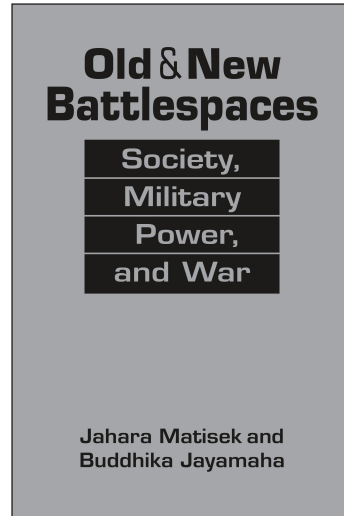


EXCERPTED FROM

Old and New  
Battlespaces:  
Society,  
Military Power,  
and War

Jahara Matissek and  
Buddhika Jayamaha

Copyright © 2022  
ISBN: 978-1-62637-996-1 hc



LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS

1800 30th Street, Suite 314  
Boulder, CO 80301 USA  
telephone 303.444.6684  
fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the  
Lynne Rienner Publishers website  
[www.rienner.com](http://www.rienner.com)

# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<b>1</b> Imagining War	1
<b>2</b> How Battlespaces Change Through Time	17
<b>3</b> Warfare in the Nuclear Age	45
<b>4</b> The Complexity of Emerging Battlespaces	63
<b>5</b> Compressed, Converged, and Expanded Battlespaces	97
<b>6</b> Civil Society and the Contemporary Battlespace	117
<b>7</b> New Battlespaces and Strategic Realities	141
<b>8</b> The Future of Grand Strategy	159
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	173
<i>Bibliography</i>	175
<i>Index</i>	189
<i>About the Book</i>	197

# 1

## Imagining War

**WAR IS THE ORGANIZED USE OF VIOLENCE IN PURSUIT OF AN OBJECTIVE.** The link between war and politics prominent in contemporary discourse emerged with the advent of standing armies at the end of the early modern period in Europe and particularly after the Napoleonic Wars. The purpose of military strategy is to reconcile ends, ways, and means to shape the behavior of the adversary. Violence and the credible threat of violence are merely means to create a particular effect; destruction is an intermediate effect, never an end in and of itself.<sup>1</sup>

War is also an elemental social enterprise. As societies change, so too do the ways they organize violence—such as the shift from feudal levies to national conscription to maintenance of standing armies. As societies change, the nature of the objective changes, sometimes quite drastically—such as from territorial conquest to the defense of human rights. Likewise, the character of warfare evolves as societies change. How societies adopt varied forms of military organizations shapes the character of war just as war shapes the character of societies.<sup>2</sup> When trying to understand military power and the origins of and victors in a conflict, it is widely accepted that the character and shape of war is influenced by economic and political power and other structural variables.<sup>3</sup> There also is a general sense that broad trends, like the intensification and diversification of global economic ties, the development of new technologies, the increasing wealth of many countries, and the political mobilization of their peoples, has affected the relationship between the organized use of violence and the creation of effects that have become contingent and far more complex than in the past.

If military history is a guide, the relationships between violence and creating effects will get more complex over time. This reality poses a Janus-faced puzzle for students and practitioners of military and strategic studies. Students of strategy usually look backward to understand changes in warfare over time. Ultimately, strategists have the “task of turning one currency—military (or economic, or diplomatic, and so forth) power—into quite another (desired political consequences).”<sup>4</sup>

Practitioners who design strategy attempt to apply lessons of the past as they address what they think are salient ongoing changes. Ultimately, they execute strategy in an environment of imperfect information with uncertainty as the only certainty. Standing athwart the past and the present, students of strategy are faced with concerns over what broad societal attributes will contribute to the changing character of war over time. But how should both students and practitioners define the character of warfare across time and space? What aspect of war, such as, for example, its nature, character, representation, interpretation, or organization, changes over time? We develop the concept of battlespaces as the prism with which to see changes in war over time.

