James M. Dubik, Ph.D

THE FUTURE OF WAR AND AMERICA'S STRATEGIC CAPACITY

ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR

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MILITARY LEARNING AND THE FUTURE OF WAR SERIES

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

James M. Dubik is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War (ISW). Jim is a husband, father, grandfather; uncle, son, and brother; leader; innovator; author; retired army general with over 37 years of active service; and a former infantryman, paratrooper, and ranger. He earned a Ph.D. in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Arts and Science from the US Army Command and General Staff College. He was a professor at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic Studies. He wrote *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory*. He is also the co-author, with General Gordon Sullivan, of Envisioning Future Warfare. He has written for Army magazine and published over 200 essays, articles, monographs, op-eds, chapters in books, and forwards to books. He has been quoted in numerous print and online media outlets. Jim is a frequent lecturer, panel member, and media analyst on national security issues. He is also President and CEO of Dubik Associates, an international consulting firm with a focus on leader development, organizational change, and national strategic and intelligence issues. He is a Board Member and Trustee of the Leadership Roundtable, Senior Fellow at the Institute of Land Warfare; member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the National Security Advisory Council, US Global Leadership Coalition; 2012-2013 General Omar N. Bradley Chair in Strategic Leadership cosponsored by the Army War College, Dickinson College, and Penn State Law School; recipient of the 2017 Thomas B. Hagan Dignitas Award. He is a member of the Army Ranger Hall of Fame as well as a distinguished member of the US Army 75th Ranger Regiment. Jim was raised in Erie, PA and now lives in Alexandria, Virginia with his wife, Sharon.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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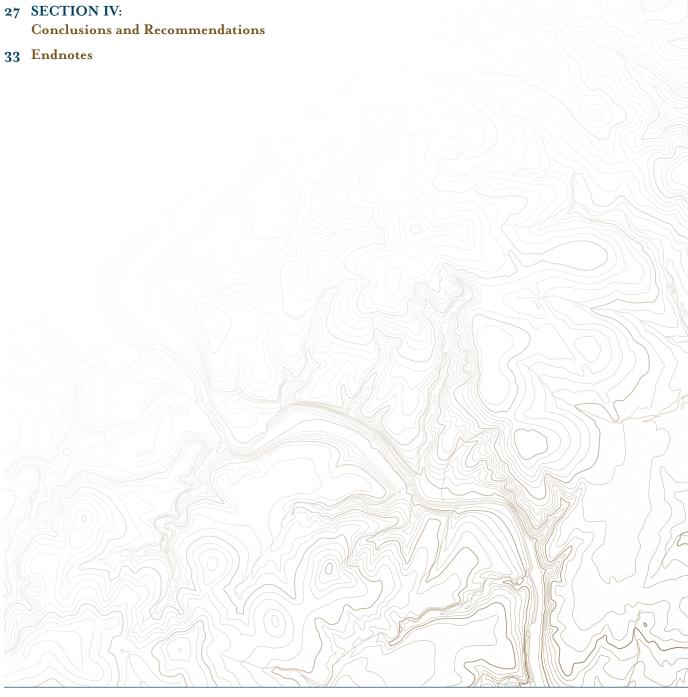
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Executive Summary

The world is not in an era of change; it is in the midst of a change of era, affecting almost every aspect of individual and communal life.[1] The amount and velocity of change will continue to increase and thus exacerbate the already significant stress on the leaders and institutions within nations as well as those associated with the global security environment. The probability of conflict—war in all its forms—is rising. Correspondingly, the importance of thinking and acting at the strategic level is rising as well.

No single organization in the US National Security apparatus is charged with attending to the strategic-level lessons the United States should be learning. The study of tactics and individual battles; the forces, weaponry, and equipment used to fight; and how battles are strung together into campaigns—are all necessary and important elements concerning the future of war. The US military services, the Joint Staff, Geographic Combatant Commanders, and the US defense industries are hard at work trying to figure out future warfighting requirements: new weapons and equipment, new fighting methods, new-leader development and training requirements, new capabilities, and new organizations. The results of this work at the tactical and operational levels of war will affect success at the war-fighting level. This paper does not aim to duplicate this effort. Rather, this paper begins from a different perspective, one that acknowledges that wars must also be waged in addition to being fought.

Waging war requires different skills and capacities. Three core strategic skills are particularly important:

1. Identifying coherent aims or purposes for any use of force, then aligning military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns that increase the probability of achieving those aims;

2. Creating the organizational capacity to translate initial decisions concerning strategies, policies, and campaigns into action, adapting as events unfold to achieve aims and bring the use of force to a successful conclusion;

3. Building and sustaining legitimacy—using force only for legitimate reasons, observing international law in execution, ensuring proper integration of military and civil leadership, and sustaining public support throughout.

Proficiency in these strategic skills increases or decreases the probability of success at the war-waging level. Waging and fighting wars both matter. Any study of the future of war that focuses merely on war-fighting will be necessarily myopic and insufficient. An adequate study must also address war-waging. This paper, therefore, takes up the following question: what should senior US civil and military leaders and US war-waging institutions learn in anticipation of a future already unfolding?

Answering this question begins with explaining that the concept of war has undergone a paradigm shift from a binary to a unitary understanding of war.[2] The old, binary paradigm that separated "war" and "operations other than war" made little sense when US strategists adopted it during the Cold War, and it makes less sense now. US strategists must understand war in all its forms as the unitary phenomenon it is. This conceptual shift has taken place within a larger strategic context. The environment in which

all uses of force and forms of war take place has been changing rapidly and growing more complex every day, and this pace of change and complexity promises only to accelerate in the future.

US senior military and political leaders are facing an ever-increasing volume and velocity of challenges—social-political, economic, diplomatic, financial, and informational—that are resulting from the emerging information age, the Fourth Industrial Revolution. One of the effects of these challenges is exacerbated inequality within nations and among them, an inequality that produces fear, anxiety, and divisiveness that, in turn, increases the probability of strife, conflict, and the use of force.[3] The increased probability of using force in one form or another is also coming from US competitions with China, Russia, and Iran; the United States' unresolved wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and globally against Salafi jihadis; the nuclear-armed, irritating North Korea; the effects of climate change; and the receding trust in US leadership.

The paper goes on to outline how the conceptual shift and environmental trends make executing the three, core war-waging skills in the future even harder than they had been. Then it ends with conclusions and recommendations.

SECTION I:
War As A Unitary Phenomenon[4]

The first step toward preparing for future war is making the paradigm shift from a binary to a unitary understanding of war. International law and convention describe, fairly precisely, the conditions necessary for a state of war to exist. Such precision is necessary for diplomats and lawyers.[5] But as a guide for civil and military strategists, it leads to a false belief that there is a categorical difference between war—meaning conventional combat—and every other form of using force. That "everything else" was sometimes called "military operations other than war," labeled "operations other than war," and more recently "hybrid warfare," or "grey zone operations." Such false distinctions frequently hamper US operations and are obstacles to strategic success. War as a legal construct has a distinct meaning, but an understanding of war as a recurring human phenomenon—using force to achieve the aims of a political community—is a more unitary, than binary, phenomenon. Whether the political community is a state or some "other than state entity" or whether that community is using force below or above the threshold that would justify legal intervention is immaterial. The unitary view of war holds that, from the civilian or military practitioner's standpoint, all uses of force are best understood and approached as war.

War, that is, using force under every circumstance, has three essential commonalities. First, the ultimate purpose of any use of force derives from the strategic policy goals identified by the political entity using force. The sound choice as to the number and type of forces to employ in a given situation—whether military or non-military—is not the result of some sort of random number generator or artificial top line. Force is employed for a purpose; it has an aim. This is war's teleological dimension. Force employment decisions and other actions unrelated to an ultimate policy aim decrease

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the probability of success. Second, all uses of force, whether military or non-military, include tactical, operational, and strategic employment considerations.[6] One use of force differs from another only in the degree, priority, timing, and mix of military and non-military forces. Both military and non-military forces take discrete, individual actions that are aimed to attain very specific, tactical objectives. Those tactical actions, in turn, are (or should be) linked, sequentially or simultaneously, at the operational level. That is, linked into a coherent campaign—or more often a set of military and non-military campaigns—each with its own campaign objectives that together are designed to increase the probability of achieving the political community's ultimate strategic goals. The linkage of these three levels and the mix of military and non-military forces forms war's organizational dimension. Third, achieving policy aims requires proficiency in all three core strategic skills: identifying strategic aims and aligning military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns with those aims; translating initial plans into coherent action and adapting those plans as events unfold, thus bringing the use of force to a successful end; and creating and sustaining legitimacy, domestic and usually foreign—war's functional dimension.[7] War as a recurring human phenomenon is unitary because all uses of force—wars in all its forms—share these common dimensions.

All three commonalities of war are present in Russia's use of force in Crimea and Ukraine, its assistance to the Assad regime, and its multi-year cyber-campaigns against the democracies of Europe. They are also present in China's use of force in the South China Sea and its Belt and Road Initiative; in Iran's use of force in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq; as well as in al Qaeda's actions prior to and after the 9/11 attack. They are present in ISIS's activities

initially in Iraq, then Syria, and now in Afghanistan and globally.

All of these are examples of war understood as a unitary phenomenon. Similarly, cyber-attacks like the extensive attack launched by Russia[8] against multiple US systems, institutions, and agencies revealed in late 2020, as well as those conducted more recently against oil and meat production, do not cross the legal threshold of war, yet are best understood as war in the unitary sense. When US strategists approach these examples as "not war," the result has been less coordinated, and therefore, less effective responses. The same has been true of Russian political disinformation campaigns as well as cyber-attacks emanating from China, Iran, or North Korea. The argument is not that the United States should go to war, in the legal sense, with Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea. Rather, the United States should think and act reflecting the teleological, organizational, and functional dimensions common to all uses of force.

Russia, China, and Iran have long held a unitary concept of war, which creates an asymmetrical advantage for them relative to the United States. US strategic leaders acknowledge the three commonalities when waging "war," but rarely does the United States think and act that way when it comes to using force in circumstances "other than war," The result: *de facto* yielding the strategic initiative to competitors.

