The Army in the Strategic Planning Process

Who Shall Bell the Cat?

Carl H. Builder
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April 1987

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RAND

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PREFACE

This report documents the results of individual research undertaken by the author during a one-year assignment to the U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency (CAA) as their Distinguished Visiting Analyst (DVA) for 1985–1986. One of the several agreed tasks of the DVA program at CAA is to undertake individual research projects of mutual interest to the analyst and CAA. This research into the role of the Army in the strategic planning process was suggested by CAA’s Director and endorsed by the Army Staff (DAMO-SS). It involves an exploration of the definition and significance of strategy, a comparative analysis of the military services on various aspects, but particularly in their approaches to strategy, and an analysis of the Army’s unique problems and opportunities associated with strategic planning. It should be of interest to all military and defense planners concerned with understanding the distinctive behavior of the several military services in their approaches to the planning of future forces for combined, joint, and coalition warfare.

This research was originally reported by CAA, under the same title, as a Technical Paper, CAA-TP-86-12, dated October 1986. Its revision and subsequent publication as a RAND report is by agreement with CAA. This report differs from the earlier CAA publication mostly in details, but also in the elaboration of several implications, as suggested by RAND reviewers.

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SUMMARY

This report advances the thesis that the Army, by its historic interests and circumstances, is in a unique position among the services to participate in the strategic planning process—in the formulation and application of strategy for the planning of future forces. The Air Force and Navy, by virtue of their focus on operational media more than warfare, have developed independent theories and strategies for the purposes and uses of their forces. Those independent service strategies, much more than the defense strategy, inform their visions of the kinds of forces they want and how they will use them. The Army is denied that kind of independent vision of the purpose and use of its forces. It is inherently dependent upon combined, joint, and coalition forces and upon the nation’s leadership and enemies to define where, when, and how it will fight.

Strategy is defined herein as a concept for relating means and ends; the kind of strategy—grand, defense, regional, service—can be deduced from the character of the means and ends. The significance of strategy is to be found mostly in the identity and interests of its formulator: The who and why of strategy are probably more informative than the what and how. Therefore, to understand the Army’s participation in the strategic planning process, it is necessary, first, to appreciate the Army and its interests—who it is and what it is about. But those appreciations require some frame of reference. The one used here is a comparative analysis of the Army, Navy, and Air Force on seven different aspects, leading to a characterization of their distinctive service identities and to analyses of their service strategies.

The distinctive service identities characterized here do much to explain why the Air Force and the Navy persist in defining their future force requirements almost entirely on the basis of their own strategies—for conducting independent missions according to their own doctrines for independent operations of their own forces. The Army has no independent strategy for the use of its forces; it has always been dependent upon mutual support between its own brotherhood of combat arms, from its sister services, and, increasingly, from allied forces.

The Army is tied to, and is largely defined by, a few national commitments to the use of military force. The nation is obliged by treaty, agreement, and declaration to come to the aid of allies and friends around the world; but in most instances, the form and timing of that aid remain to be decided—at the time and in the event—by the political leadership of the nation. There are, however, four places where that decision has already been made—in Berlin, the Federal Republic
of Germany (FRG), the Republic of Korea (ROK), and the United States itself. In those four places, the United States has committed itself to fight by the deliberate presence of its ground forces to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation or its allies. Two of those commitments, for the defense of the FRG and the ROK, presently account for the design and deployment of much of the Army; and if those two commitments were to be adequately or fully met, they would almost certainly require significantly larger Army forces.

Those commitments define where and under what circumstances the Army is now unambiguously pledged to fight. Those pledges have price tags that the nation and the Army must confront: What are the military (as opposed to political) objectives of our forces if they must fight? What forces are required to fulfill those expectations? And what risks is the national leadership willing to accept as to the adequacy of those forces or to other consequences attending their use? These questions are more avoided than confronted in current strategic planning. Asking and answering them may be a daring deed; but the national commitments to use force are a cat that needs to be belled.

The Army, alone among the services, perhaps even within the Department of Defense, has the requisite perspective and incentives to define what those commitments will require in future forces, including the tradeoffs between coalition forces and supporting air and naval forces (both firepower and lift), and the risks involved in accepting any particular balance of forces to fulfill those commitments. Since the Air Force and Navy necessarily play supporting roles in these national commitments to ensure territorial sovereignty, and because they are preoccupied by their efforts to define their forces and missions independently from their sister services, the Army may be the best hope for putting a price tag on the national commitments to the use of military force. It is less clear that the Army would want to be the one to bell this cat; it would demand that the Army behave outside the parameters of its historic institutional personality and to risk instigating interservice strife.

The avenue to enhanced Army participation in the strategic planning process is not, as some suggest or hope, through an independent service strategy comparable to those espoused by the Air Force and Navy. At the same time, the national commitments to the use of force provide the Army with a unique opportunity to participate with needed effect in the strategic planning process: The Army could instigate the pricing of those commitments, with potential benefits to the quality of military planning and to the Army's control over its destiny. But the risks of interservice strife may pose costs which are too high in terms of what the Army values most about who it is—the nation's loyal and obedient military servant.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Behind any speculative piece of research, such as this, there are always to be found inspired instigators and enlightened sponsors. The inspired instigator was E. B. Vandiver III, the Director of the U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency, who posed the question directly and forcefully as a challenge: "Why don't you try to find out why the Army doesn't seem to do very well in the strategic planning process?" The enlightened sponsor was Army Major General Jack O. Bradshaw, then Director of Strategy Plans & Policy for the Army Staff, who saw the research pointing toward a comparative analysis of the military services and, given the opportunity to turn it off then and there, had the courage to say, "Go ahead."

The author has stood upon the shoulders of several very competent researchers who led his way into examination of the behavior of the military services. Perry McCoy Smith, in his devastating analysis, The Air Force Plans for Peace, did much to set the style and tone of this work. The author was led to Smith's book by James Lacy, who wrote the complementary analysis of Navy postwar planning, Within Bounds. A colleague at RAND, David Kassing, upon hearing of this research, put the author onto Lacy's trail. Army Major Peter Kinney suggested Admiral Wylie's fine treatise, Military Strategy. And while browsing through the CAA library shelves, the author discovered the work of another RAND colleague, Arnold Kanter's Defense Politics. These four texts stand as pillars at the corners of this research.

The author is indebted to Army Colonel Daniel M. Evans, Jr., for supplementing his reading with many good references on strategy and strategic planning, and to Army Colonel Thomas P. Easum for his hours of patient tutoring on the soul of the Army. For their constructive reviews of the drafts of this report, the author is grateful to Richard M. Lester and Howard G. Whitley at CAA and to Thomas K. Glennan and Robert L. Perry at RAND. Finally, the author is grateful to the Army, for only it among the services has the security and humility to tolerate, even encourage, what has been attempted here.
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I. INTRODUCTION

This report is about national security strategy, how it has been formulated and applied, particularly by the military services, and about the role, past and future, of the U.S. Army in those processes. At the same time, this report describes the intellectual and philosophical odyssey of the author in his search for the import of strategy, and the unique Army behavior toward strategy, in national security planning. The intellectual journey is revealing in its insights about strategy in general, the use of strategy by the military services, and the unique position of the Army among the services in the strategic planning process.

In July 1985, E. B. Vandiver III, Director of the U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency (CAA), invited the author to:

Look into strategic planning as it is done in the United States—the whole thing, from the top right down, the Army's role in that process, and how CAA might contribute to that process—all with a view toward our doing it better than we do now.

He suggested that the Army did not do very well, even as compared with the other services, in strategic planning and that CAA needed to look at how it might help the Army.

That invitation immediately begged the question of what was meant by the words, "the strategic planning process." Clearly, it was not limited to the formalized processes associated with programming and budgeting the forces (i.e., the current Department of Defense Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System). Nor was it principally the documentation processes associated with the Joint Strategic Planning System (i.e., the JSPS). To be sure, those bureaucratic processes include some important elements of strategic planning, and they undoubtedly were originally designed to provide comprehensive frameworks for strategic planning; but the reality of their implementation reveals that critical elements are still missing or remain implicit. In particular, they do not provide a clear trace of that broader intellectual process\(^1\) that ultimately leads the nation to:

- Decide upon the purposes for which military capabilities should be acquired; and

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\(^1\) That is, the formulation and development of concepts and ideas as opposed to the interaction of institutions and the flow of their documents.
• Choose particular kinds of military capabilities to fulfill those purposes.

That broad intellectual process has the color of strategy; and it was agreed, for the purpose at hand, that the strategic planning process was the one most directly associated with the formulation and application of strategy in the planning of future military forces.2

Within that very broad interpretation of the strategic planning process, the agreed objectives of the invited research were as follows:

1. To improve Army understanding of, and participation in, the strategic planning process at all levels; and
2. To identify potential CAA contributions to support Army participation in that process.

As it turned out, the first of these two objectives overtook the second. That is, addressing the first raised such fundamental issues of uncertain resolution for the Army that the definition of potential CAA contributions will have to remain largely postponed and problematic pending major changes in the national planning processes.

The initial challenge posed by these objectives was to understand strategy—what it is, how it is formulated, and how it is applied in shaping military capabilities. That part of the research odyssey is described in Section II, which follows. That section is not simply a tutorial on strategy, even though it takes some pain to redefine strategy more simply and generally than most texts. Rather, it develops a perspective on strategy that leads to a fundamental proposition—a sort of Heisenberg principle for strategy—that strategy takes on meaning mostly with reference to its formulator: who he is and what he is about. The proposition is important because it provided a powerful focus throughout the subsequent research.

Section III outlines the paths of logic or reasoning pursued by the author in search of a way to cut into the problem. It is called “Stalking the Door” because the research at this stage—reading, thinking, talking—was a hunt, without certainty of success, for some kind of door that would lead directly to the heart of the question: understanding how and why the Army participates (or doesn’t) in the strategic planning process. The description of that search in Section III, while not essential to the research findings, may be useful to others faced

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2 Precisely where and how strategy is formulated and applied in the planning of military forces remained to be defined during the course of this invited research. At the outset, however, no organizational limits were placed on the scope of the search for who participated in the formulation or application of strategy in the planning of future military forces.
with similar research problems, since it relied upon techniques that had been successful in finding "doors" in prior research on strategies.

The discovered door turned out to be comparison of the "personalities" of the military services on a variety of aspects. These comparisons, developed in Section IV, lead to distinct institutional identities for each of the military services, identities which, in turn, provided fresh insights into their individual approaches to, and affinity for, strategy.

The service strategies—what they are, how they evolved, and how they have been used—are examined in some detail in Section V. The Navy's "maritime strategy" is given original analysis here because it has been only recently revealed in the open literature and, therefore, is bereft of the body of critical literature available for the "air strategy."

Section VI explores a planning vacuum produced by the historical pursuit of service strategies and the unique position of the Army relative to the other services to participate in, and contribute to, the strategic planning process. The observed planning vacuum is the absence of a total future price tag (including the tradeoffs and risks) to fulfill the declared national commitments to use military force. Attaching price tags to those commitments would be a bold deed—a belling of the cat—because it will raise fundamental questions about the military purposes of U.S. forces overseas and tradeoffs among land, air, and sea forces. It is suggested here that the Army is better suited by both its interests and circumstances than any of the services to help or take the initiative in belling that cat.

Finally, Section VII assesses some of the implications for the Army if it should elect to take a more active role in the strategic planning process by pricing the national commitments to the use of force. For the Army, the question is not feasibility, but desirability. While belling the cat could serve the Army's interests in improving military planning and better defining its own force requirements, it would necessarily involve challenges to the other services and to the Army's self-image.
II. WHAT IS STRATEGY?

The focus in this report is on the formulation and application of strategy in the planning of future military forces. What, then, is strategy? For most of those involved or interested in military planning, the question is trivial or the answer is obvious: Everyone knows what strategy is. It is the part of the process that tells us how we intend to achieve our goals or objectives.

Nevertheless, the nature of this research called for a cautionary approach. There are many different kinds of strategy, even within the realm of national security—grand, coalition, regional, national, military, theater, service, etc. Are the selection and ranking of goals separate from, or a part of, strategy? What are its essential ingredients? Where do strategy and tactics and doctrine divide? Where does strategy come from? Who is responsible for making it? These kinds of questions suggest that strategy can be a minefield for confusion and argument, particularly if the formulation and application of strategy is made the central point of an inquiry into how the Army participates (or doesn't) in the strategic planning process. These considerations argued for going back to the fundamentals and approaching strategy anew, without the baggage of implied definitions and assumptions that have accumulated around strategic planning and planners.

The first basic is one of definition. The dictionary definitions confuse more than they help. Consider, for example, these four:

WEBSTER:¹ The science and art of employing the political, economic, psychological, and military forces of a nation or group of nations to afford the maximum support to adopted policies in peace or war.

RANDOM HOUSE:² The science or art of planning and directing large military movements and operations.

AMERICAN HERITAGE:³ The science and art of military command as applied to the overall planning and conduct of large-scale combat operations.

The art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat.

The variances among these definitions leaves uncertainty as to whether or not strategy is limited to combat or even to military operations, or whether strategy is about employment, command, or planning, or all three. Strategy can also be defined in another sense—that of a plan—but the definitions there are consistent only in a tautology: a strategy is a plan resulting from the practice of the science and art of strategy.

Part of the definitional problem with strategy, of course, is that it is a slippery word. Like "systems analysis," it has become such a widely and broadly used term as to become blurred in its meanings:

There are probably more kinds of strategy, and more definitions of it, than there are varieties and definitions of economics or politics. It is a loose sort of word.4

... strategy, like policy, is an accordion word.1

But the dictionary definitions probably suffer more from overdefining than underdefining its meaning. Simpler and more general notions of strategy are not hard to find:

The essential notion of strategy is captured in the relationship of means to ends...”

In its most fundamental sense, military strategy consists of an objective and a course of action to achieve that objective.9

4Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, JCS Pub. 1, 1 April 1984.
5While discussing these definitions, a retired general noted that the JCS appeared to have taken their definition from Webster's. Asked why the JCS found it necessary to interchange the words "science and art" and elaborate upon the other words, the general quickly replied, "That, of course, was the value added by the JCS."
8Ibid., p. 33.
A plan of action designed in order to achieve some end... 

By strategy, I mean a definable path toward goals. 

These simpler notions of strategy are more appropriate here because the strategic planning process encompasses many different kinds of strategy and their ganglia. Any of these simple notions are probably adequate, but it will be helpful to pick one and remain consistent in the use of words. The definition of strategy to be used here is:

A strategy is a concept for relating means to ends.

Thus the essential ingredients of strategy are means, ends, and some concept of how those means and ends can be related. The essence of strategy is in the relational concept; but finding that concept may hinge upon the means or ends—in their judicious selection or in the setting of priorities among them.

This definition of strategy may seem too broad as to deny the separation of strategy from any number of things, including tactics, doctrine, plans, designs, and even proposals. But the distinctions between strategy and these other things, or among various kinds of strategy, ought to come from the kinds of means and ends that are being related. Concepts for relating grand ends and means are properly in the domain of grand strategy. Strategy can be dynamic or static, depending upon the stability of the means or ends. Strategy may change if new means become available or if different ends appear to be preferable. Means and ends that are concerned with the deployment or employment of a particular weapon system will probably be recognized as tactics rather than strategy; but the precise boundary between the two needn't be sharply defined: One person's tactics can be another's strategy. And institutionally adopted rules for relating means to ends have the smell of doctrine.

The idea of using the nature of means and ends to classify or bound strategy leads to the temptation to define and, thereby, to distinguish

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12 Note that means and ends are plural, while the concept that links them is singular. A strategy is a single concept that relates one or more means to one or more ends. The choice or ranking of multiple means or ends may be an important creative step in finding a relational concept between means and ends. Strategies (plural), then, are several such relational concepts between means and ends.
13 A colleague, Robert L. Perry, suggests that doctrine often does not truly relate means to ends because the claimed ends are often beyond the actual means.
more precisely between means and ends; but it is a temptation that probably ought to be resisted.

Courses of action (means) and outcomes (ends) are relative concepts. All outcomes that have consequences can be considered to be means to those consequences; and every course of action has some satisfaction or dissatisfaction associated with its use that is independent of its outcome, hence can be considered to be an end.\textsuperscript{14}

It is probably sufficient here to recognize that ends include interests, goals, objectives, aims, and purposes while means include devices, tools, power, forces, and pressures for achieving them. Strategy is the concept, design, scheme, plan, idea, etc. that relates one as being appropriate, effective, efficient, optimum, adequate, etc. with respect to the other. The broad definition of strategy used here can be sharpened simply by providing a specific context—in this case, the strategic planning process:

Within the strategic planning process, a strategy is a concept for relating choices in the kinds of future military capabilities (means) to decisions about purposes (ends) for which those military capabilities should be acquired.

This is the sense of strategy used consistently throughout this report. Obviously, these kinds of strategies carry with them costs (mostly about their means) and uncertainties or risks (mostly about their ends).

Note that strategy, by this definition, implies some choice in (a concept for) the relationship between means and ends. If both the means and ends are fixed, and there is only one way to relate the two, then there is no strategy—only a situation. The formulation of strategy is the creative act of choosing a means, an end, a way to relate a means to an end, or any combination of those three. In the absence of some choice about means, ends, or their relationship, there is no strategy. And if that choice is obvious or dictated by circumstance, then strategy is trivial. Thus, for the Secretary of Defense to declare:

In a word, our basic defense strategy is deterrence\textsuperscript{15}

begs several questions:

\textsuperscript{15}Weinberger, Annual Report, p. 32.
- Is deterrence the means or the end or the relationship between the means and the ends?
- Whichever it is, what is the alternative to deterrence?

If there is no obvious or viable alternative to deterrence, then the strategy of deterrence is trivial. Strategy becomes more significant as the dilemma of choice deepens; but the formulation of strategy becomes most inspired in the discernment or perception of the decisive choices and their consequences.

But strategy, however defined, tends toward the abstract. A dozen familiar historical examples may be more helpful (and concrete) in clarifying the meaning of the word as it is used here.  

- President Franklin Roosevelt’s Europe-first strategy at the beginning of World War II shaped priorities in the acquisition and deployment of military capabilities (means) to prosecute quickly the war against Germany as the most virulent of the Axis powers to be defeated (end). MacArthur’s island-hopping strategy in the Pacific can be viewed as a responsive adaptation either to the consequences of Roosevelt’s Europe-first strategy or, less charitably, to the three separate wars fought by the Army, Navy, and Army air forces in the Pacific—against the Japanese and each other.

- Less ambiguous in their devotion to service interests were DeSeversky’s vision of victory through air power and John Lehman’s maritime strategy, both of which represent concepts

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16 It is argued later that deterrence is more likely to be a political end than a military strategy. See Section VI below.

17 To make them instantly digestible, the dozen examples have all been taken from recent history, from World War II to the present.


19 A colleague, Robert L. Perry, notes that there were also separate wars being fought by branches or commands within each of the services. For example, the submarine war against Japan was carried out, for the most part, separately from the surface fleet operations. And the latter were, in turn, divided between a war against the Japanese fleet and support for MacArthur’s war against the Japanese Army in its occupation of Pacific islands.

20 The air strategy is perhaps more appropriately attributed to Douhet or Mitchell or Trenchard. However, Major Alexander P. DeSeversky’s 1942 book, Victory Through Air Power (Simon and Schuster, New York), and the Disney film derived from it, did much to popularize the strategy and spread its vision beyond those directly involved with its advocacy or implementation.

21 The maritime strategy, like the air power strategy, can claim many authors, including Bing West and Admiral James Watkins. But Secretary of the Navy Lehman has used the maritime strategy as the basis for his effective advocacy of the 600-ship Navy. See John F. Lehman, Jr., “The 600-Ship Navy,” The Maritime Strategy, U.S. Naval Institute, January 1986, pp. 30–40.
for relating the military capabilities of one service or component (means) to their arguable perceptions of the national purposes of military capabilities (ends).

- Churchill gave his regional concerns about postwar political arrangements as the motivation for his World War II proposals to strike into the soft underbelly of Europe, a concept for relating the growing offensive capabilities of the Allies (means) to the political purpose of blocking Soviet expansion into Europe (end). Huntington’s proposed strategy of a retaliatory offensive posture for NATO is a concept of offensive military capabilities (means) to deter a Soviet invasion (end) by threatening a counter-invasion rather than a successful defense. 22

- General Rogers’ proposals for dealing with follow-on echelons of Soviet forces in central Europe and President Reagan’s strategic defense initiative both represent controversial concepts for relating new military means afforded by technology to ends provoked by the principal military threat each of them faces, i.e., to avoid being overwhelmed or annihilated. 23

- Budgetary concerns were behind McNamara’s concept of assured destruction, which was originally intended as a criterion for sizing—or more precisely, capping the demands for—strategic nuclear forces. 24 But it also had the color of strategy and, for many, became a concept for relating the rationale for nuclear forces (means) to the deterrence of nuclear war (end).

- George Kennan’s broad concept of the containment of Communism 25 after World War II could properly be classified as grand strategy, 26 yet it still lies within the specific sense of strategy used here because its ends—the eventual mellowing or collapse of the Soviet regime—did shape military capabilities as

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26 According to Michael Howard, “the concept of ‘grand strategy’ was introduced to cover those industrial, financial, demographic, and societal aspects of war that have become so salient in the twentieth century . . . .” The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 57, No. 3, Summer 1979, p. 975). Paul Nitze sees grand strategy as “something broader than military strategy . . . in which all factors bearing on the evolving situation—including economic, political and psychological factors as well as military—are taken into account over long periods of time, including times both of peace and war” (”Strategy in the Decade of the 1980s,” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 59, No. 1, Fall 1980, p. 82).
one of the several contributing means. Indeed, Dulles' declaratory strategy of massive retaliation could be considered a contributing military component of Kennan's strategy of containment. On the other hand, the Marshall Plan, also a contributing component of the containment strategy, was a concept for using economic rather than military means for its political end of strengthening the Western European nations against both internal and external Communist pressures.\textsuperscript{7}

Upon reflection, these dozen examples reveal much about strategies that is both subtle and important:

1. Strategy takes on historical stature only when the choice of means and ends—the very essence of strategy—becomes non-trivial, i.e., when there is a conundrum or a dilemma which forces tough or inspired choices and decisions. Much of articulated strategy in the bureaucratic planning processes (i.e., the PPBS and JSPS) lacks this tension and has more the flavor of doctrine or simple preference.

2. In real strategies, the means and ends are usually quite obvious and (not surprisingly) so sometimes are the underlying motives.

3. The attribution of strategies to individuals or their proponents does much to reveal the means, ends, motivations, and dilemma embedded in a strategy. The who and why of strategy may be even more informative than the what or how of strategy.

These three observations can be swept up into a general principle\textsuperscript{20} about strategy which does much to explain the elusiveness of strategy when it is dealt with as an abstract art or science:

\textit{Strategy takes on meaning mostly in the context of the identity and interests of its formulator.}

This principle suggests that to understand fully a strategy, its formulation and application, one should first know its formulator—who he is and what he is about.\textsuperscript{29} If one knows the \textit{who} and \textit{why} of a


\textsuperscript{28}The author is indebted to a colleague, David J. Stein, for suggesting this principle by implication while he was explaining why the United States had difficulty in formulating or adopting strategies.

