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IRAQ 2003 (PART 3)[1]: THE ROAD TO … NOWHERE?

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A new type of war?

When he addressed the US Navy League's Sea Air Space Exposition in Washington DC just a few days after the fall of Baghdad, and again when he gave the 25th annual Ira C. Eaker Distinguished Lecture on May 1st, General Richard B. Myers, America's highest-ranking officer, chose a very interesting title for both his speeches: "The New American Way of War."[3] Both essentially had the same message. In them, he called "what we've done in Iraq dramatically different" to any previous war the US had been engaged in, including the Gulf War of 1991. He quoted the military historian Russell Weigly who, in his book *The American Way of War*,[4] "suggested" – as Myers summarised it – "that we won by destroying the enemy's army and driving at the heart of their nation." In Iraq, Myers said, "[w]e focused on achieving certain effects on the battlefield. We went after the Iraqi Regime and the pillars that supported it. It's for these reasons I think that we now conduct warfare much differently than we did in the past, even including Desert Storm."

Myers explained by referring to the fact that whereas in Desert Storm only 20% of the strike fighters could guide laser bombs, in Iraqi Freedom it was 100%.

[1] This is the third in a series of three articles. See *Scientia Militaria*, vol 32, no 1, 2004, as well as vol 32, no 2, 2004.
[2] Dr Scholtz is also Deputy Editor of *Die Burger* and holds the rank of Captain in the SA Army Reserve Force.
[3] The full text is at www.dtic.mil/jcs/chairman/new_american_way_of_war16apr03.htm and www.dtic.mil/jcs/chairman/myers_eaker_lecture_1may03.htm. As the second speech covers exactly the same ground as the first without adding anything substantially, all quotations are from the first.
[4] Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1978.

Whereas the Marines then had to use old M60 tanks, now they had the Abrams tank with a gun that increased their range by 50%. Myers spoke of the important reconnaissance role of unmanned aerial vehicles, able to send back target photographs instantly, and have these sent within an hour or two to airborne F-14s and F-117s so they could have them in the cockpit. In 1991, the Air Tasking Order, a document of 800 pages, took five hours to print, and it had to be taken out by helicopter to the strike units. Now, the document was immediately available world-wide via the SIPRNET, the internal operational internet of the US forces.

In Desert Storm, "ground commanders still relied on maps, yellow stickees on their maps and plastic overlays and on tactical radio reports. Today, all components have a constant picture of the air, land and sea forces. And it's available at a variety of levels. This shared picture not only shows that component commander to have better situational awareness on where his forces are, or her forces are, but also allows the other components the same situational awareness. With that knowledge, then you can begin to integrate joint operations much more closely."

Myers said that General Tommy Franks, C-in-C of all the coalition forces in the theatre, was able to use "the intelligence], the command and control and precise combat power to see the enemy, to plan, to act and assess the situation – faster than any time before. We know that process to see, plan, act and assess as our decision cycle. And in history, we also know that the one that has the fastest decision cycle that can get inside his enemy's decision loop will prevail."

The benefits could be seen in three ways, he continued. "First, because of the 'punch' of our combat power, we could strike directly at the heart of the regime. That means we didn't have to wade through the regular army to get to the center of power. Our first strike in March 19th in Iraq was on the regime's senior leaders' command bunker. As a result, it placed them in peril and not the Iraqi people. And our campaign has focused in the regime's pillars of power. Its security forces, weapons of mass destruction, air defense network and elite Republican Guard forces. These things didn't guard Iraqi citizens, they just protected the regime. So concentrating our combat power on them is a clear departure from the devastating way that Weigly described as our past approach to warfare."

Secondly, Myers said, this meant "that we could make tremendous progress to minimize unintended consequences, like causing civilian casualties and destroying Iraq's infrastructure. This mindset extended across the battlefield. … This fact alone separates this operation from past conflicts. In fact, don't think

there's been a war in history where one side went to such painstaking lengths to protect innocent life."

In the third place, "what sets this conflict apart from the past is how we integrated this joint team. When folks write the after action reports they should pay close attention to the objectives of the separate service components. I think what they'll see is that in many cases, often, they shared objectives. These required them to integrate their capabilities into a close inter-connected joint operation."

When you put all of this together, Myers said, "you realise that, in many cases, you don't need a larger force. Instead you know you have a decisive force that can be used deliberately. Today, we certainly have that in Iraq." Summarising Myers' speech, one may, therefore, identify the following as the salient points of the "new American way of war": The new technology of precision weapons allowed the US forces

- to strike at the pillars of the Iraqi regime, without having to physically destroy the Iraqi military forces in the field;
- to strike directly at the heart of the Iraqi regime;
- to do so without causing great destruction of the infrastructure and loss of civilian life;
- to cancel out the fog of war, to know the entire battlefield situation instantly;
- therefore, to act with tremendous speed in decision making, thereby contributing to the enemy's paralysis; and
- to integrate the battlefield conduct of the different arms like never before in history.

Certainly, these elements were revolutionary in quite a few different ways. But were they new *in principle*, or were they merely a further development, an impressive refinement of something that already existed? Was it a new way of war as such? It is the contention of this writer that it was not.

To begin with, it seems that Myers is exaggerating the effects of the new approach. While it is true that the Americans, true to the correct operational principles discussed below, did not seek to attack the enemy strengths but rather their weaknesses, they still had to defeat the Iraqi forces on the battlefield. How true this is, can be seen from the fact that a vast majority of the targets hit from the air – 15 592 or 82%, to be exact – were either Iraqi troops or military vehicles. Only 1

799 or less than 10% was related to the regime's leadership or the military command structure.[5] This shows that the enemy military forces were still the primary target of the coalition's efforts on the battlefield.

Secondly, the idea contained in Myers' new way of war was not that new at all. Look at the following quotation: "Characteristic of the armoured division is the integration of great firepower and high mobility on roads and the country. Its ability to move rests solely on machine power, the troops do not have to leave their vehicles for the battle. …The purpose is to create a useful, manoeuvrable unit with great range, which can be deployed quickly and so secure the surprise with a spear-point. … The centre of its warfighting is not the conduct of long battles, but to shorten it … Its deployment rests on the … concentration of the highest fighting power at the decisive point … and, in particular, on the universal valid principle of surprise to prevent the enemy resistance from asserting itself."

These words, modern as they sound, are not a part of an analysis of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They were written in 1935 and appeared in a German military magazine, *Militär-Wochenblatt*.[6] They were part of a truly revolutionary new approach to warfare, namely the use of concentrated armour in conjunction with mechanised and motorised infantry and artillery, close air support and deep interdiction of enemy supply lines, making use of extreme speed to get into the enemy rear areas, thereby creating panic, paralysing his movement and decision making, and making sure of the collapse of even a considerable stronger enemy.

The first people thinking along these lines were Major General J.F.C. Fuller and Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart in Britain during the twenties,[7] but they were prophets not honoured in their own country. They were, however, avidly studied by the Germans, who developed their ideas further into what eventually became known as the *Blitzkrieg*.[8] Speaking to Liddell Hart after the war, General Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma identified five main elements of the *Blitzkrieg*:

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[5] Lt Gen T. Michael Moseley: "Operation Iraqi Freedom – by the numbers", p. 5, at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/uscentaf_oif_report_30apr2003.pdf.

[6] Gen Walther K. Nehring: *Die Geschichte der Deutschen Panzerwaffe 1916-1945* (Stuttgart, Motorbuch Verlag, 2nd edition, 2000), pp. 76-77.

[7] Cf. Anthony John Trythall: *'Boney' Fuller. The intellectual General* (London, Cassell, 1970); Brian Bond: *Liddell Hart. A study of his military thought* (London, Cassell, 1976); Alex Danchev: *Alchemist of war. The life of Basil Liddell Hart* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998).

[8] Cf. Jehuda L. Wallach: *Das Dogma der Vernichtungsschlacht. Die Lehren von Clausewitz und Schlieffen und ihre Wirkungen in zwei Weltkriegen* (Frankfurt, Bernard & Graefe, 1967), p.

- "The concentration of all forces on the point of penetration in co-operation with bombers;
- Exploiting the success of the movement on the roads during the *night* – as a result, we often gained success by surprise deep in, and behind, the enemy's front;
- Insufficient anti-tank defence on the enemy's part, and our own superiority in the air;
- The fact that the armoured division itself carried enough petrol for 150-200 kilometres – supplemented, if necessary, with supply of petrol to the armoured spearheads by air, dropped in containers by parachute;
- Carrying rations sufficient for three days in the tanks, for three more days in the regimental supply column, and three more days in the divisional supply column."[9]

An early, but very astute analyst of the *Blitzkrieg* was a Czech officer, Lieutenant Colonel F.O. Miksche, who – in a book published in 1941 – identified three principles of this new method:

- *Surprise*, which may take three forms, strategic, technical and tactical. "Strategic surprise is gained mainly by concentration and by movement towards action (*Aufmarsch*) carried out in such a way that the attacker strikes on a certain front with a force considerably superior to that of the defence. Technical surprise derives from the use in battle of an unknown weapon or means of movement. Tactical surprise derives normally from technical surprise, and in modern war is achieved through the use of new tactics that are more suitable than the old for the new weapons and material. … The main tactical surprise of this war has been the use of parachutists, airborne troops, tanks and motorised infantry – new weapons and material – in new forms by the German armies."
- *Speed*, Miksche says, "is the necessary complement to surprise. Surprise only gains a temporary success, unless exploited by speed. If surprise is not followed by speed, the opponent rallies his forces and has the time to make new dispositions to contain the attacker. … It is an essential feature of the German technique of attack that the attacking forces must never

340; Heinz Guderian: *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (Heidelberg, Kurt Vowinckel, 1951), p. 15; Maj Gen F.W. von Mellenthin: *Panzer Battles 1939-1945. A study in the employment of armour in the Second World War* (London, Cassell, 1955), p. xv.

[9] B.H. Liddell Hart: *The other side of the hill* (London, Pan, 1950), p. 126.

allow themselves to be robbed of the initiative. They must overwhelm the defence with a flood of superior force. By the speed, with which this superior force is kept in movement and action, the countermeasures of the opponent are rendered valueless; the situation is always developing too quickly for these countermeasures to be effective."

- *Material superiority* is the third principle, "which shows itself on the battlefield in the form of fire. Superiority in weapons, ammunition, and other material must be ensured throughout an action. The will to fight of the defending forces can only definitely be broken by a superiority that is not only great but obvious. And without this superiority movement is difficult or ceases. Fire-power should therefore be considered the driving force behind manoeuvre, the force that makes movement possible."

It is the combination of "motorization as method of transport, mechanisation as method of break-through, air action as method of support, protection, and communication," noted Miksche, "that gives the warfare of to-day a character entirely different from that of the last World War."[10]

Perhaps the supreme example of a successful application of the *Blitzkrieg* method was the invasion of France and the Low Countries on May 10th, 1940. In arguably his most influential book, *Strategy – the Indirect Approach*, Liddell Hart succinctly explained the reasons for the stupendous success of the operation. By baiting the French and British through invading the Netherlands and Belgium, the Germans "managed to lure the Allies out of their defences on the Belgian frontier. Then, when they had advanced deep into Belgium, their march being deliberately unimpeded by the German air force, it struck in behind them – with a thrust at the uncovered hinge of the French advance.

"This deadly thrust was delivered by a striking force that formed only a small fraction of the total German army, but was composed of armoured divisions. The German Command had been shrewd enough to realise that, for any chance of quick success, it must rely on mechanics rather than on mass. … The tactics of the German forces corresponded to their strategy – avoiding head-on assaults, and always seeking to find 'soft spots' through which they could infiltrate along the line of least resistance. … While the Allied commanders thought in terms of battle, the new German commanders sought to eliminate it by producing the strategic paralysis

[10] F.O. Miksche: *Blitzkrieg* (London, Faber & Faber, 1941), pp. 29-31

of their opponents, using their tanks, dive-bombers, and parachutists to spread confusion and dislocate communications."[11]

In these analyses of the *Blitzkrieg*, all of the elements of General Myers' "New American Way of War" were present – sometimes explicitly, sometimes only by implication, sometimes very embryonic. But they were there. Through the new weapons and precision technology the German *Blitzkrieg* – brilliantly taken over by the Israeli's – were further developed, refined and made much more efficient. But the *principles* were essentially the same.

It was, therefore, no new way of war as such. According to a knowledgeable observer such as Anthony Cordesman, it wasn't even a new *American* way of war. The "new way," he writes, "is solidly built on the past" that derive "in large part from military thinking that took place long before Secretary Rumsfeld became Secretary of Defense." He continues: "Even seen from the perspective of the Gulf and Afghan Wars, the Iraq War was more an evolution than a revolution."[12]

The operational differences between Gulf I and Gulf II

If one wants to understand the essence of the Iraq War and what *did* make it different from previous wars, the best way is probably to compare it with the Gulf War of 1991. Some differences have already been noted in General Myers' speech above – for instance, the fact that in 1991 only a relatively small percentage of the aerial weapons used were "smart", while in 2003 only a relatively small percentage were old-fashioned "dumb" bombs. This obviously made a decisive difference in the numbers of aircraft needed. After all, with a "smart" bomb which has an almost 99% chance of hitting and destroying the target, only one or two aircraft are needed, whereas with "dumb" bombs many more have to be employed, simply because so many bombs will miss.

This principle also applies to ground warfare. If you know that a tank or anti-tank weapon will hit – and destroy – the enemy tanks almost every time, you will need less of them to begin with. You will need less artillery. And you will need fewer soldiers. This is certainly one of the reasons why no less than fifteen divisions

[11] B.H. Liddell Hart: *Strategy – the indirect approach* (New York, Frederick A. Praeger, n.d.), pp. 232-234.
[12] Cited in Anthony Cordesman: *The "instant lessons" of the Iraq war: main report, eighth working draft, May 14, 2003*, pp. 122-123, at www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf.

and 3 614 aircraft (US only[13]) were needed in 1991 to vanquish the Iraqi forces, while in 2003 only four divisions and 1 801 aircraft were adequate to do the same job.

In the second place, in 1991 speed was not of the same essence as in 2003. What the allies did then, was first to take out the "eyes" and "ears" of the Iraqi forces in a 39 days' air campaign. They did this by destroying all the Iraqi electronic sensors – such as radar and radio intercept equipment – and the Iraqis' ability to communicate between the units in Kuwait and their headquarters. Thus, when the ground war started, the Iraqis didn't have the foggiest idea of what was going on.

Then, during the last few days before the start of the ground offensive, the allies moved the bulk of their assault troops – three armoured divisions, two mechanised infantry divisions, two airborne divisions and one light armoured division – to a point north of where the border between Kuwait and Iraq intersects the Saudi border, but still inside Saudi Arabia. When the advance started, therefore, it became a "left hook" whereby the allied VII Corps not only smashed through the Republican Guard along the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border, but essentially threatened to cut the Iraqi forces in Kuwait off from their hinterland. (That strong remnants of the Republican Guard escaped after all through the Basra Gap, was because of President George Bush senior's premature command to stop VII Corps' eastwards advance.)[14]

This was, therefore, a classic flanking or encircling movement, strongly reminiscent of German operational methods since the 19th century, which emphasised mobility, an aversion of frontal attacks, and flank and/or encircling movements.[15] At the same time, although the air war was much heavier in 1991, it was equally decisive in 2003. No Iraqi aircraft rose to challenge the coalition mastery of the air; those that Iraq had retained after 1991, were either hidden of even buried.[16]

In the war of 2003 a grand flank march was impossible. Geography dictated the coalition operational plan. There was, obviously, no chance of Iran,

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[13] Stan Morse (ed.): *Gulf air war debrief* (London, Aerospace, 1991), p.188.
[14] See Rick Atkinson: *Crusade. The untold story of the Gulf War* (London, HarperCollins, 1994).
[15] Cf. Gunther E. Rothenberg: "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the doctrine of strategic envelopment", in Peter Paret: *Makers of modern strategy from Machiavelli to the nuclear age* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1986), ch. 10.
[16] Michael R. Gordon: "Lifestyles of the rich and infamous" (*The New York Times*, 22.4.2003).

Iraq's eastern neighbour, allowing its territory to be used for an invasion of Iraq. Though the governments of Jordan and Saudi-Arabia, Iraq's western neighbours, were quite friendly towards the United States, for political reasons they also could not be seen to participate in the attack. Taking into account the Turkish parliament's refusal to allow the 4th Mechanised Infantry Division access in order to invade Iraq from the north, a simple invasion from Kuwait in the south-east was all that remained. Given that Baghdad was seen from the beginning as the only possible target of the invading forces, as the centre of gravity, any fool was able to predict that the coalition invasion would have to proceed from the Kuwaiti border more or less in a northwesterly direction, and more or less parallel to the famous twin rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and that at least the latter would have to be crossed somewhere along the way.

Therefore, there was no sense in trying to encircle or outflank the Iraqis on a similar scale as in 1991. However, there was a way of dislocating them, of undermining their ability to resist no less than twelve years previously, namely speed. The Americans had to advance at a blistering pace, taking the Iraqis by surprise, creating havoc in their rear areas and supply lines, coming inside the Iraqi decision loop so that by the time they decided on a reaction, the situation would already have developed so much that their reaction would be totally outdated and therefore irrelevant. Obviously, the paralysis created by this furious pace could be greatly augmented by an unrelenting and sustained air assault. This is exactly what happened. And that, in a nutshell, is the main difference between Gulf I and Gulf II.

Operational principles

If we want to analyse and judge the operational decisions made on both sides, we need a yardstick by which to measure it. That yardstick is provided by the accepted principles of operational art. If one reads the Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz fully and properly, he has an interesting idea about what the purpose of warfighting should be. Although different aims are scattered throughout the text of this unfinished and unpolished work (Clausewitz died before it could be perfected), the very first one he identifies is this: The "true aim of warfare" (in theory), he says, is to "render the enemy powerless."[17] Obviously, having written with his experiences from the Napoleonic wars as point of departure, Clausewitz'

[17] Carl von Clausewitz: *On war* (edited & translated by Michael Howard & Peter Paret, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976), I/1, p. 75.

ideas do not have much relevance for modern operational conditions, so we will have to look elsewhere for more guidance on this.

Some of the most fundamental theoretical work has been done by Sir Basil Liddell Hart and Robert Leonhard, who developed Liddell Hart's ideas further. What should be the purpose of strategy?, is the question Liddell Hart asks himself. (Bear in mind that he uses the word *strategy* in an obsolete sense, meaning what is nowadays called *operational art*.) The question was more important than one might think. To him, it was primarily motivated by his experience as an infantry captain in the trenches on the Western Front in France during the First World War, when millions of troops on both sides were thrown in senseless, brutal frontal attacks on strong fortified positions – and massacred in their tens and even hundreds of thousands. Seeking for a way to lessen the casualties, Liddell Hart after the war made a study of history, which led him to his famous *indirect approach*.

His basic point of departure, he explained near the end of his life, was never to launch an offensive or attack "along the line of natural expectation." To do that would be "to consolidate the opponent's equilibrium, and by stiffening it to augment his resisting power." Based on this, he came to two conclusions, one negative, the other positive: "The first is that in the face of the overwhelming evidence of history no general is justified in launching his troops to a direct attack upon an enemy firmly in position. The second, that instead of seeking to upset the enemy's equilibrium *by* one's attack, it must be upset *before* a real attack is, or can be successfully, launched …"[18]

Explaining more fully in arguably his most influential book, he denied that the purpose of strategy [operational art] was the destruction of the enemy, as German theorists since Clausewitz had claimed. "Strategy [operational art] has not to overcome resistance, except from nature. *Its purpose is to diminish the possibility of resistance*, and it seeks to fulfil this purpose by exploiting the elements of *movement* and *surprise*." Somewhat further on he clarifies the above: "Let us assume that a strategist is empowered to seek a military decision. His responsibility is to seek it under the most advantageous circumstances in order to produce the most profitable result. Hence *his true aim is not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic [operational] situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by battle is sure to achieve this*. In other words, *dislocation* is the *aim* of strategy [operations]; its *sequel* may be either the enemy's

[18] B.H. Liddell Hart: *Memoirs*, I (London, Cassell, 1965), p. 163.

dissolution or his easier disruption in battle." In fact, Liddell Hart says, the perfection of operational art would be "to produce a decision *without* any serious fighting."[19] (Indeed, the ancient Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu wrote, "For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the supreme excellence. … Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle."[20])

Elsewhere, Liddell Hart also wrote that the true target in warfare should not be so much the enemy troops themselves, but the spirit of the enemy commander. The only reason one operates against the enemy troops, is because they form an extension of the spirit and will of the enemy commander.[21] (This dovetails perfectly with Clausewitz' aim of rendering the enemy powerless.) Developing these thoughts further, Robert Leonhard[22] expounded on Liddell Hart's dictum that the enemy's dislocation should be the aim. "Dislocation," he writes, "is the art of rendering the enemy's strength irrelevant. Instead of having to fight or confront the hostile force on its terms, the friendly force avoids any combat in which the enemy can bring his might to bear."

He differentiates between two methods, namely *positional* and *functional* dislocation. As far as the first is concerned, he says, "[t]he most obvious way to render an enemy force irrelevant is to remove it from the decisive point, whether in a theater, an area of operations, or on a battlefield. This form of dislocation can mean the physical removal of the enemy from the decisive point, or it can mean the removal of the decisive point from the enemy force. An example of the first would be to use a feint in order to draw the enemy's reserve. An example of the latter would be to manoeuvre away from the enemy's force and seek a decision in the enemy's rear area or against a portion of the enemy's forces that cannot be reinforced in time."

As far as *functional* dislocation is concerned, the objective is again "to render the enemy's strength irrelevant, but through different means. Rather than forcing or luring the enemy out of position, functional dislocation simply causes the enemy's strength to be neutralized or inappropriated. This effect is generally

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[19] B.H. Liddell Hart: *Strategy – the indirect approach*, pp. 337-339.
[20] Sun Tzu: *The art of war* (Herefordshire, Wordsworth Classics, 1998), p. 25
[21] Quoted in Jehuda L. Wallach: *Kriegstheorien. Ihre Entwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, Bernard & Graefe, 1972), p. 234.
[22] Robert Leonhard: *The art of manoeuvre. Manoeuvre-warfare theory and air land battle* (Novato, Presidio, 1991), pp. 66-69.

achieved through technology or tactics or a combination of the two." By way of analogy, Leonhard refers to the fight between David and Goliath. Goliath's strengths were in his physical power, his body armour, his shield, his sword, and his spear. None of these were, however, permitted to enter into the conflict. David "would not try to match strength for strength. Instead, he intended to use his sling to functionally dislocate (i.e., render irrelevant) the Philistine's weapons and defenses."

One conclusion that stands out from these quotations is that there is nothing honourable about warfare. If you want to win, you have to lie and cheat, to have to point to a non-existent threat behind your enemy's back and then kick him between the legs, you have to make him believe that you are coming from the front, and then stick a knife in his back. Render him impotent *before* you attack him.

The key operational decisions

With these insights, one may now identify and discuss those key operational decisions made by the coalition forces and the Iraqis which influenced the course of the war decisively. The *first* decision was to invade and depose the Saddam regime while destroying as little as possible of the Iraqi army or the country. After all, the whole campaign plan was built around the desire to destroy as little as possible. The end – Saddam's removal – was what mattered, not destruction. The purpose with this was twofold: first, the Americans realised that the task to rebuild every bridge, every power station, every building they destroyed, would be theirs – and that they would have to pay for it too. Secondly, destroying the country in the process of liberating it would not be the best way of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people for liberal democracy and being thankful to the Americans for liberating them. This decision was decisive in influencing the whole course of the campaign. One is reminded of Sun Tzu's very subtle idea that the best policy in war "is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this."[23]

The *second* decision was to invade Iraq with far fewer troops than the army wanted in the first place. In the second part of this analysis the story was told of the strife between the Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, and most of his Generals about the operational plan. No less than six drafts were vetoed by Rumsfeld because he felt the invading force contained too many heavy units. This, of course, was part of the power struggle between them about Rumsfeld's envisaged transformation of the American military to a light, mobile and technologically

[23] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 25 (ch. 3).

highly advanced force. A compromise was reached, namely to start the fight with two heavy mechanised infantry divisions, a medium heavy Marine division, a light air assault division, and a heavy but obsolescent UK armoured division. In the event, because of the Turkish position, this force shrank even further by a heavy mechanised infantry division. And because the British armoured force was destined to take care of Basra only (essentially a backwater), the main march to Baghdad was undertaken only by three divisions, of which only one was heavy, one light, and one medium heavy.

Martin van Crefeld makes the interesting point that modern warfare swallows far less troops than previously. He writes that "in 1941 the German invasion of the USSR – the largest single military operation of all time – made use of 144 divisions out of the approximately 209 that the *Wehrmacht* possessed; the forces later employed on the Eastern front by both sides, particularly the Soviets, were even larger. By contrast, since 1945 there had probably not been even one case in which any state has used over twenty full-size divisions on any single campaign, and the numbers are still going nowhere but down. In 1991, a coalition that included three out of five [permanent] members in the UN Security Council brought some five hundred thousand troops to bear against Iraq; that was only a third of what Germany used – counting field forces only – to invade France as long ago as 1914."[24]

The decision to use much less forces than was originally planned, therefore, fits very nicely into modern tendencies. Provided that they retain the same firepower, or even more, this cannot in itself be faulted. In the end, as they say, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating: The decisive victory, ending in the capture of Baghdad and Tikrit, shows that even this much lighter force was up to the task. The desired effect was, after all, *momentum*, which mathematically equals by *mass* times *velocity*. Theoretically, in other words, one may lessen the mass (= numbers of troops and units), provided that the velocity (= speed of advance) is increased – up to a point, of course.

Sun Tzu saw something along these lines long ago when he wrote, "In war, numbers alone confer no advantage. It is sufficient if you do not advance relying on sheer military power. If you estimate the enemy situation correctly, and

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[24] Martin van Crefeld: "Through a glass, darkly" (*NWC Review*, Autumn 2000), at www.nwc.navy.mil/press/Review/2000/autumn/art2-a00.htm.

then concentrate your strength to overcome the enemy, there is no more to it than this."[25]

The question is, of course, whether this smaller force would have been adequate against a more determined foe. As a retired UK officer told a defence weekly: "It does help to fight a totally incompetent enemy."[26] This question will be fully discussed later.

The *third* operational decision was to forego the northern invasion and attack only from the south. Of course, the Turks left the coalition with no other option; the southern route was all that remained. Nevertheless, by leaving the equipment of the 4th Infantry on ships near the Turkish shores until after the southern invasion started, the coalition took a calculated risk of not having enough forces available to defeat the Iraqis decisively in the short time that was dictated by politics.

After the war, however, *Newsweek* reported how the US transformed this risk brilliantly into a strategic asset. "Until it was too late," the magazine wrote, "Saddam was led to believe that the Americans would attack from the north, through Turkey. The ruler of Baghdad was informed by secret agents that the Turks' refusal in early March to allow the Americans to unload in their ports was all bluff – that at the last minute the Turks would change their minds and let the Americans use Turkey as a jumping-off point."[27] After the war, General Franks also gave some credence to this assertion by stating: "We believed we could through intelligence means have some influence on the regime through information warfare and deception, and we wanted the regime to believe that force would be introduced in the north, and that the timing of that introduction might be discussed with the Turks. We wanted some uncertainty in the mind of Saddam Hussein about whether the Turks were planning to permit the landing of the force, so I kept the force waiting long past the point where I knew it would not be introduced in the north."[28] Also, the Iraqi deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, apparently told his coalition captors

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[25] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 41 (ch. 9).
[26] David Mulholland: "Luck or good judgement?" (*Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15.4.2003).
[27] Evan Thomas & Martha Brant: "The education of Tommy Franks" (*Newsweek*, 19.5.2003).
[28] Joseph L. Galloway: "General Tommy Franks discussed conducting the war in Iraq" (*Knight Ridder*, 19.6.2003). Cf. also Paul Martin: "Rumsfeld fires up U.S. forces in Qatar" (*Washington Times*, 29.4.2003).

after the war that Saddam viewed the offensive from the south as a ruse, and that he therefore refused to countenance a counteroffensive.[29]

One is reminded of the Sun Tzu's famous words, which are supremely applicable here: "All warfare is based on deception. Therefore, when capable of attacking, feign incapacity; when active in moving troops, feign inactivity. … Strike the enemy when he is in disorder."[30]

Now think back to the early Iraqi order of battle, according to which fourteen divisions (Franks talks of eleven[31]) were stationed in the north to ward off an attack from that direction, three in the centre and six in the south. Of the six Republican Guard divisions, only three were placed to the south of Baghdad and the other three to the north.[32] In other words, the Iraqi placement of forces was, especially after the Turkish pull-out, completely skewed, and that was the direct result of a magnificent piece of strategic deception. Against this background, the decision to delay the transport of the 4th Infantry's equipment to Kuwait and of the troops from their base at Fort Knox, Texas, seems justified, even though this left the invading force rather thin on the ground. One hates to think what would have happened had the Iraqis been less incompetent than they actually were.

At the same time, after the war it was disclosed that US special forces had bribed some key Iraqi senior officers not to fight. This could partly explain why the regular forces, both army and Republican Guard, mostly fought so badly or even not at all, and why the vital bridges over the Euphrates were not destroyed before the Americans crossed them. When this became known, John Pike, director of the military research group GlobalSecurity.com, explained that this was a very good move: "It certainly strikes me as this is part of the mix. I don't think there is any way of discerning how big a part of the mix it is … but it is part of the very long queue of very interesting questions for which we do not yet have definitive answers."[33]

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[29] Steve Coll: "Hussein was sure of own survival" (*Washington Post*, 3.11.2003).
[30] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 22 (ch. 1).
[31] Joseph L. Galloway: "General Tommy Franks discussed conducting the war in Iraq" (*Knight Ridder*, 19.6.2003).
[32] Anthony H. Cordsman: *If we fight Iraq: Iraq and the conventional military balance* (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 28.6.2002), pp. 3-4, at www.csis.org/burke/mb/fightiraq_mb.pdf.
[33] Andrew Buncombe: "Why the Iraqis didn't fight: they were bribed" (*Sunday Independent*, 25.5.2003).

A week or so later, Agence France Presse sent out an undoubtedly related report, based on what they heard from "ex-regime officials", that Saddam was betrayed by three of his cousins, senior military officers, and a former cabinet minister, all of whom ordered troops not to fight against the Americans. One of the spokesmen, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "The head of the Republican Guard Sufian al-Tikriti, who was considered the shadow of Saddam, told the troops not to fight when US forces entered Baghdad on April 8. The verbal order was confirmed by the head of intelligence, Taher Jalil al-Harbush al-Tikriti, as well as military officer Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti whose son headed the office of Saddam's youngest son Qusay." Also, a cabinet minister spread the rumour that Saddam was killed in the attempt on his life on April 7th. "This minister was then evacuated by American troops along with his family and now lives in a European country." The three Generals were also evacuated by military aircraft following the fall of Baghdad, according to the source.[34]

It is clear that these steps, the deception and the bribery, amounted to a perfect example of Leonhard's idea of positional dislocation. It rendered the greater part of the Iraqi regular forces, about two-thirds, for all practical intents and purposes irrelevant to the fighting.

The paucity of troops did become a drawback, a strategic one, once the fighting was over. Then it became clear that the Americans had too few boots on the ground to prevent the large-scale looting and lawlessness which characterised the period after the fall of the Iraqi dictatorship. This, in turn, led to a rising feeling of frustration and enmity amongst the Iraqis towards the United States (and the liberal-style democracy the Americans were pushing).[35] More than a year after the end of the war, it remained an open question whether the coalition forces in Iraq were strong enough to stifle the gathering guerrilla war. As such it must be seen as contributing to a possible political failure.

The *fourth* decision was to weaken the invading force even further by leaving the British 1 Armoured Division to the investment and occupation of Basra. This decision also seems justified. The fact is that the present US Army is technologically a quantum jump ahead of the Brits. Whereas the co-operation in 1991 in a single army corps was already difficult, in 2003 it would have created huge problems. Their doctrines differed. They could not talk to each other securely

[34] News report sent out by AFP to the media, 26.5.2003.
[35] Cf. Alissa J. Rubin: "US struggles in quicksand of Iraq" (*Los Angeles Times*, 5.5.2003).

by radio, the Brits still having communication equipment from the seventies. Their ammunition and fuel differed, necessitating a separate logistic apparatus.[36] Even their contribution to the air campaign of 1999 in Kosovo, without any ground combat troops being involved, created huge problems.[37]

In the *fifth* place there was the decision to hasten the invasion with some 24 hours because of the information that Saddam Hussein would be at a certain place at a certain time. As a result, "bunker busters" were dropped by two F-117 Stealth fighter-bombers in an attempt to decapitate the Iraqi government, to paralyse their decision-making even before the real ground invasion started.

Interestingly enough, this attempt dovetailed neatly with something written just after World War I. In his famous "Plan 1919", calling for an all-tank army, Major General J.F.C. Fuller, the earliest visionary calling for mechanised warfare, wrote: "The fighting power of an army lies in its organisation, which can be destroyed either by wearing it down or by rendering it inoperative. The first comprises killing, wounding, and capturing the enemy's soldiers – body warfare; the second in rendering inoperative his power of command – brain warfare. … As our present theory is to destroy personnel, our new theory should be to destroy command."[38]

Fuller did, of course, not go as far as to advocate the assassination of an enemy head of state. One may, of course, pose questions about the morality of doing that. Purely *militarily*, at least, it made some sense. If it had been successful, it would have been a heavy blow to the Iraqis, possibly even leading to their collapse in the field very early on. In such a case, many lives – on both sides – could have been spared. It is also an open question whether a dictator like Saddam, who was much more than a civilian of state and who was known to have directed military operations in the war against Iran and again in 1991, should not be seen as a soldier, and therefore a legitimate target for killing. One may remind the reader here that the Allies tried repeatedly to assassinate Adolf Hitler during the Second World War.

The *sixth* decision was not to "prepare" the Iraqi forces in the south with a bombing campaign before the start of the invasion. Originally, a preparatory air assault of 20 days was envisaged, which was then brought down to 10 and finally 5

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[36] Cf. for instance Wesley Clark: "Brits brilliant but short in resources" (*The Times*, 17.4.2003).
[37] See Leopold & Ingrid Scholtz: "Pirrhiese oorwinning: Die oorlog in Kosovo" (*Scientia Militaria*, 29/1999, pp. 80-112).
[38] J.F.C. Fuller: *The conduct of war 1789-1961* (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 243.

days.[39] In actual fact, the aerial bombings started at the same time as the ground assault, the reason being intelligence that the Iraqis were planning to torch the oil wells in the south, and the fact that the coalition was loath to give them advance warning of the invasion.[40]

In the event, this decision did not make things more difficult for the invaders on the ground; the Iraqis – with notable exceptions – did not put up much of a fight to begin with. And the fact that only nine wells were indeed put on fire,[41] tends to vindicate the decision not to prepare the battlefield by air attacks.

The *seventh* operational decision was to conduct the ground advance with a maximum of speed. We have seen that the march, especially of the 3rd Division, to Najaf was the fastest contested armoured advance in all of military history. Also, when the troops resumed their march to Baghdad after the operational pause, the emphasis was again on speed. In the process, speed almost became a religious mantra. "Speed kills – the enemy", and "speed, speed and more speed," was the slogan hammered into the officers at every turn.[42]

This not a new principle, on the contrary, it has been recognised for as long as there were people thinking about the best way to wage war. "Speed is the essence of war," Sun Tzu wrote long ago. "Take advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness, make your way by unexpected routes, and attack him where he has taken no precautions."[43]

Writing about General Heinz Guderian's panzer march from the Meuse to the Canal near Abbéville in May, 1940, a move that was decisive in the comprehensive defeat of the French and British, Major General J.F.C. Fuller wrote: "It was to employ mobility as a psychological weapon: not to kill but to move; not to move to kill but to move to terrify, to bewilder, to perplex, to cause consternation, doubt and confusion in the rear of the enemy, which rumour would magnify until panic became monstrous. In short, its aim was to paralyse not only the enemy's

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[39] Rowan Scarborough: " 'Decisive force' now measured by speed" (*The Washington Times*, 7.5.2003).
[40] Peter Baker: "Overtaken by events, the battle plans are tossed aside" (*Washington Post*, 21.3.2003).
[41] Daily briefing of Brig Gen Vincent Brooks, 23.3.2003, at www.centcom.mil/CENTCOMNews/Transcripts/20030323a.htm.
[42] See Jack Kelly: "How the bold run to Baghdad paid off" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 13.4.2003).
[43] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 46 (ch. 11).

command but also his government, and paralysis would be in direct proportion to velocity. To paraphrase Danton: 'Speed, and still more speed, and always speed' was the secret, and that demanded '*de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace'*."[44]

It is almost impossible to characterise the dash to Baghdad better than in these words, written so many years before the fact. Having established that geography made a grand flank march in the tradition of Gulf I impossible, speed became the best instrument with which to attain Liddell Hart's and Leonhard's goals, namely to *dislocate* the enemy and undermine his capacity to resist *before* the decisive battle(s) took place. Even though geography forced the following of the general line of expectation – from Kuwait to Baghdad – its enormous speed (and the disruption and paralysis that went with it) more than cancelled out this disadvantage. Also, the overwhelming support of the coalition air forces made it extremely difficult for the Iraqis to manoeuvre; every time they tried to move their mechanised forces in an organised way, they were almost wiped out.

The emphasis on speed had the advantage that it enabled the attackers to "get inside the enemy's decision loop," in the American military parlance. In an interview, General Wallace said that it "continually took Iraqi forces a long time – somewhere in the order of 24 hours – to react to anything we did. By the time the enemy realized what we were doing, got the word out to his commanders and they actually did something as a result, we had already moved on to doing something different. For a commander, that's a pretty good thing – fighting an enemy who can't really react to you."[45]

Then, in the *eighth* place, came the decision to halt for a few days. US spokesmen denied that there was an operational pause, and in a certain sense they were right, because this did not mean that all fighting stopped. On the contrary, while the ground troops replenished and rested, the aircraft – of the Air Force, Navy and Marines – continued attacking the Iraqis with redoubled vigour, thereby reducing the Republican Guard's capability to fight and resist to a great extent, and not allowing them to regain their equilibrium. As a result, the resumed advance which followed – the *ninth* decision – was made much easier. Here again, speed was regarded as of the essence.

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[44] Fuller: *The conduct of war 1789-1961*, pp. 256-257.
[45] Cited in Anthony Cordesman: *The "instant" lessons" of the Iraq war: main report, eighth working draft, May 14, 2003*, p. 131, at www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf.

The fierce nature of the Iraqi irregulars' attacks did produce some doubts amongst the American Generals about the wisdom to press on to Baghdad as soon as the sand storms ended and the replenishment was complete.[46] However, the decision to continue was wise. The example of Guderian's march to the sea, as well as the Israeli race to the Suez Canal in 1967, showed that the paralysis brought about by the rapidity of the advance is usually enough to neutralise any threat to your flanks and supply lines, especially when fighting an incompetent enemy like the French, the Egyptians – or the Iraqis. It is a question of having strong nerves.

Finally, it was decided not to adhere to the original plan of investing Baghdad (like the Brits did with Basra), but to take it all at once. Seeing the disorganised state in which the Iraqi defences clearly were, the decision was basically to keep on stunning and paralysing them by not giving them a single second to draw their breath, thereby preventing them from consolidating and reorganising their defence. Therefore, a concerted assault from all sides by most available troops was made on the capital. While this did produce some fierce fighting in places, the enemy proved to be completely disorganised and unable to resist in any co-ordinated way.

Not fighting Saddam's war in the streets of Baghdad – and, for that matter, the other cities – was wise. Not for nothing Sun Tzu wrote thousands of years ago, "the worst policy is to attack cities."[47]

What about the Iraqi operations? Saddam made only three operational decisions, namely to lure the coalition forces deep into his country and then decimate them in urban warfare, to place most of his troops north of Basra, and to decentralise the command and control over the irregular *fedayeen* and militia.