US institutions, laws, customs, and norms all reflect the binary approach. This reflection is part of the reason the United States has such a difficult time coordinating military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns. Furthermore, this binary approach to war reduces the United States' preparedness for the future. Current and future conflicts will require success in using force, military and non-military, both below and above the legal threshold. That means that the United States will have to adopt a unitary understanding of the use of force in order to secure its interests in the various competitions already emerging. Adopting a unitary approach to using force, however,

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has been, and remains,[9] a significant and long-standing challenge for US senior civil and military leaders.

Simply put, US leaders define war too narrowly. Americans equate war with fighting and fighting with conventional combat. By this logic, the absence of conventional fighting means the United States is not at war—which is true in the legal sense, but not in the practical sense. US strategists have gone so far as to draw a line around conventional fighting, then label everything else "operations other than war." This kind of understanding of war—still prevalent and influential among today's military and civilian security specialists—is dangerous because it suggests that the approach that the United States takes to increase the probability of success in war differs from approaches taken for "other-than-war" situations. The particulars of any given use of force are important, but any situation in which force is being used to compel the submission of an opponent and attain a specific political purpose share three common characteristics and, therefore, must be understood and approached as war. Unfortunately, thinking in the United States has followed a different path. The United States first adopted a "spectrum of conflict" approach, now called "full-spectrum operations." Some of today's literature separates competition from armed conflict, defined in the legal, binary way. Competition, the argument continues, is not only military, but also could be political, diplomatic, informational, or economic. Such is the proliferation of the mistaken binary fallacy and the muddled cacophony it produces. Clarity of action rarely follows muddled thinking.

At one level, taking a "spectrum of conflict" or "full-spectrum operations" approach makes some sense. Armed humanitarian assistance, peace-enforcement, peace-keeping, peace-support, counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, counter-intervention, hybrid war, irregular war, grey zone operations, war amongst the people, stabilization operations, conventional war, and the many other types of conflict on the spectrum do differ from

one another. Further, the specifics of local and regional geographic, social, political, economic, and security details matter both in understanding the conflict and in structuring approaches that have a reasonable probability of success. The full-spectrum approach hides that all of these uses of force are reflections of the teleological, organizational, and functional dimensions that make using force a unitary phenomenon. All, therefore, reflect war as a unitary phenomenon. The idea of family resemblance is helpful; while each member of a family looks different, they all have resemblances. So too, the various ways to use force to achieve strategic aims look different, but their resemblances—the three common dimensions that identify war as a unitary phenomenon—are also important.

In *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Sir Hew Strachan called this mistake—the separation of war from all other uses of military force—the "binary approach to war." He writes that "one war is more like another than it is like any other human activity, and that is sufficiently true across time for us to identify the nature of war as possessed of enough enduring characteristics to be a common phenomenon." He acknowledges that "those who study war as a practical business" have to "bridge the divide between the nature of war more generally and the specific characteristics of each war in particular." But, he cautions, a binary vision of war has illogical consequences. First, it "treats current operations as exceptional, as deviations from the norm of major war." US political and military leaders set the nation up for failure when they convince themselves that a particular use of force requires less up-front thinking, planning, preparation, or organization because it is "not-war;" or that aims need not be as clear as they would be in "real war;" or that the need to think through the ends-ways-means or the tactical-operational-strategic relationships applies less if a nation is not "at war."[10]

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The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the Information Age encouraged this kind of binary thinking. In the early-to-mid 1990s, some thought (falsely) that the Revolution in Military Affairs would usher in wars whose nature would be substantively different from the past. The United States responded to the 9/11 attacks with just this view in mind: network-centric warfare and air-delivered precision munitions would produce a victory so rapid and decisive that it would obviate the need for much of a ground force. This mindset led many to believe that tactical success would result in strategic success. Twenty years later, the folly of this model should be clear to all.

Certainly, the tools of the information age have changed, are changing, and will continue to change some aspects of how wars are fought and how force is employed. The character of any particular war always reflects the technological, economic, political, and historical conditions of its time. The last 20 years of war have proven, however, that the fundamental nature of war is more enduring, and that war as a unitary phenomenon is part of this nature. "This will be a different kind of war," announced President Bush after the 9/11 attacks. He was right in one sense, but wrong in the critical sense—the nature of war had not changed. It remains the unitary phenomenon it has always been, for the three common dimensions of war are present in all uses of force.

When Clausewitz says that the first task of a statesman or commander is to figure out the kind of war on which they are embarking, he does not mean figure out at which point on the spectrum of conflict this war fits then put a label on it.[11] Rather, he means: look at what one's opponents are trying to achieve, the various ways they are trying to achieve their goals at each level, what they are using as means to achieve those goals, and how much effort they are willing to expend to achieve their aims. This kind of intellectual and analytical work produces an understanding of the kind of war one is

in. Then, Clausewitz cautions: do not try to change that understanding to fit preconceived notions. Here Clausewitz does not use the term "war" as the legal conditions of armed conflict as understood today. Rather, as the human, unitary phenomenon it is.

If US senior political and military leaders followed the unitary logic, it would have been clear that the United States' post 9/11 enemies are waging a global, revolutionary war, and those leaders would not have kept trying to make this conflict something it is not—a set of terrorist actions driven by hate and requiring, therefore, a counter-terrorist approach or presenting merely a law enforcement problem. Recognizing a unitary logic would have helped US leaders understand what China was doing in the South China Sea; what Russia was doing in Estonia and Georgia, then Crimea and Ukraine;[12] and what Iran is doing with Hezbollah and its Quds forces throughout the Middle East and beyond. Finally, following this logic would help US strategists understand that Russian interference in US elections, interrupting US oil and meat delivery systems, meddling in European political affairs, and trying to erode the trans-Atlantic relationships are not anomalous activities separate from their geopolitical aims. These are forms of war, even if they are below the threshold of the legal definition of war.

Strachan describes a second peacetime, "illogical consequence" of the binary approach to war: it can seduce one into believing that "many long-term procurement projects look irrelevant and sometimes irrational."[13] The logic of this seduction goes: the most likely form of war is "___," (fill in the blank with any favored point along the spectrum of conflict below the threshold of conventional war). Therefore, the logic continues, a military or nation needs only the capabilities necessary for that form of war. Of course, this logic is extreme, but one can also see its presence in today's strategic discussions concerning both the size of the US military and its composition.

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What this logic forgets is that war—use of force in any of its varieties—is unitary, not binary. A careful observer can see that Russia employed a large number of conventional forces to set the conditions for their "hybrid" interventions. As Mason Clark observed in "Russian Hybrid Warfare," "the Kremlin adjusts the kinds of forces it commits to hybrid conflicts according to its assessment of the conflict's requirements. The Kremlin does not shy away from sending and using units from its conventional military forces just because it has defined the war as hybrid."[14] They used many of those conventional forces to defeat or intimidate their opponents and keep potential counter-intervening forces at bay.

Furthermore, thinking associated with Strachan's second "illogical consequence" forgets that a strong threshold is among the best ways to keep uses of force below the threshold. One of the reasons that state and non-state communities chose to operate below the legal threshold of war is the fear of losing in a conventional fight. Absent that fear, moving from below to above the threshold may well happen more often. A weak threshold may only encourage miscalculation where competitors decide escalating may be worth the risk. For example, the late 2020 Russian cyber-attack against the United States could be the result of Russian leaders concluding that escalating beyond previous operations in the United States would produce another weak response and therefore be to their strategic advantage. Senior US strategists should remember that a particular use of force may start below the legal threshold of war, but it can escalate, even if none of the conflicting parties really envisioned or desired such escalation. Miscalculation and unintended escalation are likely in today's strategic environment where misinformation is proliferating and where the United States is in multiple competitions with near peers, a hot war with global revolutionaries, and playing brinkmanship with an unstable North Korea.[15] Under these conditions, optimizing the armed forces of a nation toward one variety of war is folly of the highest order.

Understanding the use of force as a unitary rather than a binary phenomenon is especially important now. As Sean McFate says in *The New Rules of War*, "one of our most serious obstacles today is that we do not know what war is, and if we do not understand it, then we cannot win it."[16] US civil and military strategists increase their probability of success when they understand that whenever the United States uses force—military or non-military—to achieve policy aims, it is engaging in war (as a human phenomenon even if not in a legal sense).

Jim Sciutto has called using force below the threshold, a "shadow war."[17] Others have called such uses of force "grey zone operations."[18] They are all examples of war in the unitary sense, sharing the three common dimensions, and requiring expertise in all three core strategic skills. Sciutto describes Russia's and China's actions in the "shadow war" as well-thought-out tactical actions and campaigns below the threshold explicitly "designed exactly to avoid sparking a decisive response…to defeat the United States without a modern Pearl Harbor."[19] In using the term "shadow war," Sciutto is yet one more example of the binary understanding of war. What he describes should be understood simply as war in the unitary sense.

Understanding the use of force as a unitary rather than a binary phenomenon is also important because the forces used to accomplish a political community's strategic aims rely on non-military forces as well as military forces. In some cases, military force alone can achieve tactical successes, but military force alone is never sufficient to attain strategic success. Strategic victory, in whatever form of war one is waging, requires the orchestrated application of non-military forces—e.g. diplomatic, industrial, labor, economic, informational, and fiscal, among others—in conjunction with military force. One need only look to World War II to see how vital non-military forces were to ultimate Allied success. In each non-military area, World War II civil and military leaders developed campaign plans aimed to contribute to ultimate

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strategic success. Creating, deploying, employing, and sustaining military forces, and bringing the war to an end would not have been possible in World War II without successful, non-military campaigns working well enough individually and together.

The United States and its allies did better than their enemies in integrating military and non-military capabilities into campaigns during World War II and the Cold War. Non-military forces, however, are also vital tactically, operationally, and strategically when using force below the legal threshold of war. Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan all provide examples of how important to ultimate success were both military forces and non-military forces at each level of war, but here, the United States' record is mixed, at best. In each of the cases just mentioned, not integrating the non-military forces at each level of war blocked overall strategic success or made success harder than it needed to be. The binary approach to understanding war and the use of force has been, and continues to be, a strategic liability for the United States. This approach has impeded clear and complete thinking and acting. Continuing that liability into the future puts the United States in a strategically weak position.