Napoleon’s Grande Armée marched across Europe in a context that was distinct to the kinds of societies and states that existed at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Napoleon was able to harness a commitment and commonality of purpose that came with a nascent French national identity. The armies that he faced lacked this resource. Union generals in the American Civil War prevailed over their Confederate adversaries in a context undergoing rapid change as industrialization shaped society and state power in the middle of that century. Mechanized infantry and strategic bombing of cities from World War II have become iconic images of conventional warfare.<sup>5</sup>

The dominant mid-twentieth-century concept of warfare focused on the clash of armies of sovereign states that build and sustain complex military organizations. That kind of warfare, particularly viewed from the present, seemed to pursue clear objectives and offered little ambiguity concerning the main protagonists. Other types of warfare, deemed “small wars” in a 1940 US Marine Corps manual, were confined to the geopolitical periphery or were sideshows to bigger wars.<sup>6</sup> But as the information age changes societies and economies, organizational principles change and adapt to various efficiencies.<sup>7</sup>

Taken together, these broad changes reflect different configurations of power. Material resources are important throughout, though in varied ways. Broad political developments, such as the rise of nationalism, the value of global connectivity, and evolving global norms about individ-

ual and group rights also weigh heavily in how war is imagined. So too are changes in how governments believe they can effectively organize and project military power.<sup>8</sup>

The post–World War II era saw the increasing prominence of conflicts referred to as irregular warfare.<sup>9</sup> These conflicts included non-state armed groups (i.e., “insurgents”) fighting colonial and indigenous state forces to win what these insurgents defined as national liberation. They fought adversaries that had far greater resources, including firepower. But the insurgents in many cases had backing from like-minded supporters around the world. Irregular warfare spawned all kinds of terms—such as *unconventional war*, *guerrilla warfare*, *counterinsurgency*, *counterterrorism*, and so forth—and fit in the broader category of civil wars fought within internationally recognized boundaries.<sup>10</sup> Civil wars (i.e., intrastate), then and now, require a different analytical framework for discerning the logics of violence, compared to the more familiar experience of interstate wars that dominated the popular and practitioner imaginations well after the experience of World War II.<sup>11</sup>

Recent and ongoing conflicts in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen present images of ambiguity. They seem to have no clear beginning or end, and distinctions between civilians and combatants, though hardly unique to this time and these places, can appear especially blurred. Remotely operated weapons such as drones complicate the picture. Mercenaries appear to play a growing role in many of these conflicts. Though these elements of warfare are not necessarily new, their combination at this point in the global configuration of power and the roles states play in people’s lives leave Americans with difficulty saying what these wars are about and whether the United States has won or lost in places like Iraq.<sup>12</sup> They wonder why American soldiers are deployed to so many countries that they cannot find on a map.<sup>13</sup> Even some in Congress were surprised to find that US forces were in Niger. This only came to their attention when four Green Berets were killed in an incident in October 2017.<sup>14</sup> Beyond the United States, there are many armed factions fighting in myriad cities, towns, and villages in Libya (2014–present), Syria (2011–present), Somalia (1980s–present), Myanmar (Burma) (1948–present), and across the Sahel of Africa (1958–present). But this violence is applied deliberately in pursuit of an objective, as has been the case for these sorts of old battlespaces in recorded human history.<sup>15</sup> In irregular wars, unlike in conventional wars, one is forced to look carefully to discern clarity in the logics of violence.<sup>16</sup>

## Warfare and Contours of Battlespaces

In the definitional landscape, *war* refers to the event in its totality. *Warfare* is the sum total of means utilized. Within it are analytical distinctions and typologies such as *conventional*, *unconventional*, *regular*, *irregular*, *symmetric*, and *asymmetric*. A *battlespace* in a war is both a cognitive reality and a manifest reality. A battlespace as a *cognitive reality* is a combat leader's understanding of the area of operation with the aim of using combat power effectively. A battlespace as a *manifest reality* is the many processes in the area of operation that violence affects, as well as processes that affect violence—the endogeneity (and often confusion) of violence inherent in any battlespace. In war, a combat leader is a manager of violence; hence, coercion is projected toward creating a specific effect that in its cumulative manifestation contributes toward realizing a specific objective. The level of complexity and the many aspects of a battlespace, not to mention understanding it, are also contingent on the level of war—that is, the positionality of the combat leader in the broader war at the strategic, operational, and/or tactical levels.

The supreme commander Napoleon saw his battlespace in terms of the strategic level—though his genius lay in his understanding of the battlespace along all levels of war and also in how well he aligned political and military end states.<sup>17</sup> He knew the broad objectives, the desired effects his grand army was expected to create, forcing adversaries to sue for peace. This is because war is more than just a simple battlefield. Napoleon's efforts at making a French country made his war-fighting efforts more effective because he reshaped the post-Revolutionary French state. The way he mobilized the French nation and the military for war shaped both the state and the wars he fought. Meanwhile, Napoleon's grand marshals, at the operational level, were aware of their commander's intent, maneuvering military elements under their command accordingly.<sup>18</sup>

Combat leaders at the tactical level conceive their battlespace in terms of enemy movements. Combat leaders, then as now, operate in an environment of imperfect information and employ combat power under their command understanding that they must minimize their own vulnerabilities while exploiting enemy weaknesses. A leader at the strategic level may not know the fine-grained details of the battlespace at the tactical level, just as a leader at the tactical level may not know the strategic-level details and challenges. But once war commences, the idea is that, on the one hand, the desired military end state is aligned with the desired political end state, and, on the other, the strategic, operational,

and tactical levels remain aligned and work in lockstep. Understanding a battlespace is an enterprise predicated on conditions of uncertainty and imperfect information.

