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JOMINI AND NAVAL SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

An Applied-Competition Approach to Russia

Kevin D. Stringer

The return of theater-wide competition in Europe with a revanchist Russia presents challenges to U.S. national-security interests. Addressing these challenges would benefit from the strategic thought of Baron Antoine-Henri de Jomini, a celebrated Swiss-born Napoleonic officer and one of the first modern theorists of war.¹ A potential path for the U.S. military to compete effectively against Russia in the European theater, while preparing for potential combat operations, resides in extracts from Jomini's operational theory of warfare applied to the maritime domain. Jomini's writings on campaigning and his "rectangular template" for gaining theater advantage offer a model for the United States to confront Russia's asymmetric and "gray zone" threats in Europe.²

The European theater is highly significant for Russian national security. On land, besides offering direct and historical invasion routes into Russia's interior, eastern Europe was a traditional sphere of Russian influence dating to tsarist times. In the

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modern era, the adjacent maritime regions have taken on greater strategic importance. The Barents Sea and White Sea are the cornerstones of Russia's power projection into the Arctic.³ In the Baltic Sea, Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, several U.S. NATO allies, concerned neutral states, and wider European security and energy interests all converge.⁴ The Black and Caspian Seas touch several Russian national-security interests and serve as platforms for ongoing Russian political and military activities in Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, Central Asia, and the

wider Middle East. Russia continues to expand the size and capability of its Caspian Sea flotilla to serve further competitive adventurism in the region.⁵ Finally, eastern Europe's riverine network provides direct access into the Russian heartland via the Dnieper, Don, and Volga feeder rivers.

Given the strategic importance of Europe's maritime environment to Russia, a U.S. competition and battlefield-preparation campaign built on irregular warfare and Jominian concepts, and leveraging U.S. naval special-warfare expertise as part of a family of integrated and low-visibility or light-footprint capabilities—such as subsurface intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) methods and cyber actions—well may be the decisive approach to gaining an advantage over Russia prior to conflict. As noted by General Tod Wolters, Commander, U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, “Every day, [European Command] and NATO compete to challenge and counter Russia's *below-the-threshold* strategy, and to counterbalance the multi-faceted and capable military power which underwrite[s] its malign approach.”⁶ Jomini's campaigning theory, in combination with maritime special-operations capabilities, suggests a convincing maritime approach for supporting these efforts to contest Russia's malign activity in Europe while remaining below the level of armed conflict, and supporting a broader conventional effort to prepare a possible future war-fighting environment in a manner consistent with the Department of Defense's approach for using irregular warfare to secure advantages during peacetime and prior to potential conflicts.⁷

This article will first highlight the vexing nature of “gray zone” competition against Russia for the U.S. military in Europe and contrast this with Russia's own adroitness. It then will distill the concepts from Jomini's theory of campaigning that are pertinent to competing with Russia and apply them to a proposed maritime irregular-warfare campaign framework. These concepts include theater objectives, lines of effort, a rectangular template for organizing and applying forces, and measures of effectiveness. From this foundation, I develop an operational approach using naval special-warfare capabilities and a suite of special operations forces-enabled cyber and enhanced ISR capabilities for conducting several peacetime missions against Russian activities: understanding the environment through special reconnaissance; preparing the environment to enable the military to transition rapidly from peacetime to combat operations, if needed; and performing active naval diplomacy measures, for both deterrent and coercive effect. This path offers a mechanism to move the U.S. defense establishment from contemplating competition to acting. It is also a step toward addressing findings in government-sponsored analysis that “more emphasis should be placed on developing operational-level guidance for employing special operations forces (SOF) in competition below armed conflict,” specifically

in the European theater.⁸ This emphasis is needed to provide greater clarity for the future training and resourcing of special operations forces for their missions against great-power adversaries, which are different in many respects from the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency focus of the past two decades.