The Russian unitary understanding of using force gives them a strategic advantage over those, like the United States, who persist in a binary understanding. Russia "considers hybrid war a whole of government activity, up to and including the use of conventional military forces."[20] As quoted in *Like War*, Russian General Valery Gerasimov explains, "the role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown."[21] China takes a similar approach.[22]

The internet is one of the non-military means that General Gerasimov is talking about, more than just a means of communication and entertainment, but also as a weapon. The Kremlin used this weapon effectively to produce confusion and paralysis in

Crimea and Ukraine. Russia is also using this weapon to attack the United States and European democracies and diffract societal and alliance cohesion. Since 2003, reports *Like War*, China has also weaponized information in three ways: to "manipulate perceptions and beliefs…manipulate treaties and international law…and manipulate both Chinese and foreign populations."[23] ISIS too has become an expert at using the internet as a means of war. Artificial intelligence is already able to pass itself off as human by combining video images and audio messages that can manipulate the opinions and actions of specific targets or populations and influence key civil and military strategic decision makers.

Success in future uses of force will require coordinating individual cyber and informational actions into campaigns that integrate these actions with those of other types of forces, both military and non-military. This integration must occur at each level of war: tactical, operational, and strategic. The battle for truth and reality is already one of the new challenges of war. This battle will only grow in importance.

Civilian and military leaders must get back to understanding war as a unitary phenomenon. They must then approach each specific use of force—whether

> *The binary approach to understanding war and the use of force has been, and continues to be, a strategic liability for the United States.*

below or above the legal threshold of war—in a similar way: by attending to each of the common dimensions of war. As Strachan concludes, "embracing the unitary nature of war as a departure point is not a substitute for hard thinking about the character of wars which are either imminent or in hand, but it does mean that the hard thinking rests on a secure, rather than superficial, foundation."[24]

The future is not one of either conventional combat or "hybrid war," "grey zone operations," or whatever the moniker *du jour* becomes. Rather, the future is one in which all uses of force are understood as manifestations of a unitary phenomenon—all are "war" in the practical sense. US strategic leaders who adopt a unitary understanding of war will find that the drivers of change in the global security environment place two important requirements upon the United States. First, the United States must sustain the capacity and will to deter others from crossing the legal threshold of war by maintaining a strong conventional and nuclear capability. Second, the United States must improve its capacity to succeed in using force in every variety of war, whether below or above the threshold—thus preserving a stable international order and reducing the likelihood of major conventional combat.

SECTION II:
Trends Affecting The Global Environment

Around the world, nations are undergoing rapid social, economic, and political changes—the difference among them is only a matter of degree. Broad, deep, and accelerated change brings with it not only an increase of stress on leaders and institutions, but also increased instability, fear, disorder, and risk.[25] In many places, one of the effects of these changes is the creation of new groups or movements who have

appeared, sometimes quite rapidly, and are having an impact on the political stage—and, therefore, on the social and economic stages. Such changes place huge pressure on the institutions designed to guide everyday social, economic, and political life, domestically and transnationally. Such are the conditions of the global environment for the foreseeable future. All uses of force take place under

these conditions. Any complete study of the future of war and using force, therefore, must take into account the significant disarray and tension in the current global environment.[26]

In this kind of environment, strategists should heed what Sir Michael Howard says in *The Invention of Peace*, "positive peace implies a social and political ordering of society that is generally accepted as just. The creation of such an order may take generations to achieve, and social dynamics may then destroy it within a few decades."[27] Donald Kagan's observations in *On the Origins of War*, adds currency to Howard's point. "A persistent and repeated error throughout the ages," Kagan says, "has been the failure to understand that the preservation of peace requires active effort, planning, the expenditure of resources, and sacrifices, just as war does."[28] The Congress of Vienna in 1815 created the Concert of Europe, a system meant to preserve the general peace. Their achievement was impressive, one that lasted almost 100 years. Then, Kagan continues, "in the long interval of peace, the sense of tragic was lost; it was forgotten that states could die, that upheavals could be irretrievable, that fear could become the means of social cohesion."[29] Then came 1914 and World War I, then World War II, proving Kagan's point. Peace does not mean the absence of competition, confrontation, or conflict.

The generation of political and military leaders who fought and waged World Wars I and II understood, at the visceral level, the need to establish a system that prevented another similar conflagration, especially one that might include nuclear weapons. This rule-based order, according to Kori Schake, "embedded cooperative practices into institutions, both among allied countries and transcending them...through which the power of the strong states is limited by agreed rules...legitimized by the voluntary accession of weaker states."[30] The post-World War II order was, in the words of Richard Haass, "a departure from the Westphalian notion...what was agreed to was an approach to order that recognized that what goes on within a country's borders matters not just to its own

Peace does not mean the absence of competition, confrontation, or conflict.

citizens but to others."[31] In spite of mixed motives, imperfections, and several "small wars," the main superpowers avoided World War III, but that order has eroded in part for the very reasons Kagan identified: leaders forgot that preserving peace requires as much work as does war. Starry-eyed idealists did not create the Concert of Europe, nor did they create the post-World War II "liberal, rule-based order," hard-nosed civil and military leaders did.

What these leaders built was based upon their experience of death and destruction on a massive scale. It was also built upon what led to that experience: the strong preying on the weak; leaders acting only on their narrow self-interest; the intensity of fear created by a variety of social, political, and economic factors; and on the breakdown of the processes and institutions that had kept these tendencies in check and prevented conventional war from breaking out. Anyone attentive to today's global environment can see similar factors at play.

In general, three major trends are creating global stress, instability, and disorder, as well as associated increased risk of war in today's global environment.

TREND ONE: The latest phase of the Industrial Revolution. "Revolution" denotes abrupt and radical change, and that is just what has happened in each phase of the Industrial Revolution, which began in the mid-18th century. Phase one, from about 1760 to 1840, ushered in railroads, mechanical power, initial telegraph communications, and the steam engine, among other technologies. Phase two, mid-19 to mid-20th century, saw mass production, assembly lines, radio and telephone communications, and electricity, again among other technologies. Phase three came in the mid-1960s bringing semi-conductors, mainframe and personal computers, and the internet. The fourth and current phase brings the accelerated expansion of smaller and more powerful sensors, artificial intelligence, machine learning, the ultra-mobile internet and social media, and the internet of things.[32]

Each phase of the Industrial Revolution has brought disruptions that challenged the social, economic, and

political systems designed to govern domestic and transnational communal life. Factories, for example, forced changes to family life, shifts from craftsman to employee, and movements from rural to larger urban areas. These changes, and others, caused "a more decisive set of changes than most people experienced historically." It meant both opportunity and excitement as well as alienation, stress, and degradation.[33] Massive social, economic, and political transformations took place during each phase of the Industrial Revolution, often at a velocity that overwhelmed individuals, leaders, institutions, and systems. War itself—how it was conceived, fought, and waged—also changed.[34] Furthermore, the industrialization of phase one, the mass production and communications of phase two, as well as the computer and internet of phase three, all united and divided the world. Phase four is no different.

The unfolding of the industrial age has not been peaceful.[35] During the first three phases of the Industrial Revolution, the American, French, Russian, Mexican, and Turkish revolutions were fought as were the American, Russian, Spanish, and Chinese civil wars. The War of 1812, the Boer War, both World Wars, and the Korean and Vietnam Wars were also fought in this period—as were civil wars in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Tectonic shifts of the magnitude of those in the current fourth phase create multiple and overlapping upheavals, and leaders and citizens alike should not expect the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be any more peaceful than the last three. Rather, competition and conflict—war in the unitary sense—will increase in likelihood.

One of the long-term destabilizing effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution may be increasing inequality within the workforces of various nations and between nations themselves. Domestically, the future workforce may come to resemble the low-skill/low-pay and high-skill/high-pay segregation that exists in many places now. Advanced artificial

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intelligence threatens even more of the current work force's employment. Such segregation, combined with the under- and unemployment—the beginning of which the United States is already experiencing and is being highlighted by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic—may produce a "winner take all" dynamic within and among nations. If future political and corporate leaders are unable to reverse this segregation and threat, the result may be more inequality and increased social tensions.[36] The probability of conflict rises under such conditions.

This dynamic could play out globally. Advanced economies focused on their own problems coexist with other parts of the globe that are simply being left behind. The more that gap grows, the more instability and security challenges it causes. This domestic and global dynamic of inequality further increases social tensions and the probability of conflict. A more volatile world, particularly given that people today are more aware of and sensitive to social injustices and the discrepancies in living conditions between different countries, further increases the pressures on political leaders and institutions.[37] Pressure is also on corporations, both domestic and multi-national. The pace of observing, learning, and adapting is unrelenting. While not all industries are at the same point of disruption, many are facing the Darwinian pressure of adapt or die. Those that cannot adapt or transform, close, always with associated loss of jobs.[38] The stress on individuals, families, corporations, societies, and economies places increased pressure on governmental leaders and institutions, domestic and transnational. The pressure is already visible.

Coexisting but countervailing directions—the ability to aggregate information and power and the corresponding ability to use the availability of information to organize and challenge that power—are another source of instability related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution's accelerated rise. On one hand, more and more individual citizens, as well as corporations and industrial sectors, are finding new

ways to voice their opinions and pressure both legislative and executive leaders. They can coordinate their efforts more easily and more quickly and circumvent government supervision. At the same time, big data, artificial intelligence, and advanced surveillance technologies are increasing the power of political leaders and governmental institutions. Then there is the impact on domestic governments and transnational organizations to adapt.

Today's political, legislative, and regulatory authorities, both domestic and international, are often overtaken by events. They are unable to cope with the speed of technological change and the significance of its implications. The 24-hour news cycle and the seemingly infinite numbers of social media outlets often force leaders to comment or react immediately to events, reducing time available for arriving at measured, principled, and calibrated responses. There is a real danger of loss of control over what matters, particularly in a global system with almost 200 independent states[39] and a growing number of non-state actors who influence global events. Add in a substantial amount of disinformation, some state sponsored with the intent to disrupt, and conspiracy theories, and the ability to cope is even more difficult. Richard Haass agrees, saying, "Globalization, with its fast flows of just about anything and everything…across borders is a reality that governments often cannot monitor, much less manage. The gap between the challenges generated by globalization and the ability of a world to cope with them appears to be widening.…The result is a world in which centrifugal forces are gaining the upper hand."[40]

As stress increases in both scope and scale, as it is increasing right now, on individuals, families, corporations, societies, economies, governments, and transnational institutions, the potential for instability grows too. "The critical danger is that a hyper-connected world of rising inequality may lead to increasing fragmentation, segregation, and social unrest, which in turn creates the conditions for violent extremism." [41] Violence and extremism

> *Although weak internally, Russia is expanding its power regionally and globally.*

are not just exclusive to terrorist organizations. History shows that labor unions, social and religious organizations, and political movements have resorted to violence when they think they have no other recourse. States, too, have used violence to suppress dissent or keep order, sometimes, justified; other times, not. States have gone to war to channel internal dissent, and nothing prevents them from acting similarly in the future. Furthermore, in a world of increasing instability and accelerated pressure, miscalculations and surprises are more likely.