In this old battlespace conception, at the strategic level Napoleon conceived of the battlespace in terms of his desired end state—getting the enemy to sue for peace—and in terms of the enemy’s and his own military capabilities. He would then maneuver his armies toward a military *dénouement* with the enemy forces—his military genius being his attention to detail at all levels and his astute use of geographic depth and space seamlessly with his military formations. It was war fought in the single domain of land and to a lesser degree on the seas, and no one doubted that this was war. Not all wars are perceived as clear-cut today; debates rage about the blurring of war, conflict, and competition.<sup>19</sup> However, we do know that there are myriad ways to create effects other than waging a war. What would the conception of a battlespace be for tomorrow’s military leaders?

### **Complexity of Contemporary Battlespaces**

Hostile activities in Ukraine and in the South China Sea provide explicit examples of the challenges of military actions and violence in the twenty-first century. The Russians outthought and outfought their competitors for power in the Black Sea region, creating a civil war and managing to expand territory and alter national borders with the use of violence. Similarly, the Chinese created a new imagined reality in the South China Sea—namely, that this region was inherently owned by China. The historical and geopolitical significance of each action, not to mention the dominant narratives and themes generated about each region, challenges notions of an American-led order.

In early 2014, “little green men” (Russian *Spetnaz* commandos) appeared in Crimea, and with explicit use of violence for the first time since World War II with no pretensions to the contrary, Russia acquired new territory and made it part of its country.<sup>20</sup> Simultaneously, Russia created proxy forces to support a civil war in Ukraine, where none existed previously. By the time the rest of the world recognized what was transpiring, Russia had realized its objectives, and the rest were left to deal with a new reality. One is hard put to point out whether a war was involved in the way Russia acquired Crimea. Yet, within days of these unmarked Russian commandos occupying Crimea, Wikipedia labeled the region as Russian, and *National Geographic* added Crimea

to Russia, with the lead map maker stating, “We map *de facto*, in other words we map the world as it is, not as people would like it to be.”<sup>21</sup> Russia realized objectives with subtle, deceptive, and effective use of implicit and explicit violence. The internet quickly rewarded this behavior by socially and digitally constructing the reality Russia sought. The success of Russia dominating the information environment even led to a top American general admitting that Russian actions in Ukraine were “the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen.”<sup>22</sup>

While the South China Sea saw numerous regional claims to the area beginning in the 1970s, China began building artificial islands in 2013 and employing numerous naval militias (dressed up as fishermen) to impose a new reality on the sea. This tactic continues with large flotillas that take seemingly permanent shelter on tidal atolls from bad weather that does not materialize. Meanwhile, the world was deliberating whether these acts were a provocation, an act of war, or what not.<sup>23</sup> The net outcome is an altered geopolitical reality that China’s neighbors must navigate. Are these actions acts of war? Can China build artificial islands in parts of the ocean without a legal mandate to do so? Do the atolls and oceanic space China claim become their area of control despite international legal condemnation?

These examples—a random sample out of multitudes of human conflicts—capture instances in which the protagonists relied on either the explicit use of violence or the implicit threat of violence to generate effects. Moreover, in each instance, a military leader as a manager of violence can be informed by history but is forced to reckon with a battlespace at variance from ones that came previously, as warfare continuously evolves. That raises the broader puzzle examined in this book: What does it mean when one refers to the changing nature of battlespaces, and what shapes them across time and space?

Throughout history, land and then the sea were the domains where the fortunes of armies were decided. In the early twentieth century, the air domain became an integral part of war fighting, followed by the space domain at the end of the century. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the cyber domain has become increasingly vital to defend and maintain. Its prominence and importance in day-to-day activities has led to many debates about a coming era of cyberwarfare.<sup>24</sup> What has become abundantly clear from these discussions is that the cyber domain will be a complementary domain in pursuit of political objectives.<sup>25</sup> Previously, many technology alarmists had engaged in “FUD” (fear, uncertainty, and doubt) debates to create the perception that the main line of effort in



modern warfare would be primarily waged via cyberspace.<sup>26</sup> Regardless, the importance of cyber conflict brought in the blurring of statecraft and warfare and a blending of all domains and jointness along the spectrum of cooperation, competition, and conflict.

