STRATEGY AND POLICY DEPARTMENT
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, Rhode Island

FOREWORD

This syllabus for the Strategy and War Course for the College of Naval Command and Staff and Naval Staff College, August 2026—November 2026, provides both an overview and a detailed, lesson-by-lesson description to assist students in their reading and preparation for seminar. Administrative information is also included.

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STRATEGY AND WAR COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Introduction

The Officer Professional Military Education Policy requires that graduates must obtain the "knowledge and skills to prepare them for service as joint warfighting leaders, senior staff officers, and strategists who … are strategically minded warfighters who can execute and adapt military strategy through campaigns and operations to attain national strategic goals."[1] The Strategy and War Course aids in supporting this policy by imparting the habits of critical thinking and strategic thought necessary for our warfighters to become more capable of making sound decisions in today's challenging, uncertain, and dangerous international security environment.

The thought processes and core concepts presented in the Strategy and War Course serve as a foundation for Naval War College students in the College of Naval Command and Staff and Naval Staff College by enhancing their skills in critical thought, judgment, reasoning, and communication while promoting strategic literacy. The course contributes to the attainment of the college's Program Learning Outcomes by providing students with the skills to apply strategic theory, history, and concepts of sea power to aid in decision-making.[2] To this end, the course's foundational historical examples address the planning, execution, and termination of military operations and campaigns. These examples highlight the profession of arms as well as concepts such as sea power, joint operations, nuclear deterrence, technology, economic power, and "soft power."

The Strategy and War Course is ultimately about warfighters and how to win wars. It is important to consider the key words in the course title: "Strategy" and "War". Strategy is the bridge that connects the intent policy provides with military operations. The practice of strategy, or strategic art, requires an appreciation of the objectives, what military force can and cannot accomplish, and an understanding of the basic types of strategy. Strategy involves linking the "ways" to attain "ends" with available "means." One cannot understand strategy without an appreciation of all three factors. Ultimately, the objective of strategy is to apply the available means in such a way as to obtain a desired political outcome.

Understanding strategy begins with theoretical frameworks. These are derived from several sources including the writings of Carl von Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Julian Stafford Corbett, and Mao Zedong. The influence of these classic works on current strategic thought cannot be denied. Reflecting on his war college education, General Colin Powell wrote, "Clausewitz was an awakening for me. His *On War*, written 106 years before I was born, was like a beam of light from the past, still illuminating present-day military

[1] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," CJCSI 1800.01G, April 15, 2024, p. A-2 - A-3.

[2] See pp. 8-9 for a complete description of the program learning outcomes.

quandaries."[3] Though these voices from the past have enduring value, they require amplification and discussion to translate their ideas to the contemporary security environment.

These theoretical concepts are applied to historical case studies and ultimately to the contemporary environment for critical analysis of strategies and evaluation of courses of action. Strategies tend to align with three basic types: 1) attrition-exhaustion; 2) annihilation; and 3) coercion (including deterrence and compellence). Political and military leaders have historically applied elements of these three strategic types in unique ways to achieve political objectives. Knowing how best to combine elements of the basic strategy types to achieve the objective of a war is the essence of strategic art. The historical cases provide opportunities to evaluate how strategic planners and military leaders in past real-world circumstances have addressed the challenges associated with these types of strategy to attain national objectives.

As we turn from "strategy" to the second key word in the course title "war", we find that the historical case studies chosen for the course allow for the examination of three distinct forms, or "boxes," of war. The first box comprises major, protracted wars fought between great power coalitions in multiple theaters and often for high stakes. The second box of war refers to regional conflicts fought within single theaters, perhaps involving coalitions, typically for shorter durations, and often for limited aims. The third box encompasses insurgencies, or internal conflicts, fought within single countries against failing, emerging, or well-established states. Like boxes, wars may nest within one another, resulting in wars within wars. During the Vietnam War, for example, an insurgency raged in South Vietnam within the context of a regional war between South Vietnam, with the support of the United States, on one side and North Vietnam on the other. Both the insurgency and the regional war occurred within the Cold War, a global competition with very high stakes.

We will study multiple historical cases involving each box of war to develop an understanding of what tends to occur in analogous situations and why. Strategy and War's nine course themes guide us in such explorations (see pages 10-15 in the syllabus for more information). There are six process themes and three environmental themes. The first process theme examines the interrelationship among policy, strategy, and operations. The second process theme connects intelligence to the process of assessment and the subsequent development of plans. The next theme then considers the available instruments of war. Strategy does not end there. The fourth theme emphasizes how forces must be employed to obtain strategic effects. Myriad reasons will force leaders to reassess and adapt, which is the fifth course theme. The sixth and final process theme considers war termination. The three environmental course themes address the broader strategic environment that impinges on the conduct of strategy in war. These include the Multinational Arena, the Institutional Context and Civil-Military Relations, as well as Cultures and Societies. The environmental themes address the context within which process themes occur.

To prepare for operational and strategic leadership, students in the Strategy and War Course analyze the leadership of some of history's most notable admirals and generals. Studying these historic figures provides insight into recurrent problems that have confronted senior leaders

[3] Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 207.

when seeking strategic effects from operations. However, the need for skilled leadership extends beyond senior military leaders. Their staffs—not to mention interagency and coalition partners—must be prepared in intellect, temperament, and doctrine to assess and fight a diverse array of enemies, achieve strategic effects, and make transitions between phases of war as well as between war and its aftermath.

Critical strategic thinking constitutes the hallmark of the Strategy and War Course. We enhance critical thinking through a graduate-level interdisciplinary approach integrating different academic disciplines, including history, economics, political science, international relations, and security studies. Together, these provide the opportunity to grapple with the complex relationship among policy, strategy, and operations, lifting perspectives above the tactical-level while sharpening critical thinking about joint warfighting. In-depth analysis of wide-ranging case studies relating to the use of force prepares students to meet the challenges of both the current and future strategic environments. Thus, the course encourages the application of knowledge gained in the case studies, guided by strategic theory and course themes, to provide tools to more critically, creatively, and effectively confront the complex problems that leaders will encounter in the future. The course does not provide answers to those problems; rather, it empowers warfighters and their civilian counterparts to more effectively ask questions and critically reason.

In conclusion, we can look back to another perilous time in U.S. history during the waning days of the Vietnam War when Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner served as President of the Naval War College. Rather than train officers, he demanded the education of leaders:

> If you attempt to make this a prep school for your next duty assignment, you will have missed the purpose of being here. If we trained you for a particular assignment or type of duty, the value of this college would be short-lived. We want to educate you to be capable of doing well in a multitude of future duties…. Your objective here should be to improve your reasoning, logic, and analysis.[4]

The Strategy and War Course embraces Turner's mission to place education over training by challenging students to hone their "reasoning, logic, and analysis" with the objective of developing productive habits of thought crucial for identifying solutions to complex problems in uncertain environments. Ultimately, this course echoes the words of the 2026 National Defense Strategy by fostering a "focused and genuinely strategic approach to the threats our nation faces and how best to manage them."[5]

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[4] Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, "Challenge: A New Approach to Professional Education," *Naval War College Review* vol. 25, no. 2 (Nov-Dec 1972), p. 6.

[5] Department of War, "2026 National Defense Strategy," Washington D.C.: Department of War, 2026.

Course Methodology

The course comprises eleven case studies. The first introduces students to foundational theoretical tools designed to build strategic literacy and a common vocabulary, which can be applied in subsequent case studies and ultimately the joint warfighting environment. The next eight case studies address historical wars resulting in the development of a professional foundation upon which to study war. Studying the outbreak, severity, intensity, duration, and termination of different types of conflicts helps warfighters develop the judgment, reasoning, logic, and analysis to more effectively approach contemporary and future challenges. The remaining cases provide an opportunity to apply knowledge obtained earlier in the course to the contemporary environment.

Each case study includes an expansive set of readings. Though the amount of reading may appear daunting, analyzing vast amounts of evidence and identifying the most salient points is an essential skill when engaging with the complex problems of the contemporary warfighting environment. Seminar moderators will provide reading guidance to aid in managing the readings to enable a more effective seminar discussion. Lectures in each case study go beyond the scope of the readings. They also provide tools to structure the evidence found in the readings while illustrating theory and common themes. Finally, the lectures provide students with an opportunity to engage with subject matter experts.

During the trimester students will write essays informed by the readings, lectures, and engagement with seminar moderators. Each essay requires students to communicate in a detailed, critical, analytical, and structured manner about a strategic problem. Though one rarely has time to think in such detail in the joint warfighting environment, structured and detailed thinking prepares students for addressing complex, real-world problems and communicating potential solutions.

The readings, lectures, and student essays empower graduate-level, discussion-based seminars. It is in seminar that the case studies culminate with small groups of students critically and analytically interacting with their colleagues and their military-civilian teaching teams. The seminar is the laboratory where students can challenge one another and themselves. In the tradition of Clausewitzian critical analysis, students will develop strategic arguments by investigating leadership decisions, considering alternative courses of action, and identifying better alternatives. The critical analyses of historical case studies in seminar will set the foundation for a summative wargaming event and a comprehensive essay at the end of the course.

Course Policy and Guidance

In the Strategy and War Course, students are assessed according to Intermediate-Level Education Joint Learning Areas and Objectives for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) established by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff via the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), CJCSI 1800.01G, signed April 15, 2024. In addition to assessing OPMEP objectives, the Strategy and War Course addresses U.S. Navy's guidance on

Professional Military Education, the intent articulated by the President of the Naval War College, and strategic challenges highlighted by the Department of War. Lastly, the course reflects the experience and judgment of the Strategy and Policy Department faculty and the feedback offered by the students.

Interconnections with Joint Planning Doctrine

The critical, analytical, and strategic thinking emphasized in the Strategy and War Course directly supports the formulation of theater strategies and operational planning taught in other core courses at the Naval War College. Joint planning doctrine links strategy, operations, plans, and assessments. Understanding the linkages is not automatic, however. It requires planners who can critically analyze and operationalize strategy-informed plans. Strategic thinking is especially vital in the first two steps of the Joint Planning Process (JPP): Initiate Planning (Step 1) and Mission Analysis (Step 2). These two steps require a clear understanding of the strategic environment, strategic direction, and risk-informed analysis that balances objectives and resources.

Moreover, all Strategy and War Course themes directly tie into the principles of the Joint Planning Process and theater strategy formulation. For example, Course Theme #1 (The Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy, and Operations) guides planners in conducting strategically aligned planning (Steps 1 and 2 of the JPP). During Course of Action (COA) Development (Step 3), planners must evaluate whether a proposed course of action achieves both military and strategic objectives: Course Theme #4 (The Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations) provides the conceptual foundation for this task. Step 4 of the JPP involving COA Analysis and Wargaming corresponds to course theme #5 (Interaction, Reassessment, and Adaptation). As a result, the strategic thought emphasized in the Strategy and War Course is more than an exercise in the study of history and theory. A U.S. Naval War College graduate with fluency in the concepts of Strategy and War can avoid the mistake of conducting military planning in a vacuum by ensuring that operations are aligned with national strategic direction.

Learning Outcomes

The Department of War has adopted outcomes-based assessment of student learning. To that end, the Naval War College has developed the following College of Naval Command and Staff/Naval Staff College (JPME I) Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate joint planning and joint warfighting ability in military operations and campaigns across the continuum of competition.
2. Create theater and national military strategies designed for contemporary and future security environments.
3. Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to decision-making in theater-level, joint, and multinational operations.
4. Apply theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine through critical thought in professional communication.

The Strategy and War Course is especially robust in supporting Program Learning Outcome 4 with the entire course based on case studies. This methodology allows students to communicate critical thinking skills through an application of theoretical and historical examples that often include concepts of sea power. Moreover, historical examples pertinent to other Program Learning Outcomes emerge in several of the Strategy and War case studies.

In support of the overarching Program Learning Outcomes, the Strategy and Policy Department has defined the following Course Learning Outcomes, and expects that those who successfully complete the Strategy and War Course will be able to:

1. Evaluate, through Clausewitzian critical analysis, strategic arguments and alternative courses of action within wars.
2. Apply creatively strategic principles, relevant theorists, and historical case studies to address complex problems of strategy and operations in war.
3. Evaluate how various actors achieve strategic effects through operations in naval and other domains.
4. Evaluate choices of theater-level commanders related to the conduct of war to achieve political aims.

Course Development Committee:

Professors Kevin D. McCranie (Chair), George D. Satterfield (Deputy), Shahin Berenji, and Joshua Meeks (CDE), Colonel Matthew P. Nischwitz, and Lieutenant Colonel Brendan R. Neagle.

STRATEGY AND WAR COURSE THEMES

The Strategy and Policy Department has developed nine related themes for use in the Strategy and War Course. These themes are neither a checklist of things to do, a set of "school solutions," nor conventional wisdom. The conduct of war can never be reduced to formulas or algorithms. Rather, the course themes supply questions to provoke thought and discussion. They are used throughout the course because they illuminate the reasons for military effectiveness in contemporary war. They furnish overarching context for analysis and decision-making. These themes constitute a starting point for critical strategic thinking and fall into two broad categories: those dealing with the process of matching strategy and operations and those concerning the environment in which that process takes place. All of the course themes are present in each of the case studies; however, beginning with the second case study, several themes are especially highlighted through each case's readings, lectures, and questions.

MATCHING STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS: THE PROCESS

1. The Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy, and Operations

2. Intelligence, Assessment, and Plans

3. The Instruments of War

4. The Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations

5. Interaction, Reassessment, and Adaptation

6. War Termination

MATCHING STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS: THE ENVIRONMENT

7. The Multinational Arena

8. The Institutional Context and Civil-Military Relations

9. Cultures and Societies

MATCHING STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS: THE PROCESS

1. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF POLICY, STRATEGY, AND OPERATIONS

Did the belligerents understand and spell out political objectives? How much did each participant in the conflict value its political objectives? Did political and military leaders use the value of the object to determine the magnitude and duration of the effort, and to reconsider the effort if it became too costly? Did leaders anticipate and manage costs and risks? Were the benefits of war worth its likely costs and risks? How well did the belligerents build support for their aims and strategy at home and abroad?

Did the political leadership provide the military with strategic guidance? Did such guidance restrict the use of force, and, if so, with what impact on chances for success? Did the belligerents adopt strategies that supported their policies? How well did the belligerents define the problem they face, understand the strategic context, and articulate the task and purpose of their missions? What was the relationship between each belligerent's political and military objectives? What assumptions did political and military leaders make about how attaining military objectives would contribute to attaining political objectives?

How did each belligerent believe its operations would support its strategy and ultimately its policy? To what extent did campaigns and operations support the strategies of each belligerent? Did political and military leaders think carefully about how the other side would respond militarily and politically?

2. INTELLIGENCE, ASSESSMENT, AND PLANS

How reliable, complete, and accurately interpreted was the intelligence collected before and during the war? How available was intelligence to leaders who needed it? Did operational leaders apply realistic intelligence estimates to analyze possible courses of action? Was a serious effort made to analyze the lessons of previous wars, and, if so, how did it affect strategic and operational planning? How successful were each belligerent's efforts to shape enemy perceptions? Was intelligence collection and assessment shaped by social, ideological, or racial biases?

How accurately did civilian and military leaders foresee the character of the war on which they were embarking? How well did each belligerent know itself, its allies and partners, its enemy, and third parties capable of affecting the outcome? Did each belligerent consider the possibility that the enemy might act unpredictably or less than rationally, resort to asymmetric warfare, or use weapons of mass destruction?

Did each belligerent use a formal, flexible, and thorough planning process? Did it include allies in that process, and, if so, with what results? Did the plans correctly identify the enemy's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities? Were strategic and operational plans informed by the relationship between political ends and military means? To what extent did plans rely upon intelligence, deception, surprise, psychological operations, and strategic communication? Did planning allow for the fog, friction, uncertainty, and chance of war? What assumptions did planners make about how diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of power could help achieve the political objectives? To what degree did preconceived ideas about the adversary distort intelligence and planning? Did the initial plans consider problems of war termination?

3. THE INSTRUMENTS OF WAR

Did political and military leaders understand the strategic and operational capabilities, effects, and limitations of the forms of military power at their disposal? Did military leaders

consider operational, logistical, or other constraints on the deployment and employment of instruments of war?

Did military leadership integrate different forms of power for maximum operational and strategic effectiveness? Did those in command of the different instruments of war share common assumptions about how force would translate into the fulfillment of political objectives? What limitations hindered integration of different forms of military power?

How did the belligerents exploit opportunities created by technological innovation? Did they turn asymmetries in technology to strategic advantage? Was there a revolution in military affairs prior to or during the war, and, if so, did its tactical and operational consequences produce strategic results? Did any military or political disadvantages result from technological innovation or changes in information technology? What role did influence operations and strategic communications play?

4. THE DESIGN, EXECUTION, AND EFFECTS OF OPERATIONS

Was each belligerent's operational design informed by a vision of the desired end-state, an accurate assessment, and understanding of political and military risk? Did each belligerent concentrate effort against the enemy's centers of gravity while protecting its own? Did operational leaders develop courses of action that were suitable, feasible, and acceptable within the strategic context? Did the operational design synchronize, sequence, and phase operations for strategic effect, and did it aim at producing chiefly kinetic or chiefly psychological effects? Did the design of operations try to deceive or surprise while anticipating possible enemy responses?

Did operational leaders keep the ultimate strategic and political purposes in view while prosecuting operations? How coherent, agile, and effective was each belligerent's system of command and control, and did forces execute operations according to the commander's intent? Were operations joint and combined? Did operational leaders exploit opportunities, parry or counter enemy operations, or control the tempo of the war? Did either side try to delay a decision, and why? Did either side make a transition from offense to defense or from defense to offense? Did operations receive the logistical support necessary for success?

How did campaigns and operations affect the enemy's capabilities, command structure, and will to fight? Did the mix of operations maximize the campaign's strategic effects? Did operational leaders foresee and try to bring about these effects, or did they benefit from good fortune or enemy missteps? How important were joint and combined operations to the campaign? Did a belligerent rely too much on military force? To what degree did information operations and strategic communications affect the outcome of the campaigns?

5. INTERACTION, REASSESSMENT, AND ADAPTATION

How well did the belligerents foresee the consequences of interaction with their enemies? Did unexpected enemy action disrupt prewar plans? How did interaction with the enemy affect

the character of the war? Was interaction among the belligerents asymmetric, and, if so, in what sense and with what consequences? Was one side able to make its enemies fight on its own terms? How well did strategists and commanders adapt to enemy actions? How did belligerents react to enemy operations and adjust to fog and friction? Did operational leaders consider alternative courses of action sufficiently? How did information operations affect the process of reassessment and adaptation?

If a belligerent chose to open a new theater, did its decision signify a new policy objective, a new strategy, an extension of previous operations, a response to failure or stalemate in the original theater, or an effort to seize a new opportunity created during the war? Did it make sense to open the new theater, and, if so, did the belligerent open it at the correct time? Did the environment in the new theater favor operational success? How did the new theater influence the larger war? What role did maritime power play in opening the theater, supporting operations, and closing the theater?

How did the outcome of key operations induce the belligerents to adjust their strategic and political goals? Did military leaders effectively adapt their courses of action to dynamic changes in the strategic environment? If an additional state or party intervened in the conflict, did the intervention compel either side to reshape its policy or strategy? If there were changes in policy or strategy, were they based on a rational reassessment of political objectives and the military means available?

6. WAR TERMINATION

Did either belligerent squander opportunities to bring an end to the war? If a belligerent was committed to removing an enemy's political leadership, did its effort at regime change result in a longer war or heavier casualties? If negotiations began before the end of hostilities, how well did each side's operations and diplomacy support its policy?

Did the victor consider how far to go militarily to end the war? Did any antagonist overstep the culminating point of victory or attack to maintain pressure on its adversary? Alternatively, did the winner do too little militarily to give the political result of the war a reasonable chance to endure? Did the victor consider what to demand from the enemy to fulfill its political objectives? How and why did the vanquished stop fighting? Was there a truce, and, if so, to what extent did its terms shape the postwar settlement? Did the postwar settlement meet the victor's political objectives? Did the closing operations of the war leave the victor in a strong position to enforce the peace? To what degree was the defeated state reincorporated into the international system?

To what extent did the relationship among the political and military leaders contribute to the stability or instability of the settlement? Did the character of the war affect the durability of the settlement? How did the populations of the victor and the defeated affect the peace settlement? Did the victor maintain sufficient strength and resolve to enforce the peace?

MATCHING STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS: THE ENVIRONMENT

7. THE MULTINATIONAL ARENA

Did political and military leaders seize opportunities to isolate their adversaries from allies? How successful were these efforts, and why? Did belligerents attempt to create coalitions? If so, what common interests and policies unified the coalition partners? Did coalition partners coordinate strategy and operations while sharing burdens, and what were the consequences if not? How did coalition members share information, intelligence, and material resources?

Did the coalition's strategies and operations solidify or degrade the coalition? To what extent did coalition partners support, restrain, or control one another? If a coalition disintegrated, did its demise result from internal stress, external pressure, or both? Did coalition dynamics work for or against efforts to match operations to strategy, and strategy to policy? How did the actions of allies contribute to operational success or failure? What impact did coalition dynamics have on war termination? Did the winning coalition endure past the end of the war?

8. THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

How were each belligerent's military forces organized? Did their organizations facilitate planning, training for, and executing joint and combined operations? Did a process exist to coordinate military power with the employment of other instruments of national power to attain political objectives? If so, how effective was that process? How well did military and civil agencies share information and coordinate activities? If there was rivalry among military services, how did it affect the design and execution of operations and strategy?

How did civil-military relations contribute to strategic success or failure? Were relations among military and political leaders functional or dysfunctional, and with what consequences? Did a lack of clarity or consistency in political aims affect the civil-military relationship? How did political and military leadership respond if the military could not achieve the objective? Were political restraints on the use of force excessive?

How did military leaders respond if political leaders insisted on operations that promised significant political gain but at high military cost? How did the civilian leadership react if military leaders proposed operations that promised significant military rewards but at significant political risk? How attuned were military leaders to managing risk? Did the actions of civil and military leaders result in the erosion of the institutions that underpinned their political system?

9. CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

How did the cultures, ideologies, values, social arrangements, and political systems of the belligerents influence strategy, operations, and military organization? Did a contender display a "strategic culture," or way of war? If so, did its adversary exploit its cultural traits? How did ideology affect the war's course and outcome? If the war involved competition for political allegiance, did culture or values give either belligerent a clear advantage? How did social divisions affect force structure and military operations?

Was the relationship among a belligerent's government, people, and military able to withstand battlefield reverses or the strain of protracted war? If the war was protracted, how successful was the victor at weakening its adversary from within? Did a belligerent conduct information operations? If so, were they designed with consideration of the culture of the target audiences? Did each belligerent's military strategy deliver sufficient incremental dividends—periodic successes—to maintain support among its populace? Alternatively, did military strategy and operations undermine popular support for the war? Was either side able to exploit social divisions in the opposing population?

Did the belligerents attempt to mobilize and manage public opinion, and, if so, with what success? Did the passions or indifference of the people affect the leadership's effort to develop and maintain an effective policy-strategy match?

COURSE PROCESS AND STANDARDS

1. Methodology. Each case study will be examined through a combination of lectures, readings, tutorials, student essays, and seminars.

2. Seminar Assignments. Each student will be assigned to a seminar for the duration of the course. Each seminar will be led by a faculty team.

3. Lectures. Students will attend lectures relating to each case study. Lectures impart knowledge about the case studies, encourage student engagement through questions, provide content to inform student essays, offer insights into strategic problems, and stimulate learning and discussion in seminar. Additional lectures in some case studies will be provided for asynchronous viewing via Blackboard. Live and asynchronous lectures are equally important to the curriculum. The arguments expressed in Strategy and War Course lectures reflect the lecturer's expertise and do not necessarily represent the Naval War College, the U.S. Navy, the Department of War, or any part of the U.S. Government.

4. Readings. Before seminar, students are expected to read the books and articles assigned for that case study, as well as the student essays. These assigned texts are the only readings required to prepare for seminar, write essays, and prepare for the end of course comprehensive essay. There is no expectation for additional outside research. Books must be returned upon completing the requirements for the course. Your seminar moderators will provide reading guidance for each seminar.

5. Course Requirements. In addition to viewing lectures, completing the assigned readings, and contributing to seminar discussions, students contribute to a capstone war game exercise and write three essays. In computing the final grade, the following percentages will be used:

- Seminar and War Game Preparation and Contribution—35 percent
- Essay 1—20 percent
- Essay 2—25 percent
- Comprehensive End of Course Essay—20 percent

Grading takes place in accordance with the U.S. Naval War College *Faculty Handbook* and *Student Handbook*.

6. Strategy and War Course Podcasts. The Strategy and Policy Department has produced two optional podcast series that align with the case studies in the Strategy and War Course. The title of the current podcast is *Strategy Matters*. It is available on Blackboard, the Naval War College Library's Digital Commons, and on commercial podcast applications (Spotify, Apple, etc.). From 2022 to 2023, the Department also produced a podcast series, *Profiles in Strategy*. This series is also available on the course Blackboard site. The podcasts are **not** required content, but they supplement the material in each case study by providing additional perspectives. Students may use content from *Strategy Matters* and *Profiles in Strategy* as reference materials for essays and seminar contributions with appropriate citations.

7. Seminar Essays. Each student will submit two seminar essays, each ranging from 2,600-3,200 words (the word count does not include citations), on questions assigned from the syllabus. Essays should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced. The seminar moderators will assign students their two essay questions at the beginning of the term. When preparing an essay, the student will find all information required to answer the question in the readings and lectures for that case study. Students shall not consult sources outside of those listed in this syllabus without obtaining written permission from their moderators. For matters relating to the format for documentation, please use either footnotes or endnotes. Since all readings are assigned in the syllabus, a bibliography is optional. For additional information please consult *The Chicago Manual of Style.*

Purpose, Goal, and Key Elements of Essays. The essay offers an opportunity to conduct strategic analysis. A good essay is an analytical "thought piece" in which the author presents a thesis supported by arguments based on the information available in the assigned readings and lectures.

Strategy and War Course essays challenge students to develop the critical thinking and professional communication skills necessary for applying strategic concepts to military planning at the operational and strategic levels of war. Joint doctrine asserts that a key task for military planners entails understanding and articulating the complex relationship among national interests, government policy, desired objectives, and the contemporary security environment. Essays provide students an opportunity to grapple with these relationships by studying complex problems, proposing suitable solutions, and assessing the implications of their suggested courses of action.