As far as the first is concerned, this had both advantages and disadvantages. He could not foresee how quickly his conventional forces would disintegrate under the combination of a lightning advance and massive aerial attacks, and he banked on the possibility of having strong forces left with which to fight the Americans block by block, street by street, building by building and even floor by floor. From his point of view, this gave him a good chance of dragging out the war, to create a lot of civilian bloodshed on the world's television sets, and to drum up

[46] Cf. Rick Atkinson et al: "Confused start, decisive end" (*Washington Post*, 13.3.2003).
[47] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 25 (ch. 3).

international pressure on the USA to withdraw and leave him in power. On the other hand, by not fighting seriously on the Kuwaiti border, he gave the Americans the chance to use his country's geographic space inland to conduct exactly the lightning campaign that induced a general collapse. It is difficult to decide what would be best. Both options were intrinsically bad; the Americans would most probably have mauled his forces whatever choice he took.

Saddam's second decision was to station most of his forces in the north. This, we have seen, was a direct result of a brilliant piece of strategic deception, for which he fell hook, line and sinker. This made the southern march to Baghdad that much easier by keeping the bulk of the Iraqi forces essentially neutralised and *hors de combat*. And when he saw his mistake and started moving the Republican Guard divisions southwards, they had to come out into the open – and were decimated from the air.

The third decision was the best one he took. The Iraqi army, like that of the Soviet Union on which it was modelled, operated with a very rigid command and control, and with very few possibilities for local initiative on the ground. The irregular forces, however, clearly operated independently and not under the control of the army. This they did with great tenacity and – it should be said – bravery, if not with great military wisdom. Nevertheless, by their operational and tactical independence they were able to shake the Americans considerably for a while. The Pentagon did expect irregulars in Baghdad, but were surprised when these showed themselves in some strength in the south.[48] On the other hand, there being no real co-ordination behind their attacks, these diminished in importance. In the end they degenerated into mere suicide attacks, at times dangerous and very scary for the American soldiers involved, but no real threat to the success of the campaign.

Observations

No analysis of the Iraq War would be complete without looking at the implications it has for warfare in general. The American defence force has indeed immediately after the cessation of hostilities appointed Admiral Edward Giambastiani and his staff at the Joint Forces Command to investigate the lessons of the war.[49] This is probably too early to establish credibly what these lessons are. One

[48] John H. Cushman jr. & Thom Shanker: "A nation at war: combat technology" (*The New York Times*, 10.4.2003).
[49] Robert Schlesinger: "Pentagon aims to implement war lessons quickly" (*The Boston Globe*, 26.4.2003); Michael P. Noonan: "The military lessons of Operation Iraqi Freedom" (*Foreign*

can, however, discuss some of the military developments brought to the fore and make some observations about what the military implications of the war could be.

The *first* is in connection with the very topical question of who was right: Secretary Donald Rumsfeld or the Generals? It will be recalled that Rumsfeld sent the campaign plan, drawn up by the Generals, five times back to them before he approved it. At the time, he was embroiled in a bitter fight with the uniforms about his wish for a downsized, light and agile force which would to a large extent depend on high technology, precision weapons and air support. The officers wanted to retain the heavy weapons and formations, and therefore wanted to send in a overwhelming force with several armoured and mechanised divisions.

So, who won? Well, certainly vice president Dick Cheney came out on the side of his colleague. On the day of Baghdad's collapse, he said the victory was "proof positive of the success of our efforts to transform the military", and "[w]ith less than half of the ground forces and two thirds of the air assets used 12 years ago in Desert Storm, Secretary Rumsfeld and General Franks have achieved a far more difficult objective."[50]

That simple it is not. It is true that mass often in history has not been the decisive factor. To cite a slightly absurd example, to have sent in an army of a million untrained soldiers and armed only with slingshots into Iraq, would not have brought victory. The decisive factor, more often than not, is not numbers, but *firepower* and *mobility*. And this, of course, is very much connected to technology, precision weapons, and the like. In other words, a smallish force, extremely mobile, highly trained and well-led, equipped with precision weapons with devastating power, would easily overcome a large, unwieldy, badly led, immobile force equipped with obsolete and inaccurate weapons.

Nevertheless, this is so only up to a point which is, it is true, difficult to pin down exactly. To be slightly absurd again, one cannot invade a country as large as Iraq with only a platoon of soldiers, however devastating their weapons, however mobile and well-led they may be, and however incompetent the enemy may be. There has to be enough troops to physically occupy a large territory and guard the

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Policy Research Institute, E-Notes), at www.fpri.org/enotes/20030501.military.noonan.militarylessonsiraqifreedom.html.

[50] Toby Harnden: " 'Fight light, fight fast' theory advances" (*The Telegraph*, 14.4.2003).

lines of communication. Mass is by far not everything, but it is not nothing either. A battle between two forces, equally well equipped, trained and led, would invariably be won by the numerically stronger one, especially if the difference is substantial.

To bring the point home: Rumsfeld and the Generals were both right and wrong. Rumsfeld probably expected too much of the new weapons. These might be a force multiplier of enormous value, but in the end you still need enough boots on the ground. At the same time, you do not need as many boots as you did even a few years ago. In this case, the force of three strengthened US divisions, supported by Air Force, Navy and Marine aircraft, proved to be up to the task of defeating the Iraqi army rather comfortably. But the invasion force was, at times, thinly spread. Had the Iraqis been a less incompetent enemy, the Americans could have been in great trouble – as they got into after the war, when some Iraqis took their recourse to guerrilla tactics. The trick is not to let a power struggle, like the one between Rumsfeld and the Generals, influence the matter. The Americans were lucky that the compromise finally reached were just about right for the conventional part of the conflict. It could easily have been otherwise.

Part of this debate was also about the future of tanks. Rumsfeld placed considerably less value on these primordial, heavily armoured and armed, but unwieldy, fuel-guzzling behemoths than the Generals. And seeing that it is about time to start thinking about a successor to the Abrams, which was conceived already in the seventies, there was pressure to phase main battle tanks out and replace them with a faster, lighter armoured and armed vehicle, possibly even wheeled instead of tracked.

The debate, it seems, has more or less been won by the tank enthusiasts. The Abrams had an excellent record in Iraq. According to one source, basing its information on "photographic and written reports by open-source media" a grand total of only twelve were immobilised or destroyed by the Iraqis.[51] Another source, attesting to the unbelievable toughness of the Abrams, says that altogether 151 tanks were hit. Most were repaired and continued the fight. Three took catastrophic hits by Russian-supplied AT-14 anti-tank missiles, while 12 others were so badly damaged they ended up in the junkyard.[52] In one case, a Marine Abrams was found with six

[51] "Documented coalition losses in the II Persian Gulf War", at orbat.com/site/agtwopen/iraq-_equipment_losses.html.

[52] Col John Hackworth at www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView?file=Hackworth_052103.htm.

dents made by RPG rounds, three of which had scorch marks, indicating that the rounds had exploded. The tank remained operational.[53]

Nevertheless, the way in which the tanks enabled the 3rd Infantry as well as the 1st Marines to punch through all the way to Baghdad, and that with unprecedented speed, augurs well for the retaining of tanks in the US army and Marine force. Also, after the debacle of Mogadishu in 1993, the US Army started experimenting with armour in urban warfare, and implemented the lessons for the first time in Iraq. Abrams and Bradleys were very much instrumental in reducing Iraqi resistance in several towns and cities, including Baghdad. The toughness and indestructibleness of the Abrams especially seem to have been the key here, although, as elsewhere, good co-operation with infantry remained a prerequisite for success. In fact, the official report of the 3rd Infantry categorically states: "This war was won in large measure because the enemy could not achieve effects against our armored fighting vehicles. … US armored combat systems enabled the division to close with and destroy heavily armored and fanatically determined enemy forces with impunity, often within urban terrain."[54] Rumsfeld, it now seems, will go with some sort of heavy armour for the future.[55]

Elsewhere in the world the outcome of this debate was being watched with great interest. In Germany, where the *Bundeswehr* faces dramatic cutbacks, including the decimation of their panzer force, General Gert Gudera, army chief of staff, opined that tanks still have a future. The army, he said, continues to require a "mechanised backbone" suited to "fighting with combined arms."[56]

The *second* aspect is not so much a new one, as an age-old lesson which was repeated for the umpteenth time. Deception of the enemy is one of the most important goals an operational or strategic commander has to aspire to. This enabled the Allies in World War II, for instance, to draw away the bulk of the German forces defending France in the summer of 1944 away from the intended point of invasion

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[53] Patrick O'Connor: "Revolutionary tank tactics alter Iraqi conflict, future of urban warfare" (*The Hill*, 21.5.2003), at www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2003/030521-tank-tactics01.htm.

[54] Third Infantry Division (mechanized) after action report, p. 22, at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf.

[55] Michael A. Lindenberger: "War may affect decision over replacing current tanks" (*The Courier-Journal*, 7.4.2003); Lance Gay: "Battle tank still rolling" (*Scripps Howard News Service*, 17.4.2003). Cf. also Anthony Cordesman: *The "instant" lessons" of the Iraq war: main report, eighth working draft, May 14, 2003*, pp. 190-191, at www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf.

[56] "Wie die US-Armee in die Irak-Krieg triumphierte" (*Der Spiegel*, 14.4.2003).

in Normandy to the Pas de Calais, where they wanted the Germans to believe that the invasion would come.[57] By deceiving Saddam Hussein as to the direction from whence the main offensive would come, winning the war was made so much easier.

In the *third* place – and this is also not new – speed remains one of the most cardinal attributes a commander should aspire to. All great captains, from Alexander the Great to Frederick the Great and Napoleon, lay great emphasis on speed. And in modern times, Colonel General Heinz Guderian, father of the *Blitzkrieg*, already before the Second World War wrote in a German military journal, "Everything is therefore dependent on this: to be able to move faster than has hitherto been done: to keep moving despite the enemy's defensive fire and thus to make it harder for him to build up fresh defensive positions: and finally to carry the attack deep into the enemy's defences."[58] And the legendary Desert Fox himself, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, wrote during the war, "Speed of movement and the organisational cohesion of one's own forces are decisive factors and require particular attention. Any sign of dislocation must be dealt with as quickly as possible …"[59] The Iraq war once again proves this principle superbly.

Fourthly, speed still has its limits – for the time being, anyway. As long as soldiers are human beings who get tired, as long as their equipment wear out, as long as vehicles need to be serviced and refuelled, as long as extreme weather conditions cannot as a matter of course be mastered, so long speed can be kept up only for a certain time, after which a pause becomes necessary. This was proved by the fact that the fastest contested advance in all of history ran out of steam after three days – three days in which there was no time to sleep, vehicles broke down and had to be left behind, food, ammunition and fuel ran out. Besides, just then a furious sand storm broke out. And although the air campaign was not affected, the ground forces were completely immobilised until it was over. In other words, although the envelope may now be pushed further than before, there are still limits. As technology progresses, one supposes, the envelope will be pushed ever further. But even then, certain limits will remain.

Speed is, therefore, decisively important, but not just in the pure physical sense. It remains important also in the realm of *reaction* to events, of *decision-*

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[57] David Fraser: *Knight's cross. A life of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel* (London, HarpersCollins, 1994), pp. 491-492.
[58] Heinz Guderian: *Panzer leader* (London, Michael Joseph, 1952), p. 40.
[59] Erwin Rommel: "Rules of desert warfare" in B.H. Liddell Hart (ed.): *The Rommel papers* (New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co.,1953), p. 200.

making. And what is here supremely important, is information warfare. A commander simply has to know what is happening on the battlefield faster and more comprehensively than the enemy. We are, in other words, talking about the digitalisation of the battlefield to enable a commander to know, through GPS, exactly where all his units are; to know, through unmanned aerial vehicles, exactly where the enemy are and in what state they are; and to be able to communicate instantly and securely with his subordinate commanders.

Number *five*: If a campaign is to be successfully fought, the teamwork between different arms – armour, infantry and artillery, ground and air forces – becomes more important than ever. On the one hand, it is true that the destructive power of modern weapons is greater than ever before. But this means nothing if that power cannot accurately be brought to bear on the enemy, or – even worse – it is brought to bear on you own forces, which is known as friendly fire. The benefits of close co-operation have grown considerably, but the disadvantages of this co-operation breaking down (as it will inevitably from time to time) also.

The *sixth* conclusion is this: For the first time, the Americans practised a true decentralisation of command like the Germans have done for considerably more than a century. The Germans call this *Auftragstaktik*. Robert Leonhard summarises the essence of this, saying that it "describes a method of command in which the commander (company, division, army group, etc.) communicates his intent with regard to the enemy as well as the mission of the friendly unit involved. He adds what details are absolutely necessary to facilitate the co-ordinated actions of his subordinates, but he refrains from telling them how to go about accomplishing the task. Rather, he lets them use their expertise, their more intimate knowledge of their own men and equipment, and their greater familiarity with the terrain to develop their own methods. Their only constraint is that they must stay within the commander's intent." In other words, a rigid central control is out. This is explained elsewhere through an analogy: "Basically, the idea is that an attack in war should follow the pattern of flowing water. As water proceeds downhill, it naturally avoids strong surfaces. Instead, it flows about seeking weak points and gaps through which the water begins to trickle. When such gaps are found, the whole body of water rush toward it, speeds through it, and then expands on the other side."[60] In other words, the commander should let the water find the weak spots without a rigid control, the way the Russians traditionally fight.

[60] Leonhard: *The art of maneuver warfare*, pp. 113, 50.

Indeed, Sun Tzu says an army "may be likened to water, for just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army should avoid strength and strike weakness. And as water shapes its flow in accordance with the ground, so an army manages its victory in accordance with the situation of the enemy."[61]

It is, therefore, striking to read in an informed American news magazine that "[t]he American war plan … is meant to be fluid. 'Like water,' said one senior military official, who described a relentless wave that flows around all obstacles in its path to inexorably drown Saddam in his hole."[62] A week later, the same magazine reported: "Franks' ground commanders were given extraordinary latitude to make their own decisions. Invasions have historically been highly synchronized and orchestrated affairs. The fabled 'left hook' in Operation Desert Storm to liberate Kuwait in 1991 was actually a ponderous advance, moving at the speed of a bicycle (less than 10 mph [16 km/h]) on average. A better model for Operation Iraqi Freedom was the German *Blitzkrieg* across northern France in 1940. The Panzer divisions were not told to march 25 miles and stop for the night, like armies of old. They were simply commanded to head west until they reached the sea. By the same token, the Third Infantry Division and the I Marine Expeditionary Force were told, in effect, to head for Baghdad and get there as fast as possible, any way they could."[63]

Yet another aspect, number *seven*, is a direct result of the technological advances in precision weapons. Comparatively few people died in this war. On the coalition side 105 American and 30 British soldiers were killed. There were 11 Americans missing, 399 wounded and 7 were taken prisoner by the Iraqis. The Brits lost 74 dead and wounded. On the other side, exact figures do not exist and will probably never be compiled. According to authoritative estimates, 2 320 Iraqi soldiers died in combat, while 9 000 were taken prisoner by the coalition forces. Among the Iraqi civilians, about 1 400 died, 5 103 were wounded or injured.[64]

As wars generally go, this is a very low number. In World War I, about 8 million soldiers died. But as material for comparison this is worthless, because that war lasted for four years and the Iraqi War only three weeks. However, even during the German invasion of France in 1940, which lasted about six weeks, the Germans

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[61] Sun Tzu: *The art of war*, p. 33 (ch. 6).
[62] Kavin Peraino & Evan Thomas: "The grunts' war" (*Newsweek*, 14.4.2003).
[63] Evan Thomas and Martha Brant: "The secret war" (*Newsweek*, 21.4.2003).
[64] "Counting the cost" (*The Guardian*, 12.4.2003).

lost a full 27 074 soldiers killed, 111 034 wounded and 18 384 missing. French losses are estimated to be in the region of 90 000 dead, 200 000 wounded and 1,9 million in prisoners and missing. British total casualties were 68 111, those of Belgium 23 350 and of the Dutch 9 779.[65]

The low casualties, certainly among the Americans, was – among other things – the result of the body armour worn by all soldiers in the field. The vast majority of the wounded were injured in the limbs, not the torso, suggesting that the armour did what was hoped of it.[66]

The last observation, number *eight*, is a caution: When looking at the Iraq War, one should, of course, avoid the pitfall of necessarily extrapolating the conclusions of this particular war to warfare in general. One always has to take the unique features of each war into account. Otherwise one would, as frequently happened in the past, prepare to fight the last war, instead of the next one.

This was probably the most "pure" *Blitzkrieg* campaign ever. All the elements of the Iraqi campaign – a blistering pace, made possible by mechanisation, without worrying too much about your flanks, supported by large-scale air attacks, everything being aimed at the demoralisation and paralysis of the enemy – were also present in General Heinz Guderian's dash from the Meuse to the English Channel in May 1940 and the Israeli march in the Sinai to the Suez Canal in June 1967. However, the instruments (tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, artillery, aircraft and ammunition) were a quantum leap ahead of those of the forties and sixties.

General Ewald von Kleist's *Panzergruppe*, of which Guderian's panzer corps was a part, represented only a small portion of the German forces invading the Netherlands, Belgium and France. The rest consisted largely of infantry divisions, marching mostly on foot and horse-drawn cart, and with a resultant slow pace. In other words, the mechanised forces continually lost touch with the infantry who were necessary to mop up the pockets of resistance which the tanks had by-passed. Also, their vehicles were not by far as robust as the present ones. All of this meant that Guderian's instruments were barely able to do what he wanted them to do.

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[65] Alistair Horne: *To lose a battle. France 1940* (London, Macmillan, 1969), pp. 509-510.
[66] David Brown: "US troops' injuries in Iraq showed body armor's value" (*Washington Post*, 4.5.2003).

In 1967, the Israelis were much better off, their tanks being able to move rapidly without too many breaking down, and the infantry in tracked vehicles, and therefore able to keep up with the spear-points. Nevertheless, also in this case, the instruments were not yet 100%. That point will, of course, probably never be reached. And yet the US weapons systems came to as near to perfect as one could humanly expect. The only real problem was the enormous logistic apparatus needed to support the advancing armoured columns. Especially the Abrams main battle tank is notorious for the huge amounts of fuel it needs. While this campaign conclusively proved that the tank is still – and for the foreseeable future will remain – the king of the battlefield, the sustainability of an advance will be dramatically improved if the vehicles need less logistical support.

However that may be, the point is that a *Blitzkrieg* campaign like this would not necessarily succeed in all circumstances. That is why we wrote a few paragraphs above that the particular circumstances of this specific war should be taken into account and that the war should not be extrapolated to cover all wars. For a *Blitzkrieg* to succeed, it has to meet certain conditions. For instance, the terrain has to be right; it will be much more difficult, of not impossible, in jungle or mountains. Command of the air is a prerequisite. And, perhaps most importantly, the enemy has to be incompetent. This is, after all, what happened in 1940, 1941 and again in 1967. This is what happened again in Iraq in 2003. The fact is that the Iraqis on all levels showed a level of incompetence far beyond anything most observers expected before the war started.

The question has to be asked: Would Rumsfeld's insistence on a lighter, more agile force and speed have worked in adverse circumstances? Against a well-prepared, well-trained, well-equipped and well-led enemy who, let's say, aggressively challenged the American command of the air, and who did not lose their heads when the Americans penetrated fast and deep into their country, but resolutely attacked their lines of communication?

After all, the Germans did try a repeat of their early *Blitzkrieg* successes in June 1941, when they invaded the Soviet Union. In spite of dramatic early successes, they ultimately failed, because Russia was, simply put, too large, its economic base too big and robust, and the fighting spirit of its people too implacable for the Germans to succeed.[67] They tried it again in December 1944, when they

[67] Cf. Paul Carell: *Unternehmen Barbarossa. Der Marsch nach Russland* (Frankfurt, Ullstein, 1963).

surprised the Americans in the Ardennes offensive. During the first days, with heavy fog preventing the US Army Air Force from taking to the skies, and with the initial momentum behind them, they penetrated some tens of kilometres. But the Americans were a totally different proposition from the French in 1940 and the Russians in 1941, and fought back with a tenacity that surprised even themselves. Also, after the fog lifted, their planes swooped down in swarms on anything German that looked like moving, and had a field day, destroying thousands of tanks and other vehicles, making a further advance impossible.[68] Under these circumstances, *Blitzkrieg* did not work. Nor would it under any circumstances that did not meet the conditions spelt out above.

The conclusion is, therefore, simple: Yes, speed and velocity remain important assets in any theatre of operations, especially if this can be combined with precision weapons and air support. But in the face of a really competent enemy one would, however, have to think of alternatives. A repeat of the dash to Baghdad would, in all probability, not work.

As Loren Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute in the US, says, "The lessons that we derive from this campaign depend upon how closely we think Saddam's Iraq resembles our future enemies. This campaign plan will work real well if we fight another corrupt dictator with no air force, but if we face a technologically proficient adversary, we'll be real sorry we took some of these chances. Ever since the collapse of communism, the US has faced a series if incompetent adversaries who provide no serious test of our war-fighting skills. Iraq was less capable than the Soviets, the Serbs were less capable than Iraq and the Taliban was less capable than the Serbs."[69]

A similar conclusion, though more to the point, was reached by Major General Julian Thompson, who commanded the British ground forces in the Falklands War. He says straight out: "The Iraqi army was lamentable. … The poor quality of their troops and ubiquitous US air power forced the Iraqis to fight an upside-down war. There was no resolute defence of a series of key areas the US could not afford to bypass, bridges and other river crossings. There was no use of obstacles to slow down the advance. Not one key bridge was blown, although several were prepared for demolition. If the Iraqis had fought in a way that forced the US to stop and launch a series of set-piece attacks, American vehicles would

[68] Cf. Charles B. MacDonald: *The battle of the Bulge* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984).
[69] Toby Harnden: " 'Fight light, fight fast' theory advances" (*The Telegraph*, 14.4.2003).

have folded back on the main supply routes, giving the militia the opportunity to chop 'the snake' while its head was engaged with regular forces. As most of the Iraqi army ran away, the militias were left both to delay the advance and attack the supply lines." Thompson concluded: "Would Rumsfeld's doctrine work against a first-class enemy? He might argue that there are none left fitting that description. But the North Koreans and Chinese, for example, while not in the same technological league as the Americans, might give them a harder fight than the Iraqis – especially if they could keep their air forces operational."[70]

And the Israeli Colonel (ret.) Gal Luft, who commanded Israeli forces in the West Bank during the nineties, said the key to the US' success, besides "the superb performance of US forces", was "the poor preparedness and lack of organization of the Iraqis."[71]

One question still remains unanswered. What does all of this mean for the South African National Defence Force? No doubt more competent South African military observers will deal with this more comprehensively, but perhaps one may be permitted a few short, preliminary ideas:

- Our military leaders will have to do more to revamp the SANDF. To put it bluntly, the ordinary soldiers are getting too old and fat. A journalist who observed exercises of members of 1 Parachute Battalion – supposed to be one of the elite units in the Army – with their French counterparts, remarked on the fitness and professionalism which the Frenchmen exuded, compared with the somewhat jaded flabbiness of the South Africans.[72] If anything stood out from the Iraqi War on grassroots level, it was the endurance expected from the GIs and Grunts.
- At the same time, the war will have to be studied in great detail so that the correct strategic, operational and tactical deductions may be drawn, both for the benefit of the high-level planners and for the training of officers.
- It is also clear that digitalisation will be the name of the game in the future. If the SANDF wants to keep up with the technological advances of modern war, if it wants to stand a chance on a modern battlefield, it will

[70] Julian Thompson: "Air power was devastating and Iraqi forces lamentable" (*The Observer*, 13.4.2003).
[71] Thomas E. Ricks: "What counted: people, plan, inept enemy" (*Washington Post*, 10.4.2003). Cf. also commentary "War and peace: triumph on the battlefield (*The New York Times*, 12.4.2003).
[72] Erika Gibson: "SA Weermag nie op Eerstewêreld-vlak" (*Die Burger*, 15.4.2003).

have to follow the American example. We are, of course, fairly far advanced already. One is told that the South African company CyberSim has not only developed computer programmes for the digitalisation of the battlefield (and civil disaster scenarios), but that they are in certain respects even in front of the Americans. However, the Americans are further advanced in the practical application. This aspect will have to pursued in South Africa with great vigour.

- The Defence Force will have to look again at certain weapons systems. In the light of the crucial role played by tanks in Iraq, it would be a momentous mistake to phase out tanks in this country, as some high-level planners wanted to do a few years back. The upgrading of some Olifant mk 1A tanks to mk 1B are proceeding, but it is an open question whether enough are involved. South Africa probably needs enough tanks to put at least a mechanised infantry division – with four or five tank battalions – in the field, should the need arise. At present there is no chance of that. Ideally, the Olifant should be replaced with modern tanks like the Challenger 2 or the German Leopard 2, but this is probably not financially feasible. As even the Olifant mk 1B would be fairly vulnerable on a modern battlefield where tanks like the Abrams, Challenger 2, Leopard 2, the French Leclerc or the Russian T-80 are involved, the SANDF should probably concentrate only on the local region, where the most advanced tanks are Russian T-55s. Also, the politicians would be wise not to declare war on the Americans!
- Also, the SANDF needs a better strategic airlift and sealift capacity. As things stand now, it would be extremely difficult to transport Ratel infantry fighting vehicles or Rooikat armoured cars (let alone tanks) to – say – the DRC for participation in peacekeeping or peace enforcement. More transport aircraft (it has been reported that the SAAF has evinced interest in the new Airbus A400M[73]) is a must, as is the case with specialised Landing Platform Docks.
- The Air Force will have to follow the American military debates about the future of their helicopter gunships and the tactics governing the use of these weapons closely. The American Apaches were badly mauled when they tried to attack the Republican Guard Medina Division. According to reports, this was because they tried to do too much by themselves. When, later on, other gunships were used, it was in co-operation with fixed-wing fighter-bombers and ground artillery. Obviously, attack helicopters are

[73] News report by AFP, 27.5.2003, as sent out to the media.

more vulnerable than previously thought. In its official report, the 3rd Infantry Division stated that deep attack operations for attack helicopters, which still form the current doctrine, are "not the best use for the division attack helicopter battalion." Instead, this battalion "is best employed in conducting shaping operations between the division co-ordinated fire line and the division forward boundary."[74] In other words, it is recommended that attack helicopters not be used without direct support from other arms in the air and on the ground.

- The SANDF will furthermore have to take cognisance of the US military's reliance on its Reserve Force and National Guard. In total, 10 686 members of the Army Reserve were committed to the operation, as well as 8 866 in the Army National Guard, 2 056 in the Navy Reserve, 9 051 in the Marine Corps Reserve, 2 084 in the Air Force Reserve, and 7 207 in the Air National Guard. This translated to 40 400 reservists out of a total of 423 988 military personnel committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, or 9,5%.[75] If even the greatest military power on earth places that much reliance on its reserves, it clearly shows that a much smaller country like South Africa will have to husband its Reserve Force very carefully indeed. Given that the Reserve Force has been allowed to dwindle to the point of virtual extinction, this is an acute problem that will have to be addressed urgently.
- Finally, from a completely different angle, the problems created by the Iraqi militia in the Americans' rear areas is relevant. The South African government has – mainly for political reasons – taken a decision to phase out the commandos. Now although the main operational activity of the commandos in recent years was to assist the Police in anti-crime operations, and the SANDF wants to relinquish this task, this was not the original idea behind this force. Originally it was to have a rear area defence force. In the light of what happened in Iraq one should not underestimate the value of such a rear area force. The Iraqi militia failed, inter alia, because they were badly trained, led and equipped. Think what a well prepared area defence force could be capable of. Anthony Cordesman makes the point that, had the Iraqis prepared their militia better, they would have been able to "conduct far more successful asymmetric

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[74] Third Infantry Division (mechanized) after action report, p. 36, at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf.

[75] Cited in Anthony Cordesman: *The "instant" lessons" of the Iraq war: main report, eighth working draft, May 14, 2003*, pp. 137-138, at www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf.

fighting."[76] Obviously, the chance of South Africa being invaded is very small indeed. But if one takes this as your only point of departure, if the whole idea of deterrence, an insurance, is not heeded, then one could just as soon abolish the entire SANDF. The Iraqi war, therefore, shows that South Africa should not relinquish the principle of rear area defence units, whatever one may choose to call them.

Propaganda

The Iraq War was a conflict in which a most interesting experiment was made, namely to "embed" journalists with certain units. The idea was that these journalists would move and live with their unit, get to know the officers and soldiers, and report on whatever it was that they were doing, thinking and feeling.[77] As one officer explained to the military historian Rick Atkinson, writing for the *Washington Post*: "Our attitude is that information should be released and that there should be a good reason for not releasing it rather than that it should be suppressed until someone finds a good reason for letting it out."[78]

Did it succeed? Well, it is a fact that the transcripts of the official daily media conferences at the HQ of CENTCOM in Qatar, led by Brigadier General Vincent Brooks,[79] turned out to be practically useless as a historical source for this description and analysis of the war. The conferences consisted chiefly of propaganda or non-committal utterances, and one strongly gets the impression that Brooks and his fellow spokesmen tried to divulge as little as possible. The reports by the embedded journalists, however, were loaded with highly readable and very useful material. It seems that no historian of the war will be able to write about events without building on these reports. Indeed, this writer has depended on these sources to a very large extent.

The reporters were given a rudimentary military training beforehand, so that they more or less knew what to do in certain circumstances and to recognise things when they saw it. The Pentagon forbade reports of live action without the permission of the unit CO. There would also be strict prohibitions on the reporting of future operations or postponed or cancelled operations. The date, time and place

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[76] Anthony Cordesman: *The "instant" lessons" of the Iraq war: main report, eighth working draft, May 14, 2003*, p. 16, at www.csis.org/features/iraq_instantlessons.pdf.
[77] Cf. Josh Getlin: "Public would get a closer look at war" (*Los Angeles Times*, 11.3.2003).
[78] Rick Atkinson: *In the company of soldiers* (New York, Henry Holt, 2004), p. 16.
[79] They are all at www.centcom.mil/operations/Iraqi%20Freedom/iraqifreedom.asp.

of military action observed, as well as the outcomes of mission results, could only be described in general terms,[80] obviously to keep the enemy from getting good intelligence on the coalition forces.

The idea of letting journalists accompanying military forces report on what they see is not new. In the past, these reporters, however, largely became an extension of the home propaganda effort, and the journalists were expected to disseminate what the authorities wanted as part of their patriotic duty to their country. The problem was that societies, especially during the sixties in the West, became more critical of their governments. In the Vietnam War this developed into a highly critical attitude about the war effort as such. The media reflected this, and the media and the government started diverging. This resulted in a highly tense relationship between the media and the military. During Gulf I this eased somewhat, when the most important commanders, such as General Norman Schwarzkopf, saw the importance of being as honest as possible to the media as a method to induce public support for the war effort.[81] This was now taken a step forward.

The embedding had advantages as well as disadvantages. One reporter, David Zucchino of the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote a long and thoughtful piece about his experiences,[82] saying that the journalists could be "bent and manipulated by commander and reporter, often to the benefit of neither. It can also provide an exhilarating, if terrifying, window on the unscripted world of men under stress and fire." During seven weeks, he writes, "I slept in fighting holes and armored vehicles, on a rooftop, a garage floor and in lumbering troop trucks. For days at a time, I didn't sleep. I ate with the troops, choking down processed meals of 'meat, chunked and formed' that came out of plastic brown bags. I rode with them in loud, claustrophobic and disorienting Bradley fighting vehicles. I complained with them about the choking dust, the lack of water, our foul-smelling bodies and our scaly, rotting feet. … I saw what the soldiers saw. And, like most of them, I emerged filthy, exhausted and aware of what Winston Churchill meant when he said that 'nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without effect'."

The most important, however, was that "I wrote stories I could not have produced had I not been embedded – on the pivotal battle for Baghdad; the

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[80] Ralph Blumental & Jim Rutenberg: "Journalists are assigned to accompany US troops" (*The New York Times*, 18.2.2003).
[81] Cf. Leopold Scholtz: "The media and the military – allies or adversaries" (*Scientia Militaria*, 28(2), 1998).
[82] David Zucchino: "The war, up close and very personal" (*Los Angeles Times*, 3.5.2003).

performance of US soldiers in combat; the crass opulence of Hussein's palaces; US airstrikes on an office tower in central Baghdad …" Yet, he concedes, "that same access could be suffocating and blinding. Often I was too close or confined to comprehend the war's broad sweep. I could not interview survivors of Iraqi civilians killed by US soldiers or speak to Iraqi fighters trying to kill Americans. I was not present when Americans died at the hands of fellow soldiers in what the military calls 'frat', for fratricide. I had no idea what ordinary Iraqis were experiencing. I was ignorant of Iraqi government decisions and US command strategy."

The journalist's independence, his/her most prized possession, became compromised: "Embedded reporters were entirely dependent on the military for food, water, power and transportation. And ultimately, we depended on them for something more fundamental: access. We were placed in a potentially compromised position long before the fighting began, and we knew it. … For journalists, the greatest enemy was ourselves – our ingrained human tendency to identify with those beside us. Bombarded with drama and emotions, it was impossible to step back, or to report every story with absolute detachment. We didn't just cover the war – we were part of it."

Zucchini concludes: "Reports from embedded reporters did not dominate newspaper war coverage. They were part of it, giving an intimate look at the 250 000 US troops in the Gulf. But the raw reporting emerging from embeds was weighed and balanced by editors against information from other reporters spread far and wide. In that context, embedding provided a valuable contribution."

Another famous reporter, Rick Atkinson, a reporter veteran from Gulf I – he later brought out an excellent book about that war – wrote, "In 20 years of writing about the military – including two previous stints as an embedded reporter, in Bosnia and Somalia – I have never seen a more intimate arrangement between journalists and soldiers. In the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a handful of reporters accompanied military units. Their copy, videotapes and recordings were 'pooled' and made available to all journalists in the theater, but in many cases they were kept at arm's length, subject to censorship, and beset with enormous logistical and communications difficulties. … In the recent war, censorship was essentially self-regulated and mostly limited to operational details that would help the Iraqis figure out the Americans' next move."

His final conclusion: "The US military in general, and the US army in particular, took a calculated risk in permitting more than 600 journalists to see the

war in ways not possible for a generation. They clearly believed they had a compelling story to share with the American public, which is the ultimate proprietor of that Army. It was a fair gamble, for both sides."[83]

William M. Arkin, a military analyst, after studying the reports from embedded journalists with the 3rd Infantry, came to a similar conclusion. "These firsthand reports," he writes, "will one day be a treasure trove for historians. And they give the lie to the notion that the embeds were censored or that they lost objectivity by getting too close to individual soldiers and units." Then he makes an important observation: "What is clear, however, is that the embedded journalists did not shy away from reporting things that the US military was doing its best to ignore. Most notably, Iraqi casualties. Fearful of public reaction, senior US officials in the region and in Washington steadfastly refused to discuss how many Iraqi soldiers and others were dying as a result of the coalition's overwhelming firepower. Not so the embeds."

In general it is clear that the practice of embedding journalists with military units in wartime was, on balance, a success. In its official report, the 3rd Infantry calls it "an unqualified success."[84] Reporters did find it difficult to retain their independence from people they came to know so well, and on whom they became so dependent. But by and large they realised the pitfalls themselves and worked hard to keep their distance and objectivity. From a journalistic point of view (and do not forget that the author of this analysis is a journalist as well as a military historian!) it had more positive than negative points. It is true that the individual reporters described only what they saw, and that was like looking through a keyhole. But put together, and with editing and cross-checking by those back home, it enabled the public to a much larger extent than ever before to get a birds-eye view of what was going on in the war zone.

This was undoubtedly important, not only for the public, but also for the governments. No government in a modern democracy can properly fight a war where soldiers may die if the public is overwhelmingly against it. (That is to say, no government who wants to survive the next election in power!) Given the very critical view electorates nowadays take of those who govern them, giving out official propaganda will not do the trick, simply because it will not have the

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[83] Mary Beth Sheridan, Rick Atkinson et al: "Embedded in Iraq: was it worth it?" (*Washington Post*, 4.5.2003).

[84] Third Infantry (mechanized) after action report, p. 44, at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2003/3id-aar-jul03.pdf.

necessary credibility. Chances are good that people will simply disbelieve what they are told. And if one looks at the propaganda spewed by officers at the official briefing sessions in Qatar, one can see why.

Allowing the independent media to be embedded may have been an attempt to co-opt them in a subtle state propaganda campaign. If so, it failed, because the journalists, by and large, kept their professionalism and reported mostly objectively, including writing or saying things that were unflattering to their hosts. But in the larger scheme of things, this helped the war effort among the public, simply because their opinions were formed by information from credible sources – the independent media. In this respect, *independence* and *credibility* were two sides of the same coin.

Illustrating this point beautifully, there was one instance in which the US military did manipulate the media, and had their own credibility seriously tarnished in the process. The raid by US Special Forces to rescue private Jessica Lynch in Nassiriya was announced with a great hullabaloo as a great and heroic feat. TV images were even sent out, and millions of people saw it. After the war, a BBC investigation concluded that the raid was launched *after* all Iraqi forces had left the hospital where Lynch was kept, that she was not, as alleged, maltreated by her captors at all, and that she was not stabbed or shot.[85] Having said all that, embedding is a practice the South African government may also favourably consider when sending SANDF military personnel to other parts of the world, such as peace-keeping or peace-enforcing operations in Burundi or the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Conclusion

Any strategic evaluation of the war will have to revolve around two questions. Firstly, did the coalition succeed in its war aims? And second, is the world a more peaceful and stable place because of the war? Obviously, some time will have to elapse before these questions can authoritatively be answered, and any attempt to do so here will have to be very preliminary indeed.

It was the Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz who coined the phrase that war is a continuation of policy by other means. What does this mean? Clausewitz continually emphasises that the true nature of war is its political identity.

[85] Cf. news/bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/correspondent/3028585.stm.

It is the government (policy) who decides what it wants to achieve; it uses war as an instrument to achieve that. War therefore is "an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." War in itself does not suspend the political intercourse between states or change its nature into something completely different. It remains politics. In a telling expression, he asks, "[i]s war not just another expression of their [people's and governments'] thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar, indeed, may be its own, but not its logic."

If this is so, Clausewitz continues – and this is of fundamental importance for this analysis – "then war cannot be divorced from political life; and whenever this occurs in our think about war … we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense."[86] It is therefore quite clear that one cannot judge a military campaign or war purely on the military level, as a tactical or operational act. Battles and campaigns have to be judged in a political context. In other words, they have to be judged according to the question to what extent they facilitate the success of the political war aim.

Liddell Hart also makes an important point, which follows logically from Clausewitz' general observation. "Victory in the true sense," he writes, "implies that the state of peace, and of one's people, is better after the war than before."[87] This may be a moral observation, but nevertheless true. War is, at best (even in this age of precision weapons), a bloody and dirty business which is much better suited to destruction than building and development. It is very often also in the victor's interest to aim for a better state after the war, if only to preserve or develop export markets for his own industries.

It is probably too early to tell whether the coalition succeeded in its war aims. Saddam's regime was toppled, but months after the fall of Baghdad, his supporters, allegedly together with a number of Muslim fundamentalists from elsewhere in the world, were still conducting a guerrilla war. This was severe enough to cause considerable headaches in Washington. At the time of writing it also was much too early to see whether Iraq would be democratised in the Western sense of the word, let alone whether this would have a domino effect on the rest of the Arab world.

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[86] Clausewitz: *On War* I/1, p. 75, and III/6, pp. 603-605.
[87] Liddell Hart: *Strategy – the indirect approach*, p. 370.