TREND TWO: Multiple, ongoing global competitions. The Fourth Industrial Revolution emerged about the time the Cold War ended. At the start, the United States was considered the sole, global superpower. Initially, Russia and China focused mostly inward, concentrating, to varying degrees, on power consolidation, economic development, and social cohesion. Iran also focused on internal matters, but used proxies, Hezbollah and others, to extend its influence in the Middle East.

Slowly, however, a different reality developed. Several global competitions developed. Revisionist powers—Russia, China, and Iran—began to expand their spheres of influence, challenging the United States' dominance, and redefined the so-called rule-based liberal world order more to their advantage. Revolutionary powers like al Qaeda and ISIS broke onto the world stage attempting to impose a world order of their own. North Korea continued to use—and often create—instability to secure its own existence and that of the Kim dynasty. Except for the revolutionary powers, global competitions mostly have taken place below the threshold of conventional war.[42] The result is increased pressure on that threshold, threatening its firmness.

Although weak internally, Russia is expanding its power regionally and globally. By seizing control of Crimea and eastern Ukraine Russia is reestablishing influence in its "western near-abroad" and has displayed military capabilities that overmatch those of the US Army in select areas.[43] Additionally, Russia is

making barely disguised threats to the Baltic countries, and through control of Crimea, its bases in Syria, and its partnership with Iran, Russia has increased its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean all the way to the Persian Gulf. It has also increased its presence and influence in Central and South America. Russia is attempting to weaken NATO through its actions in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in Turkey. The Kremlin is also attempting to weaken democracies in general through multiple campaigns of political warfare reminiscent of acts conducted by the former Soviet Union during the Cold War.[44] As Lieutenant General (Retired) H.R. McMaster says, "by 2017, it was clear that Russia was pursuing an aggressive campaign to subvert the United States and other Western democracies. Russian cyber-attacks and information warfare campaigns directed against European elections and the 2016 US presidential election were just one part of a multifaceted effort to exploit rifts in European and American society through propaganda, disinformation, and political subversion."[45] These are direct threats to US sovereignty and to that of its allies.[46]

Some of Russia's campaigns rely solely on weaponized information, but in others Russia is using a mix of military, paramilitary, and other non-military forces to enhance the effectiveness of information weapons and methods.[47] Regardless of whether one terms this mix of forces "Russian new generation warfare," the "Gerasimov Doctrine," or "hybrid warfare," the reality is the same—the Kremlin is combining disinformation and deniability with the use of the latest technologies to target states' strengths and exploit their weaknesses. Putin also has created economic dependencies, and integrated unconventional, conventional, and nuclear military capabilities into Russian actions.[48] All of these efforts serve to increase Russian influence and decrease that of the United States and its allies.

Like Russia, China is developing capabilities that offset some long-standing US strengths.[49] China has transformed parts of its military forces, developed capabilities that focus both on US vulnerabilities and on the means necessary to assert more leverage in the Indo-Asian-Pacific, and accelerated its cyber capacities. Chinese actions on the Spratly Islands coupled with its activities in the Philippines, its aggressive actions in the Senkaku Islands, as well as other global activities like constructing global naval and air infrastructures and advancing its One Road/One Belt project, all show that China is a rising power intent on expanding its power and influence on the regional and global stage and using that power to the detriment of US interests.

China appears to have little or no intention of acting according to international law or standards on trade and commerce. On the contrary, its *modus operandi* threatens free and open societies. Beijing is using a strategy of cooption, coercion, and concealment to expand its influence and its closed, authoritarian model beyond its borders—so far, below the threshold of conventional war.[50]

Iran is the third major revisionist power. Its nefarious activities in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and beyond have been widely reported—as have been its nearness and desire to acquire nuclear capacity.[51] Tehran's actions to expand its power and influence have a complexity beyond that of Russia and China, however. Since 1979, Iran, and its Sunni rival Saudi Arabia, have stoked the Sunni-Shia divide that is now one of the roots of the revolutionary powers.

Unlike the revisionist powers who generally seek to advance their strategic positions by linking tactical, operational, and strategic actions below the threshold of conventional war (at least so far), the revolutionary powers of al Qaeda, ISIS, and whoever of similar ilk may yet emerge have chosen violent means to achieve their aims.

These groups are revolutionary powers, even if some leaders and strategies prefer not to acknowledge them as such. Groups like al Qaeda and ISIS are bent on fomenting and expanding violent revolution within states, within the greater Middle East Region, and ultimately, globally. Their goal is to replace the current international order with a new arrangement, a caliphate

> *Like Russia, China is developing capabilities that offset some long-standing US strengths.*

that will operate according to their very narrow Islamic ideology, one not accepted by the vast majority of Muslims. Al Qaeda and ISIS differ as to how to achieve that goal, but there is little disagreement on the goal itself.[52]

The rogue state of North Korea remains a wild card on the international stage. Weak in so many ways, it remains aggressive and bent upon sustaining instability in the region and globally through its arms dealings, technology transfers, and now through accelerated development of both nuclear weapons and intercontinental delivery systems. North Korea seems to acknowledge no international system and acts solely on its own construct of national self-interest.

As of yet, neither the revisionists, revolutionaries, nor the rogue spoiler act in concert—although China and Russia have forged a "comprehensive strategic partnership," and Russia and Iran are cooperating in Syria.[53] Yet, the cumulative effects of revisionist and revolutionary states' actions are putting huge stress upon the international system that has been beneficial to the United States and its allies and partners. Their actions have also put crossing the threshold into conventional war—however future conventional war differs from previous versions—increasingly possible.

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The slow-building pressures that may lead to conventional war come from multiple sources. First, success in using military force below the threshold of conventional war encourages further use. Russia's success in Georgia, Crimea, and the Ukraine as well as their operations in Syria and those emerging in Venezuela and their interference with the democracies of Europe and America; China's success in the South China Sea and advancing its global footprint and influence; and Iran's success in using Hezbollah or their Quds Forces in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq—all are examples of using force to achieve strategic aims while staying below the threshold of conventional war. That is, all are manifestations of war in the unitary sense. Each of these successes encourages more such use and weakens the lower side of the threshold. Second, the inability of others—whether individual states, alliances, or coalitions—to counter such uses of force also encourages further use. Weakness before aggressive uses of force prompts more aggression. A witch's brew of new tools, especially in the cyber and disinformation arenas, when combined with covert or clandestine activity, the use of proxies and criminals, and the presence of conventional military force and nuclear weapons forms the third pressure eroding the lower side of the threshold. These tools and techniques create a "fog of peace" that delays the ability to understand what is going on long enough for an aggressor to achieve initial success and up the cost of counteraction. Cyber and disinformation operations, as well as outright lying, are eroding the strength of the threshold in other ways: both weaken alliances that provide part of the threshold's strength and both can fracture a society to a point that reduces the possibility of unified state action. Weaker alliances and fragmented societies take longer to make decisions, especially under conditions of cyber- and disinformation-based ambiguity. Again, success using these tools breeds more use.[54]

Last, the United States itself has weakened the lower end of the threshold, making crossing it at some point more likely. The United States has proven unable to use force to achieve its strategic aims in the post 9/11 wars, demonstrating a weakness in its strategic capacity to use force. Worse, because of its binary approach to war, many in the United States do not even acknowledge that war is occurring below the threshold of conventional combat. Further, the United States has allowed others to achieve technical overmatch in conventional areas that puts US deterrence capacity at risk. US military power—its war-fighting capacity—remains significant, even if

some of the trend lines are going in the wrong direction. US strategic capacity has provided the mortar that first constructed, then sustained the threshold since the end of World War II. As this mortar begins to crumble so does the strength of the threshold.

Pressures on the threshold are also coming from actions outside the security sector. The expanding and accelerating effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, for example, are stressing national and transnational leaders and institutions. Climate change is already creating new competitions. Some of the competition concerns new opportunities like the natural resources and trade routes that are opening in the face of receding Artic ice. Other competition concerns vulnerabilities created by shrinking natural resources like water, shifting agricultural capacity due to temperature and rainfall changes, and the consequences of potential pandemics. Food and water scarcity will force migrations, even as leaders try to create new production and distribution capacities. Rising sea levels have already caused some governments to evacuate and relocate whole communities. These kinds of pressures and competitions have resulted in resort to force before. There is no *a priori* guarantee that such uses of force, if they occur, would stay below the threshold. Disagreement on the details remains, but of the broad outline there is relative agreement: ours will be a future of more instability due to profound social, economic, and political systemic change with its associated stresses. The systems, structures, and conventions that currently hold the threshold of war in place are among those under significant stress.

No state views it to their advantage to cross the threshold yet, but those calculations may change as the threshold weakens. One recent study found that "with increasing levels of stress, prolonged exposure to stress and the multiplication of stressors, not only risk-taking behavior under acute but also under chronic stress becomes an important issue."[55]

> *...because of its binary approach to war, many in the United States do not even acknowledge that war is occurring below the threshold of conventional combat.*

TREND THREE: Ambiguity of leadership. The United States is not exercising leadership as it did at the end of World War II and during the Cold War. Trust in and the capacity of US leadership—from inside the United States and from without—has been in question for some time, and right now the United States seems to be not only in one of its isolationist moods but also in considerable social and political disarray. Some of the United States' actions, as well as inactions, have contributed to this reduced confidence. China, Russia, and Iran have taken advantage of the ambiguity in the United States' exercise of leadership. How global leadership shakes out, what role the United States may ultimately play—perhaps diminished, maybe resurgent—remains an open question.