\textsuperscript{29}This is reminiscent of (but not strictly analogous to) the Heisenberg uncertainty principle in physics which states that "it is impossible to know both position and momentum [of atomic particles] with sufficient accuracy at the same time" ("Mechanics, Quantum,"
strategy, the what and how are likely to become obvious or secondary. The what and how of Churchill's strategy for attacking the soft underbelly of Europe become obvious or relatively unimportant upon an appreciation of Churchill's situation and his world view.

At the same time, the what and how of a strategy, divorced from the who and why of its proponent, is much more likely to make the strategy seem opaque, ambiguous, and contentious. If the identity of its formulator is blurred (as it often is in a coalition) or if interests are diffuse (as they frequently are in pluralistic democracies), then the formulation of strategies is likely to be difficult:

Of the current world's great and near-great powers, the United States has a particularly difficult time in producing and following through on national policies and strategies, especially those with global reach and long-term horizons. This difficulty is not necessarily because of a lack of intellectual acumen or the relatively short national election cycle as often asserted. It is more probably because of the heterogeneity, pluralism and diversified constituency of the electorate and of the many interest groups in US society.\textsuperscript{30}

And those strategies that do evolve from diffuse interests are likely to be ambiguous.\textsuperscript{31}

In sum, strategy is a concept for relating means to ends. In the strategic planning process, means are taken to be future force capabilities and ends are the purposes for which those military capabilities are to be acquired. But the key to understanding a strategy is to be found in knowing who its formulator is and what he is about.

\textit{Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 11, p. 785}. Strategy, too, appears to have relativistic properties.


\textsuperscript{31}The ambiguity in NATO's strategy of flexible response (MC 14/3) is generally seen as deliberate (Karl Kaiser and Georg Leder, "Nuclear Weapons and the Preservation of Peace: A German Response," \textit{Foreign Affairs}, Vol. 60, No. 5, Summer 1982, p. 1180), but that may be making a virtue of the necessity to compromise in a coalition strategy for 16 nations.
III. STALKING THE DOOR

Understanding how the Army participates (or doesn't) in the strategic planning process is a sobering challenge. It is not enough to become familiar with either the process or the Army—although some familiarity with both is essential—because there must be something more than familiarity: There must be that perspective that selects, relates, and then integrates the myriad pieces of information about the Army and the strategic planning process into a coherent understanding.

One metaphor for the problem is the challenge of putting together the pieces of a puzzle—or enough of them—to "get the picture." The number of pieces covering the strategic planning process and the Army is enormous. One could (and some do) spend a career or lifetime just trying to see most of the pieces, let alone selecting the right ones, relating them, and then integrating them into a picture of how the Army participates in the strategic planning process.

A more efficient approach to the puzzle is to have a theory or hypothesis of what the picture looks like and then make a more directed search for the pieces that will verify (or refute) the theory. A good hypothesis can greatly narrow the field of search, but there are some risks: The theory or hypothesis may not be correct, in which case the search may be in vain, at best provoking a new hypothesis and at worst falsely confirming an incorrect hypothesis. Despite the risks, the understanding of complex problems almost always requires the efficiency of a hypothesis-directed search. Indeed, that is the approach taken in almost all scientific research.

Finding a good hypothesis, then, is like finding the door to understanding—a point of efficient entry into a problem that may lead to its core. To be sure, the door may lead only so far or turn out to have been a false entry. Promising doors into complex problems just are not that easy to find. What follows here is an outline of the author's search for a door into understanding the Army's participation in the strategic planning process. The clues were picked up one at a time, each one leading—with some zigs and zags—to the next in a logical progression, until a door was found. This is the story of stalking the door.

At the outset, several negative views concerning strategy and the Army's role in strategy formulation had to be confronted before the search could begin. There were four showstoppers here, any one of
which, if correct, would make the search either unnecessary or futile. To express them as points of view, they were:

1. **Strategy is abstract nonsense.** A few are so bold as to assert that strategy is mostly the hot air of academics and theoreticians who like to talk in abstractions.\(^1\) They hold that academic debates over strategy have little to do with anything important or real; strategies can never substitute for military capabilities, the basis of real power. Strategies may come and go like fashions; military might prevails.\(^2\) Strategies, where necessary at all, don’t come from the pipe-smoke of seminar rooms; they are the expedient plans that commanders generate on the spot when confronted with real situations involving the use of military force.

2. **The United States can’t formulate strategy.** There are several arguments that support this assertion: One is that democracies, pluralistic societies, usually can’t agree on either their identity (who they are) or their interests (what they are about), so they are unable to agree on strategy except in extremis.\(^3\) Another argument is that open societies, such as the United States, cannot publicly acknowledge all of their motives or purposes. While lofty and noble objectives are easily claimed, they do not always suffice to cover the actual

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\(^1\)“One . . . uniquely American phenomenon is that strategic ideas . . . have more the smell of the seminar room about them than of the trench or missile silo.” (Collin S. Gray, *Defense Planning and the Duration of War,* *Defence Analysis,* Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1985, p. 32.)

\(^2\)As the record of the past suggests, broad policy declarations and the fashions of official military strategy have considerable limitations. Strategy pronouncements are more likely to embellish than to enlighten, and while they may not therefore be misleading, they are not likely to be particularly instructive either.” (James L. Lacy, *Within Bounds: The Navy in Postwar American Security Policy,* Center for Naval Analysis, CNA 05-83 1178. 28 July 1983, p. 525.) The same point is made by Gray in “Defense Planning and the Duration of War,” p. 31: “The ideas and assumptions on strategy that have the authority of official blessing today have . . . had their intellectual shape modeled very much by trends in fashionable opinion, by considerations of public acceptability, and by the sometimes very arbitrary outcomes of the budgetary process, and by the preferences of entrenched bureaucracies.”

\(^3\)“Societies in which communication is open, which safeguard pluralism with legal sanctions, and which normally tolerate a high degree of political diastem find it much more difficult to develop and maintain a consensus of commitment to the legitimacy of strategic objectives. Yet the maintenance of that consensus is one of the key objectives of national strategy . . . .” (Chaplain (Colonel) Charles K. Krist, “The Moral Dimension of Strategy,” *Parameters,* Vol. 7, No. 2, 1977, p. 67, quoted by Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context,* Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, pp. 21-22.)
purposes and interests at work in the acquisition and employment of military forces. 4

3. Strategy doesn’t drive the forces. There is a view that strategy doesn’t drive the acquisition or the planning of military capabilities; these are driven by the threat or by service preferences, or both. This perspective sees strategy as the intellectual rationale that follows after and attempts to explain the forces sought or in being for other unspoken or unspeakable reasons.

4. The Army doesn’t make strategy. Like the proverbial cleaning lady who “doesn’t do windows,” some have argued that the Army doesn’t “do strategy.” Despite the other services’ pursuit of strategies, such as the so-called maritime and air strategies, there are opposing views to the effect that:

- There is no such thing as a ground-power strategy (and by implication, neither is there a maritime or air strategy, despite the claims of the Navy or Air Force);
- The services, as institutions providing specialized force capabilities, are not the makers of strategy; or
- The nation makes strategy; the Army (and the other services) must execute it.

These views see the Army (and, properly, the other services) as the means and not the makers of strategy. Huntington notes that the Army may have a unique perspective here among the services:

The Army participated in a diversity of tasks—Southern reconstruction, Indian fighting, labor disorders, the Spanish War, Cuban occupation, Philippine pacification, construction and operation of the [Panama] Canal, the Mexican punitive expedition. Accordingly, the Army developed an image of itself as the government’s obedient handymen performing without question or hesitation the jobs assigned to it. . . . By following all orders literally the Army attempted to divest itself of political responsibility and political controversy despite the political nature of the tasks it was frequently called upon to perform. 5

Each of these four positions is an independent showstopper in the sense that any one of them, by itself, if accepted as absolutely correct, argues against trying to understand the Army’s participation in the

4In the United States, policy and strategy proceed by innuendo, persuasion, compromise and almost infinite negotiation and transaction. So it is that U.S. national policies and strategies are subdued and subtle, becoming highly implicit in plans and programs.” (Westwood, “Some Notes on Strategy,” p. 65.)

strategic planning process insofar as that process involves the formulation and application of strategy. In effect, they say that:

- Even if there is such a thing as strategy, it is not important;
- Even if it is important, the United States can't formulate one;
- Even if it could be formulated, it isn't really used; and
- Even if it is used, the Army isn't the place to make it.

All four positions, of course, contain some elements of truth or they wouldn't be voiced. Some, perhaps much, of what is written about strategy and its use is probably nonsense—including even the revered Clausewitz and what is written here. But there is ample evidence in history of real strategies having an important effect upon thinking, the design of forces, and the waging of war. The contemporary claims for (and the hand-wringing over) strategy in the literature may, indeed, be overblown; but there can be no doubt that strategies have—for good and bad—had an impact. Making or changing strategy can and does influence the perceived purposes of military forces and the kinds of forces acquired to fulfill those purposes.

To be sure, democratic and open societies do have difficulties in formulating and declaring strategies. But despite the difficulties, they have successfully done so; and not all of the resulting strategies have been bland or ambiguous. The difficulties are not so much with strategy as they are with coming to grips with the ends (rather than the means) of strategy. To the extent that the strategic planning process forces clarification of ends, the anguish over strategy is something to be embraced rather than avoided. If the formulation of strategy in the United States is too often contentious, it is probably because the debates pass too quickly over the matter of ends (as being self-evident) in order to promote the means (where the vested interests lie):

Pessimists and optimists often differ less on what American forces can do than on what they should be asked to do. In short, although the issues one hears debated most often are about specific weapons, force deployment, and resource allocations, the hidden agenda of the defense debate is a dispute about strategy.  

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6The continuing difficulties of the United States in formulating a strategy toward the possession and use of nuclear weapons (ever since the early 1950s when Soviets acquired a significant capability to reply in kind) can be contrasted with the so-called "dual-track" strategy that successfully (if not quietly) ushered in the NATO deployment of theater-range ballistic and cruise missiles.

If strategy is defined, as it is here, as a concept for relating means to ends, then the dispute is about the ends more than the means.

Strategy, of course, is not the only determinant of the purposes and kinds of military force. Institutional preferences, technological developments, opposing forces, and so forth can be detected as influences on the acquisition of military capabilities. But strategy is supposed to sweep up all of these externalities in its formulation and application. If strategy does not adequately take into account or allow for service predilections or the threat, the military forces will be driven to some degree by factors omitted from strategy. Strategy should drive the forces; if it does not, it may reflect the inadequacies\(^4\) of a particular strategy rather than the proper role of strategy.

Whether or not the services should formulate and apply strategies for their particular brand of military power is obviously a question much in dispute at the present. And it is a question that is very near to the center of this inquiry and report.

It is not enough to argue that the Army doesn’t (or shouldn’t) make strategy. If that proscription is meant to apply to national or military strategy, then it is quite correct, at least to the extent that the military services are not the ultimate arbiters of strategy at those levels. But that leaves open the question of whether the services can and should participate in the formulation as well as the application (including execution) of national and military strategies. Certainly the services, as executors of the strategies, have some interest in their formulation and application. To say they should not participate is to suggest that it is an inappropriate activity for them because they are incapable (by their limited perspectives), incompetent (by their biases), or untrustworthy (because of the potential political corruption of military power). All of these suggestions are insulting and ought to be dismissed as such.

Whether there are (or should be) service strategies is a more complex question. If service strategies are proposed as substitutes or replacements for national military strategy,\(^5\) then there may or may not be merit to their consideration in the process of formulating strategies.

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\(^4\)Inadequacies may include the failure of a strategy to confront explicitly actual ends or real constraints. For example, a defense strategy that observes, but pretends to ignore, fiscal constraints or strong bureaucratic pressures or real (but embarrassing) interests is an inadequate declaration of ends, means, and the concept for relating them. What is unsaid about a strategy may be more important than what is said. Thus, political sensitivities may vitiate a declared strategy, leaving one to infer the operative strategy, if any.

\(^5\)This has happened at least twice. In the 1940s, the emerging Air Force proposed that the national military strategy should be centered on air strategy; in the 1980s, some sea-power enthusiasts have argued that the nation would be better served if it shifted to a maritime strategy.
military strategy at the national level, depending upon the perceived soundness (or acceptability) of the existing national strategy or the service theories being advanced. But such service proposals are bound to cause heated debate, whatever their merits or lack thereof, because they imply a dominance or priority of one service over the others—with all that it implies for encroachment upon the other services’ roles, stature, and claims to resources.

The service strategies may have purposes beyond contributing to the national formulation of military strategy. If they are concepts for the service’s independent use of (and justification for) its own forces, then they are almost certainly not in the national interest so much as they are in pursuit of service interests. It is here, on this point, that the Army can most clearly be heard saying that “the Army doesn’t make strategy,” and “there is no such thing as Army strategy.” If, however, they are concepts to orient and motivate the internal organization and decisions of a service, they may be more inspirational than predatory in their purpose:

A Navy still requires a theory of a Navy. Whether stated explicitly or discernible only through after-the-fact examination, there must exist something in addition to a fleet—a policy, a strategy, a plan, some sort of expectation of the conditions and anticipation of consequences—which, if not the source of inspiration, at least provides a fair means for explanation.  

The reality of service strategies is that they can and have been used for all three purposes simultaneously:

1. As proposals for the dominant element of national military strategy;
2. As declarations of the independence of service missions, operations, and forces; and
3. As a conceptual focus to bring coherence to the internal decisionmaking of the service.

It is the first two uses of service strategies, not the third, that cause heated debate. The third use of service strategies has more the flavor of doctrine than strategy; it is a vision of the service and its role in the larger scheme of things—how it would like to employ its resources in the kinds of conflicts which would make its contributions most

\(^{10}\)Summers, *On Strategy*, p. 2.


relevant. That is why the Navy talks about protracted conventional wars and the Strategic Air Command talks about spasmod nuclear wars. Those are the only kinds of wars that fully justify their unique capabilities. Such visions of war (and the institution's role in it) do provide a clear goal for institutional efforts and can be a source of institutional pride and enthusiasm for those efforts. But to the extent that such visions promote myopia about war and are used as springboards for institutional independence and dominance, they are at least contentious, if not counterproductive, to national security.

Generally speaking, the Army has not promoted an independent service strategy — i.e., a ground-power strategy or a continental strategy — as a candidate for the national military strategy. A few in the Army, having observed the Navy's apparent success in budget slicing, might see this as an oversight that the Army needs to correct; but most would probably find an independent Army strategy inconsistent with the role of the Army or with the nature of modern warfare. The nagging question is: Has the Army, by eschewing an independent service strategy, also forgone the internal institutional benefits of self-image and pride which such strategies can offer? This question was the first of three clues leading to the door. Thinking about that question led to the following hypotheses about the Army and strategy:

- Every person, every institution must have a strategy — some concept for relating means and ends — in order to make decisions. The Army must have some kind of strategy; otherwise it would have no basis for the decisions it must make every day. To paraphrase Lacy:

  An Army still requires a theory of an Army. Whether stated explicitly or implicitly, there must exist something in addition to its soldiers and tanks and guns — a concept, a strategy, a notion of who it is and what it wants to be, of what it is about and what it wants to be about — a concept which is a source of inspiration and a means for explaining its actions, if only to itself.

- The Army strategy may not be about independent service means and national security ends because it may view such efforts by the services as predatory, counterproductive, or properly beyond its province. The Army strategy may have more to do with institutional interests and concerns, such as the prospects for its people, equipment, or funding, and as such, might be better called an institutional strategy.

\footnote{ibid}
• The Army institutional strategy (as with most strategies) may be implicit rather than explicit for any number of reasons; it may be unconscious, incoherent, incomplete, impolitic, or contentious but it probably flows from the highest levels of the Army.

• The Army institutional strategy must pervade all of its actions, including how it approaches the strategic planning process: That strategy will set the Army’s agenda in strategic planning, define its preferences for means and ends, and will be the Army’s litmus test for any national security or service strategy proposal that may be advanced.

• To understand the Army’s participation in the strategic planning process, it may be necessary first to understand the Army’s institutional strategy and, thereby, to confront the Army’s identity and interests.¹⁴

These hypotheses about the Army and its institutional strategy suggest that the door to understanding how the Army does (or doesn’t) participate in the strategic planning process lies in the direction of understanding the Army’s institutional strategy. And to understand the meaning of that strategy, one must understand who the Army is and what it is about.

Since the Army’s institutional strategy is likely to be implicit for cause, its elicitation by direct interrogation is improbable. Implicit strategies have been successfully inferred from the behavior of the institution by comparing its behavior to alternative patterns corresponding to a range of possible strategies.¹⁵ Thus, the next logical question is, what does Army behavior reveal about its institutional strategy? And arriving at that question was the second clue in the search for a door.¹⁶

To narrow the examination of Army behavior down to those aspects that are relevant to its institutional strategy, two additional questions arise immediately:

¹⁴Note the tie-back here to the principle advanced in Section II: Strategy takes on meaning mostly in the context of the identity and interests of its formulator.

¹⁵For a case study of the methodology, see Carl H. Builder and Morise H. Graubard, A Conceptual Approach to Strategies for the Control of Air Pollution in the South Coast Air Basin. The RAND Corporation, R-2817-SCAQMD/RC, September 1982.

¹⁶As it turned out, the importance of this question was not in its answer but in the questions it provoked. The author never returned to the question of the institutional strategy of the Army, interesting though it may be. The questions it provoked led more directly to an understanding of who the Army is and what it is about in the strategic planning process. It was, however, a significant clue along the logical pathway to the door being sought and, for that reason, has been retained here.
1. Behavior with respect to what?
2. Behavior as compared with whom?

The first is a minefield: Some of the obvious places to look at Army behavior reflective of institutional interests include Army budget priorities, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) agendas, the intellectual interests of its professional journals, promotion policies, statements of its leadership, and so forth. Each of these is an area of study unto itself, some would be difficult to access, most would involve processing very large amounts of information, and none offer obvious criteria for separating that behavior which is pertinent to, or reflective of, Army institutional strategy.

The second question—behavior as compared with whom?—offers several avenues: Comparisons with other large institutions might offer interesting insights; but comparisons with corporations, such as IBM or General Motors, or with agencies, such as the Post Office, are of dubious relevance to the special circumstances confronting the Army as an institution. Another basis for comparisons would be with other armies, such as those of Israel, the Federal Republic of Germany, or the United Kingdom. Here, at least, the comparisons would be among institutions that share many of the problems common to armies; the differences would be cultural, economic, or geopolitical in their origins. The difficulty with that avenue of comparative behavior is the challenge of profiling several foreign armies on enough aspects to detect behavioral patterns that are reflective of different approaches to institutional strategies against a noisy background of cultural, economic, and geopolitical differences.

A third avenue is to compare the U.S. military services. This suffers from the differences in the media—land, sea, and air—in which their operations are found; but it benefits from the fact that all the U.S. military services exist in the same national culture and confront the same economic and geopolitical challenges. The services may, indeed, have developed their own unique subcultures, but those differences may be important clues to their behavioral differences in approaching institutional or service or national security strategies.

More important, evidence of service differences, including their attitudes toward strategy, is abundant, easily accessed, and widely appreciated. Comparisons between the U.S. military services is a game which almost everyone can play and offer additional evidence or anecdotes from personal experience. Thus, even if they are not demonstrably the most relevant for revealing the Army's institutional strategy, interservice comparisons appear to be a fast and easy path to detecting and

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17 The author overlooked this avenue in his initial search for the door. Its possibility was brought to his attention first by Brigadier General Stephen Silvey, Jr.
understanding Army behavior that sets it apart from the other services in its approach to strategy. More than anything else, the prospect for quick insights with modest investments commended this avenue first. And with that third clue, the door was at hand.
IV. INTERSERVICE COMPARISONS

Like all individuals and durable groups, the military services have acquired personalities of their own that are shaped by their experiences and which, in turn, shape their behavior. And like individuals, the service personalities are likely to be significantly marked by the circumstances attending their early formation and their most recent traumas. Those personalities are of interest here because of what they may reveal about how each of the services—particularly the Army—sees itself: who it is and what it is about. And through that revelation is the expectation of a better understanding of the Army's participation in the strategic planning process.

Thus, the emphasis here is on interservice comparisons that reveal differences rather than similarities between the services and on those aspects that appeared to be relevant to their individual approaches to strategy and the strategic planning process. The basis for selecting aspects upon which to compare the services was quite simple and arbitrary: it was to turn over the stones within easy reach, looking for attitudes, questions, behavior, and concerns distinguishing the services from one another in ways that might influence their approaches to strategy. That means of selection was by no means thorough or rigorous, but it was fast, and it could be stopped whenever the number and quality of the comparisons seemed sufficient to draw safe conclusions.

In this manner, the differences between the services were compared—through the literature, conversations, and personal experiences—on more than two dozen aspects. Some differences, like uniforms and insignia, while substantial, did not appear to shed any light on service approaches to strategy. Others, like critical command progressions for officer advancement, seem to show only minor differences. And still others, such as the differences between the services in their public images (as portrayed, for example, in motion pictures), were rich in color but difficult to relate back to service self-images and behavior in the strategic planning process.

1The most useful sources for differentiating between the services varied with the aspect being considered. Some aspects are treated extensively in the literature and have been referenced accordingly. Other aspects have not yet received attention in the literature and the author has drawn upon his own experiences or conversations in suggesting the differences between the services. Where literature support is sparse, the author welcomes relevant citations and alternative interpretations.
Seven aspects were particularly useful in separating the services and are discussed here in some detail. They are:

1. Altars for worship
2. Concerns with self-measurement
3. Preoccupation with toys versus the arts
4. Degrees and extent of intraservice (or branch) distinctions
5. Insecurities about service legitimacy and relevancy
6. Uses of, and attitudes toward, analysis
7. Affinity for strategy

These seven aspects for comparison are taken in an order that naturally unfolds distinct service identities or personalities. There is no pretension that these are the most important or are a complete set of the aspects upon which the services differ. The seven were sufficient for the author to sketch out the identities of the services on enough dimensions to make them:

- Recognizably distinct, one from the other
- Substantially correct
- Sufficient to understand the rationales for their approaches to strategy and the strategic planning process

Several cautionary statements should precede these comparisons: First, they have been painted with a very broad brush. To emphasize the differences between the services, their positions or attitudes on some aspects take the form of caricatures, with all that the word implies about exaggeration and loss of detail. The complex has been made simple; the great diversity of views within every one of the services has been transformed into a monolithic voice speaking for the service. The author’s purpose in these obvious distortions is not ridicule, but discernment—to bring that which has become so familiar as to be hidden from view back into focus for the purposes of analysis.

Each of the services suffers or, in turn, shines by comparison with its sisters on one or more of these seven aspects. Those most loyal to one of the services may take exception to (or pride in) the author’s portrayal of their service. But the proper tests for these comparisons is whether they capture recognizable differences between the services and are substantially correct in direction and color, even if not always in

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2 Some other unturned stones were the differences between the services in how they program and budget and how they relate to each other and to the JCS. These could be interesting studies all by themselves.

3 That is to say, consistent with what one already knows about the unique personalities of the services.
degree or detail. If they are to be useful for their purposes here, these comparisons must be compelling on the basis of what the reader already knows; their general truth must be self-evident, for they rely on recognition more than instruction.