Now where does this all leave the world? That the American/British invasion of Iraq was a shining operational success, is a fact. But did the war leave the world a better place? Did the advantages of removing Saddam Hussein's undisputably barbaric regime outweigh the disadvantages? Did the war leave America in a better position for its self-proclaimed role as the protector of freedom and democracy world-wide?

Firstly, the fact that the purported Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, one of the most important reasons for going to war, had not been found several months after the shooting stopped, dented the coalition's credibility. Coalition leaders wriggled furiously to explain this. Tony Blair persisted that the weapons did exist and would be found.[88] Donald Rumsfeld thought that the weapons possibly had been destroyed before the war and they would not be found at all.[89] For his part, George Bush said that such weapons had indeed been found, and cited an alleged (empty) mobile laboratory.[90] The straightest answer was given by the CO of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Iraq, who bluntly said US intelligence was "simply wrong."[91]

Whatever the case, according to media exposés, the information gathered by intelligence services were later somewhat embellished to make a better political *casus belli*.[92] No wonder then, that Paul Wolfowitz, probably the strongest advocate of the war, downplayed the issue of weapons of mass destruction as a reason for going to war. "For bureaucratic reasons, we settled on one issue, weapons of mass destruction, because it was the one reason that everyone could agree on," he said.[93]

These words are very loaded indeed. What Wolfowitz is actually saying here, is that there was intense disagreement within the Bush Administration about the war, and that, for want of a better reason, the weapons was settled on as the only

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[88] Gaby Hinsliff et al: "Blair: I have secret proof of weapons" (*The Observer*, 1.6.2003).
[89] Karen DeYoung & Walter Pincus: "US hedges on finding Iraqi weapons" (*Washington Post*, 29.5.2003).
[90] Mike Allen: "Bush: 'we found' banned weapons" (*Washington Post*, 31.5.2003).
[91] Greg Miller: "Analysis of Iraqi weapons 'wrong' " (*Los Angeles Times*, 31.5.2003). Obviously, these weapons may be found after the writing of this piece. But the fact remains that – at least some weeks after the war – the US' credibility was badly dented.
[92] Peter Beaumont & Gaby Hinsliff: "When spies meet spin …" (*The Observer*, 1.6.2003); Jochen Bittner & Frank Drieschner: "Im Zweifel für den Krieg" (*Die Zeit*, 5.6.2003).
[93] Cf. Bill Sammon: "White House stands by banned-weapons war rationale" (*The Washington Times*, 30.5.2003).

thing everybody could agree upon. It did not mean that the weapons were the main reason for going to war at all.

In the second place, in 1987 the Irish-American historian Paul Kennedy published a book[94] in which he developed a theoretical model, explaining how great powers' rise and decline more or less followed their economic rise and decline (relative to other states' economic strength) by a few decades. These powers become strong economically first, he said, and developed political and military strength afterwards. To protect their newly found interests, they were then forced to divert too much of their economic strength into their military, becoming overstretched in the process ("imperial overstretch," he called it), and went into decline again. On the basis of this model, and writing before the end of the Cold War, he predicted that the US would, in time, just like all the previous examples, become overstretched and would, after a while, decline again.

Obviously, the end of the Cold War and the crumbling of the USSR made nonsense of these predictions, at any rate in the short term. The US remained the only superpower in the world, with an economy enormously strong, buttressed by an unprecedented economic boom during the nineties. However, it is not impossible that Kennedy may yet ultimately be proved right. With the war against terrorism after 9/11 and the war in Iraq, with various role-players putting pressure on the Bush Administration (unofficial as yet) to deal harshly with Iran, North Korea, Syria (Donald Rumsfeld's calls for China to be treated as a "strategic competitor" seems to have abated for the time being), the US may yet go into Kennedy's imperial overstretch.

Before the war, there was considerable pressure from Rumsfeld to downsize the US military, especially the army. As a journalist summarised these ideas, "[i]n this view, mass is no longer a strength on the battlefield, because it simply presents a larger target."[95] Rumsfeld had even floated the idea of cutting the army's combat units by 20% to pay for the new precision weapons.[96] No wonder people like him and Vice President Dick Cheney tried to make as much capital as possible out of the fact that the shining victory over the Iraqis was achieved with so few boots on the ground.

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[94] Paul Kennedy: *The rise and fall of the Great Powers. Eeconomic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, Random House, 1987).
[95] Thomas E. Ricks: "Rumsfeld stands tall after Iraq victory" (*Washington Post*, 20.4.2003).
[96] Seth Stern: "Military 'transformation' may not mean smaller forces" (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 7.5.2003).

Well, first of all, although there were enough troops to win the war, there clearly were not enough to win the peace. "American ground commanders who said the war plan provided too few troops were right for the wrong reasons," according to David K. Shipler, who observed the war first-hand. "There were enough soldiers during battle – but not enough afterward. There was plenty of firepower from air and armor but not enough visible power in the streets to create an impression of American control."[97] And closer to year's end, Senator Chuck Hagel (Republican, Nebraska), a Vietnam War veteran and member of the Foreign Relations Committee who had frequently visited Iraq, said, "[w]e so underestimated and underplanned and underthought about a post-Saddam Iraq that we've been woefully unprepared. Now we have a security problem. We have a reality problem. And we have a governance problem. … And time is not on our side."[98]

The well-known commentator Edward Luttwak – himself an ex-General – pointed to the fact that "[t]he support echelon is so large that out of the 133,000 American men and women in Iraq, no more than 56,000 are combat-trained troops available for security duties." In addition to this, "[e]ven the finest soldiers must sleep and eat. Thus the number of troops on patrol at any one time is no more than 28,000 — to oversee frontiers terrorists are trying to cross, to patrol rural terrain including vast oil fields, to control inter-city roads, and to protect American and coalition facilities. Even if so few could do so much, it still leaves the question of how to police the squares, streets and alleys of Baghdad, with its six million inhabitants, not to mention Mosul with 1.7 million, Kirkuk with 800,000, and Sunni towns like Falluja, with its quarter-million restive residents."[99]

If Clausewitz is correct that war is a continuation of politics by other means, the opposite must also be correct – politics is a continuation of war by other means. This implies that the war against the Saddam regime did not end when Baghdad fell. It continued, and to win this new war as efficiently as the old, other rules would apply – and it is this that the Americans apparently did not understand adequately. For months after the collapse of the Iraqi dictatorship, the ordinary Iraqis were still aching under electricity cuts, a shortage of water, no work, no income, no safety. And this part of the war was at least as important as the shooting part. But for this war there were simply not enough boots on the ground.

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[97] David K. Shipler: "When freedom leads to anarchy" (*The New York Times*, 18.4.2003).
[98] Robin Wright & Thomas E Ricks: "New urgency, new risks in Iraqification" (*Washington Post*, 14.11.2003).
[99] Edward N. Luttwak: "So few soldiers, so much to do" (*The New York Times*, 4.11.2003).

Apart from this, there are some critical shortages in the American military, such as members of the National Guard and reserves, refuelling tankers, transport helicopters, and cargo aircraft.[100] In other words, the US simply cannot afford to downsize their military to any real extent. On the contrary, they will come under great pressure to enlarge it, Rumsfeld's plans notwithstanding, especially because they cannot depend on a future enemy being just as incompetent as the Iraqis.

America's global obligations are huge and are growing. In an insightful article in *The Observer*, Thomas Withington[101], a defence analyst at King's College, London, wrote that there are still 98 000 US military personnel in Europe, a legacy of the Cold War. (These troops will, granted, to some extent be moved from Germany to some of the Central European countries, but this will not lessen the numbers.) There are 2 000 in Bosnia, 5 000 in Kosovo, 840 in Macedonia, 7 500 in Afghanistan, 18 000 in Japan, 20 000 in outlying Japanese islands, 37 000 in South Korea, 370 in Colombia and Honduras, 1 700 in Bermuda, Iceland and the Azores, plus up to four aircraft carrier battle groups in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and the Pacific. And then, of course, there is the tens of thousands of soldiers who will be necessary in Iraq for a considerable time.

Furthermore, given the fact that – just as in the eighties with president Ronald Reagan's enormous defence force – this can apparently only be financed through a growing budget deficit, the Americans may find that they are diverting too much of their wealth into the defence of their "empire" to keep up their economic strength. If that happens (and granted, this is only one possible scenario, by no means a foregone conclusion), Kennedy's predictions may, after all, come true. As Withington puts it, "[a]ny future US 'empire building' could be rendered unaffordable and Washington may wish to note those before them who stretched too far. History also shows that the war might be quick to fight, but the peace can take longer to flourish."[102]

Is the world now a safer place? It is to be doubted. The early indications in post-war Iraq was that the fundamentalist Shiite clerics stepped into the power vacuum that came into being with the American inability to restore law and order on the streets. These people have no interest in transforming Iraq into a nice liberal-

[100] Cf. "Iraq war exposes weak spots in Pentagon's defense plans" (*USA Today*, 21.4.2003).
[101] Thomas Withington: "America's forces patrol the world" (*The Observer*, 6.4.2003).
[102] Ibid.

style democracy; they have different shades of an Islamic state in mind.[103] If Iraq indeed becomes an Islamic theocracy, the law of unintended consequences, which has so often visited the Americans in their foreign policy, will once again hold sway.

There never was any credible evidence that Saddam, bad guy that he undoubtedly was, had anything to do with the events of 9/11, or that Al-Qaeda had any plans to forge meaningful ties with him. The war was a deep humiliation to the Arabs at large. Arab TV viewers across the Middle East watched enraptured as Iraqi irregulars fought bravely against the invaders. But this was abruptly cut short by the fall of Baghdad.[104] This feeling of intense national humiliation, it seems, could be tapped into by al-Qaeda, just as the feelings of national humiliation in Germany after 1918 were tapped into by Adolf Hitler. And, while it is true that history never repeats itself, it may at least imitate itself.

At the time of publication it was obviously too early to say what the long-term outcome of the war would be. Nevertheless, the early indications – which may, of course, be reversed – were that the world was not a safer place. America's policy to wage the war alone, if need be, without the consent of the international community or indeed of most of its most important allies, apparently weakened the UN, Nato and the EU. In fact, the US has to some extent isolated (and therefore weakened) itself. Even though a rapprochement may come about with Russia, Germany and France, the resentment of the US's bullying will, no doubt, linger for a considerable time. Armed might is in the end no substitute for *convincing* others of your right. And in the Arab world, the humiliation could lead to highly undesirable consequences, like a strengthening of international terrorism.

This author agrees with the assessment of the British political observer Martin Woollacott: "[t]he United States today is discovering what other great powers have found before it, which is that military victories can have results quite opposite to those intended. The world has not been made more pliant and respectful by a demonstration of American might, but is, on the contrary, more recalcitrant, sulky, and difficult than it was before the war." He ends his article thus: "The truth is that a weakened America faces a weak world, not the best combination

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[103] Cf. Peter Beaumont: "Revolution city" (*The Observer*, 20.4.2003); Rajiv Chandrasekaran: "US military slow to fill leadership vacuum left by war" (*Washington Post*, 5.5.2003).
[104] Cf. Alan Sipress: "Arabs feel sting of yet another bitter setback" (*Washington Post*, 23.4.2003).

imaginable for the 21st century."[105] Sombre words indeed, but words that one will have to heed.

POSTSCRIPT

As brilliant as the conventional campaign was, the guerrilla war that followed was completely botched by the Americans. Just as the imperial British forces in the Anglo-Boer War were intellectually, emotionally and materially badly prepared for the Boer commandos' switch to guerrilla warfare, so the upsurge of a vicious guerrilla and terrorist campaign in Iraq caught the Americans totally wrong-footed.

Having occupied Bagdad and Tikrit, there was perhaps a window of about six months for the Americans to translate their conventional military success into a political success – something all wars are, after all, about. During this period of relative calm they had the opportunity to pacify the country by putting in a huge logistical and engineering effort, the kind Americans are renowned for, to rebuild the shattered infrastructure and restoring law and order. They did not make use of it, partly because there were too few boots on the ground, but partly also because there was virtually no planning for the post-war period. Political hubris on the part of president George Bush, his Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and the other "neocons" in the Bush administration seems to have played a big role here. They thought that the Iraqis would welcome the American and British liberators with open arms and refused to countenance the possibility that things could go wrong.

Well, wrong they went. With so few troops available and not having been prepared for it, the coalition forces could do little when the country erupted into general chaos in the aftermath of the fighting. And in this chaos, which lasted for several months, three anti-American forces grabbed the chance of establishing themselves among the Iraqi people. These were the remnants of the Saddam regime, fundamentalist Sunni Islamic terrorists who infiltrated the country (probably mainly from Syria), and the majority Shiite population. Each of these had its own agenda, but at times the three converged. At the time of writing, the Shiites seemed to have decided to put in a minimum of cooperation with the coalition forces in order to facilitate the transition and get the occupiers out, while the Saddam loyalists and the

[105] Martin Woollacott: "Strong-arm tactics leave the world a weaker place" (*The Guardian*, 2.5.2003).

Sunni fundamentalists seemed to have forged a marriage of convenience. Especially the latter two threatened to make the Sunni areas in the centre of the country, around Bagdad, Falluja, Tikrit and Mosul ungovernable. Regular attacks on American troops and the (badly trained and led) security forces of the transition Iraqi government made life very dangerous.

The American reaction to this was fundamentally erroneous. In towns like Samarra and Falluja they launched large-scale search-and-destroy offensives in which the insurgents were, in view of the Americans' enormous firepower, overwhelmed. But many insurgents chose, wisely and in line with guerrilla warfare theory, not to fight, but to melt away. And within a few weeks, the fighting would again erupt in another place.

In his brilliant study on revolutionary warfare, Colonel Thomas X. Hammes writes that this type of conflict, in contrast to previous generations of warfare, "does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces" – the way the Americans and Brits did so well on the road to Bagdad. Instead, "it directly attacks the minds of enemy decision makers to destroy the enemy's political will."[106] This is typically the way in which, for example, the ANC fought its war against the apartheid government. Judging on the large-scale semi-conventional sweeps in several towns, the Americans still have not learnt the lesson of Vietnam.

[106] Thomas X. Hammes: *The sling and the stone. On warfare in the 21st century* (St. Paul, Zenith, 2004), p. 3.

DOES HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?: THE IDEOLOGY OF SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THE MESOPOTAMIAN ERA[1]

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Abstract

Present-day Iraq occupies the area that was once the heartland of the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. Despite the millennia that separate Mesopotamia and the Iraq of Saddam Hussein, several aspects of the deposed Iraqi leader's ideology (including his concept of warfare) seem to bear a remarkable resemblance to the ideology of the kings of ancient Mesopotamia. This article explores this resemblance and shows that while Saddam Hussein and the Mesopotamian kings had much in common, there were several differences as well. Furthermore, the many empires that followed Mesopotamia also left their mark on modern Iraq. History may have, to an extent, repeated itself in that Saddam Hussein perpetuated many of the traditions associated with the kings of Mesopotamia, but his ideology reflected his specific conditions – conditions different to those that existed in the Mesopotamian era.

Introduction

This article evaluates the similarities between the royal ideology prevalent in ancient Mesopotamia (present day Iraq)[2], from the fourth millennium[3] until its incorporation into the Achaemenid empire in 539BC, and that of the regime of

[1] This article is the result of research done for a MPhil degree in Ancient Cultures at the Stellenbosch University.
[2] The source material for ancient Mesopotamia is problematic and there is still uncertainty in reconstructing certain phases of that country's history. Kuhrt (1997:10) points that not all periods are equally represented in the evidence, or equally understood.
[3] All dates relating to Mesopotamia are BCE.

Saddam[4], who from 1979 until recently controlled Iraq. Sciolino (1991:82) has likened Saddam's Iraq to Hammurabi's (1792-1750BC)[5] realm and Simmons (1994:xiv) refers to Saddam as heir to Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562BC). Saddam has also portrayed himself as some of the most powerful Mesopotamian kings.

Space does not permit detailed historical accounts of the two periods under discussion although such accounts would have been useful. Some historical framework is nonetheless required so that the discussion that follows may be seen in context. To this end, the three tables below might be of value:

TABLE 1: MAJOR PERIODS IN MESOPOTAMIAN HISTORY (4000 - 539BC)

FOURTH MILLENNIUM	
Uruk Period	c.3500-3000
THIRD MILLENNIUM	
Early Dynastic Period I	c.2900-2700
Early Dynastic Period II	c.2700-2600
Early Dynastic Period III	c.2600-2400
Empire of Akkad	c.2340-2159
Third Dynasty of Ur (Ur III)	c.2112-2004
SECOND MILLENNIUM	
Old Assyrian Period (northern Mesopotamia)	c.2000-c.1800
Old Babylonian Period (southern Mesopotamia)	c.2000-c.1800
Middle Babylonian Period (southern Mesopotamia)	c.1600-1000
Middle Assyrian Period (northern Mesopotamia)	c.1400-1050
FIRST MILLENNIUM	
Neo-Assyrian Empire	c.934-610
Neo-Babylonian Empire	c.626-539

[4] Pollack (2002:429) notes that there is some confusion about the proper shorthand for Saddam Hussein's name. He points out that the correct shorthand is 'Saddam', not 'Hussein' which is merely Saddam's father's first name, not Saddam's family name.

[5] All dates relating to the ancient kings reflect their years of rule. Dates relating to modern figures reflect their dates of birth and, if applicable, death.

TABLE 2: PERSIAN CONQUEST TO IRAQI INDEPENDENCE: MAJOR EVENTS

(539BCE - 1932CE)

PERSIAN RULE	c.539-333
ALEXANDER AND HIS SUCCESSORS	c.332-143
PARTHIAN CONTROL	143BCE-240CE
SASSANIAN CONTROL	240-637
CONQUEST BY ARABS	637
OTTOMAN CONTROL	1533-1918
IRAQ ENTRUSTED TO THE BRITISH	1920
IRAQ GAINS INDEPENDENCE	1932

TABLE 3: IRAQ FROM 1937 – 2003: MAJOR EVENTS

SADDAM IS BORN	1937[6]
COUP LED BY GENERAL QASSIM	1958
FIRST BA'ATH REGIME REPLACES QASSIM	1963 (FEB)
BA'ATH REGIME IS OVERTHROWN	1963 (NOV)
BA'ATH PARTY IN POWER AGAIN	1968
SADDAM BECOMES PRESIDENT	1979
IRAN-IRAQ WAR	1980-1988
GULF WAR I	1990-1991
ALLIED FORCES INVADE IRAQ[7]	2003 (MAR)
SADDAM IS CAPTURED	2003 (DEC)

[6] Iraq was a monarchy from 1921-1958.
[7] Henceforth referred to as Gulf War II.

Royal ideology: ancient and modern

Several aspects of the ruler ideology of the two periods in question have been identified that bear apparent similarities in spite of the enormous time-span between them. Each of these aspects will be examined separately, beginning with the ancient ideology, followed by that of Saddam.

Absolute power of the ruler

Towards the end of the Uruk period, writing appeared for the first time. During this period huge ceremonial complexes appeared that were built from imported materials and decorated with sophisticated art-works. There is also evidence of the emergence of substantial urban communities with developed socio-economic structures. All of these facts point towards a highly evolved political system with a ruler at the head of this society (Kuhrt, 1997:25). The figure of the ruler dominates many of the pictorial scenes of this period and it appears that the important ideological activities of the state were in his care and under his control (Kuhrt, 1997:25).

With the building of a large empire, the image of the Akkadian king was presented in a new light: 'he would no longer be that good-natured and easily accessible petty king, but the proud and haughty chief at the head of a huge region, of a large collection of people, henceforth existing well above the masses, governing them all from above in his quasi-supernatural majesty, and simultaneously evoking admiration, prostrations, and fear' (Bottero, 2001:13).

In the administration of their realm, the kings of the Ur III state regularly rotated governors to new assignments as a means of preventing them from becoming too powerful in their provinces (Knapp, 1988:94). In order to strengthen central government at the expense of local power, the kings relocated the populations of conquered cities to other areas. Both these practices became common in the empires of the first millennium.

By the Neo-Assyrian period, the king was the central figure around which the entire empire was organized. He was both chief of state and commander of the army. The building of an empire resulted in the development of a kingship, which culminated in absolute royal power. The king was an autocrat and his power was unchallengeable. All nominations to office were totally dependent on royal favour. Furthermore, the king held the power of life or death over all his subjects who owed total loyalty to him.

During the reign of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727BC), those who enjoyed independent power bases due to their aristocratic lineage or large landholdings were kept in check or eliminated. The Neo-Babylonian kings, like their immediate predecessors, were also absolute monarchs that headed the administration, army, religion and court. Extensive security and spy networks were created by these kings with agents reporting to them any signs of disaffection and intrigue (Postgate, 1977:25). Finally, in Mesopotamia, constitutional organs for collective expression of the popular will were largely absent (Hallo & Simpson, 1998:175), and it would seem that as a ruling autocrat, the position of the Mesopotamian king became more extreme as time went on and the size of the kingdoms increased.

Saddam, whose name means 'the one who confronts', was born in 1937. At the age of twenty he joined the anti-government Ba'ath Party. One of the core beliefs of the party was that all Arabs belonged to a single nation, which must be unified politically. The Ba'ath Party eventually gained control of the country in a coup in July 1968. Saddam soon became the second most influential person in Iraq after President Bakr (1914-1982) who had chosen him as his right hand man (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:35). In 1979 Saddam forced his superior into 'retirement' on the alleged grounds of poor health (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:85), and it could be said that Saddam, like so many of the Mesopotamian kings, seized control of the country.

From 1968 until Saddam's fall, the government had been a dictatorship dominated by the only officially recognized party, the Ba'ath Party. The people, like the ordinary Mesopotamian citizens, had no voice in government. Saddam held all the country's top posts (President of the Republic, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, Secretary-General of the Ba'ath Party Regional Command, Prime Minister and Commander of the Armed Forces), in much the same way as the Mesopotamian monarchs headed all the important institutions of the land.

Like the Mesopotamian kings, Saddam ensured that no one became either too prominent or too popular. Anyone who did so was jailed, murdered, or if lucky, simply relieved of his post. In 1982 he also reshuffled the country's major power centres (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:165). Army officers were frequently moved from unit to unit to prevent them from becoming too close to their troops (Coughlin, 2002:203). By the 1990s Saddam had established one of the most extensive security structures in modern history (Coughlin, 2002:297) just as the Mesopotamian kings established theirs in antiquity. Saddam's regime had scores of regular informants who were rewarded for reporting suspicious activities. It should be pointed out that in Saddam's Iraq, the government had available to it much more developed technologies and techniques enabling it to reach society to a far greater degree than the rulers of Mesopotamia ever did. Hiro (2002:58) describes how far-reaching and

sophisticated Saddam's intelligence service was.[8] It reached every neighbourhood, every town and every rural district (Pollack, 2002:119). In contrast, while the Mesopotamian kings maintained tight control over the cities and surrounding countryside, they were unable to penetrate the peripheral areas to any real extent and their control there was relatively loose.

Sciolino (1991:51) notes that despite the Ba'ath Party's egalitarian rhetoric, Saddam really wanted to be king. At the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, he took several steps to rehabilitate the notion of monarchy in Iraq, including the publishing of several official books praising the monarchy and renovating Baghdad's royal cemetery, at the cost of three million dollars. During this time Saddam assumed an air of grandeur and pomp. He saw himself as the living embodiment of Iraqi history: 'The assumption of this weighty historical and noble legacy seemed to assert to his people and to the world that his rule was predestined and inviolable, part of a multi-millennial chain' (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:196). Furthermore, Coughlin (2002:298) reports that Saddam's meetings with visiting dignitaries at his palaces took the form of a royal audience. Guests were supposed to talk only after he had spoken, and then to keep their answers concise.

One of the ways of exerting control over rebellious groups who threatened the absolute power of the president was to deport large numbers to another area, a method also favoured by the Mesopotamian kings. One example of this practice during Saddam's rule occurred during the time of the Iran-Iraq conflict when more than half the towns and villages in Kurdistan were destroyed and their populations deported to the main towns or to concentration camps in the Iraqi desert (Coughlin, 2002:224-225).

Violence and terror

Ancient Mesopotamia has seen numerous kingdoms and empires. Aburish (2002:64) notes that while some of these entities expanded and then contracted, often to disappear of their own accord, most of them replaced each other violently through rebellion or conquest or a combination of both. Mesopotamia was a land formed by fear – fear of the flooding of the rivers, fear of war, fear of the gods and fear of the king. Sargon II (721-705BC) said of himself: 'I left behind a terror never to be forgotten' (Holloway, 2002:80). This fear and terror that the kings evoked was an important aspect of royal ideology.

[8] Saddam's security apparatus was developed in part, with the assistance of the (former) Soviet Union's KGB.

Kuhrt (1997:517) describes the Assyrian kings as 'awe-inspiring: the fear that filled his enemies was the terror of those knowing that they will be ruthlessly, but justly, punished'. Younger (1990:66) points out that in the absence of mass media of communication, terror, spreading from village to village, and from town to town, was the only means of softening up an enemy in advance.

Like the ancient kings who strove to hold their empires together, Saddam had to weld together a fragmented country, created by Britain out of three ex-Ottoman provinces. Saddam used fear and terror to do so. Iraq did not have the national bonds of ethnicity or religion. The Kurds in the north wanted independence. They were Sunni Muslims but not Arabs. The Shi'ites of the south made up most of the population. However, power was in the hands of the Sunni minority of which Saddam was a non-practicing member[9] (Ramesh, 2003:123).

From its conception the Ba'ath was a violent party in Iraq beginning as a revolutionary underground guerilla organisation that equated violence with heroism (Sciolino, 1991:48). Miller and Mylroie (2003:28) have this to say of Saddam: 'He had replaced the state with the (Ba'ath) party, and (then) the party with himself, the giver of life and death. The terror that was his to dispense would make people fearful, but it also inspired awe, and in a few, the appearance of mercy would even evoke gratitude'. This description applied equally well to the Mesopotamian kings, particularly those of the Neo-Assyrian empire. Sciolino (1991:253) reports that during the invasion of Kuwait, hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children, were tortured or executed. Some of the victims were burned by acid or acetylene torches, others had their ears or noses cut off or eyes gouged out. Indeed Saddam, like Sargon II, left behind a terror never to be forgotten.

It must be noted though, that violence in the region was not restricted to the two eras in question. Simpson (2003:39) notes that Iraq has always had a reputation for political instability and is a land where violence and cruelty are commonplace. In the fourth century BCE, Alexander the Great (332-323) conquered the region. In the eight century CE, it was conquered by Arab Muslims who established the Abbasid caliphate. The empire was characterized by violence: no less than eighty of its ninety-two caliphs were murdered as a result of feuds over succession, corruption or intrigues (Aburish, 2002:65).

In 1258 Mongols stormed Baghdad and killed the caliph by rolling him in a carpet and then trampling him under the hooves of their horses (Murray & Scales,

[9] The division between Shi'ite and Sunni began when Shi'ite Muslims broke away from the Sunni mainstream in the seventh century in a dispute over whom should succeed the Prophet Mohammed after his death.

2003:17). When the Mongols returned a century later, they massacred the city's citizens leaving behind a carefully constructed pyramid of skulls (Murray & Scales, 2003:17). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Iraq was the battleground between Persians and Ottoman Turks who fought for control of the region. Iraq was eventually incorporated into the Ottoman empire. After the defeat of the Turks in the First World War, Britain occupied Iraq. Thereafter the country became a monarchy of Britain's creation. When the Hashemite dynasty which had ruled Iraq since its inception in 1921 was overthrown by a military coup in 1958, led by General Abd al-Karim Qassim (1914-1963), the Iraqi regent was dragged by a mob through the streets of Baghdad before being hung at the gate of the Ministry of Defence (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:3). In turn, Qassim's bullet-ridden corpse was screened on Iraqi television when he was overthrown (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:4).

Aburish (2002:65) asserts that the violence and cruelty which accompanied every change in the leadership of the country throughout its long history left an indelible imprint on the local population. The various regions and tribes of Iraq, all through its history, had been unified by force - by the ancient Mesopotamian kings, by the Ottoman and British empires, by the Hashemite monarchy, by the Ba'ath Party, and finally, by Saddam.

Saddam, in contrast to earlier political orders was, through technology and his various security services, able to extend his reach to a far greater extent. His ability to control the entire population was also greater[10]. Simpson (2003:367) paints a chilling picture of Saddam as a dictator: 'an inner voice inside everyone's head, a permanent twenty-four-hour-a-day terror. There was nowhere where you could be safe from him, no moment where you could relax.' It should be noted that Saddam's childhood would also have shaped his worldview. Saddam's shame of his humble origins drove his ambitions and, as Coughlin (2002:1) notes, the deep sense of insecurity that he developed as a consequence of his disadvantaged childhood left him incapable of trusting anyone. From his experience, Saddam learnt that in the violent world of Iraqi politics, physical force was indispensable for attaining power and then maintaining it (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:24). Aburish (2002:64) argues that Saddam's ideology was shaped in part by tribal instincts.

[10] For example, Saddam has made videotapes of his atrocities and had them distributed to instill fear into his opponents.

Demands of loyalty

Loyalty to the ruler was a cornerstone of Mesopotamian civilization. This concept of loyalty reached its height during the Neo-Assyrian empire where disloyalty was never an option. Loyalty oaths were imposed upon everyone – from the royal family to ordinary subjects. Kuhrt (1997:515) sums up the duties laid upon those swearing the oath: total loyalty to Assyria and its kings and to defending the political *status quo*. This included averting all conspiracies, revolts, assassination attempts, and the obligation to report anything that might affect the safety of king or country. Punishment for breaking the oath included ripping out tongues, flaying alive and exposure to wild animals (Kuhrt, 1997:516).

Darwish and Alexander (1991:87) describe Saddam as a ruthless dictator who demanded loyalty. Disloyalty was severely dealt with in the manner of the Assyrian kings. Karsh and Rautsi (1991:151) note that members of the National Assembly signed their oath of allegiance to Saddam in their own blood, and even family members were encouraged to spy on each other for breaches of loyalty.

Propoganda

Roaf (1990:71) points out that even as early as the fourth millennium, art was used to portray the Mesopotamian ruler and reinforce his position. Art, as well as architecture, combined to produce an effect of great power and wealth in order to impress the local population. The Uruk kings appear in various roles on seals including feeding flocks, defeating the enemy and providing for temples (Collon, 1995:51). The kings of Akkad ensured that their presence was marked throughout the empire by life-like royal statuary set up in city-shrines (Kuhrt, 1997:54). A considerable number of statues of Gudea (c.2170) of Lagash have been excavated in which there is an emphasis on the physical splendour of the king.

By the first millennium, the kings relied heavily on the use of art to bolster their image. Holloway (2002:382) notes that the Assyrians ‘exploited the visual communicative arts with an almost modern feel for ideological impact, usually exercised in the service of imperial aggrandizement and intimidation’. A sequence of reliefs shows Ashurbanipal (668-c.630) taking part in the royal hunt. They depict the kings’ prowess with various weapons as well as him making an offering to the gods (Collon, 1995:152-153).

Apart from art, literature was also used to underpin the position of the king. The unprecedented centralisation of power under the kings of Akkad needed an entirely new propaganda apparatus and scribes were centrally trained and posted to the provinces to run local bureaucracies (Michalowski, 1995:2282). The sudden rise of the dynasty of Akkad led to the rapid creation of an extensive body of legendary and epic material which illustrated the ideological and symbolic importance of the kings[11] (Kuhrt, 1997:47).

Evidence for the development of kingship ideology and its divine aspects in the Ur III state comes from the royal hymns. Although each is different, they all emphasise the legitimacy of the king.

During the Old Babylonian period royal scribes 'glorified the conquest of power now not by cities but by kingdoms and empires through the warlike deeds of kings who felled enemies as well as rivals' (Bottero, 1995:2296). The epics of Zimri-Lim (1775BC) of Mari fall into this category. The reign of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076BC) saw the development of the Assyrian annals, which chronologically memorialised the achievements of the Assyrian ruler. This type of royal inscription[12] continued until the very end of the Neo-Assyrian empire five hundred years later (Kuhrt, 1997:358). In these, the king is depicted, among other things, as pious and blessed by the gods, protecting the arrangements made by them (Kuhrt, 1997:360). His military exploits and hunting skills are also glorified (Kuhrt, 1997:360). Kuhrt (1997:476) asserts that the images of Assyrian kingship and power propagated by the royal annals were not simply hidden from sight, but played an important role in spreading their message to a wider public. They were written to become known by subjects and enemies alike and were written for 'self-justification, or to obtain or increase socio-political control, or to mobilize, or to impress, or even to frighten' (Liverani, 1995:2354).

Soon after Saddam assumed the presidency, the Iraqi people were exposed to images of their omnipotent, omnipresent, fatherly leader, who was portrayed as strict but righteous. Images of the leader appeared everywhere (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:121). Public buildings in Baghdad were intended to glorify Saddam, many having photographs of him on their walls. The photographs portray the leader in various heroic, leadership and humanitarian roles just as the ancient kings portrayed themselves in their reliefs.

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[11] Postgate (1995:395) notes that any account of Mesopotamian ideology must be one-sided and partial and that 'we can write about the nature of political regimes at all is only by courtesy of what they wrote themselves'.

[12] The royal inscriptions, though autobiographical, were not the works of the king himself, but of the court scribes and poets.

Many episodes of Saddam's early life as described by his official biographers, modern-day scribes, incorporate a degree of mythology showing Saddam to be heroic, strong and brave (Coughlin, 2002:49). Although the coup of 1968 which finally brought the Ba'ath Party to power was a relatively civil affair, Saddam's version of his role in the event had been exaggerated (Coughlin, 2002:49). It was also glorified in numerous publications, television programmes and even in a film (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:18). The story contains all the elements of a heroic leader: patriotism, courage, manliness and iron discipline.

For relaxation, Saddam liked to go hunting and, like the kings of Mesopotamia, he enjoyed a reputation as a good shot. Through the years, Saddam nurtured the popular myth of his mastery of the pistol (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:166), and his official biographies boast his genius in handling firearms from the age of ten (Darwish & Alexander, 1991:198).

Saddam himself has written a few novels. His first book is entitled *Zabibah and the King*. Like the epics of the Mesopotamian rulers, Saddam is portrayed in the novel as a heroic king who defeats his evil enemies; in this case the enemy is America. He spent the final weeks before Gulf War II writing *Be Gone Demons*, a novel in which he again casts himself as a heroic leader.

The propaganda machinery in Saddam's Iraq, it should be noted, was much more powerful than that of the Mesopotamian kings, reaching to every corner of Iraq. Saddam used the state-run television and radio as vehicles for his propaganda. Literacy levels are much higher in modern Iraq than in ancient times and the government-controlled press also played a significant role in spreading Saddam's propaganda. Furthermore, teachers were forced to join the Ba'ath Party in order to ensure the indoctrination of pupils. Mass education did not exist in ancient times. It is also important to note that unlike the ordinary Mesopotamian citizen, modern Iraqis have a greater availability of news from outside the country and within a shorter time period. Even in the remotest village Iraqis obsessively listen to foreign radio stations in Arabic, including the BBC and Voice of America (Cockburn & Cockburn, 2002:xxi). Hence an awareness of their position within the context of the wider world is far greater with modern Iraqis than ancient Mesopotamians. Furthermore, the urbanisation of tribes has made it easier for Saddam's regime to address previously difficult to reach communities (Henderson, 1991:31).

The religious role of the ruler

Berlin (1996:1) points out that in Mesopotamia the religious aspects of politics and the political aspects of religion became intertwined in intricate ways.

Mesopotamian kingship from the beginning had a very definite religious dimension. Kingship was viewed as one of the basic institutions of human life, fashioned by the gods for humankind. The gods were believed to have chosen the king or 'taken his hand'. The gods were also seen as playing a part in his creation, birth and upbringing (Nemet-Nejat, 1998:218). The ruler's privileged relationship with the gods brought divine help, blessing and good fortune to the land in return for his ceaseless attention to the deity's needs.

Ba'ath Party ideology insisted that state and religion be kept separate. However, while the two may, in theory, be separate, politics and religion are related, somehow, and in some way. During the war with Iran, Saddam claimed that his party was not opposed to religion, but in fact 'derived its spirit from heaven' (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:151). He argued that Islam and Arab nationalism were indivisible and that *he,* the direct descendent of the Prophet, was the man best suited to embody the immortal bond between Islam and Arab unity (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:152).

In 1990-1991, the secular Saddam, finding himself at war, inscribed *Allahu Akbar* on the national flag and, after seeing the Prophet in a dream (the gods frequently spoke to the ancient kings in their dreams), declared *jihad* against the infidels (Lewis, 1993:184). At the same time, Saddam saw to it that he was photographed and filmed praying in mosques (Simpson, 2003:251).

However, an important distinction needs to be made between the two eras. As the king was the earthly representative of the divine, politics and religion were aspects of Mesopotamian culture that could not be separated from the other. Saddam, on the other hand, looked to religion only when it was politically convenient and the examples mentioned above were opportunistic attempts to garner support. It must be pointed out that Saddam drank alcohol and initiated the reintroduction of horse-racing; both activities are un-Islamic (Coughlin, 2002:102-104).

Warfare

From Early Dynastic times, relations with neighbouring Elam (which was to become Persia, and later Iran) were marked by conflict. The so-called 'Vulture-Stele' shows Eanatum (c.2450), king of Lagash, defeating the people of Elam. The army was led by the king; a major factor in the pre-eminent status of the king was his prominent military role.

The concept of divine war was central to the worldview of the Mesopotamians. In a divine war the gods are active in the war and the outcome of

the battle is determined by them. Victory was won at the will of the god of the successful king. A constant theme in ancient warfare was that the enemy had sinned against the gods of his opponents, and victory over the sinner was seen as the triumph of justice (Dalley, 1995:416). During the time of the Empire of Akkad, the military grew in size and complexity. Soldiers were provided with food rations, wool and weapons, and some were given plots of land for subsistence (Kuhrt, 1997:55). Sargon's (2296-2240BC) army, it seems, depended directly on him and was largely fed by him, thereby guaranteeing the loyalty of the troops (Franke, 1995:832).

One of the duties of the king was to fight wars and his role as warrior is one of the most important aspects of Assyrian kingship. A command issued by the god Ashur to his earthly representative, the Assyrian king, was for the king to enlarge the frontiers of Assyria. Assyrian theology rested on the god Ashur's claim to universal rule. In other words, war was viewed as a divine commandment and never as an act of pure military aggression. As the god Ashur was supreme in the Assyrian pantheon, so the Assyrian king was exalted above all other earthly rulers (Knapp, 1988:225). The Assyrian king was conceptualized as embodying a moral force – he knew what was right and what was wrong. The early Neo-Assyrian kings saw their campaigns as reasserting their control over regions that were rightfully theirs (Kuhrt, 1997:479).

The greatest military era in Assyria's history commenced with the ascension to the throne by Tiglath-pileser III. He established a disciplined army made up of both professional soldiers and national militia. Every male was under obligation to perform military service when called upon. By the reign of Ashurbanipal, constant fighting had slowly drained Assyria's manpower. The state began to rely increasingly on mercenaries from conquered peoples to beef up the army. As a result, by the late Assyrian empire, the majority of troops were not Assyrian (Grayson, 1995:960). Keegan (1993:172) notes that Assyria seems to have been the first power to recruit troops without ethnic discrimination, but the loyalty of non-Assyrian soldiers is questionable.

Assyria's conquest of its neighbours followed a fixed pattern. The Assyrians first received gifts from independent rulers who then assumed client status. Failure to provide suitable tribute was regarded as rebellion, provoking mobilization of the Assyrian army. After conquest, either a local ruler was appointed as a vassal of Assyria or the country was annexed as a province under a governor appointed by the king (Roaf, 1990:160).