The strong threshold preventing the resurgence of conventional war, which the United States and its allies created, has benefitted all since World War II. The initial foundations—the US global presence, especially in Europe and Japan; NATO; the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies; and US nuclear capability—evolved and grew stronger over the years of the Cold War. That strength was no accident. Rather, it was the result of purposeful US leadership and actions sustained over time: creating and supporting alliance systems that states wanted to join, building economic and diplomatic structures that benefitted all—the weaker allies as well as the stronger, acting with enlightened self-interest rather than raw Hobbesian self-interest—and maintaining bipartisan domestic support as well as international support for the overall system. None of this was unanimous or perfect, but it was sufficient.

Post-World War II US political and military leaders and the American public at large understood why they had to create such a world and why it rested on a threshold strong enough to deter yet one more conventional war. Their understanding

came from the experience of death and destruction of two world wars. They also realized that after World War I world leaders created the conditions from which the next world war emerged. After World War II, leaders and citizens alike understood at the visceral level that preventing another major conventional war was in their self-interest, and everyone else's. The costs of prevention may have been high, but not nearly as high as the cost of another world war. These US leaders understood that balance of power does not guarantee peace. Instead, a clear preponderance of power is more likely to promote peace.[56] The life experiences of most World War II political and military leaders told them "that war increased in probability when nations believed they each could gain more by fighting than by negotiating."[57]

Now that the United States and the world are several generations from that visceral experience and the urgency of the Cold War is gone, leaders and citizens seem to have forgotten what it takes, and why it is important, to maintain a strong threshold. Robert Kagan said it succinctly in *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World*: "Unfortunately, we tend to take our world for granted."[58] Kori Schake agrees in *America vs. the West*, "The peoples of Western countries have been so safe for so long, and have so many legal, regulatory, and security guardrails in place, that they have lost consciousness of tragic outcomes directly affecting them.... Complacency led to flabby strategic thinking as the Cold War wound down."[59]

The threshold is weakening just as global leadership is up for grabs and the stress on leaders and institutions is high. A Hobbesian state of nature may not emerge, but "a more chaotic and less institutionalized order" that feels like "Europe

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after World War I" may.[60] If there is any doubt that US global leadership is in decline and that the world is experiencing the equivalent of a strategic "jump ball" for which nation or nations will emerge as leading, one need only read the breadth of literature available on the subject.[61] The messages in this literature are clear: The post-World War II, liberal rule-based global order is fading, and no one knows for sure what order, or orders, will replace it. The stakes for the US—its prosperity and security—are very high. The United States' power remains significant, but its global leadership position and influence has eroded.

An acknowledged "ladder of power," Blainey says in *The Causes of War*, increases the probability of peace.[62] The idea of such an acknowledged ladder in today's world, however, is at best problematic. Russia, China, and Iran are already competing to establish such a ladder, one in which they have more power and the US, less. This competition is going strong below the threshold of conventional combat and the legal definition of war. Depending upon the outcome, and the perceived strength of the threshold itself, this competition might expand into an arena that many civil and military strategists seem to have convinced themselves is not possible—conventional war. General Sir Rupert Smith, for example, writes, "war...as battle...as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs...no longer exits."[63] More recently, Sean McFate baldly declared that "conventional war is dead."[64] These claims evoke the ghost of Jean de Block, who in the early years of the 20th century, concluded in his book *The Future of War* that "war has at last become impossible" because "if it came to a great European war, that war could only cease with the annihilation of one combatant and the financial ruin of another."[65]

Economic interdependence, the destructiveness of weaponry, and common sense—de Bloch held—has resulted in war's end. World War I proved him wrong.

Similarly, the breadth and velocity of changes in today's international environment, the multiple and on-going competitions, and the ambiguity of leadership, all suggest caution over predicting conventional war's demise. A future large-scale conventional war, if one occurs, will not look like the conventional wars of the past. Conventional war, too, changes—conventional war of the 18ᵗʰ century differed from that of the 19ᵗʰ, and conventional war of the 20ᵗʰ century differed even more significantly from that of the 19ᵗʰ. Of this one can be sure, however: multiple, inter-related social, political, and economic tectonic shifts are underfoot. Their combined effects are not predictable for they involve not only the rational and empirical but also the emotional and psychological. War in the large-scale conventional sense is not inevitable, nor should one read into this section a prediction of such a war. But the conditions for a war larger than and different from those that take place below the threshold are already emerging and growing. The future of war may not be the kind of small, unconventional, proxy-ridden, shadow wars that many in the cottage industry of security studies foresee. The United States should not prepare for the kind of war it finds convenient. Rather, it must prepare for the range of wars that are reasonably possible.

SECTION III:
Effects On US War-Waging Capacity

The three core strategic skills discussed previously apply whether the United States uses force below or above the threshold of conventional combat. They reflect the unitary understanding of war. The ability to execute these skills constitutes, therefore, the United States' war-waging capacity. Each is inherently difficult; together, they form a formidable challenge to senior US political and military leaders whose responsibility it is to execute them and run the institutions associated with US security. The unitary understanding of war and the trends affecting the global security environment today and into the foreseeable future make executing these skills even harder.

The execution of these skills will be a key determinant in whether future uses of force by the United States will secure its national interests.

Coherence and Alignment. Describing coherent aims, or purposes, then developing the military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns that would be necessary to increase the probability of achieving those aims are two of the most important elements when deciding to use force. The third is ensuring that the means—military forces, non-military capacity, time, and funding, for example—necessary to execute the identified strategies, policies, and campaigns are on hand or can be made available. A significant error at this initial point magnifies geometrically.

Libya provides an example of where intellectual confusion bred execution confusion. Simply put, the United States failed to identify achievable political aims, then align military and non-military means with those aims. The ostensible purpose of the 2011 intervention in Libya was to protect civilians, but the strategy and means to achieve this aim—airpower—could not actually do the job. Whatever the public utterances of NATO leaders, the *de facto* strategic aim of the intervention in Libya was to remove Qaddafi and his regime. Things did not go well in Libya in part because no coherent approaches can derive from an incoherent purpose. The NATO strategies,

policies, and campaigns were muddled because the actual strategic objectives were muddled. Lack of leadership was a second reason for strategic failure in Libya. The United States adopted the charade that it could "lead from the rear" trying to have as little "skin in the game" as possible.[66] Libyans are suffering the results of these incoherent aims; misaligned strategies, policies, and campaigns; incorrect means; and absent leadership. US credibility also suffered, and US competitors took notice. In fact, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Russia exploited the chaos following NATO's Libyan operations for its political purposes, achieving multiple strategic aims at minimum risk setting conditions for having more influence in Europe.[67]

Political and military leaders need to accept that there are emerging global problems that cannot be solved by any one nation, however powerful, and that military force alone is necessary but never sufficient unless paired with non-military assets. Growing in importance, therefore, is the capacity to create non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns that are each internally coherent and form a consistent and integrated set that increases the probability of achieving the overarching policy aims. Such coherence and integration are not current US strategic strengths, and achieving both in the future will be even harder than it is now. The world is more polarized—domestically and internationally—than it has been since the end of the Cold War. An internally divided United States or NATO, for example, will have difficulty agreeing on a common aim, let alone on a set of military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns that must be aligned to achieve whatever aim.

In addition, potential enemies will present US and allied senior strategic leaders with an intentionally ambiguous situation. Below the threshold of conventional combat, they will wrap whatever they do in disinformation, trying to divide the United States' already fractious domestic political environment and national security decision making processes. They will cloak their operations by using local surrogates,

Political and military leaders need to accept that there are emerging global problems that cannot be solved by any one nation, however powerful...

clandestine forces, and prefabricated justifications. They will spread lies, deceptions, and conspiracy theories via every form of media—all intended to buy them time, stir up domestic opposition to US involvement, and thus muddy the decision-making waters. If the situation involves other states, which will undoubtedly be the case, strategic decision-making will be exponentially difficult.

Below-the-threshold cases also involve what might be labelled "non-traditional" security matters such as water right disputes; migrations resulting from internal conflicts, natural disasters, or famine or diseases; or violence that looks like internal unrest but is actually provoked by or useful to external sources. These types of situations will force the United States to decide whether to get involved, for what purpose(s), and in which ways. Achieving coherence and alignment, never easy, increases in difficulty in situations like these—especially since the United States uses its binary understanding of force, which will mean US strategic decision makers will view these situations as matters of "peace operations" or "operations other than war," even as adversaries advance their strategic aims by applying the framework of war.

Conventional combat may seem more straightforward than uses of force below that threshold, but that is not always the case. For example, aggression, which triggers the legal right to respond either in self-defense or defense of others may be "masked aggression" such as cyber activities, or other forms of "non-military" actions that do not involve physical violence. Such a scenario is far from imaginative. The United States recently suffered a cyber-attack emanating from Russia and is still trying to determine the extent of the attack's damage. When the time and conditions are right, the aggressor may unmask himself; or the unmasking may take place after an extensive investigation. By that time, while the aggression will be clear, responding to it may be impossible or prohibitively costly. Retaining a binary understanding of the use of force puts the United

States at a strategic disadvantage dealing with these threats.

For many security specialists in the United States, "above the threshold" situations seem unrealistic. The United States has not fought conventional wars for a while—almost 70 years from Korea and more than 30 since the First Gulf War. During the Cold War, crossing the threshold of conventional war risked nuclear escalation, then the First Gulf War quickly demonstrated to states and non-state entities alike that conventional US warfighting capacity was too powerful to challenge. The strength of the threshold is weakening, however, in part because the United States and other states have allowed some nations to achieve their strategic aims almost in a "contested free zone" and in part because the combined US and allied nuclear and conventional power upon which the threshold rests is itself eroding. If the erosion continues, the risks of crossing the threshold decrease and the probability of crossing it increases.[68]

The United States has had little success since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the attacks of 9/11, identifying clear and coherent strategic aims. The United States has a similarly weak track record at being able to align military and non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns with those

...potential enemies will present US and allied senior strategic leaders with an intentionally ambiguous situation.

aims it has identified. As ambiguity grows, threats take on more non-traditional faces, and mis- and dis-information accelerates, US senior political and military leaders will find it increasingly difficult to achieve coherence and alignment.

Organizational Capacity. Using force is a dynamic phenomenon. Adhering to an initial plan too long invites disaster. There is a constant gap between realities—on the ground or in the capitals of the nations involved—and the outcomes one intended. So, plans must adapt, and some organization must emerge as the agent of that adaptation. This organization must include the ability to sense the gap between reality and desired outcomes, adapt and

promulgate new military and non-military plans, and coordinate multi-department execution—at the speed of reality not that of a bureaucracy. Then the organization must be able to keep this cycle up until the use of force is brought to a successful conclusion by achieving one's aims.