Analytical essay writing in the Strategy and War Course builds core skills that directly enhance a student's effectiveness and competence in several key steps of the Joint Planning Process (JPP), as described in JP 5-0. Most notably, it sharpens the critical thinking required for Mission Analysis by providing opportunities to dissect complex strategic problems, evaluate competing objectives, and identify underlying assumptions. Additionally, the emphasis on structured argumentation and evidence-based reasoning supports Course of Action (COA) Development, where planners must craft options that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable within the strategic context. Likewise, the ability to compare alternative courses of action, articulate risks, and weigh trade-offs is invaluable during COA Analysis and Comparison. While writing analytical essays throughout the course, students cultivate the intellectual habits necessary to contribute strategic thought to joint operational planning, ensuring that plans align with sound strategy and policy.

Because essays in the Strategy and War Course are meant to argue for the strongest course of action, they are not research papers. As a result, essays should not contain historical narrative for narrative's sake. Students should present only that historical narrative necessary to support the thesis and argue their courses of action.

There are **five** elements of an effective essay:

1. Answers the question(s) assigned.

2. Has a thesis that answers the question.

3. Marshals evidence to support that thesis. Provides analysis of the issues in relationship to the appropriate course themes and concepts, and makes a clear, unambiguous, substantial argument in support of the essay's thesis as well as addressing all parts of the posed question.

4. Considers, explicitly or implicitly, opposing arguments to or weaknesses in the thesis and supporting evidence. This is the counter-argument. The essay should also rebut the counter-argument. The rebuttal of the counterargument is equally important to demonstrate why the argument is better than any potential weaknesses the counter-argument poses.

5. Is written in a clear and well-organized fashion (spelling, construction, punctuation, grammar, syntax, format, etc.).

These five elements serve as the foundation for a grading rubric that articulates expectations for the essay, sets criteria for grading, clarifies standards for a quality performance, and guides feedback about progress toward those standards.

Submission. All Strategy and War Course essays will be submitted to their moderators electronically through Turnitin Assignments set up in each Blackboard seminar course. Students may assess their papers through the Turnitin Student Workbooks in Blackboard to benefit from Turnitin's Similarity Report prior to final paper submission. For students, this will highlight areas that require additional consideration. For the similarity score in Turnitin, there is no percentage that means "all clear" and no percentage that means "big trouble." Papers with as low as a 10% similarity score may have serious plagiarism concerns. Turnitin requires students to go through the markup line by line to identify and correct any problems. When submitting papers through the Blackboard seminar course, students are still able to revise and resubmit the assignment in their student Turnitin folder up to the assignment deadline. However, submitting papers for evaluation to moderators through Blackboard is final. If there are Turnitin issues identified by a student after submission, the student should immediately contact the seminar moderators.

The student will submit the completed essay to each moderator, following the instruction in the previous paragraph, normally no later than 0830 on the day before the seminar meets. If seminars meet on Monday or immediately following a Federal Holiday, the student will submit their essays no later than 0830 on the day the seminar meets. Essays submitted late without permission from the moderators will receive severe deductions in grading. Please see the section titled "Grading Standards for Written Work" for a more complete explanation of penalties for late work. In addition to submitting the essay to the moderators, the student will distribute a copy

to each member of the seminar. **Students shall read all essays prepared by their seminar colleagues before the seminar meets.**

8. Comprehensive Essay. Students will complete a comprehensive essay at the end of the course. This essay draws upon the entire course—its theoretical frameworks, course themes, and historical case studies, and the capstone war game exercise. The comprehensive essay will require students to link concepts presented throughout the course to the war game presented in the final case study.

9. Grading Standards for Student Written Work. All written work in the Strategy and War Course will be graded according to the standards below.

> **A+ (97-100):** The essay indicates brilliance and is ready for publication. The essay answers the question in a way that offers a genuinely new understanding of the subject. The thesis is exceptionally clear and well-focused on the entire question. The counterargument and rebuttal are addressed completely. The writing is clear throughout and exceptionally well-organized.
>
> **A (94-96):** Work of superior quality that demonstrates a high degree of original, critical thought. The essay intelligently answers the question. The thesis is clearly articulated and addresses the entire question. Evidence is relevant and purposeful. Consideration of arguments, counterargument, and rebuttal are comprehensive. The organization is especially clear throughout the essay.
>
> **A- (90-93):** A well-written, insightful essay that is above the average expected of graduate work and does not have major flaws. The essay skillfully answers the question. The thesis is articulated. Evidence is significant throughout. Arguments, counterargument, and rebuttal are presented effectively. The essay is coherently organized and very clearly written.
>
> **B+ (87-89):** A graduate-level essay that meets all five elements of a seminar essay though with varying degrees of success. The essay answers the question. The thesis is clearly stated but may not address all aspects of the question. The supporting evidence advances the thesis. A viable counterargument and rebuttal are present. The organization has strong points, and the essay is clearly written.
>
> **B (84-86):** An essay that is a satisfactory consideration of the topic and demonstrates acceptable graduate performance. The essay generally answers the question. The thesis is stated but may lack clarity and may not address all aspects of the question. The thesis is generally supported with relevant evidence. A counterargument and rebuttal are presented but likely not fully developed. Problems with organization and clarity may exist.
>
> **B- (80-83):** The essay is slightly below the expected graduate-level performance. The essay may only partially answer the question. The thesis has at least one of the following weaknesses: it is vague, unclear, or fails to address the entire question. The evidence and

analysis do not fully support the thesis. The counterargument and rebuttal are not fully developed. The essay may have distracting organizational flaws or significant problems with clarity.

C+ (77-79): The essay is below acceptable graduate-level performance. The essay fails to address one or more of the five elements described above. The essay may not effectively answer the question. The thesis may have at least two of the following weaknesses: it is vague, unclear, or fails to address the entire question. Evidence to support the thesis may be inadequate, and analysis may be incomplete. The treatment of the counterargument and rebuttal may be deficient. The organization may be poor, making the other four elements of an effective essay difficult to identify.

C (74-76): The essay generally fails to meet the standards of graduate work. While it might express an opinion, it fails to adequately answer the question, develop a thesis appropriate to the question, make adequate use of evidence, include a counterargument and rebuttal purposeful to the overall argument. The essay lacks a coherent structure or fails to demonstrate the quality of insight deemed sufficient to explore the assigned question adequately.

C- (70-73): The essay fails to meet the standards of graduate-level work. The essay reflects a failure to understand or answer the question. The thesis is poorly stated, with minimal evidence or support, or the essay may lack a counterargument and/or a rebuttal. The essay may express an opinion more than it provides a critically argued response to the question. Flaws in construction and development further detract from the readability of the essay.

D (60-69): Essay lacks evidence of graduate-level understanding and critical thinking. The essay fails to address the assigned question or present a coherent thesis. It lacks effort expected or understanding of the subject matter. It may not consider a counterargument or rebuttal. The organization is critically unclear.

F (0–59): Conspicuously fails to meet graduate-level standards in every area. The essay does not address the question. The essay has no thesis and suffers from significant flaws in respect to structure, grammar, and logic. The essay lacks a counterargument and rebuttal. The essay displays an apparent lack of effort to achieve the course requirements. Gross errors in construction and development detract from the readability of the essay, or it may display evidence of plagiarism or misrepresentation.

Late Work. Unexcused tardy student work—that is, work turned in past the deadline without previous permission from the moderators—will receive a grade no greater than C+ (78). Student work that is not completed will receive a numeric grade of zero. Please see the U.S. Naval War College *Faculty Handbook* for further information on grading.

Essay Length and Format. Written assignments (all essays) have specific length and formatting requirements. Failure to meet these requirements may result in a grade reduction.

10. Pre-tutorials and Tutorials. For each assigned essay question, students will meet at least twice with their moderators. The first meeting will be a pre-tutorial to ensure that the student understands the question. A formal tutorial session follows where the moderators and student scrutinize the student's assigned question and the student's response. Moderators may require additional meetings.

11. Faculty Office Hours. Each faculty teaching team in the Strategy and Policy Department will schedule a weekly office hour either virtually or in-person**.** Faculty will also meet for scheduled tutorials for writing assignments with each student and by appointment either virtually or in-person as requested.

12. Seminar Preparation and Contribution. Student contribution to seminar discussions is an essential part of this course. This begins with preparation that requires significant time to read and think. Preparation should also include the consideration of gameplans provided by seminar moderators. Such preparation creates conditions where each member of the seminar is better able to contribute to seminar discussion. Only then can the seminar group fully understand the strategic problems examined by the case study, apply the course themes to the material, and thus fulfill the course's objectives.

The seminar contribution grade does not measure the number of times a student speaks, but how well the student understands the material, enriches discussion, and contributes to fellow students' learning. In other words, the grade reflects the quality—not quantity—of class contributions. To take part in discussion, students must absorb the reading, listen attentively to lectures, seminar moderators, and fellow students, and think critically about what they read and hear. The seminar is a team effort. Declining to contribute or saying very little undercuts the learning experience for everyone in the seminar, whereas advance preparation enhances the seminar's quality. Seminar contribution helps students demonstrate that they comprehend and can synthesize the course material and communicate their thoughts with clarity and precision. It is perfectly acceptable for students to request feedback on their level of contribution at any point in the trimester. Seminars follow a non-attribution policy to encourage free and critical thinking on difficult strategic questions; as a result, recording seminar is prohibited.

13. Grading Standards for Seminar Preparation and Contribution. Seminar preparation and contribution will be graded according to the following standards:

> **A+ (97-100):** Demonstrates exceptional preparation for each session as reflected in the quality of contributions to discussions. Contributions indicate brilliance through an original understanding of material throughout the course. Student contributions demonstrate clear, original, and critical thinking. Exceptional ability to listen and analyze the comments of others is evident through insightful quality and appropriate frequency of contribution.
>
> **A (94-96):** Arrives well-prepared for every seminar. Contribution is always of superior quality. Contributions are highlighted by insightful thought and understanding and contain some original interpretations of complex concepts. Student contributions

demonstrate clear and critical thinking. Strikes an outstanding balance between "listening" and "contributing."

A- (90-93): Above the average expected of a graduate student. Prepared for and fully engaged in seminar discussions and commands the respect of colleagues. Student contributions demonstrate critical thinking. Consistently displays attentive listening skills and thinks through the issues at hand before commenting.

B+ (87-89): Average graduate-level preparation and contribution. Preparation and contribution reflect an understanding of the material. Sometimes contributes original and well-developed insights. A positive contributor to seminar who thoughtfully joins in most discussions as an active listener and engaged speaker. Many of the student contributions demonstrate critical thinking.

B (84-86): Satisfactory contribution. Involvement in seminar reflects adequate preparation with the occasional contribution of original and insightful thought. Some of the student's contributions demonstrate critical thinking. May not always consider others' contributions when speaking or may not always demonstrate active listening.

B- (80-83): Only demonstrates minimally acceptable graduate-level contribution. Comes to seminar prepared for only portions of the seminar discussion. Contributes, but sometimes speaks or responds without having thought through the issue well enough to present a structurally sound position. Minimally acceptable consideration of others' contributions when speaking and minimally acceptable active listening.

C+ (77-79): Below acceptable level of contribution. Does not demonstrate preparation for seminar. Sometimes contributes voluntarily, though more frequently needs to be encouraged to participate in discussions.

C (74-76): Contribution is marginal. Occasionally attempts to put forward a plausible opinion, but the inadequate use of evidence, incoherent logic structure, and critically unclear quality of insight demonstrate a lack of preparation. Frequently seems disconnected or disengaged from the conversation.

C- (70-73): Lack of contribution to seminar discussions reflects clear substandard preparation for sessions. Unable to articulate a responsible opinion. Sometimes displays a negative attitude.

D (60-69): Is not prepared or engaged. Contributions are infrequent and reflect below minimum acceptable understanding of course material. Engages in frequent fact-free conversation.

F (0-59): Completely unprepared for seminar. Fails to demonstrate acceptable preparation and fails to contribute in any substantive manner. May be extremely disruptive or uncooperative.

14. War Game. The final case study (case study 11) is centered on a wargaming event. The war game is designed to serve as a culminating event in the Strategy and War Course. The game will require students to apply theory, history, and sea power concepts presented in the previous case studies, to a challenge set in the contemporary strategic environment.

15. Grading Standards for War Game Preparation and Contribution. Students will be evaluated across the following five attributes: preparation and situational understanding; strategic thinking and decision-making; adaptability and responsiveness; collaboration and participation; and communications and professional delivery.

> **A+ (97-100):** Demonstrates exceptional preparation and brilliance through an original understanding of the strategic environment. Decisions are highly compelling, accurate, and completely address the assigned problem set. Masterfully justifies arguments using insightful applications of course concepts and accurate historical examples to indisputably justify every argument. Displays an exceptional ability to analyze the moves of others and adjust strategy accordingly. Maintains a flawless balance between contributing and active listening. Exemplary communication, using tone, speed, and poise to convey complex intent with no verbal discontinuity.
>
> **A (94-96):** Arrives well-prepared and is fully engaged throughout the war game. Decisions are persuasive and address the assigned problem set. Expertly synthesizes course concepts, theories, and historical examples to justify every argument. Recommends strategically reasoned courses of action, adapting to the situation based on an astute re-assessment of changes to the operational environment. Strikes an outstanding balance between decisiveness and collaboration, consistently ensuring all collaborative voices are considered through superior active listening. Delivery is professional, demonstrating poised application of tone, gestures, and eye contact to enhance the persuasiveness of arguments.
>
> **A- (90-93):** Arrives prepared and remains engaged throughout the war game, demonstrating a firm awareness of the central issues. Commands the respect of colleagues through sound decision-making and critical thinking, consistently justifying arguments with clear applications of theory and history. Demonstrates a firm awareness of the moves of others and responds with timely strategic adjustments. The student is an effective, competent collaborator who listens attentively before responding, using a delivery style that enhances the persuasiveness of their arguments.
>
> **B+ (87-89):** Reflects the expected level of preparation and engagement throughout the war game. Decision-making reflects a solid understanding of the war game's intent, and the student regularly justifies arguments with a competent use of course material. Responses to others' moves reflect expected level of critical thoughts, though some adaptations may be more reactive than proactive. A positive contributor who actively listens and thoughtfully collaborates with colleagues. Spoken language is clear, and gestures/eye contact are generally consistent with professional standards.

B (84-86): Involvement reflects adequate preparation and awareness of central issues. Arguments are occasionally justified with references to course concepts, though the depth of application varies. The student contributes occasional original strategic thoughts but may struggle to fully anticipate the consequences of others' moves. While generally comfortable, the student may not always consider others' strategic perspectives or demonstrate consistent active listening. Professionalism in delivery is functional but may lack the polish to be persuasive.

B- (80-83): The student is prepared for only portions of the war game. Contributes to the war game but often make decisions without having thought through the strategic consequences or the moves of others. Justifications for positions are infrequent and may lack structural soundness. Displays minimally acceptable active listening, sometimes speaking without considering others' input. Delivery is functional but marred by occasional verbal discontinuity, inconsistent volume, or sporadic professional presence.

C+ (77-79): The student does not demonstrate sufficient preparation. Content and strategic adaptations are often inaccurate, poorly considered, or poorly constructed. They rarely attempt to justify arguments using course concepts or historical examples. Participation often requires encouragement from the instructor or peers, and Professional communication falls below the acceptable graduate level.

C (74-76): A lack of preparation is evident through inadequate use of evidence and fundamentally flawed logic. The student frequently seems disconnected from the war game's objectives and the moves of other players. Incoherent logic demonstrates a lack of meaningful engagement with the team. Delivery is often unclear, characterized by distracting filler words, a lack of eye contact, and an uncomfortable demeanor.

C- (70-73): Substandard preparation leaves the student unable to articulate a responsible strategic opinion or provide theoretical justification for their actions. They are unable to make informed adaptations within the game and often display a negative attitude toward the exercise or team members. Performance is substandard in almost all facets of articulating and executing strategic goals.

D (60-69): Contributions reflect a below-minimum understanding of the scenario. The student engages in "fact-free" decision-making with no reference to course material and fails to acknowledge the primary issues of the assignment. Student is occasionally disruptive or uncooperative. Largely disengaged, infrequent in contributions, and ineffective in communication, often failing to acknowledge time constraints.

F (0-59): The student is completely unprepared and fails to contribute in any substantive manner. Fails to meet even the basic requirements of the exercise and may be extremely disruptive or uncooperative. Performance is non-substantive across all facets of the war game.

16. Grade Appeals. After discussing feedback and the grade on an assignment with his or her seminar moderator, a student may request a grade review by submitting a written justification for

the review to the Deputy Chair of the Strategy and Policy Department no later than one week after the grade has been received. The Deputy Chair will then appoint two faculty members other than the original graders to conduct an independent review. Anonymity will be maintained throughout. The second team of graders will not know the student's identity, the seminar from which the essay came, or the grade originally assigned. They will grade the paper independently as though it had been submitted for the first time, providing full comments, criticisms, and a new grade. The new grade will replace the old one. The student may request an additional review of the work in question no later than one week after the new grade has been received, whereupon the Department Chair will review the appeal and either affirm the grade assigned on appeal or assign another grade (higher or lower), which then replaces any previous grade assigned. In exceptional circumstances, the student may, within one week of receiving the results of the appeal from the Department Chair, make a further appeal to the Dean of Academics, whose decision in the matter will be final.

17. Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation of work will not be tolerated at the Naval War College. The Naval War College enforces a strict academic code requiring authors to properly cite materials they have consulted for written work submitted in fulfillment of diploma/degree requirements. Simply put: plagiarism is prohibited. Likewise, this academic code (defined in the U.S. Naval War College *Student Handbook*) prohibits cheating, as well as presenting work previously completed elsewhere as new work. Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation are inconsistent with the professional standards required of all military personnel and government employees. Furthermore, in the case of U.S. military officers, such conduct clearly violates the "Exemplary Conduct Standards" delineated in Title 10, U.S. Code, Sections 3583 (U.S. Army), 5947 (U.S. Naval Service), and 8583 (U.S. Air Force).

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without giving proper credit to the author or creator of the work. It is passing off another's words, ideas, analysis, or other products as one's own. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be treated as such by the College. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

a. Verbatim use of others' words without both quotation marks (or block quotation) and citation.

b. Paraphrasing of others' words or ideas without citation.

c. Any use of others' work (other than facts that are widely accepted as common knowledge) found in books, journals, newspapers, websites, interviews, government documents, course materials, lecture notes, films, and so forth without giving credit.

d. The verbatim use of others' words without both quotation marks (or block quotation) and citation

Authors are expected to give full credit in their written submissions when utilizing another's words or ideas. Such utilization, with proper attribution, is not prohibited by this code. However, a substantially borrowed but attributed paper may lack the originality expected of graduate-level work; submission of such a paper may merit a low or failing grade, but is not plagiarism.

Cheating is defined as giving, receiving, or using unauthorized aid in support of one's own efforts or the efforts of another student (note: Naval War College reference librarians, Strategy and Policy Department faculty as well as those from the Writing Center are authorized sources of aid in the preparation of class assignments, but not exams). Cheating includes but is not limited to the following actions:

a. Gaining unauthorized access to exams.

b. Assisting or receiving assistance from other students or other sources (including the internet) in the preparation of written assignments or during tests (unless specifically permitted).

c. Using unauthorized materials (notes, texts, crib sheets, and the like, in paper or electronic form) during tests.

Misrepresentation is defined as using a single paper for more than one purpose without permission or acknowledgement. Misrepresentation includes but is not limited to the following actions:

a. Submitting a single paper or substantially the same paper for more than one course at NWC without permission from the instructors.

b. Submitting a paper or substantially the same paper previously prepared for some other purpose outside NWC without acknowledging that it is an earlier work.

18. Strategy and Policy Department Policy on the use of Super Intelligence and Large Language Models. Students are always responsible for the content of their written assignments and their contributions to seminar discussions as well as the war game.
The use of Super Intelligence (SI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) by students in the Strategy and War Course is governed by three core principles. First, these tools must serve to enhance, rather than replace, the development of students' critical thinking and professional communication skills. Second, students are solely responsible for verifying the accuracy, quality, and reliability of any SI and LLM-generated content used in their assignments. Third, only information assigned in the Strategy and War Course can be used to complete course assignments. Students will disclose in writing general assistance obtained from SI and LLMs. Moreover, students will cite the specific use of LLMs or SI. (See S&P Department Guidelines for Citation and Disclosure of Use of SI and LLMs below).

Students must never use SI or LLMs to complete an assignment in a way that misrepresents it as their own work, for example, using an LLM to generate a portion of a paper then submitting the LLM generated text as the student's original writing. There is no comprehensive list of acceptable and prohibited use of LLMs and SI, but use must be informed by the three core principles outlined in the previous paragraph. However, generally unacceptable uses include submitting SI-generated text as your own, copying from SI and LLMs without attribution, or using SI to alter the writer's voice or mimic another scholar's writing style. The Strategy and Policy Department Chair and your seminar moderators may provide further

instructions for acceptable uses of SI and LLMs in the learning environment during the first week of the course. If students are unclear about acceptable uses of SI and LLMs in assignments, it is the responsibility of students to ask their moderators prior to submitting any assignment. Naval War College Instruction 5230.1A, *Student Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence,* provides a comprehensive account of student responsibilities and expectations related to LLMs.

S&P Department Guidelines for Citation and Disclosure of Use of SI and LLMs

When a student uses SI and LLMs for general assistance, a disclosure statement is required. The following formatted statement can be placed on the student's essay cover page (a generic S&P Student Essay Cover Page can be found on Blackboard).

- "During the preparation of this work, the author used [TOOL NAME/VERSION] in order to [PROVIDE SPECIFIC PURPOSE(S), e.g., improve the readability and language of the manuscript]. After using this service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for its content".

In addition to the disclosure statement, students are required to cite specific content or ideas generated by SI and LLMs. However, it bears repeating that students shall not consult sources outside of those listed in this syllabus. Even with this restriction, there are instances where it might still prove necessary to cite content or ideas generated by SI and LLMs. If this is the case, the following is the proper format:

- NAME OF THE TOOL response to "THE PROMPT USED," THE COMPANY THAT DEVELOPED THE TOOL, DATE THE INFORMATION BEING CITED WAS GENERATED.

For further information regarding the proper citation and attribution of use of SI and LLMs, consult the Chicago Manual of Style *Online*.

19. Student Survey. Student feedback is vital to the future development of the Strategy and War Course. Responses are treated anonymously and are used only to create standardized reports. The survey is designed to provide lecture feedback on a weekly basis and overall feedback at the end of the course.

Lecture surveys do not require a password, but for the course survey student seminar leaders will distribute randomly generated passwords to each student. Use this password for the end of the course survey and please do not share it with others. Thank you in advance for your time and effort in completing this important assessment of the Strategy and War Course.

20. Online Resources. Blackboard is the main repository of online resources for the Strategy and War Course. On Blackboard, students can access the most current versions of the syllabus, course calendar, lecture schedule, and selected readings. Moreover, lecture handouts and video links will be posted on Blackboard along with other supplemental information, including

material specific to individual seminars. The podcast episodes associated with each case will also be posted to blackboard as they become available.

Readings identified as "Selected Readings" or "Leganto" are available electronically through Blackboard. The best way to access such readings is to log into Blackboard for your seminar, select the "Case Studies" tab, and then the relevant case. The words "Selected Readings" serve as a hyperlink to take you to the PDF of the correct reading. The word "Leganto" also serves as a hyperlink to take you to the library electronic reserve reading list. The words "E-book/Leganto" will provide you with access to the entire electronic version of the book, however only the pages listed in the syllabus are required for reading. The type and availability of readings as well as copyright restrictions necessitate the above reading formats.

Please refer any questions to Lori Cassisi (Academic Coordinator, Strategy and Policy Department), lori.cassisi@usnwc.edu; (401) 856-5364; Strategy and Policy Department, Office H-333.

I. THE THEORISTS: CLAUSEWITZ, SUN TZU, MAHAN, CORBETT, AND MAO

General: One of the desired outcomes of Professional Military Education is to "demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills … to support the development and implementation of strategies and complex operations."[1] Those seeking to hone their critical and creative thinking skills can do so either through first-hand experience or study. For the military professional, first-hand experience tends to entail the real-world trial and error of combat operations. The Strategy and War Course follows the other approach by employing case studies to impart critical habits of thought through a classroom environment, where learning does not have the possibility for such catastrophic results. Though each case is unique, the sequence of cases is designed toward a cumulative outcome through the integration of theorists, course themes, and historical examples. As such, the first case study allows for an in-depth, detailed examination of several key strategic theorists with the object of promoting strategic literacy, instilling strategic mindedness, establishing a common vocabulary for effective communication, providing foundational course concepts, and introducing the course themes. This case study emphasizes the application of theory as outlined in Program Learning Outcome 4 (for the Program Learning Outcomes, see page 8).

This case study is unlike any of the others in the Strategy and War Course. While subsequent cases provide opportunities to apply history, this case presents many of the course's theoretical foundations. This will be accomplished through a two-part structure. Part A presents Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu as foundational theorists. Part B expands our theoretical studies with several supporting theorists. They assist with Program Learning Outcome 4 by including concepts of sea power through the writings of Alfred T. Mahan and Julian S. Corbett. Part B provides additional focused theoretical insights on revolutionary, protracted, and irregular warfare through the writings of Mao Zedong.

To fully apply the strategic thinkers as guides in real-world decision-making, it is important to grasp the value of theoretical writing. These sometimes-complementary, sometimes-contradictory works do not provide standardized answers that are universally applicable in all situations. Instead, theorists impart common frames of reference and useful concepts for military and civilian leaders to draw upon when integrating instruments of war in the pursuit of political ends. The theorists' explanatory power sparks thought, stimulates debate, and promotes creativity.

The theorists provide methods of thinking through difficult problems. Book 2 of Clausewitz's *On War* is particularly suggestive. In these pages, Clausewitz considers the purpose of theory and applies critical analysis to war. Rather than rules and laws, the theorists provide no more than aids in judgment. Students should, however, understand that these methods of thinking can be applied to issues beyond the use of force and can assist with problem-solving in nearly every aspect of life. After all, Clausewitz's critical analysis entails "the application of theoretical

[1] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," CJCSI 1800.01G, April 15, 2024, p. A-3.

truths to actual events." It requires "not just an evaluation of the means actually employed, but of *all possible means*."[2]

The theorists, moreover, present an expansive array of concepts. Their ideas and frameworks expand the student's mental aperture by providing tools for analysis. Though the theorists presented in the course wrote many years ago, their concepts remain relevant today. For example, Sun Tzu's injunction to know the enemy and know oneself persists in our contemporary concept of "the estimate of the situation." Moreover, Sun Tzu's emphasis on advantageous positioning, superior speed, and surprise foreshadows many aspects of what is now called "maneuver warfare." Likewise, Clausewitz's emphasis on concentrating forces against the enemy's "center of gravity" still lies at the heart of U.S. joint military doctrine and planning processes.