Esarhaddon (680-669BC), in a letter written to the king of Shupria, which preceded a war with that country, presents himself as a powerful head of state

making a reasonable 'request' to the ruler of a small neighbouring country. The Shuprian king's refusal to meet this request becomes the *casus belli*, and the Assyrian king has no option but to go to war (Kuhrt, 1997:510).

As Iraq's president, Saddam saw no reason why he could not become a significant figure in international affairs. He firmly believed that it was the destiny of Iraq to be the pre-eminent force in Middle East politics (Coughlin, 2002:125). Saddam called himself 'the leader of the Arab nation' and, according to Pollack (2002:150), he made it clear that this role would be a political-military one, meaning that he, like the Mesopotamian monarchs, would achieve this position through some combination of conquest and acclaim. His vision was to create a united Arab republic, headed by him.

His desire to dominate international affairs required that Iraq develop its military strength. All males from the age of eighteen to forty were conscripted for two years into the army. Saddam created his own intelligence service as well as his own army unit which owed its allegiance solely to the president. This was to become the Republican Guard. They received better training and salaries than the other soldiers and, like Sargon's men, were totally dependent on the ruler for their existence. Saddam's link to Mesopotamia is evidenced by the fact that one of the most powerful divisions of the Iraqi army was the Hammurabi Republican Guard Armored Division, and a further unit, the Nebuchadnezzar Infantry Division.

As mentioned earlier, there have been many conflicts between the lands of Iran and Iraq from the earliest times of recorded history, and the two modern-day countries had, even before the Iran-Iraq war, engaged in border clashes for decades. A motive for the war, shared by both countries, was to determine which of the two would become the dominant power in the region. Saddam has always sought to be the leader of a pan-Arab movement. Sciolino (1991:111) quotes Saddam as saying that 'the Koran was written in Arabic and God destined the Arabs to play a vanguard role in Islam'. He also twisted a Koranic verse to state that Arabs were 'the best nation among mankind' (Sciolino, 1991:111). These claims bear a resemblance to those made thousands of years earlier by the Assyrian kings.[13]

Saddam had a similar problem as the Assyrian kings regarding his troops in that many of the Iraqi soldiers were Shi'ites and there was no guarantee of their

[13] Saddam's conflicting approaches to achieve his goals saw him, during the war with Iran, focus on the concept of Iraqi nationalism with pan-Arabism taking second place. This was done to motivate Iraqis to support the war. In the early 1990s, in an attempt to forge new alliances, although in conflict with Arab nationalism, Saddam went to great lengths to conciliate tribal leaders across the country, including handing out cars to Shi'ite tribal sheikhs (Cockburn & Cockburn, 2002:149).

loyalty especially when required to attack fellow Shi'ites in Iran. By the end of the long war, and after thousands of casualties on both sides, neither country emerged as clear victor. This, however, did not stop Saddam from claiming a magnificent victory.

With the economy in ruins following the war with Iran, Saddam began planning a move that would restore the country's finances. This included virtually demanding that the Gulf states bail him out of his financial difficulties (Coughlin, 2002:247), a demand akin to those made by the ancient kings for tribute from their smaller neighbours. Kuwait received special attention from Saddam. Kuwait, in his view, had a historic obligation to support Iraq. He pointed out that Kuwait had been illegally separated from Iraq by the British in the 1920s when they drew up Iraq's boundaries. In a final attempt to intimidate Kuwait, Saddam handed the country a list of demands, which, if not met, would be followed by Iraqi reprisals. Kuwait's response was not to Saddam's liking and his army invaded Kuwait. The whole episode reminds one of Esarhaddon's war with Shupria.

On August 28, 1990, Kuwait officially became the nineteenth province of Iraq. Saddam appointed one of his cousins as governor of Kuwait. The annexation of an independent country and the appointment of a puppet ruler also remind one of the policy of the Mesopotamian kings. In invading Kuwait, Saddam hoped, among other things, to enhance his national prestige by portraying himself, like the early Neo-Assyrian kings, as the liberator of usurped Iraqi lands.

The invasion prompted swift action by the international community resulting in what became known as the Gulf War. In the build up to the Gulf War, Saddam, anticipating divine favour, warned the coalition forces, led by America, that 'the Iraqi people are capable of fighting to the victorious end which God wants …' (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:222). A transcript of a secret meeting between senior army officers inside Kuwait in October 1990 during the countdown to the Gulf War reveals that Saddam claimed that he, like the Mesopotamian kings, was given orders from heaven to invade Kuwait: 'May God be my witness, that it is the Lord who wanted what happened to happen. This decision we received almost ready-made from God … Our role in the decision was almost zero' ('Abd-al-Jabar, 1994:104). When the coalition forces had broken his army in the war, Saddam told his supporters that 'angels of mercy' would come to their rescue to compensate them for the air cover they lacked (Ajami, 2003:389), further evoking a belief in divine favour. It must be pointed out again that Saddam's religious utterances were purely opportunistic in contrast to the institutionalised role religion played in Mesopotamian politics.

Propaganda during war

Throughout Mesopotamian history the kings, through their scribes, enhanced their warrior image and the might of their realm through propaganda. The ancient writings are full of war propaganda and a few examples from the Neo-Assyrian empire will suffice here. The Assyrian people had to be convinced that imperial expansion was desirable and justified and were subjected to constant propaganda in this regard (Knapp, 1988:225).

The Assyrian kings adopted a policy of complete blackout in the case of their own military defeats and according to the royal inscriptions, the Assyrians never lost a battle (Holloway, 2002:92). In their annals Assyrian defeats were either ignored or claimed as victories (Roaf, 1990:159). In the long, drawn-out conflict with Rusa I (c.714) of Urartu, in which Sargon II was eventually victorious, the Assyrian ruler claimed in a letter to the god Ashur, that only one charioteer, one cavalryman and three foot soldiers in his army were killed! (Roaf, 1990:182). In his inscriptions and reliefs, Sennacherib (704-681BC) portrayed himself as a successful and invincible monarch, though, in reality, as Roaf (1990:185) points out, his reign was marked by a series of uprisings and defeats.

Horowitz (2002:149) notes that in the eight years of the Iran-Iraq War, no Iraqi defeats and no Iraqi casualties were ever reported. At the same time, there were regular reports in the state-run media of the 'thousands of enemy casualties' (Horowitz, 2002:149). Iraq, according to Saddam, engaged in a 'voluntary withdrawal' from Iran in the summer of 1988. This was how he referred to the setbacks his country had suffered at the hands of the Iranians. When the war was over, Saddam simply declared himself the victor. In spite of an estimated one million fatalities and a wrecked economy, the war was proclaimed as a triumph for the Iraqi people.

A day after the outbreak of Gulf War I Saddam claimed that his forces had shot down sixty allied aircraft and proclaimed victory (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:245). Despite early losses Saddam appeared confident. Coughlin (2002:268) quotes him in warning his attackers that '… the deaths on the allied side will be increased with God's help'. In his speeches during the war Saddam argued that the world is a testing ground and that God created it in order to see which of God's creations will outdo the others in doing good (Kelsay, 1993:14). In this way humanity's destiny was to command good and forbid evil and to establish a just social order. In Saddam's eyes, this destiny was to be fulfilled by the Islamic Arab nation (Kelsay, 1993:14). He described the confrontation between Iraq and the coalition forces as 'the war of right against wrong and a crisis between Allah's teachings and the devil' (Kelsay, 1993:16). Like the Assyrian kings, Saddam believed that he embodied all

that was 'right' and that the enemy was the personification of 'evil'. And like the ancient monarchs he believed that he was responsible for maintaining the order that the gods had created.

Even as his army was being routed during the land battle in Kuwait, Coughlin (2002:273) quotes Saddam as boasting: 'You have faced 30 countries and the evil they have brought here. You have faced the whole world, great Iraqis. You have won. You are victorious'. According to Saddam, his defeat in the war had been an orderly, planned withdrawal. During Gulf War II, even as Iraqi troops were incurring heavy losses in Baghdad the Iraqi Information minister, a modern-day scribe, declared that: 'Baghdad is safe. The battle is going on. The infidels are committing suicide by the hundreds on the gates of Baghdad……' (Ramesh, 2003:165-166). The minister remained loyal to his leader to the very end.[14] His denials of reality included informing the world that coalition troops were not even within one hundred miles of Baghdad even as the city's airport fell (Simpson, 2003:320). It should be pointed out that these distortions of reality were not unique to the Mesopotamian kings and Saddam – the lies of war propaganda have characterised military conflicts throughout history.

Karsh and Rautsi (1991:44-145) describe Saddam's attempts to gain Shi'ite support during his war with Iran. Saddam, until then a secularist leader, began to laud their patron Imam and claimed to be a staunch follower of his. To 'prove' this he staged numerous television visits, dressed in traditional Shi'ite attire, to Shi'ite settlements. The birthday of Imam Ali (d.661), the founder of the Shi'ite tradition, was declared a public holiday. Saddam further made attempts to appease the Shi'ites by maintaining and repairing their shrines (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:163). The money for this, he claimed, came from his own pocket (Henderson, 1991:201). To further convince the surprised Shi'ite community of his transformation, he produced 'evidence' in the form of a genealogical table linking himself to the very heart of Shi'ism. It is clear that Saddam's religious rhetoric was opportunistic in an attempt to gain advantage during war. In Mesopotamia, religious references related to war formed an integral part of the system.

Building projects

One of the rulers' most important duties was to ensure that temples were built, restored if required, and luxuriously equipped. To the last Mesopotamian

[14] The allied forces defeated the Iraqi army and captured Saddam in December 2003. At the time of writing, allied forces were attempting to bring order to the country after the first round of democratic elections, which were held in January 2005.

dynasty in 539, the kings included their care for temples among their principal titles. As early as the Uruk phase in the fourth millennium, elaborate temple buildings were used by emerging power groups to secure their pre-eminent position (Kuhrt, 1997:25). The kings were often depicted carrying a basket of earth for the building or rebuilding of temples.

The most striking witness to the reign of Ur-Nammu (2112-c.2095) are the ziggurats – stepped towers that had temples on their highest levels. Many of the bricks used bear stamped inscriptions telling us that the builder was Ur-Nammu (Nissen, 1988:190). The might and splendour of the king was also reflected in the palaces that they built. From Sumerian times kings lived in large palaces, symbols of their power. Many of these buildings were beautifully laid out and handsomely decorated.

Saddam spent huge amounts of money in the building of several giant mosques. One of the biggest and most expensive was the Umm al-Maarik or 'Mother of all Battles Mosque' in central Baghdad which was completed in time for his birthday celebrations in 2001, the tenth anniversary of Gulf War I (Coughlin, 2002:315). Simpson (2003:63) describes Saddam as 'an inveterate builder of monuments to himself'. One of his numerous painted images shows Saddam, like a Mesopotamian king, as a construction worker carrying a bowl of wet cement on his shoulder. Saddam also built numerous palaces throughout the country, even in the most remote areas (Coughlin, 2002:228). Of course, Saddam's more developed bureaucracy and the modern technology available to him afforded him a far greater ability in his building projects. Also important to note is that while the kings' building projects had a religious component, Saddam's were purely for propaganda and self-glory.

The ruling family and favoured subjects

Towards the end of the Early Dynastic period, the earlier system of elective kingship was replaced by the dynastic system of royal succession (Hallo & Simpson, 1998:46). While details of city government are not well known, it is evident that the most important functions of state were filled by members of the royal family and their relatives. In the Empire of Akkad, local *ensi* were replaced with Akkadian governors loyal to the king (Charpin, 1995:810). It would appear the members of the imperial government came from the court and royal family. Relatives of Sargon filled numerous high offices. However, as the posts were numerous, those that could not be filled by family members were given to men who owed their primary allegiance to the king (Hallo & Simpson, 1998:55).

As a general rule, the king selected his eldest son to succeed him, but this was not always the case. In Assyria, the son chosen to succeed his father was increasingly given responsibilities in running the empire as part of his grooming for future royal duties (Kuhrt, 1997:522). The successor's education included military training. Senior military personnel came either directly from the royal family or had married into it (Kuhrt, 1997:61). Nebuchadnezzar II's (604-562BC) eldest daughter was married to Neriglissar (559-556) one of his generals, who later seized the throne (Kuhrt, 197:605). The high personages surrounding the king were extremely wealthy; they could be granted extensive estates by him, free of taxes (Kuhrt, 1997:531).

In the tradition of the Mesopotamian kings, Saddam appointed his step-brother, Adnan Khairallah as Minister of Defence. He married one of his daughters to a cousin, who was head of the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialisation, and another daughter was married to a cousin who was a colonel in the missile brigade (Sciolino, 1991:57). But it must be noted that marrying within the family was the norm for Iraqis who shared Saddam's background. Saddam's cronies were given important political posts in return for their unconditional loyalty and obedience to him. Saddam's family, friends and other high-ranking officials received huge perks. Members of the security services and the Republican Guard got better pay, cars and other material benefits (Pollack, 2002:114). Coughlin (2002:204) points out that it has become the habit of secular Arab despots, like the ancient kings, to groom their sons as their political heirs. In 1984, Uday (1964-2003), Saddam's elder son, was appointed director of Iraq's Olympic Committee. This was essentially a position to enable Uday to learn the art of government in the manner of the Assyrian appointed successor. And like the ancient appointed successor, he was also given responsibilities and trained to be a warrior. At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war, Uday used to go to the front accompanied by the Iraqi chief of staff.[15] Uday has boasted that he and his younger brother, Qusay (1966-2003)[16], were taken by their father to Iraqi prisons to watch torture and executions as part of a 'toughening up' process (Kaplan & Kristol, 2003:9).

[15] Cockburn and Cockburn (2000:152) note, however, that he was never put in a high-risk situation.

[16] Both brothers were killed in a shoot-out with American soldiers after the fall of Saddam's regime.

Divination

In Mesopotamia, the kings were viewed as holding office by the grace of the god of their city or land on whose behalf they ruled. Special measures were taken to protect the king from perceived dangers and these tasks were undertaken by priests and diviners. In the later priesthood, the role of these individuals grew in importance and they can be regarded as an arm of the Mesopotamian monarch (Hallo & Simpson, 1998:176).

Coughlin (2002:298) reports that Saddam relied on a number of psychics to warn him of any impending danger. He made particular use of an elderly blind woman psychic in times of crisis. She once prophesised that he would be the victim of an assassination attempt (a fairly common occurrence during his reign), and he thereafter trusted her judgment. Pollack (2002:235) reports that it was rumoured that Saddam relied on soothsayers more than his intelligence services. It should be noted that Saddam most probably inherited his superstitious nature from his mother who was a prophetess in her village (Coughlin, 2002:298).

Seeking a link with the past

Mesopotamian rulers constantly sought to look to the past in their attempts to underpin their legitimacy. Kuhrt (1997:59) suggests that the Uruk epics about Gilgamesh and other early kings were given their classic Sumerian form during the Ur III period. The kings of the Ur III state repeatedly linked themselves to these earlier kings through mythical family ties. In one text Ur-Nammu presents gifts to 'his brother, Gilgamesh' (Kuhrt, 1997:59). The victory over Elam by Nebuchadnezzar I (1126-1105BC) prompted him to foster an image of his greatness by adopting older royal titles in the style of Sargon and Hammurabi. He also revived the antique practice of installing his daughter as priestess of the moon-god at Ur. As Kuhrt (1997:378) notes, 'these acts illustrate, strikingly, an awareness of earlier Mesopotamian history, and how it could be used to stress continuity with a more glorious past …'. Hundreds of years later, Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II also revived the ancient practice of installing a royal daughter as priestess. The king miraculously 'found' an earlier royal text providing him with the details of the induction ceremony. Kuhrt (1997:598) points out that a number of Nabonidus' (555-539BC) inscriptions contain historical retrospects intended to show that his violent seizure of the throne had the blessing of earlier Babylonian kings. He also makes recurring references to his search for earlier buildings in the course of his own construction work. He is said to have found a broken statue of Sargon of Akkad and had it repaired and set up in a temple (Kuhrt, 1997:598).

Saddam thinks of himself as a great man of history, someone destined to accomplish great deeds. The Saddam personality cult compares him to the great figures of the country's past. These historical references, according to Pollack (2002:150), are crucial to Saddam who is obsessed with history and his role in it. He views Iraq as the manifestation of its glorious past. Thus he constantly employs names and myths from ancient times to justify his actions. Saddam, during his war with Iran, in an attempt to portray himself as the rightful leader of Arab nationalism, described Nebuchadnezzar as 'an Arab from Iraq' who fought against Persians and Jews (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:152). At the end of the war he paid tribute to Nebuchadnezzar and other great figures from antiquity by holding official burial ceremonies for the remains of the ancient kings and building new tombs on their graves (Coughlin, 2002:227). He also began with a massive reconstruction of the site of ancient Babylon. Large parts of the ancient ruins were torn down and replaced by yellow-bricked walls. Thousands of the bricks used bore an inscription, like the bricks the Mesopotamian kings used in the building of their temples. Saddam's bricks read: 'Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar was rebuilt in the era of the leader President Saddam Hussein' (Coughlin, 2002:227).

The emblem of the 1988 Babylon International Festival showed the profile of Saddam overlapping that of Nebuchadnezzar[17] (Sciolino, 1991:51). During his birthday celebration each year, Saddam chose a different historical hero to emulate. In 1990 he chose Sargon of Akkad.

The Mesopotamian theme made its presence felt in modern Iraqi art, architecture and everyday life. The regime sponsored local festivals based on ancient rites, official buildings were decorated with Assyrian reliefs and government-sponsored fashion shows dressed women in Assyrian-inspired ball gowns (Sciolino, 1991:51).

It should be pointed out that the regime rewrote history to suit its own needs. Mesopotamian history was 'Arabised' and portrayed as part of the Iraqi heritage[18] (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:123). It was not only the Mesopotamian kings that Saddam compared himself to. The Iraqi propaganda machine looked to the entire history of the region to portray Saddam in various guises depending on the political climate of

[17] Saddam's nose was elongated to make him better resemble the Mesopotamian king.

[18] Saddam was not the first leader in the region to manipulate the cultural heritage of his country to lend legitimacy to his rule. Kemal Attaturk (1881-1938), Turkey's nationalist leader for much of the 1920s and 1930s, looked to the Sumerians and Hittites in an attempt to convince his countrymen that the culture and civilizations of all nations flowed from the Turkish homeland. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919-1980) of Iran, who ruled between 1956 and 1979, presented himself as a modern-day Cyrus the Great (559-530BC) of Persia (Sciolino 1991:40).

the time (Darwish & Alexander, 1991:215). Saddam is the new Nasser (1918-1970), Saladin (1138-1193)[19], the Prophet Mohammed (c.570-c.632), and various caliphs of the region.

Conclusion

Whether they ruled over a city-state in the earlier stages of Mesopotamia's history, or the empires of the first millennium, the kings had many aspects of ideology in common. The regime of Saddam Hussein, centuries later, also embraced many of those aspects of ideology. In their absolute power and violence employed to ensure it, in their propaganda to prove their legitimacy and to portray themselves as relentless builders and victorious warriors, in their quest to dominate their neighbours through god's help, in their desire for eternal fame, and, in their need to see themselves as part of an ancient and magnificent heritage, Saddam and the Mesopotamian kings had much in common.

However it should also be noted that Saddam's ideology varied according to circumstances. Karsh & Rautsi (1991:268) argue that Saddam carried no ideological baggage: ideology for Saddam, they assert, was purely a means of ensuring that he retained the country's top position for as long as he could. He would 'use whatever ideological acrobatics (that) were required to achieve this objective' (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991:268). It might be argued that Saddam's practices were determined more by opportunism than ideology.

Apart from Mesopotamians, Iraq has seen Hittites, Medes, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Parthians, Arabs, Mongols, Ottoman Turks and the British all pass through it; and all have left their mark on the land in some way (Murray & Scales, 2003:17). Many of Saddam's practices discussed in this article may also be likened to the empires that followed Mesopotamia. It would be fair to say that Saddam used political methods that are common to most autocracies, both ancient[20] and modern[21]. While there were indeed similarities between Saddam's rule and that of the Mesopotamian monarchs, there were differences as well. Saddam's Iraq was a different world to that of the ancient rulers of the region and Saddam's ideology reflected his specific conditions.

[19] That Saladin was a Kurd did not matter to Saddam.
[20] Including those outside the ancient Near East.
[21] Saddam's rule has been likened to those of Stalin (1879-1953), Ceausescu (1918-1989) and Kim Jong Il (1942-).

History, though, has repeated itself in the sense that Saddam is the latest in a long line of rulers, going back millennia, who, after establishing and entrenching their positions in the region through violence, were themselves overthrown by violence.

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REVOLUTION IN MILITARY AFFAIRS, MISSILE DEFENCE AND WEAPONS IN SPACE: THE US STRATEGIC TRIAD

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Abstract

American plans for Missile Defence (MD) and the weaponisation of space should be analysed in the larger framework of the contemporary Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).[1] Soviet military analysts have written about this revolution from as early as the 1970s, but it was the application of information age technology (IT) in the 1991 Gulf War that captured the imagination of military planners and policy makers, especially in the US. The US is actively pursuing an RMA, conceptualised as integrating new IT into weapons systems and integrated command, control, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) and, in turn, doctrinal, operational and organisational change in the military to take advantage of information dominance on the battlefield. This relates to MD and the weaponisation of space in two ways. Firstly, very few countries have the financial and technological capability to modernise their defence forces along the lines of a US-defined RMA, which means that they may resort to so-called asymmetric means to exploit the vulnerabilities or weaknesses of a strong, conventional power. Ballistic missiles (in association with chemical, biological or nuclear payloads) are one of the asymmetrical threats most commonly cited in speeches and military documents of the US and used as justification of MD. Secondly, the RMA increases the US military's reliance on space-based military assets for C4ISR. Placing weapons in space to protect these assets is seen as a logical step to ensure a key aspect of US dominance on the battlefield. This paper

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explores the extent to which the strategic framework of the RMA has a bearing on US MD and space weaponisation arguments.

Introduction

Strategy is what connects military power to political purpose; it is neither military power as such nor political purpose. Strategy is the use of force and threat of force for the ends of policy or as Clausewitz had it "the use of engagements for the object of the war."[2] A strategic framework therefore sets out a plan of action to achieve stated goals. In the case of the US the RMA is key to this plan of action. Some of the goals to be reached through the RMA can be traced as far back as World War II, while others are a response to the post-Cold War security environment as manifested most explicitly by the September 11 attacks on the US. The strategic framework as it is pursued today can also not be seen separately from the current US administration and the neo-conservatives' control of the security agenda. This paper sets out to frame US plans for MD and the arguments for the weaponisation of space within the discourse of the RMA as the strategic framework within which the US is trying to reach its defence goals. As such the article is essentially confined to an analysis of US strategic conceptions.[3]

US defence goals and the RMA

In order to understand the RMA as a plan of action it is important to understand the defence goals of the US and from there infer the reasons why the RMA is seen as the preferred plan of action to reach these goals. This section will discuss these goals within the context of three factors: the need for precision strike, the post-Cold War context and 'neo-conservatism'.

The need for precision strike

During both world wars the human carnage as a result of imprecise bombing was appalling. In order to hit a target, hundreds of bombs were dropped as close as possible to the target. During its involvement in World War II the US initially favoured a strategy of precision bombing but the lack of technology meant that they had to bomb in daylight, which resulted in planes and men lost to the enemy. Later the US chose the strategy of area bombing, most notably the fire-bombings of Japanese cities. As the international norm against indiscriminate attack grew the US engaged technology to develop precise strike capabilities without putting US Air

Force (USAF) aircraft at risk. More humane warfare, it is argued, underlies the current strategic framework. The so-called CNN effect, i.e. the ability of news media to cover wars and broadcast images almost globally, enhances the prominence of this goal in the light of public revulsion of civilian suffering during wars.

The post-Cold War context

The strategic environment that characterised the Cold War era and informed military doctrine (doctrine can be defined as 'codified precepts that govern military operations'[4]) was a bipolar configuration between two superpowers that relied on mutually assured destruction to deter one another and consequently to keep their animosity cold. The post-Cold War context is one of multipolarity.[5] Moreover, the symmetry of military power between the superpowers has given way to asymmetry in two ways. Firstly, the US has overwhelming conventional military power. Secondly, weaker parties may wish to acquire asymmetric means (not least nuclear, chemical and biological (NCB) weapons) to defend against or challenge a conventionally stronger state. This is sometimes perceived by conventionally stronger states as a means for weaker parties to hold strong states to ransom. Asymmetric parties also include non-state actors, most notably terrorists. The terrorist threat, played out on September 11, created the confirmation/justification for these perceived threats. The US National Security Strategy Report (2002) puts the attacks in (US) perspective by saying that if terrorists could inflict such damage with resources that hardly amount to the cost of one tank, what more are they not capable of if they exploit technologies and acquire chemical, biological, nuclear and information weapons. Rogue states drawing on the financial and human resources of a state can do even more harm.[6] Essential to this argument is the proliferation of missile technology that has been in excess of intelligence expectations as well as the ability of rogue states to develop NCB weapons programmes.[7] The A.Q. Khan missile and NCB technology network served as confirmation of this perception. The proliferation of missile technology along with the September 11 attacks confirmed for the US that geographic location no longer precludes direct attack.

From a US security perspective, the multiplicity of actors (who are less identifiable and predictable) and the proliferation of technologies previously monopolised by major powers form important drivers of uncertainty in the post-Cold War context. This uncertainty questions the value of Cold War nuclear doctrine and the ability of nuclear weapons to deter NCB threats as well as conventional (and asymmetrical) challenges to US security (and that of 'friends and allies'). It begs a strategy that is more flexible to address the different contingencies that uncertainty from potential adversaries and their capabilities may require.[8]

In response to the post-Cold War context, the US identified the following defence goals:[9]

- To *assure* US allies and friends of 'US steadiness of purpose and ability to fulfil security commitments.' The implications of assurance as a military goal relates to horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as the US nuclear umbrella and MD may keep Japan and Taiwan from 'going nuclear' in the face of regional nuclear threats posed by countries such as China and North Korea. However, it may have a negative effect on vertical proliferation as China may wish to increase its nuclear missiles in the face of Taiwan being protected by MD. The goal of assurance also sends a clear message that US defence is not confined to the homeland, but takes on a global nature that also involves creating regional security balances to protect the interests of allies and friends.

- To *dissuade* future military competition. It is important to note that dissuasion is not only directed against NCB weapons acquisition by adversaries, but against military competition in general. The means of dissuasion is identified as research, experimentation, test and demonstration programmes. (The Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2001 (QDR) does not mention of what, but in subsequent documentation it is clear that these programmes include conventional, nuclear and space weapons). Moreover, a culture in the military that embraces innovation and risk-taking is seen as essential to dissuasion. The Iraq War can be construed as having the intended effect of dissuading other nations to pose a challenge to US interests.

- To *deter* threats against US interests, allies and friends, i.e. to discourage aggression or any form of coercion of the US, their allies or friends. Also, to do this through 'forward deterrence' in peacetime by deploying forces forward in critical areas. There has been an expansion in these forward deployed forces, and the US is even expanding further into Africa.[10]

- To *decisively defeat* any adversary if deterrence fails. This military goal is as much offensive as it is defensive in that the QDR explains that the US must have the capability to 'impose its will' on an adversary and this could include regime change and/or occupying foreign territory.

On face value, these goals are not radically different from the Cold War era, but the means of achieving them are. Here defence documentation highlights new approaches, namely:

The shift from a threat-based to a capabilities-based model for defence planning: In the Cold War the Soviet Union and its allies were the identified threat, and defence capabilities were designed to counter that threat. In the absence of certainty of which states and non-state actors may pose a threat to its security, the US is planning to defend against the probable *capabilities* with which an adversary might challenge the US. The emphasis is thus not on whom the adversary is, but all the conceivable ways in which the US and its allies might be challenged. This involves not only developing asymmetrical military capabilities in terms of US superiority, but also denying adversaries the possibility to develop asymmetric means with which to counter US superiority.

The shift from nuclear to conventional deterrence: The credibility of nuclear deterrence in the post-Cold War context is called into question, not least because terrorists are not linked to territory or a nation that can be threatened with massive retaliation in the same sense as state actors are. At most nuclear deterrence can be directed against states that support terrorism, but even then a nuclear response can not be justified, especially if these countries themselves do not have nuclear weapons and are not directly responsible for an attack. Nuclear deterrence doctrine is only useful to deter against 'direct' nuclear and conventional attack from another state actor. In this light, conventional deterrence seems more credible for the purposes of imposing the US's will on states (a much broader objective than merely defence against direct attack). The means of conventional deterrence are intelligence capabilities that would allow knowledge of adversaries' military intentions and programmes, precision attack capability of static, mobile and deeply buried targets and rapidly deployable forces that can be maintained in a hostile country.[11] Whereas nuclear weapons deter by threatening mass destruction, conventional deterrence is on the level of fighting.[12] This does not mean that the US will give up its nuclear arsenal. The Nuclear Posture Review notes that a new triad of nuclear, non-nuclear, and defensive capabilities should be sought. This may explain research into new nuclear weapons that might be used in 'conventional warfare', such as Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrators that would target deeply buried bunkers suspected as NCB weapons factories/arsenals or low yield nuclear weapons, so called mininukes that would approach the explosive yield of conventional bombs.[13] These programmes confirm the move to conventional deterrence by even making nuclear weapons more 'useable' on the level of fighting.[14]

Prevention and pre-emption: To achieve military goals US policy has also shifted from retaliation to preventive attack. The extent of this shift only becomes clear when preventive attack as a means of offensive defence is juxtaposed against pre-emptive attack. A pre-emptive strike in the face of an imminent attack is justified in international law, but preventive attack is not. Although the US has

called the War on Iraq pre-emption in the light of Iraqi (presumed, but never found) weapons of mass destruction, the threat of attack against the US or its allies was not imminent and therefore it could only be argued that the war was preventive.

Neo-conservatism

The policy goals and ways of achieving them, which determine the US strategic framework, cannot be seen separately from the neo-conservatives that have, since September 11, made inroads into the US security policy apparatus. The neo-conservatives originated from the Democratic Party in the late 1960s during the Vietnam War when they broke with the liberal democrats, who were against the Vietnam War.[15] During the Reagan presidency they influenced foreign and strategic policy by labelling the Soviet Union an 'Evil Empire' and supporting a military build-up intended to bankrupt the Soviet Union if the latter tried to keep up with the US. For them it was a question of winning the Cold War. It is also significant that it was during the Reagan presidency that the US last saw a space programme (Strategic Defence Initiative or 'Star Wars') comparable with what is currently on the table. Once George Bush (senior), a conservative realist, who believed in multilateralism, came into power, he dismissed neo-conservatism and during Clinton's presidency the same was true. But the 'neo-conservative agenda' has in recent times gained much ground in George W. Bush's presidency and this agenda is characterised by the following:

- Disdain for multilateral organisations (and treaties): This relates to a belief that states, that are hostile towards the US, will use these organisations to curtail US power or to build their own power under the protection of these organisations.[16] The disdain for international organisations also results from the view that these organisations and treaties are ineffective when it comes to enforcing norms of non-proliferation and arms control. In this respect, North Korea, Iraq and Iran (the infamous axis of evil) are portrayed as examples of states that have been able to acquire weapons of mass destruction or covert programmes to build these weapons while signatories to the NPT. There seems to be increasing evidence that the disdain for multilateral organisations expands to NATO in that the NATO framework may be more of a liability for swift and flexible military action if and when the US wants to 'project force'. Although not explicitly negative towards NATO, the National Security Strategy Report emphasises a list of changes necessary to carry out missions under new (supposedly post-Cold War) circumstances.[17] However, the emphasis on 'coalitions of the willing' in the same report and the way in which the US

has sought support outside NATO for its operations in Afghanistan and Iraq suggests that America is moving beyond NATO confines to achieve military goals.

- US exceptionalism: The US should not have to give away an inch of its sovereignty. This also corresponds to a notion of 'wrongdoers' as opposed to 'wrongdoing' in American foreign policy. Israel as a US ally is, for example, not regarded in the same light as North Korea, despite the former's covert nuclear weapons programme.
- A Wilsonian quest to spread democracy: Wilson, when declaring war against Germany in World War I said that the US had no quarrel with the German people, but with their authoritarian leaders. He firmly believed that the world should be made safe for democracy even if it takes force to do so. Premised on democratic peace theory (i.e. the notion that democracies do not wage war with one another), by spreading democracy world peace will be expanded as well. The same themes are echoed by the Bush (II) Administration, especially, but not exclusively, with respect to Afghanistan and Iraq. Spreading democracy is entwined with spreading free enterprise and liberal economic values. The spread of democracy and free enterprise are seen as key elements of the promotion of human dignity.
- A distinctive moral element: This is seen as the US's moral responsibility to take on the role of liberating people from dictators.[18] This element extends to state-building in weak states, not least because these states are fertile ground for terrorists.

The objectives as outlined above have both been informing as well as been informed by what is referred to as the current RMA.

The Revolution in Military Affairs

Based on the premise that the way in which wars are fought undergo from time to time 'discontinuous change' as new technology or organisational concepts are introduced to increase military dominance, the current revolution involves the incorporation of information technology into weapons systems, doctrine and organisation. States that exploit the RMA will have military advantage and therefore, in the context of the capability-based approach as highlighted above, US strategy documentation makes it clear that the US has to

- exploit the RMA and as such extend US military superiority into the future;
- guard against the possibility of states hostile to the US exploiting military-technical developments and challenging US military superiority; and
- prevent states from acquiring asymmetric means to decrease the value of the RMA to the US (or the US should acquire defence systems that will render asymmetric means of other states strategically useless, most notably MD).

It is especially the latter two that relate to weapons in space and MD, but before turning to them it is important to outline how the US has conceptualised the RMA by looking at the characteristics thereof as it manifests in US military planning, doctrine and operations (most notably in recent warfare):[19]

Precision-guided munitions: In Operation Desert Storm (the Gulf War of 1991) nine percent of the bombing was precision-guided. In Operation Iraqi Freedom (the recent Iraq War), at the point when formal combat operations were declared over, this figure had increased to 70 percent. The use of radar (JSTARS - Joint Surveillance and Targeting Radar System) and Geographical Positioning System (GPS) and inertial guidance systems (both used in JDAMS – Joint Direct Attack Munitions System) in precision attack has meant that the US military has the ability to bomb military targets with lethality and accuracy - even in difficult environments, such as cities.

In strategic terms precision attacks support the Sun Tzu principle of "disarming an adversary before battle".[20] During the Iraq War it made possible the first phase of the war, i.e. decapitation (taking out the Iraqi leadership), as well as the second phase of 'Shock and Awe'[21] where imposing 'rapid dominance' through inflicting 'overwhelming force' was intended to render large parts of the Iraqi forces impotent whether as a result of real damage or through psychological effect.

This does not necessarily mean more humane warfare. The Project for Defence Alternatives (PDA) reported that both the absolute number and the proportion of non-combatants among Iraqi casualties were higher in Operation Iraqi Freedom than in Operation Desert Storm. What stands out in both these wars is the low ratio of US and British fatalities to Iraqi ones (a ration of 70–90 to 1). The relatively low Anglo-American casualty rate aside, both of the wars had death tolls comparable to many strategically significant wars of the past 40 years and as such "do not stand out unambiguously as 'low casualty' wars."[22]

Network-centric warfare: The interconnection of dispersed commanders, sensors, weapons and troops through a robust information network is referred to as network-centric warfare. Participants in this network have the capacity to develop a shared and real-time awareness of the battlefield. Commands can also be passed more rapidly than by the adversary.[23] This is said to lift the 'fog of war', often the cause of casualties by friendly fire.

The Afghan model: Part of the RMA is the increasing reliance on smaller, specialised forces as was done in the Afghan War. This is partly to prevent taking casualties and the resultant political cost of soldiers returning home in body bags. It involves Special Operations Forces identifying targets and directing air strikes as well as a common command-control-communications-computers-intelligence-surveillance-and-reconnaissance (C4ISR)[24] grid linking these forces (network-centric warfare). Information is thus relayed not only to command and control centres in the theatre, but also to headquarters (in the Afghan and Iraq Wars this meant headquarters in the US) and platforms outside of the theatre (in the area of responsibility), such as aircraft carriers. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are used to collect intelligence and beam images of the battlefield through the integrated information grid for hours. Special forces were also used to train and equip local forces in Afghanistan.[25]

Information operations: An element of the RMA is the increased prominence of information operations, i.e. taking advantage of the power of information and information technology and integrating all aspects of information to enhance military operations. As such information operations have an offensive and defensive dimension. Offensively it includes denying the adversary the benefits of information through deception and incapacitation (for example the US's reported use of HPM (High-powered Microwave) bombs (or e-bombs) to disable Iraqi computer and communication systems) as well as psychological operations, electronic warfare and ensuring and enabling means to collect and process information that could result in military advantage.[26] The emphasis is thus on information dominance in the battle space and this dominance is key to military victory. Defensive information operations may include ensuring information security and defence of critical infrastructure in homeland defence, because the everyday reliance of a country's health, water, electricity, and transport infrastructure on computers may make it vulnerable to cyber attack and potential disruption.

RMA is in essence the paradigm within which US military planners see military transformation occurring and the role of space in bringing about this transformation is explicit in US strategy documentation.

Space and the RMA

Space is seen as "a critical strand of DNA for US military transformation."[27] The link between space and the RMA is threefold:

Space enables the current RMA: It enables the preferred way of warfare for the US, through satellites that are used for imaging, communication and precision guidance. As such the US is increasingly dependent on space. This is a 'chosen', not a 'necessary' dependence, because the US pursues the RMA type of war fighting that centralises C4ISR capabilities. US space assets, it is argued, are vulnerable to attack both in space as well as ground stations through physical attack or interference through electronic jamming. The contingency of a low yield nuclear explosion above the earth's atmosphere to damage nearby satellites is also mentioned in the US Space Commission Report.[28] In effect, by putting more eggs in the space C4ISR basket, the US military has created vulnerability. But, this is not to say that an attack on US military satellites would leave the US 'blind' in the battlefield or severely undermine its military superiority. The Space Commission's warning that a "Space Pearl Harbor" could occur was regarded as alarmist, not only because it overestimated other countries' ability to exploit US space vulnerabilities, but because there are many passive and active defences against such a scenario.[29]

Denying the RMA to other states through space control and counter-space operations: The belief that the RMA awards military superiority to those who exploit it means that the US is not only interested in securing its own space assets. It also aims to prevent potential adversaries from obtaining space assets that could help the latter exploit the RMA, at least to such an extent as to challenge US superiority. This is clearly what Peter Teets, Under-Secretary of the USAF is referring to when he notes that new capabilities should be pursued " ...in order to exploit our nation's advantages and protect our asymmetric vulnerabilities to sustain our strategic position in the world."[30] US policy in this respect is to temporarily disable hostile satellites through jamming or interference. But the Space Commission Report also calls for the ability to destroy these satellites and to use live fire events in space to test anti-satellite capabilities.[31] The call for space control is reinforced by a USAF document entitled the 'Transformation Flight Plan', which asserts that: "it will require full spectrum, sea, air, land, and space-based offensive counterspace systems capable of preventing unauthorized use of friendly space services and negating adversarial space capabilities from low earth up to geosynchronous orbits. The focus, when practical, will be on denying adversaries access to space on a temporary and reversible basis."[32] When not practical, it can be assumed that preventive measures will be more permanent. This is an issue of particular concern to the US's

European allies, who are developing the Galileo Global Positioning system with Chinese co-operation. Does US policy mean that Galileo may come under US attack should the US feel that it gives some RMA advantage to an adversary?

