

Military Strategy



Defining strategy

How could you define it?

Who are the most famous strategists?

What are strategy's prerequisites?

How implement it?

Defining strategy

Vidéo *Homeland* So4EoI (Saul)

Which component of strategy is emphasized?

So, now, how would you define



Defining strategy

Vidéo *Homeland* So5Eoi (Peter Quinn).

Strategy is both an art, as practiced by the strategist, and a science in the broadest sense, as the knowledge possessed by the strategist. (Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, Traité de stratégie).

Bibliothèque STRATÉGIQUE

Hervé COUTAU-BÉGARIE

TRAITÉ DE STRATÉGIE

7^e édition



(E) ECONOMICA



Defining strategy

Strategy is :

- *a concept, i.e. a word referring to an idea;*
- *a category of conflict, placed between politics and subordinate categories;*
- *a science → it may be learned;*
- *a method, which allows to extract permanent lessons from theory and practice;*
- *an art (as in martial art: it is a theory and practice subject to specific methods and techniques);*
- *and finally a system, to account for the globalization of strategy in the contemporary era. (H C-B)*

Defining strategy



Strategy is fundamentally an action-reaction phenomenon. (H C-B)

But, problem is that strategy has not gained traction among the general public, nor even within military circles, where technical and tactical considerations continue to prevail. (Beaufre)

Strategy differs from tactics and logistics because tactics is clearly the art of using weapons in combat to achieve the best results. Logistics is the science of movement and supply. (Beaufre)

Who is the strategist ?

The strategist makes favourable use of battles to achieve the aims of war.

Hence, he is linked to political and military power.

He understands tactics and knows how to apply them to achieve military objectives.

The fundamental problem for the strategist is to recognise the nature of the problem he is facing. (H C-B)

A strategist is someone who, when faced with a complex situation, can reduce it to a limited number of options from which to choose in order to define a direction or devise a manoeuvre. (H C-B)

Defining strategy

Initial definition: *Strategy is the art of leading an army and, more generally, the art of command.*

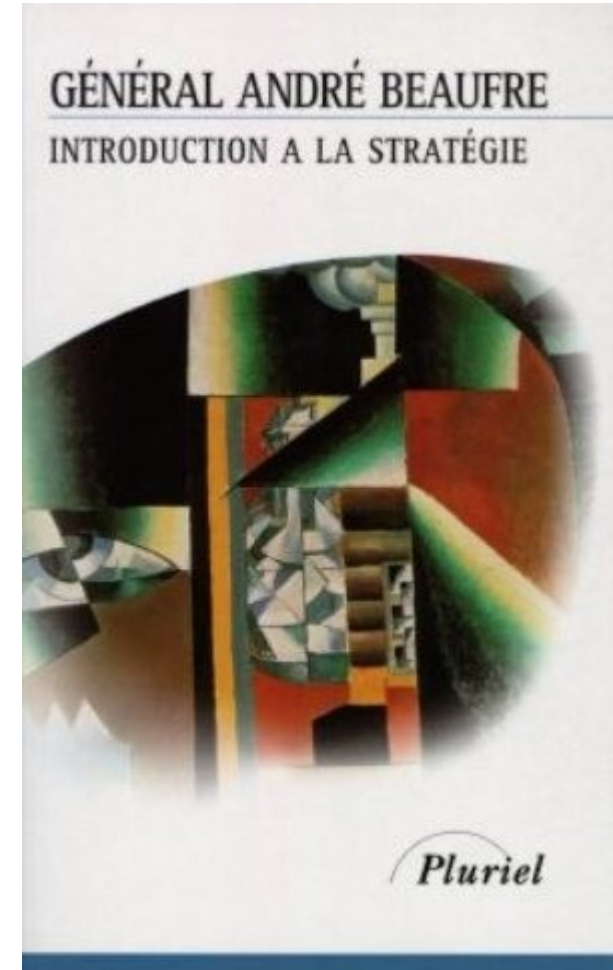
The concept of strategy loses all operational content for defining any rational attitude aimed at achieving predefined ends. This broad meaning of strategy is a weak one.