Finally, each theorist describes an overarching way of war grounded in the context of the theorist's time and unique circumstance. Each wrote for a specific type of belligerent, with definite instruments of power, and in a specific strategic environment. Clausewitz, for example, served Prussia, a continental great power on the European mainland. The state's primary instrument of war was its army. His writings grapple with changes in warfare that occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote for the United States at a time it was emerging on the global stage. He sought to engage with American leaders about the importance of becoming a sea power and chart the advantages that sea powers possess in both peace and war. Though the insights of the theorists have relevance beyond their type of state and the character of war they encountered, students of strategy should keep in mind the context and audience for which each theorist wrote. Understanding context allows us to better conceptualize the strengths and limitations of their theories and aids in our understanding of the enduring nature of war. We must not twist and distort the theorists into things they are not. Each theorist provides specific tools, and as students of strategy, we must seek to employ the proper tool.

In keeping with the cumulative nature of the course, this case provides critical frameworks for evaluating complex problems of strategy and war presented in the subsequent case studies. Rather than answers, the theorists presented in this case leave us with questions and concepts that allow us to fulfill the expectation for "the development of strategically minded joint warfighters who think critically and can creatively apply military power to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations, and fight under conditions of disruptive change."[3]

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[2] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 156, 161.

[3] Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Officer Professional Military Education Policy," CJCSI 1800.01G, April 15, 2024, p. 1.

PART A: THE FOUNDATIONAL THEORISTS: CLAUSEWITZ AND SUN TZU

Introduction: Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* serve as foundational theoretical readings in the Strategy and War Course; as a result, these writings serve as the principal topics of study in Part A of the Theorists Case Study. Although technology has revolutionized warfare, many of the core strategic principles remain unchanged. This is why the writings of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu remain relevant as conceptual frameworks for the study of strategy and war.

Clausewitz provides a critical point of departure by clearly describing war as "*nothing but the continuation of policy with other means*."[4] As the title of his book suggests, he writes extensively on war. In some respects, his focus is the narrowest among all the theorists in the course, yet he provides a carefully reasoned definition and description of war in its various parts. Unlike Clausewitz, who developed complex arguments, Sun Tzu addresses strategy in concise yet profound statements. His writings tend to stretch beyond the actual fighting. He emphasizes winning without fighting and his menu of options addresses the value of attacking an opponent's strategy and alliances, supporting his argument that victory is possible without bloodshed.

Clausewitz and Sun Tzu agree that political authorities must determine the political objectives of war. They discuss the relationships between national objectives and the strategies that will help to secure their objectives. At the same time, these theorists recognize that political pressures give rise to tensions between political and military leaders regarding the best ways and means to achieve political ends.

Both texts explore ethical tenets of the profession of arms, including the value of education in the art of war. They considered the intellectual development of leaders as essential for the security of the state and demanded that those in positions of military leadership learn the concepts and skills essential for rigorous critical analysis through the study of theory and military history. Clausewitz and Sun Tzu continue to aid today's leaders when devising and evaluating alternative courses of action to achieve future strategic success. To this end, the expectations of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu are the same as those of the Naval War College. *On War* and *The Art of War* therefore constitute natural points of departure as we begin thinking critically about strategy and war.

[4] Clausewitz, *On War*, Note of July 10, 1827, p. 69.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the value of studying theoretical writings such as those developed by Clausewitz and Sun Tzu?

2. What does Clausewitz mean by critical analysis?

3. How do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu define war? For what purposes would Clausewitz and Sun Tzu assert that a nation should go to war?

4. Clausewitz emphasizes the primacy of politics in waging war. How does Clausewitz's view of the proper relationships between war and politics and between military and political leaders compare with that of Sun Tzu? (See in particular Book 1, Chapter 1 and Book 8, Chapters 6A-6B of *On War* along with Chapter III of *The Art of War*.)

5. Why do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu maintain that conduct of war more closely resembles an art rather than a science?

6. Among Clausewitz's most important concepts are culminating point of victory, center of gravity, and the need to be strong at the decisive point at the critical time. How useful are such concepts for strategic and operational leaders?

7. Sun Tzu wrote, "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril" (Chapter III:31 of *The Art of War*). Why is the ability to develop this kind of knowledge so important?

8. Sun Tzu puts a premium on acquiring decisive superiority in the information domain to make timely, bold, and effective decisions in war. How realistic is it to expect that one side can build up such a decisive information edge against a competent adversary?

9. Compare how Clausewitz and Sun Tzu present the role and value of intelligence in war. Which theorist provides better advice on intelligence for leaders in the contemporary environment?

10. Clausewitz emphasizes the need to understand the importance of three interrelated aspects of war: reason, passion, and chance. What role does each play in war? What challenges do these aspects, particularly passion, present for ethical leadership and the profession of arms?

11. Sun Tzu argues, "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill" (Chapter III:3 of *The Art of War*). Meanwhile, Clausewitz states, "Since in war too small an effort can result not just in failure but in positive harm, each side is driven to outdo the other, which sets up an interaction" (Book 8, Chapter 3B of *On War*). Are these two statements contradictory or complementary? What are the dangers of adhering to only one of these statements?

12. Clausewitz recognizes that war can be fought for either a limited or an unlimited objective. How do these types of objectives differ from each other?

13. Some contemporary observers have argued that technological innovation might soon lift the fog of war completely, thus invalidating some of Clausewitz's most important insights. Do you agree?

14. In Book 1 of *On War*, Clausewitz explains the challenges presented by friction and the fog of war. How can a commander mitigate these challenges?

15. How do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu address the role of ethical considerations in wartime decision-making?

16. What roles and responsibilities do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu assign to military and political leaders in strategic decision-making?

17. How do Clausewitz and Sun Tzu suggest that a nation can secure successful war termination?

18. As we strive to understand the contemporary security environment and the potential contributions of all instruments of national power, how can we apply *On War* and *The Art of War* to ongoing conflicts and to great power competition?

Readings:

1. Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. **(Book)**

Please note, *On War* is divided into eight books, each of the eight books is subdivided into chapters. The following are the assigned readings:

- The Front Matter to *On War*: Preface by Marie von Clausewitz and Two Notes by the Author (pages 65-71).
- Book I: All Chapters.
- Book II: Chapters 1-3 and 5-6.
- Book III: Chapters 1-9.
- Book IV: Chapter 11.
- Book V: Chapter 3.
- Book VI: Chapters 1, 5, 6, 26, and 27.
- Book VII: Chapters 2-5, and 22.
- Book VIII: All Chapters.

[While much of *On War* focuses on technical questions of warfare in Clausewitz's era, the assigned selections emphasize the enduring contributions of Clausewitz's book. The preface by Marie von Clausewitz describes her editing of the work after her husband's death and explains

the influence of his career on the book as well as some of its stylistic features. This translation of *On War* was much heralded when it appeared in 1976 in the immediate aftermath of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. It remains the most widely read English-language version of Clausewitz's work.]

2. Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. Paperback edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. Pages 63-149. **(Book)**

[Brigadier General Griffith's experience in the U.S. Marine Corps, as well as his deep understanding of Asian languages and cultures, makes his translation of this important text on war both scholarly and approachable for the professional military officer and civilian leader.]

3. Bellinger, Vanya Eftimova. *How to Read Clausewitz for the Strategy and War Course.* U.S. Naval War College. Newport, RI, 2026. **(Selected Readings)**

[This guide was written to aid readers in comprehending the mechanics of Clausewitz's argument and the work's overall organization. This is especially important since Clausewitz's rich and insightful book is also a very challenging text. The guide was written by U.S. Naval War College professor Vanya Eftimova Bellinger.]

4. Handel, Michael I. *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought*. Third edition. London: Cass, 2001. Pages 1-40, 155-164. **(Book)**

[Handel, a former professor in the Strategy and Policy Department, argues that despite differences in emphasis and substance, a universal or unified strategic logic transcends the wide gaps in time, culture, and historical experience that separate nations. Students are encouraged to challenge Handel's thesis and assess the extent to which culture might influence planning and operations.]

PART B: THE SUPPORTING THEORISTS: MAHAN, CORBETT, AND MAO

Introduction: In Part A of the Theorists Case Study, the foundational strategic theories of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu took center stage. This next part of the case study addresses Alfred T. Mahan, Julian S. Corbett, and Mao Zedong. Each developed more focused strategic theoretical advice. Mahan and Corbett focused on warfare at sea including concepts of sea power while Mao emphasized protracted, revolutionary war to provide a pathway for weaker states and non-state actors to achieve strategic success.

Mahan served as professor and second president of the Naval War College. His first book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, was heralded by his contemporaries as groundbreaking in its arguments about sea power and its effects. Writing in the decades before the First World War, Mahan developed the concept of sea power in an era of rapidly advancing technology and rising naval powers challenging the status quo.

His theories range from the level of grand strategy to that of naval tactics. His grand strategic analysis explored the interrelationship of naval power, geography, social structure, economic organization, and governmental institutions. In the process, he developed the concept of sea power—a combination of naval might and financial and economic strength. He argued that creating and sustaining sea power requires favorable geographic, economic, social, and political conditions. When addressing naval strategy, operations, and tactics, Mahan emphasized the aggressive employment of the fleet. Central to Mahan's theory is a critical operational decision with enormous strategic importance: under what circumstances does it make strategic sense to risk one's fleet? This necessitates exploring the ways sea power can influence a war's outcome. Specifically, Mahan believed sea power could have a decisive effect on the outcome of war.

Julian S. Corbett was not so sure about the decisiveness of sea power. He drew heavily upon Clausewitz's *On War* to develop a distinctive analysis of how maritime powers fight and win wars. At sea, Corbett believed the key objective from which all other effects flowed was obtaining "command of the sea." However, he considered command of the sea as only a means to an end. Victory at sea did not generally win wars; instead, it enabled states to gain more decisive effects ashore. The navy enabled and magnified the effectiveness of other instruments of national power.

Corbett, like Mahan, wrote his most significant works in the years immediately preceding the First World War at a time when technological change was revolutionizing the tools of maritime power. Corbett's theories focus on how Britain, then the dominant, global naval power, should most effectively seek political objectives in war. Especially important among his theories were his thoughts on the advantages that maritime powers have in conflicts for limited political objectives.

Mao is the third major strategic theorist examined in Part B of the Theorist Case. He is the premier strategist for weaker states and non-state actors. His writings draw on other great works on strategy and politics, including those of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. Indeed, Mao studied both Clausewitz and Sun Tzu. As a result, his work represents an important synthesis between

On War and *The Art of War*. Mao developed a strategy for how a non-state actor can gradually build organizational strength by mobilizing the population to defeat more powerful state adversaries. Asymmetric strategies employing irregular warfare—such as terrorism, insurgency, and information operations—loom large in Mao's writings.

Mao blended theory with his experience as a strategic practitioner. He led the communists to victory in the Chinese Civil War, demonstrating how an initially weak political organization pursuing extremist objectives can overthrow an existing regime and subsequently wage a global ideological struggle. Mao's success has inspired leaders of other extremist movements including al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Mao's writings raise important ethical questions relating to war and statecraft and have great relevance for understanding contemporary extremist groups that employ subversion, propaganda, political agitation, popular mobilization, terrorism, and insurgency to defeat their enemies.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Mahan mean by "sea power"? How can countries possessing sea power influence the international environment?

2. What are Mahan's six elements of sea power? How were these elements relevant at the time of his writing and how are they relevant today?

3. What does Corbett mean by "maritime strategy"? How is this different from Mahan's concept of "sea power"?

4. Corbett argued that wars are in almost all cases decided on land. Based on your own knowledge or experiences, was he correct in this conclusion?

5. According to Mahan and Corbett, what is the role of the sea lines of communication in naval strategy?

6. What does Corbett mean by "command of the sea"? Is he correct in asserting that this should be the object of naval warfare?

7. How do navies enable the other instruments of national power?

8. What are the major similarities and differences between the theories of Mahan and Corbett?

9. How did Mao modify Clausewitz and Sun Tzu's ideas for the circumstances of revolutionary war in the twentieth century?

10. What are the three stages of Mao's theory of revolutionary, protracted warfare? How can weaker adversaries use this three-stage model to defeat stronger adversaries?

11. Beyond Mao's three stages, what are the principal strategic and operational tenets of Mao's writings that weaker actors must consider to defeat more powerful adversaries?

12. What role did Mao assign to intelligence, military deception, psychological operations, and information security in his writings on strategy and war?

13. Why did Mao emphasize the role of the peasantry in revolutionary warfare?

14. The phrase "the enemy gets a vote" is commonly used in today's discourse. How do Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mahan, Corbett, and Mao address the role of the enemy in strategy and war?

15. How do Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Mahan, Corbett, and Mao believe that nations win wars?

16. How can we use these more focused theorists, Mahan, Corbett, and Mao, to help us make sense of the contemporary security environment?

Readings:

1. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. "Introductory" and "Discussion of the Elements of Sea Power." In *Mahan on Naval Strategy*. Edited by John B. Hattendorf. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015. Pages 1-96. **(Book)**

[This selection from Mahan's writings examines sea power and its elements. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* has been called the most influential nonfiction book published in the United States during the nineteenth century and is widely read by aspiring sea powers such as China and India today. The author was the first strategy professor at the Naval War College and later served as its President.]

2. "Strategical Terms and Definitions used in Lectures on Naval History." Included as an appendix following Julian S. Corbett. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988. Pages 307-325. **(Book)**

[This writing can be found at the end of *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. It is provided here as a brief overview of some of Corbett's most important theoretical concepts. Often referred to as the "Green Pamphlet," it was designed to provide Corbett's students with an overview of critical terminology relating to naval strategy. Corbett wrote this document with the assistance of Captain Edmond Slade, of the British navy, who was then serving as president of Britain's naval war college.]

3. Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. London: Longman, Green, 1911. Reprint, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988. Pages 12-87. **(Book)**

[Corbett shows how a maritime state can deploy its navy to achieve strategic objectives against a land power. He emphasizes maritime strategy and contrasts this with how continental land powers wage war.]

4. McCranie, Kevin D. *Mahan, Corbett, and the Foundations of Naval Strategic Thought.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2021. Pages 209-246. **(Selected Readings)**

[The first of the assigned chapters provides a brief overview of Mahan's most salient theoretical arguments while the second assigned chapter does the same for Corbett. Each of these chapters describes how their theoretical concepts form distinctive ways of war.]

5. *Seeing Red: The Development of Maoist Thought on Insurgency*. **(Selected Readings)**

[This reading provides selected extracts from Mao's writings on political revolution and irregular warfare. The reading includes Mao's "On Protracted War." Bradford Lee, Professor Emeritus in the Strategy and Policy Department, edited this reading and provides introductory comments about each excerpt.]

Case Leads: Professor Kevin D. McCranie and Colonel Matthew P. Nischwitz

II. THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: POLICY, STRATEGY, AND OPERATIONS IN A LONG WAR

Introduction: The first historical case study involves a war potentially unfamiliar to many students. Set in ancient Greece, the Peloponnesian War was a decades-long conflict between a rising Athenian empire and the region's traditional hegemon, Sparta. Thucydides, a participant in the war and author of our main text for this case, intended for his history to be "a possession for all time." He succeeded. Political and military leaders from John Adams to George C. Marshall considered its lessons applicable to the security challenges of their own day, and contemporary pundits talk of China and the United States being caught in a "Thucydides Trap."

The origins of this war appear trivial. A dispute between Corcyra and Corinth over control of Corcyra's colony Epidamnus eventually drew two peacetime alliances—the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta, and the Delian League, dominated by Athens—into the ancient equivalent of a great power conflict. Yet as his account unfolds, Thucydides makes a case that the truest cause of the war lay in something deeper: Sparta's fear of the growing power of Athens. Uneasy allies during the earlier Persian Wars, over the next fifty years Athens and Sparta interacted along a continuum of competition from economic sanctions to outright conflict. Sparta's allies, especially Corinth, also played a role in persuading Sparta to act before Athens' power became preponderant. Still, when this war began in 431 B.C., leaders in both Athens and Sparta expected a relatively short conflict and a low-cost victory, even though the prize was hegemony over the Greek world. The high value of that political objective and the asymmetry between Athenian sea power and Spartan land power made a quick, decisive victory unlikely. As the war protracted, the human, material, and political costs increased. Nevertheless, both sides repeatedly rejected each other's peace overtures, and many, including Thucydides, viewed the peace treaty midway through the war as little more than a strategic pause.

Relying on its strengths as Greece's greatest land power, Sparta began the war with an offensive strategy. Spartan armies deployed repeatedly to the Athenian homeland in attempts to force a decisive land battle. In contrast, Athens chose a more defensive approach championed by its leader, Pericles. This involved integrating seaborne raids around Sparta's periphery with a defensive posture at home to exhaust Spartan will. Neither belligerent, however, was able to achieve its policy aims through these strategies.

Strategic frustration, changes in leadership, and the play of chance forced a shift in approaches. In Athens, a devastating plague brought a new leader, Cleon, to the fore. He sought to apply sea power more aggressively and found unexpected success in a peripheral operation on the island of Sphacteria where he captured a group of Sparta's elite citizen-soldiers. Emboldened by this stroke of fortune and holding valuable hostages, Cleon expanded the war and increased Athens' political demands. Unwilling to accept these terms, but unable to strike directly at Athens for fear of endangering the captives, Sparta embarked on a peripheral campaign of its own. Transforming a secondary theater in northern Greece into the primary theater, the Spartan general Brasidas succeeded in capturing Amphipolis, a key city along Athenian sealines of communication. Still, neither Athens nor Sparta could come to terms until the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas empowered the peace parties in both cities.

During the pause in the fighting that followed, called the Peace of Nicias after its Athenian broker, some in Athens looked to expand the conflict rather than enjoy a "peace dividend." Motivated by a new leader named Alcibiades, a modest contingent of the Athenian army joined with that of Argos in a land battle designed to decisively defeat Sparta once and for all—the very type of battle Athens had avoided for the past thirteen years. Political intrigues by the peace party in Athens undermined these plans, resulting in a humiliating defeat for Argos, a reputation-restoring victory for Sparta, and a lost opportunity for Athens.

Soon after, the Athenians voted to open a new theater by invading Sicily, an island halfway across the Mediterranean. After more political intrigues forced Alcibiades, one of the expedition's three commanders and its architect, to flee to Sparta, his new hosts saw an opportunity. Sparta capitalized on Athens' overextension and the protracted siege of Syracuse by developing local alliances in Sicily and deploying large forces to the island. In the end, their combined militaries destroyed or captured the bulk of the Athenian army and navy in Sicily. News of the disaster plunged Athens into despair. Remarkably, Athens fought for nine more years, even driving Sparta to sue for peace on two occasions.

Sparta, however, was beginning to reap the fruits of its string of victories. The Spartans uncharacteristically chose to contest two theaters simultaneously and to integrate operations across them. First, the Spartans established an expeditionary base at Decelea, less than twenty miles from Athens, and were finally able to bring Spartan land power to bear in a more sustained and effective way. This garrison did not just threaten Athens' physical security; it posed several economic threats. Second, Sparta opened a new theater in Ionia in the eastern Mediterranean. This was far from Sparta as Sicily had been from Athens. Unlike Athens, however, Sparta fought in friendly territory with extensive support from Persia, an offshore superpower that had been watching from afar until either Athens or Sparta appeared to gain the upper hand. Persian ships allowed Sparta to rapidly develop sea power on an unprecedented scale. Athens still scored two stunning naval victories at Cyzicus and Arginusae, but refused peace offers from Sparta after each. Athenian luck did not hold, and a combination of poor Athenian leadership and wily and opportunistic leadership by Sparta's naval commander, Lysander, culminated in the decisive defeat of the Athenian navy at Aegospotami in 405 B.C. Its empire crumbling, its navy destroyed, and its people starving, Athens surrendered unconditionally less than a year later.

The Peloponnesian War is especially rich in illustrating many of the concepts presented in the Strategy and War Course. It is especially effective for highlighting the following course themes: the Interrelationship of Strategy, Policy, and Operations; the Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations; Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment; and War Termination. Moreover, the case also allows students to apply theory, history, and concepts of sea power in support of Program Learning Outcome 4, while evaluating strategic arguments and alternative courses of action within wars through Clausewitzian critical analysis. The case addresses complex problems of strategy and operations in war through the creative application of strategic principles, international relations theory, and other relevant theorists. Finally, the case affords students the opportunity to evaluate the achievement of strategic effects through operations in naval and other domains and to assess the operational and strategic choices of theater-level commanders to achieve political aims.

Both Athens and Sparta were forced into a continuous cycle of strategic adaptation, as the protracted conflict compelled both powers to realign their war aims (ends) and methods (ways) to the shifting realities of their available means. Reassessment followed failures as well as unexpected successes. Further complicating this process was the inherent difficulty each faced in bringing its power to bear against the other. Athens looked to both preserve its sea power and ally with a strong land power, while Sparta tried to "rent" a navy. Victory came to the side able to solve its strategic dilemma first.

Thucydides also provides a window into the role of ethics within the profession of arms. He presents political and military leaders and discusses their personal ambition and political calculation. Students should pay particular attention to the speeches of the key leaders such as Pericles, Archidamus, Cleon, the Spartan generals at Plataea, Alcibiades, Nicias, and the Athenian delegates to Melos for insights into the role all of these factors in decision-making play when balancing wartime necessity with societal norms in protracted conflict.

Finally, Thucydides' account of the political and strategic failures of Athenian democracy is a cautionary tale. To what extent do modern democracies embody the characteristics of ancient Athens, and how much can we learn from the Athenian experience? If Clausewitz and Sun Tzu were right to suggest that self-knowledge is the foundation of any effective policy and strategy, then is Thucydides' account of the rise and fall of Athens a worthwhile starting point for understanding the problems modern democracies might experience in protracted conflicts?

Discussion Questions:

1. Which leader, Pericles or Archidamus, did a better job of assessment prior to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War?

2. Did it make strategic sense for Sparta to embark on a war with Athens before Sparta had acquired a more powerful navy?

3. How well did the sea power, Athens, and the land power, Sparta, compensate for their weaknesses and exploit their strengths in fighting against each other?

4. How would you characterize the evolution of Athenian and Spartan strategy before the Peace of Nicias?

5. Should Athens have accepted higher risk on land by sending a larger force to support their ally Argos in the Battle of Mantinea?

6. Was the Sicilian expedition a good strategy badly executed, or a bad strategy?

7. What alternative courses of action offered Athens greater potential for strategic rewards than the Sicilian Expedition?

8. Given their strategic situation after the defeat of the Sicilian Expedition, how should Athenian leaders have reassessed and adapted?

9. Which operation produced greater strategic effects, the successful Athenian operation at Pylos and Sphacteria, or Sparta's successful operation in Thrace?

10. Drawing upon the examples of the Athenian operation at Pylos and Sphacteria, the Spartan operation in Thrace, the Athenian operation in Sicily, and the Spartan operations at Decelea and in the Aegean, what are the rewards and risks of opening a new theater in an ongoing conflict?

11. Why were Athenian leaders willing to risk their fleet in the battles of Syracuse, Arginusae, and Aegospotami given that they could not afford to suffer a catastrophic loss at sea?

12. Who was the most effective military leader for Athens and Sparta? Who came closest to fitting Clausewitz's definition of a military genius?

13. Sun Tzu states that attacking the enemy's strategy and allies should take precedence over attacking either its army or its cities. How well did Athens and Sparta follow this advice?

14. Athens sued for peace unsuccessfully in 430 B.C., as did Sparta in 425 B.C. and 406 B.C., and the Peace of Nicias broke down almost immediately. Why did these efforts to obtain a durable negotiated settlement of war termination fail?

15. When was the optimal time for Athens to negotiate peace—after the successful operation at Pylos and Sphacteria, after the inconclusive Battle of Amphipolis, or after the defeat of the Sicilian Expedition?

16. "Sparta and its allies did not defeat Athens so much as Athens defeated itself." Do you agree?

17. Are democracies more likely than other systems of government to commit the "blunders" Pericles was so concerned about and Thucydides highlighted?

18. What moral and ethical dilemmas confronted the people and leaders of Athens and Sparta in their decision-making?

19. Past students have found Thucydides critical for making sense of their experiences in Vietnam as well as Afghanistan and Iraq. To what degree does Thucydides help you understand the current strategic challenges that confront the U.S. and its allies and partners?

20. Thucydides is considered one of the founding fathers of the realist tradition in international relations theory. How are the principal tenets of realism illustrated by his

history of the Peloponnesian War? How do liberalism and constructivism offer additional explanatory power?

Readings:

- **Your seminar moderators will provide specific reading guidance to divide the following readings between this case study's two seminars.**

1. Strassler, Robert B., ed. *The Landmark Thucydides*. New York: The Free Press, 1996. Books I-VIII (pages 3-548). (**Book**)

[Thucydides serves as the primary reading for this case study. The following annotations are designed to help guide you through this reading.]

Key passages:

- Book I — Origins of the conflict, pages 3-85.
  With particular emphasis on the evolution of sea power and the speeches.
- Book II — Outbreak of the war, pages 89-107.
  Pericles' Funeral Oration and the plague, pages 110-128.
- Book III — Revolt of Mytilene, pages 159-167.
  The Mytilenean debate, pages 175-184.
  The Plataean debate, pages 185-193.
  Civil war in Corcyra, pages 194-201.
- Book IV — Athens' success at Pylos, pages 223-246.
  Brasidas in Thrace, pages 263-272.
  Brasidas captures Amphipolis, pages 279-285.
- Book V — Peace of Nicias, pages 309-316.
  Alliance between Athens and Argos and the
  Battle of Mantinea, pages 327-350.
  The Melian Dialogue, pages 350-357.
- Book VI — Launching the Sicilian expedition, pages 361-379.
- Book VII — Athenian disaster in Sicily, pages 427-478.
- Book VIII — Reaction to Athenian defeat in Sicily, pages 481-483.
  Athenian coup, pages 508-512, 517-525, and 532-540.