Space is the next phase of the RMA: The link between the RMA and space goes beyond that of an enabler. The Space Commission Report notes that space is not only useful from an RMA perspective in the sense of "passive collection of images or signals or a switchboard that can quickly pass information back and forth over long distances."[33] It is clear that weaponising space itself forms a part of the conceptualisation of the current RMA. The Space Commission Report makes an argument for the projection *in, from and through space* by noting the deterrent effect and in conflict, the extraordinary military advantage that this will provide. Weapons orbiting in space would reduce lengthy mobilisation periods, currently predicated on forward deployed bases, aircraft carriers and airlift capability to transfer weapons and soldiers to the battlefield. It would be the ultimate standoff and global strike weapon strategy. Space weapons used in an offensive mode could be the next phase of the RMA.

The Transformation Flight Plan notes that the USAF "is looking at ways to collect or generate large quantities of energy on orbit in order to rely on space-based platforms for more missions and provide a greater degree of true global presence. This would change many equations about traditional ideas of rapid response."[34] The document goes on to outline a series of space weapons programmes, the research and development of which are likely to commence within the next five years and deployment envisioned as soon as 2015.[35] This corresponds with US wargaming scenarios which presume that space will be weaponised by 2015.[36] Some of the programmes mentioned in the Transformation Flight Plan include the following:[37]

- *Air-launched anti-satellite missiles:* These missiles will provide the capability of intercepting satellites in low earth orbit.
- *Evolutionary air and space global laser engagement (EAGLE) airship relay mirrors:* Space-based mirrors will extend the range of airborne, space and ground-based lasers, projecting different laser powers and frequencies to disable targets through illumination to destruction.
- *Ground-based laser:* This laser will transmit laser beams through the atmosphere to Low-Earth Orbit satellites for defensive and offensive space control.
- *Hypervelocity rod bundles (dubbed 'rods from God' in the media):* These rods are foreseen to travel through space at hypervelocity speeds, but could in the future be launched to orbit earth and strike ground targets on earth from space.

- *Space-based radio frequency energy weapon:* Planned for the long-term, this will be a constellation of satellites containing high-power radio-frequency transmitters that would disrupt, destroy or disable electronics and command and control systems.

These space weapons programmes are envisioned for the long-term, i.e. 2015 and beyond, and from what we know, are only on the drawing board and not yet in the development phase. However, they suggest that a massive initiative is underway. The fact that US military planners are flaunting these plans in such an aggressive manner may prompt other powers to develop space weapons of their own, which in turn would provide the justification for the US to pursue these weapons. Thus, it will effectively result in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Missile defence and the RMA

MD relates to the RMA in two ways, namely:

The asymmetry paradigm: The notion that actors hostile to the US will develop asymmetric means to counter-balance overwhelming US conventional military power can be referred to as the asymmetry paradigm.[38] State actors may develop non-military asymmetric means, such as diplomatic activities in international forums (as was the case in the build-up to the Iraq War in the UN Security Council when it became clear that a second resolution to sanction war was unlikely to be passed). However, it is the military, especially the non-conventional means (notably ballistic missiles with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads) that have been used to justify MD, especially because non-state actors may also acquire these weapons.[39] In this sense MD supports the capability-based approach in that it caters for the contingency of any actor acquiring NCB weapons and missiles to deliver them without having to identify specific threats.

Under President Bill Clinton, MD in the first instance was seen as protection of US territory against ballistic missile attack (National Missile Defence) as well as forward deployed US forces (Theatre Missile Defence). In December 2002 President Bush announced deployment of MD as early as 2004 (a month before presidential elections) and he opted for a single architecture (which could eventually be a global MD shield).[40] It thus became clear that US allies and friends would also be protected by the system. The 2004 deployment of MD now seems uncertain due to technical failure of several interception tests. In some of the successful tests, interceptors seem to have been guided to the warhead of the incoming missile.[41]

Conventional deterrence: MD corresponds with the shift in deterrence doctrine. It renders an adversary's ability to deter the US through (NCB) missile attack on its forces, homeland or friends/allies obsolete. In the absence of mutual assured destruction, the option of deterring (or imposing one's will on) an enemy with conventional attack is left opened. Moreover, it is also argued that MD could even dissuade adversaries from developing these threat capabilities in the first place if they knew that MD would render them useless.[42]

Conclusion

Within the context of current US defence goals there is a strategic connection between the RMA and weapons in space on the one hand, and the RMA and MD on the other. This connection does not preclude a three-way link of mutual dependencies. 'Thoroughgoing' RMA requires secure control of space, which in turn requires secure and effective MD. The RMA is so heavily dependent on space-based assets that the many ways in which an enemy could disable key space-based reconnaissance and communications elements by a strike from the ground must be thoroughly suppressed.

On closer inspection, the military advantage of weaponising space is questionable. Some have likened space weapons to nuclear weapons, saying that their short-term military advantage will soon be replaced by long-term woes of proliferation.[43] It has also been argued that the US will undermine its own military superiority by moving warfare from earth (where it currently has overwhelming dominance) into space where other nations may pose competition with relatively rudimentary technologies. The notion that the US will be able to achieve full-spectrum dominance through unilateral space weaponisation will only work if they can suppress strikes from earth pre-emptively. Not only are space technologies often dual-use, making it difficult to determine whether a civilian satellite is being launched as opposed to a space weapon, but pre-emptively shooting down or threatening other countries' space launches could be regarded as acts of war. Such a policy could seriously complicate the current tacit acceptance of US military superiority among the major powers of the world.

Proponents of space weaponisation in the US, most notably the current Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, assert that the weaponisation of space is inevitable. Space, like land, sea and air, is just another medium of conflict that will inevitably see warfare and therefore demands that the US, as a forward-looking country, should be the first to exploit this inevitability.[44] However, the argument that "history has predetermined weapons in space" seems to rest more on technological

determinism, dressed up as the so-called capabilities-based approach. This approach asks only 'how' and 'with what' questions when it comes to warfare (and defence), while negating the 'who' and 'why' questions. The latter questions are essential to know the circumstances under which warfare takes place and to make the defence responses plausible and realistic.[45]

Planning for contingencies 'out of context' suggests that technology-related policy choices are not determined by rational cost-benefit analysis, but a drive towards perceived technological progress. The weaponisation of space seems to be driven by a largely Western worldview that equates technological efficiency in military affairs with military efficiency. The two are however, not synonymous as we have seen in the Iraq War. Despite the technological superiority of the coalition forces, they still have not won the war and it certainly has not been a less bloody war than other wars of the past 50 years, neither does it look like a more expedient war.[46] A very narrow and technological interpretation of military efficiency is the only context in which the weaponisation of space makes sense. It is argued that US military superiority can be extended without weaponising space and unnecessarily compromising relations with other powers, most notably Russia and China.[47] Space seems to be not the next military high ground, but the next technological high ground in military affairs.

As for MD, the US has been at lengths to reassure China and Russia that MD is directed at rogue states and terrorist threats. However, these countries are suspicious that US plans for MD may only be a cover for plans of weapons in space, especially in the light of the US's abstention in the UN General Assembly vote on the resolution to prevent an arms race in outer space (the resolution supports the PAROS initiative in the UN Conference on Disarmament). An initial response by China was to link their agreement to a moratorium and eventual convention on the production of fissile material (the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty) with negotiations on PAROS.[48] This play between conventional military power and asymmetric means – by reserving the right to produce fissile material, China can increase its asymmetric means (nuclear deterrent) to counter US military superiority – is indicative of the negative impact of weaponisation of space on non-proliferation.

Notes and references

[1] The concept (military) transformation has largely replaced the concept RMA in US vernacular, most notably as employed by Donald Rumsfeld in 'Transforming the Military', *Foreign Affairs*, 81(3), May/June (2002), pp.20-32. In American context there is, however, an argument to be made that the concepts essentially refer to the same types of changes in military affairs. Therefore, I will continue to use the concept RMA in this article with the understanding that it is interchangeable with that of military transformation as used by Rumsfeld.

[2] Colin Gray, *Modern Strategy*, (Oxford, 1999), p.17, 18.

[3] Demarcating the scope of the paper in this way does not preclude reference to possible responses by other states or the hope that the paper will extract comparisons with the strategic frameworks of other states.

[4] Leo MacKay quoted by Norman Davies, 'An Information-based Revolution in Military Affairs', In David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla (eds.), *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, (RAND, 1997), http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR880/ (accessed: 2005-02-10).

[5] Some view 'unipolarity' in the context of US unilateralism and the assertion that the US is the only remaining superpower or hegemonic power (a la Robert Gilpin) with overwhelming military and economic dominance. However, to call the current international configuration 'unipolar' would be to negate the importance of regions (and regional powers), international organisations and transnational actors that characterise the international context.

[6] National Security Strategy of the United States, 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/print/nssall.html (accessed: 2005-02-10).

[7] US Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 2001, www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf (accessed: 2005-02-12).

[8] Nuclear Posture Review Report (2001), as leaked and posted on the web, http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/policy/dod/npr.htm (accessed: 2005-02-12).

[9] These goals are set out in the US Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 2001, www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf (accessed 2005-03-02), and subsequently reiterated in the Nuclear Posture Review Report (*ibid*), the National Security Strategy Report (op cit) and numerous speeches by President George W. Bush.

[10] Eric Schmitt, 'Pentagon Seeking New Access Pacts for Africa Bases', *New York Times,* 5 July 2003.

[11] Quadrennial Defense Review Report, *op cit*, p.12.

[12] Lawrence Freedman notes that the combination of atom bombs and delivery means has meant in practice that war changed from a fight to a process of destruction and that RMA is the culmination of efforts of the past 25 years to reverse this tendency. Lawrence Freedman, 'The Revolution in Strategic Affairs', *Adelphi Paper*, no. 318 (1999), p.15.

[13] This notion suggests a contradiction in terms. Conventional warfare ceases to be conventional when nuclear weapons are used. The new nuclear weapons would blur this traditional distinction. The concerns raised by such a lowering of the threshold of the use of nuclear weapons include the escalation to the use of high yield nuclear weapons, increased risk of proliferation of new nuclear weapons and the environmental and health risks of testing and using nuclear weapons in a 'conventional' way.

[14] Although the US Congress did not approve the funding for the most contentious of these 'new nuclear weapons' programmes in FY 2005, this was largely a result of a budgetary process that is in disarray, rather than a rejection of the programmes as such. It is almost certain that President Bush will submit a funding request for these programmes in 2006 again. See Matt Martin, 'Congress Stops 2005 Funding for New US Nuclear Weapons', *Washington Nuclear Update*, BASIC, 24 November 2004, http://www.basicint.org/update/WNU041124.htm (accessed 2005-03-02).

[15] Stephan Halper, Panel discussion on Neo-Conservatism, Cambridge University, June 2003.

[16] This approach is not unique to the Bush (II) Administration. However, the withdrawal from multilateral organisations and treaties and the notion of signing bilateral agreements with countries to exclude the US from the reach of multilateral organisations, such as the International Criminal Tribunal, have been more explicit since Bush's presidency.

[17] United States, The National Security Strategy Report, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html (accessed: 2004-12-16).

[18] President Bush stated in his West Point Graduation speech: "We are in a conflict between good and evil. And America will call evil by its name. By confronting evil and lawless regimes we do not create a problem, we reveal a problem. And we will lead the world in opposing it", 1 June 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html (accessed: 2005-02-11).

[19] It is important to make clear that the current RMA is driven by the US's conception of the role of information in warfare. Other states have had marginal influence in determining the form of the current RMA (just as Germany's use of the tank led to *blitzkrieg*, which some analysts have referred to as one of the past RMAs). It is also important to note that there is nothing inevitable about military revolutions. Unless states recognise and exploit technologies or organisation concepts and adapt them to their goals and capabilities, there is no autonomous functional logic that brings about the RMA.

[20] It is thought that Sun Tzu was a Chinese general of about 500 B.C. Although there is some argument whether he indeed existed and was the author of 'The Art of War', this work, along with Clausewitz' 'On War', are still today the cornerstones of military strategy in most countries.

[21] Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade, *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance*, (NDU Press Book, December 1996), http://www.iwar.org.uk/military/resources/shock-and-awe/shockindex.htm (accessed: 2005-02-10).

[22] Carl Conetta, 'The Wages of War: Iraqi Combatant and Noncombatant Fatalities in the 2003 Conflict', *Project on Defense Alternatives Research Monograph*, #8, 20 October 2003, http://www.comw.org/pda/0310rm8.html (accessed: 2005-02-11).

[23] IISS, op cit, p.18.

[24] C4ISR is typical RMA jargon and suggests the network-centric approach. Command and control refers to the hierarchical communication between responsible officers and their subordinates in the battlefield, but it has increasingly become desirable to keep units in touch with one another across theatres of operation (communication) and this is now done digitally (computers) through intelligence (surveillance and reconnaissance) received from specialised systems (such as unmanned aerial vehicles). Ref: Lawrence Freedman (op cit), p.12.

[25] International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Strategic Survey* 2002/3, p.17, 18.

[26] Freedman, op cit, p.49.

[27] Col. John Raymond, 'Transformation Communications: The Transatlantic Dimension', paper presented at RUSI Conference entitled "The Future of Transatlantic Military Space Relations", London, 11 October 2004.

[28] United States, *Report of the Commission to Assess United States Nation Security Space Management and Organization*, (January 2001).

[29] Michael O'Hanlon, *Neither Star Wars nor Sanctuary: Constraining the Military Uses of Space*, (Brookings Institute Press, 2004) p.21.

[30] Peter Teets, Milcom 2003 Luncheon Address, http://www.nro.gov/speeches/milcom2003.html (accessed 2004-12-16).

[31] Space Commission Report, ibid, p.29.

[32] Space Commission Report, ibid, p.61.

[33] Space Commission Report, ibid, p.33.

[34] United States, *US Air Force Transformation Flight Plan*, (November 2003), p.83.

[35] Teresa Hitchens, 'USAF Transformation Flight Plan Highlights Space Weapons', Center for Defence Information, 19 February 2004, http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?documentid=2080&programID=68&frompage=../friendlyversion/printversion.cfm (accessed: 2004-12-16).

[36] Interview with Steven Metz from the US Army War College (Washington D.C.) on 12 August 2004 at the University of Pretoria.

[37] Leonard David, US Air Force Plans for Future Wars in Space, *Space.com*, 22 February 2004. http://www.space.com/businesstechnology/technology/higher_ground_040222.html (accessed: 2004-12-02).

[38] Saïda Bédar, 'The Revolution in Military Affairs and the 'Capability Race'', *Disarmament Forum,* 4 (2001), p.27, 28.

[39] For the purposes of this article I focus only on NCB missiles as a means of asymmetric warfare, but it should be emphasised that asymmetric warfare includes every other 'unexpected' military move, including insurgent actions, flying aircraft into buildings, information warfare, launching a satellite into space with gravel as payload so as to create destructive space debris, and so forth.

[40] IISS, op cit, p.29.

[41] Michael Evans, 'Star Wars Test Missile Was Guided by Beacon', *Times of London,* July 28, 2001, p.17.

[42] IISS, op cit, p.29.

[43] Karl Mueller, 'Totem and Taboo: Depolarizing the Space Weaponization Debate', *RAND*, 8 May 2002, p.9, 10, http://www.gwu.edu/~spi/spaceforum/TotemandTabooGWUpaperRevised%5B1%5D.pdf (accessed: 2004-12-16).

[44] Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization Report, as quoted by Michael Krepon and Christopher Clary in *Space Assurance or Space Dominance? The Case Against Weaponizing Space*, http://www.stimson.org/pub.cfm?ID=81, (accessed: 2004-11-29).

[45] Freedman, op cit, p.59.

[46] For those who see the glass as half full, the US has won the war, but not (yet) the peace.

[47] Michael Krepon and Christopher Clary, *Space Assurance or Space Dominance? The Case Against Weaponizing Space,* http://www.stimson.org/pub.cfm?ID=81, (accessed: 2004-11-29).

[48] Nuclear Threat Initiative, *Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty*, http://www.nti.org/db/china/fmctorg.htm (accessed: 2005-02-11).

NOT A MIRACLE AFTER ALL… CÔTE D'IVOIRE'S DOWNFALL: FLAWED CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

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Introduction

Long touted as an island of political stability and (relative) economic prosperity in West Africa, since December 24, 1999, Côte d'Ivoire* has joined the more common category in the sub-region: praetorian states mired in political uncertainty and unending turbulence. Indeed, on September 19, 2002, it came very close to collapsing altogether, a fate very few would dare to predict only a few weeks earlier. This stunning evolution started with the military regime of General Robert Guei, which lasted less than ten months. Eric Nordlinger's definition of praetorianism as "a situation in which military officers [in the case of Africa non-commissioned officers as well] are major or predominant political actors by virtue of their actual or *threatened* use of force"[1] fits Ivory Coast perfectly today. Political violence has already claimed thousands of victims. As witnessed in the recent resumption of fighting and bloody upheaval, the threat to the country and the entire sub-region has by no means disappeared − despite the Marcoussis and Accra agreements and continued efforts to end the crisis.[2]

Since that faithful Christmas Eve 1999, when the military peremptorily stepped on to the political scene, Cote d'Ivoire has definitely entered a critical era in

* By decree dated October 14, 1985, the Ivoirian government decided to name the country "Côte d'Ivoire" and to no longer accept translations of this French name. However, the English translation is still widely used by American writers. "Ivoirian" is the English translation of the French adjective "*Ivoirien*." This decision revealed the "special" relationship between the country's elites and the French language. I fail to see the point of accepting only one foreign language version of a concept when the overwhelming majority of the country's population does not speak that foreign language. Therefore, I have decided to use the two versions interchangeably.

its civil-military relations (in the broadest conception of this phrase). Early hopes for a speedy normalization were systematically dashed, and even as President Laurent Gbagbo's term ominously nears its end, tangible progress remains elusive in spite of unrelenting efforts on the part of the international community.[3] Cote d'Ivoire's situation illustrates pointedly Claude Welch, Jr.'s warning that "[t]he first overt seizure of power by the armed forces constitutes the most important shift in civil-military relations... It is a step not readily reversed."[4] Furthermore, as too many African states illustrate, once that fateful step is taken, a pernicious "military-as-a-justifiable-player" mentality seems to permeate the polity, increasing the likelihood of the military becoming a fixture on national political life, one way or the other. This situation begs the questions: How did this one prosperous and reputed stable powerhouse in West Africa take such a turn? What explains that Ivory Coast has moved so quickly from a sure bet for continued civilian (if not necessarily democratic) ruled state to a conclusively praetorian state? An answer to these and related questions will begin to shed some light on this situation.

To the casual observer, all seems to have started on Christmas Eve 1999, when a mutiny of gun toting petty officers and soldiers degenerated into the full-blown coup d'état that toppled President Henri Konan Bedié. The coup, which took most observers by surprise, was remarkable in how easily it unraveled the forty-year old civilian regime. However, as argued elsewhere,[5] the present situation is the outcome of dynamics in the Ivoirian body politic and, as a derivative, of singular civil military relations concocted since the country's independence in 1960. To understand the intervention of the military and the country's subsequent troubles, it is critical to look beyond the unimaginative policies and even the crass conduct and practices of President Bedié during the last months of his tenure. While these may have precipitated the coup, the roots of the "praetorianization" of Ivoirian politics are deeper and more ancient.

This study is an attempt to answer aspects of the above-mentioned questions. To this end, using an analytical framework centered on the concept of "coup vulnerability," the article first chronicles and analyzes the evolution of the civil-military relations in Ivory Coast since independence, with special focus on how these were handled by the successive heads of state, the turning points in these relations as well as the related behavior of the main actors. It will be argued that the roots of the successful Christmas 1999 coup and its aftermath must be traced to the distinctive and singularly obsessive efforts to prevent coups, and a vexatious unwillingness to seize on numerous opportunities to transform and reorient the security apparatus. Second, the collapse of the military regime, its reasons, and the events that led to it, as well as the dynamics of the current crisis are examined. The

analysis focuses on the divisions the coup injected in the military, General Guei's miscalculations, and to be blunt, his ineptitude as a leader, as well as the other relevant political considerations. Finally, the still doubtful attempts to turn the page on the still festering imprints of praetorianism, long standing authoritarianism, and the malicious throes of ethnic politics are evaluated.

Before presenting a relevant brief historical background about Cote d'Ivoire, it is useful to outline the analytical framework based on the concept of "coup vulnerability", which is borrowed from N'Diaye.[6] This analytical framework embraces, integrates, and expands on the classical notion of civilian control of the military developed by scholars such as Samuel Huntington, S.E. Finer, Claude Welch, JR. K. Kemp and C. Hurdlin, and others.[7] Drawing on the work of these authors it posits that less problematic civil-military relations, that is a willing subordination of the military to civilian political authorities are most likely to obtain in states where the civilian authority is legitimate, the military is professionalized, its autonomy valued, and its expertise and authority over internal affairs recognized and respected. The analytical framework predicts that a state's vulnerability to military intervention in the political process decreases or increases as a function of the extent to which the above state of affairs (as a matter of deliberate policy and behavior) is pursued, or instead, neglected and undermined. Consequently, the evolution of civil-military relations in Cote d'Ivoire is examined considering:

- The extent to which the security apparatus has been professionalized;
- Its degree of autonomy as a whole and in its components (absence of politicization and ethnic or regional manipulation);
- The extent of government legitimacy;
- The military's perception of government legitimacy; and
- The extent of military restiveness.

As the efforts pursued by the various regimes to ward off military intervention strayed from political legitimacy, pursuit of military professionalism and correlated policy actions, it is expected that civil-military relations will breakdown. This is in line with African scholarly assessments of what it will take to democratize African states and to work towards the "twin principles of military expertise and civil supremacy".[8] Of course, military professionalism and autonomy are not a panacea and some scholars, including Rebecca Schiff, have found this approach problematic in dealing with civil-military relations in developing countries.[9]

Historical background

A former French colony in West Africa, Cote d'Ivoire became an independent state on August 7, 1960 after centuries of French colonial presence. Like most African states, an extreme ethnic and religious diversity characterize its approximately 14 million people.[10] Contrary to most other colonies, independence was not the objective of Ivory Coast's political leaders in the late 1950s. Independence came only after the failure of the "*Communauté Franco-Africaine*" set up in the late 1950s to salvage France's crumbling colonial empire in Africa.[11] Even after independence, Ivory Coast kept unique relations with France, thanks to the imposing personality of Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who until his death on December 7, 1993, was for almost 34 years Ivory Coast's only President. As Aristide Zolberg documents, Houphouet-Boigny along with the party he created, the *Parti Démocratique de Côte D'Ivoire* (PDCI), was the principal architect of every major policy orientation and decision of the Ivory Coast over the last half century. [12]

Under his leadership Ivory Coast pursued a resolutely pro-Western, capitalist economic strategy and foreign policy. The country experienced a rapid economic growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s. It also stood out in the West African sub-region for its political stability. Houphouet-Boigny also enjoyed a reputation of man of wisdom and peace.[13] This image, often propped up by the French (and western) media, was assiduously cultivated by calculated, often beneficent or magnanimous grand gestures in domestic, sub-regional or international politics. It was also echoed in the state-controlled media and by a legion of flattering journalists and writers.

The deepening economic crisis of the 1980s gave rise to ever more pressing demands for radical changes in the macroeconomic orientation and distributive policies. As in other states of the region, an emboldened political opposition vociferously demanded the end of the PDCI's monopoly on power.[14] After much resistance and violence, multiparty elections and other reforms were introduced in 1990, not coincidentally after the *La Baule* France-Africa Summit. On December 9, 1993, two days after Houphout-Boigny's death, when National Assembly President Henri Konan Bedié was sworn in as the head of state in accordance with article 11 of the Constitution, the face of Ivory Coast had changed beyond recognition. And yet, the only seemingly immutable variable was the unique relationship, often characterized as neocolonial, independent Ivory Coast has developed and maintained with France. Nowhere has that relationship been more consequential than in the area of regime maintenance (in the African context, this meant mainly coup prevention in addition to reassuring internal and external

security guarantees). Consequently, a meaningful analysis of the successful overthrow of the Bedié government on Christmas Eve 1999, manifestly against the tide of worldwide democratization and demilitarization, must start with the long running, entangled Franco-Ivoirian efforts to prevent precisely that outcome. To reiterate, the author's contention is that while Bedié's political recklessness precipitated his overthrow by the soldiers, ultimately, reckless civilian control strategies, broadly construed, are the root–cause of the military intervention in the political process in Cote d'Ivoire.

Regime stability: instruments and cost

The set-up

Before examining the deeply flawed security sector arrangement and attendant coup prevention strategies implemented by the post-colonial regime in Cote d'Ivoire, it is useful to look at the Ivoirian security apparatus and its role in the stability of the Houphouet-Boigny regime. It was created from the remnants of the colonial army in 1961 by the 61-209 Law which organized national defense following the French government's 1960 *plan raisonnable* establishing armies in its former colonies.[15] Until they were split by the September 2002 rebellion, the International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that the armed forces of Cote d'Ivoire stood at 13, 900.[16] The largest service being the army (6,800), followed by paramilitary bodies the *gendarmerie* (4,400), and the presidential guards (1,100). The Navy (900) and Airforce (700) are the smallest services. In addition, there are 12,000 reservists, 1,500 PDCI militia members and, of course, the intelligence services attached to the presidency, the ministry of security and ministry of defense. After assuming the presidency, President Bedié, created the National Security Council, modeled on the US institution of the same name and appointed trusted *gendarmerie* General Joseph Tanny to head it. As will be discussed later, France, the former colonial power and closest ally, played a major role in the set-up and training of these forces. In a West-African sub-region reputed for its countless coups, military regimes, and recurrent turmoil, Cote d'Ivoire enjoyed, until the 1990s, a remarkable, if relative, stability. However, beyond the personal leadership qualities often attributed to Houphouet-Boigny and the remarkable economic growth the country experienced in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s the much overrated exceptionality of Cote d'Ivoire is better analyzed in light of the policies to consolidate the post-colonial regime starting immediately after independence. As David Goldsworthy has noted perceptively, "the dominant long-lived civilian leaders of Africa do not leave their relations with the soldiers either to chance, or to the growth rates, or to the broader working of structural variables."[17]

After the failure of the joint defense structure France had envisioned as a part of a scheme to retain close ties with its soon to be former colonies in Africa, the overwhelming majority of newly independent states entered into a series of defense agreements with France. Generally, the defense agreements provide for the set up, training and equipping of African militaries and security services, and the presence of French (military and civilian) technical advisers. They also enable African states to call on France to ensure their external and internal security (reestablishing law and order),[18] including the prevention of "putsches, and other coups d'état."[19] For its part, Cote d'Ivoire, signed a defense agreement on April 24, 1961. This agreement provides for the permanent basing of troops, has ultra-secret clauses, and has not been renegotiated for nearly thirty years.[20] The importance of Cote d'Ivoire to France was unmistakable. Along with Senegal, it was singled out by General De Gaulle as countries in which France would intervene if necessary.[21] Danielle Domergue-Cloarec, has argued that some of the defense agreements signed between France and its former colonies, contain secret clauses to guarantee the personal safety of heads of state and their families.[22]

Given Houphouet-Boigny's central role in the post-colonial political and security arrangements, it is reasonable to assume that such a secret clause existed with Ivory Coast. Thus, a noticeable characteristic of these accords is that, as Chester Crocker noted, they "imply a commitment to regimes, as opposed to states".[23] It is also useful to add that because of its origins and the deep imprint of its French designers and sponsors, the Ivoirian security sector inherited the features, philosophies and structures of France's conception of a state security. This essentially means a tradition of the army as "*la grande muette*" (the great mute one), that is, strictly apolitical, republican, loyal to the 'state', in charge of 'national defense' under the leadership of a head of state, who is 'chief of the armies' with extensive formal and discretionary prerogatives in matters of state security. This also means the Cote d'Ivoire did not have a unified notion of a holistic "security sector" as currently understood in the literature.

The preceding context constituted the setting for the civil-military relations that developed over the forty years the post-colonial PDCI regime lasted in Cote d'Ivoire. Finally, while inheriting wholesale the security and military tenets and assumption of the former colonial master is not unique to Ivory Coast, this can arguably be considered the first missed opportunity to design a security sector based on a different conception of security for the state and the people. Instead, the security apparatus was used to guarantee and perpetuate Houphouet-Boigny's and the PDCI's power using a variety of nefarious strategies and tactics. These very strategies were to lead to the 1999 coup.

Coup prevention strategies, seed of the 1999 coup

In the context of rampant praetorianism in West Africa, ideological rivalries with its neighbor (mostly Guinea under Sékou Touré and Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah), the regime of Houphouet-Boigny could not feel too secure. In such conditions, the preservation of the regime assumes a paramount importance. Observers of civil-military relations in Africa have noted that the cornerstone of the strategies of the Ivoirian regime to retain power has been the continued presence of French troops and military advisors.[24] While this was indeed the primary strategy, the measures taken to insure that Cote d'Ivoire remained coup free also include shrewd secondary strategies to prevent the military from taking power. Finally, these flawed civil-military relations in the narrow sense sowed the seeds of the December 24, 1999 coup, as will be demonstrated. Other policies, particularly the total disregard to the most basic norms of democracy and the corrupt management of the economy must also be briefly examined, as these are germane to the civil-military relations and security in general.

The French military presence

Decades ago, Ruth First observed that Houphouet-Boigny's close relationship with France was "the soundest insurance against a successful coup".[25] There is no doubt that the PDCI regime owes most of its longevity to the presence of French troops and French military assistants at all levels in the ranks of the Ivoirian military. This "external guarantee strategy"[26] which consisted (and resulted) in the deterrent stationing of hundreds of French Marines near Abidjan, the presence of French military advisors, a sustained program of training for the Ivoirian military, and a significant reduction of defense expenditure, had also fatal flaws. Along with the other equally flawed (but somehow secondary) regime maintenance schemes, the strategies undermined the professionalization, autonomy or political insulation of the military. Combined, these strategies further heightened the military's realization of the low legitimacy of the political system and the regime. The evidence suggests that it is the alienation of the Ivoirian military, its politicization and (the resulting) long history of restiveness that culminated in the Christmas Eve coup.

Since the independence of Côte d'Ivoire France has constantly maintained hundreds of marines on its military base of Port-Bouet near Abidjan. The number of these troops steadily increased over the years, no doubt, signaling a strengthening of the French commitment to the survival of the Ivoirian regime. In 1999, even as the coup was under way, French troops numbered nearly 600.[27] In addition to these readily available troops, France could airlift within hours its domestically based *Force d'Action Rapide* (FAR) to any trouble spot in Africa.[28] While in power,

Houphouet-Boigny left no doubt that he would not hesitate to call on France to help him retain power. In 1971 French troops intervened to put down a rebellion by the *Bete*, an ethnic group traditionally opposed to the Baoule (Houphouet-Boigny's ethnic group).[29] In 1990, in the face of a combined civilian and military threat, the President again solicited French intervention (though to no avail this time). Indeed, until 1999 (for reasons to be discussed later), French's military power was ready to see to it that, should the need arise, any coup attempts (at least one it did not approve of) failed. Pascal K. Teya has argued that French troops used demonstrative maneuvers to deter and dissuade potential opponents from even attempting a coup, often injuring the patriotic sentiments of the Ivoirian military.[30]

The presence of French military advisors was another dimension of the strategies of the Ivoirian regime to prevent coups. For years, until it was surpassed by Madagascar, Cote d'Ivoire had constantly had the highest concentration of French nationals in Africa. Up until the 1970s, various high level civil servants, often in sensitive positions, including the president's Chief of Staff, were French citizens. Nowhere has the presence of French nationals been as consequential as in the military. In the efforts of the Ivoirian and French governments to prevent coups, these military assistants are an "even more important army" than the regular French troops.[31] A compilation from various sources indicates that the number of these military advisors drastically dropped from 248 in 1965 to 111 in 1980, and remained roughly constant at about seventy in the mid-1980s.[32] The decline is more noticeable after 1980 when anti-French sentiments ran high and the close ties with France were increasingly criticized as neo-colonial. More than a change in the strategy, this decline most likely reflected the necessity for the Ivoirian government to decrease the visibility of French military advisors. Evidently, because of their access to intelligence, these advisors' main role was to ensure that nothing France did not like happened in Côte d'Ivoire.

Cooptation, manipulation, and politicization of the military

While Houphouet-Boigny, and later his successor Henri Konan-Bedié relied heavily on the close political and military ties with France to ward-off military intervention, they have also pursued other strategies to further reduce the likelihood of a military takeover. These flawed schemes consisted, among other measures, in the ethnic and political manipulation of the military, the co-optation of officers in the political and administrative ruling circles and spoil system, and the exploitation of inter-service rivalries. All of this also contributed to the ultimate overthrow of the regime.

Houphouet-Boigny was keen to integrate military officers in the machinery of the PDCI regime. For instance, more than 30 per cent of the prefects "who exercise significant powers" in their administrative districts were members of the military; the objective, more or less explicit, was to lessen the risk of military intervention.[33] The petty officer origin of the 1999 coup seems to give credence to Teya's analysis, in the same vein, that the top brass of the Ivoirian military was cleverly compromised by the regime in the mismanagement of the national economy and in politics in order to neutralize it.[34] To give the military a stake in the regime, high-ranking officers were even brought into the government in 1974. According to Claude Welch, Jr., Houphouet-Boigny made "political reliability ... the dominant criterion for promotion" in the military.[35] Other cooptation and manipulation measures were evident. Shielded from the harsh belt-tightening measures of the 1980s, the military was indeed "well treated" economically.[36] Additionally, military officers were put in charge of parastatals and given the opportunity, indeed encouraged, to enrich themselves illegally. When for some reason top officers become unreliable, they are given positions in state-owned companies or in diplomatic missions to distance them from active service.

The ethnic manipulation of the military was yet another alarming scheme the civilian regime employed to prevent coups. In the early years of independence, Houphouet-Boigny took advantage of a (never proven) "conspiracy" to overthrow his regime to shrewdly disarm the army, fragment and entirely reconfigure the ethnic make-up of the Ivoirian military.[37] A critical element of this re-structuring has been the creation of a 3,000 person strong PDCI-controlled militia (the presidential guard) made-up exclusively of *Baoule*, the President's ethnic group.[38] Another indication of this approach has been Houphouet-Boigny's heavy use of what Howard William has called "a system of ethnic quotas" as an instrument of governance,[39] which he extended to high-ranking officers as well. In 1982, he had a group of high-ranking *Bete* officers publicly express their support for him (to dissociate themselves from a growing opposition with ethnic overtones).[40]

The military was manipulated in others ways as well. In 1990, with his power weakened by pro-democracy movements and political parties, a physically and politically weakened Houphouet-Boigny called on the army to brutally repress his opposition. None other than Robert Guei, the future junta leader (then a colonel) was charged with carrying out that mission. Characteristically, Houphouet-Boigny is said to have promised to "fill up [Guei's] pockets with money".[41] On the eve of the 1995 presidential election, for selfish reasons, President Bedié continued essentially the same approach. He manipulated the inter-service rivalries by playing off the army against the *gendarmerie* and got rid of General Robert Guei then the

Joint Chief of Staff for apparently requesting written orders to prepare to use the army again Bedié's opponents in the 1995 elections.[42]

Effects of the coup prevention strategies

Obviously, the combined effect of the strategies implemented by the PDCI regime has been to keep Cote d'Ivoire coup free for nearly forty years. As the Christmas Eve coup was to stunningly demonstrate, however, these same strategies contained the seeds of the undoing of the civilian regime. In effect, these strategies had grave implications and consequences on the political system as a whole and on civil-military relations specifically. First, the survival of the regime rested not on healthy, sound foundations but on the will of the French government to save it. Second, the various manipulations and machinations sapped the military's professional corporate self-image, and heightened its political and social awareness of the flaws of the system. They made elements within the military realize that not only was the regime's claim to legitimacy tenuous, but that just as force helped it to survive, force could undo it. Third, the frequent uses of the army against the opposition politicized the military even more dramatically. The military came to see itself as a bona fide political player. This increased the likelihood of its intervention in the political arena, only on its own behalf, for its own corporate interests, not to save the regime one more time. Finally, the disastrous management of the affairs of the country, the neglect of the needs of the Ivoirian people, all important dimensions of civil-military relations broadly construed, did nothing to legitimize or consolidate the post-colonial regime.

A closer look at the implication of these overall strategies will help explain this outcome. The web of economic, political, military and cultural relations between France and the Ivory Coast has been described as an illustration of French neo-colonialism.[43] Edouard Bustin has forcefully argued that in the domain of civil-military relations in particular, African states are ultimately the losers in the neo-colonial arrangements. First, the defense agreements typically vest in the French President the ultimate decision to intervene, undermining national sovereignty, and giving the protégé regime much to worry about. For example, in a blatant effort to pressure Houphouet-Boigny into abiding by the *La Baule* summit dictate (that African states should accept multiparty politics), France ignored his request and refused to intervene to put down a military mutiny in June 1990. This uncertainty did not promote civil-military stability. It is indeed dangerous to protégé regimes, for France has been known to ease out presidents she can no longer depend on as in Cameroon and Niger.[44] As will be discussed below, this scenario is, to some extent, what seems to have happened in December 1999.

Second, the neocolonial arrangement inherent in the reliance on an external guarantor can lead to the perverse effect of military officers frantically cultivating self-serving relations with the French military authorities and be willing to carry out coups on their behalf. This confuses the military elite by giving them mixed loyalties. The officers know that any move against the regime is likely to be detected in time or crushed by the French military. At the same time, they must remain distant enough from the same regime should it become doomed. They will therefore display insincere loyalty to the regime. Typical examples are the French ousted Jean Bedel Bokassa in the Central African Republic and Hissen Habré in Chad, both of whom were installed by France but subsequently embarrassed or defied by their protector. The cozy relations which apparently existed between General Guei and the French military establishment was made evident in the former French army Chief of Staff, retired General Jeannou Lacaze's efforts to help him retain power in 2000. In addition, As Chipman has stressed, the presence of French military advisors perversely entrusts French nationals to sensitive positions in African militaries and gives them access to information they can use to influence directly and decisively the course of domestic events.[45] This cannot but affect negatively the morale and possibly injure the sense of institutional pride of African militaries.

Other implications and effects of the coup prevention schemes concocted by Presidents Houphouet-Boigny and Bedié lead to the inescapable conclusion that they also contributed to the demise of the civilian regime. One of the most insidious effects of their policies was that, instead of eliminating military restiveness and instilling civilian supremacy in the military, they produced the opposite. While the Ivoirian military succeeded in displacing the civilian regime only in the 1999 coup, it had a long history of various forms of intervention in the political process, however. One of these forms was coup attempts and conspiracies. Already in 1962 and 1963, in 1973, and in 1980, groups in the Ivoirian military conspired, and in some instances attempted, to overthrow the government.[46] As recently as in the 1990s, conspiracies fomented by officers of the Ivoirian military were uncovered.[47]

Other forms of military interference in the political process were mutinies and other forms of overt political insubordination. In 1991, members of the military went on strike demanding higher wages and some soldiers even briefly occupied a radio station. One year earlier, soldiers occupied Abidjan airport. Others roamed the streets at night and engaged in acts of banditry.[48] In April 1990, in conditions very similar to those that eventually led to the successful coup, President Houphouet-Boigny was forced to meet with mutineers complaining against their living and service conditions.[49]

A third form of interference of the military in the political arena, though not at the initiative of military, was its zealous repression of political opponents. In the 1970s and 1980s, and again in the 1990s, both Houphouet-Boigny and Bedié used the military to suppress their political opposition.[50] In 1971, for example, the army, along with French troops, participated in the massacre of members of the *Bete* ethnic group accused of separatism and opposition to the Houphouet-Boigny regime.[51] In 1991, during sustained pro-democracy demonstrations, the military brutally repressed university students. The repression was so vicious that even the Prime Minister considered it "revolting." As recently as 1995, the military was used against political opposition during the succession struggle. In the city of Gagnoa, several opponents were killed. The politicization of the Ivoirian military was already deepened by charging it with the "civic and moral education" of union members and students who were leading the opposition in the late 1980s. It was little wonder that during the succession struggle between Henri Konan Bedié and Alassane Dramane Ouattara, Houphouet-Boigny's last Prime Minister, the army seemed to align itself against President Bedié even though he eventually prevailed in the contest.[52] While this version is not unanimously agreed to, it is certain that the military through none other than Robert Guei did get involved in the succession dispute.