THE CHALLENGE OF COMPETITION AND GRAY-ZONE OPERATIONS

The 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy declared that “[i]nter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.”⁹ The Biden administration’s 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance continues this policy thread and outlines an agenda for the United States “to prevail in strategic competition.”¹⁰

The concept of great-power competition raises three vexing issues for the U.S. military. First, the definition and contours of competition remain amorphous. There is a lack of consensus and agreement among various schools of traditional international-relations thought on great-power competition and what it means for the United States. A 2018 study postulates that there is no consensus on the definition of *competition* among states and assesses that little U.S. analysis or forethought has been given to the characteristics of this emergent era.¹¹ While this latter point may be an extreme conclusion, it nevertheless suggests a lack of clarity in U.S. national-security approaches to competition.

Second, the national-security goals and strategy for competing against other great powers are nebulous. Amid this uncertainty, the U.S. military is exhorted to “adopt a better framework for understanding, describing, and participating within a competitive operational environment.”¹² The current notion of great-power competition, though, offers little prescription and unclear direction for U.S. defense policy.¹³

Third, the assumed primacy of nonmilitary activities in competition raises questions about the application of military power to compete with adversaries and the appropriate nesting of military capabilities within a broader whole-of-government approach. Russia’s “gray zone operations are a form of coercion that mix conventional and unconventional military activities with other security forces and non-military actions—like diplomacy, influence operations, and economic pressures.”¹⁴ U.S. Defense Department guidance asserts that the military element of national power needs to find its role and approach to remain below the level of armed conflict while creating strategic opportunities for the U.S. interagency and allies.¹⁵ The preceding points highlight the lack of direction, understanding, and focus within the U.S. national-security establishment on how to apply military power effectively to compete against Russia without precipitous escalation.

In contrast, Russia appears to operate effectively in this gray competitive space, given its strategic culture, historical experience, and limitations as a great power. The Kremlin employs a mixture of national-power instruments to exploit and achieve temporal and regional advantages while avoiding its targets' thresholds for armed conflict.¹⁶ With the perspective that competition is an integral element of the "permanent state of war" mentality that some analysts believe characterizes Russian national-security thinking on interstate relations, Russia employs a set of hybrid means to attempt to destabilize relevant countries and weaken both U.S. influence and the NATO alliance.¹⁷ As General Wolters noted, this "*below-the-threshold of armed conflict* strategy via proxies and intermediary forces . . . attempt[s] to weaken, divide, and intimidate [U.S.] Allies and partners using a range of covert, difficult-to-attribute, and malign actions."¹⁸ President Vladimir Putin's modern empire-building effort to restore Russian prestige and great-power status does not rely solely on military power but includes a "postmodern" mix of political blackmail and subversion, information and cyber operations, economic leverage and financial intimidation, and military sales and exercises.¹⁹ This mix is not new, and much of it flows from the legacy of Soviet "active measures" dating to the Bolshevik Revolution and the Cold War.²⁰

Russia has demonstrated these methods in Georgia, Ukraine, Syria, Libya, and the High North. In Georgia, Moscow initiated a passport-distribution scheme in 2002 to create "Russian citizens" in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions who later could be instrumentalized as "oppressed minorities" leading up to the August 2008 Russo-Georgian war. This consular effort was accompanied later by cyber denial-of-service attacks launched from Russian servers that paralyzed Georgian government websites prior to the conventional conflict.²¹ In Ukraine, the Kremlin used information operations to shape and control a pro-Russian narrative of the 2013–14 Maidan revolution and subsequent takeover of Crimea and contested occupation of the Donbas region. Armies of Russian bloggers, journalists, and propagandists sustained a social media campaign designed to undermine pro-Western Ukrainian actors, create fear within the pro-Russian population, and obscure Russian irregular-warfare activity by proxy forces in Crimea.²² These operations often had primacy over more-conventional military activities.