2. Kagan, Donald. *The Peloponnesian War*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Pages 402-484. **(Selected readings)**

[This selection from Kagan picks up the narrative of the war where Thucydides leaves off to explain the final stages of the Peloponnesian War. Central to the story and the eventual Athenian defeat are the crucial naval battles of Arginusae and Aegospotami.]

3. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *Mahan on Naval Strategy*. Edited by John B. Hattendorf. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015. Pages 198-207. (**Book**)

[Mahan applies his own framework for strategic assessment to evaluate the Athenian plans for the campaign in Sicily and provides insightful critical analysis of how the operation might have been better executed.]

4. Ulrich, Marybeth. "An International Relations Primer for Strategy and War." **(Selected readings)**

[This reading by the Chair of the Strategy and Policy Department offers a primer on modern international relations (IR) theories that the students may find useful to understand Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War and in subsequent case studies.]

Case Leads: Professor John H. Maurer and Captain Joe Matison

III. THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: SEA POWER, JOINT AND COMBINED OPERATIONS, AND IRREGULAR WARFARE

Introduction: In June 1776, the British Empire launched the largest maritime expedition to that point in European history to regain control of its rebellious North American colonies. Britain's inability to terminate the initial rebellion quickly and the successes of the American Patriots, especially after their victory at Saratoga in 1777, resulted in France, Spain, and Holland joining the war against Britain. Now caught in a global conflict, Britain fought for the survival of its empire. The American and French combined efforts culminated in a military victory in 1781 at Yorktown and a final peace settlement in 1783.

Students will explore why the British failed and how the Americans, the weaker contender by any conventional standard, achieved their independence in a revolutionary war. This case provides an opportunity to engage with Program Learning Outcomes 1 and 4 through the application of theory, including concepts of sea power, as well as historical examples of joint planning, joint warfighting, and combined operations. The War of American Independence case study is especially effective for considering the course themes of the Design, Execution and Effects of Operations; Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment; the Multinational Arena; and the Institutional Context and Civil-Military Relations.

The War of American Independence allows us to study the evolving competition between the Patriots and their British colonial rulers. The initial uprising was primarily a battle for the allegiance of the American people executed by the Sons of Liberty's sophisticated information campaign to incite rebellion against the Crown. The conflict eventually turned violent, as irregular and conventional warfare broke out between the Continental Army under George Washington and the British Army supported by the Royal Navy. After the British defeat at Saratoga in 1777, the war expanded into a great power competition among the European maritime powers. Fighting stretched far beyond North America as the British were forced to mount globally integrated operations far beyond American shores. Battles occurred in the English Channel, the Mediterranean Sea, the West Indies, the South Atlantic, and the Indian Ocean.

A revolutionary war hinges on the struggle for the political allegiance of a group of people. That defining characteristic links the War of American Independence to more recent insurgencies. Nonetheless, the political ideology of the Patriots fighting for independence differed from the ideologies animating more recent revolutionary movements. In the early 1770s, rebel leaders in Boston laid the groundwork by crafting a compelling political narrative based mainly on traditional British legal and political principles to justify their uprising. Using pamphlets, newspapers, and committees of correspondence, the Patriots exploited overt and covert communication networks to dominate the information environment and quickly spread the rebellion across the Thirteen Colonies. Meanwhile, the British found it difficult to respond effectively to the motives and strategies of their enemy, even though they enjoyed a similar language and culture. This blind spot was a liability for Britain and a significant asset for revolutionary leaders seeking to sustain and expand their political support.

The Patriots relied on all elements of national power including a mix of conventional and unconventional military operations; however, Patriot leaders employed conventional and unconventional elements differently. Washington preferred a strategy that prioritized decisive battle, while General Nathanael Greene of Rhode Island preferred to exhaust the enemy. Greene coordinated regular and irregular forces during a strategically effective operation in the southern colonies. Each approach had political implications. American support for the revolution was far from unanimous, especially at the outset of the conflict. Insurgents and their enemies had to earn support and deny it to their adversaries. Hence, this conflict requires us to examine how insurgents and counterinsurgents sustain the loyalty of their followers, win the support of neutrals and the undecided, and undercut support for their adversaries. The War of American Independence allows us to evaluate how well both sides understood this environment and the instruments of national power available to them.

This case also invites us to appraise foreign intervention in an ongoing war, along with the challenges that come with multinational coalitions. France intervened in 1778, followed by Spain in 1779, and the Netherlands in 1780. The expansion of the war made the conflict in the colonies a war within a larger global struggle against Britain. As the war expanded, the British had to reassess their strategic priorities as their colonies in the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and India came under threat. Meanwhile, France faced the challenge of developing the capabilities of American land and sea forces.

The conflict at sea focused on controlling the sea lines of communication connecting Europe with overseas colonies and outposts. This global naval conflict allows us to consider the strategic uses of sea power presented in the theories of Alfred T. Mahan. We confront enduring strategic issues when examining Mahan's critique of British naval strategy during the war. These issues include geopolitics, commerce, and the material foundations of strategy; naval preparedness; asymmetries between land power and sea power; joint operations; naval concentration; calculations governing when to risk a fleet; the decisiveness of naval battle; the integration of maritime power with other elements of national power; and the uses and limits of blockades.

This case also explores the strategic effects of applying sea power in joint and combined operations. Successful British joint operations at New York in 1776 and Charleston in 1780 failed to yield the desired strategic results. However, French and American combined and joint operations during the siege of Yorktown by land and sea, broke the will of the British government to continue the war. “Jointness” is not an end, but one way among many to achieve strategic success. Understanding why the British failed to reach their desired strategic results while the French and Americans succeeded may enable us to discriminate between the kinds of joint operations that win wars and those that do not.

Both major protagonists, but especially the Patriots, grappled with surprise and uncertainty. Assessing how well they anticipated and responded to unexpected events helps us understand the eventual outcome. Yet, many other factors also deserve attention, such as the character of the war, the availability of local support and intelligence, control of sea lines of communication, civil-military and intra-military relations, command structures, coalition

leadership, and the need to keep pressure on the enemy without overshooting the culminating point of attack.

This case explores the evolution of George Washington as commander of the Continental Army from the darkest days of the War of American Independence, when defeat seemed all but inevitable for the Patriots, to his triumph at Yorktown. Washington's supporters ascribe much of the credit for American victory to his strategic and operational leadership, understanding of the profession of arms, and capacity for making ethical decisions. After numerous mistakes, he adapted enough to deny the British a quick victory and sought a decisive battle only when opportunity allowed. He employed a "Fabian" that involved foregoing high-stakes battles in favor of wearing out the British strategy. The capabilities of his army made this as much a necessity even more than a choice. Although this approach required the Continental Army to stay on the strategic defensive for most of the war, it enabled the army to survive. Tactical offensives yielded incremental dividends until Washington could seize the initiative and transition to the strategic offensive. Even during the war, however, some questioned Washington's skill as a strategist. Many thought the outcome of the war owed more to British blunders than American generalship. A critical analysis of Washington's leadership and British failures thus helps us understand the nature of strategic leadership.

It is imperative to consider the political and institutional context in which the Patriot military strategy developed since Washington did not lead alone. Having served in the Second Continental Congress, Washington knew most of the political leaders of the revolution, many of whom were well-versed in using information, diplomacy, intelligence, and foreign aid. Congress employed the Declaration of Independence as a means of strategic communication and a statement of principle. Nonetheless, the Americans' political organization complicated efforts to win the war. Congress brought together a coalition of thirteen independent states wary of any central authority that might endanger their liberty. Many wondered whether inflation, bankruptcy, desertion, and mutinies in the army posed a greater danger to American independence than the British. Congress often found supporting Washington's army in the field challenging because it lacked the authority to raise troops and revenue.

The War of American Independence case study includes readings from multiple perspectives, including Patriots, Loyalists, and British. These viewpoints allow us to grasp multiple sides of a strategic problem and highlight the importance of interaction. For example, a stronger appreciation of British decision-making opens a window into the British war effort while helping to explain why independence was far from assured.

Several of the readings in the Fundamental Documents selection of this case study are noteworthy. The documents provide the perspective of the Founding Fathers on matters relating to the origins of the United States and the principles upon which they were founded, notably the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. They also include correspondence from one of Washington's trusted lieutenants, Alexander Hamilton, that provide glimpses into Washington's strategy and the difficulties faced by the political and military leaders in waging the American War for Independence as a fledgling nation.

The case offers four critical Strategy and War takeaways. First, it presents a well-documented study of how insurgencies develop and are nurtured by skilled leaders. Second, it demonstrates how the cunning use of information operations and strategic communication allowed the revolt to grow, attract allies, and gain legitimacy. Third, the case delivers vital strategic lessons for naval warfare. Mahan's critique of British maritime strategy presents a powerful framework for assessing the relative utility of naval power in a multipolar environment. Finally, the case provides an example of how internal conflicts often attract outside intervention, altering the character of the war and turning it into a regional and global conflict.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. How likely was it that the Americans could win their struggle with Britain when they resorted to force of arms in April 1775?

2. Was the British decision to pacify American resistance by force of arms counterproductive to Britain's overall objectives?

3. Assuming the War of American Independence was a struggle for the allegiance of the American people, compare how well the strategies and operations of American and British commanders were suited to the character of the war.

4. Why did British military successes in North America in 1776 fail to produce a decisive victory over the Americans?

5. Did the British still have a chance to win after France entered the war in 1778?

6. How could the Americans have won their independence without assistance from France?

7. Why did British leaders find it challenging to reassess and adapt their strategy during this conflict?

8. Why didn’t Britain’s naval strength yield decisive outcomes?

9. Why did British operations in the southern colonies between 1778 and 1781 fail to win the war for Britain?

10. Was the Patriots' success in achieving independence due more to the strategic skill of George Washington or British operational and strategic mistakes?

11. How well did Washington and his British counterparts anticipate and respond to the surprise and uncertainty created by the fog and friction of war?

12. The American colonies fought the War of American Independence as a coalition of separate states and in a foreign alliance with France, Spain, and the Netherlands. How did the coalition effort affect war termination?

13. How well did the Patriots use information operations, deception, and intelligence during the War of American Independence?

14. How well did the British use divisions within the colonies to attract support and undermine the Patriot cause during the War of American Independence?

15. Was George Washington's decision to engage the British in the New York and New Jersey campaigns of 1776 counterproductive to overall American strategic interests?

16. In *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan was harshly critical of British naval strategy during the War of American Independence. Do you agree with his critique?

17. Who would rate George Washington better as a general: Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, or Mao?

18. Why did Britain maintain most of its empire after the War of American Independence, while the end of the Peloponnesian War destroyed the Athenian Empire?

19. The American War for Independence occurred at a time when the Enlightenment was introducing new political and social ideas. Based on the Fundamental Documents and the lectures, how well did the Patriots utilize some of these new principles in mobilizing the population and in sustaining the revolutionary cause during the conflict?

20. What lessons highlighted by Mahan's critique of British naval power during the American War of Independence can be applied to America's use of maritime power in the contemporary environment?

Readings:

1. Ferling, John. *Whirlwind: The American Revolution and the War That Won It*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2015. Pages 4-318. **(Book)**

[Ferling provides an overview of the American War of Independence in this core reading. He argues the war's outcome was contingent on leadership and strategy and remained in doubt until the very last year of the conflict. Even during the peace talks, the United States might have emerged from the war far weaker and more vulnerable than it did were it not for adept American diplomatic efforts at war termination.]

2. Genest, Marc. "The Message Heard 'Round the World." In *Quills to Tweets: How America Communicates about War and Revolution*. Edited by Andrea J. Dew, Marc A. Genest, S.C.M. Paine. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2019. Pages 7-23. **(Leganto)**

[Genest examines the strategy the Sons of Liberty used to win the battle of ideas against the British in the early years of the colonial uprising in Boston. Rebel leaders designed a marketable

message to justify the revolt and implemented a communications network that dominated the information environment.]

3. Mackesy, Piers. “British Strategy in the War of American Independence.” In *Revolutions in the Western World 1775–1825*. Edited by Jeremy Black. New York: Routledge, 2016. Pages 539-557. **(Leganto)**

[Mackesy explains the rationality of the British government's strategy, including decisions made by George III and Lord Germain. Mackesy analyzes British advantages during the war that made the ultimate American victory far from inevitable.]

4. O'Shaughnessy, Andrew Jackson. *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. Pages 4-14, 83-122, 320-352. **(Book)**

[O'Shaughnessy offers a red-team analysis of the strategic environment built around the perspectives of key British personalities and decision-makers. The assigned chapters cover General William Howe, Admiral Richard Howe, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich.]

5. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890. Pages 505-541. **(Selected Readings)**

[Mahan analyzes where Britain went wrong with its naval strategy and what its miscues reveal about the proper use of navies in wartime.]

6. Pritchard, James. “French Strategy in the American Revolution: A Reappraisal.” *Naval War College Review*. vol. 47, no. 4 (Autumn 1994). Pages 83-108. **(Selected Readings)**

[Pritchard examines the French decision to go to war, the French alliance with the Americans and the Spanish, and the global naval war.]

7. “Founding Documents of the American Revolution.” **(Selected Readings)**

[These readings help understand the cultural, social, material, institutional, and international dimensions of strategy during this war. The first document dates from 1775 and provides Edmund Burke's British assessment of a war with the Thirteen Colonies. The following document is the Declaration of Independence. This is followed by documents essential for understanding Washington's Fabian strategy. The final two documents provide short responses to the Declaration of Independence from Loyalists.]

Case Leads: Professor Michael F. Pavković and Commander Scott E. Brickner

IV. THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR: MARITIME STRATEGY, JOINT OPERATIONS, AND WAR TERMINATION IN A LIMITED REGIONAL CONFLICT

Introduction: This case examines the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), a conflict between Russia, an established great power, and Japan, a rising challenger seeking to overturn the regional order in an era of intensifying great power competition. The case explores the geopolitics of Asia, the coordination of land and sea power, and the particular problems of fighting a limited war. The Instruments of War; the Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations; the War Termination; and the Cultures and Societies course themes are especially salient for analyzing and thinking critically about the Russo-Japanese War.

During China's "century of humiliation" (1839-1949), the decline of China created opportunities for outside powers to extract concessions at Chinese expense. By the end of the nineteenth century, Russian and Japanese interests clashed as they expanded their influence in Manchuria (northeast China) and Korea. Seeing no diplomatic solution with Russia, the Japanese government decided on war. Japan sought to use speed, surprise, and skilled tactical and operational execution to compensate for Russia's far greater resources. The Japanese military quickly achieved sea control and landed forces on the Asian mainland. Russia struggled to bring its massive military might to bear over extended land and sea lines of communication. Japan's initial successes did not end the conflict, however. Instead, the war lasted for almost nineteen months. Fighting on land revolved around the siege of Port Arthur (May 1904-January 1905) and huge battles fought in Manchuria, notably at Liaoyang (August-September 1904), Shaho (October 1904), and Mukden (February-March 1905). Neither army proved able to deliver a knockout blow. Instead, Russian forces retreated into the interior of Manchuria, stretching Japan's supply lines and limited manpower. The Battle of Tsushima (May 1905), at which the Japanese Combined Fleet annihilated the Russian Baltic Fleet after it had steamed 18,000 miles from the Baltic Sea to Northeast Asia, gave Japan command of the sea. Meanwhile, on land, Russian forces in the theater substantially outnumbered the Japanese, and Japan was desperately short on manpower. With both sides approaching their breaking points, Japan managed to achieve most of its war aims in the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth.

This was a remarkable feat for a resource-poor island state. While Russia had been the dominant Eurasian land power throughout the nineteenth century, Japan started modernizing only in 1868. Only a generation later, it defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 before fighting Russia in 1904-1905. Japan's strategy reveals many key elements necessary to conduct a regional war: coordination of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power, integration of land and sea operations, and foresight in war termination. At the same time, Japan took an enormous risk in challenging a power possessing resources on a continental scale. In contrast, Russian strategy illustrates the dangers of underestimating an adversary and failing to understand its military potential.

An in-depth examination of the Russo-Japanese War highlights enduring problems in strategy and war. This conflict shows the centrality of the Design, Execution and Effect of Operations course theme, particularly the interrelation of land and sea operations. Despite advantages in resources, manpower, naval vessels, interior lines, and strategic depth, Russia lost to a rising power whose military transformation it had grossly underestimated. Tokyo went to

war only after using diplomacy to improve its chances of success. Japan shaped the international arena, concluding an alliance with Great Britain to isolate Russia. The Japanese navy then launched a surprise attack on the Russian naval base at Port Arthur, allowing its armies to land in Korea and China. The limited carrying capacity of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Chinese Eastern Railway (the Manchurian link to Vladivostok and Port Arthur) slowed the buildup of Russian ground forces in the theater. This bottleneck allowed the Japanese to achieve numerical superiority early in the war. The Russo-Japanese War demonstrates how a weaker antagonist can win a limited regional war. It highlights the consequences of an established power failing to anticipate, innovate, or exercise sound judgment in a complex and uncertain environment.

Naval operations loom large in this conflict. While Japanese naval and land forces understood their interdependent relationship, Russian naval forces coordinated neither within their service nor with Russian ground forces. Though the Russian squadron at Vladivostok caused consternation among the Japanese when it briefly ventured out to sea and disrupted commercial traffic, the Russians failed to take advantage of this. In contrast to Russian paralysis at sea, Japanese naval forces commanded by Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō focused on neutralizing Russian naval forces so the Imperial Japanese Army could land men and supplies unimpeded on the Asian mainland. The Japanese successfully kept the Port Arthur squadron bottled up in port except for a brief period when Russian mines sank two of Japan's six battleships and Admiral Stepan Makarov commanded sorties that threatened Japanese sea communications. The Port Arthur squadron reverted to inactivity after Makarov went down with the Russian flagship *Petropavlovsk* in April 1904. The Imperial Japanese Army ultimately destroyed the squadron at anchor by taking Port Arthur.

Additionally, the case showcases the Instruments of War course theme including the disruptive influence of rapid technological change. Prior to the war, many naval experts maintained that torpedoes would revolutionize war at sea. Torpedoes' erratic performance and ineffectiveness during the war deflated such expectations. Conversely, naval mines, quick-firing artillery, and machine guns yielded important operational results. At the same time, the scale of the ground battles—in particular the carnage of Port Arthur and Mukden—foreshadowed the horrors of trench warfare in the First World War. Yet, neither the belligerents nor most foreign observers completely understood these phenomena or their implications.

The engagements on land and sea also raise important questions about the interaction between land and sea power and about combining different kinds of military power to produce strategic outcomes. For example, the Russians' stubborn defense of Port Arthur imposed hard choices on Japanese army and navy commanders. Until they took Port Arthur, Japanese army leaders faced hostile forces on two fronts: besieging the port while also fighting the Russians in Manchuria. The Japanese navy, furthermore, had to maintain its blockade of Port Arthur as long as the Russian squadron there survived. Had Tōgō's fleet withdrawn to refit and prepare for the arrival of the Baltic Fleet, it would have permitted Russian warships to escape. This would have placed the land campaign in jeopardy by endangering the sea routes connecting Japanese expeditionary forces with their sources of supply in the Japanese home islands. Joint operations ultimately allowed the Japanese to capture Port Arthur, easing these dilemmas.

The case affords an opportunity to apply the writings of Alfred T. Mahan and Julian S. Corbett. The conflict allowed both Mahan and Corbett to test and adapt their theories of naval war. They analyzed the strategic effects of Japan's sea power and joint operations. The Russo-Japanese War was a laboratory for ideas about sea power, naval strategy, and the proper relationship between armies and fleets. Although Russian forces had the choice of reaching the front by land or sea, they had to traverse vast distances to do so. Japan enjoyed much shorter lines of communication but depended on its navy to deploy and sustain troops on the Asian mainland. Russia could have prosecuted the war without a navy; Japan had no such option. In addition, Russia could rebuild its navy at its own shipyards, while Japanese yards could not construct state-of-the-art battleships. These differences raise strategic questions. When should Russia or Japan have risked its fleet? Was it better for Russia to preserve the Port Arthur squadron or to employ it actively and risk its destruction? A key Program Learning Outcome for the Intermediate Course entails applying "history, theory, and concepts of sea power:" The Russo-Japanese War provides an excellent venue to explore those ideas through the writings of Mahan and Corbett.

The war's end illustrates the relationship between operations and the course theme of War Termination: how military achievements translate into political results. Japan carefully integrated diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments into all phases of the war. Japan suffered from exhaustion by spring 1905, having used up its financial and manpower reserves, but had planned in advance for American mediation. During the closing phase, military leaders seized Sakhalin Island as a bargaining chip for peace negotiations, and worked in coordination with political leaders to terminate the conflict before the military balance swung toward Russia. By contrast, St. Petersburg's handling of the conflict suffered from dysfunctional civil-military relations and a leadership incapable of integrating elements of national power. Although Russia managed to overcome transportation bottlenecks, reversing Japan's numerical superiority in the theater, the defeats suffered by the Russian armed forces provoked revolutionary outbreaks throughout the empire. Russia's will to fight evaporated even as it overcame its logistical deficiencies. War-weariness induced both sides to accept President Theodore Roosevelt's mediation to end the war. Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906 for his efforts.

The Russo-Japanese War provides a useful starting point for understanding the geopolitics, societies, and cultures of Northeast Asia, and for understanding how they mold planning and operations to this day. While the Russo-Japanese contest for primacy on the Korean Peninsula precipitated the Russo-Japanese War, rivalry between the Soviet Union and Japan later shaped the Chinese Civil War (1927-1949). Conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union lay at the heart of the Korean War (1950-1953), a clash whose aftereffects continue to shape the contemporary security environment.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Was Japan's success due more to the strategic and operational skills of Japanese leaders or to a cooperative Russian adversary?

2. Would better strategic and operational leadership on the Russian side have allowed Russia to prevail in the land campaign in Manchuria?

3. How well did Japanese operations cope with Russian strengths and exploit Russian weaknesses?

4. Would either side have benefitted from taking greater risk in its fleet operations?

5. What were the most important Japanese operational mistakes, and how might the Russians have exploited them?

6. How did the land and sea operations around Port Arthur affect the conflict's outcome?

7. What enduring lessons about war termination in a conflict fought for limited aims can be learned from studying the Russo-Japanese War?

8. Did the Japanese exceed Clausewitz's culminating point of attack in their operations in Manchuria?

9. Could Japan have secured a more advantageous peace?

10. Both Mahan and Corbett found evidence in the Russo-Japanese War to support their strategic theories. Whose analysis of the conflict is more persuasive, and why?

11. How did Imperial Japanese Navy operations contribute to the war's outcome?

12. George Washington successfully executed a Fabian strategy of avoiding major battles, protracting the war, and raising the adversary's costs during the War of American Independence. Why did a Fabian strategy work for Washington but not for the Russians?

13. What alternative courses of action might the Russian navy have pursued for greater strategic gain?

14. Was Tsushima a decisive victory?

15. Could an alternative Russian strategy have overcome Japan's geographical advantages?

16. Were the rewards Japan hoped to gain worth the risks it took by fighting a Russian adversary with much greater economic and military resources?

17. Did Japanese or Russian military leaders take better advantage of the transformation of naval warfare?

18. The Russian experience in this conflict, the British experience in the War of American Independence, and the Athenian experience in Sicily suggest how difficult it is to wage war in a distant theater. How can states best deal with this problem?

19. What are the most important implications of the Russo-Japanese War for the contemporary strategic challenges the United States and its allies face in East Asia?

Readings:

1. Paine, Sarah C. M. *The Japanese Empire: Grand Strategy from the Meiji Restoration to the Pacific War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pages 49-75. (**Leganto**)

[Paine, Naval War College Distinguished University Professor emeritus, provides a brief overview of Japanese strategy before and during the war, an approach mirrored by Professor Fuller's discussion of Russian strategy.]

2. Fuller, William C., Jr. *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*. New York: Free Press, 1992. Pages 362-377, 397-407. (**Book**)

[Fuller, a professor emeritus and former chair of the Strategy and Policy Department at the Naval War College, describes the Russian diplomatic situation and state of the empire on the eve of the war, along with the evolution of Russian strategy during the hostilities.]

3. Connaughton, Richard. *Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear: Russia's War with Jap*an. Third edition. London: Cassell, 2003. Pages 9-356. (**Book**)

[Connaughton provides the general and comprehensive core overview reading of the war, offering the background necessary for the more focused or theoretical readings on the case.]

4. Mahan, Alfred Thayer. Excerpts from "Retrospect upon the War between Japan and Russia." In *Naval Administration and Warfare*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1918. (**Selected Readings**)

[Mahan discusses a number of strategic questions raised by the Russo-Japanese War, including the perennial tradeoffs in designing military platforms between speed, protection, range, firepower, and cost, as well as the importance of thinking clearly about the missions those platforms are intended to fulfill. He asks whether Russia and Japan were correct to commit as many resources as they did to Port Arthur. He also looks at vital and enduring questions of basing and fleet concentration, whether within a particular theater or globally.]

5. Corbett, Julian S. *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905*. Vol. 2. Annapolis and Newport: Naval Institute Press and Naval War College Press, 1994. Pages 382-411. (**Leganto**)

[Corbett outlines Japanese naval strategy, drawing on Togo's own testimony of his intentions. He compares Japan's strategy in the Russo-Japanese War to how Japan operated in 1894 against China. He also sketches an alternative Russian strategy. The appendix presents the specifics of Russian war planning prior to the war.]

6. Evans, David C. and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997. Pages 91, 94-116. (**Book**)

[This study of the Imperial Japanese Navy covers Japan's naval operations during the war. In addition, it provides a useful order of battle for understanding the naval balance in the Far East.]

Case Leads: Professor David R. Stone and Captain Joseph A. Pommerer

V. THE FIRST WORLD WAR: PREWAR PLANNING, WARTIME REALITIES, REASSESSMENT, AND ADAPTATION

Introduction: On 28 June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist. This event triggered a broader European crisis and the outbreak of the First World War. Initially pitting the Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia, and their allies) against the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary), the war revealed a profound gulf between political objectives and the military mechanisms to achieve them. Military operations seemed incapable of achieving strategic results. All parties at war sought to break this stalemate, whether through new instruments of war, improved tactics, greater resources, or additional allies. Naval power was employed for commerce warfare and amphibious operations, as well as to bring global resources to the European fronts. In the end, the war drove its belligerents to the brink of collapse. The Russian Empire disintegrated in 1917. This allowed Germany, hard-pressed by Allied economic blockade, to gamble on a final offensive against Britain and France in spring 1918. By that point, however, the United States had joined the Allied coalition. American troops and materiel tipped the balance against Germany, which had to accept defeat in November 1918.