In the end, it is evident that no analysis of the Christmas Eve 1999 coup can be complete without a discussion of the policies Houphouet-Boigny and indeed Bedié pursued in the overall management of the country. These are germane to any analysis of civil-military relations, as invariably they constitute the backdrop of the military intervention and are typically used to justify it. As will be seen later, the Ivoirian coup was not exception. Indeed these policies and attitudes also contributed further to digging the grave of the PDCI regime.

The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the affairs of the state were conducted with a high degree of mismanagement and corruption. Many authors attribute the economic crisis that befell Ivory Coast to the wasteful, corrupt neopatrimonial practices associated with Houphouet-Boigny.[53] He once publicly urged his ministers to enrich themselves, and most of his ministers were found to be "self-serving and corrupt".[54] This partially explains why as much as 130 billion CFA Francs were annually embezzled and taken out of the country, and the countless multi-billion CFA Francs financial scandals involving governmental elites, including Bedié.[55] The actions taken by the soldiers throughout the 1990s, including the fatal blow to the regime were justified by the disparities between their destitute economic conditions contrasted with those of the elites.

Politically, for years, through undemocratic means and an elaborate clientelist scheme, Houphouet-Boigny managed to enlist the loyalty and devotion of large segments of the intellectuals and business classes. He used the *Party Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI) and its organs to maintain a firm control over the state apparatus. Only in 1990 when violent opposition demonstrations threatened the very existence of the regime was Houphouet-Boigny forced to introduce multi-party elections. While the introduction of multi-partyism and other trappings of democracy constituted a step toward more responsiveness and legitimacy, it did not guarantee free and fair elections or democratic practices. Immediately after succeeding Houphouet-Boigny, with the tacit but firm support of France, Bedié displayed unmistakable authoritarian tendencies.[56] The multi-party elections of 1990 and 1995 were no more free and fair than the previous elections when the PDCI monopolized political life. In this respect, Konan Bedié seems to have replaced the (mostly) co-optation and subtle repression strategies characteristic of the pre-1990 period with heavy-handed, crass repression. Despite some limited progress since the 1990 reforms, Ivory Coast's record of respect for democratic rights and freedoms, measured by diverse organizations and observers, tends to indicate that these rights were often violated. Each Amnesty International annual report since 1991 describes the detention, mistreatment (including torture) and even killing of hundreds of political opponents and several journalists. In 1991, several members of the military were detained and tortured after an alleged coup attempt,[57] and significantly, in 1997, at least 10 members of the military figured among those detained and mistreated.[58]

The missed opportunities

The wave of democratization and demilitarization of African politics in the 1990s notwithstanding, the stage was set for the military takeover. Again, while a series of fateful events and the outright foolish behavior and attitude of President Bedié were precipitants for the coup, the civil-military relations built around flawed coup prevention strategies and other related policies are seemingly its root causes. In general, since the set up of its military in 1961, numerous opportunities to model a security apparatus that would entrench a political system based on values of democracy, legitimate state and individual security, were missed. The reorganization of the armed forces after the alleged 1963 coup was one such opportunity. Instead, Houphouet-Boigny created an all-Baoule presidential guard, and a militia as the armed arm of the PDCI, and left untouched the overall structure of the security architecture centered on the presence of French troops and military advisors as security guarantors.

Another opportunity presented itself in 1990 when the president was forced to negotiate with mutineers about a wide range of issues including organizational and inter-service concerns. The most compelling opportunity to reform the security sector came when President Bedié assumed power in a constitutionally prescribed manner in 1993. Aside from the creation of the National Security Council, no serious reform was undertaken. In fact, to further ward off any military intervention, Bedié chose to exacerbate the rivalries between the services, playing off the army against the *gendarmerie*, more specifically, the Chief of the latter, General Joseph Tanny, against General Robert Guei, then Chief of the Army. It was evident that the extensive reassignment of officers in the various commands shortly after the 1995 elections was an indication that the situation in the security sector was a matter of concern for him. This pattern of Ivoirian heads of state's unwillingness to tackle what was evidently a serious situation in the security sector and civil-military relations was to continue even after the Christmas Eve coup. That coup, evidently, was both the irrefutable proof, both of the failure of old policies and strategies, and the security sector's dire need of serious overhaul. Its occurrence seems to support the 'coup vulnerability' hypothesis.

The coup and its aftermath

With their decision to oust Henri Konan Bedié and to constitute a military junta, the *Comité National de Salut Public* (CNSP), to run the country, the Ivoirian military ushered in a new era of civil-military relations in Cote d'Ivoire. The success of a group of non-commissioned officers in displacing without bloodshed and almost effortlessly one of the longest running civilian regimes on the continent was an eloquent testimony to the utter failure of the coup prevention strategies and overall regime sustaining policies of the PDCI and its leaders. In particular it illustrated the failure of the external guarantor strategy and officer corps manipulation/cooptation schemes to anticipate two critical phenomena. First, increasingly, military interventions in African political processes are spearheaded by commissioned and non-commissioned junior officers, not the top brass. President Bedié's lament that all his generals had fled as the coup unfolded,[59] is instructive in this regard. Second, as the 1994 coup in The Gambia, the failed coup in Guinea in 1996, and more recently the failed coup in Burundi (2001) and Guinea Bissau (2004) illustrate, these military interventions are no longer the planned, by-the-book, "full-blown" coups d'état of old, but can, in the heat of mutinous actions, achieve the same outcome. Though there seems to be evidence that other more 'typical' coups may have been in preparation,[60] what started as a mutiny of soldiers to call attention to their precarious conditions and to the manifestly deteriorated political situation in the country, rapidly escalated into the ouster of the head of state.

The coup also highlighted the fatal mistakes President Bedié made in not carrying out an overhaul of the security sector, despite the window of opportunity his coming to power presented. In this regard the coup can be seen as a patent failure of leadership as well as the bankruptcy of the security apparatus on which Bedié has artlessly grown dependent to keep his opposition at bay. Typical of his poor leadership savvy, even as he leaned more and more heavily on his security system to maintain power, President Bedié consistently ignored the insistent warnings of his French backers of growing discontent and restlessness in the military. French intelligence services had in effect specifically alerted him repeatedly to this situation and of the potential replication of restiveness and insubordination witnessed in other African states following the return of peacekeeping contingents and urged him, to no avail, to take counter measures.[61]

According to General Robert Guei, who was brought out of retirement by the mutineers to lead them, in a statement on December 24, 1999, the reasons for the coup were twofold:

> There are problems which are strictly of military order which concern the restoration of their dignity; that is, the improvement of their equipment, salary increases and some problems peculiar to the military profession… The other problems are political, since they called for the unconditional release of elements currently imprisoned at the Abidjan Central Prison for political reasons.

During his meeting with the mutineers, Bedié used foul language and displayed an arrogant and insulting attitude, in reaction to which it was decided to depose him.[62] Just two days earlier, in a speech to the nation, a defiant Bedié had stubbornly refused to heed the insistent calls for moderation of friends in the international community. He had rejected pleas to free the jailed militants of the main opposition party, the *Rassemblement Des Republicains* (RDR) and to lift the ban imposed on Alassane Dramane Ouattara, the former Prime Minister. Ouattara had been excluded from the upcoming presidential election under the pretext that he was not a citizen of Côte d'Ivoire. As if nothing could ever change in the basic nature of his relations with France, Bedié relied almost blindly on the French military umbrella. This attitude blinded him to noticeable changes in French policies on military intervention to rescue friendly regimes, in general. It certainly blinded him to unmistakable signals that the French authorities (in a stalemated socialist government/rightwing president-*cohabitation*-situation) had grown irritated by his drift toward autocratic rule, in particular.

French “preoccupation” with his handling of his political opponents (particularly the disenfranchisement of Alassane Ouattara) and the injection of virulent xenophobia in Ivoirian politics, was expressed in the form of polite public pronouncements as well as blunt private warnings. He had forgotten that already in 1990, on the wake of promulgation of the *La Baule* doctrine, President François Mitterrand had stunned Houphouet-Boigny by refusing to intervene against mutineers who had occupied the Abidjan airport. Furthermore, in 1997, France's Foreign Minister specifically told the (former) Organization of African Unity (OAU) that henceforth his country refused to "be dragged in internal conflicts" in Africa.[63] Finally, his almost defiant mismanagement of the economy brought the country very close to bankruptcy and alienated the European Union (EU), the World Bank, and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The embezzlement of billions of EU aid was also still fresh in the news.

After a moment of confusion and a futile attempt to reverse the course of events, Bedié and his family fled the country with the help of France after seeking refuge in the French embassy in a strange twist of irony. He had appealed directly on a French radio to loyalist forces and the general population to resist the coup. On the contrary, the population and the political class seemed to have almost unanimously been relieved to see the political impasse come to such a decisive, if unexpected, end. The statements of General Guei were reassuring enough as he declared that he had no ambition to remain in power and that the soldiers have taken power to “clean up the house” and that, as soon as this is done, they will abandon power.[64]

The shock and later the protestations of the international community, were somehow muted by the collective sigh of relief and even jubilation which emanated from the Ivoirian people and its political class. Acceptance of the *fait accompli* was soon evident even as governments and international organizations called for a speedy transition to constitutional rule. This was particularly true of the OAU, which had, a year earlier decided to refuse admission to any government resulting from a coup d’état. After the initial puzzle as to why French troops stationed in Port-Bouet didn’t intervene to save Bedié’s regime, the real question turned to how long the military would stay in power, and what political situation is likely to emerge after the transition period?

As the military junta and those in the political class who objectively benefited from the ouster of Bedié, started to prepare for the transition to new institutions and rules of the game, few foresaw the dangerous course Cote d’Ivoire

was about to embark on. For, however welcome and even salutary it may seem sometimes, the intervention of the military in the political arena invariably brings about an array of uncertainties and dangers. Not only is the potential for deep divisions within the military a very likely outcome with a chain of coups and counter-coups, but the potential for violence as the preferred means to solve contradictions increases sharply. Although it lasted less than a year, the experience of military rule in Côte d'Ivoire brought all the possible twists and turns that can be expected from an inexperienced and divided military institution purporting to set up a democracy for a country facing daunting challenges. This deadly mix produced the most startling military regime interlude in African modern history. Its main ingredients consisted of General Guei's awakened personal political ambition, his inept leadership, the effects of the inherent tensions of the hybrid role thrust on the military as institution and as government, and finally, the effects of the political manipulation of ethnicity, regionalism, and religion in the Ivoirian body politic.

The military interlude

If for nearly forty years, power in Ivory Cost was certainly civilian as opposed to military, it was definitely not democratic. As Robin Luckham has stated, there is more than a nuance in the distinction.[65] Given the circumstances that led to the current crisis, the military interlude failed miserably to usher in a democratic civilian regime, if this ever was its objective. In many respects President Laurent Gbagbo, just as Presidents Houphouet-Boigny and Bedié before him, does not owe his position to the express will of the Ivoirian people. When the unsolicited "military experiment" Côte d'Ivoire underwent started, the odds seemed good enough. A political impasse was finally unblocked, the military leader dragged apparently against his will from retirement unambiguously stated that he had no interest in power and that, once an orderly transition was completed the military would withdraw to its barracks. The euphoria in the population and in the overwhelming majority of the political class rapidly vanished when General Guei, without ever stating his intentions until the very last constitutionally mandated moment, revealed his true face.

His intention to use the transition to fulfill a suddenly awakened presidential ambition became clear when, after decrying in his first pronouncements the political blunder Bedié had committed in injecting the poisonous concept of "*Ivoirité*" in Ivoirian politics, he embraced it and wrote it in the new constitution.[66] Next, came the elaborate use of the judiciary to eliminate cumbersome opponents from running (another Bedié antic), and finally, in the face of electoral defeat by a "light weight" candidate, the blatant attempt to perpetrate a "coup in a coup" by canceling the election altogether and proclaim himself president. Very few foresaw

this evolution although, early in the transition, General Guei had started to wrap himself in the mantel of a still much revered Houphouet-Boigny. In hindsight, given his thorough cooptation in the political circles of the PDCI, between 1990 and 1997, when he was unceremoniously forced into retirement by Bedié, the opportunity to take his revenge on the political system and on Bedié himself would have been too tempting to let slip by. An element of what can be called the "De Gaulle complex" may have also played a role in his decision to want to continue in office.[67]

His decision may as well be simply the result of the corrupting influence of power. Whatever motivated it, this decision proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Cote d'Ivoire. It nearly pulled down the entire sub-region into chaos and violence. When this sad episode was all over, the country laid in economic shambles. It was badly divided and, due to centrifugal forces of all sorts in an advanced state of decomposition. The same could be said of the entire security sector as well. Security forces killed hundreds of peoples, chaos loomed, and Ivory Coast was no closer to democratic civilian control or real political stability than it was on December 24, 1999. Arguably, it was far worse off. Despite the adoption of a new constitution, the post-colonial political system and the elite philosophy that underpinned it was largely untouched. Understandably, the security sector was also left essentially intact.

While the military institution was not a model of unity when the coup took place, partly due to divisive tactics by both Houphouet-Boigny and Bedié, the experience of ruling the country deepened its many cleavages. Very early in the military administration the *gendarmerie*, believed to be more loyal to Bedié, was pitted against the army. Similarly, northern high-ranking Muslim officers, particularly Generals Lassana Palenfo and Abdoulaye Coulibaly, respectively second and third ranking members of the CNSP and putatively close to Alassane Ouattara, seemed to be at odds with General Guei and other southern or western Christian officers in the CNPS. To complicate this situation further, the same corporatist and materialistic-cum-political reasons that motivated the coup in the first place, led to a large-scale mutiny on July 4, and 5, 2000. In addition to asking millions of CFA Francs, the mutineers demanded no less than a pledge by General Guei that he would not run.[68]

After fierce fighting quieted down, General Guei needed all the deal-making skills he could muster (and sweeping promises of material reward) to end the mutiny. Evidently, the 40 per cent increase of the soldiers' salaries the junta had decreed earlier[69] was apparently not enough to assuage the military's assertive claims to a bigger slice of the fast shrinking financial pie. It was, however, all but

certain that Guei's candidacy to the presidency was an important reason for the restiveness in the ranks. It was soon evident that a widening rift existed in the ruling junta as well. The September 17, 2000 attack on General Guei's residence, whether real or faked, was another manifestation of the deep divisions in the military. As a direct result of this attack, Generals Palenfo and Coulibaly, fearing for their safety, had to take refuge in the Nigerian embassy to escape arrest. As their open letter to Guei from their hideout revealed, the main reason for the rift was Guei's decision to run for the presidency and their opposition to that decision.[70] Their trial under the Gbagbo regime confirms their allegations, as Guei through an envoy, urged the military tribunal to release them "because they had no hand in the attack".[71]

These developments confirm that it is indeed a difficult gamble for the military, by definition a non-democratic, hierarchical, conspiracy-prone institution, to be in charge of transforming an authoritarian political system into a real democracy. It is not sure, however, that even a unified and efficient military would have been able to carry out successfully this task after forty years of PDCI rule. The task was made singularly more difficult after Bedié's divisive policies fragmented so deeply the political elite and, generally, the Ivoirian people. Furthermore, there are objective social and political problems associated with the dozens of ethnic groups comprising Cote d'Ivoire and the fact that nearly one third of its population are immigrants from neighboring states. In addition, Ivory Coast has also had a history of economic and political disenfranchisement of the northern, predominantly Muslim part of the country by the predominantly Christian southern and western elites.[72]

After the succession struggle in which Bedié prevailed, a split in the PDCI led to the creation of the RDR (*Rassemblement Des Republicains)* around Alassane Ouattara, Houphouet-Boigny's only Prime Minister, and other disgruntled PDCI militants. While the 2001 municipal elections revealed its solid urban and national implementation, the RDR is widely believed to represent mainly northerners. The strength of the RDR and, over the last decade, the demographic shift in Cote d'Ivoire in favor of northerners, has, for the first time, made it possible for a northerner, namely Ouattara, to have a definite chance of being elected head of state. This prospect, and its potential for upsetting the economic, ethnic, religious, and political arrangement crafted by the PDCI regime, seems to have been at the heart of the efforts by Bedié and his circle to prevent Ouattara from running. As Generals Palenfo's and Coulibaly's letter suggests, these considerations may have also influenced Guei's advisors[73] in getting him to bar Ouattara one more time, and to run for the presidency himself.[74]

A Supreme Court Guei had made sure to pack with his cronies found legal reasons to eliminate any candidate susceptible to make the race competitive for the Junta leader. The former President Bedié then in exile in France, Emile Constant Bombet, his former senior minister, Mohamed Lamine Fadiga, another former minister, were all disqualified for one reason or another.[75] Guei also sabotaged the various initiatives of the international community, singularly the OAU's efforts, to find an acceptable solution to a situation with potentially grave implications for the entire West African Sub-region.[76] Nothing was to stop his plans to remain head of state. However, these plans failed, when, on October 22, election day, the electorate reported massively its votes on Laurent Gbagbo, the leader of the *Front Patriotique Ivoirien* (FPI), a long time opponent to the PDCI regime who, like Guei, is from western Cote d'Ivoire. He too seemed to have accepted the "*Ivoirité*" thesis, if only tactically in order to eliminate Ouattara. It is widely believed that Gbagbo's candidacy was validated by the Guei controlled Supreme Court only because he was thought to be weak enough to allow and make more legitimate a first round victory for Guei. To Laurent Gbagbo's credit, he called on his supporters to refuse to accept Guei's electoral putsch and to repeat the Yugoslav scenario that drove Slobodan Milosevic from power only a few weeks earlier. In so doing, he succeed, in what was referred to as the 'boulevard coup,' in bringing to a screeching halt Guei's presidential ambitions.

The aftermath

After desperately attempting to cling to power by force of arms, including by sequestering the electoral commission members and using the troops, General Guei was forced to flee the palace when it became evident that the military, both officers and rank and file had abandoned him *en masse*.[77] This should not come as a surprise given the deep division in the military brought about by the political adventure and the conflicting agendas of various officers. After a few days, he acknowledged Laurent Gbagbo as the head of state, thereby closing the military regime interlude. In a surrealist media event, President Gbagbo traveled to meet General Guei in Yamoussokro to sign with him an agreement sponsored by common French friends.[78]

Power was back in the hand of a civilian, but it was by no means democratic. Counter-intuitively, the new political dispensation did not even attempt to address the flawed civil-military relations, security sector arrangement, and the other factors that contributed to the coup in the first place. For one, it was under the newly constituted civilian regime that hundreds of people were massacred by security forces in *Yopougon*, a predominantly poor and northerner neighborhood in Abidjan.[79] In the early days and weeks of the Gbagbo regime, dozens of opponents

and nationals of Burkina Faso and Mali, Cote d'Ivoire's neighbor to the north, were tortured, raped, harassed, and imprisoned in various detention centers. While the failed transition can be blamed for some of these events, for most, it cannot. This is evidence of the prevalence of a dangerous culture in the security establishment that transcends any given regime. This culture was not addressed under the military junta, since the basis of its power was brutal force. It was not addressed by the Gbagbo regime either, since it too relied heavily on the same state coercive instruments to maintain and consolidate power. The mutiny and subsequent civil war were to confirm the worst fears many harbored.

Hopes and yet another missed opportunity

As the preceding demonstrates, if the coup was precipitated by the inept leadership, mismanagement and President Bedié's crass behavior, it brought to the surface and exacerbated the serious civil-military relations flaws, and political and social crises Côte d'Ivoire had been experiencing throughout nearly forty years of PDCI rule.

These were its root causes. The military intermission, supposed to prepare the transition to a truly democratic civilian regime did no such thing because of the equally deficient leadership of General Robert Guei, and his murderous will to retain power. Neither the Constitution nor policy initiatives addressed seriously any of the crises that help propel the military to power. The critical component of a democratic order, i.e. the civilian democratic control of the military institution and the security apparatus generally, its frameworks and basic features (including the presence and role of French military personnel) were not given the keen treatment they clearly deserved. Yet, these issues are critical to any democratic regime. Unless they were seriously addressed, the conditions that led to the various coup attempts and mutinies of the last years were bound to continue to exist, and along with them the risk of perpetually unstable civil-military relations and a crisis-laden security sector. This would continue to delay the country's and the entire West African region's move toward stability.

To his credit, Laurent Gbagbo organized the "National Reconciliation Forum" in which all protagonists in Ivoirian politics were given a podium to vent their various grievances and to push various agendas on the state. Under the able leadership of Mr. Seydou Elimane Diarra, a long time high level official and cabinet member under Houphouet-Boigny and Prime Minister under General Guei, this forum, modeled on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, overcame many obstacles. The much-heralded forum allowed the airing, in a

cathartic and therapeutic way, of painful events and taboos in an effort to exorcise the demons that seem to have taken over and poisoned the politics of the country. Not surprisingly, the nationality of Ouattara took center stage at the Forum, one of the conclusions of which was that he should be issued a nationality certificate. The Forum also allowed the airing of numerous other problems Ivory Coast has to address, including the issues of ethnicity, regionalism, land tenure, and prerequisites for national reconciliation. The Forum and other appeasing measures President Gbagbo shrewdly took definitely reduced the level of political tension and enabled the much needed resumption of economic dealing with France (which eagerly obliged), the EU and the IMF and World Bank. The only false note was the acquittal of suspected perpetrators of the massacre of *Yopougon* in which dozens (maybe hundreds) were executed by security forces as Gbagbo came to power. It soon became apparent that it was a mistake to underestimate the risk of breakdown by mistaking the reduction of tensions brought about mainly by symbolic measures and various international pressures for a stamping out of dangers of further destabilization.

To be sure, the lesson of the popular movement that chased General Guei from power was not likely to be lost on future civil-military relations. However, as the September 2002 events proved also, it was a grave mistake to overestimate its dissuasive effect, particularly when the various lingering crises described above worsened and another political impasse was in the making. More portentous, however, even as clouds gathered, was President Laurent Gbagbo's vexing inability to learn from the turbulent post-coup regime, and beyond, the deep flaws of the political systems and the security sector arrangement, his personal experience with both as a citizen and a political leader notwithstanding. Most disappointing with his tenure was what seemed to be his willingness to continue 'business as usual' in the security sector and civil-military relations singularly. There was no discernable evidence that he had questioned any fundamental underpinning of the security apparatus, its structure, practices, methods or undertaken any reform of a sector that had so profoundly destabilized the country and was about to do so again.

When he came to power after General Guei's debacle, Laurent Gbagbo had to his credit unquestioned political courage and acumen (mixed with troubling deceitfulness as General Guei lamented shortly before his death). However, he did not seem to measure the enormity of his task and the necessity to take advantage of the window of opportunity afforded him to carry out a far-reaching transformation of the political system whose defects he decried and fought for decades. In light of his record, he never was able to graduate to the stature of statesman. He remained stuck at the level of what can be labeled 'political adolescence' with a propensity to

'play politics' in the most objectionable and reckless meaning of the phrase. Consequently, by September 2002, it was evident that Gbagbo and his government had missed yet another opportunity to give the country the means of transcending the legacy of seriously defective civil-military relations and political system generally. Without realizing it perhaps, Gbagbo was only perpetuating a dispiriting pattern of Ivoirian heads of state who invariably missed propitious opportunities to overhaul a system badly broken. Unsurprisingly, they all lived to see the devastating consequences of their turpitude.

Still flirting with disaster

This section can only offer a snapshot of the acute crisis that literally brought Ivory Coast and West Africa to the brink of disaster, since it is still unfolding, and its outcome most uncertain. When President Gbagbo, for self-serving reasons and under the pretense of reducing the cost of running the state had some military units slated for discharge, a simmering crisis boiled over into the full-blown national crisis with which Cote d'Ivoire is still grappling. On September 19, 2002, these units (and others) mutinied. Soon the mutiny/coup attempt became a rebellion with the occupation of the main northern cities of Korokho and Bouake. His was quickly followed by the occupation of other major cities and threats on the capital with the aim of ousting President Gbagbo.

There is no evidence that the late General Guei, who had recreated himself as an old-fashioned party leader, was personally implicated in the events. However, he had stated in an interview that all he needed was a telephone call to "burn Côte d'Ivoire down" if he so wished.[80] He was assassinated at the beginning of rebellion, but his words proved prophetic since one of the rebel groups, the *Movement pour la Justice et la Paix*, claims to want to avenge his death. Many of the original mutinous soldiers later organized under a political movement, the *Movement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire* were allegedly recruited by him. This rebellion/civil war proved emphatically that indeed Ivory Coast was no 'miracle' as it rapidly threatened, because of its economic weight, as no other state in the region could, to pull Francophone West Africa into chaos. While through various channels the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) endeavored frantically to resolve the conflict and circumscribe a potential regional war, in the end, it failed and its leaders had to face the embarrassment of leaving it to France to take the lead in pursuing a solution.

The crisis also revealed the state of decomposition of the FANCI (*Forces Armées Nationales de Cote d'Ivoire*), the Ivoirian military and the depth of the crisis

of the security apparatus. The regular army and *gendarmerie* were losing many decisive battles against motivated rebellious units now joined by volunteers and conscripts from the North and West, and mercenaries. The numerous divisions injected in the military by political manipulation, 'ethnicization,' and later by the military regime interlude have now become even more pernicious and deadly. Furthermore, the Gbagbo government, which owed its survival to the rapid intervention of French troops and their interposition on an imposed line of cease-fire, was forced to recruit mercenaries and to bomb civilians indiscriminately undermining further its claim to legitimacy. This humiliated further the FANCI and complicated further the civil-military equation, making even more difficult the solution agreed to in the Marcoussis agreement to "restructure the defense and security forces" and "redesign a military that is attached to the republican values of integrity and morality". This clause of the agreement seems to confirm the central argument of this paper.

In addition, horrendous human rights abuses, including mass killings by dead squads, illustrated the depth of the political and social 'Ivoirian malaise'. Hundreds of thousands of West Africans living in the country as well as Ivoirian from the north were displaced internally or driven out of the country, often harassed and abused by the security forces, creating a humanitarian disaster. The Marcoussis and Accra agreements created the conditions of the beginning of national reconciliation, starting with a government of national reconciliation, the disarmament of armed groups and the creation of conditions conducive to open, free, and fair elections in October 2005 at the end of Gbagbo's term. The rebel groups joined the government headed by Seydou Diarra since March 23, 2003. On July 4th the conflict was declared over, and an amnesty law was enacted on August 6, 2003.

Cote d'Ivoire seemed then to have escaped the breakdown experienced in Liberia or Sierra Leone, though many times it came close to replicating destruction and killings on an even larger scale. The situation remains precarious, and peace has not been achieved yet by any means as the November 2004 events illustrate. First, even as the process of negotiated solution to the conflict proceeds, both sides have continued efforts to procure armaments, though this seems to have been curtailed by United Nations Security Council resolution 1572 of November 15 that imposed an embargo on arms. Notably, the joint statement of the July 4th FANCI and the *Forces Nouvelles* (the coalesced rebel groups) ratifying the end of hostilities and calling on the political leadership to stop rearmament has not. While the top brass of the FANCI displays a conciliatory attitude, the extent to which this is widely shared is uncertain as the real sense of humiliation and resentment (expressed on various occasions) may yet resurface and deep divisions remain on how to

proceed. The crisis has only increased the role of the military as indicated by the bizarre official ceremony on July 4th in which Mathias Doué, then army Chief of Staff, all but in essence 'ordered' the civilian politicians to clean up their act.

Furthermore, President Gbagbo, supposed to be striped of most of his executive powers, (though he has since cunningly reclaimed and exercised them with a vengeance), while insisting on reconciliation, has always cultivated an ambiguous attitude regarding the Marcoussis and Accra process when aspects of the agreements do not suit him. So far he succeeded in frustrating all the demands of the *Forces Nouvelles* insisting that they disarm first. The resumption of fighting in November 2004 and the dramatic developments they led to, in addition to shining a bright light on the role of France in its former colony, brought a new twist to the civil-military equation. Another line of division within the armed forces, on the one hand, and between President Gbagbo and at least some elements of the military, came to the surface on what to do to end the stalemate. In the end hardliners, represented by Colonel Phillip Mangou (who seem to share ethnicity and regional origin) seem to have won out.

In the wake of the November fighting and disturbance in Abidjan, General Mathias Doué, a former member of the military junta, up to then Chief of General Staff, was replaced by Colonel Mangou because he was considered too close to the French military and less enthusiastic to resume fighting the rebels. Speculations about his ouster (and his subsequent disappearance) and its significance for the army and more generally for the likely development of the crisis have not abetted. Meanwhile, at the time of writing, Cote d'Ivoire is still experiencing a precarious situation marked by the absence of real progress toward a peaceful resolution of the crisis even as the fatidic October 2005 (the end of Gbagbo's term) is approaching. Though it is clearly at the core of the current political crisis as the analysis demonstrates, the enduring civil-military relations predicament will most likely continue to be overlooked.

Conclusions

This article has purported to chronicle and critically analyze the civil-military relations that have manifested in Ivory Coast since independence and the nefarious effects they have had on its body politic ever since. The discussion has focused on the set-up, major actors, characteristics, and defining moments in these relations, with the December 24, 1999 coup and its consequent current crisis gripping the country as the vivid illustrations of just how deeply flawed they have been. The analysis was guided by the widely accepted proposition that only

democratic civilian control of the armed forces, which supposes a democratically elected, responsive and scrupulously respectful of the military's autonomy and professionalism, is likely to avoid breakdown in these relations. Such sound relations also preclude wanton interference of the civilian authority in the internal affairs of the military, its manipulation, and in general, the 'instrumentalization' of the military in the political arena, all of which contribute to the "coup vulnerability" concept.

It was contended that one of the constant features of Ivoirian politics since independence has been the willingness of the successive heads of state, using singularly deleterious devices, to manipulate, politicisize, and otherwise trample on the professionalism of the security apparatus to keep power. Their actions undermined the political system and divided the military, creating a propitious environment for the coup d'état and the rebellion, and complicating the prospects for a solution to the current crisis. Being prisoners of a more or less acute ethnoregional consciousness, they have consistently missed opportunities to recognize and attend to the flaws of the civil-military relations inherited and the danger this represented for the body politics. Belying persuasively the depiction of their country as a 'miracle' of sorts, all lived to suffer the consequences (often costly and tragic) of their shortsightedness. The role France was made to play in the overall architecture of civil-military relations and its long-term effect on the military's evolution was also underlined.

While, understandably, the priority now is to return the country to normalcy and eliminate the likelihood of a generalized, prolonged, and destructive civil war, the centrality of the security apparatus and its democratic control have never been as patent. This does not seem to be recognized emphatically enough in the various agreements and "road maps" which still see the process of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration in isolation of the necessity to revamp the entire security apparatus and the political system. Cote d'Ivoire has become the epitome of the praetorian state where "social forces confront each other nakedly" − where no institution or organized body is granted the legitimacy for resolving conflicts, and armed violence carries the day.[81] A clear lesson of this predicament other states can learn is to heed the advice African scholars of civil-military relations and practitioners have been insistently advocating recently: for African states to achieve overall good governance, it is imperative to overhaul entirely the security apparatus.[82] Until this becomes a genuinely accepted wisdom, it is likely that harmonious and sound civil-military relations will continue to elude Ivory Coast for the foreseeable future as they have for nearly forty-five years already.

Notes and references

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[3] This author met with other scholars on Cote d'Ivoire in December in New York to help, in conjunction with the UN, chart the most sensible way ahead after the breach in the ceasefire in October 2004.

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DEFENCE, DEMOCRACY AND SOUTH AFRICA'S CIVIL-MILITARY GAP

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Introduction

Civil-military relations theory suggests that a functional and effective military requires a unique culture, separate from its parent society. This is based on the assumption that a "gap" between the military and society is inevitable as the military's function, the lawful application of military force in accordance with government direction, is fundamentally different from civilian business. Those interested in civil-military relations are essentially concerned with determining when the "gap" between the military and parent society becomes dysfunctional in terms of civil-control over the military and/or the military's ability to execute its mandate. The correct balance needs to be obtained to ensure that the military remains strong enough to defend the state (protected *by* the military) and subservient enough not to threaten the state (protected *from* the military).[2]

Since World War II, there have been at least three distinct waves addressing the nature of the civil-military gap, the factors that have shaped it and the policies necessary to keep civil-military differences from harming national security.[3] The gap debate crystallised with Samuel P. Huntington's 1957 book, *The Soldier and the State*,[4] and Morris Janowitz's 1960 book, *The Professional Soldier*.[5] Huntington argued that the military's unique function required a military culture independent from societal influences. Any "fusionist" efforts by the civilian government, he argued, would be disastrous for military effectiveness. Janowitz disagreed with Huntington's assessment of its impact on military effectiveness. He claimed that the changing demands of modern warfare and the broadening of military tasks (to include constabulary non-military roles) required a shift in professional skills and values and that the armed forces would not be able to resist "civilianisation", for doing so would isolate it from broader society.[6]

The trauma of the Vietnam War marked the second wave of literature addressing the nature of the gap focusing this time on the work of Charles Moskos. His institutional/occupational thesis highlighted the implications of an organisation shifting from one highly divergent from civil society (institutional), to one more akin to the civilian marketplace (occupational).[7] Moskos maintained that the potential outcomes of the move away from the professional/institutional model of military organisation towards an occupational/civilian model, was that soldiers instead of being motivated by a desire to serve the "common good" were more concerned with pay, benefits and quality of working life. This he believed, would impact negatively on loyalty, commitment and military culture, and by implication, military effectiveness. Of interest is that while Moskos considered these civilianising trends harmful to the military, Janowitz disagreed on the seriousness of these occupational values for the military.[8] He maintained that due to technological advance and changing values in broader society, the military would be obliged to adapt to maintain both its legitimacy and effectiveness.

The end of the Cold War and the extraordinary changes in the international security environment sparked renewed interest in the gap debate. This time, analysts turned their attention toward the new security challenges of the post-Cold War and how these challenges would affect the mission, strategy and character of the military. Disagreement between the military and its civilian superiors flared into confrontation over questions like women serving in combat roles, trade union rights for soldiers,[9] and the involvement of the military in peace missions.[10] Collectively, these problems revived the classical Huntington-Janowitz debate, between those who emphasised the need for the military to be different and for this difference to be respected, and those who argued that, given the new missions of the armed forces, traditional military culture now served a less essential purpose.[11]

Although the issues associated with the civil-military gap debate have remained much of the same, tension in civil-military relations has heightened in the post-Cold War era due to the impact of a number of new systemic forces. In an international security environment where armed forces are asked to help, protect and save rather than fight, commanders have grappled with ways to bridge the gap between their mandate (to fight wars), the demands placed upon them in terms of the new security environment (maintaining peace and global security) and the need to accommodate individual rights (political imperatives) imposed upon it by broader society.[12] Increasingly academics in other countries (that is, apart from the US) have begun to recognise these tensions between the military and civil society and the impact this has on civil-military relations in democratic societies.[13]

Against this brief theoretical background, this study seeks to establish the status of the civil-military gap in South Africa, by analysing the responses of civilian students and military officers on a range of security issues, and comparing these quantitative findings with the qualitative information obtained during interviews and literature in the field. In so doing, an attempt is made to ascertain whether a civil-military gap exists in South Africa and the implications this holds for civil-military relations.

Research Methodology

The instrument used to measure the civil-military gap was a questionnaire designed by the European Research Group on Military and Society (*Ergomas*) and used in eighteen different countries. This study reports only on the South African findings. The study was conducted in three phases, the first comprising a literature review of relevant material in the field, the second in-depth interviews with specific target groups and third, the distribution of the *Ergomas* questionnaire to civilian students and military officers of comparable age and educational background. Not all the questions were included for analysis in this study, only those of relevance to the military gap in South Africa are discussed.[14]

Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with two senior South African National Defence Force (SANDF) military officers, one responsible for Corporate Communications and the other for external military operations; two journalists, one from a daily Afrikaans newspaper, the other from a weekly English newspaper; two politicians, a representative from the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the other from the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA); two anti-war/peace campaigners; and two military analysts, one working at a civilian university, the other employed by a leading non-governmental organisation involved in security research and capacity building in Africa[15]. The interviewers were sensitive to the political, cultural and military backgrounds of the respective interviewees, as well as race and gender.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires were distributed to respondents during the period July 2003 to March 2004. The military officers (hereafter officers) responding to the questionnaire were either in their first year of commission, or final under-graduate or post-graduate year of study at the South African Military Academy, Saldanha. The civilian respondents were civilian students (hereafter students) attending the Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape, and the University of

Cape Town[16] in the following academic departments, political science, law, economics and engineering. Only persons who volunteered to take part in the study completed the questionnaires. A total of 226 questionnaires were handed out of which 36 questionnaires were incomplete and were discarded. A total of 190 questionnaires were processed.

Demographic profile

The demographic profile of respondents by race and gender for the two control groups in the sample is reflected below (Table 1).

The age of respondents varied between 19 years and 38 years. The mean age of all the respondents was 24. Of the respondents, 38.4% indicated that their father has served in the military, while 1.6% revealed that their mother served in the military.

Table 1: Demographic profile

	Military Officers		**Civilian Students**	
Gender	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Male	51	26.8	76	40.0
Female	10	5.3	53	27.9
Race	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Black	29	15.6	31	16.7
White	23	12.4	71	38.2
Coloured	5	2.7	24	12.9
Asian	2	1.1	1	0.5

Data analysis

The aim of this study was to determine if there were any differences in the opinions of students and officers on a range of civil-military relations issues. Most of the data was recorded on a four-point scale and differences were determined through a *chi*-square test at a 5% level of significance. For statistical purposes, responses were often grouped by combining two adjacent categories to enhance the validity of the test. The Student's *t*-test was conducted with to compare the opinions of students and officers on a ten-point scale. This was done since normality could be assumed and because of the variability of the data over larger range of values.

In the final interpretation of the data, the findings were discussed with reference to information obtained from the interviews and other secondary sources. The ultimate aim was to determine if there is a convergence in the attitudes of

officers and students on range of security issues discussed and whether, with reference to the qualitative information obtained from the interviews and literature in the field, if these 'gaps' can be confirmed, and if so, what this means for civil-military relations and military effectiveness in South Africa.

Limitations

Although this project is the only comprehensive study of the so-called civil-military gap in South Africa, there are a number of limitations. Firstly, the survey focused on an elite group of officers and students and the results may not be indicative of the opinions of the rank and file of the SANDF, or of the broader South African student or general population. It is acknowledged that differences, such as race, gender, educational qualifications, years of study and direction, are important in terms of how different groups perceive security. However, in the discussion of the findings, these factors were not reported. In terms of demographic profile, more whites responded to this survey than blacks.

Nonetheless, these respondents represent a cohort of our educated youth and their perceptions as our future leaders and decision-makers serve as an indication of how security matters are perceived. When the findings are compared with the qualitative information obtained in the interviews and literature in the field, the trends are clear that a civil-military gap is evident in South Africa.

Main findings

In the following section, the findings of the Ergomas survey conducted among military officers and civilian students are discussed. Studies point to an emergence of a civil-military gap on three levels – a cultural gap, a functional gap and a knowledge gap.

Indications of a cultural gap

The cultural gap,[17] refers to a clash in values between the military and civilian cultures. Loyalty and selfless service are considered the most desirable qualities in individuals serving in the military. Accordingly, the military profession requires all members to demonstrate high standards of patriotism, discipline, courage, and self-sacrifice in the course of their duties.[18] The less emphasis civil society places on these values, the more difficult it becomes for the military to inculcate and enforce these values. Thus, the first set of questions relate to the value individuals attach to certain character traits and their willingness to submit to authority.