Finally, the service comparisons have been limited to the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Arguments for and against the inclusion of the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard were entertained, but the purposes of the comparisons overrode those arguments. The ultimate purpose of the research was not to compare the services, but to understand the Army's participation in the strategic planning process. The service comparisons, while certainly interesting in and of themselves, needed only to be sufficient in number and kind to understand who the Army was and what it was about in strategic planning. It will become apparent that comparisons among three of the five services were quite sufficient for that limited purpose.4

Altars for Worship

What do the services revere most as a principle or cherish as an ideal? How do the services differ in the altars at which they choose to worship?5 The question concerns the ideas or concepts that serve as inspirations and aspirations. For the knights of old, the altar might be the code of chivalry. For the hippies or "flower children" of the 1960s, it might be "love." Altars worshiped are revealing about how the worshippers see themselves and their values.

Tradition has always been an important part of military life, but the Navy, much more than any of the other services, has cherished and clung to tradition. The U.S. Navy was born under—and bravely fought its way out from—the massive shadow of the British Royal Navy and its rich traditions. Some of those who served in the new navy had served (perhaps involuntarily) in the Royal Navy; and the extraordinary success of that navy, with its traditions, frequently served as an institutional model of professionalism for the U.S. Navy.6 The reverence for tradition in the U.S. Navy has continued right down to the present, not just in pomp or display, but in the Navy's approach to almost every action from eating to fighting. In tradition, the Navy

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4Moreover, neither the Marine Corps nor the Coast Guard enter into the Department of Defense Planning, Programming, Budget, and Execution System as separate actors. The Marine Corps falls within the Department of the Navy and the Coast Guard within the Department of Transportation.

5This comparison was suggested by Rear Admiral James A. Winnifield, USN (ret), who offered, as an example, what the answer might be for the Navy.

6See, for example, Huntington, The Soldier and the State, pp. 248-249.
finds a secure anchor for the institution against the dangers it must face. If in doubt, or if confronted with a changing environment, the Navy will look to its traditions to keep it safe.

If tradition is the altar at which the Navy worships, then one of the icons on that altar is the concept of independent command at sea, which, like the Holy Grail, is to be sought and honored by every true naval officer. The reference to religious concepts in describing the Navy is not new:

As Secretary Stimson once remarked, the admirals were wrapped up
in a “peculiar psychology” in which “Neptune was God, Mahan his
prophet, and the United States Navy the only true Church.”

Independent command of ships at sea is a unique, god-like responsibility unlike that afforded to commanding officers in the other services. Until the advent of telecommunications, a ship “over the horizon” was a world unto itself, with its captain absolutely responsible for every soul and consequence that fell under his command.

The idealization of independent command at sea is probably well captured by the exploits of Commodore Matthew Perry in opening up Japan to western trade in the 1850s. Perry, halfway around the globe and months away from Washington, acted as Presidential emissary, ambassador, commander-in-chief, secretary of state, and trade commissioner, all under the guns of his ships, as he threatened war and negotiated treaties with feudal Japan. The nearest examples of such autonomy and power being vested in military officers on land are the early expeditions to the new world and the American west. On land, military officers were brought under scrutiny and supervision by means of the telegraph in the middle of the nineteenth century. But naval officers, once their ship was “hull down, over the horizon,” remained beyond the peaky grasp of the telegraph. Until the advent of reliable, worldwide radio communications in the middle of this century, the responsibility and opportunity of the independent command at sea remained unique to naval officers. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Navy as the most disgruntled of the services over the encroachment of Washington into the details of its command and control.

The broad authority to engage and retaliate against provocations,

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granted to the Sixth Fleet commander during that fleet's maneuvers off the Libyan coast in Spring 1986, comes close to the naval ideal of independent command at sea.

The Air Force could be said to worship at the altar of technology. The airplane was the instrument that gave birth to independent air forces; and the airplane has, from its inception, been an expression of the miracles of technology. The very knowledge of how to fly came from technical devices and experiments, and fliers have been the major instigators and beneficiaries of technological advances in everything from structural materials to microelectronics.

If flight is a gift of technology, and if the expansion of technology poses the only limits on the freedoms of that gift, then it is to be expected that the fountain of technology will be worshiped by fliers and the Air Force. If the Air Force is to have a future of expanding horizons, it will come only from understanding, nurturing, and applying technology. There is a circle of faith here: If the Air Force fosters technology, then that inexhaustible fountain of technology will ensure an open-ended future for flight (in airplanes or spacecraft); and that, in turn, will ensure the future of the Air Force. The critical element of this faith, of course, is the continued expansion of flight-related technologies, which is at least arguable as the air and space technologies mature.9

The altar at which the Army worships is less apparent than those for the other two services. That may be because its ideals are more diffuse or variable or subtle. There are, however, several consistent themes that surface when the Army talks about itself: They have to do with the depth of its roots in the citizenry,10 its long and intimate history of service to the nation, and its utter devotion to country. For examples:

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9One evidence of a slowing in the expansion of the aeronautical technologies is the growing lifetimes of aircraft before obsolescence. The most successful (or ubiquitous) models of aircraft have always had useful lifetimes that were about equal to the history of aviation which preceded them. That thumb rule can be applied across more than 80 years of aviation where airplane designs have generally succumbed to technological obsolescence. It can be applied equally well to the Curtiss Jenny, Douglas DC-3, and the Boeing 707. The best military aircraft designs have had somewhat shorter useful lives, but have followed the same trend.

This continuing extension of useful lifetimes implies that technological obsolescence in aircraft is slowing. While that might be welcomed by those paying the bills for aircraft, it is not by those devoted to designing and building new ones, who have to search harder for reasons—in the threat or competition or technology—to replace the existing aircraft.

10Evidence of the Army's roots in the citizenry is to be found in its composition—over a third of the Army's force structure (as measured in divisions) is vested in National Guard units.
Although each of our armed services is unique and different, the U.S. Army holds a special position of significance and trust. Its ranks come from the people, the country's roots, and it is closest to the people.\textsuperscript{11}

Out of the Army's long and varied service to our nation, tested and tempered through 200 years of peace and war, have emerged certain fundamental roles, principles and precepts. ... They constitute the Army's anchor in history, law and custom, suggesting the sources of its present strength and the trust and confidence of the nation in the essential role of the Army.\textsuperscript{12}

... the Army ethic must strive to set the institution of the Army and its purpose in proper context—that of service to the larger institution of the nation, and fully responsive to the needs of its people.\textsuperscript{13}

Those ideas are sufficiently altruistic and patriotic that they could be ratified with little modification by any of the military services. What makes them unique to the Army is that they really are important to the Army, as matters of belief and expression. They represent—at a level which is probably deep and difficult to express—who the Army thinks it is and what it believes in: Of all the military services, the Army is the most loyal servant and progeny of this nation, of its institutions and people.

If the Army worships at an altar, the object worshiped is the country, and the means of worship are service.

\textbf{Measuring Themselves}

Each of the military services measures itself against some institutional standard of health:

It is a well-known fact that service Chiefs who advocate in their respective budgets 17 divisions, 27 tactical fighter wings, or 15 aircraft carriers are unlikely... to advocate less. Those who hope each year that they will, hope against impossible odds.\textsuperscript{14}


For the military services, the size of their budgets—both absolutely and relative to those of the other services—is a measure of organizational success.\textsuperscript{15}

The question here is not \textit{how} the services choose to measure themselves, but \textit{how important} those measurements are to them. \textit{How concerned} or preoccupied are they with taking or meeting those measurements?

The Navy has been the most consistently concerned of the three services about its size, which it measures first in the number of its capital ships and then, so they may be adequately backed up, in the numbers of other ships, by category, and, more recently, in the aggregate.\textsuperscript{16} The Navy’s peacetime demand for capital ships has remained essentially unchanged since before the First World War, even though the kind of capital ship has changed from dreadnought to battleship to carrier to supercarrier; the perceived enemy and geographical orientation of the Navy have changed as many times. The Navy demand for 100 submarines goes back before the Second World War, despite dramatic changes in submarines, their role, and the threat.\textsuperscript{17} It would be difficult not to notice that the size and composition of the required fleet has been remarkably constant while history has brought the changes of several wars, the fall and rise of empires, dramatic technological advances, new enemies, and even an altered sense of national purpose.

The Navy’s concern about meeting these measurements is acute: Being one capital ship down is to be “a quart low,” with ominous consequences if not corrected soon. Part of that concern is justified in the long lead times required to produce a capital ship and in the impact of even one key ship on the rotation schedules for forward deployments. Quick to question their ability to “make do” when they are short a capital ship, the Navy is equally quick to rebuff any questioning of the need for the forward deployments which drive their requirements. The Navy is the hypochondriac of the services, constantly taking its own temperature or pulse, finding it inadequate, caught up in an anxiety largely of its own making.

\textsuperscript{15}Arnold Kanter, \textit{Defense Politics}, p. 5.
The Air Force has, from time to time, argued strongly for its size in terms of the number of wings of bombers or fighters needed or desired. But the Air Force appetite for newer and more technologically advanced aircraft, with their attendant higher cost, has tempered their demands when the choice came to more of the old or fewer of the new. For the Air Force, the aerodynamic performance and technological quality of their aircraft have always been a higher priority than their number. Thus, in measuring itself, the Air Force is likely to speak first of the kind or quality of its aircraft (speed, altitude, maneuverability, range, armament) and then their numbers.

Evidence for this emphasis on quality over quantity is easily observed: The Air Force does not lament the size of its bomber force so much as it does the age of its B-52s. The trade of larger quantities of arguably less-capable F-16s for F-15s was never attractive to the Air Force. Confronted with a mix of the new B-1 bomber and an even newer advanced technology bomber (ATB), the Air Force favored more of the ATBs. The Air Force concern about self-measurement becomes acute only if its qualitative superiority is threatened: New aircraft developments by the Soviets are of much greater concern if they reflect new flight envelopes than if they are being produced in large quantities. To be outnumbered may be tolerable, but to be out-flown is not. The way to get the American flier’s attention is to confront him with a superior machine; that hasn’t happened very often or for very long in the relatively short history of aviation.

The Army appears to be the most phlegmatic of the three services about measuring itself. Although division flags are one indication of its current status, the Army has been accustomed to growing and shrinking with the nation’s demands for its services. At least until recently, the Army has consisted mostly of people, and over 30 of the last 40 years, conscripted from the citizenry. To the extent that the Army publicly expresses concern about its health, it is likely to be about the “end strength” (number of people) of its “active component” (not counting Guard and Reserve units). That is the salient measure of its readiness to fight or to expand, as may be demanded of it. Thus, when the Army does talk about its size, it tends to be in terms of people—not equipment. The Army may refer to the number of active divisions, to its state of modernization or readiness, as percentages of the whole, but the basic measure remains the number of people. And the Army is

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16The Air Force sought 70 groups after World War II, when it was dominated by strategic bombing enthusiasts. See Paul R. Schrutz, “The Admiral’s Revolt,” Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute, Vol. 112, No. 2, February 1986, p. 70. More recently, under leadership dominated by the Tactical Air Command, the Air Force has sought 27 tactical fighter wings. See Murray, “JCS Reform.”
accustomed to that number being variable depending upon the commitment of society and the government to defined causes.

**Toys versus Arts**

How do the services differ in their devotion, possessiveness, or pride toward their equipment and skills? With what do people in military service tend to identify themselves? The things that attract and hold the attention of service professionals at the individual level provide an insight into the preoccupations of the service that go deeper than the assertions of the institution itself.

The Air Force is, by far, the most attached of the services to toys. Air Force pilots often identify themselves with an airplane: "I'm a 141 driver." "I flew buffs." Sometimes this identification goes right down to a particular model of an airplane: "I fly F-4Cs." The pride of association is with a machine, even before the institution. One could speculate that if the machines were, somehow, moved *en masse* to another institution, the loyalty would be to the airplanes (or missiles).

Air Force pilots delight in showing visitors their toys. It isn't hard to get an invitation to sit in the cockpit, to share its owner's excitement with the power and freedom of flight. The cockpit visitor will probably find it easier to engage the owner in a discussion of the difficulties and restrictions associated with weather and air-space in peacetime than the relationship of the man and machine to war. This is not to denigrate the great skill and courage of those who are prepared to fly and fight, but simply to note that flying and flying machines are nearest to their hearts. The prospect of combat is not the essential draw; it is simply the justification for having and flying these splendid machines.

The history of American airmen flying for foreign governments shows just how strong the draw has been. The Lafayette Escadrille, Chennault's Flying Tigers, the Eagle Squadron, the migration of fliers to the Royal Canadian Air Force in the early 1940s all attest to the overriding love of flying and flying machines. When America didn't possess the planes or the reasons to fly them, the pilots (or would-be pilots) followed the airplanes, even if that meant serving in other nations' military services and wars. To be sure, the pilots rationalized their extra-national services—sometimes in terms of helping with noble wartime causes, very seldom just for money, but almost always, upon reflection, by their common love of flight. They rejoined American units when that became possible, but flying came first. 19

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19 There were not prominent instances of American volunteers for the British Army or Navy in World War II, although Americans in the French Foreign Legion in World War I were fairly numerous.
The Navy is far less toy oriented, even though there is a more diverse set of toys to play with and a love for both ships and the sea. But the true lover of the sea and ships can be just as attracted to yachts or working at sea as to the modern fighting ship or the Navy. Whereas the things that the Navy owns and operates are clearly a source of interest and pride for those who serve in them, Navy personnel are more likely to associate themselves with the Navy as an institution. This loyalty to institution appears to extend even to Navy fliers:

Whereas the Army aviators under General Billy Mitchell had continually agitated following World War I for a new aviation service separate from the Army, the Navy fliers had always been Navy officers first and aviators second . . . 20

These seagoing aviators, unlike their Army counterparts, had always had a stronger affection for their service than for their aviation units.21

Army people have historically taken greater pride in the basic skills of soldiering then in their equipment. Until the last few decades, the Army was notorious for its reluctance to embrace new technologies or methods. The Army took great pride in the marksmanship of the citizen soldier and clung to a marksman's rifle (the M-14) while the Air Force, as might be expected, quickly embraced the high-technology, volume-of-fire approach embodied in the Stoner AR-15 (thence the M-16) rifle.

If one engages, say, an Army artilleryman in conversation about his business, it is soon apparent that his pride is in the art of laying a battery of guns for accurate fire. The kind of gun—155mm, 8-inch, or even a captured gun—is incidental; the power and satisfaction are in the knowledge and skills required to do something that is both important and general to warfare. Conversations with infantry and armored officers reveal a similar pride of skills—a thorough grounding in the basic arts of employing infantry or tanks effectively in battle.

Of late, however, the Army seems to be moving toward the other services in an attachment to machines. The Abrams tank and the Bradley fighting vehicle have some of the color of institutional toys. That shift may be a necessary response to the technology changes now

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20Donald, "Post War Defense Policy," p. 120.
21Ibid., p. 45.
confronting the Army, or it may be seen as a better way for the Army to compete for budget slices in a toy-oriented defense program. In any event, there are signs that the Army is getting “hooked” on toys too.

Intraservice Distinctions

For no service was intraservice competition ever equal in importance to competition among the services. The organizational and administrative ties which bind a service together preclude intraservice controversy from becoming as intense as interservice controversy.22

Interservice cleavages ordinarily will dominate intraservice distinctions. . . . Each of the services, however, is itself a complex organization composed of numerous subsidiary units and components. . . . Moreover, these differences are important to the members of each service. In particular, promotions to higher rank typically are reported (albeit unofficially) in terms of a variety of intraservice distinctions.23

All three services make intraservice distinctions among their people, particularly their officers, on the basis of their specialties or skills. They differ, however, in how these distinctions are made and used. Therefore, these distinctions are a useful clue to differences between the services on what they think is important and what they are about.

The Navy is the most elaborate in its distinctions among, and the relative ranking of, its various components, branches, or activities. The implicit intraservice distinctions within the Navy provide an extensive, fine-structured, hierarchical pecking order from top to bottom. At the pinnacle of this structure, since World War II, has been carrier-based fighter aviation.24 At (or very near) the bottom is mine warfare. Submarine and surface warfare specialties, in that order, lie in between. But the distinctions go further. Among aviators, carrier (tailhook) pilots are above land-based fliers. Within the tailhookers, attack aviation is not as high as fighters, but above antisubmarine warfare aviation. Among submariners, attack submariners are, without any doubt, preferable over ballistic missile launchers. Nearer the bottom of the heap are amphibious warfare and land-based patrol (VP) aviation. The captain of a carrier with origins in fighter aviation clearly has

24The submariners are now increasingly challenging the naval aviators for the top of the hierarchy, probably because of the 20-year ascendancy of the bright young officers who were hand-picked by Admiral Rickover for the Navy nuclear power training program.
credentials. The greater the diversity of experience, the better, but it cannot compensate for good bloodlines acquired somewhere in carrier aviation and surface warfare. Career devotion to the VP squadrons or the “boomers” (SSBNs) is deadly; similar devotion to carrier aviation or attack submarines is not.

It is apparent from this that the distinctions are made on the basis of what the Navy calls “platforms,” the machines in which the men serve, and their basing. These distinctions usually divide careers at their beginning; the blending (if any) usually comes at the O6 level; in between, few cross over from one career (platform) path to another. The Navy supports the notion that every new line officer is a potential candidate for the Navy’s top job, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Therefore, the hierarchy in career specializations can be associated with the experience which is relevant to the management of the total navy: The SSBNs are too isolated from the mainstream of naval operations; carrier aviation is at the heart. Curiously enough, despite these strong and important discriminations, naval officers see themselves, first, as just that, and only secondarily as specialists (e.g., as fighter pilots or submariners).25

The Air Force and Army are quite similar in their intraservice distinctions, perhaps because the Air Force roots have been separated from the Army for only forty years. Both have divided their officers into two groups that stand on different levels—in effect, a two-plateau or two-caste system of status. In the Air Force, the division is between pilots and all others. Whereas there has always been a healthy rivalry among pilots of different types of aircraft (not only among the categories of aircraft flown, but even down to models of the same category), pilots are collectively on a plateau quite far removed from all others, including flight crew members and ballistic missile officers.26 Pilots are likely to identify themselves with a specific model of aircraft and to see themselves as pilots even more than as Air Force officers.

Although the ownership of the Air Force is clearly in the hands of pilots, the rivalry between fighter and bomber pilots still manifests itself in swings of ruling power between the Strategic and Tactical Air Commands (SAC and TAC). Currently, the Air Force is dominated by TAC. Although the major commands tend to capture and put their marks upon officers throughout their careers, crossovers and mavericks are more evident in the Air Force than in the Navy.

In the Army, the basic division is between the traditional combat arms (e.g., infantry, artillery, and armor) and all others, which are seen

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25 Davis, _Post War Defense Policy_, p. 120.
26 See Kantor, _Defense Politics_, p. 108.
in (and fully accept) support roles to the combat arms.\textsuperscript{27} The branch distinctions are a source of pride and banter, but their effect upon promotion and power within the Army is not so clear as it is with the Navy and Air Force. Kanter\textsuperscript{28} argues that the Army is the least differentiated of the services, noting that:

It is perhaps symptomatic of the relatively low salience of intra-Army cleavages that, when Army officers are promoted to flag grade, they remove their branch insignia from their uniforms.\textsuperscript{29}

Nevertheless, Army officers, more than those of either of the other two services, are likely to offer up their specialty when identifying themselves. Where Navy and Air Force officers, as authors, may be content to be identified by their service alone, Army officers will almost always append their specialty (e.g., artillery or infantry). This probably has less to do with status than it does with pride or candor in the officer's qualifications. When an Army officer identifies himself with the Army Engineers, it is evident that he is saying much more about his background and qualifications than he is about his status in the Army, since his branch is not one of the combat arms.

Despite self-identification by branch within the Army, there is a brotherhood among the branches that is not evident among the specialties in the other services. To a degree significantly beyond that exhibited by the Navy and Air Force, the Army branches acknowledge their interdependency and pay tribute to their siblings. Where the Navy submariners and fliers and the Air Force TAC and SAC pilots may privately think that they could get the job done largely on their own, the Army branches of infantry, artillery, and armor each see themselves as inextricably dependent upon their brother branches if they are to wage war effectively. That dependency is long-standing, comfortable, and almost eagerly acknowledged. While each branch is proud of its unique skills and contribution, there is seldom any hint of dominance over, or independence from, its brothers.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{27}Aviation and air defense artillery are more recent additions to the combat arms; they probably do not fully share the higher plateau status of the traditional branches.

\textsuperscript{28}Kanter, \textit{Defense Politics}, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{29}This may be \textit{definitional} rather than \textit{symptomatic}. The name, general, was originally intended to apply to those officers capable of commanding all of the branches in a combined arms force. It is fitting, therefore, that they no longer associate themselves with a single branch, but with all branches under their command.

\textsuperscript{30}This does not mean that the branches are free from rivalry. Like brothers, they frequently tease each other about their respective abilities and chores, but not about their contribution to the Army or its missions.
Institutional Legitimacy and Relevancy

If institutional concerns about the legitimacy and relevancy of a military service were plotted as orthogonal vectors, the three services would be found widely separated at three of the four corners. Here, institutional legitimacy refers to the confidence of the service in its rightful independent status, while relevancy refers to the pertinence of its missions and capabilities. The substantial differences between the three services in their concerns about legitimacy and relevancy are important because they mark the behavior of the institutions in their approaches to strategy and the strategic planning process.

The Air Force, as the newest of the three services and the one whose separation from the others had to be justified within living memories, has always been most sensitive to defending or guarding its legitimacy as an independent institution. The fight for autonomy by the Air Force was long and hard; and the victory was not total: the Navy retained control of its aviation, and the Army has periodically threatened encroachments. If aviation in support of naval operations is controlled by the Navy, why shouldn’t aviation in support of ground operations be controlled by the Army? If the Air Force is not a decisive and independent instrument of warfare, the reasons evaporate for having a separate service to wield aerospace power.

... the doctrine and the decisiveness of strategic bombardment in future warfare were inextricably tied to the AAF case for autonomy. If strategic bombardment could not be decisive in warfare, and if victory could be obtained only by having an army actually meet and defeat the enemy on the battlefield, then it would be difficult to refute the case for maintaining with the United States Army the Army Air Corps (with its missions of close support of ground troops and interdiction of lines of communication) in order to support the majority of this nation’s forces.31

Even though the Air Force has broadened its purview beyond strategic bombardment, particularly in the last half of its forty-year life, to include tactical air warfare, its legitimacy as an independent, autonomous institution still rests on the decisive and independent nature of the air war. Support of the ground troops and interdiction of the lines of communication may be the ultimate ends, but the means to those ends is success in waging the air war, and that is the true business of the Air Force.

At the same time, the Air Force is supremely confident about its relevance, about the decisiveness of air power as an instrument of war, whether that instrument is wielded for strategic or tactical objectives.

