

1968

## Current Concepts and Philosophy of Warfare

Raymond G. O'Connor

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

---

### Recommended Citation

O'Connor, Raymond G. (1968) "Current Concepts and Philosophy of Warfare," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 21 : No. 1 , Article 3.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol21/iss1/3>

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



# **CURRENT CONCEPTS AND PHILOSOPHY OF WARFARE**

**Professor Raymond G. O'Connor**

**Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History  
Naval War College**

**A lecture delivered to the  
Naval War College  
on 12 September 1967**

This morning I'm supposed to talk about current concepts and philosophy of warfare, and I want to begin by observing that it's more appropriate for me to be talking on today's topic than it was to be speaking on that of yesterday. To illustrate, we'll reveal the process of what some people refer to as progress. At the time of the Battle of Leyte Gulf it was presumptuous for some of the junior officers to find

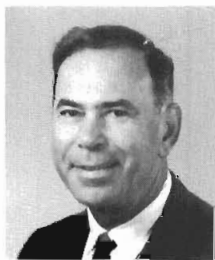
fault with Admiral Halsey's conduct. Professionalism still enjoyed some degree of status in those days, and the acknowledged experts on warfare were those in uniform. Still, the old admonition about war being too important to be left with the generals was taken somewhat to heart, and the politicians became involved, as you are aware, in military activity. After 1945 the original adage then was amended to read:

"War is too important to be left to generals and politicians." So, evidencing considerable desperation, the problem of war was turned over to the professors, where largely it rests today. I should add that the armchair strategist, the grandstand and Monday morning quarterback, has always been with us, but he was not considered respectable, enjoyed little prestige, exercised little influence over actual policy, and usually did not enjoy the sanctuary of the academic profession.

Today's defense intellectuals, as they are sometimes called, have advanced degrees, a professional academic background or affiliation, and usually function with some kind of defense institute supported largely by foundation or government funds. Among these institutions is the Rand Corporation, the so-called "think tank" at Santa Monica, Calif., which has achieved a good deal of notoriety. Sponsored by the Air Force, it has turned out a great many writings, and it has produced a number of people who are in the Defense Department today. Others such as Herman Kahn, who was a physicist originally, wrote his book *On Thermonuclear War* while he was at Rand Corporation and now heads up the Hudson Institute. A great many other people are affiliated with civilian educational institutions or with particular institutes that devote their time and effort to strategic studies. The writings of these defense intellectuals are not relegated to the obscurity of the conventional learned journals but they are widely promulgated through all of our communications media. Moreover, they are heeded by those in government who have the responsibility for determining our military policy. There are a number of reasons why this phenomenon has occurred, and I want to mention a few because I think it helps us understand the nature and character of cur-

rent thinking, and, also, I think it helps us understand why most of the literature on the subject has appeared in the United States.

## BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Dr. Raymond G. O'Connor occupies the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History at the Naval War College.

The Chair of Maritime History, named for Admiral King, was established at the Naval War College in 1953. Its occupant is appointed for a term of 1 year by the Naval War College President. The incumbent provides professional advice and guidance to the President, Chief of Staff, faculty, and students in maritime history and related subjects; he is a lecturer, seminar participant, and a consultant for student research programs; he teaches courses in maritime history both in the core curriculum and in the electives program; and he assists in curriculum planning.

Professor O'Connor holds an M.A. from The American University and a Ph.D. from Stanford University, and he attended the University of San Francisco Law School. Retired from the Navy, Professor O'Connor has served in professorial billets in History at Stanford University, the University of Kansas, the University of Costa Rica, and the University of California at Santa Barbara. In 1965 he was appointed professor of History and chairman of the Department of History at Temple University.

As Associate, Historical and Research Organization, Professor O'Connor completed a number of studies for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. His books include *Perilous Equilibrium*; *Readings in the History of American Military Policy* (editor); *Readings in Twentieth Century History* (co-editor); and *American Defense Policy in Perspective* (editor and coauthor). In addition, he has contributed numerous articles to various periodicals. His current project is *A History of American Foreign Policy, 1921-1941*, which will be volume VI in a seven-volume history of American foreign policy edited by Alexander DeConde.