By extension of meaning, we must resign ourselves to the coexistence of a strong meaning, which corresponds to the essence of the concept, and a weak meaning, whose purpose is clear but whose logic is vague. (H C-B)

If we constantly expand the scope of the term “strategy”, we will dilute its meaning to the point of rendering it meaningless! Under such circumstances, any action carried out according to a pre-established plan would become a strategy or part of a strategy. This is a mistake, for two reasons. Firstly, because it is not planning that characterises strategy, but the political goal being pursued. On the other hand, because this purpose is truly very specific. (Benoist Bihan, Conduire la guerre)

Defining strategy

Strategy is therefore the art of dialectics between wills, using force to resolve their conflict. (Beaufre)





Strategy is a science



Strategy is a human science.

The dialectic of wills suggests the main characteristic of strategic logic. It is a probabilistic logic in which information is never perfect.

Since information is never perfect, one of the fundamental elements of strategic calculation is the assessment of the opponent's intentions and capabilities. (H C-B)

→ you have to work hard to become a strategist.

On the battlefield, inspiration is most often just a reminiscence. It is not a genius who suddenly reveals to me, in secret, what I have to say or do in a life that is unexpected for others; it is reflection, meditation. (Napoléon).

The theory that always wants to go hand in hand with experience will sooner or later take its revenge for having been neglected. (Kléber)



Strategy needs a hard work



One becomes a great captain only through a passion for study and long experience. The adage so often repeated today, that one is born a general and does not need to study to become one, is one of the many errors of our century, one of those commonplaces used by presumption and nonchalance to dispense with the painful efforts that lead to perfection. (Archduke Charles)

Strategy, more than any other science, draws on every discipline: it needs the exact sciences to evaluate its technical basis; economics to evaluate its resources; political science because of its close relationship with politics; sociology to place conflict in its global context; history to draw on examples and lessons... (H C-B)

Strategy is a skill that combines technique and a sense of achievement, but it also involves a great deal of psychology. (Xavier Fontanet)

Strategy needs a hard work

The rule is that strategic knowledge is acquired and perfected through experience and intellectual work. (H C-B)

Thus, one of the essential elements of classical military strategy has always been to understand the transformations of warfare more quickly than the adversary and, consequently, to be able to predict the influence of new factors. (Beaufre)

However, new approaches that appeared to provide definitive solutions to the difficulties encountered have always had only short-lived effectiveness. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the mechanisms underlying the evolution of the decisive nature of armed forces is the key to military strategy. (Beaufre)

Is strategy useful ?

The aim of strategy is to win.

In war, you can neither finish second nor « almost win ».

Winning always means preserving the moral bond that underpins the identity of one's own organisation, and conversely, dissolving the moral bond that underpins the identity of the opposing organisation. (Beaufre).

→ need to understand the ennemy:

Without a general idea or philosophy, we drifted with the winds of adversity, suffering the assaults of the dynamic philosophies that opposed us. Similarly, without a strategy, we were constantly unable to understand the manoeuvres that sought to undermine us, and we regularly focused our efforts on dead ends. (Beaufre)

Personal work

What is the current US strategy and is it successful?

→ You may use the internet, artificial intelligence, calculators, but you will have to expose verbally your results.

Now, it is up to you!

Military Strategy

Defining Strategy



The definition of strategy has evolved over time, but it remains political.

We reject the overly simplistic label of military strategy. The means are military, but the end is political, and the means cannot be conceived independently of the end. (H C-B).

It becomes increasingly abstract.

The degree of generality and abstraction of strategy has logically increased with the industrialisation of warfare, so that strategy has tended to rise above and dissociate itself from tactics. (H C-B)

Defining strategy

Strategy is therefore the art of dialectics between wills, using force to resolve their conflict. (Beaufre)



Components of Strategy

1 The enemy.

In order to develop the strategic plan, it is necessary to anticipate possible adverse reactions to each of the proposed actions and to be prepared to counter each of them. (Beaufre). → different enemies=different strategies.