Indeed, the Air Force arguments for its autonomy and legitimacy are rooted in the very same theory that provides its confidence about its relevancy and pertinence. With such vital institutional interests vested in a single theory, the validity of that theory is no longer questionable by the institution:

Making all due allowances for the difficulties and the genuine accomplishments of our strategists, it should, nevertheless, be perfectly clear that every salient belief of prewar American air doctrine was either overthrown or drastically modified by the experience of war.32

The one great, determining factor which shaped the course of the Second [World] War was not, as is so often said and so generally believed, independent air power. It was the mechanization of the ground battlefield with automatic transport, with the “tactical” airplane and above all with the tank. Airpower in its independent form was, in sober fact, relatively ineffective. It was the teaming of the internal combustion engine in the air and on the surface, in order to take the traditional objectives of surface warfare which, together with the remarkable development of electronic communications, really determined the history of the Second World War.33

Instead of making the common mistake of planning to fight the next war with weapons and techniques that had been effective in the last, the Air Corps planners were laying plans to conduct the next war using weapons and techniques that had been proven largely ineffective in the present war. The reason is quite obvious: the planners were not making detailed plans for fighting the next war but rather were planning for a force that could provide the justification for autonomy.34

In exactly the opposite corner is the Navy: The Navy is supremely confident of its legitimacy as an independent institution, but with the advent of long-range aviation, and again with nuclear weapons, its relevancy has come into question.

After 1945, U.S. naval power ceased to be something explainable in its own right and assessable in its own terms.35

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34Smith, p. 28, emphasis added here.
35Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 2.
Advocates of strategic air power argued that World War II had proven decisively that there would never again be a war like it, and that armies and navies were now virtually obsolete.  

The Navy's position in this regard was by no means curious: in a unified Department of Defense, it saw grave threats to its institutional identity, and with some justification. The Navy had long viewed itself as possessed of a peculiar strategic mission and faced with peculiar strategic and technical problems beyond the ken of the other services. In the establishment of a higher central control layer risks that the Army and the Air Force would dominate both strategic planning and resource allocation, leaving the Navy in the perennial position of poor step-sister.  

The institutional Navy has been buffeted by technology since the advent of steam power, through iron-cladding, rifled guns, airplanes, the atomic bomb, ballistic missiles, space surveillance, and anti-ship missiles. It was the airplane and atomic bomb, in the hands of the air-power enthusiasts, that brought the relevance of the Navy explicitly into question. The threat posed by the airplane was ultimately co-opted by transferring the capital ship mantle from the battleship to the carrier, but the threat of nuclear weapons to, the relevance of the Navy has been dealt with by the Navy's dismissal of nuclear war as being much less likely than a protracted conventional war. The ballistic missile was adapted to the submarine, but it has never been close to the heart of the Navy, despite the envy of the Air Force and the affection of the arms control community. 

The Army has always been the most secure of the three services on both counts. Although the relevancy and necessity of both the Army and Navy were seriously challenged by the Air Force after World War II, the Army was secure in the absolute necessity of its purpose and continued existence. The Army could console itself in the view that modern warfare, as demonstrated in Korea, the Middle East, and Vietnam, was ultimately decided on the ground. There might be air campaigns and support from the sea, but in the end, someone had to take and hold the ground. To be sure, the Army's size might be whittled down to a shadow by the new strategic theories, but the Army had

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36 Ibid., p. 19.
37 Ibid., p. 80.
38 However, that transfer was effected only through the trauma of World War II and the disastrous losses of battleships to aircraft by all of the major naval powers.
39 Not surprisingly, each of the services tends to focus on the kind of war that would make its own forces the principal player. By elevating the importance or likelihood of "their" particular brand of war, the services raise the stature of their own role, mission, and forces.
suffered drastic expansion and reduction before; its job was fundamen-
tal and remained, even if its popularity and support might vary over
time and circumstances.

This Army sense of security has been evident throughout the forty
years of efforts to unify the U.S. armed services. If the Navy has been
the most resistant of the three services to accepting the constraints of
unification and “jointness,” the Army has been cooperative to the point
of taking the initiative, with the Air Force falling in between. A good
example is provided by the Army’s pursuit of the Air Force in the evolu-
tion of the AirLand Battle doctrine. While such joint planning is
obviously appropriate, the weight of the enthusiasm for the venture
appears to lie with the Army.

Uses of Analysis

All of the military services are producers and consumers of analysis.
Operations analysis or research became well established within (or for)
each of the services during World War II. Systems analysis (a peacetime,
futuristically oriented, cost-dominated planning derivative of opera-
tions research) was forced upon all of the services in the 1960s
during the tenure of Robert S. McNamara, who, as Secretary of
Defense, made it a prerequisite to participation in the planning, pro-
gramming, and budgeting process. What is of interest here is how the
three services differ in their regard for, approach to, and use of analysis
internally, for their own decisionmaking, as well as those analyses that
may be mandated or imposed upon them.\footnote{These observations on the differences between the military services in their uses of
analysis are based almost entirely upon the author’s experiences. For an amplification of
this aspect of interservice comparisons, see Carl H. Builder, On the Army Style in
Analysis, The RAND Corporation, P-7267, October 1966.}

The Air Force, consistent with its reverence for technology, has
always been the most comfortable of the three services with analysis.
The Air Force has relied upon analysts from its inception to support
operational, developmental, and acquisition decisionmaking at high lev-
els, both inside and outside the Air Force. The father of the Air Force,
Herbert Hap Arnold, took bold steps to ensure that the new institution could
retain in peacetime some of the benefits afforded by its wartime scienti-
sts and analysts.

What sets the Air Force most apart from its sister services is how it
regards analysis. Air Force officers, as members of an institution
whose faith rests on theory and technology, are accustomed to dealing
with analysis on every aspect of flight and the application of air power;
supporting decisions with analysis is quite natural. Most senior Air
Force officers are consumers of, and participants in, the analyses that support internal decisionmaking. Thus, analysis in the Air Force is not restricted to the formalized planning, programming, and budgeting process; it is often regarded as the most effective medium for debate within the Air Force itself.

Analysis is more likely to be used by the Air Force to illuminate or clarify its decision problems and options rather than to define conflict or forces. Consequently, Air Force analyses tend to be relatively sophisticated and elegant in their design, execution, and presentation: Much prized is the simple equation, the single graph, or the clever model that captures and illuminates the essence of a problem. Analytic models are often fashioned ad hoc, with a life no longer than the problem at hand. Large-scale simulations and models are less prevalent in the Air Force than in the Army, but more than in the Navy. More than either of its sister services, the Air Force looks to simple (or at least clear) parametric analyses that illustrate the options or their sensitivity to the principal uncertainties.

The Army's approach to analysis is, in many respects, opposite to that of the Air Force. Army analyses appear to be oriented toward feeding numbers to the planning, programming, and budgeting process. Large-scale simulation models with long, evolutionary lives are routine. Detail and scope are prized, even at the expense of clarity or understanding. The Army appears to have an implicit faith in analysis and analysts: The stature of an analysis seems to rest upon the number of factors taken into account, the amount of detail included, and the number and credentials of the analysts who did the work. Less clear is whether that faith rests with the validity of such requirements analyses or with their effectiveness in feeding credible (i.e., acceptable) numbers into the bureaucratic programming process. In other words, does the Army believe the results or believe in the technique as a device to keep the Department of Defense satisfied?

Much of Army analysis appears to be aimed at getting a single answer (often a number) rather than illuminating the alternatives in the face of recognized uncertainties. Hence, deterministic rather than stochastic methods predominate. The sophistication of Army analysis is likely to be found in computer programming and data handling or management, as opposed to problem structuring or analytic design. Army analysts are more likely to associate themselves with models (or particular analytic techniques) than with the problems to which their models are applied. This is in some contrast with Air Force analysts who tend to associate themselves more with problems—which they may address with a variety of models or analytic techniques. At the risk of overstating the point, the Army uses professional analysts to get the
numbers they need, whereas in the Air Force, anyone confronted with the need to understand a problem or advocate a solution is likely to be an analyst.

The Navy's attitude toward analysis is quite different again. The Navy has been at the forefront of operational analysis—to improve the tactical or operational use of its existing platforms or forces. But it has little tolerance of analysis for planning or evaluating the Navy. Analysis of naval force requirements or effectiveness is a direct threat to the Navy's traditional institutional prerogatives. The Navy doesn't need analysis to define its requirements; it has always known what its requirements were. It knows that naval forces are effective when the Navy is left alone to use them as it sees fit.

The Air Force and Army may differ in their approaches to analysis, but both show great respect for its utility in defining requirements. The Navy, on the other hand, has never relied on analysis for requirements; they come from its experience and traditions—and from the quality thinking of its people, well steeped in both.

When the Navy had to take up "systems analysis" in order to survive in the planning, programming, and budgeting process, it did so with a clear eye: If analysis was the coin of the McNamara realm, then the Navy would mint as much of it as might be necessary. Navy decisions about the needed platforms or forces, still based on its experience and traditions, could, after all, be wrapped in the language of "systems analysis." It would be unfair to say that the Navy was deliberately cynical in its regard for, or conduct of, analyses because its actions were rooted in a much more fundamental perception and faith: Navy institutional judgments were (like those of the true Church) infallible. If an analysis gave results that were contrary to those judgments, then, very simply, the analysis must be wrong, either in the way it was formulated or in the way it was executed.

In sum, if descriptive words had to be affixed to each of the three services to describe their approaches to analysis, they might be sophisticated and elegant for the Air Force, ingenious and credulous for the Army, and suspicious and pragmatic for the Navy. The questions that the three services seem to be approaching through analyses are quite different:

- **Air Force:** How can we better understand the problem—its dimensions and range of solutions?

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41Where the Air Force is more likely to use analyses to define the characteristics of the forces it needs (e.g., the optimum payload for a new bomber), the Army is more likely to use them to define the amount of forces it needs (e.g., the number of 155mm shells required).
- Army: What do we need to plan more precisely—to get better requirements numbers?
- Navy: How can we better use what we have?

All three questions are meritorious, but they require quite different styles of analysis, analytic tools, and perhaps even analysts.

Affinity for Strategy

How the three services regard strategy—its importance, who should formulate it, how it should be applied—are important clues to their attitudes toward strategic planning.

Of the three services, the Air Force is clearly the most comfortable with strategy and things strategic—in thinking, theorizing, and planning. The Air Force was conceived around a strategic theory and midwifed by strategists. Its continuing existence—its justification as an independent institution—rests upon strategic theory. Strategy colors almost every action of the Air Force, from defining roles and justifying missions to the development of doctrine and the acquisition of forces. The Air Force (unlike the Army and Navy) does not assign flag rank responsibility for the development of strategy,\footnote{Both the Army and Navy have assigned specific responsibility for strategy to flag officers in their headquarters. For the Army, it is the Strategy, Plans and Policy Directorate (DAMO-SS); for the Navy, it is the Strategy, Plans and Policy Division (NOP-60). In the Air Force the responsibility for strategy is assigned two levels further down in AFXOXS, as a part of planning integration, which, in turn, is a part of Air Force plans.} possibly because the entire Air Force has been built around a developed, articulated, and understood strategy. Much more important to the Air Force is the development and promulgation of doctrine that will prevent the erosion or undermining of its strategy.

The Navy's historical affinity for strategy is probably just as strong as that of the Air Force; but for the past sixty years, it has been far less confident with its position on strategy precisely because of the Air Force's aggressive and successful pursuit of strategic theory. Until the 1920s and the emergence of the air-power theories of Douhet and Mitchell,

The Navy thought of itself as the nation's "first line of defense," the service which had to remain at all times maximally ready because it was the service that would first meet and engage any approaching enemy aggressor. The Mitchellites strategic doctrine rejected all this, claiming that all surface forces—especially naval forces—were obsolete. They were obsolete, the Mitchellites said, because they were wholly vulnerable to air attack and consequently useless. The fliers asserted that the new "first line of defense" was an air offensive,
the use of long-range aerial bombardment to knock out an enemy in quick decisive blows.\footnote{Davis, Post War Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, p. 42, emphasis in the original.}

The Navy of the prewar period, to understate the case, was unresponsive to radical technological innovations. For fifty years it had been planning to fight the next war with battleships and related vessels. An elaborate strategic concept as well as a massive body of thinking and planning had been erected on the assumption of certain fixed characteristics and capabilities of these basic pieces of hardware, and any changes, even if improvements, would have destroyed the entire interrelated structure.\footnote{Ibid., p. 256.}

Before [World War II] it was commonplace and congenial to conceive of naval strategy as a thing apart: a discrete body of thinking about indisputably naval functions and missions, concerned almost entirely with "naval" enemies, and engaged-in almost exclusively by naval officers. The distinction between land war and sea war was still sharp enough (or so it was commonly perceived) to permit individual, exclusive strategies for each. So long as the missions of war could be defined in traditional terms such as command of the sea, control of the air, the conquest or defense of territory, military strategy could be compartmentalized according to the medium in which each service operated. National defense was merely an aggregation of separate service strategies.\footnote{Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 11.}

The revolution in weaponry and its uses during the Second World War made it no longer congenial to articulate strategy wholly in terms of distinct mediums (air, land, sea) or to conceive of entire missions and functions as within the exclusive purview of one or another military service. Wartime uses of air power had irrevocably shattered the traditional boundary—the coastline—that separated land and naval warfare, Army and Navy strategies.\footnote{Ibid., p. 16.}

Thus, within twenty years, in the crucible of World War II, the Navy adopted the air offense for itself in the form of the carrier as its primary instrument of naval power. This adaptation was not solely based upon the proven lessons of the war:

\[\ldots\] the forthcoming dominance of aviation forces in the postwar Navy was not decided in response to a new strategic concept or to an analysis of the international political situation but rather in response to an institutional threat [by the Air Force] to the Navy which originated within the domestic political arena.\footnote{Davis, Post War Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, p. 149, emphasis in the original.
... the submariners had as good a case as the aviators or any other Navy group if the matter [of dominance in the postwar Navy] was going to be decided solely on the basis of comparative war records. No less notable figure than Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, one of the most renowned carrier task force commanders in the Pacific (although not himself an aviator), is reported by one reputable Navy historian to have made the flat statement: "The submarine beat Japan." 64

Nevertheless:

The naval fliers, who had used those few opportunities given them before the war to experiment with carrier operations, were now in control of the Navy. . . . They were not prepared to accept the metaphysical reasoning of the Air Force that all air everywhere was indistinguishable and that therefore only the Air Force had a right to conduct U.S. military air operations. 65

But the security afforded by this adaptation was short lived:

The new notion that navies were useful for a far more comprehensive range of actions than naval battles . . . was . . . one of the major lessons that the Navy learned in World War II. But the Navy had been known to ignore important lessons in the past. Why did it learn this particular lesson so thoroughly—and so quickly too. . . ? The first reason . . . was the emergence of Russia as the new enemy. Inasmuch as Russia had only negligible naval strength, the U.S. Navy could not claim a major role in defensive plans against this threat unless it abandoned its old dogma about the chief use of navies. But even more important than this reason were five other closely interrelated developments:

1. The advent of the atomic bomb.
2. The belief . . . that the atomic bomb had made navies obsolete, not only because ships were thought to be too vulnerable to atomic attack but also because no naval force could deliver an atomic weapon.
3. The exploitation of the foregoing views by the Army Air Force, which claimed that atomic bombs had made all forms of warfare outmoded except strategic bombing; that only the Air Force could deliver atomic bombs and, therefore, that a new separate Air Force ought to be made the dominant component of the postwar U.S. defense establishment.
4. The susceptibility of the Congress to the arguments of the Air Force, believing that emphasis on the atomic bomb would give the U.S. a cheap, painless, and invincible military force that no other nation could match.

65Ibid. p. 223.
5. The growing determination of the Navy, led by its aviators, not to let these developments succeed in reducing the Navy to a secondary component of the U.S. defense establishment. 50

The history of the Navy since World War II has been a search for a strategic concept to justify naval power in the form judged desirable by the Navy as an institution.

...the very general nature of the Navy's postwar strategic thinking—actually, little more than the elaborated conviction that a strong diversified Navy offers the U.S. a versatile fighting force of great value in many varied military situations—plus the obsessive focus on the struggle with the Air Force have led the naval officers to neglect until recently efforts to refine their strategic thinking in the specific context of the emerging new world order. A generally versatile fighting force is certainly a good thing to have, as an axiomatic proposition, but in a defined situation a more precise capability of special nature might be incompatibly more valuable than a kit of general-utility tools. 51

The final [Navy] postulate was the concept of a functionally-integrated, strategically independent naval force at sea: self-sustaining and self-replenishing, needing no foreign bases, and self-possessed of all that was required to perform wartime missions. This was the Navy's victory in the interservice struggles of the 1940s: to keep control of the Marine Corps and its own air power. In the ensuing years, the Navy resisted all attempts to alter these facts or their significance. It was also the most persistently resistant of the services to efforts at greater defense centralization and any reallocations of roles and missions. 52

The Navy's search for strategic concepts has culminated in the so-called "Maritime Strategy," which is described and analyzed in some detail in Section V, following. The point here is that the Navy has a strong historical affinity for strategy, but had been adrift without one for sixty years because of the Air Force and its aggressive advocacy of the air strategy. With the advent of the maritime strategy, the Navy tried to reestablish its anchors in strategy. The effectiveness or validity of the maritime strategy may be arguable; the Navy's affection for strategic theory is not.

The Army, as an institution, has not shown any particularly strong affinity for strategy. At the same time, however, Army leaders have traditionally been major contributors to the formulation of national strategy. It would seem that the disconnection has to do with the

50 Ibid., pp. 188, 190.
51 Ibid., p. 259.
52 Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 550.
distinctions the Army itself draws between the Army as an institution serving the nation and senior Army people serving in roles of national advisers or statesmen. The formulation or advocacy of strategy implies a choice of means and ends. But such choices are not obvious to the Army in its institutional roles and missions. It must fight where and when it is told to fight; and all too often, the means have been provided from the citizenry after the fact of war.

Understandably, the Army is more concerned about how well it can assimilate assigned resources and employ them than it is about the assigned objectives and resources, which it so often takes as givens. How well the Army adapts and uses its assigned resources to achieve its assigned objectives, attainable or not, is everything.\(^{53}\)

Strategy, when available or articulated, usually by others, is used by the Army to declare what it needs. If those resources are not forthcoming, the Army will define the shortfalls and state the risks.\(^{54}\) It generally will not offer strategy (and, hence, resource) alternatives. The Army is accustomed (as a citizen army in peacetime) to not having what it needs to execute declared wartime strategies; it assumes that either the resources will be made available or the strategy will have to be changed upon the event. In either case, the Army intends to fight well (i.e., demonstrate its competence, dedication, and courage) regardless of the position in which it may find itself, whether it can win or must lose.

The Air Force and Navy may advocate strategies in peacetime to their advantage, but they are not irrevocably committed to their execution in war. If their strategies do not appear to be propitious in the event of war, they are, to a large degree, free to change them accordingly by the way that they commit their forces to combat.\(^{55}\) The Army may be unique among the services in its acceptance of national strategies in peacetime which it is both utterly committed to execute and unlikely to be able to successfully prosecute in wartime.

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\(^{53}\) It is here, on the effective and efficient use of available resources, that the Army concentrates its conceptual energies. The AirLand Battle concept is not strategy but doctrine. It says, whatever the means and ends that may be assigned to us, here are concepts for the most effective and efficient use of those means toward those ends. This is how we would prefer to fight if we have the opportunity.

\(^{54}\) But in defining the shortfalls and stating the risks, the Army is typically not confrontational. These things are said and accepted quietly, as with a partner in a venture. There is a duty to say what must be said, but loyalty, without challenging the national leadership.

\(^{55}\) For example, the Navy abandoned its Rainbow war plan in the aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
Service Identities

The foregoing comparisons of the three services are sufficient to sketch their unique personalities—who they are and what they are about. The purpose of the sketches is to capture the salient characteristics of each service that seem to bear upon its approach to strategic planning. The sketches are deliberately made brief and vivid so they can be held easily in the mind. Their order of introduction is intended to contrast their differences.

The Navy, more than any of the other services and over anything else, is an institution. That institution is marked by two strong senses of itself: its independence and stature.

The...Navy argument [in the Woodrum Committee hearing of April 1944] was the principle that each service should be assigned a broad general mission and then left free to obtain whatever forces and equipment, within budgetary limitations, that it needed to carry out this mission.56

"The Department of the Navy," General David Jones volunteered, "is the most strategically independent of the services—it has its own army, navy and air force. It is least dependent on others. It would prefer to be given a mission, retain complete control over all the assets, and be left alone."57

The Navy's stature as an independent institution is on a level with that of the U.S. Government (which the Navy must sometimes suffer):

"Let us remember," warned [Admiral Bradley] Fiske, "that the naval defense of our country is our profession, not that of Congress." The naval profession... must have room to work out its own "rules of strategy, tactics, and discipline..."

So fierce had been the Navy's opposition to service unification, that even Truman was intrigued with one exasperated Army unification proposal which suggested that "the only way to overcome the Navy's resistance would be to do away with the War Department, transfer all of its elements to the Navy, and redesignate that organization as the Department of Defense."58

Who is the Navy? It is the supra-national institution that has inherited the British Navy's throne to naval supremacy. What is it

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56Davis, Post War Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, p. 56.
58Quoted by Huntington, The Soldier and the State, p. 262.
about? It is about preserving and wielding sea power as the most
important and flexible kind of military power to America as a maritime
nation. The means to those ends are the institution and its traditions,
both of which provide for a permanence beyond the people who serve
them.

The Air Force, conceived by the theorists of air power as an
independent and decisive instrument of warfare, sees itself as the
embodiment of an idea, a concept of warfare, a strategy made possible
and sustained by modern technology. The bond is not an institution,
but the love of flying machines and flight.

The coincidence of opinion within the Air Corps on the supreme
importance of autonomy can be explained by years of frustrated
efforts, the common bond of the joy of aviation, and the crusading
attitude of these men. At last the tenuous theoretical arguments of
Douhet and Mitchell had been justified in the eyes of the Air Corps
leaders and the years of frustration were over. The great joy and
overstatement in the period immediately following the successful
explosion of the two atomic bombs was well recorded in the press
and in the congressional hearings of 1945 and 1946. Airpower would
defend this nation; air power would guarantee the success of a new
international security organization; air power would punish aggres-
sion wherever it might manifest itself; air power would save the
world. Salvation had come; all America and the world needed to do
was to maintain and support a strong United States Air Force—a
simple, reliable formula. The airplane was not considered just
another weapon; it was the ultimate weapon for universal peace-
keeping.

Objectivity about this weapon was absent within Air Corps circles for
many reasons. Perhaps the foremost reason was the psychological
attachment of the airman to his machine. To him the airplane was
not just a new and exciting weapon; it was what carried him miles
behind enemy lines and brought him back; it was a personal possess-
ion which was given a personal, usually feminine, name, kissed upon
return from a mission, and painted with a symbol for each enemy
plane shot down or bombing mission completed. The affinity of pilot
for airplane has its parallel in the history of the cavalry soldier and
his horse. The airman, like the cavalryman of the past, was not
known for his modesty, or his objectivity, when it came to the
employment of his chosen steed. 50

Who is the Air Force? It is the keeper and wielder of the decisive
instruments of war—the technological marvels of flight that have been
adapted to war. What is it about? It is about ensuring the indepen-
dence of those who fly and launch these machines to have and use
them for what they are—the ultimate means for both the freedom of
flight and the destruction of war.

The Army sees itself, ultimately, as the essential artisans of war, still divided into their traditional combat arms—the infantry, artillery, and cavalry (armor)—but forged by history and the nature of war into a mutually supportive brotherhood of guilds. Both words, brotherhood and guilds, are significant here. The combat arms or branches of the Army are guilds—associations of craftsmen who take the greatest pride in their skills, as opposed to their possessions or positions. The guilds are joined in a brotherhood because, like brothers, there is a common family bond (the Army) and a recognition of their dependency upon each other in combat.