In many respects, the First World War was the defining event of the twentieth century. The conflict brought the deaths of some sixteen million people, saw the collapse of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires, and hastened Europe's geopolitical decline. The war also launched the United States as a global power, bringing American industrial capacity, financial power, and military might to bear against Germany. It conjured the Soviet Union from the ashes of the Russian Empire, setting the stage for a coming age of Soviet-American bipolarity. The staggering number of military casualties, the normalized targeting of civilians, and the global pandemic left profound demographic scars and nurtured radical politics and ideologies. The lack of a coherent war termination process, the enduring tragedy of this "war to end all wars," spawned a yet more horrible sequel twenty years later.

The trigger for the First World War was a clash of Russian and Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans that spiraled out of control. Germany supported Austria-Hungary because it feared Russia's growing power and because Russia's alliance with France meant Germany faced an unacceptable strategic encirclement. Germany's war plan, the so-called Schlieffen Plan, hoped to knock France out of the war before Russia could mobilize and overrun Germany's eastern frontier. The plan prized speed. France had superior global market access it could use to outlast Germany if the war became protracted. It also carried risk. The fastest westward invasion route was through neutral Belgium, a provocation that could, and did, bring Britain and its empire into the war on the side of France. German strategy thus gambled on both time and space.

Timely intervention by British forces in support of the French stalemated the war across a vast Western Front by the end of 1914. Industrial-age firepower and mass armies created deadlocked battlefields of unprecedented lethality and scale, requiring a reassessment of political objectives and wartime plans. As the war protracted, military and civilian leaders grasped at novel instruments of war such as submarines, tanks, poison gas, and airplanes. In their desperate search for operational advantage, ethical norms that distinguished between combatants and

noncombatants evaporated, making the conflict a war of entire societies. The war's Eastern Front, while much more dynamic than its western counterpart, featured the same brutality. The increased costs of the conflict in blood and treasure only served to increase the efforts and political demands of the warring powers.

Like the ground war, the war at sea proved stagnant. While this more clearly favored the Royal Navy's strategy of distant blockade, naval leaders in all countries had expected to see the application of sea power in a decisive battle between the British and German main surface fleets. Although the British and German fleets did fight a major sea battle off the coast of Jutland in 1916, it proved indecisive. It also failed to answer many of the strategic questions about the proper use of navies that had remained unanswered since the war's beginning. Were the capital ships of the main fleets too costly to risk? Was there any other way to bring sea power to bear?

Questions like these had been addressed before the conflict by thinkers such as Alfred T. Mahan and Julian S. Corbett. Their writings influenced debates about sea power, maritime strategy, and naval operations. Indeed, Mahan's theories gained widespread acceptance among naval and policy leaders of almost every great power in the years before the First World War. Corbett's writings, meanwhile, focused on British strategic and operational problems, emphasizing the importance of joint operations and peripheral strategies targeting adversaries' geographic and coalition weaknesses. The war served as a dramatic test for both thinkers' ideas. As such, it remains a valuable case to study for maritime strategy.

Conservative strategies on both sides—Britain's blockade and Germany's restraint of its surface and undersea fleets—proved politically difficult for both leaders and their populations to accept. In 1915, Winston Churchill launched a British-led Dardanelles Campaign to attack Germany's ally Ottoman Turkey, force its capitulation, and open a vital supply line to allied Russia. It failed, along with smaller peripheral operations in the Baltics, Balkans, and Middle East. Meanwhile, Germany was again driven to riskier strategies, opting to repeatedly escalate its U-boat campaign against British shipping to cut off Britain's food and materiel supplies. However, the submarine warfare campaign risked bringing the United States into the war.

The submarine campaign was not the only way that the United States, the world's most powerful neutral, was slowly drawn into the war. Questions of American border security also became a key flashpoint. European belligerents weaponized crises on the border. One crisis resulted in U.S. troops engaging in cross border operations against Pancho Villa in 1916. Moreover, Germany attempted to entice the Mexican government to choose war with the United States in the Zimmerman Telegram. In turn, Britain leaked intercepts of this telegram to the United States. The relative importance of the Zimmerman Telegram and the unrestricted submarine warfare campaign for bringing the United States into the war in April 1917 continues to be debated.

By early 1918, both sides prepared offensives on the Western Front with the goal of ending the war. The Germans struck first, taking advantage of resources freed by their victory over Russia in hopes of winning on the Western Front before significant American forces reached France. The Germans almost drove a wedge between the British and French armies, temporarily breaking the trench stalemate before their offensives exceeded their culminating

point of attack and ground to a halt. The sustained Allied counteroffensives beginning in July brought the collapse of the German army and urgent requests for an armistice.

Understanding the relationship between national security objectives, military objectives, and war termination is an indispensable part of strategic theory and practice. In hindsight, the treaties ending the war, particularly the Treaty of Versailles with Germany, contributed to postwar instability as the victors sought gains commensurate with the price that they had paid but were unwilling and unable to enforce the peace. Meanwhile, the Germans soon convinced themselves that they had not been defeated militarily and had been cheated out of victory by domestic subversives—a powerful myth that stripped the postwar Weimar Republic of much of its legitimacy.

Did these complications doom the peace? As Clausewitz argued, the end of one conflict can plant the seeds for future wars. What insights and warnings do the First World War offer for the United States as it engages in the Middle East and confronts tensions with China in the Pacific? To this end, it is especially helpful to consider the following course themes: Intelligence, Assessment, and Plans; the Instruments of War; Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment; and War Termination. For example, in what ways did the planners of 1914 succeed, and fail, to use the wars in their immediate past to prepare themselves? How can we learn from the First World War's naval strategists as they tried to address the changing character of their war at sea? What do the challenges of coalition management in that conflict tell us about how to fight and win a great power war today? And how can we learn from the First World War's catastrophic failure to imagine and execute effective war termination?

This case gives students excellent opportunities to consider the strategic effects of operations to enhance warfighting effectiveness. Key operations such as the Schlieffen Plan, the Dardanelles Campaign, Germany's unrestricted U-boat campaign, the Verdun and Somme offensives, and Germany's final Spring Offensive are covered in detail to this end. This approach allows the case to uniquely bring together the elements of analysis in PLO 4, integrating theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine. Connections between strategic theory and the belligerents' doctrine and planning are highlighted, and the case prominently features the strategic effects of naval operations.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Was the Schlieffen Plan a good strategy badly executed or a bad strategy?

2. Did Britain commit a strategic error in carrying out major ground offensives on the Western Front in France and Belgium between 1915-1918?

3. Were British and German leaders too risk-averse in the use of their main battlefleets?

4. Once the fighting deadlocked on the Western Front by the end of 1914, what alternative strategies should the Allies and Germany have adopted?

5. Judging from the Dardanelles Campaign, the British campaign in the American South, and Brasidas' campaign in Thrace, when is opening a new theater worthwhile and what are the costs and hazards of doing so?

6. Clausewitz argued that when the cost of fighting exceeds the value of the object, strategic leaders should seek a way to end the war. What civil-military challenges made this advice difficult for the leaders in this war to follow?

7. How did the British blockade of Germany contribute to the success of the Allied and Associated Powers?

8. Did the Allies waste resources on peripheral theaters to the detriment of operations against Germany?

9. The United States warned Germany not to undertake unrestricted submarine warfare. Why, then, despite these warnings, were Germany's leaders not deterred from adopting a strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare in January 1917?

10. Were military leaders too slow to learn from combat experience and adapt to the changes in warfare brought about by new technologies?

11. In the Peloponnesian War, the American War for Independence, and the First World War, the warring parties adjusted their political demands during the conflict when conditions on the fighting fronts changed. When the costs of war escalate, how should leaders adjust their policy goals to reflect the increased cost?

12. Were the German offensives on the Western Front in the spring of 1918 a strategic mistake?

13. Throughout the war, the Allied Powers (plus the United States after 1917) enjoyed at least a fivefold population advantage and threefold superiority in gross domestic product over the Central Powers. Why were they unable to translate this immense quantitative advantage into victory sooner?

14. Could the Allies have defeated Germany without the economic and military contributions made by the United States?

15. What were the key barriers to the Allied and Associated Powers effectively addressing the problem of war termination during the First World War?

16. Did the First World War's conduct and outcome lend more support to the views of Corbett or Mahan?

17. Did the First World War show that the strategic theories of Mahan were largely irrelevant?

18. Was the Zimmermann Telegram a decisive turning point in bringing the United States into the war, or was it only one accelerant in a strategic shift already driven by submarine warfare and U.S.-Allied ties?

19. Was World War I truly a global war, in which manpower, materiel, and operations from outside Europe played the decisive roles, or primarily a European regional conflict whose outcome was decided in Europe?

20. How did the naval arms race leading up to the First World War between Britain and Germany resemble the modern naval buildup between the United States and China in the South China Sea and beyond?

21. How did the breakdown of diplomatic relations and the failure of diplomacy contribute to the outbreak of the First World War, and what lessons can be drawn from this in managing the great power competition between the United States and China?

Readings:

1. Kagan, Donald. *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Pages 81-99, 145-205, 285-307. **(Book)**

[Kagan provides an overview of the causes of the war while also showing that negotiation between great powers was possible despite conflicting interests. He also describes the end of the war and the problems of establishing a stable peace. Students should delay reading pages 285-307 which describe the end of the war until after they finish reading no. 2 by Hew Strachan.]

2. Strachan, Hew. *The First World War*. New York: Viking, 2004. Pages 35-64, 99-340. **(Book)**

[Strachan presents the core reading for this case by providing a general overview of the actual war. This book includes essential background information for evaluating the policies and strategies adopted by Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. He counters traditional perceptions of the strategic deadlock on the Western Front by stressing the novelty of the war's technology and the operational and strategic challenges faced by leaders on both sides.]

3. Holborn, Hajo. "The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff" and Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment." In *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Paret, Peter, ed. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986. Pages 281-325. **(Book)**

[The assigned chapters provide an introduction to the evolution of Germany's General Staff system and Germany's operational doctrine.]

4. Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. Atlantic Heights: Ashfield Press, 1987. Pages 239-265. **(Book)**

[Kennedy provides a broad overview of Britain's naval operations during the First World War.]

5. Hough, Richard. *The Great War at Sea, 1914-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983. Pages 144-168. **(Leganto)**

[Hough examines the Dardanelles Campaign, focusing on the leadership in the British war office.]

6. Baer, George. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993. Pages 64-82. **(Book)**

[The First World War witnessed a huge buildup of American naval power. A former professor and chair of the Strategy and Policy Department, Baer provides an account of the U.S. Navy's development, strategy, and operations during the war.]

7. Offer, Avner. *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. Pages 354-367. **(Leganto/E-book)**

[Offer provides an account of the flawed assessments and planning assumptions behind Germany's decision to embark on a disruptive, asymmetric strategy of unrestricted submarine warfare.]

8. "In Search of Victory: First World War Primary Source Documents." **(Selected Readings)**

[This compendium of primary-source documents addresses pivotal points in the war when leaders reassessed and adapted. The first of these points involves the reassessment following the initial failure of the war of movement in the fall and winter of 1914. The second point of reassessment involves German decision-making culminating with the decision to undertake unrestricted submarine warfare in the spring of 1917. The final point of reassessment highlights war-termination planning by the Allied powers in 1918.]

9. Hull, Isabel. *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005. Pages 199-225. **(Leganto)**

[Hull argues that German military culture, with a focus on tactical and operational military expedience, affected and often undermined its strategic decision-making.]

10. Burk, Kathleen. "Great Britain in the United States, 1917-1918: The Turning Point." *International History Review*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1979). Pages 228-245. **(Selected Readings)**

[Burk examines British-American relations in the crucial period of 1917-1918 with a focus on the role of American financing of the war and Britain's loss of freedom of action.]

11. Keene, Jennifer D. “North America.” In *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume 1: Global War*, vol. 1, edited by Jay Winter. The Cambridge History of the First World War. Cambridge University Press, 2014. **(Leganto)**

[Keene describes the consequences for the war on North American hemispheric defense, and the effect of American fighting forces and war materiel on the war. The chapter offers a useful explanation for how the war intersected with questions of American border security, and how the war and American entry affected concepts of hemispheric defense.]

Case Leads: Professor Jesse C. Tumblin and Ms. Jamie Martin, Department of State

VI. THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN EUROPE: INTERDEPENDENCE OF SEA, AIR, AND GROUND OPERATIONS

Introduction: The case study on the Second World War in Europe offers enduring lessons for contemporary strategy and warfare. Four course themes are especially important to understanding this conflict: the Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy, and Operations; Intelligence, Assessment, and Plans; Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment; and The Multinational Arena. The case also supports several Program Learning Outcomes through discussions of military theory, joint warfighting, and sea power.

The European Theater of Operations provides one of history's richest examples of the integration of land, sea, and air power within a multinational coalition pursuing unlimited political objectives. Although the Allies had overwhelming economic and industrial resources, they faced a determined adversary and possessed divergent political interests and strategic priorities. To achieve victory, the Allies had to mobilize their economies for war, skillfully wield massive military forces across all domains, convince their populations to endure immense sacrifices, and manage their coalition's internal divisions.

Between 1939 and early 1941, Germany overran much of continental Europe. At that point, Hitler could continue air and naval operations against Britain, support his Italian allies with troops in the Mediterranean, or invade the Soviet Union. He chose all three, hoping that the defeat of the Soviet Union, British losses in the Mediterranean, and the stress of the Luftwaffe's bombing campaign would convince Britain's leaders to make peace and accept German domination over Continental Europe in exchange for a guarantee of the British Empire's survival. What he got was a protracted struggle of attrition on multiple fronts.

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, Operation BARBAROSSA, represented the largest land campaign in history. German forces achieved dramatic gains in 1941, overrunning much of Ukraine, besieging Leningrad, and advancing to the outskirts of Moscow. Yet, the Soviet state did not collapse. In 1942, Germany's drive toward the Caucasus and Stalingrad culminated in catastrophe. After Stalingrad, the Red Army increasingly mastered operational coordination, deception, and logistics in successive offensive operations. By 1944, Soviet forces had developed one of the war's most formidable operational systems. The cost, however, was staggering: the Soviet Union suffered between twenty and thirty million military and civilian deaths, constituting the largest share of casualties in the Second World War.

The halt and reversal of Germany's eastern offensive coincided with a reversal of German fortunes elsewhere. At the very moment German troops stalled at the siege of Stalingrad, Axis positions elsewhere were beginning to unravel under mounting Allied pressure in North Africa. In November 1942, the Axis suffered a decisive setback at the Second Battle of El Alamein, while American forces landed in Morocco and Algeria during Operation TORCH. These campaigns demonstrated how geographically dispersed operations interacted strategically. German commitments in one theater constrained its ability to reinforce other theaters, while Allied pressure mounted simultaneously across multiple domains.

The existential threat posed by Nazi Germany forged an unlikely coalition between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union. Maintaining the Grand Alliance required not only military cooperation but also constant political negotiation. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin agreed on a "Germany First" strategy, yet they frequently disagreed over how and where to defeat Germany. The debate over opening a second front in Western Europe remained unresolved until the Tehran Conference in late 1943, where the Allies committed to executing Operation OVERLORD by mid-1944.Coalition management therefore became a central component of Allied strategy.

Ultimately, Allied victory depended upon successes across multiple domains and theaters. Control of Atlantic sea lanes sustained Britain and enabled the buildup of American combat power; strategic bombing and intelligence operations weakened German industry and operational mobility. Soviet offensives in the East forced Germany to disperse its forces, creating opportunities for Anglo-American operations in the Mediterranean and France.

The Battle of the Atlantic was particularly critical. Britain depended heavily upon imported food, fuel, and raw materials. The destruction of these resources aboard Allied shipping threatened the survival of the entire coalition war effort. The campaign became a prolonged contest between German submarines and Allied naval, air, scientific, and intelligence capabilities. Victory required technological innovation, organizational adaptation, and close coordination across services and nations. It was the longest continuous campaign of the European war.

Meanwhile, the Western Allies' air forces attempted to defeat Germany in a new domain of operations through the Combined Bomber Offensive. Advocates of strategic bombing believed air power could compel surrender through attacks on industrial and civilian centers of gravity. In practice, bombing alone did not force capitulation. Nevertheless, sustained attacks against factories, transportation networks, and fuel production significantly degraded Germany's ability to wage war. The air campaign also demonstrated both the possibilities and limitations of air power as an independent strategic instrument.

By mid-1944, the Western Allies were prepared to invade France. Under General Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership, Operation OVERLORD became the largest amphibious assault in history. Eisenhower commanded a joint and combined force while balancing competing personalities, national interests, and operational priorities. His leadership illustrates the challenges inherent in coalition command, where diplomatic skill and military judgment are inseparable.

D-Day itself did not guarantee victory. Fighting continued across multiple fronts. In Italy, Allied forces advanced slowly against determined German resistance. In the East, the Soviet Union launched Operation BAGRATION, destroying German Army Group Center and accelerating the collapse of German defenses. By late 1944, Germany's shrinking industrial capacity, exhausted military forces, declining air power, and strategic overextension brought Allied armies to its borders.

The defeat of Nazi Germany therefore emerged from the interaction of multiple lines of effort: coalition management, sustained naval and air campaigns, whole-of-society mobilization, strategic intelligence, and simultaneous offensives across multiple theaters. This raises enduring questions for students of strategy. How should one assess the relative importance of these campaigns in producing Allied victory? How did Allied leaders achieve consensus despite differing national priorities and strategic cultures? What role did adaptation and organizational learning play in the outcome of the war?

Despite facing imminent defeat, Germany continued to resist fiercely. American casualties in April 1945 remained extraordinarily high, while Soviet losses during the Battle of Berlin exceeded three hundred thousand. These realities invite further reflection on the challenges of defeating ideologically committed adversaries and the costs associated with unconditional surrender and total war.

The case also remains highly relevant for contemporary practitioners of strategy and warfare. The Allies confronted the challenges of coalition warfare, global force management, contested maritime communications, industrial mobilization, technological adaptation, and operations conducted simultaneously across multiple theaters and domains. The European theater therefore offers an important historical framework for considering contemporary joint and multinational warfare in an era of renewed great-power competition.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Assess the relative advantages of economic, technological, and societal factors in shaping Allied success in Europe. Did one factor prove more decisive than the others for the Allies?

2. To what extent did Allied strategy reflect a coherent linkage between political objectives and operational design?

3. After U.S. entry into the war against Germany, was there a realistic alternative strategy for employing American air, naval, and ground forces in Europe that might have accelerated Germany's defeat? Why or why not?

4. Could the Allies have opened the second front in France without first succeeding in the Mediterranean, the Battle of the Atlantic, and the Combined Bomber Offensive?

5. What were the most consequential differences that account for the Germans' quick victory over France in 1940 and their failure to win quick victories over Britain and the Soviet Union?

6. Did Germany ever possess a viable strategy for victory?

7. Was there another viable operational approach that the Western Allies could have taken to defeat Germany besides Operation OVERLORD?

8. Was air power decisive, supporting, or misapplied in the European theater?

9. To what extent did Allied control of the sea enable operational success on land in Europe?

10. What were the most important strategic and operational factors behind the Allied victory in the Battle of the Atlantic?

11. Was sea power in the European theater primarily an enabling condition for land operations, or did it function as a decisive instrument of strategy in its own right?

12. Does Allied use of sea power in the European theater better reflect the ideas of Alfred Thayer Mahan or Julian Corbett? Defend your answer with reference to specific campaigns.

13. Was allied success more attributable to Eisenhower's coalition leadership or his operational skill?

14. Did coalition dynamics enhance or constrain operational effectiveness for the Allies?

15. What were the strategic effects of the Allied policy of unconditional surrender on the conduct and termination of the war in Europe?

16. Which belligerent adapted more effectively over the course of the war in Europe, and why?

17. Which concepts from the theorists we have studied best explain the course and outcome of the war on the Eastern Front?

18. How should we assess the relative contributions of the Eastern Front, Western Front, and air–maritime campaigns to the defeat of Germany?

19. Which contributed more to the Allies' victory: their material superiority, or German operational and strategic errors?

20. Judging from this case and others we have studied, what elements make for a strategically effective multinational coalition in contemporary warfare?

Readings:

- **Your seminar moderators will provide specific reading guidance to divide the following readings between this case study's two seminars.**

1. Murray, Williamson and Alan R. Millett. *A War to Be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pages 1-142, 234-335, 374-483. **(Book)**

[This is the core reading for this case study. It comprises a narrative history of the Second World War focusing on the operational level of war. The selections assigned cover the entire war in Europe from its inception in September 1939 until the surrender of Germany in May 1945, to include the Battle of the Atlantic.]

2. Biddle, Tami Davis. "Democratic Leaders and Strategies of Coalition Warfare: Churchill and Roosevelt in World War II," in Hal Brands, ed., *The New Makers of Modern Strategy: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023). Pages 569-592. **(Book)**

[Biddle explores key differences between totalitarian and democratic states and examines Anglo-American strategic debates as well as disagreements over war termination and the desired political end-state of the war in Europe.]

3. Biddle, Tami Davis. *Air Power and Warfare: A Century of Theory and History*. U.S. Army War College Press, 2019. Pages 1-33. **(Selected Readings)**

[Biddle examines the development and application of air power as an instrument of warfare from the interwar era to the present, introducing key air power theorists such as Douhet, Trenchard, and Mitchell. The text examines the theoretical and conceptual foundations of air power's use in warfare and whether those expectations were achieved during World War II.]

4. Wettemann, Robert P., *Rhino Tanks and Sticky Bombs: GI Ingenuity in World War II* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2025) pages 134-151. **(Leganto)**

[Wettemann argues that the Americans who fought in Europe possessed a unique sense of agency, ingenuity, and mechanical resourcefulness. The Greatest Generation grew up with greater access to machines—the Model T, the Fordson tractor, and mechanized factories—than most from other countries, and their Depression-era upbringing required them to find ways to "make it work." This led directly to battlefield innovation that their opponents in the Wehrmacht could not match.]

5. Citino, Robert M., *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005). Pages xi-xv and 268-305. **(Leganto)**

[Citino describes the German military strategy of 1939 in its historical as well as social and geographical contexts. Because of its central European location and its resulting tendency to fight wars on multiple fronts at once, Germans adopted *Bewegungskrieg* (war of movement) out of necessity. His final chapter details the German campaigns of 1941-1942, but with a view to explaining the limits of *Bewegungskrieg* and how this extremely high-risk, high-reward approach to warfare failed to secure German victory by 1942.]

6. Overy, Richard J., *Russia's War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998). Pages186-198. **(Leganto)**

[Overy dedicates a chapter to the Battle of Kursk and argues that Stalingrad was *not* a "turning point" in the Great Patriotic War because all the Soviets did there was hold their ground; they did not begin to *win* until 1943 at Kursk. Overy summarizes important adaptations and lessons learned within the Soviet armed forces that made it possible for the Red Army to begin its grand counteroffensive that concluded in the march on Berlin and ultimately won the war in 1945.]

7. O'Brien, Phillips. "East versus West in the Defeat of Nazi Germany." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. vol. 23, no. 2 (June 2000). Pages 89-113. **(Selected Readings)**

[O'Brien challenges the view that Soviet ground forces were largely responsible for the defeat of Nazi Germany. He highlights the importance of American Lend-Lease aid to the Red Army and the powerful effects of the Anglo-American bombing of the German homeland.]

8. Baer, George W. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. Pages 189-205, 222-231. **(Book)**

[Baer provides an overview of the U.S. Navy's role in the Battle of the Atlantic and in supporting the Allied landings in the Mediterranean and at Normandy. This reading helps students evaluate the Navy's allocation of resources across multiple theaters and the efficacy of the "Germany First" strategy.]

9. Irish, Kerry E. "Cross-Cultural Leadership: Dwight D. Eisenhower." In *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell*, edited by Harry S. Laver and Jeffrey J. Matthews, 93–118. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008. **(Selected Readings)**

[Irish provides a positive overview of Eisenhower's leadership philosophy, which he describes as "cross-cultural leadership," or the ability to lead effectively across differing national, institutional, and personality cultures. He argues, much like Millett and Murray do, that Eisenhower's claim to "greatness" lies not so much in his operational brilliance but in his role as a team builder and coalition manager.]

10. Hooker Jr., Richard D. "Eisenhower as Supreme Allied Commander: A Reappraisal," *Parameters* 54, no. 3 (2024). Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College. **(Selected Readings)**

[Hooker provides a critical assessment of Eisenhower's leadership to counterbalance the glowing treatment he has received in most histories of the war. He argues that Eisenhower committed "serious mistakes" that prolonged the war and cost unnecessary additional lives.]

Case Leads: Professor Nicholas Evan Sarantakes and Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Romaneski

VII. THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE PACIFIC: MILITARY TRANSFORMATION, THEATER COMMAND, AND JOINT OPERATIONS IN A MAJOR MARITIME WAR

Introduction: The Pacific War is the most recent and consequential example of warfare in the maritime domain between two major industrial powers (Japan and the United States). The theater of operations is akin to today's Indo-Pacific Command, with joint and coalition operations waged in locations from eastern India and the Bay of Bengal across the Pacific to Alaska and south to Australia. This case merits specific attention because of technological and military innovation by the combatants, the emergence of new military domains, the failure of deterrence, the importance of joint operations, the enormous logistic burdens placed on navies, the industrial demands of modern war, mobilization challenges in protracted war, the impact of the war on societies and civilian populations, and the creation and use (for the only time to date) of atomic weapons. Both the United States and China closely study this case for parallels in the current strategic competition. Though all nine of the Strategy and War Course themes are present in this case study, the following four are emphasized: the Interrelationship of Strategy, Policy, and Operations; the Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations; War Termination; and Cultures and Societies.

In the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan had acquired a substantial empire in northeast Asia. Japan remained, however, an unsated power. It sought still further imperial possessions in Asia to provide it with markets, key resources, and security. Japan undertook operations against China with its 1931 invasion of Manchuria and massively escalated operations throughout China in 1937. The United States and its allies responded to Japanese expansion in China with increasingly harsh economic sanctions. Meanwhile, a brief but bloody border war against the Soviet Red Army in 1939 turned Tokyo’s strategic gaze southward.