Personal and military values

The respondents were asked to indicate the importance of 19 virtues in the education of their children, among them discipline, responsibility, tolerance, patriotism, comradeship, orderliness, traditionalism, obedience, creativity, loyalty, spirit of equality, generosity, initiative, self-control, determination, open-mindedness, team spirit, and so forth. Of the 19 qualities listed, significant difference in opinion emerged between students and officers on seven characteristics. Officers felt far stronger that discipline ($p=0.021$), patriotism ($p=0.005$), comradeship ($p=0.020$), traditionalism ($p=0.052$), obedience ($p=0.017$) initiative ($p=0.006$) and determination ($p=0.047$) are important in their children's education. Although not statistically significant, other characteristics such as loyalty, team spirit, and honour were of greater importance to military officers compared to the students

Following this, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the same virtues for the military. On this there was consensus, with most respondents indicating that discipline, responsibility, honesty, team spirit, obedience, loyalty, orderliness, honour, self-control, comradeship, orderliness, and determination as important for the military. Only on the values of obedience ($p=0.052$) and traditionalism ($p=0.028$) did officers score higher than students, while the need for self-control, was regarded significantly more important for the military by students ($p=0.021$).

Individualism versus collectivism

The military demands a higher sense of obedience and compliance of its members than the civilian world. Thus, the responses to the questions measuring the level of individualism among respondents are important in terms of authority relations and traditional military culture. In this regard, students were significantly less "willing to give into arguments" (76% versus 90% usually never give in) than officers. Little difference in opinion emerged between students and officers when it came to whether they would "change their minds when in an argument" (officers 84% versus students 89%).

Most of the respondents indicated that they "do not easily give into arguments" or "change their opinions", and most favoured "consensus decision-making". Across the board both students and officers indicated that they were "not hesitant to disagree with the group". They were almost equally divided on the question on whether they "like to beat the system".

Table 2: Questions on consensus decision-making

	Level of Agreement				*Chi-square*
Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	***p***
I usually favour group consensus	**25.9**	**42.9**	**21.8**	**9.4**	0.646
Military officers	32.1	39.6	20.8	7.5	
Civilian students	23.1	44.4	22.2	10.3	
I do not hesitate to disagree with the group	**55.0**	**32.2**	**10.5**	**2.3**	0.795
Military officers	50.9	34.0	11.3	3.8	
Civilian students	56.8	31.4	10.2	1.7	
I like to beat the system	**23.3**	**31.3**	**34.4**	**11.0**	
Military officers	26.0	20.0	38.0	16.0	0.169
Civilian students	22.1	36.3	32.7	8.8	
I always listen to my leaders	**24.3**	**41.6**	**28.9**	**5.2**	
Military officers	42.6	37.0	14.8	5.6	0.001
Civilian students	16.0	43.7	35.3	5.0	

Percentages in 1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly.

The only, rather obvious, difference between officers and students on the issue of individualism and collectivism was that officers were significantly more (p=0.001) prepared to "always listen to their leaders" (see Table 2). Nonetheless, what these responses indicate a strong sense of self-determination by both the military and civilian youth.

Indications of a functional gap

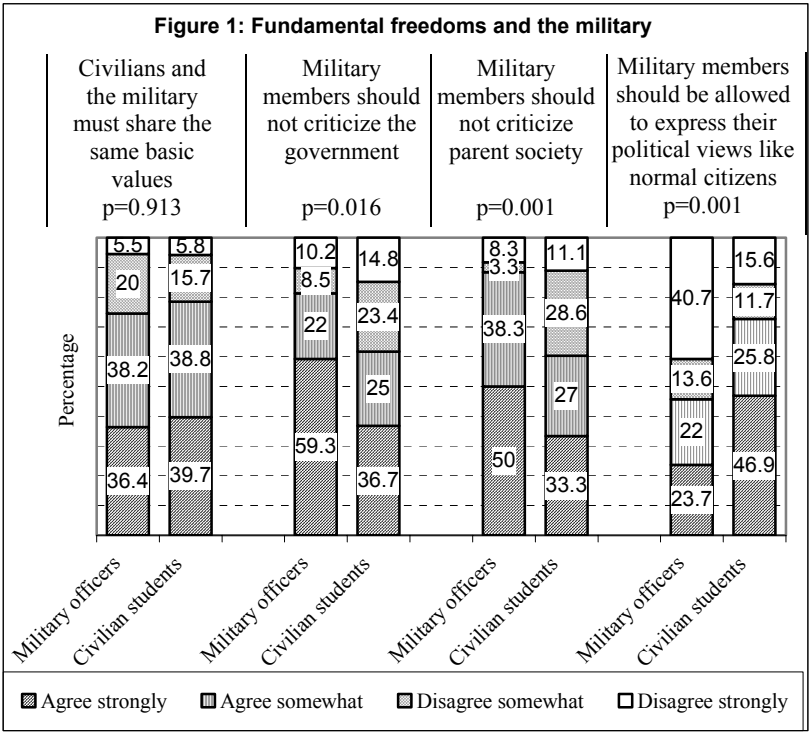
The functional gap underscores the pressures placed on the military to conform to politically, socially, and morally correct imperatives.[19] Here respondents were asked to respond to questions relating to equality of rights, gender equality and the use of the military in various roles and how this is perceived to impact on the operational effectiveness of the SANDF.

Equality of rights

With the emphasis placed on equality of rights in the Constitution of the RSA, it is not surprising that across the board, both officers and civilians attached a great deal of importance to these principles and most agreed that the "equality of people", the "respect of individual rights" and that the "basic freedoms of

individuals" are very important. No significant differences between the two groups were observed on the question "civilians and the military must share the same basic values" which indicates that officers generally felt that they should be granted the same basic fundamental rights and responsibilities as any other citizen.

Figure 1: Fundamental freedoms and the military



Some interesting differences of opinion were established with regards to freedom of expression. From Figure 1 it follows that at a 5% level of significance, most officers were not comfortable with the idea that the military should criticise the government (p=0.016), or the parent society (p=0.001). Even more interesting was the fact that a significant amount of students strongly agreed that "military members should be allowed to express their political views like normal citizens", while officers strongly disagreed with this statement (p=0.001).

Gender equality

In line with the provisions of the new Constitution, military policy guidelines were issued to allow women to serve in all roles in the military, including in combat roles.[20] In this regard, differences of opinion existed between officers and students on gender equality. Students were significantly more (p=0.032) in favour of women being fully integrated into the military on an optional basis than officers, but did not support the full integration of women on a compulsory basis. Officers, on the other hand were more (p=0.017) in favour of women serving in the military on a compulsory basis, but not in combat roles.

Respondents were asked to indicate what factors they thought, if any, would warrant women not serving in the military. Although not statistically significant, officers felt stronger than students that women should not serve in combat because "women are not effective in combat", that "women could be taken prisoner or abused", that "the death of women soldiers will demoralise male soldiers and the public", and that there is "little privacy for men and women in military jobs". On the aspect of the impact of pregnancy on deployability, officers felt significantly stronger that this has a negative impact on the organisation (p=0.016).

Prioritising defence tasks

Most of the respondents agreed that the military's primary role is to defend the country, but that it should also be deployed in military operations other than war (MOOTW) including "peacekeeping missions, disaster relief, to fight terrorism, combat drug-trafficking and to deal with domestic disorder". The only significant difference with regards to the military being used in non-traditional missions was that officers were more in favour of their involvement in controlling mass immigration (p=0.014). However, when it came to the missions that entailed the use of force, officers were far more in favour of their involvement in peace-enforcement missions (p<0.001) and combat missions (p<0.001). Moreover, a significantly higher number of officers reported that "the most important role for the military is preparation for and the conduct of war" (p<0.001) and that "war is sometimes necessary to protect the national interest" (p<0.001). This suggests that officers still view their core function as warfighting, even though they are used predominately in missions where the use of force is the last resort.

Hereby it is not implied that officers object to being deployed in MOOTW. Although officers did not entirely agree that "peacekeeping and other non-combat missions are presently central to the military function", most (66%) strongly supported the idea that "the military should be prepared to cover a wide-spectrum of possible missions". This is particularly significant, as both officers and

students seem to agree that government should not focus only on national security issues, but also deal with security issues which contribute towards the well-being (quality of life) and survival of people.[21] In this regard, both officers and students regarded organised crime (89.3%), international drug trafficking (88.8%), the threat of mass immigration from foreign countries (88.0%), terrorism in our countries (68.4%), and the possibility of armed conflict between African countries with which we have cooperative relations (53.9%) as the most likely security threats facing the country.

Despite the consensus on the level of importance of these threats, some differences emerged with regards to the likelihood of these threats to the country. The fact that SANDF has been responsible for borderline and soldiers are often sent on border control duties explains why officers felt significantly stronger ($p=0.007$) that mass immigration posed a serious threat. Significantly more officers (71.7%) than students (54.5%) felt that the threat of "attacks on computer networks" was likely. This may be ascribed to the emphasis placed on information warfare in the education of officers. Moreover, although neither officers nor students rated the possibility of nuclear blackmail from developing countries as a serious threat, officers thought this more likely ($p=0.012$) than students.

Indications of a knowledge gap

The *knowledge* gap denotes a lack of understanding between the military and parent society, which affects informed decision-making on military matters, interest in, and support for the armed forces.[22] In this section, questions relating to civil control of the military, the influence of the media and the status of the military reflect the implications a growing knowledge gap has for civil-military relations.

Civil control of military

Given this, the responses of officers and students to the questions relating to civil control of the military are noteworthy. Although not statistically significant, officers were more inclined to support the statement that "the military profession should be subordinate to the political leadership" and that "politicians must give professional autonomy to the military". However, both students and officers agreed that "the military should advocate policies that it believes are in the best interests of the country". In terms of the gap debate, this is important as it indicates a need for the military to make known and defend its needs. This could imply that the military is prepared to accept civil-military *control* provided that there is enough civil-military *cooperation* or dialogue with government on issues that affect the military (Table 3).

Table 3: Military subordination and the military's role in society

	Level of Agreement				*Chi-square*
Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	***p***
The military profession is subordinate to the political leadership	**38.9**	**38.3**	**18.3**	**4.6**	0.070
Military officers	52.7	30.9	14.5	1.8	
Civilian students	32.5	41.7	20.0	5.8	
The military should defend and support the government's policies	**36.3**	**30.2**	**17.6**	**15.9**	0.873
Military officers	35.6	30.5	20.3	13.6	
Civilian students	36.6	30.1	16.3	17.1	
The military should advocate military policies that it believes are in the best interests of the country	**47.7**	**33.5**	**11.4**	**7.4**	0.756
Military officers	47.2	30.2	15.1	7.5	
Civilian students	48.0	35.0	9.8	7.3	
The military should have direct political influence in society	**12.1**	**25.8**	**28.0**	**34.1**	0.731
Military officers	8.5	27.1	27.1	37.3	
Civilian students	13.8	25.2	28.5	32.5	
Politicians must give professional autonomy to the military	**30.6**	**32.9**	**26.0**	**10.4**	0.086
Military officers	42.6	29.6	16.7	11.1	
Civilian students	25.2	34.5	30.3	10.1	

In percentage1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly

Despite the fact that officers felt that the principle of subordination of the military to political leadership must be respected, 58% reported that politicians are very or somewhat ignorant of military affairs, and only 6.1% regarded politicians as being very and 35.9% somewhat knowledgeable on military matters. The student group expressed similar reservations on the level of competency of politicians on military matters. This explains why both officers and students felt that the military

should be able to influence decisions affecting defence so as to ensure informed decision-making by politicians.

When asked how much confidence they had in various institutions on a scale of 1-10, officers held institutions of the state in higher esteem than students. In this regard, the *t*-test showed that officers held significantly higher levels of confidence in the President ($p=0.001$) and in the military ($p<0.001$) than students. The level of confidence expressed in other state institutions was comparable between the two groups, although officers, on the whole, were more supportive of government compared to students.

The media and public opinion

The media plays an important role in influencing and directing public opinion. In light of this, the responses of officers and students to the questions relating to the media and the military are noteworthy. Officers and students reported that their main sources of information on the military were newspapers, television news and radio news. Very few students consulted special military newspapers or magazines on military affairs. For officers this was their main source of information on military matters and compared to the mass media, obviously more creditworthy.

The fact that students relied heavily on the mass media for information on military matters is of some concern, given that both students and officers (54.6%) stated that the "level of information the media is not good". The lack of accurate and factual information on military matters plays an important part in shaping perceptions of the military. Although most respondents thought the depiction of the military in the media was neutral to somewhat hostile, officers felt significantly stronger that the media was hostile towards the military ($p=0.01$).

The status of the military in society

The relatively poor public image together with a general lack of interest in security issues, explains why students displayed a high level of apathy towards the military and few stated that they had any keen interest in security issues. On a scale of 1-4, where 1 equals strongly agree and 4 strongly disagree, only 36.4% students compared to 75.4% officers demonstrated a keen interested in security issues, with almost a fifth of the students indicating little or no interest in military service ($p<0.001$) (Table 4).

Table 4: Importance of military service

	Level of Agreement				*Chi-square*
Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	***p***
South Africans should always feel patriotic	**53.3**	**33.7**	**10.1**	**3.0**	**0.036**
Military officers	69.8	22.6	5.7	1.9	
Civilian students	45.7	38.8	12.1	3.4	
Good citizenship means serving in the military	**23.2**	**28.6**	**31.0**	**17.3**	**<0.001**
Military officers	40.4	38.5	17.3	3.8	
Civilian students	15.5	24.1	37.1	23.3	
All South Africans should be willing to fight for the country	**39.6**	**26.0**	**19.5**	**14.8**	**<0.001**
Military officers	73.6	18.9	3.8	3.8	
Civilian students	24.1	29.3	26.7	19.8	
Strong armed forces improve our image throughout the world	**33.9**	**32.7**	**25.6**	**7.7**	**<0.001**
Military officers	56.6	28.3	13.2	1.9	
Civilian students	23.5	34.8	31.3	10.4	
The military is the most important part of public life	**20.1**	**21.8**	**37.9**	**20.1**	**<0.001**
Military officers	37.5	23.2	33.9	5.4	
Civilian students	11.9	21.2	39.8	27.1	
All men should do some national service	**28.2**	**22.4**	**26.4**	**23.0**	
Military officers	44.6	26.8	17.9	10.7	**0.001**
Civilian students	20.3	20.3	30.5	28.8	
I am proud of women and men that serve in the military	**47.0**	**31.9**	**16.3**	**4.8**	0.491
Military officers	53.7	24.1	16.7	5.6	
Civilian students	43.8	35.7	16.1	4.5	
The South African armed forces are attracting high-quality, motivated recruits	**28.8**	**19.2**	**32.1**	**19.9**	**0.002**
Military officers	44.4	9.3	22.2	24.1	
Civilian students	20.6	24.5	37.3	17.6	

In percentage 1=agree strongly, 2=agree somewhat, 3=disagree somewhat, 4=disagree strongly

Highly significant differences were observed on the willingness to serve in the military. Students were less patriotic than officers (84.5% versus 92.4%) and few thought "good citizenship means serving in the military" (39.6% versus 78.9%) or that "all South Africans should be willing to fight for their country" (53.4% versus 92.5%). This places a serious question mark over loyalty to the country should its national interests be threatened.

Apart from the general lack of interest in military service, a significant number of students did not agree that the "military is the most important part of public life" ($p<0.001$). They also disagreed with the statement that "strong armed forces improve our image throughout the world" ($p<0.001$), implying that powerful armed forces are not in realist terms, central to state power. There was also significant disagreement over whether all men should do some form of national service. Nonetheless both students and officers respected those who serve in the military, although students did not think that the SANDF was attracting high quality, motivated recruits ($p=0.002$).

Discussion

For the South African armed forces, the post-Cold War era has truly been an era of uncertainty and change. Unlike many other Western armed forces, the SANDF had to adapt not only to a new strategic environment, but to a new political dispensation which affected almost every facet of its being. These systemic forces have influenced civil-military relations in various ways, impacting on attitudes towards military service, the functioning of the military itself and civil control over the armed forces. In this regard, when an analysis is made of the findings on the three themes presented and compared with the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and available literature in the field, the evidence clearly points to an emerging civil-military gap similar to that observed in other countries.

In terms of personal values and attitudes, the DOD established a Workgroup on Organisational Culture to formulate a value system for military personnel that was acceptable to all and in line with national values as defined in the Constitution. The seven values identified as guiding principles were patriotism, loyalty, human dignity, professionalism, integrity, leadership and accountability.[23] Together with the Code of Conduct, these values serve as the guiding principles for members of the SANDF.[24] The emphasis placed on these values largely explains why officers regarded discipline, patriotism, comradeship, orderliness, traditionalism, obedience, initiative, and determination as more important in their

children's education than students. However, both officers and students agreed that these values are important for the military.

Although officers were far more "prepared to listen to their leaders" than students, they were equally assertive in terms of their opinions. This implies that the youth of today want to be valued and respected as individuals. In an environment where egalitarianism is becoming the norm, tolerance for authoritarian leadership and even unqualified obedience to authority in the military is on the wane. In future, military leadership will face a greater challenge in socialising members into accepting traditional military values, especially where members have become more questioning and less accepting of a military culture based on subservience and conformism.

Exacerbating this trend is the growing rights-based culture within society, based on the need of the military to conform to civilian values and practices espoused in the Bill of Rights. In terms of accommodating individual freedoms in the military, officers attached a great deal of importance to certain democratic principles and less on others, depending on how they perceived the impact on military effectiveness. For example, officers were concerned that certain freedoms would impact negatively on loyalty and the political neutrality of the forces. In terms of gender integration, while officers accepted that women should be allowed to serve in the forces in all roles, they had reservations about their suitability for combat. Typically militaries prefer a gap to exist in terms of certain cultural values in order to retain an ethos and regulatory framework necessary for its operational effectiveness. However, across the world armed forces are increasingly having to justify why it is necessary to restrict certain individual rights.

In this regard the Department of Defence has faced a number of court battles, which have compelled the SANDF to recognise for example, the right of military personnel to belong to trade unions and to adjust the military justice system to ensure "equality before the law". According to a senior military officer, the correct balance between these democratic rights and the need to maintain the effectiveness in the SANDF "has still not been reached".[25] The findings illustrate that whilst there is the acceptance that soldiers are citizens, military personnel felt strongly that the difference lies in the fact that "they are soldiers not civilians", and that the nature of their profession requires that certain fundamental rights be limited in order to maintain their warfighting capability.

Besides the emphasis placed on egalitarian values, another societal trend that influences military functioning is the growing pacifism within society. Students

for example, were less supportive of the military becoming involved in missions that require the use of military force. These results are by no means unique to South Africa. Similar gap studies conducted in Germany and France revealed that the military not only attached more weight to military force as a political instrument, but was more readily inclined to use military force for security goals, whereas civilians were more reserved and reluctant to make use of force.[26] Numerous other studies in America have yielded similar results.[27]

In terms of South Africa's defence policy, the primary role of the SANDF as stipulated in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,* the *White Paper on Defence*[28] and the *Defence Review*[29] is to defend the country against external aggression. However, it is for its secondary function, "to defend and protect its people in accordance with the Constitution and principles of international law", that the SANDF has been most operational since 1990. More recently, the political demand to realise the objectives set out by the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)[30] has ensured that the SANDF has become more involved in peace support operations. Indeed, developing a regional capacity to deal with Africa's security challenges and participating in NEPAD's programmes is currently one of the government's priorities.[31]

For students and those interviewed, the concern was less with external security, and more with internal security threats such as crime, drug trafficking and disaster relief.[32] Many hold the view that South Africa's security is best served by preventing internal conflict caused by high unemployment, poverty, as well as ethnic and racial tensions, than by keeping the peace in Africa.[33] However, government has taken a definite decision to remove the armed forces from these internal roles and channel the available resources to external deployments in line with its foreign policy objectives. The findings indicate that definite tension appears to exist in terms of what the military is trained for, what civil society wants from the military and what politicians regard as national and foreign policy priorities.

Who decides on the defence priorities? In South Africa, civil control over the armed forces is exercised through parliamentary defence committees, the Minister of Defence and Defence Secretariat. A civilian Defence Secretariat is responsible for the formulation of policies, programmes and budgets and controls the execution of the mandate of the Defence Force. The Chief of the SANDF, previously effectively in command of the DoD, now has a greatly reduced role, and is chiefly responsible for the efficient management, command, and administration of the SANDF and its operations. This system of civilian control has been adopted in order to guarantee that the armed forces are excused from involvement in politics

except through prescribed channels, and that the civilians cannot interfere in operational matters.[34]

As members of the SANDF pledge, "to respect the democratic political process and civil control of the SANDF"[35] it is not surprising that they felt significantly stronger than students that "the military profession must be subordinate to the political leadership". Yet at the same time, they felt that "politicians need to give professional autonomy to the military". This reflects the tension that exists between the functions of the Secretary of Defence and that of the Chief of the Defence Force.[36] According to the Democratic Alliance (DA) representative in Parliament, there is "tension between the Minister of Defence and Chief of the SANDF, specifically over the power, duties and areas of responsibility of the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the SANDF".[37]

The tension is not because officers do not accept civil supremacy, but due to the perception (among officers and civilians alike) that "political leaders are not all that knowledgeable on military matters". Across the spectrum, military officers, journalists, academics and politicians stated that politicians do not understand the challenges the SANDF has faced since 1994. Statements include, "there is too much expectation of the SANDF and this is placing the military in an unfair position. The politicians think that when the military says it needs more time, that they are stalling or unwilling. Politicians speak out before the military has been consulted and this is a source of great tension for commanders."[38] "Politicians promise things that the military cannot deliver. They are over-enthusiastic about the abilities of the military".[39] "Politicians have no idea of the role of the military" and show a "lack of real interest in finding out what is going on".[40]

While the Department of Defence holds regular information briefings with the Parliamentary Portfolio committees to inform, advise and to direct operations, there is an apparent lack of credible information to make informed decisions on military matters. Many express the view that the military should be more involved in constructive dialogue with civil society.[41] Although officers did not support the right of members "to criticize government or the even parent society", they supported the view that "the military should advocate military policies that it believes are in the best interest of the country". However, a new policy directive on media liaison issued by the Minister of Defence, Mosiuoa Lekota, in July 2000, has limited the "advocacy" role of commanders. In effect, this policy centralised all communications with the media, virtually denying commanders the opportunity to communicate directly with the media on any matter unless it passed through the Office of the Minister of Defence.[42]

This situation is considered to have created renewed and unnecessary tension between the military and the media.[43] Consequently, the media has tended to focus on sensational issues – sex scandals, racial tensions, the conflict with the trade unions and disciplinary problems, rather than the positive contribution the SANDF is making. Therefore, it is not surprising that officers considered the media critical of the military, that public opinion of the military was not very good and that the public viewed their profession negatively. The lack of credible information to the public, the negative publicity and growing distance between civil society and the military invariably impacts on the morale of the forces, as well as recruitment and retention.

For many in civil society, the SANDF is a faceless organisation and it is apparent that the public needs more information on how the SANDF operates, on the challenges of transformation, the problems the SANDF faces, how the defence budget is spent and the operations the SANDF is involved in.[44] According to Kent and Malan, the SANDF does not have a proactive public information strategy and has chosen to suppress information, rather than providing open and timely information on military matters.[45] Academics confirm that, "there is not enough information on explaining the role and function of the military. People sit with snippets of information and there is no informed or mature debate on military issues".[46]

One military journalist felt that as a result of this, the military has become "isolated from society and that in order to bridge the gap, the military should raise its profile, be accountable, be transparent and increase communication with the media". Mr David Dlali, member of the ruling ANC, claimed, "the military is not well understood by civil-society that this can be blamed on both the public representatives (members of parliament) and the communications sections of the military".[47] Another journalist[48] expressed the view that the restrictions placed on the SANDF by the Minister of Defence on communication with the media, has "hampered the flow of information to the press". Across the board military journalists, military officers and military academics stated that the relations with the media are worse now than ever before and that the military there is a dire need for a more open, critical debate on military issues. This has contributed to the growing "information gap" on military affairs.[49]

In conclusion, it is apparent that students do not attach the same value to military service as officers. They were nowhere near as patriotic, loyal to the country, or prepared to serve in the military out of national security concerns. Few,

students "felt that good citizenship means serving in the military" and these views are supported in terms of their attitude towards conscription. Nonetheless, most were proud of those who serve in the South African armed forces, although they did not think the SANDF was attracting the best recruits. These attitudes are symptomatic of a growing apathy towards military, brought about by the absence of any direct threat, contact, and information on the military.

Conclusions

What does this mean in terms of the civil-military gap for South Africa? As regards military culture, although military personnel are clearly more patriotic and place a high premium on traditional military values, they display the same level of self-determination as civilians. Judging from the responses to the questions relating to the level of individualism, it is clear that the youth of today, both military and civilian are becoming more individualistic and assertive. To some extent this is antithetical to traditional military culture, which requires unswerving discipline, loyalty and obedience to the chain of command. Together with a growing rights based culture within society, this has compelled the armed forces to balance the needs of the individual versus those of the organisation. This brings us back to the classical Huntington-Janowitz debate on where is the optimal middle ground. What one sees is an increasing congruence of civil and military values, where the military is being obliged to accept this, but would prefer a "gap" to enable it to instil the values it regards as essential to military effectiveness.

The changed international and domestic environment has also placed pressure on the SANDF in terms of other political, social and moral imperatives. There appears to be a mismatch vis-à-vis what the military is trained for, what civil society wants from the military and what the politicians regard as national and foreign policy priorities. With fewer people having any direct contact with the military, this could place a strain on civil-military relations, especially where this relates to funding and public support for the military. With the end of conscription and a growing lack of contact between civil society and the military, an understanding of the challenges facing the armed forces become less respected and valued by broader society. The implication is an overstretched military, increasingly alienated from society and less capable of fulfilling its mandate. While it is accepted that these tensions will exist within a democratic society, the concern lies more within the realm of civil-military relations.

In South Africa, the civil-military gap is exacerbated by a lack of critical debate and growing apathy towards the military. This affects informed decision-

making and civil control of the military. The question can rightly be asked "how are ministers to control the armed forces when they (usually) lack the necessary knowledge and experience to do so effectively?"[50] The former chair of the Portfolio Committee on Defence, Thandi Modise, stated, "There is nothing as dangerous to democracy as an ignorant MP, let us keep on learning".[51] In this regard, definite tension exists between civilian decision makers, politicians and commanders on military affairs, based on the lack of basic military expertise.[52]

The lack of understanding of the military also impacts on recruitment to the armed forces and willingness of those to serve their country. Who joins the armed forces and their reasons for joining is important to all societies as it has significant implications for the character and stability of the political system. The fact that some states are directly governed by military regimes drawn from the officer corps, while others actively strive to ensure that the armed forces remain subordinate to the armed forces, indicates that who joins the forces is of central importance to society. The finding that respondents in this study showed little interest in military matters and military service, points to some concern in terms of the future leadership of the SANDF.

Although this study has identified specific tensions between the military and civil-society, the exact implications of the widening civil-military gap in South Africa, is a subject for further research and debate. Clearly, there is matter for concern. Should the factors contributing to this "gap" be left unchecked, it can affect not only the functioning and civil control of the armed forces, but national interest and future security, however this is defined.

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[13] See *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26/2, June 2003, pp. 1-63.
[14] Lindy Heinecken and Richard Gueli, The Cultural Gap between the Military and the Parent Society in South Africa. Paper presented at the International Sociological Association, RC 01, on Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution, hosted by the Middle East Technical University and the Turkish Military Academy, Ankara, 7-9 July 2004.
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[16] The three universities were chosen for different historic reasons. While all the universities are now fully racially integrated, the University of Cape Town is a historically white English university. The University of Stellenbosch, is historically white-Afrikaans and also houses the Faculty of Military Science of the South African Military Academy. Thus, it has 'ties' with the military. The University of the Western Cape is historically black. All three universities are located in the Western Cape.
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[37] *Interview* with Mr Hendrik C. Schmidt, Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament, 22 September 2003.
[38] *Interview* with Senior Military Officer, Pretoria, 11 July 2003.
[39] *Interview* with Mr Mark Malan, Head: Peace Missions Programme, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 9 July 2003.
[40] *Interview* with a journalist from the *Weekly Mail and Guardian* who preferred to remain anonymous, Cape Town, 15 September 2003.
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SOCIOLOGY, BIOLOGY OR PHILOSOPHY OF A WARRIOR? REFLECTIONS ON JAN SMUTS, GUERRILLA–BEING AND A POLITICS OF CHOICES [1]

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Introducing Smuts

This article could have been titled "Feeling our way into the mind of a man formed in guerrilla war more than a century ago." South Africa produced arguably three statesmen of international stature. These are Shaka-Zulu (militarist, conqueror and Jacobin nation-builder), Jan Smuts (guerilla, military leader, statesman and philosopher) and Nelson Mandela (leader of the struggle for liberation from white minority rule and renowned reconciliatory statesman). Within their own historical epochs these men became known far outside the territory of their birth and carved their names into international history and political discourse.

[1] An early version of this article was delivered at the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa in Durban, circa 2001. I am indebted to Mogobe Ramose (Department of Philosophy, Unisa) for critical comments. André du Toit and Abraham Olivier deserve thanks for their interest in the topic. I owe gratitude to Vladimir Shubin, for valuable questions, critical "corrections" and collegial support. My colleague and friend, Gert van der Westhuizen, acted as a valued soundboard and discussion-partner. I had the opportunity to test an adapted version of the paper at the War and Society in Africa Conference initiated by the Subject Group Military History at the SA Military Academy somewhat later. I owe thanks to Gen. Solly Molo, Gen. Roy Alexander (SANDF), Prof. Leo Barnard (University of the Free State) and Castro Khwela (previously attached to the Military Academy) for thoughtful comments. I thank Ina Snyman (*emeritus* Chief Specialist Researcher and Program Director, HSRC) for careful reading and comments on various versions of earlier work in progress. Lastly, the challenging, critical and constructive feedback by the peer reviewers for this submission to *Scientia Militaria* cannot go unnoticed and deserve my deep gratitude. For the arguments and imperfections in the end product, I take full responsibility. This paper is dedicated to my father, Eben Liebenberg, who kindled my interest in Smuts (in fact he was the first to tell his inquisitive little boy the "story" of Smuts on a Sunday afternoon walk long, long ago in *die duine van Keidebees*). This contribution is also in fond remembrance of a close friend, colleague, mate and comrade, the late Rocky Williams.

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Jan Smuts was a thinker *and* a doer. He was a statesman, a military man, a botanist and an intellectual of international standing. Some chose to call him a philosopher. Others referred to him as "a man of letters" versed in communication, correspondence and literary works in various languages (Grimbeek, 2000: 37). He also was a renowned guerrilla. Was he an extremely rare breed or was he through his experience, simply a product of his time? What experience(s) produced the "political" or "later" Smuts? Many noteworthy attempts were made to describe and interpret Smuts. Some works dealt with his military leadership and political prowess such as Hancock (1962, 1968), Van Meurs (1997), or were biographical in nature (Crafford, 1945; Smuts, 1955). Others dealt with certain epochs in his life, i. e. the Anglo-Boer War (South African War) or other limited areas in his life (Spies and Nattrass, 1999; Smith, 1999; Grobler, 2000). Some of these works are so monumental that they will stand as classics in their genre for years to come. But do they answer all that there is to say about Jan Smuts?

It is contended that there is a specific, less explored angle on Smuts that may contribute to this dialogue. There is place for an analysis of the close linkage of "military" and "political mind" of Smuts. More so, the deep impact of guerrilla experience on his life and being needs attention. Few – if any of the works on Smuts – embarked extensively on comparing the "military" and the "civil" or "political" Smuts (See for example Beukes, 1994; Crafford, 1945; Grimbeek, 2000; Hancock, 1962 and 1965; Meiring, 1974; Oost, 1956; Smith, 1999; Spies & Natrass, 1994, soft cover - 1999; Van Meurs, 1997). More important and applicable here: even fewer sources try to relate an understanding of the "military mind" of Smuts vis-à-vis his "political mind" and the human, existential and political choices he made as being forged by his early guerrilla experiences during the Anglo-Boer War.

The relatively short, but supremely intense experience of guerrilla war probably reflects the most formative body/mind (existential) juncture for Smuts and many other guerrillas before and after him. Before that he was educated at Victoria College (today University of Stellenbosch) and Cambridge. This may well answer for the intellectual growth of Smuts. It is argued here that his higher learning in isolation of the guerrilla experience does not necessarily answer for the type of persona that Smuts was to become after his guerrilla experience.[3]

[3] An interesting quotation originates from Ernesto Guevara de la Serna ('Che'): "The more uncomfortable the guerrilla fighter is, the more he is initiated into the rigours of nature, the more he feels at home; his morale is higher; his sense of security is greater… he has learned to risk his life (Sandison, 1997: 66).

Research question

Without dwelling too long on the notes above, let us address the body-being, experience and guerrilla war that led to the research question: can we trace back primarily Smuts' political, and secondary his later military choices, to the somatic experience as a guerrilla soldier and commander during 1900–1902 in such a way that it adds to a greater understanding of Smuts the later statesman, vexed in an enigma?

Methodology

This exploratory article is based on an extensive literary review of various sources on Smuts, guerrilla warfare as well as a range of materials related to existential choices, existential-phenomenology and alternative research (even radical) methodologies. It also touches on hermeneutics, somatic thinking, bodily being and biological influences on individuals and collectives of people. (Examples of such scholarly work include Bleicher, 1980; Feyerabend, 1984; Luijpen, 1980; Peperzak, 1977; Rooney, 1999; Ricouer, 1982; Adrey, 1970; Liebenberg, 1990[4].) Biological influences here is not to be understood as man's genetic composition, nor his biological and anatomic composition, but his inextricable interaction with the surrounding natural environment (or *habitat*) if you so wish.

Partaking in many debates and an ongoing dialogue with Smuts supporters and antagonists, historians, observers and journalists and their clashing/complementing/contradictory arguments also played a role. So did a variety of impromptu discussions and free-flowing interviews with surviving South African ex-servicemen from World War II as well as Smuts admirers and supporters (United Party members or "Sappe") within and outside the family circle of the author. Literature and scholarly reviews and debate-cum-dialogues were complimentary to each other in this endeavour. Was it not after all Jürgen Habermas philosopher and sociologist that advocated the value of *communicative interaction*? (Bleicher, 1980: 160 – 162, 163 – 164; Kolakowski, 1982:392ff). Pieter Geyl also reminded us that "[h]istory is a discussion without end…" And even if the point of departure – for human beings – is subjective and the methodology deployed here somewhat alternative in that it reflects advocacy, the author makes the conjecture that these reflections contribute to an ongoing dialogue in the chosen field.

Some readers may observe elements of an eclectic approach in this article. This contribution is however not post-modern and by choice (conviction?) not intended so. In this contribution hermeneutics as "the operation of understanding in

[4] Louis Liebenberg: no relation with the author.

relation to the interpretation of texts" plays some role – simply because the human animal as material being cannot escape this obligation (*Aufgabe*) of (co-) interpreting (Thompson, 1982: 43). The choice to accept to some extent the value of hermeneutics in this enterprise is not by accident. This contribution does reflect some interpretive and philosophical concern (Bleicher, 1980: 3).

Some readers may detect a measure of critical hermeneutics meshed into this work in as far as the researcher attempted to read text and context anew the interaction with nature included (Bleicher, 1980: 3-4). Reading the text afterwards in the context of the "then" does require an attempt at understanding (V*erstehen*); but this time through the material and concrete. The author accepts that interpretation of text and the actions of the human being do relate to reality as summed up by Josef Bleicher. This is done rather than uncritically accepting the argument that semantic signs relate to a 'quasi-world' which only indirectly find itself coupled to a perceived reality (Ricoeur in Bleicher, 1980: 5).[5]

The selected research and argumentative approach represent both a personal choice and a choice for an integrative methodology (read also: an interdisciplinary research approach). The subtext here is not underpinned by the primary qualities of realism or idealism as defined by Luijpen (1980: 96ff). Somewhere in the subtext of this essay the reader may detect elements of subjectivity as freedom (*subjectiviteit als vrijheid*), freedom as transcendence (*vrijheid als trancendentie*), freedom as history (*vrijheid als historie*), the mediation of the body (*bemiddeling van het liggaam*), phenomenology of hate (*de fenomenologie van de haat*) and existence as co-existence (*existeren als co-existeren*). The latter represents tenets of existential phenomenology, and also of philosophical anthropology and the theory and practice of somatic beings. (See Luijpen, 1980, as well as Peperzak, 1977. On somatic or bodily beings, consult Hanna, 1977). The above informs the subtext, but neither governs, nor encapsulates it.

Notes on guerrilla struggle and the material body

In addressing the above, a variety of sources related to especially guerrilla warfare and the human as bodily being socialized in a specific context, will be referred to. In this case the context is one of guerrilla warfare and its outcomes for the individual as part of a collective of cadres and his/her/their future actions and choices. The "material context" in this analysis also encapsulates nature as part of

[5] Needless to say that critical theory and critical sociology as a life-long interest of the author play a role in the work presented here (See Held, 1980).

concrete material interaction. I do not intend to make only a materialist analysis or to commit "a philosophy text" per se; but if these notions/approaches creep into the analysis, it should be accepted as a needed element of the argument.

At various times, Thomas Hanna's work, *Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking* (1977), is found to be very informative, if not a *tour de force* in body-mind analysis. For Hanna the distinction body and mind is false, because people/persons/individuals are somatic beings or *per se* bodily-beings. Hence experience dictates: the more intense the experience, the more the dictate. This does not for Hanna rule out the capacity to choose. And in choosing, the soma is open to act on the chosen option embedded in the bodily or real-life experience. But making the choice needless to say is deeply influenced by the foregoing bodily experience within a material or concrete context (Hanna, 1970: 308ff).

Hanna links up with existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and even Nietzsche. Hanna indeed chose to refer to these personas or bodily beings as "the first of the somatic thinkers" and he adds Darwin, Freud, Piaget as well as Camus and Marx to his analysis. In short, the intense experience of the human (as part of a/the the collective) within this material life becomes a primary medium: a "to be" and "to be-come". With this Hanna provides a potential heuristic tool to analyse Jan Smuts and guerrillas before and after him.[6] However in the course of this discussion authors on warfare and guerrillas will also speak their mind and experience in complimenting the above perspectives.

From Paul Virilio, architect and philosopher, in discussion with Lotringer, comes an important qualitative distinction between modern conventional war and the earlier understanding of war (Virileo, 1983: 2, 4). Ever since Sun Tzu, speed mattered in war. Modern wars and the Anglo-Boer War as one of the first modern resource wars espoused the idea of speed. The logic of quantity, speed, logistics and "war economy" became driving forces for war. It is argued by Virilio that "[t]he knowing power is set in motion through logistics" (Virilio, 1983: 5, 6). Note that "knowing power" could equal "speeding force" in this context.

"In ancient warfare, defence was not speeding up, but slowing down. The preparation for war was the fort, the wall, the rampart, the fortress…" Organisation of war space moved from the earlier passive, static, to speeding up through an

[6] The distinction revolution-evolution becomes more problematic as a result of Hanna's approach. This, however, seems to have no negative impact when analysing Smuts and his formative guerrilla experiences. In fact in Smuts' own writings the two terms seemed to be holistically meshed into the evolution or growth of (even volatile) parts into a whole.

accumulation of logistics (Virilio, 1983: 3ff, 12 ff). In the ages of globalisation[7], modern conventional warfare became the continuous flow chart of increasing mass logistics. In looking at Smuts' guerilla experience we have to keep in mind that Smuts in the early phases of the Anglo-Boer War clearly favoured newer doctrines like speed, maneuverability; thus mobility versus siege or holding ground. "My humble answer goes by taking the offensive, and doing it before the British force… (at this moment we will be) strengthened." He also argued that (it is) more "advantageous to take offensive than to act defensively" (Hancock & Van der Poel, 1966: 324). This preference was to be strengthened later due to his guerilla experience.