What is the Army? It is, first and foremost, the nation’s obedient and loyal military servant. It takes pride in being the keeper of the essential skills of war that must be infused into the citizenry when they are called upon to fight. What is it about? It is about keeping itself prepared to meet the varied demands which the American people have historically asked of its army, but especially prepared to forge its citizenry into an expeditionary force to defeat its enemies overseas. And in this latter role, the Army accepts (with understandable unease) the fact that it is utterly dependent upon its sister services for air and sea transport and firepower.

After characterizing the services thusly, the author wondered if the mottos for the three service academies would lend or undermine support for the distinctions made here. They are splendid and, in the light of the personality profiles which have been drawn, need no identification or further explanation:

- *Ex scientia tridens:* From knowledge, sea power.
- Man’s flight through life is sustained by the power of his knowledge.
- Duty, honor, country.

The ultimate objects of affection or aspiration are obvious in each case. Even the singular use of Latin is somehow fitting.

Because these sketches of the service identities are based on historical behavior, they do not necessarily portray how the services will behave in the future. There is evidence that all three services are changing:

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66There is some ambiguity about the motto for the Air Force Academy. While the mottos of the Military and Naval Academies are to be found on everything from cuff links to glassware, there appears to be no comparable consistency for an Air Force motto. The one used here for the Air Force Academy appears on the base of the sculpture of a falcon in the cadet area opposite Mitchell Hall and has appeared on class rings. Over a portal to the cadet area, however, is “Bring me men” (to match my mountains); and a current enlargement is “Commitment to excellence,” which appears on the academy stationery. Inquiries to the Academy staff and graduates have provided no further resolution of this ambiguity.
• The rise of the submariners (or more generally, the nuclear power community) relative to the aviators and surface warfare officers in the Navy
• The ascendency of the fighter over the bomber pilots in control of the Air Force
• The Army's increasing emphasis on high-cost toys.

But much more is constant. The personalities of the services, like those of individuals, are hard to change quickly or deliberately. They are the products of the culture and acculturation of hundreds of thousands of people, whose leadership requires decades of institutional experience, and whose behavior is continuously reinforced by social and professional incentives.\(^2\) A strong, radical leader, such as Admiral Zumwalt, may disturb the identity of a service while in command, but reactionary, restoring forces are likely to form quickly and persist longer. Since people are more likely to associate themselves with an institution for positive rather than negative reasons, there is always a large reservoir of restorative attitudes—to maintain those values that originally attracted the institution's membership. Thus, barring a catastrophe which decimates one or more of the services, the unique service identities (whether they have been portrayed here correctly or not) are likely to persist for a very long time. Indeed, the service identities or personalities are likely to be one of the most stable aspects of the nation's future security prospects.

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V. SERVICE STRATEGIES

The need for the services to have some concept of operations is as old as the services themselves; but, historically, such concepts have been expressed in the form of service doctrines rather than national security strategies. The collision of service doctrines is more recent and can be associated with the appearances of air forces and theories about air power. Before the advent of aircraft, the boundary between land and sea warfare was relatively sharp, with only subordinate elements of the Navy and Army—the Marines and Coast Defense Artillery—operating at their interface. The mainstream doctrinal interests of the Army and Navy, therefore, only overlapped at the margin until airplanes, based on land or sea, demonstrated the ability to reach deeply and importantly across the shoreline. Then, what originally passed for service doctrine quickly escalated to competing national strategies:

Prior to the 1930s, doctrine was reasonably well developed in the Navy, somewhat less so in the Army. The rise of airpower, however, was a powerful stimulant to the military quest for ideology. Lacking secure organizational existence or general acceptance during the 1920s and 1930s, the supporters of airpower—like any new, crusading group—needed to develop an intellectual rationale. The existence of the surface forces might be taken for granted; the need for an air force had to be demonstrated. Moreover, no longer was it possible for a service to elaborate a doctrine defining its importance to the nation and its relation to national policy without explicitly, and not just inferentially, defining the position of the other services also. Mahan had constructed a doctrine of seapower without specifically denigrating landpower. For the supporters of airpower, however, the attack on the surface forces was unavoidable. Once the Air Force was established, the intensity of their doctrinal concern perhaps moderated somewhat, but by this time the other services had felt compelled to reply in kind.¹

Indeed, the establishment of an independent Air Force, based upon a strategic theory for the decisive use of air power, set the stage for interservice battles in various forms and across many issues, right down to the present:

In the choice of a federated rather than a genuinely unified service system after the war, issues about weapons, functions and forces were also and inescapably clashes between powerful service interests, orientations and instincts for institutional survival, and between these interests and the policies of political controllers. The balance of political power among the services did not permit any wholesale reallocation of roles and missions—regardless of how changed the external environment—but this simply meant that the issue was either finessed administratively or argued in other terms: in debates about the character of war, the efficacies of alternative strategies, the economies and effectiveness of competing weapons, forces and tactics.²

Thus, while these interservice battles have been wrapped in the language of war and weapons and strategies, they were, at the core, about organizational and institutional interests:

... the content of the strategic doctrine promoted by each service was a reflection of the distribution of influence among intraservice groups. Alterations in the intraservice distribution of influence (and corresponding shifts in doctrinal emphasis), in turn, are attributed to changes in the services' environment. In the strategic environment, for example, the projected behavior of potential foreign adversaries had only a modest impact on the services' behavior. Rather, the environmental stimuli toward which their strategic planning efforts were directed were overwhelmingly domestic in origin and were predominantly defined in organizational terms.³

Service strategies were not so much the logical responses to threats as they were the drivers of threat interpretation:

Understandably, each service inclined to conceive of a U.S.-Soviet conflict in terms that were consistent with its own capabilities and theories of warfare. External facts about Soviet military capabilities were subject to any number of interpretations, and each service derived its own meanings and promoted its own particular emphasis.⁴

Thus, the priorities among roles and missions set by the services themselves, and the policies they were eager to advocate, were conditioned by threats and opportunities they perceived in their organizational environment. Specifically, the strategic preferences of elected politicians, and the allocation of budgetary resources in a manner consistent with these preferences, were... the origins of the changing distribution of influence within the services and the defense policies advocated by them.⁵

²Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 532.
³Kanter, Defense Politics, p. 100, emphasis in the original.
⁴Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 542.
⁵Kanter, Defense Politics, p. 101, emphasis in the original.
Quite apart from the relative merits of the competing service strategies, within their own terms of reference, there is some question as to their import for, or impact on, national security strategy:

To the extent that ambitious strategy and muscular visions of wartime missions make plausible politically the case for certain levels and kinds of forces, they cannot be disregarded, but this hardly means that any administration would actually choose to use U.S. forces according to these prescriptions in something as serious as an actual war.  

But the dangers of having the services pursue their own strategies for national security have been evident for some time:

The purpose of the NSC [National Security Council], according to Hoopes, was "to bring the separate organizations and traditions of the Military Services under sufficiently central authority to ensure an end to multiple and conflicting strategies for defending the nation and its interests; and to bring the Military Establishment as a whole into close and continuous relations with the State Department, the intelligence agencies, and the economic counselors for the purpose of planning foreign policy, weighing its military risks, judging the demands on national resources, and coordinating day-to-day operations. . . . The NSC was designed to ensure detailed considerations of all the major factors that bear upon US foreign policy decisions."  

That expectation of the National Security Council, however, ignored the peacetime needs of the military services to plan future forces and operations around specific concepts for relating their military means to national ends (i.e., strategies):

There is an inherent contradiction between the military and its civilian leaders on [the setting of objectives]. For both domestic and international political purposes the civilian leaders want maximum flexibility and maneuverability and are hesitant to fix on firm objectives. The military on the other hand need just such a firm objective as early as possible in order to plan and conduct military operations.  

It is this need to plan against clear objectives that compels the services toward strategy; but it is their concomitant desire for institutional independence and control that attracts them to advance separate service strategies for national security.

Although airplanes were the first instruments to blur the mission and doctrinal boundaries between the services, the successive

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6Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 328.
8Summers, p. 117.
appearances of nuclear weapons, long-range ballistic missiles, and spacecraft battered down the institutional attempts to define new boundaries between the services:

The services thus were confronted with the increasing need to justify their existence in terms of national policy at a time when the possibility of a service’s having a distinctive mission or even a clearly defined hierarchy of strategic missions was slowly disappearing.

The diversification of service activities affected the content of the proliferating doctrine stimulated by interservice competition. No longer could the services be justified in terms of exclusive missions or functions required by national policy. Before the innovation of the [McNamara-Hitch] functional programs, military doctrine was service doctrine. So long as the significant missions were related to the command of the sea, the conquest of territory, and the control of the air, such doctrines were meaningful in policy terms. The functional requirements of deterrence, however, ended the strategic importance of elemental doctrines. The purpose of doctrine is to relate force to purpose, and airpower or seapower in and of themselves served no distinctive ends of policy. Mahan and Douhet were strategists of seapower and airpower; the Cold War produced strategists of massive retaliation and limited war.⁹

These developments temporarily changed the content of the debates among the services, although the fundamental issues between them—institutional independence and control—remained:

[The] interservice debate was just as prevalent and intense as it had been previously. The issues at stake in the controversy, however, had changed in character. Strategic questions no longer dominated the discussion. Instead, proprietary issues had become prevalent. Neither the fundamental existence of the services nor fundamental alternatives of national strategy were at issue, but rather marginal gains and losses of resources, forces, and weapons. The question of what should be done was less controversial than the questions of who should do it and how much resources should be allocated to it.¹⁰

Although the distinctions between the services’ missions have become increasingly blurred since World War II, they have remained predominantly separate organizations with substantially unique capabilities: for the vast majority of contingencies, each service continues to be a “monopoly supplier” of military resources and capabilities.¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., p. 412.
¹¹Kanter, Defense Politics, pp. 92, 93.
Those services which could establish major interests in higher priority functions had little incentive to bolster their contribution to lower priority functions in which other services had a primary interest. The Army regularly criticized the Air Force for its alleged neglect of tactical aviation and airlift. Both these services criticized the Navy for its alleged neglect of antisubmarine warfare and continental defense.\textsuperscript{12}

But the national strategy of deterrence—by the threats of nuclear escalation in conflicts overseas or of retaliation for attacks upon the homeland—has been increasingly questioned on its efficacy, relevance, and morality. And this has created a market for new strategic concepts as candidates for the centerpiece of national strategy. One, advanced by President Reagan in April 1983, is for defensive shields against nuclear attacks. Another is the concept of horizontal escalation,\textsuperscript{13} which has been partially captured within the so-called “maritime strategy.” The latter has been vigorously advanced by the Navy in recent years, coincidentally with a preferential build-up of naval forces, arguably at the expense of the other services’ budgets. This represents, to some, a renewal of the service strategy debates engendered by the air power advocates of an earlier era.

Whether the maritime strategy signals the services’ return to the debate over national strategy, or simply the rationalization of a predisposition to rebuild naval forces, remains to be seen. But it has stimulated the question (sometimes in the form of a plea) Why doesn’t the Army have a ground-power strategy? Latent in that question is the implication that such service strategies are worthwhile for one or more of the following reasons:

\begin{itemize}
  \item To orient the services’ planning of forces or operations,
  \item To garner more of the defense budget, or
  \item To enhance national security.
\end{itemize}

Whether such service strategies have, in fact, been motivated by such purposes or have been (or will be) successful in achieving them is worthy of closer examination. To that end, the air and maritime strategies are scrutinized here in some historical and analytical detail. Together, they tell an important story about service strategies and their relevance to the Army.

\textsuperscript{12}Huntington, \textit{The Common Defense}, p. 419.
\textsuperscript{13}Horizontal in the geographic sense, as opposed to vertical in the destructive sense.
The Air Strategy

Giulio Douhet is generally acknowledged to be the first to advance the air strategy in what he called "command of the air."\textsuperscript{14} There, he posed the first and central premise of the air strategy as an axiom:

To conquer the command of the air means victory; to be beaten in the air means defeat and acceptance of whatever terms the enemy may be pleased to impose.\textsuperscript{15}

To this axiom, he added two corollaries:

1. In order to assure an adequate national defense, it is necessary—and sufficient—to be in a position in case of war to conquer the command of the air.

2. All that a nation does to assure her own defense should have as its aim procuring for herself those means which, in case of war, are most effective for the conquest of the command of the air.\textsuperscript{16}

Douhet posed the second premise of the air strategy as an affirmation:

The command of the air cannot be conquered except by an adequate aerial force.\textsuperscript{17}

And from this he concluded that:

National defense can be assured only by an Independent Air Force of adequate power.\textsuperscript{18}

What Douhet meant by an "Independent Air Force" was somewhat tautological: It was "all those aerial means which, taken together, constitute an aerial force capable of conquering the command of the air."\textsuperscript{19}

These same elements are to be found in the modern conception of the air strategy or theory in three tightly linked premises:

\textsuperscript{14} Giulio Douhet, The Command of the Air, Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1942, as translated by Dino Ferrari from the second edition published in 1927, having been originally published in 1921 under the auspices of (the Italian) Ministry of War.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 28.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 29.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 32.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. The idea of air power as an independent instrument is usually attributed to Hugh Montague Trenchard, principal organizer of the RAF (see, for example, "Trenchard," Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 10, p. 109), but Jan C. Smuts is given that credit in the semi-official history of the British air arm in World War I, according to The War in the Air, Volume of Appendices, edited by H. A. Jones, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1937 (as cited by Bernard Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1969, fn. p. 71).
1. Air power can be the decisive instrument of war.\(^{20}\)

2. The decisive use of that instrument requires air superiority.

3. Achieving air superiority requires central control of air power.

Where Douhet riveted the attention of the armies and navies of the day was his proposal:

For the present I ask only that we give the air arm the importance it deserves—in Italy we are far from doing that—and that during the transition period we adopt the following modest program: *A progressive decrease of land and sea forces, accompanied by a corresponding increase of aerial forces until they are strong enough to conquer the command of the air.* This is a program which will approach nearer and nearer reality as we grow firmer in promoting it.\(^{21}\)

This proposal for promoting air power at the expense of land and sea forces was the first verbal shot in a fraternal-institutional war that has continued, with varying intensity, down to the present, with no end in sight.

Billy Mitchell became the outspoken American “proponent of an independent air force and of unified control of air power”\(^{22}\), but the theory of air power did not gain broad public acceptance until World War II. In America, it was the Book-of-the-Month and Disney film, *Victory Through Air Power*,\(^{23}\) that did much to broaden support for the air strategy. DeSeversky’s book, admiringly dedicated to Mitchell, opens with the first basic premise of the air strategy:

The most significant single fact about the war now in progress is the emergence of aviation as the paramount and decisive factor in war-making.\(^{24}\)

The second basic premise of the air strategy comes shortly thereafter:

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\(^{20}\)This claim was more strident in the middle of the 20th century than it is today. Then it was claimed that air power was the decisive instrument of war. Today, air power theorists claim that it can be decisive if used correctly by either side to a conflict. For an updated perspective of the evolution of the air strategy, see David MacMack, *Voices from the Central Blue: The Air Power Theorists,* in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986.

\(^{21}\)Douhet, p. 30, emphasis in the original.


\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 3.
We cannot and must not dream of conquering the enemy without first capturing dominance in the air—but once we have a clear-cut dominance in the air, all else becomes a secondary subordinate, auxiliary operation.\textsuperscript{25}

The third and final premise of the air strategy is taken up as the emancipation of air power, in this curiously phrased dictum:

The simple truth is that a separate Air Force is not a wondering device to guarantee automatic military ascendancy, but merely the minimal precondition for successful modern warfare.\textsuperscript{26}

During World War II, the AAF leadership acted out the air strategy, accepting its first two basic premises as proven (even as they strove to demonstrate them) and laying the groundwork for the third. The central control of air power in a separate, independent, autonomous Air Force became the implicit objective of almost all AAF actions:

The focus of attention for the postwar [AAF] planners . . . was planning for Air Force independence from the United States Army. Since Air Force autonomy was the primary concern for the planners, other factors such as doctrine, base requirements, and weapons systems forecasts were secondary considerations which could be modified in the interest of strengthening the AAF aim. The postwar planning for the organizational independence of the Air Force was thorough, detailed, and well-conceived, while that for international contingencies, though considerable, suffered from this concentration on the organizational aspects of the postwar military structure.\textsuperscript{27}

What the postwar world situation might hold in the way of threats to American national security was, of course, of considerable concern to the postwar [AAF] planners. What was of greater concern, however, was how the AAF could justify its case for autonomy in the immediate postwar period. There were numerous plans . . ., each based on a different set of specific assumptions, yet all were designed primarily to justify the case for an autonomous Air Force within the national defense structure of the United States.\textsuperscript{28}

The theoretical arguments for Air Force autonomy were rooted almost entirely in the air strategy. But the full implications of the Air Force quest for autonomy became increasingly apparent to the Army and Navy:

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 26, emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 255.
\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 15.
In this justification for autonomy there was no evidence of any deviation from the arguments of the 1920's and 1930's. It was when the Air Force leaders expanded upon this with a discussion of the strategic impact of technological developments in aeronautics that the pre-eminence of airpower in the accomplishment of national defense was hinted at by some and hammered at by others.

Certainly Colonel William Mitchell had claimed that airpower was the first line of defense and offense, but the Air Corps leaders of the 1920's and 1930's had been much more subtle in their arguments for autonomy. As World War II drew to a close, subtlety had largely disappeared and the obsolescence of navies and armies was pointed out by key AAF commanders such as Lieutenant General James Doolittle and General George Kenney. They claimed that they wanted equality with the Army and Navy, but in making their case before Congress and the press their arguments were such that they could justify not equality but supremacy of the Air Force.29

The centerpiece of the air strategy and the bid for an independent Air Force was strategic bombardment:

To the AAF leaders, the strategic bombardment mission for years had been both a means and an end. It was a means by which autonomy might be justified and obtained, but it was also considered by the AAF leaders to be the primary purpose of military aviation. The dual technological breakthrough of very-long-range bombers and atomic weapons made the strategic aviation enthusiasts of the past appear quite prophetic to the American public.

The serious questioning of the decisiveness and importance of strategic bombardment which was beginning to take place as the United States Strategic Bombing Survey reports were being completed never became a significant public issue. No matter how ill-conceived the Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany or the strategic offensive in the Pacific had been, it all became irrelevant to the American public, Congress, and the Air Force. Overnight, strategic bombardment had gone from thousand-plane missions with hundreds of escort fighters to a single bomber dropping a single bomb. Strategic bombardment had won its case, and the ignored lessons of World War II could remain ignored by the public, Congress, the Air Force, and all others except the inquiring scholar or the parochial Army or Navy man.30

Thus, the validity of the air strategy was taken to be proven despite the growing wartime evidence to the contrary:

29Ibid.
30Ibid., p. 17.
When doctrine becomes dogma, all kinds of counter-dogma signals can be ignored. If the lessons of the Battle of Britain could be ignored, if the high losses in bombardment aircraft whenever they were seriously opposed by German fighters in the early, unescorted daylight raids in 1943 could be discounted, if it took the loss of 60 aircraft on a single mission over Schweinfurt in August 1943 and 60 more over Schweinfurt in October 1943 finally to convince all the Air Corps leaders that unescorted bombardment against defended targets was self-defeating as well as suicidal, then is there any reason to believe that attitudinal changes among the American public and the War Department would have permitted a different Air Force to develop? The answer has to be a tentative no.\textsuperscript{31}

Even when the counter-evidence was acknowledged, it could be interpreted by the air strategy theorists as anomalous:

The fact that the Germans failed to knock out England from the air decidedly does not mean that knockouts from the air are impossible. It means only that Germany was not properly prepared to do it.\textsuperscript{32}

The opponents of the air theory said the Korean experience “proved” that strategic bombers were overrated. The heavy bomber supporters said that this was not so; Korea was the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time.\textsuperscript{33}

The blindness was induced by doctrine; and while the doctrine was built around a theory of air power, it was motivated by the prospect of institutional independence:

... the formulation and articulation of the doctrine is ordinarily designed to justify fully the service’s attempt to obtain or maintain exclusive control over certain missions. Criticism usually results in an undermining of the case the service has so carefully made for certain roles and missions in national defense. Dissent is therefore discouraged, and breakthroughs in technology which might bring established doctrine into question are often ignored.\textsuperscript{34}

Air Corps leaders had reached a doctrinal decision by 1935 as to the efficacy of unescorted long-range strategic bombardment and were unwilling either to question that decision or even to observe

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 112.

\textsuperscript{32}DeSeversky, \textit{Victory Through Air Power}, p. 70.

\textsuperscript{33}Wylie, \textit{Military Strategy}, p. 66. Wylie goes on to say: “And nearly everybody missed the point. The strategic bombers were then, as they are now, fully able to do their job. The only hitch was that the assumptions did not coincide with reality. The Korean War was real enough; it was the assumptions that were not valid for that particular reality. Whether the reality—i.e., the Korean War—was ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ was irrelevant.”

\textsuperscript{34}Smith, \textit{The Air Force Plans for Peace}, p. 30.
technological advances that might cause them to modify this doctrine until 1943 when the whole concept of strategic bombardment was endangered by the horrendous losses over Germany.

To point out the vulnerabilities of strategic bombardment was to jeopardize the Air Corps case for autonomy, for if strategic bombardment was proved ineffective as the element of warfare which alone might prove to be decisive in battle, then its case would be seriously undermined. If flights of bombardment aircraft could be turned back, or if the defensive fighters could inflict unacceptable losses upon the bombing formation, then the whole concept of strategic bombardment would be proved erroneous, and the Air Corps would then be expected to accomplish only close support, air superiority, and interdiction, none of which (nor all in combination) could justify complete autonomy. 26

The drive for an independent Air Force colored almost everything the AAF planners saw or did:

Since the aim of the postwar planners was to plan for and justify an autonomous Air Force, and since this was the reason that [General] Arnold "tolerated" the planners, it is understandable that they based their plans on theories of war causation, potential enemies, and base requirements which would best justify autonomy. 26

The planners were an extremely optimistic group, probably because they were convinced that American airpower was winning World War II. The enormous role that the Russians, the British, and the Chinese, as well as the United States Navy, Marines, and Army were playing in the victory was not recognized by the Air Force planners. 27

The airman's reverence for technology 28 also colored the AAF interpretations of national security threats:

The Air Force planners viewed threats to national security largely in terms of technology as it related to airpower. If airpower was the key to national security and national strength, no other state would pose a threat unless it possessed a sophisticated air force.