Seeing no alternative to war, in December 1941 Japan simultaneously attacked Hawaii, Guam, Hong Kong, Malaya, Midway, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Wake Island. Japan intended its attacks across the Pacific to cut off the international aid sustaining Chinese resistance and create a self-sufficient and defensible Pacific Empire. The United States responded with a massive air, land, and sea campaign in conjunction with its allies. This first halted the Japanese advance at the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway in 1942 and then pushed Japan back towards its home islands and the heart of the Japanese empire. The war ended with the devastating U.S. bombing of Japan, a massive Soviet invasion of Manchuria, and the American use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Second World War in the Pacific was the most intense maritime conflict ever fought. By the end of the conflict, it featured the main types of naval platforms upon which the U.S. Navy still relies: aircraft carriers, surface combatants to protect them, and submarines. Aviation also emerged as an integral instrument of war in the maritime domain. U.S. application of naval power against Japan continues to shape U.S. force structure today, but are the “lessons” of the Pacific War—the centrality of naval aviation, the effectiveness of unrestricted blockade, and the decisive role of atomic weapons— still applicable to the current operational environment?

The Pacific War presents a rich source for exploring the Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations course theme. Despite the bitter inter-service rivalry between the Japanese army and navy, from December 1941 into the spring of 1942, Japan's military forces executed a brilliant series of joint operations across Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. Students can study that campaign for insights into the effective integration of land and naval forces.

Japan's successes allowed it to acquire territory rich in strategic resources. It seized the initiative through surprise, but operational successes came with strategic costs. Could Japan defend the new empire it had won? More importantly, Japan added formidable great powers to the ranks of its enemies, even as it remained bogged down fighting Nationalist China. Japan had gone to war repeatedly since the 1890s to secure its dominance of Northeast Asia, but like Germany, every effort it took to overcome strategic challenges through escalation only made its strategic environment more threatening. When Japan's rulers attacked the United States in December 1941, they went to war without any clear conception of how to achieve victory. Students might consider the risks of relying on tactical and operational excellence without a viable strategy linking military plans to political outcomes.

While three-quarters of the Japanese army was deployed in Northeast Asia fighting in China or deterring the Soviet Union, the Japanese navy bore the brunt of the war against the United States in the Pacific. The pivotal battles occurred at Midway and in the Solomon Islands in 1942-1943. The former shows how important technology and intelligence can be to the outcome of an operation, while the latter is particularly useful for studying the prerequisites for a Corbettian peripheral operation. Ultimately, these successes enabled the United States to regain the initiative in the Pacific while simultaneously pursuing victory in Europe, managing the difficult tradeoffs involved in globally integrated operations. As the war progressed, the United States executed a combination of sequential and cumulative strategies as described by J.C Wylie (reading no. 3). Cumulative strategies degraded Japan's war-making potential by targeting industry and critical sea lines of communication. Sequential strategies, meanwhile, centered on American offensives in Southeast Asia and across the Pacific. Students should ask whether this was an efficient application of U.S. resources, and whether U.S. inter-service rivalry (like that of Japan) hindered the effective prosecution of the war.

The Pacific War also provides examples of distinct approaches to operational and strategic leadership. Isoroku Yamamoto on the Japanese side along with Douglas MacArthur, Chester Nimitz, and William Halsey on the American side had very different relations with their political leadership and their subordinates. Students should seek to understand the qualities that proved effective or ineffective in managing complex operations.

Despite U.S. operational successes by 1944-1945, successful war termination proved difficult to engineer. After the loss of the Marianas, the Japanese ruling elite realized that defeat was inevitable, yet Japan continued to fight. Before August 1945, the emperor refused to confront military leadership directly, and the Japanese army was determined to fight one final battle in the defense of the home islands. It anticipated that, by inflicting heavy casualties on American forces invading Kyushu, Japan could compel the United States to abandon its demand for unconditional surrender. An enemy on death ground is always dangerous, and strategists ought to recognize how even a battered enemy might still turn the tide of a war despite having

lost repeatedly on the battlefield or raise the cost of victory beyond an adversary's willingness to pay.

This case also explores how history, cultures and societies shaped approaches to warmaking and planning for war. In particular, both the United States and Japan misread the others' military and political cultures prior to the war, and this created additional challenges as the war unfolded. Moreover, engrained facets of Japanese military culture, embedded in its armed forces and institutionalized in its doctrines since the Russo-Japanese War, contributed to the protraction of the war and created roadblocks to war termination.

Within the U.S. government, there was tense debate over how to terminate the war against Japan. What operations could elicit surrender from Japan most expeditiously, with a minimum of American casualties, and without Soviet assistance? The use of the atomic bomb to terminate the war ushered in a new nuclear age but raised important new questions about this new weapon's utility and morality. The swiftness of the Japanese capitulation and the ceremony on the U.S.S. *Missouri* in September 1945 has shaped American thinking about war termination. The end of the Pacific War was far more complex than commonly believed. U.S. strategy for war termination devoted little attention to the fate of the Japanese and European colonial empires, or how the war had affected events within China. The Pacific War's end did not bring peace to the region; rather, it created new geopolitical arrangements and ideological antagonisms that remain relevant to decision-makers in the contemporary security environment.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. What was the rationale for Japan's offensives in 1941-42? Was Japan's strategy realistic with respect to its capabilities?

2. In December 1941, the Imperial Japanese Navy was a formidable fighting force. Why did Japan's initial naval superiority fail to secure victory in the Pacific War?

3. Did Japan lose the Pacific War because it was obsessed with winning decisive naval battles? What if it had won some of these battles?

4. What factors best explain the different operational and strategic effects of the surprise attacks on Port Arthur in 1904 and Pearl Harbor in 1941?

5. Why did the Japanese pursue a southern strategy rather than striking north against the Soviet Union?

6. Which of Corbett's insights best explain the outcome of the Second World War in the Pacific from the U.S. and Japanese perspectives?

7. What alternative strategies could Japan have pursued to achieve a more favorable outcome in its war against the United States?

8. Did the United States commit a strategic error by dividing its forces among multiple theaters of advance from 1942 to 1945?

9. How effectively did U.S. military commanders combine sequential and cumulative operations during the Pacific War?

10. To what extent did changes in aviation and naval warfare make Mahan's strategic theories irrelevant?

11. How well did leaders in the Pacific War balance risk and reward compared to those in the previous case studies?

12. What do the experiences of the United States and Japan during the Second World War suggest about the dangers posed by interservice rivalries?

13. How did Japanese military culture affect their strategic and operational approaches to war with the United States?

14. Were the strategic benefits of targeting civilian populations commensurate with the political, ethical, and moral costs?

15. Based on this and previous case studies, what are the prerequisites for a strategically effective peripheral operation?

16. Which factor was most significant in bringing about Japan's unconditional surrender: firebombing and mining of Japan, the dropping of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or the Soviet invasion of Northeast Asia?

17. How did Japan's campaigns in China affect the course of the war against the Allies in the Pacific?

18. How could the Japanese have exploited the most important U.S. mistakes during the Second World War in the Pacific?

19. Are there substantive ethical differences between unrestricted submarine warfare by the United States in the Second World War and Germany in the First World War that justify evaluating them differently?

20. Did the United States commit a strategic error by encouraging Soviet intervention in the war against Japan?

21. Could the United States have achieved a "better state of peace" in the aftermath of the war against Japan? If so, how? If not, why not?

22. What are the most salient operational and strategic lessons that leaders should take from the Pacific War for today's security challenges in the Western Pacific?

Readings:

1. Kuehn, John T. *Strategy in Crisis: The Pacific War, 1937-1945.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2023. Pages 34-168. **(Book)**

[This is the core reading for the case. In it, Kuehn provides a comprehensive narrative overview of the Pacific War by illustrating the strategies and operations of the United States and Japan. The book compares these operations with those on the Eastern Front in the Second World War and highlights the significance of the Allied planning conferences, demonstrating the connections between the two theaters in Allied planning and strategy.]

2. Baer, George W. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. Pages 146-189. **(Book)**

[The United States spent much of the interwar period preparing for what appeared to be an inevitable war against Japan. In this reading, Baer assesses the U.S. Navy's role in developing policy, strategy, and operations for the war against Japan in the late 1930s.]

3. Wylie, J. C. Appendix A, "Excerpt from 'Reflections on the War in the Pacific.'" In *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967. Reprint, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989. Pages 117-121. **(Leganto)**

[The United States adapted to strategic challenges of war in the Pacific that had not been anticipated in the interwar planning process. Wylie, a veteran of naval battles in the Pacific and a former Naval War College faculty member, identifies two different types of military strategy that were highlighted in the campaign—sequential and cumulative strategies.]

4. Paine, Sarah C. M. *The Wars for Asia, 1911-1949*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pages 3-11, 123-220. **(Book)**

[Like the United States, Japan fought a war in multiple theaters from 1937-1945. Japan's struggle to occupy China absorbed enormous resources, disrupted Japan's economy, and exacerbated tensions with the United States. Paine, a Naval War College University Professor, emeritus, provides an overview of the Second World War in Asia, addressing the critical importance of Japan's broader war in Asia and particularly its war with China. Paine's reflections on war termination (pages 204-220) will be particularly relevant to our additional seminar time.]

5. Warner, Denis and Peggy. "The Doctrine of Surprise"; Miller, Edward S. "Kimmel's Hidden Agenda"; and Cohen, Eliot A. "The Might-Have-Beens of Pearl Harbor." *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History*. vol. 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1991). Pages 20-25, 36-43, 72-73. **(Leganto)**

[These articles offer three different perspectives on Pearl Harbor. The Warners, specialists on the Russo-Japanese War, explain the Japanese proclivity for surprise; Cohen analyzes why American

military leaders were surprised; and Miller presents an analysis of the operational plan that Admiral Husband Kimmel intended to execute had his fleet not fallen victim to the surprise attack.]

6. Larrabee, Eric. *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants and Their War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987. Reprint, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004. Pages 354-411. **(Book)**

[Larrabee chronicles Nimitz's role in the Central Pacific theater. He analyzes the choices made in this theater, leaders' motivations, and the interaction between political and military decision-makers. Additionally, he details the impact of intelligence on the Battle of Midway, the strategic effects of operational decisions made by Japan and the United States, and the significance of the battle's outcome.]

7. Lee, Bradford A. "A Pivotal Campaign in a Peripheral Theatre: Guadalcanal and World War II in the Pacific." In *Naval Power and Expeditionary Warfare: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. Edited by Bruce A. Elleman and S. C. M. Paine. London and New York: Routledge, 2011. Pages 84-98. **(Leganto)**

[Interwar planning envisioned a single major offensive through the island chains towards Japan. It did not consider the utility of secondary or peripheral operations, or the need to provide support to allies and coalition partners. In this reading, Lee, professor emeritus of the Strategy and Policy Department, discusses the U.S. decision to contest Japanese operations at Guadalcanal and highlights its strategic effects.]

8. O'Brien, Phillips. *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pages 374-429. **(Leganto)**

[O'Brien examines the impact that heavy attrition had on both militaries from 1942-1944, and how this impacted the American's multi-pronged advance across the Pacific.]

9. Hasegawa, Tsuyoshi. "The Atomic Bombs and the Soviet Invasion: Which was more important in Japan's decision to surrender?" In *The End of the Pacific War: Reappraisals*. Edited by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007. Pages 113-144. **(Leganto)**

[The reasons for Japan's surrender in August 1945 continue to be actively debated. This essay argues that the Soviet invasion of Northeast Asia in August 1945 was the decisive factor behind Japan's decision to sue for peace.]

10. Boyle, John Hunter. "Hiroshima," In *Modern Japan: The American Nexus* (New York: Harcourt, 1993). Pages 275-301.

[This reading offers a concise, yet comprehensive, view of the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan, highlighting the contemporary debates and various interpretations of the decision in the 50 years after the war.]

11. “The Blue Team: Documents on U.S. Policy, Strategy, and Operations in the Pacific War.” **(Selected Readings)**

[Primary sources provide key insights into the thinking of wartime leaders. This compendium includes an important speech from President Roosevelt in February 1942, Admiral Nimitz’s operational plan and “Letter of Instruction” to his subordinate commanders for Midway, the minutes of a crucial June 1945 meeting at the White House that considered war-termination options, and other primary-source documents that shed light on American policy, strategy, and operations vis-à-vis Japan.]

Case Leads: Professor Andrew R. Wilson and Captain Everett Alcorn

VIII. THE KOREAN WAR, 1950-1953: IDEOLOGY, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND FIGHTING AND TERMINATING A MAJOR REGIONAL WAR

Introduction: The aftermath of the Second World War left devastated and divided societies across Europe and Asia. This was especially true in Korea. Japan's defeat ended its imperial rule over Korea but did not resolve Korea's future. Though most Koreans were committed to a unified Korean nation-state; the question was what form it would take. The Soviet Union occupied half of the Korean peninsula north of the 38th parallel, where the Soviets engineered a one-party communist dictatorship under Kim Il-sung. U.S. occupation south of the 38th established a Western-leaning state under the presidency of Syngman Rhee. As North and South Korea built new states, Kim repeatedly petitioned his patrons—Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union and Mao Zedong in China—for permission and resources to invade the South and reunify Korea under his rule. Stalin eventually agreed, and in June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. The North's initial attack was wildly successful, driving South Korean and U.S. forces into a small perimeter around the city of Pusan. U.S. General Douglas MacArthur conducted an extraordinarily risky amphibious landing at Inchon to cut off the North's forces and enable a rapid breakout from Pusan. The United States and its allies, acting under United Nations auspices, liberated South Korea and overran most of the North. MacArthur's achievement became a catastrophic success because it triggered Chinese intervention on behalf of North Korea. The Chinese sent U.N. forces reeling back down the peninsula. The front finally stabilized near the original line of division, but political debates over MacArthur's insubordination and frustrations over a stalemated war continued unabated. Though major fighting ceased in 1953, U.S. and South Korean troops still face North Koreans across a tense demilitarized zone today.

This case study examines the strategic and operational challenges the United States confronted while fighting a major regional war as the leader of a coalition against a determined ideological adversary. The time, place, and type of war that erupted on the Korean Peninsula in 1950 caught the United States unprepared materially, strategically, institutionally, and intellectually. The conflict continues to shape the current operational environment in Northeast Asia to this day. The Korean War depicts all course themes, but the following are particularly prevalent in this case study: the Interrelationship of Strategy, Policy, and Operations; War Termination; the Multinational Arena; and the Institutional Context and Civil-Military Relations. Moreover, the case study provides an opportunity to support Program Learning Outcome 4 through the application of theoretical concepts to the first limited war of the nuclear era.

In response to North Korean aggression, the United States immediately decided to intervene under the auspices of the United Nations. The Korean War helps us understand the capability of U.S. military forces to conduct a full range of military operations in pursuit of national interests as leader of a coalition, as well as the limits of that capability.

The U.N. forces suffered initial military setbacks before counterattacking. Their breakout from the Pusan perimeter and landings at Inchon in September 1950 (Operation CHROMITE) were masterpieces of surprise, deception, and joint warfighting. CHROMITE also highlights the fundamentals of joint operational planning. These remarkable operational successes, however, did not end the conflict. The war became even more difficult to end as U.N. forces sought to

exploit their victories and keep pressure on the enemy by advancing into North Korea. China's intervention embroiled the United States in a major regional war. American failure to grasp China's strategic intentions and operational capabilities contributed to the Chinese inflicting one of the worst battlefield reverses that U.S. armed forces have ever suffered. While U.N. forces eventually halted and pushed back the Chinese offensive, the fighting did not end. Instead, a costly two-year stalemate proved immensely frustrating to the Americans, who had come to expect that their wars would produce decisive and unambiguous results.

Profound differences in ideology and strategic culture between the belligerents further complicated assessments, operational planning, strategic choices, and negotiation tactics. The erratic course of the U.S. intervention in Korea reflected the complexities of the first major war fought for limited aims in the nuclear age. This case study showcases the difficulties faced by political leadership in developing clear strategic intent while empowering and trusting theater military commanders to follow that intent. Most notably were disagreements between President Harry Truman's administration and the theater commander—General Douglas MacArthur. The result was a failure to calibrate political objectives, keep strategy aligned with policy, and isolate adversaries.

This case examines how the broad strategic guidance set forth by George F. Kennan in his influential "X" article and later by Paul Nitze in NSC-68 helped shape U.S. strategy for the great power competition of the Cold War. The broader international environment molded the strategic and operational courses of action available to those fighting in Korea. This required globally integrated operations as part of a continuum of competition between two global coalitions to prevent fighting in Korea from expanding into a regional or even global conflagration involving nuclear weapons. The leaders of both coalitions made decisions at the operational and even tactical levels with an eye toward controlling escalation. Hence, our study of the Korean War allows us to more fully comprehend the relationships among the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.

The physical accessibility of the Korean theater played to U.S. strengths in naval and air power. While UN carrier-based aviation provided a critical platform for power projection that compensated for a lack of secure land bases, this dominance faced an evolving challenge. The rapid development of PRC air forces transformed the conflict into a vital case study on the strategic limitations of air power when confronting an adversary capable of rapid adaptation and exhibiting a high tolerance for attrition, augmented by favorable terrain. At the same time, the theater’s terrain negated many of the UN forces’ land power advantages. This case study thus permits us to assess the strengths and limitations of integrating the naval instrument with other instruments of war—air, land, and nuclear—for achieving strategic objectives. The bounded character of this conflict further provides an opportunity to analyze the importance of interaction, reassessment, adaptation, and innovation in wartime. In particular, this case highlights the difficulties in determining both the culminating point of attack and the culminating point of victory.

This case study is also valuable for understanding the importance of intelligence, deception, surprise, and assessment in strategy and war. Failing to foresee China's intervention represented—along with Pearl Harbor and 9/11—one of the most dramatic intelligence failures

in U.S. history. Whether the failure to understand China's intentions and actions stemmed from simple ignorance, the difficulty of assessing an adversary from a different culture, willful disregard of clear warnings, hubris among key leaders, or a triumph of operational secrecy on the part of China remains an issue hotly debated among historians.

In addition, the Korean War highlights the problems in terminating a conflict fought for limited aims. The war-termination process frustrated American civilian leaders and military commanders alike, leaving a legacy that directly affected the U.S. conduct of the Vietnam War and beyond. While the United States ultimately realized its aim of preserving an independent South Korea, China's intervention and protracted negotiations with the communists significantly increased the war's costs. U.S. leaders also found that trying to reach a settlement with adversaries created vexing problems with managing coalition partners whose priorities and preferences did not always align with those of the United States.

The Korean War vividly illustrates the complexity of wartime civil-military relations. As the theater commander, General Douglas MacArthur frequently pursued strategies unaligned with the Truman Administration's policies and objectives. He openly advocated for escalating the conflict, suggesting the use of nuclear weapons and deploying Nationalist Chinese forces. When President Truman rejected these proposals, MacArthur publicly criticized the president and his policy and appealed directly to Congress. While Truman ultimately fired MacArthur for insubordination, the episode exposed the fragile nature of civilian control over the military. Similar frictions existed on the Communist side. While Chairman Mao Zedong and Marshal Peng Dehuai coordinated effectively in the early stages of the war, Mao increasingly ignored and overrode Peng's operational recommendations as the war progressed. The increasingly tenuous relationship between Mao and Peng resulted in missed diplomatic opportunities and battlefield disasters for the communist forces. Thus, this case study provides future leaders with vital historical examples and theoretical frameworks to evaluate similar dynamics in the contemporary strategic environment.

General Matthew Ridgway took command of U.N. forces following MacArthur's dismissal. The contrast between Ridgway and MacArthur as theater commanders is telling; Ridgway concentrated on the operational problem of evicting Chinese forces from South Korea. Coming from the Pentagon, Ridgway understood the administration's goals and undertook operations to achieve them. Although he stabilized the conflict, he failed to achieve decisive effects due to the massive Chinese military presence and significant Soviet material aid. The result was a stalemate from mid-1951 until the armistice in 1953. Fear of escalation—specifically, fear that the Soviet Union would launch operations in Europe while U.S. forces were occupied in East Asia—reinforced the stalemate, calling into question the utility of nuclear weapons at the operational level of war.

The war termination effort in the Korean War underscores the importance of understanding leadership dynamics to achieve conflict resolution. It also highlights the value of sustained military presence as a deterrent to future aggression. These lessons remain highly relevant today, as war termination challenges in modern conflicts such as Ukraine, Gaza, and Syria feature complex interactions between internal politics, military posturing, and diplomacy.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. Were domestic causes within the Korean Peninsula or international factors more significant in triggering the outbreak of the Korean War?

2. Did the United States make a strategic mistake by going to war in Korea?

3. How did civil-military relations affect the conduct of the Korean War?

4. Which of the theorists in the Strategy and War Course best explains the outcome of the Korean War, and why?

5. How effective were the U.S. and China at reassessing and adapting during the Korean War?

6. Which side—the U.N. forces or the Communist forces—was most effective at taking advantage of the other side's strategic and operational mistakes during the Korean War?

7. How do Clausewitz's concepts of the culminating point of attack and culminating point of victory (Book 7, Chapters 5 and 22 of *On War*) help explain the course of the Korean War?

8. Which was more harmful to the American conduct of the war in Korea: military leaders' failure to comprehend the political objective or civilian leaders' failure to comprehend what can and cannot be achieved by force?

9. The Korean War was the first major U.S. conflict fought after the advent of nuclear weapons. How did nuclear weapons influence decisions made by the belligerents?

10. During the war-termination phase of the Korean War, 1951-1953, the Americans and Chinese needed to address two key issues: how far to go militarily and what to demand politically. Who did a better job?

11. Preconceived ideas about an adversary can distort intelligence and planning. How did preconceived ideas by belligerents on both sides of the conflict affect the Korean War?

12. To what extent did air power in Korea contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives?

13. Why did the Korean War continue after the front stalemated in 1951?

14. What factors hampered the belligerents' efforts to achieve optimal integration of the different forms of military power?

15. How well did U.S. military and civilian leaders manage risk during the Korean War?

16. Why did the United States accept a stalemate in Korea while five years earlier in the Second World War it achieved its basic political objectives?

17. The X article and NSC-68 presented two very different approaches to strategy in the early Cold War. Did the Korean War support one of these strategic approaches better than the other?

18. How is the Korean War best understood: as a civil war, as a regional war for dominance in Northeast Asia, or as a theater in a global Cold War?

19. Which factor most influenced wartime decision-making in Washington and Beijing during the Korean War: culture and ideology or interest?

20. What is the biggest takeaway from the Korean War Case Study as it pertains to contemporary events, specifically great power competition?

Readings:

- **Your seminar moderators will provide specific reading guidance to divide the following readings between this case study's two seminars.**

1. Jager, Sheila Miyoshi. *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013. Pages 13-286. **(Book)**

[Jager provides the core reading for this case study in this general overview of the Korean War. The reading includes the war's origins, foreign intervention on the peninsula, war termination, and the war's effect on Cold War alliances and U.S.-Korean relations.]

2. Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950–1953.* Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995. Pages 55-85, 247-261. **(Selected Readings)**

[This reading is fundamental for understanding Mao Zedong's strategic thinking in the context of China's intervention in the Korean War. It makes the argument that Mao's "military romanticism" was, from his perspective, tied directly to national security. Zhang Shuguang contends that Mao romanticized military affairs by believing that a weak army could triumph over a strong one.]

3. "North Korean Offensive, July 1-September 15." In *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1950, vol. 7: Korea. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976. Pp. 393-395, 449-461, 502-510, 600-603, 712-721, 781-782. **(Leganto)**

[These documents illuminate the pre-Inchon debate within the American government over whether the U.S. political objective in the Korean War should be limited or unlimited.]

4. Hallion, Richard P. “Naval Air Operations in Korea.” In *Air Power History*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall 1993). Pages 31-41. **(Selected Readings)**

[This reading analyzes the critical role of carrier-based aviation in maintaining the UN’s operational tempo, specifically focusing on how naval air power compensated for the initial lack of usable land bases. It provides strategic insight into the evolution of "power projection" through a detailed look at close air support, interdiction campaigns, and the role of air power in achieving policy aims in a limited objective war, while also exposing the limitations of air power in an underdeveloped mountain environment.]

5. Xiaoming Zhang. “China and the Air War in Korea, 1950-1953.” *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr. 1998). Pages 335-370. **(Selected Readings)**

[Zhang’s analysis offers a “red team” perspective on air power, examining how the People’s Volunteer Army Air Force (PVAAF) transitioned into a regional challenger against U.N. air supremacy. The reading showcases the strategic limitations of air power when facing a motivated adversary willing to endure high attrition.]

6. Brodie, Bernard. *War and Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1973. Pages 57-112. **(Leganto)**

[Brodie analyzes the major American policy and strategy choices in the Korean War. He is especially provocative on what he sees as a missed opportunity for war termination in mid-1951.]

7. Osgood, Robert. *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957. Pages 163-193. **(Leganto)**

[Osgood analyzes the Truman administration’s rationale for intervening in the Korean conflict while addressing some problems that waging a limited war posed for the United States and its Clausewitzian trinity.]

8. Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. Pages 115-129. **(Leganto)**

[Gaddis explores the development of American nuclear strategy and the deliberate non-use of these weapons from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Korean War. This reading will help students think about how U.S. policy and strategy may be constrained even if the other side has a small weapons-of-mass-destruction (WMD) capability at its disposal. Gaddis is a former member of the Strategy and Policy Department and afterwards became a professor at Yale.]

9. “X” [George F. Kennan]. “The Sources of Soviet Conduct.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 65, no. 4 (Spring 1987). Pages 852-868. **(Selected Readings)**

[In this article, originally published anonymously in July 1947, State Department official George Kennan argued that the United States needed to follow a strategy aimed at containing Soviet expansion. This article is often seen as a blueprint for U.S. strategy during the Cold War.]

10. NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, April 7, 1950. Sections I-IV, IX, Conclusions, Recommendations. **(Selected Readings)**

[This report from an ad hoc interdepartmental committee, headed by State Department official Paul Nitze, painted a stark picture of the emerging superpower conflict and forcefully recommended a major buildup of military and other resources to confront the communist threat. Like reading no. 9, NSC-68 can be viewed as a blueprint for U.S. strategy during the Cold War.]

11. Ulrich, Marybeth P. "A Civil-Military Relations Primer for Strategy and War." **(Selected Readings)**

[The current chair of the Strategy and Policy Department, Marybeth Ulrich, introduces civil-military relations theory. The article's emphasis on the distinct roles and responsibilities that political and military leaders have in the formulation of strategy and its implementation in a theater of operations is particularly relevant in the Korean War case study.]

12. General Douglas MacArthur and Secretary of Defense George Marshall. "Testimony Before the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees." In *Korea: Cold War and Limited War*. Edited by Allen Guttman. Lexington: D. C. Heath and Co., 1972. Pages 26-52. **(Leganto)**

[This reading provides the explanation General MacArthur offered for his actions in the conflict with President Truman, along with the administration's rationale for relieving him of command.]