In 1911 Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote a letter to Theodore Roosevelt in which he told of just reading a book by the naval historian Corbett on the Seven Years' War. In this book Mahan discerned two points which he thought were important enough to call to the attention of the former President.

First: Diplomatic conditions affect military action, and military consideration, diplomatic measures. They are inseparable parts of a whole. And as such, those responsible for military measures should understand the diplomatic factors, and vice versa. No man is fit for Chief of Staff who cannot be entrusted with the knowledge of a diplomatic situation. The Naval man also should understand military conditions and the military the naval.

The second point he made was this:

For a military establishment the distinction between a state of war and a state of peace is one of words, not of facts.

It may seem strange that Mahan should think these points of sufficient importance to bring them to the attention of one of the best informed men in the world on such matters. But these concepts were so alien to accepted doctrine in the United States that he felt compelled to do so. This situation was largely due to the fact that America, unlike most other nations, had enjoyed free security from other major powers by virtue of the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean moats, the state of armament technology, and the lack of significant military commitments abroad. This condition and this kind of thinking prevailed until after the Second World War when the United States could no longer afford the luxury of military innocence as a result of two developments: First, advances in weaponry and delivery systems which made this continent immediately vulnerable to the most destructive weapons ever devised by man; second, the as-

sumption of responsibility for protection against Communist aggression anywhere in the world. The magnitude and complexity of the problem were so great and the role was so foreign to the American experience that the military professionals seemed incapable of devising a proper strategy. It may also be that they knew too much about it, and "fools rush in," etc.

Samuel Huntington has explained the civilian interest in military strategy on the grounds that:

Military officers, by definition, have to be members of one of the armed services. Inevitably they tend to analyze strategic problems through service prisms. Early in military history this was perfectly feasible. Mahan produced a strategy of seapower and Douthett one of airpower. The cold war, however, requires strategies of massive retaliation, limited war, and graduated deterrence. The strategic categories cut across service lines. Service doctrine couched in terms of land, sea, and air were more of a hindrance than a help in the analysis of many important strategic problems.

Admiral Wylie in his recent book, *Military Strategy*, contends that strategic theory is properly the province of the scholar and the social scientist. Strategy itself may not be a science, he notes, but "strategic judgment can be scientific to the extent that it is orderly, rational, objective, inclusive, discriminatory, and perceptive." I hesitate to claim that these qualities are the exclusive province of those in the academic field, but at least Admiral Wylie seems to believe they are.

According to Bernard Roddie, "Today we can say without hesitation and with animus that the military problem is, even in its stark outlines, not only beyond the competence of any one person or group of persons, but beyond the competence of any one profession." Who else, we may ask, but the academic person would undertake such an im-

possible task? Charlie Brown once said that no problem was so great that he could not run away from it, but, of course, he was uncorrupted by higher education. Perhaps I too, in spite of my alleged erudition, have been escaping the problem, and it's time to deal with terms.

Strategy is one of the most loosely used words in our language, but we can't dismiss it on the grounds of imprecision. The term comes from the Greek *strategos* which means a military commander. But I don't intend today to run you through the gamut of etymology and semantics. Personally, I like to define strategy in three categories: First, strategy which employs the nation's resources to protect and promote its interests without war. This definition does include the use of force, although without violence since war is not present. A second category is strategy which employs the nation's resources in war toward the attainment of national goals. And third, strategy which concerns the movement and support of military forces in war prior to contact with the enemy.

As you are aware, the latter category is the one which was most popular and most often used. That is, it was used in this particular sense by military personnel until the Second World War and after. Most contemporary theorists would not accept the third category because it ignores the political objective. Also, for example, Admiral Eccles would call my first category *national strategy* and my second category *military strategy*. Liddell Hart is among those who would reject my third category on the grounds that it ignores the political end. So, essentially, the modern theorists are concerned with what Brodie calls "the intellectual no-man's-land in the sphere where military and political problems meet."