In Syria, Russia has used proxies effectively to steady the Assad regime.²³ Specifically, Russia's use of operatives from the Wagner Group, a private military company—many recruited from among former intelligence-services personnel and military veterans—allowed Russia to attack U.S. and coalition forces in Syria in February 2018 while maintaining plausible deniability.²⁴ Similarly, in Libya, Russia expanded its use of deniable proxies from the Wagner Group

to advise Libyan National Army troops as well as to engage in direct combat operations. These efforts enhance Russia's geopolitical leverage in the Mediterranean beyond its Syrian naval bases while obscuring official Russian government involvement.²⁵

Finally, in the maritime domain, particularly in the High North, Russia has continued opportunities for mischief by applying subversive measures on geographically isolated islands, undersea cables, energy supplies, and commercial supply chains through front companies, proxies, and dual-use commercial vessels.²⁶ These ambiguous Russian activities can be nested in the concepts promulgated by the Russian chief of the general staff Valery Gerasimov in widely cited remarks published in February 2013, in which he urged a new formulation of doctrine and tactics to win the wars of the twenty-first century, where the lines between war and peace are blurred.²⁷ Russia's gray-zone operations can be combatted, and perhaps even reversed, by applying Jominian principles to an irregular-warfare framework to develop an operational approach that applies naval special-operations tools against Russia in the European theater's maritime competitive space.

JOMINIAN THEORY AND A MARITIME CAMPAIGN FRAMEWORK

Russian power can be confronted and contained using principles of strategic organization that Jomini outlined in his best-known work, *Summary of the Art of War*.²⁸ If one abstracts Russia's broad strategic efforts and superimposes them on the geographic Eurasian landmass, Jomini's principles of geometry, strategic points, and force provide an analytical framework that illuminates the options for integrating naval and other special operations forces into a synchronized, theater-level campaign.²⁹ Like Clausewitz and *On War*, Jomini is often ambiguous about his theory of warfare, requiring interpretation for modern application.³⁰ Also, Jomini's theory was developed in a nineteenth-century context that was characterized by well-defined conditions of peace and war. This consideration may limit the full application of his ideas to current gray-zone operations, but—considering the Russian national-security perspective that interstate relations are a permanent and fluid state of war, and that the current conflict with the United States and the West is being fought across multiple domains, albeit for the most part in a nonlethal fashion—Jominian principles may be more relevant than expected.³¹ In particular, Jomini's ideas on campaigning, a rectangular template for theater operations, and a concentration on decisive strategic points provide a basis for conceptualizing a special operations-centered maritime irregular-warfare campaign against Russia in the European area of operations.

For Jomini, the campaign was a central element of warfare requiring careful planning and preparation, in which the commander's main objective was to

dominate his assigned zone of operations or theater.³² Jomini further characterized the operational theater as “the territory upon which the parties may assail each other.”³³ In modern terms, this territory is the geographic area where adversaries engage either in competition below the threshold of conflict or in actual war. Consistent with giving primacy to the campaign and emphasizing the theater of operations, Jomini was spatially oriented. He believed that “[s]trategy is the art of making war upon the map and comprehends the whole theater of operations.”³⁴ To gain theater advantage and domination, Jomini theorized what I call a “rectangular template” for visualizing his recommended operational approach, writing, “If every theater of war forms a figure presenting four faces more or less regular, one of the armies, at the opening of the campaign, may hold one of these faces . . . while the enemy occupies the other. . . . The different ways of occupying this theater will lead to widely different combinations.” Jomini’s prescription for domination was to control at least two, and potentially three, sides of this rectangle to wrest control and advantage from an adversary. A commander achieved this control by identifying and controlling decisive strategic points relative to the theater rectangle. These decisive strategic points, often geographic, were characterized by some enduring military significance for the theater and the military operations within its boundaries. Jomini further indicated that some of these strategic locations possessed a high political value and termed these sites “political objective points.” For Jomini, success implied concentrating forces at these decisive points to dominate the theater rectangle while taking the initiative to keep an opponent off balance.³⁵

Applied to twenty-first-century conditions and within a campaign framework, Jomini’s theoretical concepts illustrate a path to gain theater advantage over Russia’s gray-zone campaigns for influence in Europe. First, if the Jominian theater aim is to “dominate the assigned zone of operations,” then U.S. theater objectives in maritime competition should be the disruption of Russian activities that are below the threshold of war while gaining the initiative in that competitive space and imposing greater costs on Russian actions.