It was assumed that deficiencies in technological sophistication were the reason the Soviets did not develop a strategic air capability in World War II. 29

26Ibid., p. 31.
27Ibid., p. 35.
28Ibid., p. 49.
29See Section IV.
30Ibid., p. 52.
They measured a state's power by heavily weighting technology and by assigning lesser values to natural resources, manpower, and ideology.\textsuperscript{40}

To his credit, as an advocate of the air strategy, DeSeversky foresaw the limitations of air power against states which did not measure high by these standards:

Total war from the air against an undeveloped country or region is well-nigh futile; it is one of the curious features of the most modern weapon that it is especially effective against the most modern types of civilization.\textsuperscript{41}

While many, perhaps most, of the air strategy theorists were, and still are, true believers in its three basic premises, the air strategy was never proven before, during, and after World War II; its only demonstrable utility was institutional: the achievement of an independent Air Force. Even there, the victory was partial—the Navy was able to retain its own air power,\textsuperscript{42} and eventually the Army reacquired its own air power of a sort. Thus, the real and demonstrable effect of the air strategy was institutional independence; all the rest remains disputed theory even today. But Perry McCoy Smith would argue that the theory served its proponents well:

The end sought was not national security through a properly balanced military defensive and deterrent force but rather an autonomous, powerful United States Air Force which would be the first line of defense, the largest of the three military services, and the recipient of the largest share of the defense budget. Assumptions were drawn not as an initial step in the planning process, which would, in turn, provide the guidance for the structure, size, and deployment of the military forces. Instead, they were drawn in order to lead to the end desired.\textsuperscript{43}

The strident claims made for the air strategy have softened over the last several decades, but the basic premises remain even today:

As a critical element of the interdependent land-naval-aerospace team, aerospace power can be the decisive force in warfare.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., p. 39.

\textsuperscript{41}DeSeversky, Victory Through Air Power, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{42}See Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 550.


\textsuperscript{44}Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force, AFM 1-1, 16 March 1954, p. 1-3, emphasis added here. Only aerospace forces are described as having decisive potential. The discussion of the other members of the team—land and naval forces—notes that they are dependent upon aerospace power and makes no reference to their having the potential to be decisive.
Considering the nature of modern war, airpower can dominate not only the air but the land and sea as well. The Air Force must be able to deny control of the air to enemy air forces and to provide ground and naval forces the assistance necessary for them to control their environment.\textsuperscript{45}

In sum, since 1943, several fundamental beliefs have remained embedded in Air Force doctrine. Airpower can exploit speed, range, and flexibility better than land and sea forces, and therefore, it must be allowed to operate independently of these forces. These characteristics are most fully realized when airpower is controlled centrally but executed decentrally.\textsuperscript{46}

The Maritime Strategy

The Navy’s embrace of the maritime strategy is neither so long nor as consistent as the Air Force’s institutional marriage to the air strategy. The maritime strategy, as codified theory, is relatively new:

This is not to say that the complete pattern was not well understood, if not articulated expressively, at least two hundred years ago—merely that it had never, until recently, been described in general or theoretical terms and set down on paper for analytic discussion.\textsuperscript{47}

Analysis of the maritime strategy and its applications is, therefore, necessarily based more upon an interpretation of current writings than on historical events. Nevertheless, some of the historical antecedents of the maritime strategy are pertinent here.

The U.S. Navy is no stranger to strategy. For the first half of the 20th century, the Navy, thanks to Alfred Thayer Mahan, had a world-class theory of sea power and its use. That theory saw central position and concentration of force as general principles of strategy, equally applicable to continental or insular powers. For an insular nation, like the United States, the central positions were the seas; and command of the seas conveyed power, for commerce and in war. Certainly the importance of the seas to an insular (i.e., maritime) nation and the imperative of commanding the seas (i.e., sea control), both of which are to be found in the modern maritime strategy, have their origins in the writings of Mahan.\textsuperscript{48}

With Mahan’s theories to explain why sea power was necessary for insular nations like the United States, Britain, and Japan, and with

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid., p. 1-4, emphasis added here.
\textsuperscript{46}Ibid., p. A-6, emphasis added here.
\textsuperscript{47}Wylie, Military Strategy, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{48}“Mahan’s strategy of seapower,” Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 19, pp. 562, 563.
great oceans separating the United States from its potential enemies in Europe or Asia, the role of the Navy as "America’s first line of defense" became self-evident. It was the Navy that would shield the country from attack; and the Navy would meet and presumably defeat any potential enemy on the high seas.

The airplane, as it developed increasing capacities for range and payload, doubly threatened that view of the Navy. Airplanes with bombs could reach across the oceans that had heretofore isolated America from her enemies, bypassing the Navy as the first line of defense. And airplanes, again from enemies across the oceans, could find and threaten the survival of naval ships on the high seas. These were the concepts that Billy Mitchell and, later, Hap Arnold were trying to prove in their highly publicized demonstrations with bomber aircraft against ships: Mitchell tried to prove that bombs from aircraft could sink battleships, while Arnold tried to prove that aircraft could find ships (the Italian passenger liner REX far out to sea).

But even as World War II proved that ships were vulnerable to attacks by aircraft, the Navy convincing demonstrated that it, too, could use airplanes, carried on ships, to project power ashore—i.e., the bombardment of land targets. Before World War II, the Navy considered shore bombardment as an ancillary mission for naval gunfire. Gunfire, provided by the capital ships (battleships), was intended for sinking other ships in battles on the high seas. Aircraft were ancillary, to be used mostly for scouting and spotting gunfire.

After World War II, the Navy saw power projection as the primary mission of naval forces, one to be carried out principally by carrier-based aircraft. Of course, to carry out that mission would also require control of the sea areas necessary to bring naval forces to bear for power projection; and that, in turn, would require self-defense for naval forces. In effect, power projection became the mission of the capital ship (the carrier) which then justified the additional, supporting naval forces for sea control and self-defense. Control of the sea lanes or sea limes of communication (as distinct from control of those sea areas needed for the exercise of naval power projection), while still recognized as a naval mission, no longer enjoyed the attention that Navy gave to power projection, despite the concern of many, including the Army. The capital ship, the aircraft carrier, and its supporting forces were justified by power projection; sea lane protection called for a different and less interesting navy. Thus, for the Navy, particularly its aviators, a new role for sea power, beyond that envisaged by Mahan, had emerged.

The theorists of independent air forces, like DeSeversky, saw power projection from the sea as a temporary or inadequate approach to the use of air power.
Except in limited stretches of ocean as yet beyond the reach of land-based aviation, ship-borne aircraft is a most hazardous substitute for true airpower: first, because it is inferior to the enemy's land-based planes, and second, because the carriers themselves are perfect targets for enemy aviation, being among the most vulnerable ships afloat.42

DeSeversky's assessment of the relative performance of land and carrier based aircraft, while arguably correct at the time, did not fully anticipate the evolution of tactical jet aircraft and aerial refueling, which have made the differences in performance because of land or carrier basing vanishingly small. His assessment of carrier vulnerability, of course, remains disputed even today.

Then, just as the Navy adjusted with pride to its new, proven capabilities in warfare, the advent of atomic bombs suddenly threatened the fundamental need for sea power. If airplanes could reach across the oceans, and if one airplane with one bomb could destroy an entire city (or fleet), why did America need or want a Navy? Within the space of little more than a decade, many of the conceptual foundations of the Navy had been overturned:

- The airplane was no longer an auxiliary or ancillary instrument of naval warfare; it had become the primary strike weapon of fleets.
- The aircraft carrier had replaced the battleship as the Navy's capital ship; and the aviators had ascended to the top of the naval hierarchy.
- The Navy could no longer claim to be the nation's first line of defense; but it could project significant power ashore by means of carrier-based aviation.
- The vulnerability of ships (or any other object that could be found) to nuclear weapons could no longer be questioned.

Little wonder, then, that the Navy found itself adrift in strategic theory for more than thirty years after World War II—and at the very time when the Air Force was using its air strategy to lay claim to institutional independence and dominance in service status and budgets.

The political fight with the War Department and, more particularly, with the Air Force soon dominated the Navy men's every consideration. Their responses to this political struggle—which they sincerely believed to be a fight for the very survival of their service—thus pro-

42DeSeversky, Victory Through Air Power, p. 25.
vided the context for all remaining decisions about the postwar Navy.36

For the Navy the struggle was...seen as a fight for institutional survival and, concomitantly, a fight to guarantee that the U.S. would continue to have the large degree of seapower that the Navy men were still convinced that it needed.31

The...carrier was seen by the Navy as a guarantee of institutional survival, but it was viewed by the Air Force as a threat to its own monopoly of atomic delivery [and] by the Army as a wasteful drain on resources...32

The past forty years have seen the Navy awash in proposals and arguments for new directions and theories for sea power. These have included the relative emphasis the Navy should give to:

- The traditional mission of sea control as compared with the newly found capabilities for power projection ashore.
- Nuclear weapons delivery (and nuclear warfare) as compared with conventional warfare missions.
- Air, surface, or subsurface warfare capabilities as the dominant naval forces (and, hence, medium) of the future.
- The retention of amphibious and mine warfare capabilities.
- Ship quantity versus quality; big versus little carriers.

But the Navy's deeply held reliance upon traditions for safe passage allowed little leeway for actual change beyond what was forced upon it by the trauma of World War II. Thus, rather than embracing any radical new theory about sea power or itself, the Navy creatively waffled:

While the other services tended to become associated with a single theory and strategy of war, the Navy made a virtue of having no such singular strategic preoccupations [sic].33

The advantages to a service in not becoming peculiarly identified with any single strategic mission were well illustrated by the smooth sailing of the Navy in the interservice conflicts after 1950. The Air Force was identified primarily with strategic deterrence, the Army with European defense and then limited war. Traditionally, the Navy argued that it was not limited to any single medium, that it must include all the air, sea, and ground forces necessary to accomplish its

30Davis, Post War Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, pp. 155, 156.
31Ibid., p. 226.
32Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 531.
33Ibid., p. 540, emphasis added here.
mission. The Navy also maintained broadly diversified forces which could be interpreted as supporting one or more functional missions. A carrier task force could be used for strategic retaliation, European defense, or limited war. Anti-submarine warfare, similarly, was relevant to continental defense, European defense, and limited war.54

Moreover:

The size, composition, roles and missions of the Navy have never been determined in a political vacuum or by means of an orderly process in which strategy follows from national objectives, naval strategy from overall military strategy, and naval forces from naval strategy, but always in a real world in which the relationships are much more complicated, and in which naval policy is both a product of and a reaction to the competition, interaction, and ambiguities of broader conceptual, technological, fiscal, political, and organizational factors.56

It is against this background that the maritime strategy emerged. The Navy’s affection for strategy, going back to Mahan, is strong; and the major buildup of the Navy, begun in 1981, needed an explanation for sea power that went beyond the available pronouncements. Yet, the Navy’s dilemma in declaring a strategic view was real.

The essence of peacetime strategic decision-making must . . . be to face up to difficult choices between competing conceptions of war when one is no more obviously “correct” than another, and when the defense establishment cannot do everything it would want. Yet, to embrace one set of answers was to risk all on the wrong choice; to hedge and cover as many bets as possible ran the risk of having a little bit of everything and not enough of anything; to attempt a strategy for every possible contingency was likely to result in a strategy for none.56

That painful choice is evident in the maritime strategy which the Navy has adopted.

The maritime strategy emerged slowly and implicitly, through briefings, testimony, and unpublished papers, so that it came to be debated in the academic journals even before it had been explicitly expressed in the open literature.57 Uncertainty about just what the maritime strategy was, or ought to be, was apparent in the debates:

55 Lacy, Within Bounds, p. 529.
56 Ibid., p. 569.
What [Ambassador Robert W. Komer] resists is a shift to a "maritime strategy" that would go beyond controlling the seas and would use the seas to project power against the Soviet Union. . . . One use of maritime power under this concept would be attacks by aircraft or missiles from ships directly onto the Soviet homeland. Another use would be "horizontal escalations" or attacks on Soviet interests outside the homeland. . . .

The maritime strategy Mr. Komer describes is not a maritime strategy that would be useful for the United States today or in the future. Yet, it is easy to see how he could interpret the term in this way. What he criticizes is, in fact, the direction that the U.S. Navy is moving under the Administration's defense program. Quite simply, the Navy is asking to do more of what it has done so well ever since World War II, projecting power onto hostile shores with aircraft based on aircraft carriers.56

This public speculation as to what the maritime strategy was finally ended with the publication of The Maritime Strategy by the U.S. Naval Institute,59 as a supplement to its Proceedings. This was no tentative or vague offering of a proposed strategic theory as an invitation to debate; this was codified strategy:

Naval strategy has recently received more attention than in any peacetime era since Alfred Thayer Mahan dominated the scene. This unusual prominence stems from the Navy's attempt to think through and spell out a maritime strategy within the national military strategy. Because the best developed and most detailed statements of "The Maritime Strategy" have been available only in classified versions, public debate between its supporters and detractors has often suffered from misinterpretations or exaggerations.

This supplement provides the most definitive and authoritative statements of the Maritime Strategy that are available in unclassified form. They are the nearest thing to a British "White Paper"—that is, an official statement of policy—that we are likely to encounter in the American political system.60

. . . the Maritime Strategy has rationalized, disciplined and focused Navy program development, budgets and procurement to a degree that would have seemed remarkable only five years ago. Since 1982, a formal presentation of the maritime strategy begins each annual naval program development cycle.61

60Ibid., p. 1.
The publication of the maritime strategy in the Naval Institute's supplement to the Proceedings has stirred considerable comment and discussion on the merits and wisdom of the strategy by its proponents and opponents, but very little analysis of its content. The presentation of the maritime strategy requires only 73 paragraphs, so its content can be analyzed by simply:

1. Reducing each of the 73 paragraphs to its topic sentence,
2. Combining those topic sentences into 11 paragraphs of related ideas, and
3. Scanning that condensed statement for assumptions and principles.

What emerges from this reduction and structuring is a bare-bones sketch of the principal premises and promises of the maritime strategy. It becomes apparent that it is not so much strategy as it is an explanation of:

1. How naval forces can contribute to national security at every level of conflict (i.e., a rationale for naval forces), and
2. How the Navy would prefer to employ its forces in combat (i.e., naval doctrine).

The strategy (or perhaps more correctly, the combination of several sub-strategies) spans the spectrum of conflict from peacetime to global war, a variety of objectives, and every form of naval power. At the extremes of conflict—peace and all-out war—the strategy thins out to a simple claim for the unique contributions of naval forces: from showing the flag to the survivability of submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Several sub-strategies take form and subside in between those extremes, shifting in their ends and means with the intensity of conflict.

At the lower levels of conflict, the strategy claims that forward naval presence can deter conflict or escalation by the implied threat of direct confrontation or defeat. In the middle, at the threshold of superpower conflict, the strategy calls for aggressive forward deployments of naval forces to present the enemy with the prospect of a protracted and expanded war, preventing him from focusing his efforts in time or space. If the enemy should persist, then strikes on his flanks and rear should dilute and divide his efforts. And at the upper levels of conflict, but still with conventional weapons, the strategy seeks to coerce the enemy by threatening to adversely tip the nuclear balance. This threat

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62 See the Comment and Discussion department of the Proceedings in the months following the publication of the supplement on maritime strategy.
would take the form of exposing his submarine-based strategic nuclear forces to attrition. The strikes on the flanks and rear of the enemy and the attrition of his submarine-based nuclear forces would, of course, involve the concomitant or prior destruction of the enemy naval forces.

The applications of military force in the maritime strategy can be arranged as shown in the table below. It is apparent that the maritime strategy is intended to apply to all possible levels of conflict, war aims, force types, and uses of naval power. What is less clear is whether the war aims are in consonance with national aims for the use of military force and, if so, whether the proposed uses of naval power are central, relevant, or productive to those aims. But the breadth of application provides the strategy with a robustness: All of the Navy specialties—aviation, ships, submarines, Marines—not only have a piece of the action, they have their day in the sun as the principal players. All levels of conflict are included. The Navy plays no matter where the geographical point of conflict—even in a land war in Central Europe.

Thus, the maritime strategy resolves the dilemma which today's Navy faces in having a coherent strategy and yet recognizing the traditional roles and missions of its diverse elements. The means of the maritime strategy are all of the existing types of naval forces; the ends are all of those military objectives which might apply across the spectrum of conflict. The maritime strategy is not a concept for relating means and ends; it is an explanation of how all existing means can be related to all ends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Force Type*</th>
<th>+ Application</th>
<th>- Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace-crisis</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Surface</td>
<td>+ Presence</td>
<td>- Deterrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stability</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis-conflict</td>
<td>Seizing the</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>+ Forward</td>
<td>- Defocusing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>deployment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict-war</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Air and</td>
<td>+ Strike</td>
<td>- Dilution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>protecting</td>
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<tr>
<td>War-peace</td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>Subsurface</td>
<td>+ Attrition</td>
<td>- Coercion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Here, force type refers to the principal (cutting edge) or most effective type of force to be applied to achieve the desired effect, recognizing that naval forces are almost always deployed and used in combinations.
Nevertheless, three premises about the use of naval forces are evident in the maritime strategy:

1. The presence of naval forces can have a significant effect on deterring the instigation or escalation of local conflicts.

2. Threatening the Soviet flanks and rear with naval strike forces can significantly inhibit the Soviets from concentrating their military efforts in time or space.

3. Threatening the survivability of Soviet ballistic missile-carrying submarines can significantly tip the nuclear balance.

The last two premises both rest on implicit assumptions that they:

- Are attractive and credible uses of military force in conflicts with the Soviet Union and
- Will require the possession or achievement of maritime superiority.

These three premises and two assumptions are the five anchors of the maritime strategy. If any one of them fails or is not accepted, much of the strategy's support for the existing character of the Navy is lost. Thus, whatever the merits of the many arguments or assertions that adhere to the maritime strategy, these five anchors are central to the Navy's institutional stake or interest in that strategy. For example, the assertion that the United States is a maritime nation is not central to the strategy. Whether Europe is more important than Northeast Asia is also not central to the maritime strategy insofar as that strategy supports the Navy's institutional interests.

On the other hand, arguments about whether or not attacks on the Soviet flanks and rear are attractive or credible uses of military force

\footnote{That the United States is a maritime nation by geography and overseas interests is not enough, by itself, to justify the need for a maritime strategy. Other nations, such as Japan and Norway, are also maritime nations by geography. The Soviet Union is a maritime nation by interests, even if not by geography. Yet, it is not apparent that these nations are driven to maritime strategies. The argument that the United States needs a maritime strategy is inferential rather than explicit in its basis.}

\footnote{Ambassador Komer wondered aloud: "It is interesting that the maritime supremacy school never suggest [sic] that the United States pull back forces from Northeast Asia... Could it be because the Pacific is a Navy-dominated theater?" (Komer, "Maritime Strategy," p. 1140, fn 10.) Davis noted that: "One of the dominant characteristics of U.S. naval strategic thought during the half century from 1890 to 1940 was a strong emphasis upon security problems in the Pacific and Asia and a relative neglect of the Atlantic and Europe. This enduring traditional Navy concern for the Pacific and Asia, and the corollary lack of concern for the Atlantic and Europe, was evident again from the outset of the Navy's planning for the post-World War II period..." (Davis, Post War Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, p. 78).}
in a conflict with the Soviets over Central Europe.\textsuperscript{65} go right to the heart of Navy's justification for its considerable vested interest in carrier air strike forces. A similar relationship exists between attacks upon Soviet ballistic missile-carrying submarines and the Navy's high interest in attack submarines (probably even over its own ballistic missile-carrying submarines).

In sum, an analysis of the content of the maritime strategy suggests that it is a carefully woven fabric of sub-strategies that more clearly serves the Navy's institutional interests in rationalizing its existing force mix than it does the U.S. national strategy or security interests.

The Army and Strategy

If the Air Force has an air strategy, and the Navy has a maritime strategy, why doesn't the Army have a land or a ground-power strategy? Or a continental strategy? The question must have been asked many times since World War II—since the emergence of an independent and powerful Air Force riding upon the air strategy. The more recent expansion of the Navy, seemingly floated on the maritime strategy, can only have reinforced the significance of the question.

The fact is that the Army does not have a theory which is the equivalent of the air or maritime strategy. It does have a theory of how it would prefer to fight—the AirLand Battle doctrine—but not a concept for the selection of the means and ends of war, as do the Air Force and Navy. Why this difference?

Admiral J. C. Wylie\textsuperscript{66} has provided a lucid analysis that explains much of this difference, which he relates to three factors. It is useful to quote him at length here:

First, the connotation of the word "strategy" is not the same to the soldier as to the sailor or airman. The reason for this is elusive but very real. It has to do with the environment in which the conception is set.

Where the sailor or airman think in terms of an entire world, the soldier at work thinks in terms of theaters, in terms of campaigns, or in terms of battles. And the [latter] three concepts are not too markedly different from each other.

\textsuperscript{65}If deterrence fails, the only agreed-upon U.S. objectives are to terminate the war as quickly as possible, at the lowest possible level of violence, and upon favorable terms. It is not at all agreed that the United States will seek to protract or expand any war, anywhere, any time, with the Soviets. While it certainly might be desirable, under some circumstances, to protract or expand a war with the Soviets, that is not the general or accepted case.

\textsuperscript{66}Wylie, \textit{Military Strategy}. 
This state of mind in which the soldier derives his conception of the strategic scene is brought about primarily by the matter of geography. Prominent and direct in its effect is the fundamental fact of terrain. "Terrain" as a word does not have deep meaning to the nonsoldier, but to the soldier it is everything. It is the fixed field within which he operates. It is the opponent that he must always face no matter who may be his enemy. It is the fact of terrain that establishes the field within which the soldier’s professional intellect must generate its plans.37

A second factor of primary influence in the soldier’s strategic pattern of thought, related closely to the status of terrain, is the nature of the soldier’s combat—and thus the nature of his conception of strategy.

The sailor and the airman encounter war as a separated series of encounters. After each encounter the two sides separate. They haul off, they regroup, they jockey again for position, and to a considerable extent each combatant retains to himself the decision as to whether and where and when to fight again. In most situations, the sailor and airman fight with their opponents only when, for one reason or another, it is mutually agreeable. Mahan and perhaps others before him have found it convenient to differentiate tactical and strategic matters by the simple fact of contact. When opposing forces are in contact, the plans and operations are “tactical.” Everything outside contact is “strategic.”

Not so the soldier. His conception of the separation of strategy and tactics, and thus his concept of the scope of strategy, is on an entirely different footing. The “contact” thumb rule has no validity for him. The soldier makes contact when the war starts, and he makes every effort to maintain contact until the war is over. The soldier who has lost contact with his enemy is in a bad way. To the soldier the shading between a tactic and a strategy is a fuzzy and not too important one. . . . what he does is tactical and what his next senior does is strategic.38

Wylie then identifies the third factor as the soldier’s limited view of the objective, which he claims is the soldier’s acceptance of the Clausewitzian principle that “the ultimate objective of all military operations is the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces and his will to fight.” But from the discussion which follows, it is apparent that Wylie’s third factor is better described as the absence of the soldier’s control over his essential support:

This [soldier’s focus on the destruction of the enemy] is not a theory of strategy in quite the same sense that the sailor has his maritime theory or the airman has his air theory. It is much less complex than

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37Ibid., pp. 45, 49.
38Ibid., pp. 50, 51.
that. It is, however, a basic concept of warfare, and appreciation of
these underlying factors could do much toward helping the nonsoldier
understand why the soldier thinks as he does.

It may explain for instance, the soldier's tacit (and sometimes not too
tacit) opinion that air and naval forces exist primarily to transport
the soldier to the scene of action and support him after he gets there.
The soldier views the enemy army as the prime focal point of war,
and all else should properly be subordinate. The soldier is impatient
with the navy when the navy finds tasks that might interfere with
taking the soldier where he wants to go, where the enemy army is,
and keeping his supplies coming steadily. He is impatient with the
airman who wants to put a machine tool factory out of business; he
wants the airman to work on the enemy tank right across the valley
from him. And the soldier, few men realize, is the only one of the
military men who cannot do his part of the war alone. The airman
can have his duels in the air and can bomb factories or enemy missile
launchers or whatever he chooses all by himself. He does not need
the soldier or the sailor to help him. The sailor can sail away and
sink the enemy ships and control the seas and even extend his influ-
ence ashore, all with his own ships and his built-in air strength and
his own specialized troops in the naval service.