The discovery that the United States is deficient in this second strategic skill is not a new one. One need only read *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing* or *Dereliction of Duty,* written to describe how the United States' national security bureaucracy operated during the Vietnam War, or *Duty,* Secretary Robert Gates's description of his experience with that bureaucracy to realize that the US norm is the opposite of that required by the second core strategic skill.[69] The Clinton administration had difficulty adapting in Somalia in the 1990s. As the purposes for this intervention changed from the initial humanitarian assistance mission to one that included disarming Somali clans as well as rehabilitating Somali political institutions, building a secure environment throughout the country, and ultimately the manhunt for Mohamed Farrah Aideed in reaction to his supporters ambushing and killing 24 Pakistani soldiers—two major adaptive deficiencies arose. First, no sufficient re-evaluation of the plans—strategies, policies, or campaigns—took place after the transition from the first Bush administration to the Clinton administration. Nor did a complete re-analysis of means—military and non-military—necessary to achieve the new purposes take place.[70] A similar deficiency in organizational capacity in the Obama administration made success in Libya near impossible. Air power alone did not, in fact could not, achieve NATO's goals. Bombing is extremely effective against fixed targets and those mobile targets that are clearly distinguishable from civilians and friendly forces. But even the most skilled pilots are ineffective when the weather is poor, the targets are difficult to distinguish from the air, or they are forced to fly high and fast to avoid shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles. NATO's air campaign

reduced Qaddafi's forces, and with enough time, the cumulative effects of bombing, fiscal and economic sanctions, and diplomatic discussions might have worked. But civilians were not being protected, Qaddafi ended up being killed, tribes entered the fray, and Libya collapsed. The Somalia and Libya examples demonstrate a long-time US deficiency to adapt and bring the use of force to a successful end.

This lack of organizational capacity will continue to haunt senior US civil and military leaders. The current US methodologies have proven themselves deficient in multiple situations, and over extended time. The three trends of the evolving global security environment and the unitary understanding of war by US adversaries will demand more of the United States' already less-than-capable processes and institutions. The speed at which events occur, the ambiguity and complexity inherent in today's security challenges, the velocity of change once force is used, the unblinking eye of the 24/7 media, the ubiquity of social media, the newness of the types of security challenges, the "fog of peace" created by increased mis- and dis-information, and the fact that war is being practiced by enemies and competitors of the United States—will all only make this deficiency more pronounced.

Legitimacy. In a 2006 essay using Iraq as its example, several political scientists argued that Americans will judge a war as legitimate and worth incurring casualties over when they see the use of force as just, the war's aims as achievable, and the progress toward those aims on track for a successful end.[71] While the subject of legitimacy can consume volumes, these three criteria are useful rules of thumb.

At the start of the 2003 Iraq War some questioned its righteousness, yet most Americans supported the war. Its ostensible purposes—to enforce United Nations resolutions, to eliminate the Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Program, and to prevent the most dangerous weapons from falling into the hands of the most

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dangerous people—plus nearness to the trauma of the 9/11 attacks—resulted in 72% of the American people supporting the invasion.[72] But by April 2004, one year later, 42% of Americans thought the United States had made a mistake by invading. Five years after the invasion, in 2009, 58% of Americans thought the war was a mistake.[73] These numbers fluctuated in relationship to two major questions. First, did the United States go to war for the right reasons? Second, did the United States have a reasonable chance for success—that is, did the United States have the strategies, policies, and campaigns that could succeed and was progress being made toward that success?

Creating and sustaining legitimacy for using force has always been difficult for US administrations. True legitimacy for a democracy is a product of a healthy set of civil and military dialogues conducted within similarly healthy national security institutions and processes and amid public scrutiny. The strategic context in which the United States operates has experienced an accelerated rate of change and the use of force has also undergone significant shifts, but, in general, US national security systems have not kept pace.

Creating and sustaining legitimacy through the decisions and actions taken in capitals as well as military and non-military actions taken on the ground will be much more difficult than it already is. Mis- and dis-information, recorded and manipulated on artificial intelligence-enhanced social media platforms, then distributed very precisely to specific people and audiences using big-data analysis, will challenge the legitimacy of US actions to the core. In the current strategic environment, whether domestic or international, truth is already under fire. One effect of the erosion of truth and the mistrust of authority and institutions will be to undermine the legitimacy that Americans presume when their leaders use force on their behalf. Even when the righteousness of using force is well grounded in international law and morality, even when US forces—military and

non-military—follow the Laws of Armed Conflict, and even when actual progress is being made, the legitimacy of each of these three areas will be contested in the information space. These conditions will exacerbate the difficulty in exercising this third core strategic skill.

In sum, the unitary understanding of war and the major trends acting upon the global strategic environment are creating conditions of accelerated change that are already creating more ambiguity, instability, and danger. These pressures are, in turn, stressing the capacity of US strategic leaders as well as the institutions designed to help these leaders execute their core, strategic responsibilities and increasing the probability of war in many varieties—possibly even large-scale

Americans will judge a war as legitimate and worth incurring casualties over when they see the use of force as just, the war's aims as achievable, and the progress toward those aims on track for a successful end.

war. In the last 19 years, the period of the United States' post 9/11 wars, the United States has not demonstrated excellence in any of the three core strategic skills. The United States faces a future where these skills will be increasingly important to protect US interests and more difficult to execute.

The United States could stumble its way forward, adapting its proven insufficient methods and procedures to problems as they arise and hope US wealth, leadership, and industrial might will again prevail. But, as one US Army Chief of Staff said, "hope is not a method."[74] The United States should adopt a deliberative process to improving its strategic capability.

SECTION IV:
Conclusions And Recommendations

The emerging unitary understanding of war and the use of force, the complexity and ambiguity in today's global environment, and the United States' deficiency in the three core strategic skills are far from merely academic issues for today's political and military leaders as well as institutions designed to serve them. Furthermore, the United States is not immune to catastrophic failure. US military leaders are paying attention to many of war's shifts, but their attention is focused mostly on the tactical and operational employment of force and the acquisition of new technology-based capabilities. Reading almost any book or article about the future of war results in engaging in a wide variety of technological discussions: omni-present artificial intelligence; swarms of lethal autonomous systems; hives of hyper-smart integrated weapons and platforms; cyber-attacks, cyber-defenses, and cyber-espionage; deep space operations; sea, air,

and land robotics of all sorts; and more. These are important and necessary discussions as US leaders and thinkers try to figure out what the United States must do to prepare for war in an ambiguous future and in a period of accelerated change. The nation is well-served by its military services, joint headquarters, and Geographic Combatant Commanders whose job it is to attend to these aspects of using force.

But military attention is insufficient, and techno-fascination has a way of obscuring other important strategic activities associated with preparing and planning for future war that lay at the nexus of US civil-military leadership. Using force, in whatever variety, is inherently a civil-military affair.

Think of France in 1940 and the collapse of the French Army. This catastrophe resulted from a combination of failures to anticipate, learn, and adapt.

The French, Cohen and Gooch write, "built up a picture of what a future war would and should be like as a result of a selective view of the past…they also failed to anticipate the future on the basis of available evidence.…[and] they failed to act speedily and effectively enough" on what they did know.[75] The United States is in a similar position. For many, the picture of future war is what they are seeing now, small grey zone or hybrid actions—defined as not war. This narrow view is creating a strategic myopia, and the myopia turns into a blind spot with respect to US weakness in executing the three, core strategic skills. One cannot react speedily and effectively to what one does not see. *Military Misfortunes* rightfully places blame on French and British military organizations for their part in the 1940 catastrophe, but blame also falls on French political and diplomatic leaders.

In the United States, with respect to their tactical and operational skills, military leaders have already begun adjusting to a future that treats war as a unitary phenomenon. They modified existing organizations and created new ones, adapted decision making and planning methodologies, changed the conditions under which forces train and with whom they train, reoriented some part of their professional education systems, and altered command selection and promotion systems. None of these adjustments are finished and all will improve over time.

The improvement of US strategic skills, however, is lagging. Constructing non-military strategies, policies, and campaigns and integrating these campaigns with military force—regardless of the form of war involved—remains a US strategic weakness as does achieving success in using force below the threshold of conventional combat. And this weakness is expanding in scope: rather than understand war in its unitary sense, a body of literature is now discussing global competition in terms of "not war." US strategists are creating a new point along the

…the unitary understanding of war and the major trends acting upon the global strategic environment are creating conditions of accelerated change that are already creating more ambiguity, instability, and danger.

spectrum of conflict—Political Operations Other Than War—thus extending the binary fallacy further.

To prepare adequately for the future, US senior civilian and military leaders will have to figure out how to learn, then practice, their strategic skills more rigorously—not just their tactical and operational skills. Waiting until the next use of force when lives are at stake almost guarantees unpreparedness. In the meantime, the unsatisfactory answer to the important question of what governmental entity has the responsibility for adapting the United States' strategic capacity necessary to address the significant shifts of the past several decades is: none.

The legislative branch has a constitutional duty to raise and sustain the United States' armed forces as well as fund the other non-military departments always necessary to strategic success in the use of force. The Executive Branch has the duty to use US military and non-military forces in a coordinated and integrated way. Blending these two branches is supposed to be hard, but not impossible—as seems to have been the case in the United States' post 9/11 wars.

The US military services have been studying the changes in the concept of war as well as the drivers of instability in the global strategic environment. Their purpose, however, is not to determine the effects on the three core, strategic skills. Rather, they have a completely appropriate, but narrower, focus: not to miss a major change in "the character of war"—that is, in how force is used. They know that the "type of military dominance that the United States has enjoyed… is historically rare. Such dominance, they acknowledge, "is also short lived."[76]

Together, the US services as well as the Joint Staff and Joint Operational Headquarters are seeking to reform or transform military organizations, equipment and weaponry, fighting doctrine, training methodologies and conditions, and leader

development models to avoid catastrophic failure fighting the United States' future battles or to deter competitors from crossing the threshold of conventional war.