Technology-induced change inadvertently created a humanly devised domain, conceived as cyberspace. This humanly devised domain is in turn anchored in outer space, and it is not an exaggeration to suggest that nearly every individual and modern institution on the planet is dependent on the space domain and the satellites that orbit Earth. From daily life to fighting wars, the on-demand connectivity afforded by cyberspace, the Internet of Things, and satellites has integrated domains in ways inconceivable previously. Consequently, besides the domains of land, sea, and air, the cyber and space domains have become emergent war-fighting battlespaces—if not direct, then indirect areas of competition—since activities in the traditional domains of land, sea, and air are becoming dependent on cyber and space.

For example, the 2011 Libyan War became the first conflict in which 100 percent of the munitions used were precision-guided weapons, meaning that the ability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)–led coalition to hit targets was dependent on data-connection links afforded by the cyber and space domains.<sup>27</sup> However, this continual historical trend toward more precise standoff weapons (i.e., the ability to project violence without being close to an enemy) is only part of the change.<sup>28</sup> Use of violence and war is not about destruction; it is about creating effects, with necessary destruction as an intermediate effect. However, there are alternative avenues to create sociopolitical effects in the domination of the information environment without the use of violence in generating real strategic outcomes.

State and nonstate actors engage in malicious cyber activities inside the United States and allied nations with impunity, such as the remarkable 2020 SolarWinds Hack that resulted in the compromise of sensitive data of major firms like Microsoft and numerous US government agencies.<sup>29</sup> These cyber actions are taken against corporations, state entities, and even specific individuals. American citizens subjected to disinformation, misinformation, intimidation, bullying, or threats from an external state and/or state-affiliated proxy in cyberspace could call the local police, and yet the police would be incapable of defending them.<sup>30</sup> This raises another set of questions: Do such actions rise to the level of war? If not, what does it mean if the state cannot protect its citizenry from foreign aggression? Is the country failing in its social contract? What does this tell us about the present

and future when the idea of “reaching out and touching someone” has assumed new meaning due to advances in technology?

The traditional image of what constitutes conventional war and what does not is predicated on violence. This old battlespace conception is no longer so clear-cut in liberal democracies where people do not live inside digital fortresses as citizens do in China, Russia, and other authoritarian countries. In the “free world,” civil society is vulnerable in a way that was simply not possible before the advent of global connectivity and instantaneous communications. Various effects and end states are pursued in the cyber domain that achieve a slow, steady erosion of Western values and ideational foundations. This is an important distinction of sociopolitical-information warfare: it differs from traditional notions of information warfare or political warfare in that it achieves nonkinetic effects of “anomie” by trying to break social order and solidarity.<sup>31</sup> It is a distinct paradigm shift in which society and varying social dimensions are put under constant duress without adversaries making explicit use of violence.<sup>32</sup>

For example, in 2014 anti-vax movements were amplified and gained prominence due to specific online tactics. This included a snowballing effect, especially on Twitter with bots and the creation of private Facebook pages, adding more followers that would reshare antivaccine posts and amplify polarizing views against the basics of fundamental vaccine science.<sup>33</sup> This has real-world consequences: a 2015 study found that failure to vaccinate in the United States resulted in almost \$15 billion in economic damage.<sup>34</sup> China and Russia view this as an opportunity to weaken their adversaries. Operatives in these countries have waged cyber campaigns of disinformation about vaccines, especially in the Covid-19 era, not to mention about the origins of certain diseases (e.g., Soviet Union’s 1980s Operation Infektion, blaming the United States for inventing HIV/AIDS).<sup>35</sup> Hence, the societies in which individuals have open access to information have become centers of gravity in battles to influence attitudes that question the legitimacy of national authorities and even their political systems—what used to be called *subversion*, a term seldom used in policy circles since the end of the Cold War. These information operations are cheap to execute and present few risks, particularly if executed by authoritarian states that do not allow foreigners the same level of access to their own citizens’ information environment.

