direct the Vietnam War from the basement of the White House. Contrast this with the story of the soldiers in the Grenada operation who called in support requests from a phone booth because their radios would not work with those of the other services. The media, of course, seized the opportunity to blast the Defense Department (rightly) for buying communications systems that lacked interoperability. But to me, the story illustrated one of our nation's greatest strengths: the ability and willingness of our troops to use initiative. We do not want to lose this in a wrong-headed effort to perfect unity of command. Too much information (Martin Van Creveld calls this "information pathology"<sup>1</sup>) leads to too much control. Perhaps the ideal is what Tom Peters calls "loose-tight" management.

Another "yes, and" would entail a fuller treatment of the principle of mass, particularly as regards logistics. A "mass" of troops without the resources to support them is almost useless. A delicious quote of unknown origin goes as follows (paraphrased): "If you study the great military campaigns of history, you will find that the losers studied tactics; the winners studied logistics." Napoleon and Hitler outran their supply lines with devastating results. The Normandy invasion was not a triumph of tactics so much as it was a triumph of logistical support. The real heroes of Normandy, it could be argued, were the builders of the assault craft, gliders, portable bridges, nonperishable foodstuffs, parachutes large enough to carry trucks and jeeps, the radios that allowed people to coordinate their efforts in unfamiliar terrain, the training materials, and all the other elements that contributed so mightily to the effort. As recorded by Lynn Montross, "the Allies were able to land 326,547 men in the first six days, in addition to 54,186 vehicles and 104,428 tons of stores."<sup>2</sup>

We have been lucky or prescient to have had so much time to prepare for several of our major war efforts. We may have been spoiled. In WWI, although the first American units arrived in France in late 1917, they were not committed in force for nearly six months. When committed, they were well trained, equipped, and ready to go. Eisenhower was appointed to command the Overlord operation (Normandy invasion) in January 1943, five months before the invasion, and preparations had begun before that. As the authors report, in Desert Storm, the Iraqis completed the occupation of Kuwait in the 36 hours

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<sup>1</sup> Van Creveld, Martin, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 249.

<sup>2</sup> Montross, Lynn, *War through the Ages* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Revised and Enlarged Third Edition, 1960), 927.

preceding August 3, 1990. The coalition forces, however, did not attack until January 17, 1991, nearly five and one-half months later, after a massive infusion of troops and supplies and time to spend learning how to operate in the desert environment.

In Korea, however, the story was different. When the North Korean Army attacked the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army on June 25, 1950, "the best damn army outside the United States" had no tanks, no medium artillery, no 4.2-inch mortars, no recoilless rifles. They had no spare parts for their transport. They had not even one combat aircraft.<sup>3</sup> President Truman immediately dispatched two divisions from Japan. Because of the efficiency of the American drawdown after WWII, however, the finest fighting force the world had ever seen was down to only ten divisions and nine regimental combat teams, all of which were at reduced strength, none of which having its proper wartime quota of weapons.<sup>4</sup> Within seven weeks, the original divisions plus other UN reinforcements had been pushed into a small perimeter around the port of Pusan, where a gallant defense finally allowed the "Arsenal of Democracy" to come to the rescue. It was close, very close.

This brings me to the final point in my list of worthy ideas to be pushed further. More study is needed to determine a set of principles to be followed in the event the classic principles *cannot* be followed. Clearly, in the modern world, an ideal Unity of Command may not be achievable. Could a Desert Storm-type coalition be assembled again? How should war be conducted when the best one can do is a hodgepodge of command? Should war even be considered without it? Are certain combinations of principles powerful enough to offset the inability to observe others? The principle of "security" was violated in Vietnam, but that was partly because no one was sure who or where the enemy was. Sometimes it is impossible to achieve surprise. Perhaps achieving the "offensive" is impractical, as in the Lebanon situation. But we live in a nasty world, and we need to take action sometimes when all the choices are terrible. Perhaps treatment of the principles of war along these lines would give us some fresh ideas for how to cope with it better.

The authors have written an excellent treatise that makes a worthy contribution to the field of public endeavor. Their creative blend of the principles of war with tenets of public administration provides an innovative approach to decision making along, as they put it, the "seam" of civilian/military discourse and action. I would certainly

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<sup>3</sup> Fehrenbach, T.R., *This Kind of War* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 17. The internal quote is by Brig. Gen. William L. Roberts from a *Time* magazine article.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

recommend this book to the military war colleges. When I attended the Air War College in 1973-74, I complained that we discussed "war" very little and "air" even less. The big thing then was "management." This book would have been a valuable addition to the curriculum. I would also recommend it to the administrators, both career and politically appointed, of the Department of Defense. The holistic view taken in the book would give them a better perspective on their real jobs. Finally, I would recommend it to the students and faculty of the Defense Systems Management College (of which I was once Commandant). Those in charge of the procurement of weapons systems should have a better understanding of their uses and limitations.

Do I really need to quote George Santayana on the lessons of history?

Charles P. Cabell, Jr., DPA  
Brig. Gen. USAF, (Ret.)