In regard to the term "concept"

I'm going to take the coward's way out and define it as a mental image or idea of how a thing should be done or established. So the mental image or idea is the key here. And as for the term "philosophy," it originally derived from the Greek meaning "love of wisdom." Bertrand Russell has defined philosophy as "talking about things we don't know." For our purposes I'm going to say that it deals with speculation. That is, an attempt to analyze and speculate about what we are not, epistemologically, in a position to be sure of. For example, it is impossible to analyze a nuclear war because none has ever been fought. Now at this point you may feel like the boy in the James Thurber cartoon who faced with an unappetizing dish at meal-time, said, "I say it's spinach, and I say to hell with it." So perhaps a modest chronological approach may be more intelligible.

Following the Second World War, and for a variety of reasons, the United States military policy was based on, actually, "massive retaliation" designed to deter the major antagonist. A large share of military expenditures went into aircraft, and our possession of the atomic bomb seemed, to the powers that were in Washington, adequate. In 1949 two things happened. Russia detonated a nuclear bomb and a hassle erupted in the United States over what was known as the B-36 controversy. Carriers were made and destroyed in the armed services during this particular debate. In 1950 a task force under Paul Nitze produced what came to be known as National Security Council Study No. 68 — not because it was produced by the Council, but because it was referred there, for deliberation and recommendation, by the President. Reaching the Council in the spring of 1950, this study urged a more balanced military structure, but the Korean war broke out before any recommendation

came from the National Security Council. The Eisenhower Administration took office in 1953 with the slogans "more bang for the buck," "liberation, not containment," and "massive retaliation." Our military policy returned to that of deterrence by the threat of nuclear annihilation of the instigator, not necessarily the perpetrator, of aggression. During the 1950's numerous studies emerged - not all from the academic community - dealing with the subject of limited war, proclaiming the need for more conventional forces, criticizing massive retaliation, and denouncing reliance on the Strategic Air Command.

The Kennedy Administration entered office committed to a military program that would embrace, as the title of the McNamara reading in your assignment indicates, the entire spectrum of defense. The nation, it was contended, must be prepared to handle wars in any dimension of magnitude, so the choice, if we were faced with a situation, would not be that of on the one hand retreat or on the other hand nuclear annihilation.

The first Kennedy budget asked for additional billions to go into the build-up of Army ground forces and intercontinental missiles. The Administration was committed to the graduated response whereby the nation would be prepared to handle any dimension of military aggression with the means appropriate for the job. The means was to be tailored, not only to the character of the opposition, but to the significance of the issue at stake. And you recall those fascinating conversations that we've heard about people sitting in the State Department or in the Department of Defense or in the White House discussing how many lives was it worth to achieve some particular political goal.

Throughout the entire post-World

War II period, a practice was followed consistently that had only been used sporadically in previous periods: namely, the overt employment of military force without violence to enforce policy. Embodying many aspects of formal deterrence, it was more comprehensive and promised positive, not merely negative, results. In other words, it was not just a reaction to a challenge, it was used in a way that would demonstrate a certain amount of initiative, and it was designed to change an existing situation. The Kennedy Administration not only implemented many of the ideas of the defense intellectuals, but it brought some of them from their plastic towers into the real world of Government. In some cases interservice rivalry was subordinated to protection against both the methodology and the conclusions of the long-haired, egghead professors. Systems analysis and cost effectiveness reverberated through the corridors of the Pentagon, and one disgruntled officer grumbled that IBM stood for, "I, Bob McNamara."

The concepts that govern our present defense policy are dealt with in the readings for this assignment, so there's no point in my trying to summarize them here. I do want to mention something about certain first strike, second strike theories and, presumably, practices. For many years the United States did endorse the policy of second strike, namely, that we would not be the first nation to launch a nuclear attack. Officially, some believe this is still our policy. Yet we have evidence that on at least two occasions President Kennedy did state that we would launch a first strike if conditions were such that he believed an attack by the Soviet Union was imminent. According to Hugh Sidey in his book, *John F. Kennedy: President*, the President assured De Gaulle when he met with him in

Paris that the United States would not wait for a launching of a first strike by the Soviet Union. If, he said, we were really convinced that the Soviet Union intended to make a conventional attack on Europe, we would launch a nuclear strike. Apparently De Gaulle was not convinced, and Kennedy obviously was trying to hold NATO together at that time.