Tangible violence, with all the risks and costs associated with pursuing certain political and military end states, appears to be waning as a primary line of effort. Gaining importance in these new battlespaces is

the growing emphasis on pursuing nonkinetic efforts to generate effects that achieve strategic objectives with less need for armed personnel physically present in a location—although there will always be utility in having someone on the ground with a gun.<sup>36</sup> Many of the risks and costs associated with old battlespaces seem to have decreased in importance with the new battlespaces developing. However, the thread between all battlespaces is that along the spectrum of competition and conflict, warfare essentially remains a human activity.<sup>37</sup>

External actors increasingly target Western civil society by leveraging new domains (i.e., cyber and space), successfully implementing sociopolitical-information warfare against a society by creating rifts and exploiting grievances.<sup>38</sup> Much as rebellious colonials angered British Redcoats by not fighting the proper eighteenth-century way, twenty-first-century adversaries are circumventing traditional notions of military power and strength by attacking and exploiting an undefendable position: civil society.<sup>39</sup> In line with historical precedents in which the weak exploit power asymmetries, these emerging competitors and spoilers seek ways of diminishing the inherent strengths of the strong by shifting toward a strategy with less emphasis on kinetic military options. This fundamental shift requires deciphering what can be weaponized, including intangible things like data to target individuals anywhere in the world and achieve political and military objectives. Hence, we are forced to consider what value an airstrike in the twenty-first century has when adversaries can attack Western civil society via online media—that is, by exploiting the sociopolitical-information environment—which can be as persuasive and impactful in establishing certain narratives in a target country.<sup>40</sup>

As great power competition (GPC) became a defining point of the national security strategy laid out by the Donald Trump administration in 2017, the US military and many of its allies continue to focus on large-scale combat operations (LSCO) to fight the next war in ways they would prefer if they must fight. Meanwhile, anti-Western actors invest in cheaper asymmetric, non-LSCO capabilities, hoping to achieve gains without a kinetic fight. The GPC era (2017–present) of a rising China and resurgent Russia is a by-product of America’s failure to develop a proper strategic vision since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, it is an extension of the growing tension in the international system due to countries like China and Russia wanting to maximize their own autonomy and survivability. Their warfare pursuits have been to achieve gains without provoking a military response from the West.

And what is war if adversaries create tactical and strategic effects without the use of violence? This elemental reality makes civil society in

liberal democracies an emergent battlespace. But the necessary legal structures designed to safeguard civil society prevent security professionals from even placing it within the broader discussion of emergent battlespaces. Yet the unavoidable reality is, any young lieutenant who steps into a war and attempts to understand a specific battlespace inevitably faces a series of integrated domains in land, sea, air, cyber, space, and civil society. These domains, while analytically autonomous, remain integrated in reality, and the interconnectedness creates an emergent reality. The question then is, Do all these changes constitute a fundamental change in war fighting, and how can one make sense of these changes?

## **About the Book**

This book turns war into the unit of analysis. Seeing war over time means seeking to understand the changing face of battlespaces through time. We provide a temporal continuum that runs right across the discussion. Turning war into the unit of analysis and change in war over time into the outcome raises the analytical issue of the level of analysis. If change in war over time is the outcome in need of explication, is the level of analysis situated at the strategic, operational, or tactical level of war?

This book develops a macro-level interdisciplinary framework drawing on military and strategic studies, political science, sociology, history, and even literature to delineate and discuss war over time. Simultaneously, it uses derivatives of the macro-level categories to delineate war along the levels of analysis. The word *delineate* is used decidedly. The aim here is to derive concepts and categories from the broad framework with which to delineate contours of change across time and along the levels of war. This subsequently means seeing what war would mean if adversaries could create effects either without the use of violence or with innovative use of violence.

This analytical approach also makes this book different from the many recent books that discuss the changes in warfare, with some explicitly speaking of a fundamental change in war. Most of them isolate adversaries' cyber activities without explicitly discussing them in terms of civil society, much less seeing them in terms of the emerging multidomain environment. This book is informed by some of their technological discussions and ideas of international relations, yet differs from them by turning warfare into the unit of analysis.<sup>41</sup>

The chapters in this book proceed as follows:

In Chapter 2, we develop the overall analytical framework. War is an elemental human enterprise. War is also a paradoxical enterprise that

brings out the best and worst in humans, a nature that ensures war remains one of the most studied topics. If there is a consensus about war, it is that it is inherently complex. Such complexity—usually referred to in terms of fog and friction—comes from the reality that the usual ideational, economic, military, and sociopolitical processes that shape people every day begin to change at a rapid pace as a function of violence. These changes in turn also shape the dynamics of violence, and the process becomes iterative, creating a level of endogeneity where parsing out precise causal processes becomes extremely difficult. War fighters in this milieu are the managers and executors of violence. They make decisions on the application of combat power based on their specific understanding of the battlespace, where they both inhabit and shape the processes.