Placing Jomini’s rectangular template over eastern Europe—the target of most of Russia’s hybrid activity—suggests that the most promising locations for strategic efforts exist primarily within the maritime space (see map). Russia holds its north–south baseline on the east side of the rectangle and the U.S. and NATO allies hold the north–south baseline on the western face. The other two faces are largely maritime corridors. The northern west–east face includes the Baltic, Barents, and White Seas, and the southern face consists of the Black and Caspian Seas. Both faces’ respective littoral doorways provide Jominian opportunities to influence the other two faces of the rectangle and gain the competitive initiative

A PROPOSED JOMINIAN RECTANGULAR TEMPLATE FOR GRAY-ZONE COMPETITION IN EUROPE



by surveilling, disrupting, or dislocating Russian activities while remaining below the level of armed conflict.

Russia has a long landmass border of approximately 4,700 miles stretching from Norway to Azerbaijan, flanked by these maritime access points in the Barents and White Seas and the Baltic, Black, and Caspian Seas, including their related rivers and estuaries. Although U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine ground units conduct frequent deterrence activities along the Russian land border, often with allies and partners, the land portion of this border is more restrictive for U.S. disruptive competitive action owing to political, military, and legal restraints and escalation considerations.

In contrast, the maritime avenues offer the best ingress and access points into Russian areas of interest and influence with legal and political space that avoids the unacceptable escalatory risks of acting across sovereign land boundaries. This operational approach would adhere to two relevant Jominian principles. The first is to maneuver forces to threaten strategic decisive points, specifically on the flanks and near the base of power.³⁶ Maneuver in the competitive space

implies activities relying on access and relationships that prepare the environment to allow for a rapid transition by the U.S. military into offensive combat operations if needed. The maritime environment provides international navigational rights in the Barents, White, Baltic, and Black Seas, which offer the flexibility to approach Russia's strategic decisive points in its littoral regions in a manner that the land borders with Russia do not permit. Additionally, the littoral regions offer a surfeit of strategic decisive points, or targets of interest, including the Kola Peninsula, the Baltic islands, Crimea, and the mouth of the Don River.

These points host critical infrastructure and strategic forces that are essential to Russian national defense, and special operations forces' peacetime operations near these points can provide greater situational awareness and understanding of these nodes for numerous purposes, ranging from early warning to preparation for contingency operations. (Given the Caspian Sea's inland location, a coastal state would have to grant access, which involves some diplomatic relationships that presently are challenging for the United States.) Additionally, in his section in the *Art of War* on "descents," Jomini mentions maritime operations as being valuable "[t]o make a diversion, at once political and military," to distract or impose costs on an enemy.³⁷ While Jomini's comments refer to operations in actual conflict, this principle has validity for maritime operations during peacetime competition as well. Finally, while one can argue that cyber and information operations are unconstrained by physical borders and make them irrelevant, these activities are not stand-alone as currently practiced, but instead generally are linked to an accessible physical domain—air, land, or sea—to achieve desired effects. In the case of Russia, the maritime domain seems to offer the best opportunities for access and maneuver at lower escalation risk and can be used to amplify the political effects of cyber and information operations.

Jomini does not directly discuss in the *Art of War* how to assess a campaign's success in the modern sense, since in his era victory in combat and the occupation of territory were the marks of effectiveness.³⁸ Nevertheless, by applying his principles to a modern competition campaign, measures of effectiveness would be indicated and derived from changes in Russian activities and behavior in the respective maritime regions of interest and near the identified decisive strategic points, as a result of U.S. naval special-operations activity. Qualitative assessment of Russian reactions to U.S. activities and an estimation of the costs imposed could be initial criteria for evaluation. These measures would be developed further as the campaign and force experience progressed. To convert any proposed campaign objectives, lines of effort, and measures of effectiveness into action, an operational approach for naval maritime special

operations forces provides the application of special-operations capabilities to exploit Russia's maritime flanks strategically.