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## Preface

As abhorrent as it may be, warfare has routinely been chosen as a preferred method of dealing with discord among states. The use of military force as an instrument of foreign policy, however, introduces a complex set of issues into the decision-making process of a nation's executive leadership. This book examines this decision-making process, and the relationship between civilian and military decision makers in particular, from both an academic and functional perspective using two case studies – the United States in the Persian Gulf War and South Africa in the Angolan War – to form a structural framework for the inquiry.

The inquiry itself focuses on the disciplines of decision-making theory, executive and military leadership, national security processes, and military strategy and doctrine. It asks the question: How can the principles of war be transposed from framing the decision-making process on or near the battlefield to being used as an effective approach to decision making at the highest levels of government during a crisis situation? In exploring the answer, it suggests ways to facilitate and improve the decision-making process.

In fact, research conducted using the Gulf and Angolan Wars to evaluate the practical application of the principles of war indicates that there is a positive relationship between proper use of the principles and successful results stemming from military action. If the principles of war are to be used as a design for decision making, however, judicious employment should be exercised to prevent their use as an inflexible checklist, the study concludes.

But success on the battlefield does not necessarily achieve desired political results. War termination and the ensuing postwar state of peace must be considered concurrently with military concerns when initially responding to a crisis situation. The overall political

objective can easily be overlooked when making critical decisions during the "heat of battle." History is replete with such occurrences.

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- Special recognition and thanks must go to Colonel Jim Toth (USMC, Ret.) who gave us many excellent ideas to pursue in the initial stages of the research.
- A former South African military officer, Brigadier Willem Van de Waals (Ret.), contributed indispensable assistance in the South African case by identifying invaluable sources for research and lending his local expertise for preserving accuracy.
- A special mention must be made about the South African Defence Force. Its assistance in identifying knowledgeable personnel and distributing survey forms was essential to the data collection phase of the effort.
- We are also indebted to all those military personnel and other professionals who gave of their valuable time to fill out the extensive, time-consuming questionnaire. Their candid and thorough answers contributed immeasurably to advancing the database of this inquiry.
- We owe a great debt to all the numerous reviewers and editors who helped to make each draft more readable, integrated, and sophisticated.
- Finally, we wish to sincerely thank our wives, significant others, and confidants for their patience over the two years we were consumed by this endeavor. Without their willingness to

make numerous sacrifices throughout the exercise, this would never have come to fruition.

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## Introduction

On 5 August 1987, a South African Defence Force (SADF) military convoy located in South West Africa (now Namibia) crossed over the border into Angola. This was one of many military incursions into Angola that had been initiated by the South African government over the previous 13 years, with the purpose of influencing Angolan political and military affairs in a manner favorable to South African internal and strategic interests.

Three years later and a continent away, on 2 August 1990, Iraqi military forces invaded the oil-rich country of Kuwait and threatened to do the same to the strategically important kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The United States and its allies responded immediately by first limiting the Iraqi offensive through the use of political and economic actions in coordination with defensive military operations, and then, when political policy options failed, liberating Kuwait through the use of offensive military force.

Both the United States and the South African governments felt a need to resort to military force to defend and/or advance national interests after more traditional political endeavors had, from their perspective, failed. In the United States' case, the requirement to employ military force was apparent. In the South African case, the need to mobilize the SADF was more ambiguous.

While nations have historically used war to further their objectives, the application of military force as an instrument of policy has often been misunderstood. The United States in particular has grappled with this issue since the end of World War II. No longer is the use of armed force as an instrument of policy as cut-and-dry as when national survival was at stake. Under the threat of nuclear annihilation, wars have become more limited in nature while the pursuit of national objectives and goals has become more complex. This drive for



national interests now, more than ever before, impacts other nations within the so-called "global village."

One further consideration of using force is the consequence resulting from military operations. Should the decision be made to declare war or use force short of war to advance or defend national interests, a determination must be made on how to conduct operations so as to terminate the conflict in terms most favorable to the country's goals and well-being. In the end, an understanding of conflict termination is just as important as how a nation prosecutes armed intervention in the first place.

### **Coming Together at the Seam**

One of the most difficult decisions a President may face during his term in office is whether or not to use military force to further the interests of the United States. Although the country has had only five declared wars in its 200-year history, the decision to use, or threaten the use of, military force has been more extensive than one might believe. A study conducted by Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan in 1975 revealed that the President was called upon to employ armed forces for political purposes 215 times between 1946 and 1975.<sup>1</sup>

A President's decision to use military force is not a simple yes/no decision. It is fraught with considerations concerning the proper employment of force and the potential consequences of doing so. For instance, the President has to consider the political counsel of his advisors along with the expectations of various interest groups, including public opinion. He also must seek the advice of his primary military advisor, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS); something he may be uncomfortable with or unwilling to do. How much should he trust in his own judgment, and how much should he rely on the military establishment to lead a U.S. response in redressing a critical foreign policy issue?

A seam forms at an important juncture in the decision-making process of our federal government. It is a seam where two cultures—military and civilian—come together in the hierarchy of the executive branch, often harmoniously, but sometimes contentiously. This seam forms a pivotal point where critical decisions must be made—whether or not to use military force, the establishment of goals and objectives,

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<sup>1</sup>Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force Without War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1978), 16.