This paper sought a different purpose: to identify what strategic skills leaders in the United States need to increase the probability of strategic success—meaning the achievement of overarching policy objectives when the United States uses force in the future. To that end, senior US leaders in Congress and the Executive branch should take three, broad and sweeping actions:

The Departments of State and Justice should review their ability to contribute to waging war in all its forms, and Congress should review its funding decisions on critical non-military capacities.

The joint State and Justice review must include both internal capacities as well as those of independent federal agencies like the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the International Criminal Investigations and Training Program (ICITAP). These agencies, and other department organizations, are essential non-military means necessary to successfully use force in the unitary sense. Further, this review must focus on two main questions. The first, does the United States have sufficient capacity in these departments, agencies, and organizations? Second, are the activities of these departments, agencies, and organizations sufficiently aligned with those of others so that, together, they help attain US strategic aims?

The USAGM and the Voice of America (VOA), for example, should be key players in writing the information strategies, policies, and campaigns and aligning them with US strategic aims—part of Core Strategic Skill #1—a capacity that is already important but weak. They should also be part of executing

To prepare adequately for the future, US senior civilian and military leaders will have to figure out how to learn, then practice, their strategic skills more rigorously...

plans on the ground and adapting those actions as events unfold—key parts of Core Strategic Skill #2. Too often, however, their participation in planning and execution is too little or too late or viewed as tangential so not sufficiently integrated into the strategic-level planning and execution. These deficiencies are not because of lack of will but more because of a lack of capacity resulting from chronic underfunding. They simply do not have the right people with the right skills to do all that is required of them.

USAID is often viewed as "foreign aid," therefore not part of waging war. This perspective is born from the binary approach to war that has prevailed throughout the US national security section. Under the unitary understanding of war, however, the capacities of USAID should play a critical role in achieving US strategic aims—in planning, aligning those plans with others, and in executing and adapting. USAID has grown somewhat in the post 9/11 period, but still lacks the ability to contribute fully to the execution of Core Strategic Skills #1 and #2, mostly because they too have suffered chronic underfunding.

A similar conclusion would result from an analysis of the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and Justice's ICITAP. The law enforcement and rule of law capacities, which should be robust in both INL and ICITAP, are often too shallow to help write strategies, policies, and campaigns or to monitor execution and adaptation. INL, for example, usually contracts out these requirements which complicates planning, executing, and adapting. Again, these deficiencies are not because of lack of will but more because of chronic underfunding.

Finally, the Department of State's Foreign Studies Institute is nearly devoid of any discussion of the relationship of diplomacy to uses of force or of the

ways the department should participate in each of the three strategic war-waging skills. This void reveals how deeply the binary understanding of war is buried in the United States' national security psyche, institutions, and processes. Another way to highlight the unitary nature of using force is adding military students—other than military foreign area officers—to State's Foreign Studies Institute just as Foreign Service Officers attend military senior service colleges.

The Departments of Treasury, Commerce, and Transportation have similar important but under-funded organizations that should also be part of the United States' war waging capacities. Treasury, for example, continues to play a very important role in the war against jihadi organizations and networks—as has Commerce and Transportation. When it comes to waging war in the unitary sense, Congress must view funding for these non-military capacities as important as funding for the Department of Defense. Otherwise, any coherent and comprehensive U.S. strategic response to the broad variety of threats and competitors who use an even broader variety of force will continue to suffer. Simply put, the interagency processes in the National Security Council must be re-thought for the 21st Century.

The Senate and House Armed Services Committees should commission three studies.

The first should be a historical assessment of US performance in each of the three core strategic skills from the end of the Cold War to the present. The purpose of this study would be to recommend changes to organizations, legislation, or procedures that present structural obstacles to more effective execution of these skills.

In the past 20 years, US performance in using force to achieve strategic aims has rarely met the nation's expectations. Sustained and repetitive unprofi-ciency will only reduce the probability of successful future uses of force, whether below or above the threshold of conventional combat. A broad and deep study, with a joint and bipartisan backing, may help set the conditions for future success.

The second study should be a nation-wide analysis of US schools of strategic studies and international relations to determine if these schools adequately address the theory and practice of how United States has used, is using, and should use force to achieve national strategic aims. The purpose of this study should be to make recommendations that would more adequately prepare civilians for service in the various US national security sectors and create a sat-isfactory "pool of potential senior civilian leaders" who are able to execute the three core strategic skills at the highest levels of the US government.

US schools of strategic studies and international relations often produce those who serve as the leaders either of cabinet-level departments or who serve at the next tier below as important advisors and the leaders of working groups that develop and execute strategies, policies, and campaigns. A cursory look at some of these programs suggests that few have courses on the theory and practice of using force to attain strategic aims or in case studies to analyze how the three core strategic skills are exe-cuted. This seeming educational gap is producing a set of senior civilian leaders who—even if politically reliable from an administration's standpoint—are ill prepared to do what the nation may demand of them. This proficiency gap is especially alarm-ing given the unitary understanding of war and the period of accelerated change in the global security environment the United States now faces, the stress put on institutions, and the probability of conflict that results. A broad-based, joint, and bipartisan study would call attention to an important strate-gic educational gap that, if closed, could positively impact US strategic capacity.

The third study should be a historical review of the US civil-military relationship, theory and practice. The purpose of this study should be to identify the types of relationships that have decreased the effec-tiveness of US uses of force as well as those types that increase effectiveness. Too often, discussions about the US civil-military relationship have focused on civil control of the military. This discussion is nec-essary but insufficient, for absent is a discussion of functionality. The civil-military relationship is sup-posed to contribute to making the best use-of-force

decisions possible. Even a quick review of the past twenty years of decisions will reveal deficiencies in the U.S. civil-military's functional dimension. The Congressional study should recommend changes to organizations, legislation, or procedures that present structural obstacles to more effective execution of the essential strategic skills.

Since its inception, every US president has used his National Security Council differently. The relationship between a president and his generals and admirals has also varied, as has the relationship between the Department of Defense and the other departments always necessary to achieve strategic success. The final decision authority for uses of force is firmly placed on US civil leadership. This placement is unquestionable. That said, however, some patterns of behaviors increase the probability of good decisions, coherent execution, sufficient adaptation, and success in achieving strategic aims—and other patterns have a reverse effect. Responsible use of final decision authority is as important as having that authority. US history is replete with both positive and negative examples, proving that having final decision authority and using it responsibly are two separate issues. The protection of two oceans as well as the United States' military power, wealth, industrial might, and leadership status allowed the United States the luxury of paying less attention to the effects of corrosive or constructive relationships and their impact on strategic decision-making and execution capacity. That is not possible in today's global environment or the environment that most project into the future.

A second aspect of US civil-military relations is equally troubling—that is, the expanding politicization of the military.[77] Over the past several decades politicization has increased in four harmful ways. Political candidates have sought, and used, public endorsement from retired generals and flag officers.

A broad-based, joint, and bipartisan study would call attention to an important strategic educational gap that, if closed, could positively impact US strategic capacity.

Such endorsement has created the impression that there are Republican and Democrat generals and admirals. This impression bleeds over to active-duty members, which runs counter to the oath to the Constitution, not to a party or person. Additionally, some candidates and elected officials intentionally create "veterans for" groups, which again overtly forge military members into partisan political blocks. Another way the United States' military has been politicized concerns the civilian work force of both the Department of Defense and the Service Departments. Over the last number of years, the number of political appointees has increased changing the ratio—especially among managers—between political and professional leadership. The result has been a slow erosion of apolitical, professional analysis and recommendations and an accretion of politically acceptable analysis and loyal recommendations. Finally, since the mid-1990s, social media has allowed a growing number of service members to engage in public and undisguised partisan political activities. The result is that norms of public activism may ultimately replace the norms of the profession of arms. No American should be denied the opportunity to form a political opinion, support a political candidate, or vote, but the trend threatens a bedrock of American democracy—a non-partisan military. Such a trend could ultimately affect the quality of strategic decisions and actions when using force.

The Department of Defense should establish a high-level board to conduct a thorough review of senior service colleges.

This board should study not only the war college of each military service, but also the National Defense University. The study should assess whether current academic programs adequately prepare senior military officers to execute their roles effectively in each of the core strategic skills under the conditions associated with a unitary

understanding of war and the trends at play in the global security environment. The purpose of the board should be to make recommendations to improve the effectiveness of US civil and military leaders in executing their strategic responsibilities on behalf of the nation.

The war colleges of the military services are often the last professional military education an officer receives. This educational experience is supposed to move a student's mindset from the tactical and operational to the strategic. Doing so prepares that officer or senior civilian for service on a senior level staff—at one of the service departments or department of defense, on the joint staff, on the staff of a joint geographic command or joint task force, or one of the senior service commands. The colleges are excellent at what they do: create leaders who understand the theory and practice of using their domain forces in joint and combined operations and are critical thinkers well attuned to using force in a variety of social, political, economic, informational, geographical, and climatic conditions. These are important skills, essential to using force below or above the threshold of conventional combat—but these are tactical and operational skills, at best theater-level skills. As such they are derivatives of the three, core strategic skills mentioned throughout this paper. US war colleges should focus on both sets of skills: the three core strategic skills and the derivative operational and tactical skills. Since US civil authorities are the final decision authority with respect to the core, strategic skills—as well as some at the operational and theater strategic levels, even tactical under some circumstances— some military leaders and their staffs have important roles in helping the final decision authority exercise that authority responsibly.

The National Defense University and the Dwight D. Eisenhower School of Security and Resource Strategy need special attention. Both are excellent academic institutions, and both focus not only on educating military leaders but also civilian leaders whose departments are, or should be, directly and indirectly

The question is whether educating for execution is enough.

involved when the United States uses force below and above the threshold of conventional combat. Service war colleges also include civilian students, but it is the National Defense University and the Dwight D. Eisenhower School of Security and Resource Strategy that have this as a primary task.

The question is whether educating for execution is enough. The National Defense University's mission, for example, says it "educates joint warfighters in critical thinking and the creative application of military power to inform national strategy and globally integrated operations, under conditions of disruptive change, in order to conduct war."[78] This mission statement is heavily weighted on execution: warfighters, conduct of war, and application of military power. Execution matters, and every war college whether service or national must treat execution seriously and extensively. But execution is too narrow of a focus. It is only one portion of one of the three core strategic skills.