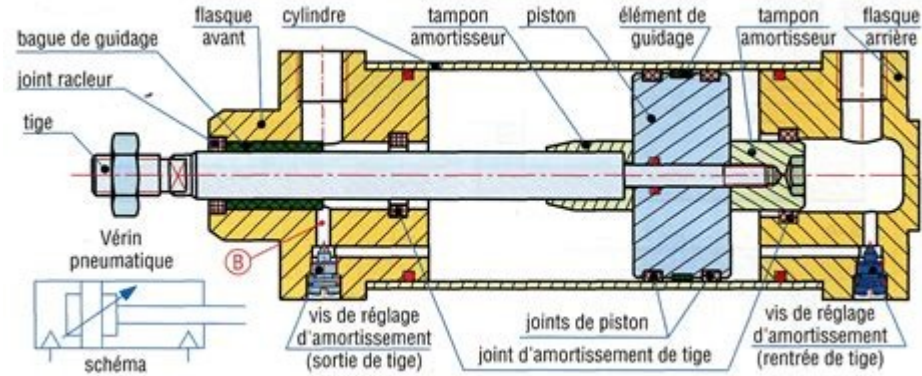
The struggle of wills therefore boils down to a struggle for freedom of action, with each side seeking to preserve it for itself and deprive its opponent of it. (Beaufre).

2 The environment: the locations, the population, the weather.

3 The rear area (populations not waging war).

4 The laws of war.

Components of Strategy



5 The needs. *Strategic thinking must respond to a need.* (H C-B)

6 The means. *The strategy will employ a range of material and moral means to achieve the decision, ranging from nuclear bombing to propaganda or trade agreements. The choice of means will depend on a comparison between the vulnerabilities of the adversary and our capabilities. To do this, we must analyse the decisive moral effect. Who do we want to convince?* (Beaufre)

What Strategy needs

An ennemy: *Clausewitz's laws of reciprocal action are as follows:*

Each adversary dictates the law of the other, resulting in reciprocal action, which, as a concept, must be taken to extremes.

As long as I have not defeated my opponent, I must fear that he will defeat me. I am not my own master, for he dictates his law to me as I dictate mine to him.

If one wants to defeat one's opponent, one must proportion one's effort to his strength of resistance. (H C-B)

The possibility of using force: The strategy must be based on the use (action strategy) or threat of use (deterrence strategy) of force. (H C-B)

What Strategy needs

Power and coercion. *Strategy is inseparable from coercion, whereas diplomacy can be described as the art of persuasion without the use of force.*

Strategy thinks in terms of power, whereas diplomacy thinks in terms of influence. (H C-B)

Cultural prerequisites: *It can be said that strategic science is limited to advanced societies that face the risk of war, are open to discussion, are oriented towards abstraction, and are governed by the pursuit of utility. (H C-B)*

Intelligence.

Strategic thinking

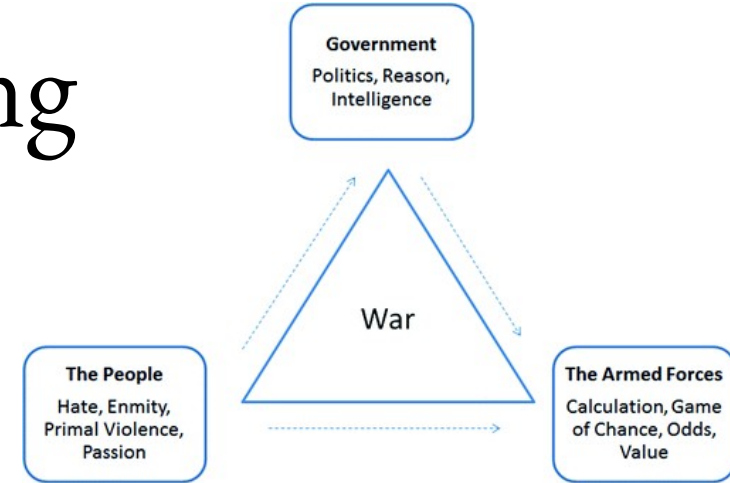
Strategic thinking requires a certain openness, as it reveals precepts and maxims, much like 'recipes', which rulers and military leaders do not wish to disclose, so as not to inform their adversaries.