This analytical framework takes war in its totality with all its complexity. It is based on the premise that the changing *character* of war over time is best understood and viewed through the relationship that lies in the dichotomy between the nature of war and the character of war. In the annals of military and strategic studies, the nature of war is seen as constant over time due to the immutable purposive nature of human beings. It is therefore assumed that since the nature of war remains constant, the character of war, the bloody manifestations of violence, is what changes over time. If the nature of war is constant over time and the character of war changes over time, what explains the changes over time?

We build on the long-held assumption that the nature of war is constant. Waging war is in the nature of human beings as purposive individuals. Therefore, wars are always fought for a purpose. Based on that assumption, the elemental premise of this book argues that the ultimate character of war is defined by the immutable social sources that shape the exercise of organized violence and the contingent decisions of human beings in the way they apply violence. People organized into a community, tribe, clan, city-state, empire, nation, and/or nation-state can choose to wage war in pursuit of an objective. The nature of the objective sought and the social sources of military power—geopolitics, regime type, ideas, nature of military organizations, and scientific knowledge (GRINS)—ultimately shape the character of war over time and across space.

Our GRINS framework builds on classics that discuss war but differs in its manifestation by making the relationship between the nature of warfare and the character of warfare the locus of analysis. The premise is that understanding what shapes the relationship between the nature and character of war provides the guideposts that allow one to delineate the broad contours of the character of warfare over time. The rest of the chapter takes the long view of history and covers familiar ground. It

interprets the familiar, from the Napoleonic Wars to the end of the World War II, with a novel lens in the hope that this allows readers to see the familiar differently. On the temporal dimension, this chapter concludes at the end of World War II as nuclear weapons gain prominence.

In Chapter 3, we discuss the utility of warfare as a means of generating effects in the presence of nuclear weapons. The advent of nuclear weapons was a defining moment in human history. The development of this weapons system had far-reaching strategic ramifications and played a decisive role in shaping warfare and geopolitical realities. It paradoxically enabled power while inhibiting freedom of statecraft.

War has long been a means of realizing sovereign objectives, ranging from building states where none existed to expanding territory and building empires. Yet in an age of nuclear weapons, when friends and foes alike possess the capacity to scorch the earth, what is the role of warfare? States, like individuals, are purposive, animated by interests, concerns, and fears. The organized capacity for violence will therefore always be one of the many instruments of national power, but how shall one wield it in creating effects, in pursuit of objectives, if it will mean collective annihilation?

As the nature of war is constant, people will always find a way to use violence as a means. Nuclear weapons do not make war obsolete. But they do force considerable thought about innovative ways to exercise violence in pursuit of objectives. This chapter discusses how warfare evolved during the Cold War as nuclear weapons made “interstitial warfare” the new normal.<sup>42</sup> Specifically, forms of social power—ideational, economic, military, and political—get formally or informally institutionalized. Domestic institutions, international organizations, transnational alliances, and so forth, are manifestations of institutionalized power arrangements.<sup>43</sup> Once in place, these arrangements shape the behavior of individuals, communities, and even states. Interstitial warfare refers to conflict that takes place either at the edges of or between institutionalized power arrangements and often makes prolific use of proxies to avoid direct confrontation among nuclear-armed adversaries.

During the Cold War, the geopolitical distribution of power shaped the rise of this interstitial warfare. Political warfare played a role in the ongoing struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union to shape political outcomes in each other’s sphere of influence. Though rudimentary from a contemporary perspective, these efforts raise important considerations and provide guidelines for thinking about cyberwarfare and influence operations today. Proxy warfare was another interstitial operation, with considerations that are important to consider when reflecting on potential futures of warfare in a more competitive geopo-

litical environment. The chapter concludes with the implications of the end of the Cold War.

In Chapter 4, we discuss warfare during and after the end of the Cold War. The transformative moment was when the Berlin Wall fell, and there was no forceful response from Moscow. The end of Soviet influence led to an immense concentration of ideational, economic, military, and political power in the hands of the United States and its allies. Rapid political and economic change around the world altered economic incentives. Technological innovations took place at a rapid pace, changing the way people conducted their daily interactions. Moments of abrupt change also led to social dislocations, opening new political opportunities to settle scores or create new realities.