But the soldier cannot function alone. His flanks are bare, his rear
is vulnerable, and he looks aloft with a cautious eye. He needs the
airman and the sailor for his own security in doing his own job.69

In sum, the Army does not have a strategic theory like the Air Force
and Navy because its circumstances—its lack of control over terrain,
engagement, and supporting resources—deny it the freedom to define
war on its own terms.

69Ibid., pp. 53, 54.
VI. BELLING THE CAT

The strategic planning process, as it has been defined here, is the formulation and application of strategy in the planning of future military forces. In their participation in that process, the U.S. military services encounter at least four different kinds of strategy that relate military means to military and political objectives:

1. National security strategy—the collection of concepts relating the national means (e.g., political, military, economic, moral) to the various security ends of the nation (e.g., survival, sovereignty, well-being), as promulgated by the National Security Council through memoranda to or from the President.

2. Commanders in Chief’s strategies—concepts for relating the JCS-assigned means to JCS-approved ends, the latter presumably consistent with the national security strategy. These strategies are probably reflected more than stated by the force or regional commanders in their actual war plans.

3. Defense strategy—a component of the national security strategy, it is interpreted and restated by the DoD, the JCS, and each of the services in their program planning guidance. The services are obliged to use (or to conform to) defense strategy in the formal planning, programming, and budgeting processes required by the JCS and DoD.

4. Service strategies—ideally components of the defense strategy, but more likely proposed alternatives to, or reinterpretations of, the defense strategy. The services then use these strategies for setting their own institutional agendas, rationalizing their requirements, and arguing for a larger or protected slice of the budget.

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1See Section I.

2For a discussion of structured national security ends (goals), see Builder, A Conceptual Framework for a National Strategy on Nuclear Arms, pp. 5, 6.

3The war plan of CINCSAC, the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) for the employment of U.S. strategic offensive forces in strike operations, would be one widely discussed example.

4Typical documents incorporating statements of the defense strategy include the Defense Planning Guidance, the Joint Long Range Strategic Appraisal, and The Army Plan.

5Service strategies are likely to be implicit rather than explicit, because of their purposes. An explicit example of a service strategy, presented as a component of the
Of these four, the last would appear to have the greatest effect upon the kinds of forces sought by the services and upon concepts for their use.

The national security strategy is fragmented among separate policies to deal with specific security problems, such as those raised by arms control, access to Middle East oil, Central America, and so forth. These policies are typically reviewed and revised only when a problem becomes salient; they are far from providing a complete or coherent strategy for national security. When a fragment of national security strategy does manifest itself, it is likely to emphasize, appropriately enough, ends more than means.

The CINCs' strategies, at least up to now, have little to do with the planning of future military forces. They are mostly about how to fight (apply) the assigned forces, sometimes (implicitly) about the need to assign more of the available forces (currently assigned somewhere else), and seldom about the planning of future military forces. Although the CINCs' strategies should logically flow directly from the national security strategy, the latter is usually so fragmented or incomplete that the CINCs have considerable latitude for their own interpretations. Thus, it might be more correct to say that the CINCs' strategies are generally not inconsistent with a reasonable interpretation of the national security strategy. Faced with insufficient means to achieve the ends expected of them by orthodox approaches, several of the CINCs have resorted to novel approaches, thereby at least drawing attention to, if not solving, their plights.6

The defense strategy, as manifested in the Defense Guidance, is not really strategy as it has been defined here—a concept for relating means and ends. Rather, it is a statement of very general (mostly political) ends and a prescription of specific military means to be acquired and maintained. The relationships between those means and ends are often missing or only implied. From time to time, new defense concepts arise and may modify either the general political ends or the specific military means found in the defense guidance.7 The political ends (e.g., deterrence, reassurance of allies) are consistent with the fragmented national security strategy, but since the tenure of

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6Examples are General Rogers' scheme in Europe for countering the Soviet follow-on forces and Admiral Long's proposed swing strategy for the Pacific.

7An example of the former might be the proposals for "horizontal escalation" which surfaced in the early 1980s, alongside or integrally with the maritime strategy. An example of the latter might be the Rapid Deployment Force. One called for new political objectives in the event of war, without specifying the means to achieve them; the other specified forces that had to be acquired, without defining the military objectives for those forces.
Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense, they have seldom been converted or transcribed into specific military criteria for their achievement.

While the defense strategy may, indeed, have an effect in defining (rather than rationalizing) the amount of forces acquired and supported, the heart of the strategic planning process—where ideas define the purposes and kinds of forces—is probably more influenced by the service strategies. The services (particularly the Air Force and Navy) have their own concepts of the military purposes (ends) to which military force ought to be applied and of the kinds of forces (means) best suited to those purposes. Those important relational concepts are embedded in the service strategies and not in the defense strategy found in the program planning guidance.\(^8\)

If that be so, then the Air Force and Navy participate in the strategic planning process, through their service strategies, in an important way that the Army presently does not. The analyses presented here\(^9\) strongly suggest that the air and maritime strategies, whatever their intellectual merits, are used by the Air Force and Navy, not just to make their internal planning coherent, but principally as devices for justifying the independence of their institutions, missions, forces, and, therefore, their budgets within the national security forum. It has also been argued here that the Army is denied such independence by its inherent dependency upon others—its sister services for support and the nation's enemies and allies to define the wars it must help fight. All this potentiates the question: What can, what should, the Army then do in the strategic planning process in recognition of its unique and (some might say) disadvantageous position relative to the other services?

For the Army to make itself more independent, on the model of its sister services, by claiming the independence (or dominance) of land warfare missions, flies in the face of two realities:

1. While land warfare may, in fact, dominate some conflicts, the interdependence of air, sea, land, and even space operations is nowhere more apparent than in the conduct of land warfare. Wars isolated to space, the sea, or even the air, are at least conceivable. The isolation of warfare to the land is now

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\(^8\) This perception of the importance of the service strategies in the strategic planning process implies that the services retain powerful influences upon the kinds of forces acquired and the concepts that guide their use, even though they may not have as much influence upon the amounts of forces acquired or total resources devoted to national defense.

\(^9\) In Section V.
credible only at the most primitive levels where both sides have no other resources. Even low-intensity conflicts, such as those now waged against smuggling, terrorism, and insurrection, are likely to involve sea, air, and, without speculating too far, even space operations.

2. The Army has never seen itself as having an independent sense of mission or purpose apart from the country's. To repeat, the Army is the nation's most loyal and obedient servant. The Army, unlike the Air Force and Navy, has no vision of a war on its own terms. For the Army, war will always be on terms chosen by others—partly by the nation's enemies, partly by the nation's leadership—terms which are never satisfactory or welcome, but always to be met with a sense of duty, honor, and courage.

One obvious way out of the dilemma for the Army would be to reacquire control over its essential support, such as sea or air lift and air (or sea) fire support. It was the Key West agreements, barely 40 years ago, that stripped the Army of that control. It can be argued that it is time to reevaluate those arrangements, that the Air Force will never warmly embrace close air support as a mission, that the Navy will always put sea lift and its protection at the bottom of its priorities.

There can be no doubt that the Army would be in a much better position to define an independent strategy if it had either independent missions (ends) or independent forces (means). And there is good reason to speculate that the overall defense posture of the United States might be enhanced by a reassignment of service roles and missions (e.g., separating out the nuclear forces). But whatever the logic or merit of revisiting the Key West agreements, it is a simplistic answer to an enormous problem now rooted in the nation's institutions, history, and responsibilities. While realigning the service roles and missions may be the "right" approach, it almost certainly is not the workable approach to the Army's dilemma for at least two reasons:

- Any steps by the Army toward controlling its own air and sea support would run head-on into opposition with the longstanding interests and actions of the Navy and Air Force to separate and keep isolated their missions and forces from their sister services. In short, it would precipitate the most virulent, highest-stakes interservice warfare.

10 Unless it would be to pick up where it left off in Europe in 1945, and complete the job of European liberation as General George S. Patton is supposed to have proposed. It could be argued that the AirLand Battle doctrine provides an Army vision of war; but that vision is true to its name: It is about a battle, not a war.
It would do nothing to remove the dependency of the Army upon the nation's enemies for the choice of terrain and time of engagement in their aggressions or upon the nation's friends and allies for their support in conflicts. Removing joint dependencies would not eliminate coalition dependencies; and the Army is much more dependent upon coalitions than either of its sister services.

Thus, even if the Army did control its own lift and air support, it would still be dependent upon others in defining where and how and why it would fight. The same is not true, to a large degree, for the Air Force and Navy, both of whom—correctly or not—see some prospect for choosing the timing, locale, and objectives in the commitment of their forces to combat.

Is the Army, therefore, without any prospect for strategy initiatives in the strategic planning process? If it cannot control its essential support or the terms of its engagement in combat, it is clearly denied an independent strategy—an independent vision of its forces (means) and the purposes (ends) to which they will or ought to be applied. But the Army has an advantage that its sister services do not:

While the Air Force and Navy can offer up visions of how they would prefer to fight, their visions are only preferences, not commitments. The Army has been handed something much more concrete around which it can define both means and ends. In the national commitments to the use of force, the Army has been given specific assignments as to where it must fight—four assignments so clear and important that the nation has already made the extraordinary decision to fight even if its forces are not attacked.

National Commitments to Use Force

The Army, uniquely among the services, is tied to the national commitments—by alliance and physical presence—to use military force to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations. Naval and air forces—strategic or tactical, forward or rearward deployed—are not committed to combat until attacked or ordered by their commanders. The presence of U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean, for example, is not a national commitment to fight there unless the forces themselves are attacked. A Soviet intervention in Greece or Turkey might very well be sufficient to invoke use of U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean, but the decision to do so remains a matter of choice which the U.S. President and the NATO leadership can consider. Similarly, a limited Soviet nuclear strike against the United States
might or might not invoke a response in kind; but it would not necessarily or automatically commit U.S. strategic offensive forces to a response: the SIOP is not a commitment but a credible threat (embodied in a plan) to use strategic nuclear forces under a broad range of circumstances at the discretion of the President.

There are, however, four places in the world where it can be said that the United States has unambiguously pre-committed itself to fight, even if its own forces are not directly attacked. These unequivocal commitments are for the defense of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Berlin, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the Republic of South Korea (ROK), and the United States itself. Those four unambiguous commitments are underwritten by the presence of U.S. military forces—specifically, Army forces—positioned such that they must be encountered by any serious threat to sovereignty or territorial integrity. Two of them, for the defense of the FRG and ROK, involve major commitments of U.S. forces—in division strengths—for coalition warfare alongside allied armed forces.

Indeed, it is the presence of Army combat troops that is the hallmark of these four national commitments to the use of military force. There may be little or no doubt about the willingness of the United States to act in the defense of its other allies (e.g., Norway, Japan, Turkey) and friends (e.g., Philippines, Honduras), but there remains, nevertheless, some ambiguity about the circumstances and form and timing of U.S. actions. By contrast, there can be no doubt about the circumstances, place, or time when the United States is prepared to spill blood in the defense of Berlin, the FRG, the ROK, or the United States once their sovereignty or territorial integrity is challenged.

To be sure, these four places are not the only potential sites of land combat for which the U.S. Army should be prepared to fight. They, alone, do not define the Army, its ends or means. The creation of the Central Command attests to the national determination to be prepared to fight a land war elsewhere in the world. The Marine Amphibious Forces pose a credible threat to engage in land warfare in the defense of such places as Norway or the Philippines. But while there may be a national determination to acquire the capabilities to fight elsewhere, that determination still falls short of a commitment to do so:

11Including, probably, the right of overland access to the city from West Germany.

12The threat to the territorial integrity of the United States is the least apparent or immediate of the four. Only the Aleutian Islands have been considered as likely prospects for occupation by the Soviets in the event of a conflict involving Pacific interests. Puerto Rico and Guam would have to be included as territorial parts of the United States; but whether the United States would fight to retain possession of its bases (or base rights) in Cuba, Panama, the Philippines, and Japan (including Okinawa), short of a decision to defend those countries from outside aggression, is problematical.
In foreign confrontations the United States is not committed until its land forces—its Army—is committed. And in the event of hostilities, the Army historically has borne the brunt of the war, the human cost, taking the great bulk of the casualties. The Army as an institution knows this and has been traditionally reluctant to go to war, its leaders seeking to ensure that war is truly necessary and that our civilian leadership exploit all other avenues before taking that final step.15

The decision whether to fight at places other than the four now favored by national commitments will depend upon what forces are actually available at the time, the world (including the domestic political and economic) situation, contingent threats, and other options available to the national leadership. The military leadership may, after reviewing such considerations, advise against the commitment of certain kinds of forces. For example, the Navy might argue against inserting carrier-based tactical aviation into the restricted areas of the Persian Gulf if confronted with a threat of Soviet counterstrikes. The Air Force might advise against tanker support for a long-range airlift when its strategic bomber forces are confronted with an imminent threat of attack. The Army might very well advise against a limited investment in the defense of Thailand. Such reservations question whether a commitment would involve the right forces at the right time and right place to do the right job. But such questions do not apply to the four places where the Army must fight if an enemy uses force to challenge the sovereignty or territorial integrity of the nations or peoples involved; they have already been answered by the positioning of Army forces with the determination to fight.

What makes these four commitments special is that the choice about using certain Army forces in combat has been given away—to potential enemies. In all other places and circumstances of U.S. interests, the choices of using military force—where, what kind, when, to do what—remain. These four commitments, so long as they remain in place, are the anchors to Army requirements for forces. They are anchors because they offer the Army no scope for latitude as the nation varies in its security interests and its commitments of resources to its armed forces and to the Army.

Pricing the Commitments

If these four national commitments to use force are treated—by the Army, its sister services, or the Department of Defense—like other gen-

operators of requirements for forces, then there is great risk of failure to
differentiate between resources that are fungible and those that are not
in assessing the nation’s security. While the national leadership of the
United States may be able to decide its priorities in the event of multi-
ple conflicts (e.g., whether to reinforce NATO or South Korea or both
in the event of simultaneous hostilities), the commanders of the
forces that now guarantee the four special commitments will have to
fight, with or without reinforcements. To count these committed
forces like others is to see them as part of a total pool of military force
that can be summed in assessing the nation’s military options. But
they are not part of the military options; they are and remain commit-
ments until withdrawn from their uniquely forward defensive posi-
tions. But there is more than just an accounting problem here. These
national commitments to the use of force involve price tags, not just
coin of a different kind to be counted. The value of these commit-
tments to the United States is largely political; their military value (if
any) can be reckoned only in the context of a battle or campaign that
goes beyond a simple willingness to fight. The political value of the
commitments is realized through the reassurance of allies and the
deterrence of enemies. The price tags are the costs—as measured in

14All of them Army officers.

15Of the many forward-deployed combat forces maintained by the United States, the
Army forces appear to be the most clearly devoted to territorial defense and to defensive
operations by their posture (Huntington’s proposal aside). By contrast, the forward-deplo-
yed air and naval forces are much more ambiguous as to their intended use. They
have the potential for significantly greater effectiveness if used offensively rather than
defensively against the enemy, and they may be redeployed quickly. The forward deploy-
ment of naval and air forces, as in the Philippines, Greece, Japan, or Spain, is seen by
their host nations as being more in the interests of the United States for its global
interests than for their defense. Indeed, that is why the forward basing for naval and air
forces outside the four special commitments involves negotiating (and paying for) base
rights, whereas the forward basing for air and ground forces within the four commit-
tments involves negotiating host nation (or state) support.

As a consequence, forward-deployed troops have a political significance unlike that of
naval and most air forces. The withdrawal or redeployment of U.S. naval or air forces
from many of their forward deployments would be viewed by their hosts as a mixed bag:
a loss of income; a reduction of the risks of becoming involved in someone else’s war; etc.
But the withdrawal or redeployment of U.S. troops from their forward deployments
would be cause for great concern from their host nations (or states) about the American
commitment to their territorial defense.

The term “price” is used here in the sense of “the cost at which something is
obtained,” not in the economic sense of “the quantity of one thing that is exchanged or
demanded in barter or sale for another.” (Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary,
Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, 1986.)
military resources and risks—that are associated with the peacetime maintenance of these national commitments. Those costs can be found in the answers to three questions, all in military terms:

1. What specific military purposes (e.g., destroy, delay, disrupt) are to be achieved by the commitment to use military force to defend this place at a time of choice given to the enemy?\footnote{It is not enough to say, as some do, that their purpose is deterrence of conflict. Deterrence, in the absence of criteria for its success, is not a military purpose, as the term is used here. The prospect of destruction, delay, disruption, or even uncertainty may deter; but then the criterion for deterrence—how much destruction, delay, disruption, or uncertainty is expected to deter—needs to be specified. Secretary of Defense McNamara proposed that the threat of assured destruction should be sufficient to deter a nuclear attack on the United States by the Soviets; but he then went on to define the criterion for deterrence—the ability to destroy certain specified fractions of the Soviet population and industrial floor space following a specified Soviet attack—thereby providing an explicit, though legally dubious, military purpose to be achievable by the strategic nuclear forces. For a discussion of the legal issues raised by the concept of assured destruction, see Carl H. Builder and Morlie H. Graubard, The International Law of Armed Conflict: Implications for the Concept of Assured Destruction, The RAND Corporation, R-2804-FF, January 1982.}

2. What military forces are required to achieve that purpose?

3. What are the military risks (possible consequences and their likelihood) associated with achieving that purpose with those forces?

Obviously, those three questions are interrelated: For every stated purpose, there are alternative combinations of required forces and associated risks. The purposes or the risks can be traded off against the size of the forces; and some purposes or kinds of forces can affect risks regardless of the size of the forces. Moreover, there are tradeoffs between various kinds of forces, even with constant purposes and risks. These tradeoffs include combat forces and their support and, for the defense of allies (the FRG and ROK), between coalition and U.S. forces or support. They also include tradeoffs between air and ground forces and between lift for early reinforcement and forces in place.

Whether or not all of these tradeoffs are completely understood or worked out, the important points are these:

- There is a price tag that attaches to each of the four national commitments to use force.
- Each commitment is an open contract with potential enemies (and allies in several cases) to pay that price.
- The price tag can be expressed as one or more alternative combinations of the military resources and risks associated with the achievement of a military purpose or objective.
• There are important tradeoffs between all the terms on the price tags.
• The price tags on the four extant national commitments to use force have not been explicitly assessed.

These assertions suggest that important criteria, assessments, and tradeoffs have not been provided for the least ambiguous (and perhaps the most important) of our national security commitments. And all of these are not implicit in the current force commitments or deployments. For example, the current U.S. forces committed for the defense of the FRG are the result of historical, political, budgetary, and institutional pressures, not of a deliberate consideration of objectives, force tradeoffs, or risk assessments. Indeed, the balancing of political and budgetary, as opposed to military, pressures appears to be the principal determinant of their immediate future. Should future forces be planned on that same basis? More to the point, should the Army “go along” with their being planned that way?

The main thrust of the argument advanced here is that price tags on the national commitments to use force have nothing to do with the balancing of budgetary and political pressures. The amount of money in one's purse or the heartiness of one's appetite has nothing to do with the prices to be found on the restaurant menu. Political leaderships control the purse and have the appetite for commitments, but the professional military planner has a duty to price those commitments thoroughly and fairly.

In the national commitments to use force, the price tags attach to the commitment, not to the ability or willingness to pay the costs. The budgetary and political pressures are the realities that should bear upon making the commitments, not upon their fair pricing. The price tags are the basis for planning (designing) future forces against the commitments; whereas the political and budgetary realities should determine whether or not the commitments should be sustained, expanded, or withdrawn. The military planner should not, because of budgetary and political pressures, be diverted or subverted from responsible military planning of future forces; and that requires full and fair assessment of the required military forces to achieve specific military objectives, including the risks and tradeoffs in the choices among both forces and objectives.

Footnote: Fair pricing here means the full and honest assessment of the required military forces and risks associated with specific military objectives, without regard to political sensitivities, fiscal constraints, or service proprietary.
To assess these price tags is to "bell the cat," for they raise fundamental questions that the military services have every right (but may have been afraid) to ask of their political leadership (who may be afraid to answer them) and that clearly demand confronting the trade-offs between joint and coalition forces. For example, it may be uncomfortable to state (or to hear), explicitly, the purposes and risks of the Berlin garrison force or the trade-offs between land and air forces for the defense of the FRG. But it is folly to think that the price tag on the U.S. commitment to defend the FRG is somehow divorced from, say, Belgian force plans, Air Force tanker aircraft planning, Navy plans for protection of the sea lanes, or the risks introduced by uncertainties in all of them.

Of the four current national commitments to the use of force, the defense of the FRG is the big ticket item in the size of forces required, in the importance of the political commitment to U.S. interests, and in setting the force structure of the tactical air forces and the Army. If that commitment could be fairly priced, the remaining three should be simple by comparison: and the requirements for much, perhaps the most important part, of the Army and its essential support could be clearly defined.

What might the price tag for the defense of the FRG look like? First, it would include a military objective—or a set of alternative objectives. At one extreme, an example objective might be:

In conjunction and coordination with allied force commitments and plans, to repulse any invasion of the FRG by the Warsaw Pact within two weeks and without resort to escalation in the scope of conflict or type of weaponry instigated by the enemy.  

19That is, "to do a daring and risky deed" (see "bell," Webster's Third New International Dictionary) or "to attempt something formidable or dangerous" (see "cat," Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged Edition, Random House, New York, 1967). The phrase has come to mean different things to different people over time, e.g., to stop a dangerous predator (cats versus birds) or to tackle a difficult task (catching or holding the cat in order to bell it). But its meaning here is consistent with the context of its origins in "the fable of the mice who resolved in convention to hang a bell upon the cat's neck, but found none bold enough to do it." (See "bell," Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged, G & C. Merriam Company, Springfield, 1944.) As with the convention of mice, it is easier to get agreement that the price tags should be assessed than it is to find someone bold enough to do it. Is it less a question of feasibility than willingness to risk injury (or worse) in accomplishing the deed.

20Force structure is defined as the "numbers, size, and composition of the units that comprise the forces assigned." See Department of Defense Dictionary, emphasis added.

21It is almost certain that this objective would demand more forces than the United States could (or would be willing to) provide. But such an objective might be used as a reference point in terms of minimizing risks and maximizing forces. Lesser objectives and their associated risks and forces would then provide a spectrum of price tags and a
At the other extreme, an example objective might be:

To ensure that any successful invasion of the FRG by the Warsaw Pact requires the destruction of sufficient U.S. forces to make escalation by the United States to the use of nuclear weapons credible, the criterion for sufficiency being at least ten thousand U.S. military combat casualties.\(^5\)

Although both examples imply a larger, political objective of deterrence, they have been deliberately expressed here in military terms. Note that both examples address the defense of the FRG, not the defense of a sector or corps area. How does the United States see its commitment to the defense of the FRG? Has the U.S. Army reduced its view of the problem to the sectors assigned to it? If so, it would suggest that the bureaucratic force planning process is driving the perspective of the military problem rather than the other way around. Thus, a necessary, but not sufficient, step in selling the cat will be to shift the planning orientation from corps to national objectives.