At this point we are dealing with what some authorities call "preventive war and preemptive war." And there is a distinction between the two. The first contends that a nation should strike if it believes that in the foreseeable future it may be attacked or it may run into a situation where a war will develop. The second pertains to a situation where you believe that an attack is imminent and you strike before the other fellow does. There is some argument at the present time as to whether the Israeli action this summer against the Arab countries was a preemptive or a preventive strike. This depends a lot, I guess, on one's sympathies. It depends in part, too, on how you interpret the information we get as to what went on in the Israeli Cabinet. In any event, those are two important distinctions that are made by many of the theorists, and they're hotly debated in the higher echelons, not only of defense institutions, but also in the Government.

Now I'd like to devote the remainder of the time to a brief account of some of the work that is being done in the field of warfare. And I should point out that it has been reliably concluded that over 100,000 pieces of literature, articles, reports, and books have been written on the subject in recent years. And this does not account for classified studies. Also, as I mentioned before, most of this work has been done in the United States. One of the more notable exceptions is the Institute for Strategic

Studies in London headed by Alistair Buchan. Another is the Institut Français d'Études Stratégiques with its provocative director, General André Beaufre. The literature on thermonuclear and nuclear war — what some refer to as general war or total war — has been considerable, but it has not been conclusive, and it has not been unanimous in its findings or conclusions. When the United States had a monopoly in bombs and delivery systems, there was moralizing about their use and criticism of a reliance on them to deter aggression. When the Soviet Union began to catch up, it was popular to believe that the war would be over in 3 days and the destruction would result in an automatic cessation. You didn't have to worry about what some people call today "conflict termination" because the very nature of the war itself would ensure its end. During this period President Eisenhower warned that "there is no alternative to peace," and Walter Millis described the situation as the hypertrophy of war. Many thought that since, demonstrably, war was no longer socially useful by any stretch of the imagination, it would not recur.

In the midst of alarm over what was popularly referred to as "the balance of terror," Oskar Morgenstern, an expert in the mathematics of game theory, saw hope for peace in the establishment of what he called "invulnerable retaliatory forces" by both camps, so each side would be secure in the knowledge that a surprise attack would not be decisive. An essential element in creating this security, he felt, was the immediate implementation of a vast and necessarily expensive civil defense program to insure that the population would survive a thermonuclear attack. The retaliatory forces themselves would consist primarily of guided missiles against which no de-

fense did exist, and he thought that the least vulnerable of launching platforms was the nuclear-powered submarine. Neither side, then, would be likely to risk attack with the knowledge that sure, instant, and devastating retaliation would follow. He went on to say that with the creation of a thermonuclear stalemate the prospect of limited war would emerge. Here the nature and extent of the conflict, he concluded, must be determined by the aims or objectives which should be defined and declared at the outset. In this way the chances of hostilities expanding or escalating would be minimized. Morgenstern cautioned that "mathematical rigor in these areas is not to be expected." But history, he said, furnished examples where armed conflict had been confined to the achievement of limited ends.

In some respects Morgenstern was going along with those who felt that massive retaliation had been emasculated as an instrument of policy by the Soviet Union's growing power massively to retaliate on the United States. It was then argued that if it were discovered that a nuclear attack had been launched against this country, there would be no point in retaliating since no political end could be served, and we might as well save as many lives as possible. This contention was not well received because it would destroy the efficacy of deterrence which most authorities agreed depended on credibility. As Raymond Aron has noted, "One cannot maintain that the thermonuclear holocaust is too horrible for anyone to launch it and at the same time count on the effectiveness of this threat in most circumstances."

Thomas Schelling, another exponent of games theory, deals with decision-making conditions of uncertainty, where the decisions of one side depend on the decisions of the other. Since

game theory is a subject with which I am not too familiar, I want to quote what I think is one of the briefest, most concise, and clearest accounts or definitions of game theory and its significance.

The matrices of game theory render at least three services to the political scientist. They oblige him to accept the kind of discipline of thought, to analyze and enumerate all possible eventualities in a given situation. They help him to construct ideal types of circumstances of conflict, for example, games with two players,  $n$  number of players, zero sum games and non zero sum games. They permit the abstract formulation of the dialectic of antagonism. Decisions are not taken with regard to a future about which we know nothing, nor with regard to a future in which each event is unknown to us, but in which the approximate frequency of the various classes of events is known to us. The strategic decisions constitute a chain, each decision provokes the following and the latter tends to counteract the preceding one. The chess player moves a pawn in response to the movement of an adverse pawn. The strategist opposes his enemy in a similar fashion.