Once the foundations have been laid, strategic thinking will develop during periods of inactivity brought about by peace, but always with the risk of war looming in the background.

Strategic thinking requires both practical experience and a propensity for reflection, qualities that are not often found in the same person.

Throughout the history of strategic thinking, there has been a shift between what could be called the political paradigm and the military paradigm. The former links strategy to the higher, political dimension, to the general conduct of war, while the latter is deliberately confined to the strict framework of the organisation of the military apparatus and the conduct of operations. (H C-B)

Strategic thinking



Strategic wait (according to Poirier): *as no action is required in the short term, it is necessary to maintain a watch, both technical and doctrinal, so that when the time comes, it will be possible to respond to changes in the international system.* (H C-B)

Clausewitz theorized strategic trinity and friction: *all the imponderables, all the unpredictable phenomena that interfere with military plans. They are countless and of all kinds: the weather, the death of a leader, a misunderstood order, the unexpected arrival of an enemy unit, and so on. Clausewitz sums up the diabolical action of friction in this famous sentence: in war, everything is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.* (B. Bihan)

Strategic principles



Principles are general rules designed to avoid being subject to the enemy's law and to ensure superiority at the point chosen for swift and decisive action.

A fine illustration of the paradox of principles: truths that even a mediocre mind can understand, but whose application is reserved for a few superior minds, because respecting them all at once is often problematic. (H C-B)

Marmont: there are few general principles for the conduct of armies, but their application gives rise to a multitude of combinations that are impossible to predict and lay down as rules.



Strategic principles

Marmont: *We discover a principle by carefully considering the goal and then seeking the best means to achieve it. Once the principles are recognised, genius applies them, and that is the whole art of war.*

General Debeney: *in reality, the principles of warfare only have the fruitful value of a principle for those who have developed or rediscovered them themselves in the course of their personal work.* (H C-B)

Adherence to principles is no guarantee of success, but it does provide insurance against serious mistakes. 'One may be defeated, but one must never be taken by surprise' (Blücher). (H C-B)

Strategic principles

Principle	Definition
Freedom of Action	Ability to act according to one's own will, without being constrained by the enemy or circumstances.
Economy of force	Optimal use of available resources to maximize effectiveness at the decisive point.
Concentration	Massing forces at the decisive time and place to achieve local superiority.
Security	Protection of forces and assets to avoid surprises and preserve combat capability.
<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Ability to seize and maintain the advantage by acting first or in an unexpected manner.</i>
<i>Unity of command</i>	<i>Centralization of authority to ensure coherence and effectiveness of action.</i>



Nuclear Strategy



It is based on mutually assured destruction.

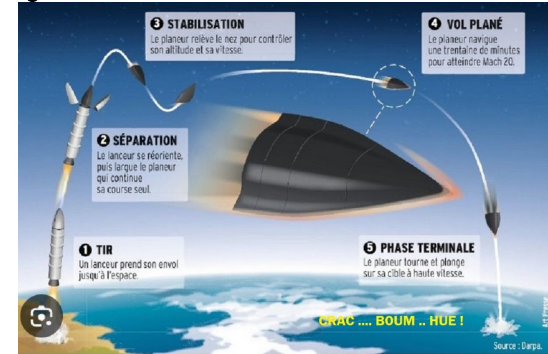
Nuclear weapons are weapons that should not be used: threats to use them are made to prevent certain actions.

The advent of nuclear weapons makes it impossible to consider the means independently of the ends.

Politically, the atomic weapon has become a symbol of power: those who possess it have tried to maintain their monopoly through non-proliferation policies. (H C-B)

Hence, the Iranian and North Korean efforts to get it.