While some intractable wars ended, new ones emerged. The concentration of power was such that decisions made in the United States, the European Union (EU), and NATO played a decisive role in shaping wars from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Since the 9/11 attacks, NATO and the United States have been fighting wars for twenty years, and for over thirty years if one counts the imposed no-fly zone in Iraq and numerous military operations in the fractious Balkans. We refer to this permissive environment as the unipolar moment, a time in which US and NATO partner politicians and their foreign policy establishments engaged in what we call “strategic narcissism” (with due nods to Hans Morgenthau and H. R. McMaster), as this geopolitical moment seduced many into assuming that the world could be remade into the Cold War victors’ image and that the underlying nature of warfare no longer applied.

This chapter concludes with how the subsequent decisions of adversarial states, nonstate actors, and assorted spoilers also began to play a role in shaping the character of wars. It ends with a discussion of the slow decline of Western strategic primacy in the traditional domains and how the West was unprepared for the rise of emergent domains.

In Chapter 5, we discuss the rise of battlespaces as multidomain realities. We especially focus on what makes the contemporary reality different and how the confluence of more competitive geopolitical realities and technological changes has integrated traditional war-fighting domains of land, air, and sea with the cyber and space domains. Simultaneously, these changes have also created novel battlespaces—or social realities that adversaries can (and do) leverage into battlespaces.

The chapter examines how liberal democracies find themselves at a distinct disadvantage in this altered strategic and war-fighting context, whereas adversaries have become proficient at generating strategic realities with tactical maneuvers. Picking up on the theme of expanding

battlespaces woven throughout this book, the chapter takes up the issue of “lawfare,” of adversaries’ disingenuous use of the legal principles of liberal democracies and of major international organizations to achieve alternative political ends.

Chapter 6 dives deeper into the nature and reality of integrated domains and the nature of emergent domains, especially implications for warfare being less kinetic and lethal, yet becoming increasingly more effective. It elaborates the contrasting strategic conceptions of the victors of the Cold War and the rest, as it were. Then it discusses the logic of how revisionist powers utilize emergent domains to outthink, outsmart, and outfight the United States to create strategic realities.

This chapter focuses on how adversaries with authoritarian political systems exploit new opportunities to engage in interstitial warfare by weaponizing the open societies of countries that have liberal democratic systems. Recalling some of the conclusions from Chapter 3’s attention to political warfare, this chapter highlights how technological changes and the effects of strategic narcissism in the United States and elsewhere contribute to the asymmetry of this form of contention.

The chapter builds on this element of interstitial warfare to better conceptualize cyberwarfare in the broader contemporary battlespace. It draws important distinctions between the use of cyber technologies in the pursuit of espionage (the collection of information for political and military purposes) and subversion (the transmission of information for the purposes of dividing and weakening an adversary from within). Though the latter is easily conceived as a political term that reflects the preferences and values of the observer, much like terrorism, there remain important distinctions in the ends, ways, and means of these uses of information.

Chapter 7 surveys contemporary strategic realities. We emphasize the expansion of the battlespace to new domains. US policy makers and planners recognize this expansion while also struggling with how to adjust bureaucracies and policies to reflect these changes and at the same time preserve commitments to the basic values of an open society. Previous chapters showed how similar challenges were addressed in the past. Legacy institutions of the Cold War military and the unipolar moment become obstacles to crafting flexible responses to contemporary challenges.

Finally, Chapter 8 concludes by posing a series of questions pertaining to the future of grand strategy in an era of integrated and emergent domains. It discusses the implications for Western civil society and the sort of adaptations needed to excel in the era of a new battlespace.