At this point you should be fully acquainted with the role of game theory in military strategy and in political science.

I do want to emphasize that a great many of the people working in the field of political science, political analysis, studies of war, use game theory. They use game theory, too, in conjunction with the so-called quantification process. This methodology has become very popular in the social sciences, and one of the foremost groups is located at Stanford University where, for a number of years, the analysis of the causes or the reasons for the outbreak of war has been going on. Analyzed on a quantitative basis, that is, and what they're trying to do and what they seem to come up with are



## 10 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

some conclusions regarding the tensions that actually create a state of where so often, especially in the case of World War I, let us say, none of the nations really wanted a war, but the tensions arose for a variety of reasons to such a point that war did occur. And these people, Robert North and Ole Holsti, Richard Brodic, and others — I sometimes refer to them as misplaced historians — quote with approval from a book by Paul Horst entitled *Matrix Algebra for Social Scientists*, in which he says the only way to judge what will happen in the future is by what has happened in the past. "Other things being equal," he declares, "the more frequently things have happened in the past, the more sure you will be they will happen in the future." Continuing this theme he notes that "prediction depends always upon knowledge, and knowledge is necessarily an offspring of the past. This principle is basic not only to science but to all knowledge, and herein lies the crucial importance of history, in one form or another, to all the social sciences." Now these are political scientists who are speaking, they are quantifiers, they are not humanists, as some historians think they are, and they are respected among political scientists even though they do attach a good deal of importance to history.

Well, I want to return to Schelling's ideas, where, as I said, he's dealing with decisions made under conditions of uncertainty, where the decisions on one side depend on the decisions of the other. And I refer you again to that quote on the significance of game theory and the way it works.

Deterrence, Schelling says, is an active principle of life, and he sees it everywhere — in our daily life, children's activities, and the like. The trick, he says, is to get one's way without actually resorting to violence. What

he calls arms control is, in his words, "really an effort to take a long overdue step toward recognizing the role of military force in the modern world. Arms control," he goes on to say, "is a recognition that nearly all serious diplomacy involves sanctions, coercion, and assurances involving some kind of power or force and that a main function of military forces is to influence the behavior of other countries, not simply to spend itself on their destruction." He is interested in arms control as well as disarmament. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably, but it's the controlling of violence and it's the controlling of the means whereby violence is developed and carried out that he stresses. And he sees this in terms of establishing what disarmament tried to do in the 1920's and 1930's. What was then called disarmament was the limitation of armaments, and the essential point was to establish an equilibrium of military power whereby no nation would be capable of launching aggression on another nation with a clear prospect of success.

At the height of the controversy over "the ultimate weapon," Herman Kahn's book *On Thermonuclear War* appeared, to be greeted either with enthusiasm or disgust. One reviewer referred to the author as "Genghis Kahn," because of what the reviewer regarded as Kahn's coldblooded approach to megadeaths — millions of deaths — and the like. Kahn, frightening everyone with statistical accounts of these megadeaths and the genetic effects of radiation, argued that "despite a widespread belief to the contrary, objective studies indicate that even though the amount of human tragedy would be greatly increased in the postwar world, the increase would not preclude normal and happy lives for the majority of the survivors and their descendants." Asking the question, "Will the living envy the dead?"

he concluded, no, the living would not envy the dead because actually the conditions under which they lived would be tolerable and presumably better than death. Also, Kahn assured his readers that, "War is likely to continue a few days after the first strike and then terminate probably by negotiation." This was sort of, again as I said earlier, an assumption that the war would not continue after the bombs had been delivered and exploded. Following this book Kahn wrote on thinking about the unthinkable, and then he wrote a careful and detailed study of the process of escalation.