The Eisenhower School's mission is a little broader. It "prepares select military officers and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing national security strategy and in evaluating, marshalling, and managing resources in the execution of that strategy."[79] Again, the emphasis on executing strategy has a prominent place, rightfully so. Developing strategy also has a place, and strategy is broadly understood as planning, organizing, training, equipping, sustaining, projecting, and decommissioning the military instrument of power as well as understanding the national security environment from political and economic lenses.[80]

War in the unitary sense is already occurring below the threshold of conventional combat, that threshold is weakening, and both domestic and transnational institutions—security, political, economic, and social—are now under significant stress. Several nations are already competing for leadership, regional if not global.

The US military is preparing for the future by asking questions, experimenting, and modeling a variety of futures. But using force includes more than

deploying and employing military forces and requires more than tactical and operational excellence. It includes all three core strategic skills. History tells us that aggregation of tactical and operational success can result in strategic failure.

The United States and global community find themselves in a period of increased probability of using force under a wide variety of circumstances—war in all its forms. The Congressional Commissions and the Defense Board will have a decisive role in preparing the United States for the future. Of course, if the proposed commissions and board begin work, the first thing each will hear is "we're already doing that." This will be

> *War in the unitary sense is already occurring below the threshold of conventional combat.*

the likely response from each of the war colleges and every school of security studies. It is also the likely response of each service department as well as the Department of Defense with respect to preserving a non-partisan military. If this answer was credible, however, why over the last 20 years has the United States not cloaked itself in strategic excellence? And why, during that same period, has the military become more politicized, has funding for critical non-military capacities decreased, and the US strategic decision-making apparatus not yielded better results?[81] The answer to these questions is clear: the United States needs more than tactical and operational excellence; it needs strategic excellence.

Endnotes

1   Pope Francis speaking on November 10, 2020 in Florence, Italy as reported by Joshua J. McElwee of the National Catholic Reporter: https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/catholicism-can-and-must-change-francis-forcefully-tells-italian-church-gathering.

2   "Paradigm shift" is used here in the sense that Thomas Kuhn developed it in "The Structures of Scientific Revolutions" Chicago, Illinois: *The University of Chicago Press*, second edition, 1970. I first discussed the paradigm shift surrounding the concept of war in "Land Warfare in the 21st Century," a paper that I co-authored with General Gordon R. Sullivan that can be found in "Envisioning Future Warfare" (Leavenworth, Kansas: US. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1995), pp. 8-11.

3   Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (New York: Crown Business, 2016), pp. 9 and 11.

4   Some of the ideas in this section were developed in previously published essays and monographs. See "Land Warfare in the 21st Century," a paper that I co-authored with General Gordon R. Sullivan that can be found in *Envisioning Future Warfare*, *op.cit*., pp. 8-11. Colonel James M. Dubik, "War in All Its Forms," Armed Forces Journal, 1994. and James M. Dubik, "War By Any Other Name," published by the Association of the United States Army in the May 2016 issue of *Army*.

5   See, for example, Geoffrey S. Corn, et. al., *The Law of Armed Conflict: An Operational Approach* (New York: Wolters Klewer, 2012) especially chapter 3, pp.63-106; or *21st Century U.S. Military Law of War Deskbook* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, U.S. Military Judge Advocate General School, 2010), especially chapter 3, Kindle locations 333-462.

6   Many hold that war has four levels: grand strategic, strategic, operational, and tactical. Under this framework, the grand strategic level addresses the use of force across more than one theater. I agree with this framework, but have chosen to use the three levels recognized by US military doctrine. I made this choice for simplicity's sake. I did not want to divert attention from the paper's main thesis by taking a digression into theory.

7   Even al Qaeda or ISIS, not states, have to sustain legitimacy internal to their political community (their equivalent to domestic legitimacy) and among at least some external audiences (their equivalent to foreign legitimacy) in order to recruit, raise money, supply themselves, arm themselves, and expand their influence.

8   This refers to the at-least 9-month-long and expansive campaign of cyber-attacks on up to 250 US entities, agencies, and departments—including Treasury, Commerce, Homeland Security, and others—as well as public and private US information platforms used by these agencies. As of this writing, Russian hackers working for the Kremlin are believed to be behind these breaches and that these breaches are only part of a broader campaign which is still on-going. One official of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency said that these breaches "pose a grave risk" to networks across both the public and private sector. This is but one of many recent reports: https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/17/politics/us-government-hack-extends-beyond-solarwinds/index.html.

9   The binary understanding prevails even in today's discussions. Read, for example, Hal Brands's "Cost imposition in the contact layer: Special operations forces and great power rivalry," published on July 6, 2021 at https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Cost-Imposition-in-the-Contact-Layer.pdf?x91208' or Matt Levitt's "Harmonizing Counterterrorism and Great Power Competition," published by the National Interest on May 9, 2021 online at https://nationalinterest.org/feature/harmonizing-counterterrorism-and-great-power-competition-184787?page=0%2C1. One can also see the vestiges of the binary war/not war still prevalent in military doctrine like the June 3, 2019 Joint Doctrine Notes 1-19 which uses the legal definition of armed conflict to distinguish it from operations "below armed conflict," https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf?ver=2019-06-10-113311-233 and the Army's concept for multi-domain operations where operations other than war appear to have thier own spectrum of political operations other than war as well as economic, diplomatic, and informational operations other than war. https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/02/26/b45372c1/20181206-tp525-3-1-the-us-army-in-mdo-2028-final.pdf.

10 Hew Strachen, "The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective" New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp 193-209.

11 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 88.

12 Jim Sciutto, *The Shadow War: Inside Russia's and China's Secret Operations to Defeat America* (New York: Harper, 2019), pp. 21-40 and 61-103.

13 Strachen, *The Direction of War, op.cit.*, p. 208.

14 Mason Clark, "Russian Hybrid Warfare," (Washington, DC: the Institute for the Study of War, September, 2020), p. 8. http://www. understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Hybrid%20 Warfare%20ISW%20Report%202020.pdf.

15 James M. Dubik and Nic Vincent, "America's Global Competitions: The Grey Zone in Context," published by the Institute for the Study of War, February, 2018. http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/ default/files/The%20Gray%20Zone_Dubik_2018.pdf

16 Sean McFate, *The New Rules of War: Victory in the Age of Durable Disorder* (New York: William Morrow, 2019), p.5.

17 Sciutto, *The Shadow War, op.cit.*, pp. 1-20, especially page 11.

18 Dubik/Vincent, "America's Global Competitions: The Grey Zone in Context," *op.cit.,* See the chart on page 10 and the appendix on pages 30-32 which lists some of the more prominent thinkers and positions relative to grey zone operations.

19 Jim Scuitto, *The Shadow War, op.cit.*, p.248.

20 Mason Clark, "Russian Hybrid Warfare," *op.cit.*, p. 15

21 P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media* (New York: An Eamon Dolan Book, 2019), p. 106 Kindle edition.

22 See Eliot Cohen, *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force*, op.cit., pp 99-126; and H.R. McMaster's *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World*, *op.cit.*, pp 89-126.

23 *Ibid.*, 184 Kindle edition.

24 Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, op.cit.*, p. 208.

25 Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 2-5.

26 Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order* (New York, Penguin Press, 2017). The introduction, pages 1-14, summarizes Haas' argument, but best to read on to page 208 for the entire argument.

27 Michael Howard, *The Invention of Peace* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000) p. 3.

28 Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday, 1995) p. 567.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 567.

30 Kori Schake, *America vs the West: Can the Liberal World Order be Preserved?* (Melbourne, Australia: Penguin Books, 2018), pp 2 and 4.

31 Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray, op.cit.*, p. 34.

32 *Ibid.*, pp 6-9.

33 Peter Stearns, *The Industrial Revolution in World History*, Fourth Edition (Bolder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2013), pp. 2-7.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-15.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

36 Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution, op.cit.*, p. 45.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

39 *Ibid.*, p.69.

40 Richard Haass, *The World in Disarray, op.cit.* pp. 12-13.

41 Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution, op.cit.*, p. 80.

42 James M. Dubik and Nic Vincent, "America's Global Competitions: the Grey Zone in Context," Institute for the Study of War, February 2018, http://www.understandingwar.org/report/ americas-global-competitions-gray-zone-context.

43 David Johnson, "The Challenges of the 'Now' and Their Implications for the US Army," (Washington, DC: RAND, 2016).

44 Russian Political warfare. See again the list of references at endnote 5.

45 H.R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World* (New York: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2020), p. 26.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

47 Mason Clark, "Russian Hybrid Warfare," *op.cit.*. p. 21.

48 McMaster, *Battlegrounds, op.cit.*, p. 40.

49 Three good books that describe China's approach to using force are Eliot Cohen, *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power & The Necessity of Military Force* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), especially pp. 99-126; H.R. McMaster, *Battleground, op.cit.*, pp. 89-154; and Jim Sciutto's *The Shadow War, op.cit.*, pp. 41-60, 105-140, and 215-246.

50 *Ibid.* pp. 104, 109-125.

51 For a quick summary of these and other Iranian actions, see pp. 293-318 of McMaster, *Battlegrounds, op.cit.*.

52 See Daniel Byman, *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), especially the section on strategy and tactics and the Islamic State. For example, on page 48 Byman writes, "In the long term, al Qaeda seeks to create a true Islamic state: a caliphate….Al Qaeda leaders are vague, however, on when such a state should be declared or what it would actually look like in practice….This stands in sharp contrast to the Islamic State, al Qaeda's rival…that broke from al Qaeda in 2014 and declared a new caliphate." "Al Qaeda sees the battlefield as global," p. 51. The Islamic state's initial vision is more regional, but intends to expand beyond the Middle East and Southwest Asia to Europe, the US, and beyond. Pp. 170-176.

53 McMaster, *Battlegrounds, op.cit.*, p. 83 and pp. 34-35.

54 James M. Dubik, "How Long Can the Threshold Hold?" Army, July 2019. https://www.ausa.org/articles/ how-long-can-threshold-war-hold.

55 Smarandita Ceccato, Brigitte M. Kudielka, and Christiane Schwieren, "Increased Risk Taking in Relation to Chronic Stress in Adults," *Frontiers in Psychology*, published online, January 29, 2016, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4732013/

56 Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*, Third Edition, (New York: The Free Press, 1988), p. 113.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

58 Robert Kagan, *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2018), p. 4.

59 Kori Schake, *America vs the West, op.cit.*, pp.60-61.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

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