Meeting such objectives would necessarily involve consideration of the options available to the Warsaw Pact in terms of mobilization, concentration of forces, and the employment of chemical or nuclear weapons. The forces required to achieve those objectives would need to consider allied capabilities, air and ground force contributions, air and sea lift support for mobilization and resupply, sea and air lanes protection, etc. Force alternatives, by trading off allied for U.S. forces, air for ground forces, lift support in exchange for forces in place, etc., would become apparent. And the alternative objectives and forces would pose different military risks. The alternative objectives, each accompanied by combinations of forces and risks associated with its achievement, constitute a set of military price tags that could be tied to a political commitment. It seems likely that a fairly negotiated price tag for the defense of the FRG would be sufficient, all by itself, to provide the Army with reasonably justified force requirements every bit as ambitious as those now supported by the service strategies of the Air Force and Navy.

Unfortunately, the size of the NATO security problem and the U.S. obligations to NATO have tended to blur or confuse the specific commitment the United States has made to defend the FRG. That rational basis for negotiating a match between military commitments and capabilities, whatever the political aspirations might be.

\(^5\)Although this objective may appear to be frivolous or macabre, it is probably, unfortunately, not very far removed from the current, but implicit, objective of U.S. forces in the FRG. The reasons for making such objectives implicit rather than explicit are political rather than military, but the tradeoff between the interests of political rectitude and military planning needs to be confronted sometime, if not continuously.
commitment is by far the largest of many U.S. obligations to NATO, to the effect that the two are now often treated as synonymous, with detrimental consequences. The defense of the FRG is mostly a military problem; the security of NATO is mostly a political problem. Forging military means for the defense of the FRG (or any other cooperative ally) is probably tractable; defense of all of NATO is a political pretension and probably not solvable by military means.  

If, however, the principal military problem is defined as successful defense of the FRG, there is some hope for the design of attainable forces. Indeed, it could be argued that it is the FRG commitment, not the NATO-wide obligations, that dominates the design of the present Army. The pessimism about NATO creeps in when the demands for the defense of the FRG are compounded by demands for the defense of the flanks (mostly of interest or concern to the Navy), which is an obligation and not a commitment. NATO is a good example of where and how clarification of military objectives could serve the Army well.

For other possible uses of military force—beyond the four places where the nation is now committed—specific price tags of the sort discussed here (i.e., the combinations of military purposes, forces, and risks) may be premature. Where the nation has not yet committed itself to the use of force, the setting of military objectives becomes highly speculative or hypothetical. In such cases, the association of specific forces with broad political objectives—in the style of the current Defense Guidance—may be sufficient. But in the four places where the nation has already made its decision—its commitment to fight—there need be no speculation about the forces that might be committed—forces have already been committed. What remains undone is to:

- Clarify the current military purposes and risks associated with those forces;
- Define the tradeoffs among alternative purposes, forces, and risks; and
- Rationalize the choice of a particular combination of purposes, forces, and risks to be sought in the future.

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23For the Army (or Department of Defense) to define itself mostly in terms of defending NATO by military means is to drive itself crazy and leads to much of the pessimism about NATO planning. Trying to design forces for impossible tasks is not only futile, it is discouraging and demeaning as well.
Who Shall Bell the Cat?

If price tags should be put on the four national commitments to use force, who should do it? The Office of the Secretary of Defense? The Joint Chiefs of Staff? The Commanders in Chief for the theaters in which these four commitments exist? The military services? The prospects are not good anywhere. Belling the cat may, ultimately, be mostly in the Army's interest; and the Army may, simultaneously, be the best and least likely candidate to do it.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense is preoccupied with brokering the basic match between national security interests (including its commitments) and resources, not with writing military price tags on the commitments. Moreover, assessing force requirements and risks against military objectives has traditionally been considered as judgments properly made by the military, not the civilian, leadership.

The JCS is, by organizational intent, the proper office to price the national commitments to use force—to define the military objectives, size the forces, assess the risks, and weigh the tradeoffs among the three. And it has the military expertise and the joint and global perspectives required to do so. But despite these propitious circumstances, the reality of the JCS is that it has, instead, become almost entirely concerned with brokering compromises between the services in their continuing competition for responsibilities and resources. Indeed, because of that concern, the JCS has become known more for avoiding or denying than for confronting the basic tradeoffs between the forces or capabilities of the services. If the price tags on the national commitments to use force are to include a full and fair accounting of the tradeoffs between joint and coalition forces, objectives, and risks, the JCS is, regrettably, not the place to get them.

The proposals to reorganize the JCS might change this gloomy prospect, but one would have to be extremely optimistic to find much hope there. Current efforts at JCS reform tend toward steps to release the JCS from the blandness of its advice and the paralysis of its planning due to the pursuit of the parochial interests by the separate services. Even if successful, these reforms would only create a more conducive environment for confronting the tradeoff and price tags for the national commitments; they would not, by themselves, instigate the extraordinary process of belling the cat. Developing fair price tags for the national commitments would call for more than a permissive environment; it would require courageous activism within the Joint

\*Most notably, the so-called "Packard Commission's Report"—A Quest for Excellence, Final Report to the President by the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, June 1985.
Staff. Because of the enormously powerful interests involved—in the White House, Congress, Department of Defense, and the military services—the need for compromise in reorganizing the JCS will be great; and the final, adopted reforms are likely to be modest and implemented with caution.25

The theater or regional Commanders in Chief are also plausible candidates to write the price tags on those national commitments to use force that lie within their own commands. The problem with their candidacy is their understandable preoccupation with the shortfalls between their current resources and obligations (or ambitions) for a war that they may have to fight tomorrow. They have understandable difficulties in addressing future forces, contemplating reduced objectives, or any tradeoff that might compromise the aspirations or power of the command. In short, the allegiance of the CINCs is to their command, perhaps even to their own service, more than it is to the fair and balanced pricing of the national commitments within their command.

Recent changes involving the CINCs more in the resource allocation process may alleviate some of these problems. But the fact remains that the CINCs have no program authority and cannot directly shape the forces they will have to lead into war.26

Of the military services, only the Army appears to be suited by incentive and circumstances to bell the cat:

- The presence of Army troops and Army commanders is a common denominator of all four national commitments to the use of force.
- The Air Force and Navy are dedicated to the independence and uniqueness of their forces; they are disinclined to consider the tradeoffs of their forces in favor of any others.
- The Army is accustomed to its dependency upon the forces and capabilities of its sister services and allies and, therefore, to the obvious tradeoffs among them.
- The Army is, by its self-perception, the loyal and obedient servant of the nation; and it, more than any of the services, may be capable of considering reductions and expansions in its commitments, obligations, and resources—of putting the national interests above the Army's institutional interests.

26Ibid., p. 66.
In sum, although the JCS and CINC's stand in organizationally and logically superior positions to price the national commitments to the use of force, the Army is probably the institution that has the best reasons and capacity to do it. Whether the Army would want to is, of course, a different and important question—one that is addressed in the next section.

But the four national commitments to use force are the Army's equivalent of the Air Force's air superiority or the Navy's sea control missions: Whatever else the Army may want to do or may be asked to do, it must fulfill those commitments. To permit those commitments to remain without clear and fair price tags is to invite ambiguity about what the Army can do in their eventuality. Such ambiguity is often desired by politicians, but it has no proper place in military planning. And it is in the Army's interest, more than any other service or agency, to root it out.
VII. IMPLICATIONS

This intellectual odyssey in search of understanding, and perhaps thereby improving, the Army's participation in the strategic planning process has led to the following perceptions:

1. The Air Force and Navy initiatives for the formulation and application of strategy in planning future forces are derived mostly from their own service strategies—the air and maritime strategies.

2. Those service strategies, while defended and promoted in terms of national security, are more deeply motivated by the services' interests in institutional autonomy and mission independence.¹

3. The Army, because of the unique circumstances of its obligations under the national commitments to use force, cannot pursue either institutional autonomy or mission independence² and, therefore, is deprived of a service strategy as the basis for initiatives in the strategic planning process.

4. But the Army's unique obligations do provide it with the basis for initiatives in the strategic planning process—strategies in the form of concepts for relating combined, joint, and coalition

¹This is not an indictment of the services, per se; they are only doing what institutions (and individuals) almost always do when placed in a competitive environment. The implied fact is that the institutional arrangements for national security in the United States are perceived as encouraging and rewarding competitive behavior of the services for strategies, roles, missions, and budgets. While one might hope that such interservice competition occurs only in peacetime, there is ample evidence that it is just as prevalent during wartime as well. All wars must end and, even in wartime, institutions must (and do) look ahead to their institutional futures in peacetime. See Section V.

²At least not to the same degree as the Air Force and Navy. The Army's sister services can (and do) conceive of conflicts that they could fight and win all by themselves, without the Army. The conflicts that the Army is obliged to fight—under the national commitments to use force—cannot be successfully waged by the Army alone, even if it were to take over roles and missions now assigned to its sister services. If the Army took over its own close air support missions, it would still require Air Force support to provide some measure of air superiority. Similarly, sea lift requires sea lane protection and air lift requires air tanker support. And even if all those were somehow brought under Army control, the Army remains much more dependent than its sister services upon coalition forces for the big-ticket commitments—the territorial defense of the FRG and EOK.

About the only conflict that the Army could fight largely on its own is an intervention into Mexico, because of direct land access and the absence of significant air or sea threats. While even citing the possibility of such an intervention may seem bizarre or impolite, it must be remembered that the Army has been called upon to intervene in Mexico on at least three separate occasions.
forces (means) to military objectives (ends) in support of the present national commitments to the use of force.

Pursuing those initiatives, while admittedly a "daring and risky deed," has been portrayed, to this point, as something that should be done in the name of sound military planning and Army control over its obligations under the national commitments to use force. What has yet to be addressed is whether it is feasible, practical, or desirable for the Army to bell the cat, or even to instigate its belling through others. Those questions are taken up here as implications.

The difficulties and dangers in pricing the national commitments to the use of force are well represented in the following arguments:

- In many instances, it is not in the national interest to be too specific about military objectives, the relative capabilities of coalition forces, or the risks which have been accepted. Political leaderships can seldom afford to be explicit about the military objectives associated with national commitments to the use of force.
- The price tags are domestic and international political grenades and are, therefore, to be viewed more as a danger to the Army institutionally than they are as an asset to better planning.
- The tradeoffs among joint forces affect the vital interests of the services in their independent roles, missions, and contributions and will, therefore, engender intense interservice disputes which cannot be resolved.
- The Army does not want to be the instigator of the internecine warfare that is almost certain to accompany tradeoffs among air, land, and sea forces or their fire and lift support. The "nation's loyal and obedient servant" might be "hoist with its own petard."
- Given the historical aggressiveness of the Navy and Air Force, the tradeoffs might be skewed by them to argue for Army reductions in favor of their own forces. The "nation's loyal and obedient servant" might be "hoist with its own petard."
- It is not the Army's job; it is a joint/coalition problem and one properly taken up by the JCS or CINC's. The reorganization of the JCS is supposed to take care of this problem.
- The Army cannot speak for the Air Force or the Navy or other countries on the supporting uses of their forces; therefore, it cannot make the tradeoffs or risk assessments required.

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3This view has been expressed to the author by a high official in the Army.
4Such arguments often find fertile ground in the ever-present American isolationist tendencies or play to occasional interests in a pullback from NATO because of some tiff with the Europeans.
The pricing, with its demand for tradeoffs and risk assessments, is beyond the capacity of current analytical techniques or beyond the Army's analytical support resources because of their scale or complexity.

These arguments reflect legitimate analytic, bureaucratic, and political concerns. All of them (and possibly more) can be resolved into two tough, direct questions:

1. Could the Army bell the cat, even if it wanted to?
2. Would the Army want to bell the cat, even if it could?

One is a question about means, the other of ends. While the two questions are obviously conditionally interdependent, they can be taken up separately here.

Could the Army Do It If It Wanted To?

At first, this appears to be a question about analytical feasibility; a little reflection, however, suggests that defining the tradeoffs among joint and coalition forces is much more a bureaucratic than an analytical problem. The interactions between air, sea, and land warfare are not inherently intractable: All three services work across those interfaces with their own systems, assessing their capabilities and effects. Ships shooting down airplanes is no less tractable analytically than ships sinking ships; killing a tank from the air rather than the ground does not shift the analysis from the plausible to the incredible. The modeling or simulation of warfare of any kind is complex and can be analytically demanding, but problems of even greater complexity have been and are being subjected to analysis of varying rigor. There is nothing inherent in combined, joint, or coalition warfare that poses an analytic boundary which cannot be crossed. And there is no new ground to cover in a top-down analysis of military requirements, from objectives to forces, including the risks. What is difficult, even awesome, is crossing from one service's turf onto another's. That is an institutional, not an analytical, barrier.

While the Army cannot speak for the other services or nations in the use of their forces in joint or coalition warfare, that does not prevent the Army from portraying and analyzing those forces and their operations in accordance with their owners' statements, doctrines, and strategies. It is one thing for the Army to tell the Navy or Air Force

\[\text{omitted for length}\]
how to fight or allocate their forces. It is quite another for the Army to repeat what its sister services have themselves declared. To claim that the Army does not know enough to portray how naval or air forces would be employed is an affront: If true, the Army is ignorant of vital information about how to fight and allocate its own forces, which are intimately dependent upon naval and air forces.

The Army can certainly portray the allocation and application of tactical air power, air lift, or air tankers according to, or consistent with, the Air Force's own doctrine, analyses, and models. Whether the Army agrees with such allocations and applications is a different problem which need not confuse the fair pricing of the national commitments. If they are not, in the Army's view, the "best" way to allocate or apply air power, that is the Air Force's problem and can only point toward the need for more ground (or sea) forces to compensate for the misallocation of air power. If the Army misunderstands or misinterprets such sources for the application of air power, it can always welcome corrections. If there are disagreements about the effectiveness of air power, then those disagreements become part of the risk assessments that go with the price tags.

But bureaucratic barriers to analysis are real enough, even within a service, let alone between services. Analytical models and assumptions of dubious validity or relevance may be perfectly acceptable for calculating an uncontented "requirement" for spare parts or ammunition; but let them be applied to tradeoffs between the cherished symbols of a service faction—as between tanks and artillery or between carriers and submarines or bombers and fighters—and the models will quickly be found inadequate and unacceptable. The tradeoffs there, because of their vital importance to institutions, are resolved politically or bureaucratically, not analytically. Little wonder, then, that tradeoffs involving the vital interests of entire institutions have found no home in current analytical models owned, operated, or blessed by those institutions. Such vital interests are too important to be trusted either to models or analysts. The joint force tradeoffs—or more correctly, compromises—by the JCS are resolved politically or bureaucratically, not analytically.

If the Army cannot fairly define the tradeoffs among its own branches, is there any hope that it could be an honest broker in making the tradeoffs between joint or coalition forces? The Army's record on analytically examining the tradeoffs among the forces of greatest interest to its own branches is probably no worse nor better than that of its sister services. But to bell the cat, the Army would have to have a demonstrably superior record, not just for credibility, but because the price tags require trading off combined as well as joint and coalition
forces. Thus, pricing the commitments cat risks *intraservice* as well as interservice and international infighting. The first blood in belling the cat could come from internal bleeding.

This suggests that the Army is not yet institutionally prepared to price the commitments, even if it wanted to. It would first have to take the extraordinary step of subjecting itself to the same analytical disciplines that are required for fair pricing of the national commitments to the use of force. That would represent a departure from the Army's current position on both branch protectionism and the way it does analysis. Not only would the Army have to tolerate, even encourage, open and explicit trading off between tanks, artillery, helicopters, etc., it would have to realign its analytic efforts more toward tradeoffs than requirements.

Because it is still the least toy oriented of the three services, the Army is perhaps the best able to contemplate open tradeoffs among the various kinds of weapons that it fields. Whether that ability to consider open tradeoffs would extend down to the resultant allocations of personnel among the Army branches is much less clear. The Army may not be as toy oriented as the other services, but the entrenchment of its branches is as deep as any. The survival of the branches may not be measured in equipment or weapons, but it probably is in personnel.

Then there is the matter of analytical style or preferences: The Army's analytical orientation is toward large, detailed simulations to produce and justify the specific requirements numbers needed in formal JCS and PPBS planning systems. However, the tradeoffs needed for fair pricing of the national commitments involve consideration of many cases because of the large number of alternatives, the diversity of forces, and the substantial uncertainties at almost every turn. Such tradeoffs beg the use of simple parametric models which are more characteristic of the Air Force than the Army in their analytical styles. Since these differences in analytical orientations are, as much as anything else, reflections of the differences in service personalities, realignment of the Army's analytic efforts away from large simulations and toward simple parametric models would be neither natural nor easy.

In sum, there is no obvious reason why the Army could not price the national commitments if it really wanted to. The analytical means are available or known. But developing the capability to do so would require a significant reorientation of the Army's philosophical approach to the uses of analysis. And exercising such a capability would have to start with tradeoffs inside the Army itself, between the interests of its separate branches, at considerable risk to the Army's own bureaucratic tranquility. Ultimately, even the capacity to bell the cat could cost the Army dearly in both its peace and personality.
Would the Army Want To If It Could?

The dominant concern has to be the potential for interservice strife and its consequences. The other arguments—about diplomatic and coalition sensitivities—have more the flavor of additional, buttressing arguments than they do genuine concerns. The Army has worked hard at building good relationships with its sister services, particularly with the Air Force now under the leadership of tactical pilots. All those good works could “go down the tubes” if full-scale interservice warfare broke out. The Army could find itself once again embattled over its purposes and future, as it has been several times since World War II—with its sister services amplifying, if not instigating, public questions about the need for an Army, the need for troops overseas, the dangers of becoming entangled in somebody else’s war, and so forth. Isolationist sentiments, ever present within American society, find expression or sympathetic vibrations in the Navy’s maritime strategy and calls for bringing American troops home or avoiding “another Vietnam.” By firing the first shot in an all-out interservice battle, one could project the Army being the first victim.

From what act of the Army would such dire consequences flow? From putting a price on the national commitments to use force? It is not a price that causes problems; it is the menu of prices that threatens the protocols of interservice truce. The real nub of the matter is the trading off of forces owned by different services; that is the forbidden ground. Trading off forces implies their substitutability and, hence, in any mix of forces, their interdependency—something which the Army alone among the services has accepted (or has long been forced to accept). For the Navy and Air Force, historically devoted to the independence of their requirements for forces, tradeoffs between their forces and those of the sister services are more than a tugging over budget slices; they are an assault upon their institutional integrity and independence.6

Given those high stakes for the Navy and Air Force, and the potentially adverse consequences for Army relationships with its sister services, does the Army have to instigate the tradeoffs in order to price the national commitments to the use of force? If the tradeoffs are the problem, why not fix the price without them?

To avoid tradeoffs is to avoid fair pricing of the commitments. If there is a declared or candidate military objective, then assessing the

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6The tradeoffs between Army and Air Force assets will be the more obvious, immediate, and direct for the four national commitments to the use of force. But the Navy may be the most sensitive of the services to any tradeoffs involving its forces. Thus, it is not clear which of the Army’s sister services would perceive itself as the most threatened by force tradeoffs.
joint and coalition forces required to meet that objective, and the risks involved with that particular combination of ends and means, implies that the tradeoffs are understood: So much of A and so much of B, taken together, can accomplish X with some probability, P. It is the combination of A and B, whether they represent joint or coalition or combined forces, that implies an understanding of the tradeoffs. If one side of that tradeoff remains fixed, say at current force levels, then the pricing becomes advocacy for one side of the tradeoff at the expense of the other. The feasibility, credibility, and utility of pricing the national commitments to the use of force rests upon a full and fair disclosure of the tradeoffs among means and ends and risks.

If the Army does not confront the tradeoffs between those joint and coalition forces upon which it is, and will remain, dependent, then the Army will find itself in a gradually worsening situation with respect to its own planning for (and its capacity to meet its obligations to) the national commitments to the use of force. The trends clearly point to increased, not reduced, reliance upon joint and coalition warfare in U.S. military commitments. If the Army avoids the tradeoffs among its own forces and those upon which it is inherently dependent, then it will continue to be a victim of the independent force theories espoused by its sister services. Although the nation may fight only with joint forces, it will continue to plan and buy them as independent forces so long as the Navy and Air Force portray them as such without challenge, while the Army, perhaps in the name of interservice harmony, remains silent about the true measures of their interdependency.

The choice is a tough one for the Army: Should it risk interservice strife for better military planning? On one side of that choice is the prospect for a continuation of the recent past in the Army's interservice relations and participation in the strategic planning process. On the other is the prospect of an uncertain tradeoff between better planning and poorer interservice relationships. The potential gains in the quality of Army planning are probably easier to describe than the potential risks and costs of interservice strife that might follow any Army attempt to bell the cat. It is a classic gambler's choice: to bet—with uncertain outcomes of win, lose, or draw—or not to bet—with greater certainty of more of the same in the future.

This intellectual odyssey provides no way to resolve that choice. It does suggest, however, the following logic in considering whether to examine the Army's choice and its payoff matrix more closely:

- The opportunity to enhance the Army's participation in the strategic planning process will not be found in a service strategy for independent forces and operations, as pursued by the Navy and Air Force.
• The national commitments to the use of force, especially the commitments to defend the FRG and ROK, could provide the Army with a powerful wedge into the strategic planning process; but its exploitation will require defining the tradeoffs between joint and coalition forces.

• If those tradeoffs are defined, they may or may not threaten force structure and budget slices; but they are certain to threaten the institutional independence of Air Force and Navy and to strain interservice relationships.

• If those tradeoffs are not defined, the Army will continue to lack significant control over the consistency of its obligations, resources, and risks associated with the national commitments to the use of force.

Belling this cat is indeed a "daring and risky deed." It would call upon the Army to take an activist's role in strategic planning, to put its force structure and budget slice on the line in the name of better or more honest planning. Such actions seem, at first glance, quite uncharacteristic of what the Army is in its self-image as the nation's loyal and obedient servant. Army behavior during the past two decades provides little reason to believe that it would want to take such risks:

Under the several influences of the McNamara period in which there was a gradual and near-total waning of meaningful strategic dialogue in DoD and in the NSC system, the Vietnam War and the rapid retreatment...organized and deliberate strategic thought directed beyond the immediate future all but disappeared from the Army. Generally speaking, from 1968 forward the Army had expended its bank of strategic thought and the Army's main stream was introspective, managerial, and preservation oriented.\(^7\)

If loyal service means managing and preserving the Army as a national institution, such risky behavior as has been proposed here is unnecessary and potentially counterproductive. If loyal service means speaking out for the national interest at the risk of painful and contentious choices, including getting hurt, then getting this cat bellied may be consistent with the notion of duty to country. At present, the Army's manner of fulfilling its self-image as the nation's loyal and obedient servant seems more passive than active; and, therefore, it seems quite likely that it will not, at this time, take great institutional risks in the cause of better strategic planning. But while the Army's self-image is likely to remain fixed, the degree of activism it will resort to in

\(^7\)Summers, On Strategy, p. 111, referred to a memorandum from Major General Elder to Lieutenant General Donald Cowles, DCSOPS, 8 March 1973, on the subject of "Army Strategic Thought."
fulfilling that image may change over time or with leadership. Thus, belling the cat may be an idea whose time, if not now, may yet come within the Army.
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