Meanwhile, Soviet military thinking was based on the proposition that the war would actually be won *after* the nuclear strike and that it would be won by conventional forces. This made sense in a European environment where we could not possibly provide adequate troops for a followup. And, of course, Soviet troops would not need to invade the United States in order to secure their objective which, at that time, appeared to be the control of Europe. Which brings us to the question of whether a war could be waged using only conventional and tactical nuclear weapons. Henry Kissinger in his book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* published in 1957 - - and this book achieved a good deal of notoriety — thought that it could. He believed that the use of tactical nuclear weapons would not invariably or inevitably lead to escalation to all-out nuclear war. Yet in a later book called *Necessity for Choice*, Kissinger changed his mind. Soviet military writers also have taken different positions on the question, although a recent article in *Pravda* reported in our press last week indicated that the Russians believe that the use of tactical nukes will inevitably lead to an all-out nuclear war, a feeling that evidently prevails at the decision-

making level in our Government. Yet Bernard Brodie in his recent book, *Escalation and the Nuclear Option*, deplores what he calls the "downgrading" of tactical nukes and the reluctance to use them. He suggests that if they had been employed early in the Vietnam war we would no longer have our problems there.

One of the more prolific schools of strategy is the Foreign Policy Institute of the University of Pennsylvania, headed by Dr. Robert Strausz-Hupé. Through its journal *Orbis* and a host of books, this school has expounded the doctrine of "protracted conflict," a term admittedly borrowed from the Communists. Their contention -- and what follows is largely in their own words -- begins with the premise that "we can but surmise that destiny has placed us in the midst of a revolutionary epoch, comparable on a global scale to those which embraced the passing of the city-state, the fall of Rome, and the breakdown of European feudalism." They go on to say that since 1945 the West was willing to give a round and take a round. If the West won a round, as for example in Korea or Jordan, it was in the defense of the status quo. When the Communists won a round, as for example in Czechoslovakia, China, Indochina, and the Middle East, they gained access to ground previously closed to them. In most of Asia and in some measure in most underdeveloped lands, the forces of history, as they put it, are not on the side of the West, they actually favor the Communists. In the face of these hostile tides, the West can only hope to defeat the Communists by learning to counter the strategy of protracted conflict — to manage, they say, to manage conflict in space and time. According to the Communist doctrine of protracted conflict, war, politics, diplomacy, law, psychology, science, and

## 12 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

economics all form a continuum and all are closely integrated in the conduct of foreign policy. The Western people derive strength from the free interplay of various points of view. By contrast, the Communist bloc can be likened to an organism seeking to respond to individual situations on behalf of the entire organism, rather than of its individual parts incapable of speaking with a single voice. They go on to say that the logic of the emerging world conveys an inescapable conflict between communism and the free world — a conflict which inheres in the basic principles on which each system is founded. The struggle was and remains inescapable. Conceivably, the resolution of the struggle in total war may be inescapable.

The duel between the United States and the Soviet Union, then, resolves itself, in the long run, into a contest between two social systems. The implication is that should the United States win the contest in the nonviolent stage in regard to economic competition, ideological competition, political competition, social competition, and what have you, that if the United States should win in all these dimensions, then the Communists will resort to war in order to prevent a final American victory. Therefore, some people conclude, if you follow this particular strategy or theory you might just as well go to war now and get it over with rather than going through the long, tortuous process of defeating the Communists in the nonviolent dimensions of competitions, only to find that you have to defeat them finally with violence. So there are individuals who disagree with the theory of protracted conflict, in part, on those particular grounds.

Now to deal briefly with this question of limited war. Not a great deal of study was done in this country about limited war, surprisingly enough, until

the middle 1950's. One would think that the situation that arose in Korea and the dispute between the President and the general would have provoked more theory earlier on the topic of limited war. Actually it wasn't until the middle 1950's that much literature began to appear. Robert Osgood's book *Limited War* was not published until 1957. At present, an enormous amount of literature on this subject exists.

Until 1959 the official Pentagon definition of general war and limited war was as follows: "General war is a conflict in which the forces of the United States and the U.S.S.R. are directly involved and in which atomic weapons are assumed to be used from the outset. Limited war is a conflict short of general war in which United States forces will use atomic weapons as required to achieve national objectives." So atomic weapons, tactical atomic weapons, should fit into, and did fit into, the definition of limited war as accepted by the Department of Defense up to that time.