Guerrilla warfare is substantially and qualitatively different from (modern) conventional warfare. Some authors noted that partisan or guerilla experience represent energy that is needed to repel an invasion by a superior force and as a spontaneous arising of a body politic. Laqueur (1977: 1) argues: "In actual fact guerrilla warfare is as old as the hills and predates regular warfare. Throughout history guerrilla wars have been fought by weaker people's against invading or occupying armies, by regular soldiers operating in the enemy's rear, by landless peasants rising against landowners, and by bandits, social and asocial." He notes that the Spanish resistance against Napoleon produced the term "guerrilla" (Laquer, 1977: 1). Examples of guerrilla wars are manifold: partisans against Napoleon in Spain, Southern Italy and Russia; guerrilla activities during the Franco-Prussia War (1870-1871); Lawrence of Arabia's activities; Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa; guerilla activities in China before and during the communist take-over; the South African War; pre-and-post independent Africa and later South Africa; Latin America and Cuba. Moreover… guerrilla organisations and movements, and women (participating) in struggles well before those led by Mao and Fidel… were commonplace" (Laqueur, 1977: 5). What about the qualitative difference ascribed to guerilla warfare?

Guerrillas have to counter a superior enemy in order to attain victory over a stronger hegemonic power. It becomes an inversion of the ruling logic of conventional/mass war – in strategy, tactics and experience. While perceiving and understanding defeat, the guerrilla acts against a vastly superior force with the conviction of victory. Guerrilla war, as such is de-accumulation of equipment and limitation of complex logistics through necessity. It attacks the war economy of the

[7] Anthony Giddens, a sociologist, reminds us that globalisation is not new (Giddens, 1993). Like war it just exponentially spread over the globe in an implosion of time and space since the 1700s.

stronger with the known limitations of "whatever is available". Naturally, guerrilla war is waged on the continuum of speeding up and slowing down. (Derived from Sun Tzu, Part II: 72ff; Part VI: 85ff; Part IX).

This inversed body of logic penetrates both the action and thought-processes of the guerrilla. It could be argued, this experience, deeply etched as it is in the bodily-being of revolutionary leaders and cadres, will remain.

Apart from other irritations and suffering, the lack of equipment and sophisticated communication technology, of a chain of logistics and frequently a chain of command, worsened by bodily suffering, the guerrilla has to continue the struggle – even in areas where ideology has lost its powers of persuasion. There seem to be little doubt that (in accordance with the quote from Mao Tse Tung (a guerrilla himself) at the beginning of this article) that biology, experience and exposure to the material world are closely related. Guerrillas attack the war economy of the stronger under the dictum of "whatever is available". *Have little, do much, attain victory against all odds*, is no easy dictum to live through and will leave deep imprints on the participants of such wars. This inverse body of logic saturates the action and thought processes of the guerrilla war participants on individual, collective and (social) identity levels. Robert Adrey on his part suggests that human behaviour can be traced back to animal origins, so also the struggle for resources (Adrey, 1970). In his remarkable work *The Art of Tracking: The Origin of Science,* Louis Liebenberg, integrates anthropology, botany, the history and philosophy of science and cognitive psychology and argues that the art of tracking (in nature) may present a crucial step in transition from Early to Modern Humans (Liebenberg, 1990). Such transition presumably will include the theatre of war. Relate this to the quote by Mao and guerilla struggle. The expert tracker must be able to "read between the lines". They cannot read everything *in* the sand… rather they must be able to read *into* the sand (Liebenberg, 1990: v). This reminder by Liebenberg is worth keeping in mind as we, in this article, "keep tracking into the mind of the guerilla".

Von Decker and others prove to be informative here: "In the case of a special mission, it is the mission itself which should be paramount to the partisan above all other considerations. He ought never to deviate from his purpose, never, above all, at the expense of his mission, whatever inviting opportunities may tempt him. In short, the partisan should be a man of absolute reliability. When he has no special mission, the partisan should take as his sole aim the infliction of appreciable losses on the enemy. A partisan will avoid contact with the enemy insofar as the object of his expedition can be achieved without fighting for no other reason than

that he is not always his own master in providing for the needs of the wounded, nor can he count on anyone to replace his losses. However, if a free corps cannot avoid an engagement, each man must be inspired by the greatest bravery. No partisan should ever dream of laying down his arms, if only because he must consider himself and his men as outlaws.[8] If a partisan band is scattered, each man must know the general meeting place and do his utmost to reach it. In such warfare, the permutations are infinite and each has its variants. Ruse, surprise, force, boldness, chance, and, above all, luck – these are the vantage. Sometimes one, sometimes another will lead to his object. His salvation of today may destroy him tomorrow. Here all rules fall short and theory is of no avail.[9] Almost always the partisan is weaker that the enemy he confronts: method, therefore, no longer applies, for all method is based on some equality of forces (Von Decker in Laqueur, 1970: 60ff).

Debray points out another relevant linkage: "… whenever armed struggle is the order of the day, there is a close tie between biology and ideology. However absurd or shocking this relationship may seem, it is nonetheless a decisive one. Physical aptitude is the prerequisite for all other aptitudes; a minor point of limited theoretical appeal, but the armed struggle appears to have a rationale of which theory knows nothing…" (Debray, 1977: 215).[10] It is worth noting and reflecting on these words of Debray because it is closely intertwined with the argument here. Some of the references to (and direct quotations from) Guevara echoes Debray. The references later made by the author – and others reflecting on Smuts' persona – are also closely tied into the argument.

Che Guevara stated: "There are three conditions for the survival of the guerrilla movement that begins its development under the situation just prescribed: constant mobility, constant vigilance and constant distrust. Without the adequate use of these three elements of military tactics, the guerrilla will survive with difficulty. It must be remembered that the heroism of the guerrilla warrior at this moment consists in the extent of his establishment ends and the enormous sacrifices he must make to achieve them. These sacrifices will not only be the daily combat, or face-to-face fighting with the enemy. They will take forms that are subtle and more difficult to resist for the body and mind of an individual who is in the guerrilla movement. These guerrillas will perhaps be severely punished by the enemy armies. Sometimes they will be divided into groups; those who have been made prisoners, martyrised;

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[8] Guevara puts it in stark terminology: "It matters little to the individual guerrilla whether or not he survives" (Sandison, 1997: 66).

[9] The reader may now understand why the author chose to start this paper with a quotation from Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method.*

[10] Once again the above statement and its implications apply.

persecuted like hunted animals in those areas where they have been chosen to operate, with the constant worry of having the enemy one step behind; with the constant distrust of everyone since the frightening peasants will hand them over, in some cases, to be rid of the repressive troops; with no other alternative but death or victory, at times when death is an ever present thought, and victory is the myth about which only a revolutionary can dream… If the military situation will be difficult at first, the political will be no less ticklish. And if one single military error can liquidate the guerrilla movement, a political error can stop its development for long periods. This is how guerrilla war must be… understood" (Guevara in Laquer, 1977: 209ff). To bring the guerilla environment and resultant knife-edge choices closer under focus, the following may be enlightening: "Partisan war requires special talents in the commander and unusual qualities in men." Also, "…[the partisan] will maintain strict discipline in his band… true courage in an officer is founded on blameless morality". Perhaps more important:

> "A leader is no man's master; he is a leader in order to give commands, but no man is his slave. Discipline and respect work both ways, from lower to higher and from higher to lower. Our armed forces [guerrillas] must recognize the principle of economy, economy of human life and of supplies and weapons. We live off the land and our numbers are few; thus the principle of unceasing initiatives, boldness, courage, heroism, and the principles of mobility, speed and swiftness are essential to armed forces struggling for their country's liberation" (Cabral, 1977: 242).

Thus, small wars have always been and will continue to be supported and nurtured from among the ranks of the people (Von Decker, 1977: 55). No wonder then that in such a tightly knitted group within the above context the argument is made by Cabral that if a man is ordered to attack and he runs away, and so unsettles his group, the group has a right to kill him (Cabral, 1977: 239).[11]

One may choose to highlight the words mentioned above. It impresses the notion that guerrilla warfare as a form of "in-between warfare" has had (and will do so in future) formative influences on guerrilla commanders and soldiers. Consider the following persons and their role in semi-conventional and unconventional

[11] Che for example was criticised by Regis Debray for his absolute and "simplistic black or white fevor which never allowed him to be – or more important – perceived as being weak in any way. Che ordered the summary execution of a number of men who were revealed as traitors and spies… (He) could never bring himself to apologize for such executions" (Sandison, 1997: 58). Sandison here points towards an aspect of guerrilla-leader being that also marked to some smaller degree the persona of Smuts.

"guerrilla" warfare: Gueseppi Garibaldi, Lettow-Vorbeck, Mao Ze Dong, Che Guevara, Regis Debray, Vo Nguyen Giap, Josiah Tongogara (Zimbabwe), Samora Machel, Chris Hani, Raul and Fidel Castro.

Getting 'into' Smuts' head

In conventional war Smuts favoured attack rather than defence; movement rather than siege (Hankock & Van der Poel, 1966: 324; Judd & Surridge, 2002: 93; Scholtz, 1999: 20–21; Nasson, 1999: 51).[12] That Smuts already seemed ready to advocate such military-strategic approach at the time when war broke out in 1899 is clear.

Did previous guerrilla experience play such an informative and active role in Smuts' attitudes and deeds? This question begs an answer.

The Boers were beaten back. A second stage of war was to follow, namely guerrilla war (Scholtz, 1999: 126ff). Now an acid test would come for Smuts the uninitiated guerilla: an experience that could be called a fundamental break in everyday somatic experience – perhaps the greatest somatic experience of Smuts the "me-bodily-being" and of guerrillas before and after him. A long march/commando raid in winter through the Cape Colony, comparable with Che Guevara's and Fidel Castro's march from the Santiago de Cuba through the Sierra Maestro's to Havana. A raid seemingly comparable with that of the constant irritation wrought on French forces by Spanish *guerrilleros* against Napoleon in Spain.[13] A raid that covered considerable distances covering areas nearly as vast as the Russian partisans covered earlier on against Napoleon in the latter's disastrous attempt to defeat Russia and the subsequent French retreat from Moscow during 1812.[14]

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[12] Scholtz makes it clear that seemingly only two of the Boer leaders had some knowledge of then military-theoretical nature. They were Smuts and JBM Hertzog (Scholtz, 1999:20). Hankock & Van der Poel in the *Selections from the Smuts papers* (Vol.I) , Memorandum (4 September 1899) quote Smuts: "De beste militaire schrijvers van deze eeuw hebben bewezen hoeveel voordeeliger het is om aanvallenderwijze op te treden dan defensief te handelen" (Hankock and Van der Poel, 1966: 316). Scholtz correctly remarks that it was/is unclear to which such authors Smuts was referring (Scholtz, 1999: 21).

[13] For more detail on the Spanish Sore or "Ulcer" see Davydov (1977: 49 – 52) and Espoz y Mina in Laqueur (1977: 46 – 48).

[14] Following the failure of the Barbarossa invasion and attempted but unsuccessful subjection of the Soviet Union and crushing victories by the Soviets over German forces such as the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the German *Wehrmacht* was to increasingly experience the sharp end of partisan activity. It is estimated that about 6 000 partisan units of various strengths operated behind German lines between 1942 – 1944 (Sharashkin, 2005). These activities bled the German operations, men and material to death and defeat. Indeed such partisan activities in Russia, France, Italy, Greece and the Balkans played no small role in the German and Italian defeat.

Smuts here had his first real contact with the enemy. Two of his compatriots killed, he alone survived the reconnaissance trip (Erasmus, 1999: 89).[15] Before, "contacts" with the enemy was at a level of strategic or tactical planning at an object distance, like modern wars tend to be. Now it was for real and the bodily being had to cope with the real experience, the somatic interruptions/ruptures/continuities in the physical war theatre. This happened in the interface between somatic being, material context and nature. Soma and biology and earth and constant movement/flux met. Threatened by food poisoning and death, the sick and fatigued guerrillas were hounded mercilessly by the enemy during rainstorms. The guerrillas under his command were on the move in unknown territory, while they suffered an ever-present lack of food and his comrades died of wounds and illnesses. The execution of an informer (*impimpi*), named Lemuel Colaine in Van Rhynsdorp at the unwavering command of Smuts deserves mentioning (Reitz, 1999: 162–163).[16] Smuts stuck to his decision despite protestations by some onlookers, acting in principled intolerance towards what was seen by him as treason. The dictum that Cabral stated earlier and the intolerance that Sandison (1997: 58) mentioned in Che Guevara's dealings with traitors reflects here the guerilla commanders' action. One observes an approach in dealing with treason that seemed to be shared in thought and action by Smuts, Cabral and Guevara.

Smuts: the link between somatic beings, bodily experience, movement, modern/mass/conventional war and the (inverse) logic of guerrilla-action

The Anglo-Boer War was one of the first modern conventional wars. For some it was also the first of modern resource wars (Pritvorov & Liebenberg, 2000: 75ff). Others, such as Cuthbertson saw it as the last of the colonial wars.[17] Bottomley refers to it as one of the first Total Wars.[18] Speed, quantity and mass

[15] Smuts and his fellow guerrillas were under the impression at that stage that both his compatriots were killed. [Extract from the diary of A G Boshoff quoted by Erasmus (1999: 82)]. It later transpired that one was wounded and captured and one killed in the contact.

[16] Some sources refer to Colijn, the Dutch spelling rather than Colaine as used by Reitz. The former spelling is perhaps more likely. The *Dictionary of South African Biography* does not include a reference to Colhaine or Colijn. (DSAB, Vol. V: 914).

[17] Personal discussion on the topic between the author and Greg Cuthbertson, historian (07/04/2005).

[18] Andrew Porter took another view. Maybe somewhat controversial but well worth reflecting on: "For most people in the (British) metropole, neither the war nor other South African issues ever captured their attention in such a lasting way… rapid displacement of South African issues by others with far more domestic resonance revealed just how shallow had been the impact of the war and how limited had been its capacity to redefine the boundries of political action" (Porter, 2002: 300).

logistics became not only dictums but also axioms in furthering the objective of victory over the smaller Boer Republics with their rich resources – as was to happen in all large wars afterwards.

Guerrilla warfare maybe described as anarchic. Rooney refers to "mavericks in military". He includes some conventional military commanders in analysis. Guerrillas, like mavericks (without adding pejorative value to the term) are forced to invert the logic of conventional/modern/industrial/high-tech warfare. Differently put: "An unexamined action is not worth doing." Hodgkinson (1983: 279), an authority on the philosophy of leadership, derived the above from the Socratic notion: "An unexamined life is not worth living." Likewise unexamined (read: inexperienced and reflective/reflexive), subversive action is not worth undertaking. Guerrilla experience for the soma or bodily being tends to enforce this without pre-reflection. Simply put: there is limited opportunity to read a textbook before. Experience is the daily teacher.

The guerrilla "state" (self-chosen and/or enforced) is perhaps the more social (natural?) state. The modern conventional state of war brings about an ever-present, nearly omnipotent variable, namely quantity, speed and mass logistics.[19] In fact, it is actually immaterial whether mass-logistics in modern war is the assumption or the outcome. The conventional state (of war) thus rests on speed and power. It is a war state. In contrast the guerrilla state is qualitatively different. It inverts the logic of the war state. Hence, it also inverts the logic of "body" and "state".

Smuts: Reading mind or *soma*?

In the East African campaign (World War I) some said that Smuts "made his men suffer unnecessarily by driving them too hard in the terrible conditions" (Crafford, 1945: 124). Or it is said that Smuts endured hunger and thirst with his followers. "He ate the same food… Tired and pale and washed out, he remained upon his feet, working and planning when bouts of malaria assail him. He went about his duties in the ordinary way with drawn face and fevered brow" (Crafford, 1945: 126). As in the *Boer War* days, "he constantly went out to reconnoitre, taking unnecessary risks and being the source of continuous anxiety to his staff officers who remonstrated with him in vain" (Crafford, 1945: 124, 125, 129).

[19] Usually against smaller or surprised opponents (and with by implication aged – if not obsolete – armed forces); The German *Blitzkrieg* against The Netherlands, Belgium and Poland, Operation Barbarossa against the unsuspecting Soviet Union and more recently the two Gulf Wars against Iraq being examples. It is at times like this that the guerrilla/partisan activities started cutting the heels of the invader/oppressor…

> "Although still somewhat detached and unapproachable, he was much more human in the field, in most respects, than he had been at home, and by many a kind act he stole the hearts of his men… Men and officers alike respected and admired him because he was willing to live as they lived and to face danger, sickness, and death, even as they did." (Crafford, 1945: 129). Similar arguments have been raised by his son (Smuts, 1952: 169-173).

Smuts faced organised conventional war and later some resemblance of guerrilla war in *Deutsch West Afrika* (Namibia) during World War I and mobile (some would say guerrilla) war in *Deutsch Ost Afrika* (German-East Africa or Tanganyika). In the latter for all practical purposes the German General von Lettow-Vorbeck engaged Smuts for years without victory. Rooney argued that: "Against this criterion, Lettow-Vorbeck succeeded where Smuts failed…" (Rooney, 1999: 109). Another military analyst suggested that Smuts "was a bad tactician and strategist, an indifferent general, but a remarkable soldier in the East African theatre" (Military observer quoted by Rooney, 1999: 110).[20] For the most part, some may argue Smuts battled against the country rather than against Lettow-Vorbeck. But then, there is little new about this, both in conventional and unconventional warfare. Some may even choose to make this argument with regards to the recent less-than-vaguely "efficient American Blitzkrieg" or "precision war" against the small Iraqi Republic, its obsolete army and its people, infrastructure and economy weakened by a dozen years of sanctions (Scholtz, 2004: 27, 28).

After the East-African campaign Smuts corresponded with Lettow-Vorbeck and his impoverished family. He even started sending money to – by then retired – Vorbeck. Had a person with ample acumen and somatic experience gained in the guerrilla phase of the South African War met his match in guerrilla/mobile war in German East Africa? Did he develop a healthy respect, even admiration for an erstwhile foe? And reciprocated in kindness? Perhaps yes…

In the remainder of the article some areas will be highlighted where the contention of the author is that the "inculcated logic through intense somatic

[20] Gen. Roy Alexander SANDF provided another perspective, during a conference held at the Military Academy Saldanha (2001). He argued that Smuts in close duels performed better/more effective being the "hunted" than being the "hunter" – in other words as a guerrilla, rather than conventional military leader in a conventional war. Alexander's argument strengthened the observations made by Robert Ardrey (1970), Laqueur (1977) and Louis Liebenberg in *The art of tracking: The origin of science*. (1990). This argument is worth considering as a heuristic tool in attempting the understanding of guerrilla, nature, war and movement in territory.

guerrilla experience influenced the later Smuts' choices and actions. Rather than weighing up personal conjectures here against other interpretations amply written and well presented from their specific perspectives, the remainder of the article departs from a more reflective approach. The rest of the article will deal with the following: pre-empting the potential victory of an opponent or the possibility of a drawn-out (guerrilla) war by contestants; regrouping and (re-) accommodation following the battle/struggle; and being guerrilla, the human experience, nature and holism.

Pre-empting the potential victory of an opponent or the possibility of a drawn-out (guerrilla) war by contestants

With much compassion and understanding – even solidarity – Smuts acted towards Lettow-Vorbeck after the East African campaign in World War I. Compare this to his actions against one of his kinsmen (*stamgenote*) during the Anglo-Boer War. Lemuel Colijn (Lambert Colyn or Colijn) served as an informer for the British Colonisers. After Colijn was caught he was summarily sentenced to death and executed by firing squad on Smuts' orders despite protestations from Colijn and the tearful daughters of the man on whose farm this took place (Reitz, 1999: 163–164; Oost, 1956: 16; Smuts, 1952: 79).

Smuts abided by the inculcated logic of guerrilla war. During the 1914 Rebellion when Afrikaners rose against British rule, a similar incident occurred. Smuts's reaction in the case of Captain Jopie Fourie can be traced back to the earlier ethos developed in guerrilla struggle. (Note also my previous references to Cabral and Guevara in this regard). Fourie was a captain in the Union Defence Forces (UDF). Without resigning from the UDF, Fourie joined rebel forces north of Pretoria. He was captured, court-martialled and executed by a firing squad.

Smuts firstly reacted to the fact that an old comrade-in-arms treacherously rose against him. Fourie fought in the Anglo-Boer War together with Smuts and others. He did not resign from the UDF or the rank he held. He gave no warning of his intent to fight against Smuts during the rebellion. Fourie broke an unspoken, strict code of guerrilla honour and the extra-ordinary chain of command that are installed through socialised guerrilla action. His punishment was swift and non-debatable. Some would argue that Smuts as head of state could have acted the same way under ruling legal conditions. After all this is also the military justice dispensed by conventional forces. The author's argument in contrast is that the "first instinct of the guerrilla" regarding treason played the primary role in Smuts' decision. Furthermore, knowing how exhaustive a successful guerrilla campaign as part of a

civil war could be, Smuts pro-actively made a bludgeoning cut in the potential development of a new guerrilla chain of command by removing Fourie.

Taking a cue from the guerrilla experience and *soma* of Smuts, it could be argued that the above two reasons for Fourie's punishment was uppermost in the mind of Smuts rather than the legalities of a regimental code of discipline or legal issues pertaining the loyalty of citizens to the existing state. The death of Fourie finally effected a break between Smuts and the Afrikaner Nationalists. What was a perfectly consistent decision in terms of guerrilla logic was a less than optimum political choice. Repercussions of this choice were to haunt Smuts afterwards, just as Guevara was criticised for his rash taken against traitors. For Smuts however the consequences went further than mere criticisms by fellow political comrades. It was to impact negatively on his immediate and future political career.

A second example – the 1922 Mineworkers Revolt: Smuts reacted swiftly and brutally after his personal political intervention failed – or rather were denied to him by the strikers and their leaders. The militant and the communist oriented strikers took their revolution seriously. Smuts took the cutting of the umbilical cord of a potential revolutionary war (and foreseeable urban guerrilla action) equally seriously. The strike was broken within days by police, soldiers and the air force. Once again the argument goes, the choice was informed by Smuts's guerrilla experience.

His commitment of superior forces prevented a potential drawn-out resistance resembling the reincarnation of a new classic guerrilla march of (urban) resistance against the state. Realising in his tactical calculus that strong military intervention (for a limited time) was necessary, he acted. He made use of the dictum of scarcity of human and military resources on his own side that guerrilla war taught him. He knew that the strikers were more hamstrung by the same *economics of scarcity*. Smuts was not a guerrilla anymore; however the somatic experience of the tactical approach of a guerrilla commander remained with him – the guerrilla (a persona formed in guerrilla warfare) tends to a purist and unwavering in his/her decisions while working within an *economy of human and material scarcity*. Thus the guerrilla acts decisively if the opportunity arises.

The revolutionary strikers' committee and the strikers-commandos made the rather serious mistake of preparing for defence rather than attack and there was a lack of effective leadership and a strategy of armed revolutionary struggle on their

side.[21] In the course of a few days a potential revolution was quelled. Smuts's son argues that: "Once he (Smuts) had assumed personal command matters sped to a swift conclusion… Once more he had revealed his brilliance as a military tactician" (Smuts, 1952: 257). Matters did end swiftly after Smuts took control of the situation, but it was not necessarily brilliance that brought it about. It was a firm unwavering decision inculcated through guerrilla experience.

A third example is the Bondelswarts Revolt in the erstwhile South West Africa. Smuts, through JH Hofmeyer, administrator of South West Africa, tried to negotiate when tension arose between the authorities and the Bondelswarts on the issue of dog tax. Failing this and knowing the area, he pre-empted any escalation of the civil unrest (and a real danger of rural guerrilla war) through speedily cutting off access to water, using deliberate and concentrated force to subdue an enemy that had the potential to undermine the administration of South West Africa. He again had cut through the potential future development of a new guerrilla nucleus or "core" through a pre-emptive strike. Politically, Smuts survived the Bondelswarts *affaire* despite international and national criticism. The longer-term political consequences however were less than amicable for Smuts; which happened to suggest that being conditioned in being a guerrilla does not guarantee perfect post-guerrilla leadership in politics.

This time around his innate guerrilla action (the primary military-somatic being) prevented the spreading of a rural revolt. He acted without much warning, with mobility, surprise and speed using conventional military means (i.e. the newly formed South African Air Force)[22] in choosing to repress the revolt. In doing so he (as an old-guerrilla) prevented timely the potential spread of rural rebellion that would be difficult to quell.[23]

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[21] The strikers acted rather old-stylish. Defend rather than attack was their chosen approach, something that Virileo warned against.

[22] See Maxwell and Smith (1970) for the role that air force operations played in the suppression of the revolt.

[23] Forty years or more later the Apartheid government would be faced with revolt in Namibia (rural unconventional warfare) and inside South Africa (urban and peri-urban guerrilla and some rural activity) continuing for nearly three decades. Eventually Namibia became independent after the forced withdrawal of South African forces. The ideal that the Bondelswarts and Witboois could not achieve became a reality for Namibian people when the South African flag was lowered and the Namibian flag raised in the Windhoek stadium. Similarly Scholtz argues about the South African situation in the 1990s: "Wat die Boere om verskeie redes in 1900 – 1902 nie kon regkry nie, het vir die ANC wel gewerk" (Scholtz, 2000: 269). See also Leopold Scholtz (1999): *Waarom die Boere die oorlog verloor het*.

One may add he was to lose the political contest later because of these actions. He would pay a costly political price for his actions. He was seen as being paw-in-glove with capitalist exploiters, to be insensitive towards (white) workers, acting harshly against indigenous people and as being authoritarian. Others saw in his approach colonialism and racism. The Bulhoek massacre, where religious insurgents made exactly the same mistake as the Bondelswarts and the strikers, also contributed to Smuts's eventual political downfall.

The "early" Smuts was known for his pro-active approach. He argued for the appointment of young African born persons (*Afrikaanders*) in the state bureaucracy of the Transvaal Republic rather than Dutch expatriates intent on status and moneymaking (Armstrong, 1939: 51, 55; Theron, 2000: 133, 135, 136–138). In this sense he was an early advocate of "affirmative action" in South Africa. He fought corruption in the *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek* (ZAR) openly despite Kruger's inaction against persistent white-collar crime (Armstrong, 1939: 55). He established a secret service for the ZAR before the Anglo-Boer War.

In military conflict he argued for a rapid deployment of Boer forces in South Africa at the advent of the Boer War. In this sense Smuts was the harbinger of *blitzkrieg*, rather than *sitzkrieg*, which the older Boer leadership opted for (Spies & Natrass, 1999: 24–26). In conventional war Smuts was ready to adopt warfare to be more mobile and aimed at rapid deployment. He was, in effect, a thorough modernist in his time. This type of "modernist intellectualism" was later to be moulded, refined and honed in guerrilla war. Through enforced experience Smuts became more persistent, tactically always on the move and deploying hit-and-run tactics on different levels – yet remained a "purist". He was forced to understand and act on various strategies and tactics simultaneously as somatic being in a natural-material context.

Smuts deliberately moved into the Cape Colony to mobilise political support for the Boer/Republican/anti-colonialist cause. His incursion added value by distracting the imperial enemy and forcing them back into already "conquered" (even "safe") territory. Smuts aimed at establishing "liberated" zones. He aimed to mobilise and recruit new guerrillas, establish new bases and if at all possible, create the conditions for "popular insurrection" as part of the political plan. He used the media (*popular and armed propaganda*) by informing foreign newspapers about his progress while in the field. (The author submits that Smuts was more provocative and farsighted in his guerrilla strategy than Christiaan de Wet at the time – even if many would disagree with this conjecture).

Looking at Smuts' actions during this phase some questions remain in retrospect. He could not have deluded himself and must have known that mass-revolt was problematic – even unlikely. Or did he – as Che Guevara did in his fateful Bolivian campaign? He perhaps had a fair idea of reliable locals and their support structures (even access to arms).[24] His invasion had perhaps a better chance at success as Guevara's last expedition in Bolivia, where Che was advised beforehand to expect little support from the local population and moving with his band in territory unknown. There was even more of a chance of success one may argue, than was afforded Guevara in Africa due to the limitations of men, material and the impositions of a foreign populace and unknown/unfriendly territory (Gleijeses, 2003). Smuts succeeded and hung on in his deep penetration of enemy territory.

The classic examples of lessons learned (read: conditioning) through exposure to guerrilla warfare remained with the persona of the later Smuts.

Regrouping and (re-) accommodation following the battle/struggle

Dealing with defeat and/or contemporary setbacks with the hope of rescuing (some) building blocks for future use – both military and political – is at stake here.

This article *deals with the guerrilla experience and the effects thereof in one's personal life and* the *longer-term impact of guerrilla war on commanders and men/women involved in such a struggle long after the intensity of the guerrilla experience took place… and yet lingers on like a smouldering coal*.

Geyser typifies Smuts as a "philosophical strategist rather than a military commander" (Geyser, 2001: III). One has to disagree. Smuts was a strategist, but his commanding capabilities were those of the "guerrilla-commander-in-action". The author also have to disagree Herman Charles Bosman's and Penny Grimbeek's earlier analysis that Smuts was (only) a "man of letters" (Grimbeek, 2000: 37ff). The guerrilla experience of Smuts did leave existential marks ("conditioning" – if one likes) that stayed with him. And the guerrilla-body conditioning, the soma moulded through the being of guerrilla in nature/the material and concrete more than the sophistry of letters created the later political Smuts. His physical encounters with nature and enemy inculcated a primary thought pattern (reaction – if one wishes)

[24] Compliments to the fact that Smuts and a Captain Van Tonder took an earlier initiative before the war to establish a *ZAR Geheime Dienst* with a network of informers over South Africa. Like elsewhere in the world military intelligence though could not answer fully the question of "how much support exactly do we have". Military intelligence over decades seems to consistently confuse "sympathy for a cause" with "willing militant support for a cause".

with regard to regrouping after crises or defeat. [See Von Decker on regrouping as a guerrilla "drill" (1977: 610)].

The effect of the guerrilla war on Smuts: "[He] found satisfaction in physical expression and achievement, in hardships and in really intimate association with his fellow men… In those long months in the open air he formed a philosophy of life and an understanding of the world that he followed ever after" (Smuts, 1952: 84–85). Intimate cadreship and harsh experience inculcate the natural urge to regroup in order to continue the struggle.

His "mentality" or existential predisposition gained in the guerrilla theatre became a permanent and prominent feature with Smuts. He acted as guerrilla forced by an ever-changing flow of events to be pragmatic in the guerrilla phase of the Anglo-Boer War. If he learnt to be "hard" and "soft" at the same time, that also remained with him. Regrouping after failure or partial failure – even defeat – became "first nature" for Smuts and guerrillas before and after him.

Smuts knew that guerrilla war asked for speeding up and slowing down war in a pragmatic – even balanced – fashion. This impacted on his later political life. In guerrilla wars, principles are seldom absent. Devising ways (strategy) and means (tactics) to attain or uphold the principle may differ. Smuts lived this and experienced this. In his later political life, regrouping seemed to re-assert itself. In political terms he tried to recapture lost territory by involvement with the *Volkspartij* established by Gen. Louis Botha. Much later on joining up in government with an old comrade-yet-adversary, Gen. J B M Hertzog, even if they did not see eye to eye on everything, he demonstrated this again. He abundantly tried to show that he forgave old clashes/ skirmishes/battles. (See him in and out of coalition with Hertzog, see him giving back civil-rule to *Duitswes* and his later relationships with Alfred Milner and Lettow-Vorbeck.) It is argued here that the notion of regrouping played a major, if not primary role.

Central to his mind (even if unconsciously) was "regrouping" and "starting again". He lost an election, stayed on in opposition, won elections again, lost again. He received honours from former enemies and allies. He even attended the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument (1948). Was that an act of holism or selfish opportunism? Was it perhaps an act of many pathways lead to victory? Or – even – a defeat could be a pathway to a new victory (regrouping)? Or was it reconciliation with Afrikaner Nationalism? The latter seems unlikely. Most of the former actions are compatible with guerrilla being and regrouping after every

operation/defeat/victory. Thus Smuts represents the dictum of "live to fight another day", rather than the modern war manoeuvre or mass attacks.

To add a bold conjecture as interlude: The inculcated natural logic of regrouping played a role in Smuts' later philosophy of holism, which will be discussed below in more detail. The author's contention is that "perceived defeat can turn into victory" or at least "after battles and skirmishes – even failed – one regroups". And this relates to the guerrilla experience that integrated itself in the actions of the political Smuts. Scattered parts (of a guerrilla band) can come together again as a greater whole. Holism would develop in Smuts' philosophy in much the same way.

Like a Che Guevara – and that happened to be a personal weakness – it seems in retrospect that Smuts trusted too much in the long-term wisdom of followers. Then, like many a time earlier, personal defeat can come through the ballot box (as in Smuts' case) or the bullet (as in Che's case).

Being guerrilla, the human experience, nature and holism

Let the argument speak: dependency on nature is a primary learning experience in guerrilla warfare. The somatic body-nature interdependence is the required minimum for survival – and eventually success. With it comes the knowledge that nature can re-act (retaliate?) almost voluntarily if you act unknowingly. The effect of the interactive-interdependence with a voluntary/involuntary nature during the guerrilla phase could have influenced Smuts' later holistic and botanic interests. While the sources that invited holism in the thought of Smuts may have been many and scientifically varied (perhaps even eclectic), the real-life experience of guerrilla war was material and concrete and played a major role.

Shall one relate the following about the guerrilla commander? "The more uncomfortable the guerrilla fighter and the more initiated into the rigours of nature, the more he/she feels at home; his/her morale is higher; his her sense of security greater… it matters little to the guerrilla whether he or she survives or not" (Sandison, 1997: 66. See also various essays in Laqueur, 1977).

This experience played an important – if not crucial – role in the later life of Jan Smuts. He abided by the "moral law" lived as "bodily-being" along the lines of imposed human survival and excellence in nature. In a very real sense it is experience that matter(s) encapsulate(s) experience [Speaking of Taoism, nature can be a contradictory/opposing force (enemy) or complimentary force

(partner/respectful fellow)]. And for the same amount of pain, survival could be translated into survival by excellence. But these are material for future discussions].

It is argued here that earlier guerrilla experience impacted deeply on Smuts's later political and philosophical thinking. Thus "holism" had as source the material experience. Material experience, on its part was informed/moulded by the guerrilla experience and experiences lived through in a giving and unforgiving nature. The more intense the experience, the more likely it will influence the choices made by the bodily (or existential) being – even years afterwards. Needless to say: The latter statement brings us back to the quotes at the beginning of the article.

For someone with daily guerrilla-experience in close contact with nature, the term ***science*** includes and encompasses the material and physical world.[25] Whereas Che and his comrades shot hawks for food and ate donkeys (their own riding animals), Smuts and his comrades enjoyed amongst others the tortoise and its yet unborn, as a meal notwithstanding his/their love for nature. Che retained his day-to-day interest in medicine, which in essence means to save, conserve and nurture life while having to kill (Guevara's Bolivian Diary published by Pimlico, 2000).

Erasmus in quoting from her father's diary referred to the guerrilla band under Smuts having to live on prickly-pear leaves, honey, drought-starving cattle and even considered eating some of their riding animals (Erasmus, 1999: 81ff). In survival the guerrilla depending on nature lives through and is educated by, sustained through, but also disciplined by nature. Consider the following experiences by Che Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia and what we know about Smuts: "Day of intermittent marching until five in the afternoon… We advanced a little (during a march). We only shot a small parrot, which we gave to the rear party. Today we ate palm hearts with meat… only three scant meals left."

A later entry: "We shot four hawks for our meal; everything has got soaked and the weather continuos to be very wet. The few men's morale is low; Miguel has swollen feet and some of the others suffer from the same condition… we decided to eat the horse as our swelling is alarming… The situation became agonising, the machete men (pathfinders) were fainting, Miguel and Dario were drinking their own urine, so was Chino. And the results were horrible diarrhoea and cramps…"

[25] It is at this point that a whole new area of research is opened up that cannot be entertained here. It pleads for and implies the need for future research in this area.

Smuts grew simultaneously as a botanist notwithstanding the fact that some of the insurgents and he himself nearly died as a result of eating bread-tree fruit (*broodboom-vrugte*) at the wrong time of the year. The story of this is well described. His son, Jan Christian Smuts, amongst others, in some detail refers to this. In the vicinity of the Zuurberge and the Great Fish River after living on a sub-optimum diet (that is going hungry to the point of starvation, some would say) they came upon what the younger Smuts describes as "boesmans brood" (*Encephelartos Altensteinii*) and proceeded to feast on it. "Soon all were overcome by acute abdominal pains and writhing on the ground" (Smuts, 1952: 75). Smuts amongst others were tied to his horse in order to remain saddled while they had to escape the enemy amongst cold and torrential rain.

Smuts and those with him experienced the dependency on nature for the guerrilla. So did thousands of other guerrillas after him. Also, they experienced physically that nature will or can re-act (retaliate?) almost voluntarily if you act unknowingly: The effect of the interactive-interdependence with a voluntary/involuntary nature during the guerrilla phase could have had formative influence on Smuts' later botanic interests and holistic philosophy. The junction between materialism (the real world), the tension – if not contradiction – between human and nature's power and the tension between "history running its course" and the "human as historical agent" in the broader context of an evolving material world is pertinent here.

Taking note and reflecting on other authors on the sources of the holist philosophy of Smuts (and these arguments are indeed eloquent), it is suggested that the guerrilla experience as a (proto-) source or holism cannot be discarded. In fact, it should be taken seriously.

Conclusion

It is argued here that Smuts' guerrilla experience in contrast to a variety of other analyses was essentially formative of his later military, political and philosophical life. Earlier interpretations undoubtedly greatly contribute towards understanding Jan Smuts. The perspective offered here, it is trusted, is another useful contribution.

The guerrilla experienced intimately marked the later Smuts. Smuts himself remained an "immense and brooding" (spirit) in and of Southern Africa. Unlike Rhodes, the coloniser-tycoon, who never was an African or guerrilla, Smuts as guerrilla and African opted out of "final solutions". He made it clear that for example the "race question" demanded too much energy to conquer, while showing

towards Ghandi ambiguously animosity (hate?), grace and respect – and later recognition – that perhaps pointed beyond apartheid and exclusion.[26] This holds true of his reaction after the Marabastad rebellion in Pretoria in the 1940s where he publicly expressed his regret for the lives lost through anxious and premature police and military action. This action demonstrates some measure of greatness. This is something for example that the (New) National Party and Afrikaner (Broeder) Bond, capitalist institutions and the Liberals (read: PFP/DP/DA) and their cohorts up to know have never done – or in very subdued terms in the aftermath of Apartheid and capitalist excesses.

Did we arrive at an answer on whether we can interpret Smuts through sociology, social history, identity theories, somatic interaction of people with nature, material philosophy or biology? It may be or may be not. But we know that new vistas of interpretation are open within this material world where humans interact consistently in war and peace – even where the weak resists the powerful in the inverted logic of war; thus turning guerrilla.

Taken from the above arguments offered there are pressing reflections remaining for social theorists, military sociology students (guerrilla and conventional) and political leaders by "(re) considering Smuts" and the formative experience described above through new lenses. And such reflections are becoming more pertinent in our modern – some would say "global" – world.

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[26] Historians such as Iain Smith commented on his views regarding race relations in time and context (Smith, 1999: 175). The Rhodes memorial lecture delivered by Smuts in 1929 makes for interesting reading. In it Smuts oscillates between rationales for separateness, future equality yet difference – in fact not providing an answer for the "native policy" of the time or the future ("Native policy in Africa" in *Plans for a better world*, 1942:52ff). Some observers could easily see in this speech a proto-rationale for apartheid.

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