NAVAL SPECIAL-WARFARE OPERATIONAL APPROACH

An operational approach (what U.S. military planners call “ways”) is simply a description of the broad actions the military must take to achieve the desired objectives (known as “ends”).³⁹ This section sketches out the operational approach for naval special operations to execute a Jominian irregular-warfare campaign to achieve several competitive objectives: disrupt Russian activities occurring below the threshold of war; gain initiative in the competitive space; impose greater costs on Russian actions; and prepare the theater for potential combat operations. According to Lieutenant General James Dubik, USA (Ret.), and Nic Vincent, from a military perspective success in interstate competition requires operating in the gray zone with low-signature, nimble, and rapidly deployable forces.⁴⁰ This outlook implies using special operations forces for competition because of their low visibility, small-footprint profile, and expertise in close-in maritime and riverine access. Special operations forces and naval special warfare have powerful, flexible tools that can be integrated across the full range of conflict and operations, as part of whole-of-government efforts, and with partner nations and U.S. allies to deter Russian activities of concern.

Besides U.S. naval special-warfare units' unique capabilities in maritime close access and placement, they possess equipment ranging from a family of low-visibility, multimission surface and subsurface tactical craft to sophisticated signals and communications gear.⁴¹ The proposed irregular-warfare campaign would use a dedicated naval special warfare group and its enablers, in conjunction with other U.S. agencies to provide both cyber and ISR support. Implementing the Jominian approach advocated in and around the Baltic, Black, Caspian, and Barents and White Seas would include the following: conducting special reconnaissance to understand the maritime environment better; executing special missions for the preparation of the environment for eventual combat operations; and performing visible information operations as a subset of naval diplomatic measures to support more-cogent counter-Russia or pro-U.S. and -NATO narratives. The first two missions mentioned directly support preparing for potential combat operations, while the last contributes to competition below the threshold of conflict.

Special reconnaissance activities enabling a greater and deeper understanding of the contiguous bodies of water and their littorals along Russia's maritime periphery are a first step in developing “strategic opportunities for the U.S. and its partners.”⁴² The mission of *special reconnaissance*—defined as “reconnaissance and surveillance activities conducted as a special operation in,

but not limited to, hostile, denied, or diplomatically and politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance”—is a core special-operations task, and naval special-warfare assets are trained and equipped to perform it in and from maritime environments.⁴³ Maritime special reconnaissance generally requires capabilities not found in the conventional force.⁴⁴ A thorough “mapping” of the Jominian maritime corridors would create greater situational awareness, with details on adversary human activities and greater data on the meteorological, hydrographic, and geographic characteristics of the respective littoral regions.⁴⁵ Extensive and comprehensive special reconnaissance of the waters along the pertinent Jominian rectangle faces—to include surface, subsurface, and coastal investigation—would lay a foundation for better knowledge of the adversary and enable a wider-ranging preparation of the environment for potential future operations, including combat if required.

For special operations forces, *preparation of the environment* is “an umbrella term for operations and activities conducted by selectively trained special operations forces to develop an environment for potential future special and conventional operations.”⁴⁶ In the European theater, naval special operations forces would prepare the environment to create conditions conducive for successful competition and other military operations on the spectrum of conflict, to include preparations to allow the U.S. military to embark quickly and successfully on combat operations if that becomes necessary.⁴⁷ Subcombat competition could focus on exposing, illuminating, and addressing Russian commercial gray-zone activities in the maritime environment. As illustration, in September 2018, Finnish police and military raided the Finnish Baltic island of Säkkiuoto. A Russian businessman from Saint Petersburg had purchased the island legally, then developed it to include nine piers, a helipad, and military-grade communications equipment.⁴⁸ While the Russian government denied ulterior motives, this type of activity easily could be highlighted within a maritime special-operations campaign for an allied national government to conduct additional action. Such activities would nest within conventional USN objectives in the European theater and enable further military and interagency actions.