Case Study Leads: Professor Kenneth Swope and Lieutenant Colonel Brendan R. Neagle

IX. THE VIETNAM WAR, 1965-1975: INSURGENCY, COUNTERINSURGENCY, AND CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS

Introduction: This case examines U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War from 1965 to 1975. Though the case formally begins with the start of U.S. military operations in Vietnam, the United States had already been involved in the Vietnamese Civil War for more than a decade by the time Operation ROLLING THUNDER commenced and 3,500 Marines landed at Da Nang. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the United States supported France with money and munitions in its efforts to restore control over the former colony of French Indochina. When the insurgent Viet Minh defeated France in 1954, the French government conceded full independence to North Vietnam, or the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), where Ho Chi Minh's Communists solidified their rule. South Vietnam, or the Republic of Vietnam (RVN), remained non-communist. After the French withdrawal, the United States expanded its advisory role to develop South Vietnam's capabilities and its armed forces.

In the early 1960s, the United States became directly involved to maintain an independent, non-communist South Vietnam against internal and external aggression. South Vietnam faced a hybrid threat: internal Viet Cong insurgents backed by the North, as well as North Vietnam's conventional forces. In 1965, the United States launched Operation ROLLING THUNDER, a large-scale air offensive against North Vietnam to convince the North to end its campaign against the South. In the same year, the United States introduced large numbers of combat troops for the first time into the South. By 1968, the United States had some 550,000 troops in South Vietnam aimed at reducing enemy capacity and providing internal security. Air operations attempted to slow the infiltration of soldiers and supplies from the North while also convincing Hanoi to abandon its goal of reunification.

In 1968, the North Vietnamese launched the Tet Offensive. The United States defeated the offensive and reassessed, accelerating their pacification efforts to quell the Viet Cong insurgency. The Nixon Administration, in office from January 1969, increased the intensity of the air war and expanded the war to include ground operations in Laos and Cambodia. Even while expanding the war geographically, Nixon focused on "Vietnamization," a policy that would lead to the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the transferring of responsibility to RVN military forces.

The Easter Offensive of 1972 was a major test of Vietnamization. A massive conventional North Vietnamese invasion was halted by the RVN military, supported by American air power. The defeat of the Easter Offensive, more aggressive bombing of North Vietnam in Operation LINEBACKER II, and concessions by the United States at the bargaining table persuaded the North to agree to a negotiated settlement. At the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, the North capitalized on the perceived weakness of the South Vietnamese regime and the waning commitment of the United States. Despite these advantages, the North Vietnamese needed to agree to major concessions in return for a temporary peace. After the American troop withdrawal, a massive conventional attack by the North in 1975 was successful. The South's army collapsed rapidly, and the United States chose not to provide further political or military support to the South. The Republic of Vietnam ceased to exist.

The Vietnam War highlights several enduring dilemmas inherent in nested wars: in this case an interrelated set of conflicts comprising an internal conflict in South Vietnam, a regional war in Indochina, and the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. This case specifically highlights the following course themes: Intelligence, Assessment, and Plans; the Design, Execution, and Effects of Operations; the Multinational Arena; and Cultures and Societies.

In the realm of assessment, the readings underscore the difficulty and the degree of effort required to understand the character of the war and the major players involved—their enemies, their allies, and themselves. At various critical junctures after 1965, U.S. leaders also had opportunities to reassess the problem and their strategic options. Even more than half a century later, strategists continue to debate whether a more accurate assessment or reassessment would have produced a better outcome.

The United States confronted major problems when designing and executing operations to achieve the desired effects on the ground and in the air. The Krepinevich reading highlights the tension between the attrition strategy of 1965-1968 and rival ideas about counterinsurgency. Beginning in the early 1960s, the CIA worked in conjunction with Army Special Forces and the RVN military to launch a series of pacification and unconventional-warfare programs. U.S. military advisors also pressed South Vietnamese civilian and military officials to serve popular interests in the countryside, as analyzed in the Hazelton reading. Before 1965 and after 1969, the United States focused primarily on training, advising, and assisting the South Vietnamese armed forces in their efforts to gain the support of the southern population and resist insurgent and Northern conventional forces. In many of these operations, the United States achieved tactical and operational success, yet the United States proved incapable of translating those successes into strategic results.

The air campaign highlights another area where the United States had difficulty achieving strategic effects. President Lyndon Johnson and his senior advisors wanted to ensure that the air campaign did not completely alienate domestic opinion or lead to unwanted expansion of the war. However, the military saw the operation from a different perspective. The resulting Operation ROLLING THUNDER highlights challenging command relationships in the theater, the effectiveness of joint and service doctrine in an unfamiliar environment, and the role of political guidance. Meanwhile, the lack of clear lines of authority made the campaign difficult to coordinate.

Subsequent air campaigns, including Operations LINEBACKER I and LINEBACKER II during 1972, had different aims. The first aimed at interdicting the supply lines supporting the Easter Offensive and then continued to attrite conventional enemy forces through the summer and fall. LINEBACKER II, an all-out air operation in December 1972 featuring hundreds of B-52 sorties over Hanoi and Haiphong, was intended to compel the North to sign the agreement it had already accepted in October 1972. This case explores how air operations translated (or failed to translate) into battlefield and strategic effects against a mostly pre-industrial nation.

The readings demonstrate that the relationship between the United States and its South Vietnamese allies was far from ideal. The United States was consistently frustrated by what it

saw as Vietnamese corruption, tepid commitment, political machinations, and dependence. At the same time, U.S. forces demonstrated serious failures to understand Vietnamese culture and society. The Vietnamese government and military resented the American tendency to dominate and dictate the direction of the war during peak U.S. involvement, only to transfer all responsibilities in the name of Vietnamization.

This case also considers the broader consequences of withdrawal from protracted conflicts. The U.S. decisions to escalate and later remain in Vietnam often stemmed from concerns about the consequences of withdrawal. In the minds of many hawks, withdrawal from Vietnam would lead to the collapse of neighboring regimes (under the "domino theory") and damage the credibility of American commitments worldwide, including the main Cold War theater in Europe. Opponents of the war argued that withdrawal was unlikely to damage U.S. credibility or precipitate a regional collapse. The subsequent course of events in Indochina supports elements of both arguments. The fall of Laos in 1975 and the nightmarish civil wars in Cambodia might appear to support the hawks' fears of regional collapse. By contrast, Thailand's successful resistance and the emergence of a regional rivalry between China and Vietnam appear to support more dovish arguments. This debate, in turn, forces one to consider the second- and third-order effects of opening, developing, and closing theaters of operation.

Students should consider the parallels between the dilemmas the United States faced in Vietnam and more recent challenges. For example, images from Kabul in 2021 reflect those of Saigon in 1975. In Vietnam, the United States supported the weak South Vietnamese government while fighting the Viet Cong and the regular North Vietnamese Army. Looking back on Afghanistan, we can see a similar dynamic where the United States supported a government with limited popular support while fighting a complex insurgency. The U.S. experience in Vietnam also forces us to consider what leaders should do when there are serious problems with civil-military relations and the attainability of political objectives.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. What best explains the failure of Operation ROLLING THUNDER to have a decisive effect in the Vietnam War?

2. How critical was the ability to isolate the theater of operations to the outcomes of the Vietnam and Korean wars?

3. What effect did Operation LINEBACKER I and Operation LINEBACKER II have on the signing of the Paris Peace Accords and on the outcome of the war?

4. To what degree do Mao's theories of revolutionary warfare explain the course of insurgency in South Vietnam?

5. What would an effective counter to the enemy's *dau tranh* strategy have required?

6. Was the communist victory in Vietnam due more to the inherent weaknesses of the Saigon regime, strategic mistakes by the United States, or the brilliance of North Vietnamese strategy?

7. Were there elements of a strategy that, if combined, might have secured American objectives at an acceptable cost?

8. Why did the United States achieve its objectives in Korea but, despite mounting a greater effort, fail to achieve them in Vietnam?

9. Krepinevich argues that the United States lost in Vietnam because it applied the "Army concept" of conventional operations in response to an insurgency. However, the South Vietnamese army fell to a conventional invasion in 1975, not to a popular uprising or insurgency. How important was the failed U.S. counterinsurgency effort to the outcome in 1975?

10. Judging from the Vietnam War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the War for American Independence, what factors most hinder fighting wars across vast geographic distances?

11. Stansfield Turner saw the Peloponnesian War, and specifically the Sicilian Expedition, as crucial to making sense of America's experience in Vietnam. To what degree does Thucydides help us understand the strategic challenges the U.S. faced in Vietnam?

12. During the war, General William Westmoreland was reading and re-reading Mao and Sun Tzu, and he also had his staff and subordinates read these books. To what extent did these theorists influence Westmoreland's conduct of the war?

13. Did the United States have a viable strategy in Vietnam, or did the United States focus on tactics and operations in the place of strategy?

14. There was no unified command in Vietnam. Would a theater commander in Vietnam with command of all assets from all services have made a difference in either the way the United States fought or in the outcome of the war?

15. To what extent did the United States understand the cultural landscape in Vietnam and what was the impact on U.S. strategy?

16. Was there any way U.S. military power could mitigate the weaknesses of the South Vietnamese government and its lack of popular support?

17. Was air power used effectively by U.S. military leaders in Vietnam?

18. The peace of Nicias and the Paris Peace Accords were short-lived agreements. What common factors explain their failures?

19. Clausewitz and Sun Tzu have very different assessments about the importance of intelligence. Which view does the Vietnam War validate?

20. In what ways is studying the U.S. experience in Vietnam useful for understanding the strategic and operational challenges of the twenty-first century?

Readings:

1. Millet, Allan R. and Maslowski, Peter, and Feis, William B. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. Third Edition. New York: The Free Press, 2012. Pages 507-568. **(Leganto/E-book)**

[These two chapters form the core overview reading. These chapters are from a major study of U.S. military history and offer a broad overview of the U.S. war in Vietnam.]

2. Krepinevich, Andrew F. *The Army and Vietnam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. Pages 131-214. **(Book)**

[Krepinevich provides an overview of U.S. Army strategy in Vietnam by showing how the U.S. Army attempted to apply its conventional doctrine that was successful in the European Theater of World War II to the irregular fight in Vietnam. Krepinevich argues that more soldiers and more weapons would not have changed the outcome and that the U.S. failure to adapt and reassess played into North Vietnamese strategy.]

3. Clodfelter, Mark. "The Air Wars in Vietnam." *The Cambridge History of the Vietnam War*, Volume II. Ed. Andrew Preston and Lien-Hang T. Nguyen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024. 58–82. **(Leganto)**

[Clodfelter discusses the air war. This reading includes considerations of doctrine, broader civilian concerns, operational problems, and the strategic effects of ROLLING THUNDER and LINEBACKER I and II.]

4. Haun, Phil and Jackson, Colin. "Breaker of Armies: Air Power in the Easter Offensive and the Myth of Linebacker I and II." *International Security*, vol. 40, no. 3 (Winter 2015/16). Pages 139-178. **(Leganto)**

[Two former professors in the Strategy and Policy Department offer a rejoinder to Clodfelter. They argue that air power was quite effective in direct attacks on the North Vietnamese Army.]

5. Hazelton, Jacqueline. "The Client Gets a Vote: Counterinsurgency Warfare and the U.S. Military Advisory Mission in South Vietnam, 1954-1965." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2020). Pages 126-153. **(Leganto)**

[Hazelton, a former professor in the Strategy and Policy Department, argues that U.S. military officers in the advisory period believed in the need for reforms and pressed their South

Vietnamese counterparts to implement them. This article identifies the client state's ability and will to resist reforms as an important, overlooked element of counterinsurgency campaigns. Further, it challenges Krepinevich's argument that U.S. advisors did not understand what successful counterinsurgency required.]

6. Komer, Robert. *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1972. Pages 1-10, 37-45, 64-68, 106-118. **(Selected Readings)**

[Komer, who headed the CORDS program in Vietnam, examines the bureaucratic obstacles that inhibited effective interagency collaboration.]

7. Nguyen, Lien-Hang T. *Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Pages 87-228. **(Leganto/E-book)**

[Approaching the Vietnam conflict from the North's perspective, Nguyen researched in Hanoi to complete this book that provides detailed accounts of political posturing, strategic disagreement, and reactions to American attacks by the North Vietnamese leadership.]

8. Bergerud, Eric. *The Dynamics of Defeat: The Vietnam War in Hau Nghia Province*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991. Pages 223-308. **(Book)**

[Focusing on one key province, Bergerud discusses the overall effects of U.S. and communist strategies during the period of the Accelerated Pacification Campaign.]

9. Pike, Douglas. *PAVN: People's Army of Vietnam*. Novato: Presidio Press, 1986. Pages 213-252. **(Leganto)**

[This critical chapter focuses on *dau tranh*, or struggle, the essence of Viet Cong political and military strategy.]

10. Herring, George C. "'Peoples Quite Apart': Americans, South Vietnamese, and the War in Vietnam." *Diplomatic History*. vol. 14, no. 1 (Winter 1990). Pages 1-23. **(Leganto)**

[This study from the leading historian of the war contends Americans did not understand the character of the war, Vietnamese culture, the needs of South Vietnam, and the enemy they were fighting.]

11. Paris Peace Accords, January 1973. **(Leganto)**

[This is the text of the Paris Peace Accords signed in 1973. It offers an opportunity to ask to what extent the terms of the peace contributed to its fragility.]

Case Leads: Professor Anatol Klass and Commander Scott E. Brickner

X. STRATEGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT: THE RUSSO-UKRAINE WAR

Introduction: The Russo-Ukraine War is not a historical case, but rather a contemporary example that allows us to demonstrate how the course themes, military theorists, and the lessons of historical case studies can be used to make sense of the present. The War in the Ukraine is a valuable one for its all-domain character, its multi-national dimensions, the existence of a strong unclassified source base, and the freedom to analyze a conflict without direct U.S. participation. Moreover, this case provides a bridge between the historical cases studied earlier in the course and the wargame presented in the next and final case study.

The specifics of the Russo-Ukraine War are well known, but warrant a summary as they relate to this case study. Vladimir Putin began his aggression toward Ukraine in February-March 2014 by leveraging "little green men" or special forces that seized control of the Crimean Peninsula. From April 2014 to February 2022, Putin used Russian military equipment as well as the Russian military itself to support pro-Russian separatists with in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine—a period in which the term hybrid warfare became popularized and in which over 14,000 civilian and military lives were lost.

Russian aggression against Ukraine escalated in February 2022 as Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and attempted to take Kiev by a "coup de main" that ultimately failed. Ukraine mounted counteroffensives later in 2022 liberating Kharkiv and Kherson. In 2024, another Ukrainian offensive occupied the Kursk region of Russia before being pushed back by a Russian counteroffensive in March 2025. Putin expected a quick decisive victory, but instead the war is now in its fifth year.

At the time of writing in the summer of 2026, the war has stalemated while negotiations struggle to bring an end to the largest European conflict since 1945. Offensive operations by both sides have become increasingly costly and resulted in negligible strategic gains as ubiquitous surveillance and strike capabilities have made it increasingly difficult to concentrate forces for effect. Maneuver has given way to defensive fortifications and deep strikes on critical infrastructure in what some observe as a war of attrition reminiscent of the First World War. At present, Russia occupies almost 20% of Ukraine's sovereign territory. Ukraine has lost roughly 15-20% of its pre-2022 population of 41-44 million as tens of thousands have lost their lives, more have become international refugees, and others now reside in Russian occupied areas. Total casualties as of 2026 (both Ukrainian and Russian) likely exceed one million.

The ongoing Russo-Ukraine War demonstrates the relevance of the Strategy and War Course concepts even in the contemporary environment. It gives students an opportunity to apply the strategic theorists and reinforce understanding of the course themes. One theme to be specifically examined in this case, Interaction, Adaptation, and Reassessment, may have allowed Ukraine to survive rather than be conquered by Russia after Putin ordered the full-scale invasion in February 2022. The Interrelationship of Policy, Strategy and Operations is another course theme especially relevant for considering how leaders have matched strategy and operations to policy objectives. This case also explores two other course themes related to the war: the Multinational Arena and War Termination. Allies are performing a vital role in supporting

Ukraine's fight for survival, and support from China, North Korea, and Iran is helping to sustain Russia's war effort. How the war ends will likely be determined as much by the support of allies as by the actions taken by Ukrainian and Russian forces on the ground.

The theorists studied earlier in the Strategy and War Course continue to offer insights in the contemporary environment. Clausewitz's observation that war is an act of force to compel the enemy is no less true today than at the time he wrote it. Sun Tzu's concept of "winning without fighting" is the main idea behind subversion strategies employed by Putin and is equally reflected in the sanctions-based strategies often pursued by the United States and its allies to compel change in the behavior of adversarial states. Mao's theory of Protracted People's War (and its Vietnamese offshoot Dau Tranh) inspires such current warfighting concepts as information operations, hybrid warfare, "fifth-generation warfare," and grey zone operations. The theories of A.T. Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett, besides their fundamental relevance to the contemporary maritime domain upon which the global economy still depends, have found a new purpose by informing how we can view the risks and rewards at stake in winning command of the emerging space and cyberspace domains. Today's military and civilian leaders would be wise to continually revisit the concepts offered by Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Mahan, Corbett, and Mao.

While the nature of war remains the same, the character of war continues to change. Technology and doctrine have evolved at a rapid pace since the end of the Cold War. This has resulted in many aspects of the Russo-Ukraine War seeming unfamiliar or even new. Novel instruments of war are upending previously held conceptions about warfighting especially at the tactical and operational levels of war. The introduction of hypersonic missiles by Russia; the expenditure of thousands of short, medium, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles; the mass application of land, air, and sea drones; the use of precision artillery alongside traditional "dumb" artillery fires; and the employment of nonstate actors as proxies raise vital strategic, legal, and ethical questions that are currently debated by professionals and academics alike.

Disruptive change in military technology is not a new phenomenon, however. As the Cold War reached an impasse in the 1970s, military technology and operational concepts underwent a dramatic transformation. Military professionals and scholars have since referred to this transformation as a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The wave of change in the 1970s and 1980s led to the appearance of a "precision-strike regime" centered around precision guided munitions (PGMs), satellite-based communications, and stealth technologies. In the United States, the Air-Land Battle concept of 1982 responded to the transformation with a new operational doctrine. Air power soon delivered battlefield effects during the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) and the Kosovo War (1998-1999) that had only been dreamt about in the past, but even so, it proved challenging to obtain lasting strategic effects.

In the twenty-first century, the precision strike regime has by some estimates reached a "mature phase" with adversaries now possessing the same capabilities that the U.S. once monopolized. To achieve an advantage, the United States and its adversaries are developing technologies and capabilities within new domains including space and cyberspace. New technologies have had a powerful influence on the maritime domain as well. With a negligible fleet, facing off against a vastly superior Russian Black Sea Fleet, Ukraine has been able to strategically neutralize its adversary through a combination of missiles and uncrewed surface

vessels (USVs). Current developments taking place across multiple domains suggest to some that another RMA is taking place utilizing a combination of first-person view (FPV) drones, satellite networks, and advanced SI-integrated software to create a constantly observed or "transparent" battlefield while also shortening the decision-making loop. This case study provides leaders with an opportunity to gain a broader understanding of changes in military affairs to include RMAs and how these inform current doctrine.

Turning to the Multinational Arena course theme, the fall-out of the Russo-Ukraine War has had serious implications for the security of Europe and indeed the entire world. The European Union has shifted away from Russia as a major supplier of its energy needs, become more dependent on exports from the Persian Gulf region and the United States, and accelerated a "green transformation." In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Finland (2023) and Sweden (2024) joined NATO while defense spending has increased significantly across NATO member countries. The war has also forced Europe into a stricter alignment with the U.S. by increasing cooperation at the joint level while causing tensions at the policy level especially as U.S. strategic priorities shift toward the Pacific and toward the Western Hemisphere. A similar dynamic has occurred in Russia's relations with Iran, North Korea, and China.

Since the Russo-Ukraine War is an ongoing conflict, students should analyze future strategic courses of action for the major parties involved, and make their arguments for why one course of action has more merit than others. What strategic courses of action are viable for Russia or Ukraine? How should NATO respond to the ongoing war? What role should the United States play in restoring peace to the region? How can the war be terminated? And ultimately, are we learning the "right" strategic lessons from this conflict? Students will have an opportunity in this case study to apply what they have learned thus far in the course by evaluating strategic decisions and the strategic effects of operations in the ongoing Russo-Ukraine War.

Essay and Discussion Questions:

1. What are the most important ways that the strategic environment for the United States has changed since the early precision strike regime which followed from the RMA of the 1980s and 1990s and the current "mature precision strike regime"?

2. Does the integration of multiple domains on a constantly observed or "transparent" battlefield enhanced by SI represent yet another revolution in military affairs or RMA?

3. To what extent do fifth generation warfare, gray zone warfare, and hybrid warfare represent significant departures from Mao's mid-twentieth century theory of revolutionary warfare?

4. How would Sun Tzu evaluate the Russian and Ukrainian strategies that have led to the stalemated Russo-Ukraine War?

5. How would Clausewitz evaluate the Russian and Ukrainian strategies that have led to the stalemated Russo-Ukraine War?

6. Sun Tzu advised that the second-best way to win is to attack the enemy's alliances. To what extent does that insight apply to the Russo-Ukraine War?

7. Which side—Russia or Ukraine—has found more success for adapting a strategy to its policy objectives?

8. What best explains the effectiveness of strategic reassessment and adaptation by Ukraine in the Russo-Ukraine War?

9. Which strategic theorist seems most relevant for explaining the stalemated Russo-Ukraine War ?

10. Since the onset of the conflict in 2014, which side, Russia or Ukraine, has been more successful in understanding the character of the war?

11. What insights from previous case studies are most applicable to the Russo-Ukraine War?

12. Based on the extensive use of drones in the ongoing Russo-Ukraine War, how can drones in combination with other elements of power create the greatest strategic effects in future conflicts?

13. How have nuclear weapons affected the Russo-Ukraine War?

14. What are the most significant changes in the character of war that have occurred in the Russo-Ukraine War?

15. What strategic lessons of coalition warfighting from other case studies in the Strategy and War Course might be useful for Ukrainian leadership?

16. What are the most important lessons that can be drawn from previous case studies about war termination that can be applied to the Russo-Ukraine War?

17. Why has Russia found it so difficult to defeat Ukraine and successfully terminate the Russo-Ukraine War on its terms?

18. What might be the major elements of a successful war termination strategy for Ukraine?

19. Based on the complex interactions in the multi-national environment impacting the Russo-Ukraine War, can either side achieve a satisfactory war termination?

20. What are the most valuable lessons for the U.S. and its allies from the Russo-Ukraine War and why?

Readings:

1. Ryan, Mick. *The War for Ukraine: Strategy and Adaptation Under Fire*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2024. Pages 1-227. **(eBook/Leganto)**

[This book serves as the core reading for this case study by providing a comprehensive analysis of the Russo-Ukraine War. The first part of the book details how both nations have formulated their strategies and the second part discusses how they have continuously adapted to the changing realities of the battlefield.]

2. Kofman, Michael. "The Russia-Ukraine War: Military Operations and Battlefield Dynamics." In *War in Ukraine: Conflict, Strategy, and the Return of a Fractured World.* Edited by Hal Brands. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2024. Pages. 99-118. **(Leganto)**

[Kofman provides a brief summary of the war through the winter of 2024. Kofman argues that well-established concepts of warfighting continue to matter such as policy drives military strategy, mass, firepower, attrition, and industrial capacity.]

3. Jones, Seth G. and McCabe, Riley. "Russia's Grinding War in Ukraine: Massive Losses and Tiny Gains for a Declining Power." *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*. (January 27, 2026). **(Selected Reading)**

[Jones and McCabe analyze Russia's participation in the war up to January 2026, making the argument that Russia as a major power is in decline. The authors compare the losses and paltry gains of Russia's' major offensives to those in similar attritional wars including World Wars I and II.]

4. Cohen, Eliot A. "A Revolution in Warfare." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 72. Issue 2. (March/April 1996). Pages 37-54. **(Selected Reading)**

[Eliot Cohen, in a now classic article written in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, analyzes how the RMA combined new technologies with organizational and doctrinal shifts. In doing so, Cohen helped to define the meaning of an RMA. Cohen is a former member of the Strategy and Policy Department.]

5. Armin, Krishnan. "Fifth Generation Warfare, Hybrid Warfare, and Gray Zone Conflict." *Journal of Strategic Security*. Vol. 15, No. 4 (2022). Pages 14-31. **(Selected Reading)**

[This article compares Fifth Generation Warfare, hybrid warfare, and gray zone conflict. In so doing, the author makes an argument that contemporary warfare has evolved beyond the classic theories of strategy.]

6. Maurer, John D. "The Future of Precision-Strike Warfare—Strategic Dynamics of Mature Military Revolutions." *Naval War College Review*. Vol. 76, No. 2 (Spring 2023). Pages 13-37. **(Selected Reading)**

[John D. Maurer, a professor of Strategy and Security Studies at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) at Air University, argues that the mature phase of the precision-strike revolution is likely to lead to more protracted wars of attrition in the future as power projection, a longtime U.S. strength, is increasingly neutralized by massed precision weaponry causing leaders to navigate the threshold of nuclear escalation.]

7. Raska, Michael. "The Sixth RMA Wave: Disruption in Military Affairs?" *Journal of Strategic Studies*. Vol. 44. No. 4. (2021). Pages 456-479. **(Selected Reading)**

[Raska argues that there have been five RMA waves since the 1980s. Unlike the previous five, the sixth AI-RMA wave is fundamentally changing how advanced militaries fight wars. It is not a mere matter of "evolutionary change" or "modernization-plus." The sixth AI-RMA will likely result in profound changes in military organizations, doctrine, defense budgetary processes, and even alliances and strategic partnerships.]

8. Heisbourg, François and Tertrais, Bruno. "21 Strategic Lessons." *Fondation pour la recherche stratégique/Foundation for Strategic Research*. FRS Note. No. 4. (February 2026). **(Selected Reading)**

[Heisbourg and Tertrais identify 21 strategic lessons from the Russo-Ukraine War for European security. In the process, the authors provide a European perspective of the war.]