## Notes

1. Burke, Fowler, and McCaskey, *Military Strategy, Joint Operations, and Air-power*.
2. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*.
3. For example, Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Beckley, "Economic Development and Military Effectiveness."
4. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge*, 7.
5. According to US doctrine, the dichotomy for military war fighting is organized between traditional and irregular warfare. For the purposes of this book, the "conventional warfare" phrase is utilized in lieu of the "traditional warfare" term, as traditional warfare has substantially different meaning for anthropologists studying indigenous conflicts. For more on this doctrinal discussion, refer to Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2017), I-5; Ferguson, "Masculinity and War."
6. US Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, 1940, Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/UsmcSmallWarsManual1940Reprinted1990/mode/2up>.
7. Davidson and Rees-Mogg, *The Sovereign Individual*.
8. Beckley, "The Power of Nations."
9. This growing prominence of irregular warfare was a function of the growing number of civil wars due to the Cold War era of two hegemonies trying to avoid nuclear annihilation, so supporting proxies (i.e., rebels) was a by-product of their great power competition. This resulted in supporting weaker forces that then fought the much stronger polity. However, civil wars are a common phenomenon since ancient Rome. Armitage, *Civil Wars*.
10. According to US doctrine, unconventional war is considered a subset of irregular warfare because it translates into working with militias in a denied area to fight against the regime and/or occupying military powers. Bunker, "Unconventional Warfare Philosophers."
11. Joint Publication 1.
12. "NEW POLL: Americans Want Troops Home from Afghanistan, Iraq; Opposed to More Military Engagement," Charles Koch Institute, January 23, 2020.
13. Bijal P. Trivedi, "Survey Reveals Geographic Illiteracy," *National Geographic*, November 20, 2002.
14. Loren DeJonghe Schulman, "Working Case Study: Congress's Oversight of the Tongo Tongo, Niger, Ambush," Center for a New American Security, October 15, 2020.
15. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*.
16. Joint Publication 1.
17. Gibbs, *Military Career of Napoleon the Great*.
18. Durham, *The Command and Control of the Grande Armée*.
19. Nadia Schadlow, "Peace and War: The Space Between," *War on the Rocks*, August 18, 2014; Hoffman, "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict."
20. Ryan Faith, "The Russian Soldier Captured in Crimea May Not Be Russian, a Soldier, or Captured," *Vice News*, March 10, 2014.
21. Brian Resnick and National Journal, "Should Wikipedia Put Crimea on the Russian Map?," *The Atlantic*, March 19, 2014.
22. Gen. Philip Breedlove quoted in John Vandiver, "SACEUR: Allies Must Prepare for Russia 'Hybrid War,'" *Stars and Stripes*, September 4, 2014.
23. Mackubin Thomas Owens, Bradley Bowman, and Andrew Gabel, "Dangerous Waters: Responding to China's Maritime Provocations in the South China Sea," *National Interest*, December 20, 2019.

24. Healy, *A Fierce Domain*.
25. Rid, *Cyber War Will Not Take Place*.
26. Perlroth, *This Is How They Tell Me the World Ends*.
27. Mueller, *Precision and Purpose*, 4.
28. O'Connell, *Of Arms and Men*.
29. Brian Barrett, "Russia's SolarWinds Hack Is a Historic Mess," *Wired*, December 19, 2020.
30. For the purposes of the book, the nuanced difference between misinformation and disinformation is intent. Thus, disinformation results from intentional disingenuous behavior to spread false information for malicious purposes, while misinformation results from the unwitting spread of bad information.
31. The problem of anomie (i.e., breakdown of societal values, behaviors, and norms) was first identified by Émile Durkheim in 1893. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*.
32. Levite and Shimshoni, "The Strategic Challenge of Society-centric Warfare."
33. Renée DiResta and Gilad Lotanscience, "Anti-Vaxxers Are Using Twitter to Manipulate a Vaccine Bill," *Wired*, June 8, 2015.
34. Ozawa, "Modeling the Economic Burden of Adult Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in the United States."
35. Broniatowski, "Weaponized Health Communication"; Carmen Paun and Susannah Luthi, "What China's Vax Trolling Adds Up To," *Politico*, January 28, 2021.
36. Wylie, *Military Strategy*, 85.
37. Storr, *The Human Face of War*.
38. Some might be tempted to interpret civil society as the "human domain." However, definitions of this domain, first outlined by US Special Operations Command in 2013, are narrowly detailed as "the totality of the physical, cognitive, cultural, and social environments that influence human behavior." US Special Operations Command, "Human Domain White Paper, Version 7.5," MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, May 2013, 4–5. For more on the human domain and its conceptual issues requiring integration of the cyber domain, see Gregg, "The Human Domain and Influence Operations in the 21st Century."
39. Hibbert, *Redcoats and Rebels*.
40. Through mentorship of an undergrad student, Christina Durham came up with the "thought bombs" analogy. Christina Durham, "Thought Bombs of the 21st Century: Memes as a Tool in Influence Operations," PIPS Research Paper, College of William & Mary, May 2021.
41. For example, Singer and Brooking, *LikeWar*; Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters*; Watts, *Messing with the Enemy*; Stenge, *Information Wars*; Pomerantsev, *This Is Not Propaganda*; Benkler, Faris, and Roberts, *Network Propaganda*; Brose, *The Kill Chain*; Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*; Clarke and Knake, *The Fifth Domain*; Rid, *Active Measures*; Buchanan, *The Hacker and the State*; Howard, *Lie Machines*; Kreps, *Social Media and International Relations*.
42. Our conception of interstitial war is different from the first description of Clausewitzian interstitial politics in this 2014 article: Craig, "Intermediarized Security Governance and the 'Sultans' Retort.'"
43. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 1:26.