In a recent book entitled *The Meaning of Limited War*, Ambassador McClintock defines the term as follows:

Limited war is a conflict short of general war to achieve specific political objectives, using limited forces and limited force. As between the great nuclear powers, the maintenance of the global strategic nuclear balance of power would preclude the use of strategic nuclear weapons, and fear of escalation would inhibit the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

So he rules out any type of nuclear weapons in the framework of limited war. Submitting this definition to the Department of Defense, he was advised that current nomenclature separated guerrilla warfare and unconventional warfare from limited war.

Robert Osgood contends that a limited war is one in which "the dimen-

sions of military force should be proportionate to the value of the objectives at stake." And another authority defined a limited war as "one for a specific objective which by its very existence will establish a certain commensurability between the force employed and the goal to be attained." These last two quotations are from the writings of civilian theorists, and, unlike the previous definitions, you will notice that it's not necessarily the amount of force that determines a limited war, although this is significant. More important is the correlation of that force with the objective. The dimension of military force should be proportionate to the value of the goal at stake.

At this point we enter the realm of value determination. It may be simple enough for us to decide whether a particular product warrants a diversion of funds from our personal budget. If the item is "worth" the allocation we'll make the purchase: if not, we won't. So this is what these people are arguing. How important is this particular piece of land? How important is this particular objective? How many lives are we willing to sacrifice? How much money are we willing to spend? How much of a commitment are we willing to make? So you try to correlate your means with your ends. And this is one of the essential points in limited war according to many of the civilian theorists. Now, how does a government calculate the worth of an objective in lives, money, and effort? Also, there's a question as to whether one should announce in advance how much of an investment will be made, because revealing one's intentions in this regard could be fatal. Finally, and what in my opinion is the most significant criticism of this particular definition and approach, the amount of force necessary to achieve a political

goal is determined by the antagonist, who might well believe that the stakes warrant an unlimited effort on his part. The extent and nature of the force required is seldom clear at the outset, and internal or limited wars are rarely stable. The cost of the conflict and the dangers inherent in its continuing may expand out of all proportion to the desired end and produce attendant difficulties in its prosecution. I'm not trying to read anything into current events, but we can go back to the American Revolution and look at it from the point of another country, also from the point of a few men who started shooting at British troops as they were retreating, or we can go on to Mexico, where President Polk had a very nice clear-cut idea of the strategy of the war, how he wanted to wage it, and how much it would cost. But the Mexican Government wouldn't cooperate. They wanted to fight more than Polk thought that they should in terms of the issues at stake.

To reiterate, the antagonist, not the objective, is going to determine the cost of the war and the effort required. If the conflict should get out of hand or out of proportion with the desired end, the Government will then be faced with two distasteful alternatives, either of which could have disastrous consequences. The initial aims may be small, but the failure to achieve these aims, especially by a third party whose prestige and power are on the line, can have enormous repercussions. Where the will of a great nation is being tested, the feeling of resistance may be unlimited. I think we see this phenomenon especially in the context of so-called "proxy wars," where instead of the direct confrontation between or among the great powers we do have them confronting each other through what some would call satellites and others would call proxy states. In this

## 14 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

particular connection I might mention something that Mao Tse-tung has emphasized, because it bears directly on this proxy war issue. He said, "It is impossible for a genuine people's revolution to win victory in any country without various forms of help from the international revolutionary forces. And even if victory were won, it could not be consolidated." So here you have much of the theory of proxy war in regard to the Communists, the thinking behind so-called national wars of liberation, and the kind of commitments that the Soviet Union would make in order to support them. So we do have, as I say, a multitude of writing on the question of limited war in regard to means, in regard to ends, in regard to the correlation of the ends and the means, especially when a proxy war situation prevails.