This maritime preparation of the environment, led by U.S. naval special-warfare units in partnership with allies, would aim at identifying, understanding, and framing sensitive Russian maritime decisive strategic points as targets for potential follow-on actions, deterrent or otherwise. Examples of these sensitive points include Russian pipelines, undersea cables, commercial ships, fishing vessels, navigational beacons, and other objects. Preparation activities are not exclusively covert, which by their nature have minimal, if any, deterrent effect. They also encompass military-engagement and security-cooperation

activities to build relationships with critical allies and their capability and capacity to contribute to operations on the Jominian maritime template. Important partners include Finland, Sweden, the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, and Ukraine. These partners can themselves support special reconnaissance of the maritime environment around Russia to refine the location of specific targets and further develop them for additional activities. These activities align with established special-operations missions that include the reconnaissance of significant objects of interest; the tagging and tracking of significant maritime objects; and the logistics preparation for both special and conventional force arrival in a particular maritime region, to include the building of preconflict infrastructure.⁴⁹

Finally, U.S. naval special-operations activities along the northern and southern faces of the Jominian theater rectangle would enable refined and nuanced NATO information operations as part of active naval-diplomacy measures for both deterrent and coercive effect against adversarial Russian activities. If the aim of competition is to remain below the level of armed conflict, naval forces are particularly well positioned to support partners and allies, coerce adversaries, and advertise national sea power with the aim of influencing foreign leaders.⁵⁰ Special operations forces, as opposed to conventional forces, have the most important role in the spectrum of conflict short of war, at a level where the military can support and integrate with other elements of national power, especially diplomatic and information components.⁵¹

Taken together, this idea suggests that linking naval special operations forces with overt naval diplomacy in the European theater is an effective and enduring deterrence approach against a great power. This method aligns well with the concept of naval diplomacy as a “political instrument short of war” that aims to influence the “perceptions of policy-makers in hostile and friendly Powers.”⁵² As Geoffrey Till notes, naval diplomacy—what he terms *presence*—enables both coercion and coalition building.⁵³ Hence, naval special-operations activities and the presence of naval special-warfare detachments in these European littoral and riparian regions would provide opportunities for selective deterrence or compellence messages aimed at creating anxiety or uncertainty in the minds of Russian national-security decision makers and developing narratives to counter and supplant Russian propaganda and disinformation campaigns. These information operations range from publicized maritime special-operations exercises with partner nations to signal allied solidarity and interoperability, to visible maritime special operations forces boarding commercial ships with partner-nation law enforcement to demonstrate ship-interdiction capabilities. These maritime special-operations activities, often military-to-military, can be amplified by ambassadorial-level diplomatic public affairs and media

engagement to message U.S. presence and commitment to allies and partners. These actions aim to offset contrary Russian media and commercial efforts.

Overt naval special-warfare activities that are visible but have a small footprint also could reinforce some generic U.S. European Command themes, such as the benefits of NATO and European Union membership for security and economic progress, the promotion of a common Black Sea allied naval presence, freedom-of-navigation operations in support of international maritime law, and a reduction of overall Russian and allied military presence in the Arctic to prevent conflict and preserve the polar environment.⁵⁴ These overt activities, amplified by appropriate and supporting information operations, have a twofold psychological effect. One aspect strengthens allied resolve through presence, placement, and the reinforcement of regional relationships. The other side is to create uncertainty in the minds of adversary leadership, leading them to question what maritime special operations forces actually are doing in these sensitive littoral regions. For example, naval special-warfare patrol craft conducting visible and publicized operations with NATO-ally naval special operations forces in the littoral waters of the Barents and White Seas and the Baltic, Black, and Caspian Seas generates questions for Russia's decision makers about the capabilities that the United States and partners could bring to bear against it, and concern about other activities they may be performing clandestinely. Special-operations-forces activity often connotes or implies clandestine action, which, when coupled with the overt presence of naval special-warfare units and craft in a sensitive area, creates impressions that can affect Russian leaders' decision-making calculus and steer their reactions in the maritime space. The visibility of special-operations units alone may be more significant than the particular tasks they conduct.⁵⁵

