

2014

## War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics

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### Recommended Citation

Shaw, Jeffrey and Simpson, Emile (2014) "War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 67 : No. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol67/iss2/12>

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environments is directly impacted by the systems that shape that environment.

Harrison's discussion of the opponent—whether a transnational terrorist organization or a corporate competitor—as a universal dimension of strategy builds on his understanding of systems. While one can seek to change the external environment in one's favor by strategizing against a system—for example, U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East as a long-term strategy to prevent radicalization and extremism—there is a more direct approach available against individual opponents. Businessmen can assess their competitors' products and decide to invest in specific market areas where they perceive opponents to be weak. National-security strategists can recommend the implementation of counterinsurgency strategies focused on protecting local populations because they perceive opponents to be alienating the citizenry.

Finally, Harrison discusses the impact of groups on strategy, whether citizens organizing to protest a business's environmental record or mass public opinion impacting the strategies of governments. By enunciating his concept of groups, systems, and opponents, Harrison performs the service of providing broad categories encompassing virtually all the actors that confront strategists of either a commercial or security bent. In so doing he underlines the point that regardless of the area of endeavor, a strategist will face conceptual frameworks very similar to those facing colleagues in other fields. An important addition to the study of strategy, *Strategic Thinking in 3D* does much to expand the traditional understanding of strategic theory from a narrow subject lacking commonality between

multiple fields of activity to a universal framework for achieving one's goals.

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Simpson, Emile. *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012. 256pp. \$32.50

Emile Simpson served in Afghanistan as an infantry officer in the Royal Gurkha Rifles. At first glance, the book might appear to be an account of his experiences there; in fact, however, it is a sophisticated examination of twenty-first-century warfare and of the employment of the military instrument of power. Its front cover is embellished with the endorsement “Deserves to be seen as a coda to [Prussian military theorist/philosopher Carl von] Clausewitz’s *On War*.” This is no small feat, and Simpson delivers an intellectually sophisticated account of the changed nature of warfare, examining war through two lenses. The first lens is the traditional use of armed force to seek to create military conditions within which a political settlement can be reached. Second, he examines armed force deployed for a distinctly political purpose. While these modes are by no means mutually exclusive and can be employed by the same actor at the same time against the same enemy, Simpson asserts that understanding the difference between these two is essential to achieving national-security objectives in the twenty-first century.

Simpson continually refers to two ideas from Clausewitz. The first is polarity—the simple idea that wars are usually contests fought between two sides. The second idea is that traditionally, strategic

audiences are contained within the nation-state structure. When war is a contest between two sides, the audiences are easy to identify, and traditionally these audiences understand the outcome of the war in terms of the contest between the armed forces of the sides. When multiple strategic audiences, some of them not contained within or associated with nation-states, do not understand or interpret the military outcome in the same way, “the military outcome does not provide a stable basis upon which to define a conflict’s outcome.” Simpson argues that “strategic confusion can result when conflicts characterized by competition between many actors in a fragmented political environment are shoehorned into a traditional concept of war, which is two polarized sides.” The information revolution and advances in communications and social media have exacerbated this problem, forcing overlap not only between the tactical and strategic levels of war but between the tactical and policy levels as well.

Simpson describes war as a competition between strategic narratives. Accordingly, planners at all levels should be targeting strategic audiences as centers of gravity. It is a matter not so much of the Clausewitzian dictum that war is designed to compel your enemy to do your will but of compelling your target audience to understand your message. *War from the Ground Up* provides case studies for this proposition ranging from the coalition effort in Afghanistan in 2006 to the British strategy in the Borneo conflict in the mid-1960s. The author also addresses other insurgencies throughout the narrative, including the conflict in Sri Lanka and Russian operations in Chechnya, and refers to the work of prominent authors who

have weighed in on the changed nature of warfare in the twenty-first century, such as David Kilcullen, Colonel Gian Gentile, and Antonio Giustozzi. A visiting defense fellow at Oxford in 2011, Simpson fuses a firm grasp of traditional humanities and philosophy with his experience in Afghanistan.

He has provided us with what may be one of the most important books on strategy in a long time. No short review can do justice to this remarkable book, which should be read by all military officers and policy makers, as well as anyone involved with the planning and execution of military operations.

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Erickson, Andrew S. *Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM) Development: Drivers, Trajectories, and Strategic Implications*. Washington, D.C.: Jamestown Foundation, 2013. 110pp. \$18

Andrew S. Erickson is a leading authority on Chinese naval developments. His research and linguistic abilities are matched by his careful, systematic analysis. In this work Erickson thoroughly surveys the existing literature in English and Chinese addressing Beijing’s efforts to deploy antiship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) able to strike large warships at ranges of more than a thousand miles.

The author credits China with developing ASBMs as part of its strategy of “using the land to control the sea.” However, this represents a misinterpretation of naval history. While it is true that “a ship’s a fool to fight a fort,” it is also true that no nation has successfully defeated a naval force with land power alone. Examples include President Thomas Jefferson’s