Now to continue with the developments, or let's say the speculation about strategy, I want to refer again to this recent study entitled *Military Strategy* written by Rear Admiral Wylie. Decrying "the fact that strategy . . . is such a disorganized, undisciplined intellectual activity," he exhorts scholars to put this field in order. Strategy, he writes, is "A plan of action designed in order to achieve some end. A purpose, together with a system of measures for its accomplishment." As you can see, his definition is actually much broader than those that I've used or that most of the current strategists use, because he is not including one of what many of them think is the necessary element, namely, the use of force. Admiral Wylie goes on to briefly analyze the major conventional theories of strategy: The maritime, as expounded by Mahan; airpower, with Douhet as its prophet; the continental, which he identifies with Clausewitz; and guerrilla doctrine as elucidated by Mao. After surveying these various theories,

Admiral Wylie points out their shortcomings and postulates some propositions for a general theory that will apply to all dimensions of human conflict and human effort.

One area of investigation that has not had the attention it deserves concerns the vexing problem of conflict termination. Of particular interest because of the frustrating situation in Vietnam, the question of how wars end is perennial. You recall that I have mentioned some opinion regarding the conclusion of nuclear war, and a lack of unanimity is obvious. Contributing to the confusion that characterizes the study of conflict termination is the high-voltage word "victory." Meaning all things to all men, indiscriminately applied in a historical sense, and often viewed as the ultimate solution, the word "victory" has served to obscure the very purpose of war. Carrying with it an almost exclusively military connotation, its use has tended to gloss over the complexities involved in concluding a war and the factors to be considered when trying to bring hostilities to a successful conclusion. The appeal of "victory" has discouraged effective consideration of the differences or similarities, and there appear to be many, between terminating a general war, a limited war, a guerrilla war, a war of national liberation, or an insurrection. A landmark in this field is a book called *Strategic Surrender* written by Paul Kecskemeti of the Rand Corporation. Analyzing four major surrenders (or victories) that took place during World War II, the author reaches some provocative but not universally accepted conclusions. News of this work created a stir in Congress, where it was felt that Government funds should not support studies dealing with topics anathema to the American people.

Before concluding this superficial

and incomplete account of current strategic thinking, it might be well to mention something about fundamentals, namely, whether man is inherently, instinctively addicted to war. This has become a very popular topic of discussion among the sophisticated. Robert Ardrey in his book *African Genesis* claims that man's ancestor — a sort of half animal, half man — did kill with a weapon. Since this ancestor used weapons, then the use of weapons is one of man's instincts, built into his genes. In a later book, *The Territorial Imperative*, Ardrey contends that a desire for land is basic and leads to conflict. Konrad Lorenz' *On Aggression* concludes from a study of animal behavior that aggression is inherent in man. Yet an article in Sunday's *New York Times Magazine* takes issue with these authors and argues that, as the title contends, "War is not in our genes." So the dispute over heredity versus environment goes on. But the question is basic to a study of conflict among humans, and it seems unlikely that a comprehensive general theory of strategy can be formulated unless it includes this aspect of man's nature.

And, finally, we might look briefly to a type of game theory different from that employed by most of the strategic thinkers. Labeling certain techniques "gamesmanship" and "one-upmanship," Stephen Potter wrote on the theme of winning without actually cheating. For example, when playing golf against an opponent of equal ability you want to win, but you don't want to do anything that would be unsport-

ing. So instead of irritating him by spending a lot of time looking for *your* lost ball, you spend a lot of time looking for *his* lost ball. So, gamesmanship or one-upmanship has something to it, certain people believe.

Eric Berne's book, *Games People Play*, has been on the best seller list for two years. In it he contends that people tend to live their lives by consistently playing out certain games in their interpersonal relationships. They play these games for a variety of reasons: to avoid confronting reality, to conceal ulterior motives, to rationalize their activities, or to avoid actual participation. In what he calls "a thesaurus of games," he has listed a number that people play. Among them are such intriguing, albeit vicious, pastimes such as "Why Does This Always Happen To Me?" and "Now I've Got You, You Son of a Bitch."

It is very difficult to end this deadly topic on a humorous note, especially when the sign of our functionally oriented times is epitomized in the advertisement, "For home use, combination air raid shelter and mausoleum." But we should bear in mind the admonition of George Washington many years ago: "If we desire to secure peace . . . it must be known that we are at all times ready for war." The primary purpose of a government is to provide for the safety and security of the people. What it takes to perform this task and why we want to do what we think we must do are the questions which the strategists are trying to answer.