Naval special-warfare forces employing a Jominian operational approach, in combination with cyber and ISR operations, offer the United States and its allies a framework for sustained contest against Russian operations and activities in Europe as part of a wider, integrated deterrence effort while preparing the theater for potential conflict scenarios. In conjunction with conventional military capabilities and coupled with U.S. efforts, naval special-warfare capabilities provide a maritime instrument for countering Russian competition and suggest a guide for action below the threshold of conflict in the European theater, particularly in an overt naval-diplomacy role. While balancing risks and escalation is essential to ensuring this approach keeps competition below the threshold of conflict, the nature of gray-zone competition suggests that deliberate, methodical, and measured efforts to move the United States from a reactive to a proactive position in Europe's competitive space can produce salutary strategic effects. It is ironic that Baron Jomini, who was concerned mostly with land-warfare theory and who served for

over five decades as a Russian general officer, offers such a promising maritime solution for Russia's nontraditional attacks on U.S. and European interests.⁵⁶

NOTES

- The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.
1. Baron Antoine-Henri de Jomini (1779–1869) was a contemporary of Carl von Clausewitz and a renowned nineteenth-century military thinker and theorist. His works have influenced the art of war in the American, Russian, and French militaries, the writings of maritime strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan, and airpower theorist Giulio Douhet. See the chapter on Jomini in Kevin D. Stringer, *Swiss-Made Heroes: Profiles in Military Leadership* (Ashland, OR: Hellgate, 2012).
 2. *Rectangular template* is my own descriptive term for Jomini's geographic concepts for how to control a combat theater.
 3. Kevin D. Stringer, "The Arctic Domain: A Narrow Niche for Joint Special Operations Forces," *Joint Force Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 2015), pp. 24–31; Ronald O'Rourke et al., *Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 28 April 2020).
 4. Don Thieme, "The Baltic, Poland, and President Trump's Warsaw Declaration," *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 2 (Spring 2018), pp. 149–53.
 5. Magnus Nordenman, *The Naval Alliance: Preparing NATO for a Maritime Century* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015); Stanislav Pritchkin, "Russia's Caspian Policy," *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 235 (18 April 2019); Nurlan Aliyev, "Russia's Military Capabilities in the Caspian," *Central Asian Analyst*, 21 February 2019, www.cacianalyst.org/; G. Chufrin, ed., *The Security of the Caspian Sea Region* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).
 6. "Statement of General Tod D. Wolters, United States Air Force, Commander, United States European Command, February 25, 2020," *United States Senate Committee on Armed Services*, www.armed-services.senate.gov/. Emphasis in original.
 7. This approach aligns with the Department of Defense's strategic intent to "seize the initiative and execute *proactive, enduring* campaigns employing [irregular warfare] capabilities to expand the competitive space, shape the environment, and prepare for escalation to conflict, if required," as found in U.S. Defense Dept., *Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: 2020). Emphasis in original.
 8. Alexander Powell, *SOF in Competition below Armed Conflict: A Synthesis of CNA Work* (Arlington, VA: CNA, September 2020), p. 45.
 9. U.S. Defense Dept., *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: Secretary of Defense, 20 January 2018), p. 1.
 10. White House, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington, DC: 2021), p. 20.
 11. Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Emerging Era of International Competition: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2018).
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 13. Ali Wyne, "America's Blind Ambition Could Make It a Victim of Global Competition," *National Interest*, 11 February 2019, nationalinterest.org/.
 14. James M. Dubik and Nic Vincent, *America's Global Competitions: The Gray Zone in Context* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, February 2018).
 15. U.S. Defense Dept., *Competition Continuum*.
 16. *Ibid.*

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18. "Statement of General Tod D. Wolters."
19. Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), p. 282.
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22. Lionel Beehner and Liam Collins, *Dangerous Myths: How the Crisis in Ukraine Explains Future Great Power Conflict* (West Point, NY: Modern War Institute, 18 August 2020).
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