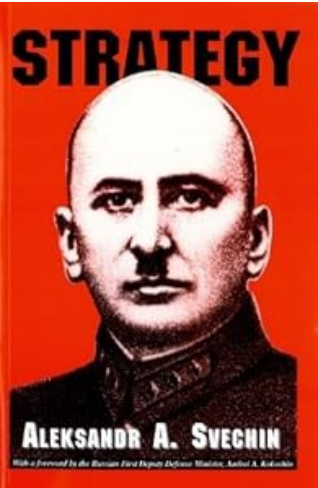
Moving beyond Nuclear?



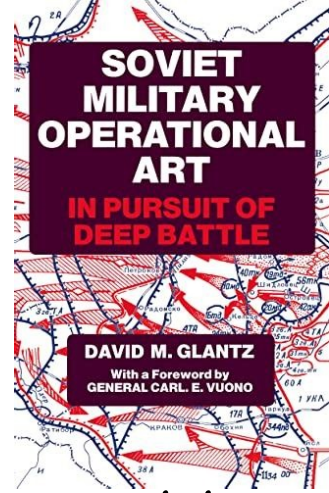
Hypersonic weapons: Hypersonic speeds cause plasma to form around the glider, which poses problems for communication and guidance, but also has the advantage of absorbing radar emissions, making it invisible in this domain.

Bourevestnik (Ru): A nuclear-powered missile, which allows it to remain in the air much longer than most intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) powered by chemical fuel. In the case of the Bourevestnik, the nuclear reactor heats hydrogen, which acts as fuel.

How would they change the situation?



Operative art

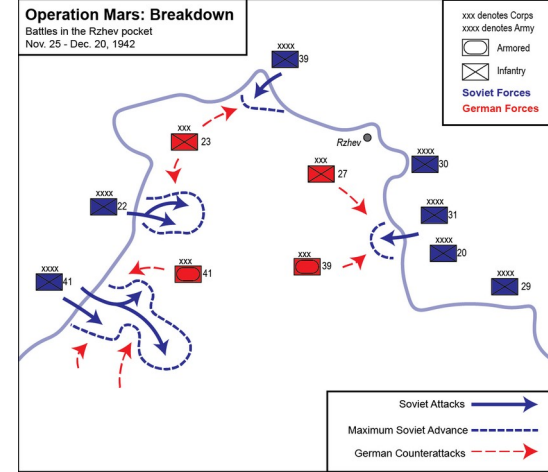


Operative art is a military discipline whose central task is to organise military activity into operations, based on objectives set by strategy.

Based on the objective of an operation, operative art sets out a series of tactical missions and a number of logistical prerequisites. (...) While strategy pursues objectives, tactics solves problems, which is a fundamental distinction. The operation is therefore the path by which strategy achieves its objectives.

Operative art is the means by which strategy, in Clausewitz's words, employs combat to the advantage of war. According to Sviétchine, the three essential elements of an operation are its strategic objective, the set of actions it implements, and its uninterrupted nature. (B. Bihan)

The Operation



The operation is a war action if the efforts of the troops are directed, without interruption, towards achieving a certain intermediate goal in a given theatre of military operations.

Svetchine defines an operation as a continuous, uninterrupted sequence of actions until the objective is achieved. Continuous does not mean that troops move and fight without stopping, but that the action is sustained over time until the objective is achieved.

An operation can therefore be defined as the materialisation, in the form of a combination of military activities of various kinds sustained over time, of the path by which the strategy intends to achieve one of its goals within a given space-time, which depends on the political

Personal work

1/2 What strategy could be applied by an emerging country (« new power »)?

→ You may use the internet, artificial intelligence, calculators, but you will have to expose verbally your results.

Now, it is up to you!

2/2 What is the current russian strategy and is it successful?



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Strategy is fundamentally an action-reaction phenomenon

The fundamental problem for the strategist is to recognise the nature of the problem he is facing. (H C-B)

The principles of war.

The use of force.

Friction: all the imponderables, all the unpredictable phenomena that interfere with military plans.

An operation is a continuous, uninterrupted sequence of actions until the objective is achieved.