9. Zagorodnyuk, Andriy. "The New Revolution in Military Affairs: How Ukraine is Driving Doctrinal Change in Modern Warfare." (April 20, 2026). **(Selected Reading)**

[Zagorodnyuk argues that the Russo-Ukraine War is causing a fundamental shift in warfighting and represents a new RMA that includes affordable precision guided weapons, networked and distributed warfare, kill-zone expansion, and crucial prioritization of adapting faster than the enemy. Andriy Zagorodnyuk is a former minister of Defense of Ukraine.]

10. Frolova, Alina and Yakymiak, Stepan. "The Changing Military Balance in the Black Sea: A Ukrainian Perspective." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. (April 2, 2026). **(Selected Reading)**

[The authors make the argument that Ukraine's maritime operations forced Russia's Black Sea Fleet to withdraw, challenging the view of Russia regional maritime dominance.]

11. Gavin, Francis J. "Nuclear Weapons and Dilemmas from the War in Ukraine." In *War in Ukraine: Conflict, Strategy, and the Return of a Fractured World.* Edited by Hal Brands. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2024. Pages 173-187. **(Leganto)**

[Gavin, an expert on nuclear topics, discusses the murky role of nuclear weapons in the Ukraine War. In so doing, this chapter provides a more general discussion of the role of nuclear weapons in the contemporary environment.]

12. Tellis, Ashley J. “The Ukraine War and Global Cleavages.” In *War in Ukraine: Conflict, Strategy, and the Return of a Fractured World.* Edited by Hal Brands. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2024. Pages 205-223. **(Leganto)**

[Tellis discusses the impact of the Russo-Ukraine War on the international environment. The author divides the world into three basic camps: one decidedly in support of Ukraine; one decidedly supporting Russia; and the third and largest group that are “functionally ‘nonaligned.’” Tellis generalizes the motivations behind the decisions of states in each of the groups.]

Case Lead: Professor George Satterfield

XI. APPLICATION OF HISTORY, THEORY, AND SEA POWER: THE PACIFIC WAR GAME

Introduction: The concluding case study of the Strategy and War Course is ripped from the headlines. It provides one last opportunity to engage with Program Learning Outcome 4 by applying theory, history, concepts of sea power, and doctrine as tools of critical thought to the contemporary environment. It also helps students ponder Program Learning Outcome 2, specifically theater and national military strategies for managing contemporary and future security challenges.

To accomplish these goals, the case breaks with the pattern from past cases. Instead of culminating with a seminar discussion, this case study ends with a war game and serves as a culminating event for the course. The war game will reinforce the topics presented in the previous case studies by exploring the dynamics of a contemporary security challenge involving China.

There is no such thing as a standard war game, but all war games have a similar objective: they force those involved to make decisions in uncertain situations. The term *war game* has a variety of meanings, but what makes a war game is the fact that it is an interactive event "that involves human players, immersed in scenarios, bounded by rules, and motivated by consequence-based outcomes."[1] Though war games can serve many purposes, the objectives of the war game presented in this case study are educational. This war game provides students with the opportunity to apply the course concepts, historical cases, and theorists to a scenario in the contemporary decision-making environment. Moreover, it allows for the practice of critical analysis skills that have been honed in previous case studies and seminar discussions. The war game is an opportunity to put the toolkit assembled in previous cases to work developing, critiquing, and executing courses of action that advance national interests and objectives.

Background:

This case challenges students to consider why China aspires to be a great sea power, how its ambitions might lead to conflict with the United States, and how conflict might be deterred. A useful point of departure is to recall Thucydides' emphasis on honor, fear, and self-interest as motives for waging war. How might these three motives shape China's quest for capabilities to fight in the maritime domain? And will its quest succeed? After all, aspirations are one thing, but having the resolve and capabilities to potentially fulfill those aspirations is quite another.

Successive presidential administrations have pronounced the People's Republic of China as the only strategic competitor with both the intent and the economic, diplomatic, and military power to reshape the international order. Beijing is determined to carve out a robust sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and, ultimately, to make itself the world's foremost power. U.S.

[1] Lin-Greenberg, Erik and Pauly, Reid and Schneider, Jacquelyn, "Wargaming for International Relations Research," *Social Science Research Network* (November 4, 2021). See page 7 for a useful table displaying game characteristics. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3676665

documents relating to national security strategy have consistently vowed to outcompete China while constraining Russia and managing other challenges.

As if to highlight the challenge posed by a return to great-power competition, China's President Xi Jinping has repeatedly called on his country to build itself into a maritime power. In April 2018, most strikingly, Xi praised China's navy for making a "great leap in development" while exhorting officers and crewmen to "keep working hard and dedicate ourselves to building a first-class navy." He made these remarks at a naval parade in the South China Sea. Some 48 surface warships and submarines passed in review before the president, including the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, while 76 fighter aircraft streaked overhead. China's communist rulers see this display of naval power—the largest in China's modern history—as boosting the Chinese Communist Party's influence, power, and prestige. President Xi's words echo with calls to national greatness from past naval powers such as Imperial Germany and Imperial Japan. Since 2018, the Chinese have continued efforts to develop a first-class navy. Just last year, China launched and commissioned at least 21 major naval combatants. Conflicts explored in this course should give us pause as we contemplate the implications of China's return to great-power competition and the ways the United States can confront the challenge.

It is worth noting that China is a traditional continental power venturing out to sea for the first time in centuries. Mahan's six elements of sea power remain useful measures for determining whether such a country has the prerequisites to make itself a great seafaring state. Adding to these Mahanian elements, factors such as economic growth, fiscal capacity, technological sophistication, multinational partnerships, and strategic leadership could also be considered. These are basic conditions for success in the maritime domain. Our historical case studies illustrate the difficulties that traditional landpowers confront when they turn seaward. Mahan provides a framework that can be used to evaluate whether China can overcome these difficulties. Leaders should also ponder whether new technologies and ways of fighting have transformed geopolitical and strategic axioms that have long governed contests between land powers and sea powers in the maritime domain. It may be that technological advances and novel war-making methods have muted the disadvantages continental powers encounter when they take to the sea—or canceled them out altogether.

This case study demands that the likelihood of armed conflict with China be considered, and if war should occur, how the course of events might unfold. Will geography, nuclear deterrence, and economic interdependence reduce the pressures that push great powers into rivalry and conflict? Or will the past repeat itself in the twenty-first century, with rising great powers posing challenges to the international order that result in war? Does China's rise as a sea power make the outbreak of war more likely? Assuming China seeks to win without fighting, in the tradition of Sun Tzu, how will it go about it? Might China miscalculate American responses, as other adversaries of the United States have done? Could coalition partners embroil the United States and China in war—much as the fighting between Corinth and Corcyra spiraled into system-shattering war between Athens and Sparta? What actions might the United States take to dissuade or deter other countries from resorting to war?

These troubling questions are at the heart of any potential war with China. In thinking about how the United States might wage a future war, and in prosecuting the war game, students should look back to the course's strategic theories, to the course themes found at the beginning

of this syllabus, and to case studies in which maritime power loomed large. Along with Mahan's teachings, this case study offers an opportunity to revisit Corbett's principles of maritime strategy, Mao's concept of active defense, the prewar assessments by Athens and Sparta, the Anglo-German rivalry preceding the First World War, Imperial Japan's adventurism, and much more. This case invites students to reconsider navies' warfighting missions through the lens of the past.

Although the nature of war is enduring and traditional naval missions endure, the character of future warfare will be reshaped by uncrewed vehicles, super intelligence, and actions in outer space and the cyber domain. The readings and war game encourage students to think about how the development and diffusion of new technologies like networks and cyber weapons may transform the execution of naval missions in twenty-first-century warfare, make such missions prohibitively expensive, or even supersede them altogether. For example, students should look beyond current doctrine to consider whether cyber is an instrument of national power, a platform, a tactic, a domain, or a type of war. And they should mull the strategic implications of assigning it to a category. One certainty is that China and other potential adversaries will harness new war-making technologies and methods in their search for strategic advantage.

Of course, it is vital that decision-makers and strategic planners examine not only how a war might start but also how it might end. War termination forms an essential part of this case study's readings. In exploring the contours of a contest with China, from its origins to its end, political and military leaders must keep in mind the two overarching concepts of strategy that stand out in Clausewitz's work, namely rationality and interaction. Can the courses of action developed by strategic planners deliver the political goals desired at a cost and risk commensurate with the value policy-makers and society place on those goals? The answers to questions about rationality rest on how adversaries and other audiences react militarily and politically to one's own courses of action. To understand interaction in wartime, it is important to obey Sun Tzu's injunction to know the enemy and know ourselves. Leaders must try to anticipate the strategic concepts that opponents may harness to fulfill their policy goals, assess their operational capabilities in relation to our own, and think ahead to how they might work around our future moves.

Finally, of special importance is the role that nuclear weapons might play in a conflict between China and the United States. Students should consider the paths whereby a conventional conflict might escalate to involve nuclear attacks on the combatants' homelands. Decisions to escalate will demand moral and ethical questioning as part of strategic deliberations. How does the ultimate weapon fit into the rational strategic calculations that Clausewitz demands?

As we grapple with such questions, Sun Tzu's enduring warning remains paramount: "War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied."[2]

[2] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Samuel B. Griffith, trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 63.

Readings:

1. Yoshihara, Toshi and James R. Holmes. *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*. Third edition. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2026. Pages 20-50, 155-200. **(Leganto)**

[In this core reading, Professor Holmes of the Strategy and Policy Department and Toshi Yoshihara, a former Strategy and Policy professor now at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, explore the role of strategic thought and strategic will to the sea in Chinese maritime strategy.]

2. China Aerospace Studies Institute. *In Their Own Words: Science of Military Strategy, 2020*. Montgomery: China Aerospace Studies Institute, Air University, 2022. Pages 28-52, 132-155. **(Selected Readings)**

[This is a translation of an authoritative work compiled periodically by a team of coauthors from China's National Defense University. It complements the previous reading in particular. The selections here review the Chinese armed forces' general approach to active defense for deterrence and conventional warfare while explaining how party officials and military commanders apply this Maoist strategic concept to such emerging warfare domains as outer space and cyberspace.]

3. U.S. Department of Defense. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*. Washington, D.C.: Department of War, 2025. Pages 1-94. **(Selected Readings)**

[This annual report out of the Pentagon provides a rich assessment of China's goals, strategies, and capabilities across its various tools of national power. If knowing potential opponents is crucial to operational and strategic success, this document is a must read for anyone in the U.S. fighting forces and the national security apparatus at large.]

4. Talmadge, Caitlin and Joshua Rovner. "The Meaning of China's Nuclear Modernization." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 46 (2023). Pages: 1116-1142. **(Selected Readings)**

[Will China's nuclear modernization threaten U.S. security? Will it destabilize the Indo-Pacific Region, or potentially increase the chances of conventional conflict by providing a nuclear shield to hide behind? These are some of the questions addressed in this article. By surveying U.S. perspectives on the meaning of China's nuclear modernization, it gives insight into what the modernization means and provides potential future indicators that could help resolve the debate of China's intentions.]

5. Bracken, Paul. "Navies in the Second Nuclear Age." *Orbis*, vol. 68, no. 1 (Winter 2024). Pages 58-71. **(Selected Readings)**

[This article from Bracken, who popularized the concept of a "second nuclear age" with fewer nuclear weapons in the world but more nuclear-armed states, reviews the strategic and operational context in which naval forces will operate in this age of nuclear proliferation and novel technologies such as SI, hypersonic missiles, smart drones, and cyber.]

6. Mastro, Oriana Skylar. "How China Ends Wars: Implications for East Asian and U.S. Security." *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1 (Spring 2018). Pages 45-60. **(Selected Readings)**

[How would a war between China and the United States end? Mastro explores this provocative question. Her article's conclusions regarding war termination in the Western Pacific make for troubling reading.]

Case Leads: Lieutenant Colonel Brendan R. Neagle, Professor James R. Holmes, and Commander Daniel R. Post

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STRATEGY AND POLICY DEPARTMENT FACULTY

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Vanya Eftimova Bellinger is an Assistant Professor in the Strategy and Policy Department. She earned a Ph.D. in History at King's College, London, UK. Bellinger is a scholar who studies the history and development of strategic thought, particularly the Prussian reform movement and its most famous member, Carl von Clausewitz. Previously, Bellinger taught as a Visiting Professor at the U.S. Army War College (2016-2018) and Assistant Professor at the Air University (2018-2022). She is the author of *Marie von Clausewitz: The Woman Behind the Making of On War* (Oxford University Press USA, 2015) and winner of the 2016 Society for Military History Moncado Prize for article. Bellinger is the first scholar to work with the complete correspondence between the Clausewitz couple and much of Clausewitz's remaining manuscripts. Her scholarly articles have appeared in *The Journal of Civil War Era* and *Military Strategy Magazine* and popular outlets such as *The Strategy Bridge* and *War on the Rocks*. She holds a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication from Sofia University, Bulgaria. Before transitioning to academia, Bellinger was a journalist and international correspondent for various European media.

Shahin Berenji is an Assistant Professor in the Strategy and Policy Department. He earned his Ph.D. and MA from the University of California Los Angeles and his BA from the University of Southern California. Before arriving at the Naval War College, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Albritton Center for Grand Strategy at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A & M University. From 2020 to 2022, he worked at Southern Methodist University where he served as a Visiting Assistant Professor and Colin Powell Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Political Science and the John G. Tower Center for Public Policy and International Affairs. He studies foreign policy decision-making and diplomacy and has a specialization in the Cold War and regional expertise in the Middle East. His research has been published in such academic journals as *International Security* and *Security Studies* and his commentary and op-eds have been featured online with West Point's the Modern War Institute, *the National Interest*, and *E-International Relations*.

Commander Scott E. Brickner, U.S. Navy, graduated from the University of San Diego with a BS in business administration and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. A career Surface Warfare Officer, he has made several deployments to the North Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean, Western Pacific, and Arabian Gulf. Commander Brickner's operational tours include USS THE SULLIVANS (DDG 68) as Auxiliaries Officer, USS HUE CITY (CG 66) as Navigator, USS CHAFEE (DDG 90) as Operations Officer, USS PHILIPPINE SEA (CG 58) as Operations Officer and most recently USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) as Operations Officer. As the Air Defense Liaison Officer assigned to COMCARSTRKGRU 2, he deployed aboard USS GEORGE H W BUSH during a ten-month combat deployment in support of OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE. Additionally, he has served at Surface Warfare Officers School as a Fleet Training (N72) instructor and a Maritime Warfare (N73) instructor.

Captain Andrea H. Cameron, U.S. Navy, is a permanent military professor teaching policy analysis in the National Security Affairs Department and the founding director of the Conflict and Human Security Studies Group. Her academic interests explore non-traditional and transnational security threats and their impact on U.S. strategic, national security and economic interests. These research interests include climate and energy policy, human security topics and civil-military coordination during humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.

Michael A. Dennis is an Associate Professor who received his doctorate in the history of science and technology from Johns Hopkins University in 1991. After postdoctoral fellowships at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, as well as the Science Studies Program at the University of California, San Diego, he served as an Assistant Professor in Cornell University's Department of Science and Technology Studies and in the Peace Studies Program. After Cornell, he worked as an adjunct at several universities in the Washington, DC area, including Georgetown University's security studies, and its science, technology and international affairs programs; he also taught courses on technology and national security in George Mason University's BioDefense program. His research focuses on the intersection of science, technology and the military with a special emphasis on World War II and the Cold War. He is currently completing a book manuscript entitled, "A Change of State: Technical Practice, Political Culture and the Making of Early Cold America." His 2013 article, "Tacit Knowledge as a Factor in the Proliferation of WMD: The Example of Nuclear Weapons," won a prize from the

Editorial Board of Studies in Intelligence. In 2018, he and Professor Anand Toprani received a grant from the Stanton Foundation to develop a course, "The Political Economy of Strategy," for both NWC and Brown University students.

Colonel Patrick F. Eldridge, U.S. Marine Corps, joined the Strategy and Policy Department in the Summer of 2026 after serving one year as military faculty in the Halsey Alfa Advanced Research Program. Before arriving at the Naval War College, Colonel Eldridge served as the Chief of Staff of the 1st Marine Division. A career artillery officer, Colonel Eldridge has commanded at the O-5 level, leading 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, and the O-6 level, leading the 11th Marine Regiment. He has completed four combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, serving as an ANGLICO Joint Terminal Attack Controller, a Civil Affairs Team Leader, and a MEB level Fires and Targeting Officer. His other key assignments include serving in the NORAD-U.S. Northern Command Current Operations (J33) and Qualification and Training (J73) Directorates. He also served as the Commandant of the Marine Corps Fellow at Yale University to the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy, as well as military faculty and Leadership Department Head at Marine Corps Command and Staff College. In addition, he served as the first Deputy Commander for Integration and Theater Littoral Warfare at CTF-76. Colonel Eldridge earned a B.A.S in Secondary Education and History from Salve Regina University in 1998 and an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies from The U.S. Naval War College in 2010. He is also a 2025 graduate of The Joint and Combined Warfare School, Norfolk, VA.

Marc A. Genest is the Forrest Sherman Professor of Public Diplomacy in the Strategy and Policy Department and is Area Study Coordinator for the Insurgency and Terrorism electives program. From 2008-16, he served as the founding Co-Director of the Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the Naval War College. In 2011, Professor Genest was a civilian advisor at Division Headquarters for Regional Command—South in Kandahar, Afghanistan where he assessed the division's counterinsurgency strategy. In 2009, Genest received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service from the Department of the Army for outstanding service as a Special Adviser to the Commander of Task Force Mountain Warrior while stationed in Regional Command-East in Afghanistan. Dr. Genest earned his PhD from Georgetown University in international politics. Before coming to the Naval War College, Professor Genest taught at Georgetown University, the U.S. Air War College, and the University of Rhode Island. While at the University of Rhode Island, Professor Genest received the University's Teaching Excellence Award. He is also a political commentator for local, national and international radio news and television stations as well as for local and national print media. In addition, Genest worked on Capitol Hill for Senator John Chafee and Representative Claudine Schneider. His books include *Negotiating in the Public Eye: The Impact of the Press on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Negotiations*; *Conflict and Cooperation: Evolving Theories of International Relations*; and *Stand! Contending Issues in World Politics*. He is the co-editor of *From Quills to Tweets: The Evolution of American Wartime and Revolutionary Communication Strategies*. He has also written articles dealing with international relations theory, strategic communication, American foreign policy and public opinion.

Commander Joshua A. Hammond, U.S. Navy, graduated from the University of Michigan with a BA in classical languages and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National

Security and Strategic Studies. While at the NWC, he received the Adm. Richard G. Colbert Memorial Prize for professional writing and research. A career naval flight officer, he has over 2,300 hours and 500 carrier landings in the F-14D and F/A-18F in support of operations in the Arabian Gulf and Western Pacific. Other assignments include air operations officer on USS CARL VINSON and an exchange assignment with the Royal Navy in carrier doctrine development.

James R. Holmes is the inaugural J. C. Wylie Chair of Maritime Strategy. He is a graduate of Vanderbilt University, Salve Regina University, Providence College, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Jim graduated from the Naval War College in 1994 and earned the Naval War College Foundation Award as the top graduate in his class. He previously served on the faculty of the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs. A former U.S. Navy surface warfare officer, he served as engineering and gunnery officer on board USS WISCONSIN (BB-64), directed an engineering course at the Surface Warfare Officers School Command, and taught Strategy and Policy at the Naval War College, College of Distance Education. His books include *Theodore Roosevelt and World Order: Police Power in International Relations*; *Chinese Naval Strategy in the 21st Century: The Turn to Mahan*; *Indian Naval Strategy in the 21st Century*; *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age: Power, Ambition, and the Ultimate Weapon*; *A Brief Guide to Maritime Strategy*; *Habits of Highly Effective Maritime Strategists*; and, most recently, a third edition of *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*. His books have appeared on the U. S. Navy Professional Reading List since 2012.

Timothy D. Hoyt is the John Nicholas Brown Chair of Counterterrorism Studies and serves as Academic Director and Senior Mentor for the Advanced Strategy Program. Hoyt earned his undergraduate degree from Swarthmore College, and his PhD in international relations and strategic studies from the Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Before joining the Naval War College's Strategy and Policy Department, he taught at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Dr. Hoyt's research interests include South Asian security, irregular warfare in the 20th and 21st centuries, national security policy in the developing world, nuclear proliferation, and the relationship between insurgency and terrorism. He previously served as Co-Director of the Indian Ocean Regional Studies Group at the Naval War College. He is the author of *Military Industries and Regional Defense Policy: India, Iraq and Israel* and over fifty articles and book chapters on international security and military affairs. He is currently working on a book on the strategy of the Irish Republican Army from 1913-2005, and on projects examining the future of the U.S.-Indian security relationship, the strategy of the African National Congress in the South African freedom struggle, Israel's defense industry, and the relationship between irregular warfare and terrorism in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Anatol Klass is an Assistant Professor of Strategy and Policy who graduated from Harvard College in 2017 with an AB in History and East Asian Studies. He received an MA in International Affairs from Tsinghua University. He studied history at the University of California, Berkeley, receiving an MA in 2021 and a PhD in 2024. The central focus of his research is modern Chinese history, and he is currently working on a book project about how various Chinese regimes have built up their diplomatic capital in the past century, producing their own institutions, ideas, and personnel with the singular aim of asserting Chinese interests

on the international stage. Before joining the Naval War College, he was a fellow at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, the Belfer Center, and the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies.

Heidi E. Lane is a Professor of Strategy and Policy and Director of the Greater Middle East Research Study Group at the Naval War College. She specializes in comparative politics and international relations of the Middle East with a focus on security sector development, ethnic and religious nationalism, and rule of law in transitioning societies. Her edited book *Building Rule of Law in the Arab World and Beyond* was published in 2016 with co-editor Eva Bellin. She is currently completing research for a book on counterterrorism and state liberalization in the Middle East. Dr. Lane has served as a visiting research affiliate with the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a U.S. Fulbright scholar in Syria, and as a research fellow with the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. She is currently a senior associate at the Center for Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the Naval War College. She holds an MA and PhD in Islamic Studies from the Center for Near Eastern Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, and a BA from the University of Chicago, and is trained in Arabic, Hebrew, and Persian and is proficient in German.

Daniel J. Lynch is a retired Commander in the U.S. Navy, an Associate Professor, and the Chair of the Strategy & Policy Department in the College of Distance Education. He graduated from the University of Rochester (BA, 1982), Troy State University (MS, 1991), and the Naval War College (MA, 1996). During his career as a Naval Officer/helicopter pilot, he served in several ASW and Training squadrons, completed multiple deployments on several aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships, and did several staff tours, including a NATO tour. While on active duty, he taught for the Naval War College in the Fleet Seminar Program (Naples, Italy) from 2000-02 and in the resident program (Newport, RI) from 2005-10. After retiring from the Navy in 2010, and before returning to the College of Distance Education in 2016, he taught middle school math and coached baseball. He became the Strategy & Policy Department Chair in the College of Distance Education in 2020.

Commander Mike Major, U.S. Navy, commissioned in 2008 as a Human Resources Officer after enlisting in the Michigan Army National Guard from 1998-2002. He most recently served as the social science adviser for the Navy Performance Management Administration team in the Talent Management Center of Excellence at Navy Personnel Command (PERS-00K). He previously mobilized to Afghanistan as an Embedded Advisor with the Afghan National Civil Order Police in Ghazni, planning and executing joint operations with the Polish Army. Cmdr. Major holds a PhD in Communication from Wayne State University, and his research focuses on communication theory in warfare and policy, strategic communication, applied communication, and organizational behavior.

Jamie Martin, Department of State, graduated from Bryn Mawr College with a BA in Political Science and Spanish and from the London School of Economics and Political Science with an MSc in Government. She is a senior foreign service officer in the Department of State, where she has served in eight overseas assignments in seven different countries. Most recently, Ms. Martin was the Embassy Spokesperson and Press Attaché at the U.S. Mission to Spain. She previously

served as the Director of Programs and Exchanges and Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Mission to the European Union. She served as the Director of the Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs from 2016-2019 and the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission from May 2018-June 2019 at the U.S. Embassy Nassau, The Bahamas. She has also served in London, United Kingdom; two tours in Islamabad, Pakistan; Cape Town, South Africa; and Mexico City, Mexico. Prior to joining the State Department, she worked as an editor for the Congressional Research Service and an Online Editor for CNNenEspañol.com. She speaks fluent Spanish and has studied French and Urdu.

John H. Maurer serves as the Alfred Thayer Mahan Professor of Sea Power and Grand Strategy. He also holds the title of Distinguished University Professor. He is a graduate of Yale College and holds a MALD and PhD in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He is the author or editor of books examining the outbreak of the First World War, military interventions in the developing world, naval competitions and arms control between the two world wars, a study on Winston Churchill and British grand strategy, and the great-power contest in Asia and the Pacific that led to Pearl Harbor. He served for eight years as Chairman of the Strategy and Policy Department. He teaches in the advanced strategy program and an elective course on Winston Churchill and the history of the two world wars. Before coming to the College, he held the positions of research fellow and executive editor of *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. He served on the Secretary of the Navy John Lehman's special advisory committee on naval history. In recognition of his contribution to professional military education, he has received the U.S. Navy's Meritorious Civilian Service Award and Superior Civilian Service Award.

Kevin D. McCranie is the Philip A. Crowl Professor of Comparative Strategy. He earned a BA in history and political science from Florida Southern College, and an MA and PhD in history from Florida State University. Before joining the faculty of the Naval War College, he taught history at Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon, Georgia. Specializing in warfare at sea, navies, sea power, and joint operations, he is the author of *Admiral Lord Keith and the Naval War against Napoleon* as well as *Utmost Gallantry: The U.S. and Royal Navies at Sea in the War of 1812*. His recent writing compares the sea power and maritime strategic theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sir Julian Corbett in a Naval Institute Press book titled *Mahan, Corbett, and the Foundations of Naval Strategic Thought*. His articles have appeared in *War on the Rocks, Texas National Security Review, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings Online, Naval History, Journal of Military History, Naval War College Review*, and *The Northern Mariner*.

Joshua M. Meeks serves as an Associate Professor of Strategy and Policy and the Course Director for the Strategy and War Fleet Seminar Program at the U.S. Naval War College, College of Distance Education. He has also taught at Northwest University, the University of South Florida, Seminole State College, and Florida State University. His publications include the books *France, Britain, and the Struggle for the Revolutionary Western Mediterranean* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2017) and *Napoleon Bonaparte: A Reference Guide to His Life and Works* (Rowman Littlefield, 2020), and he has contributed chapters to edited volumes such as *Entire of Itself? Towards an Environmental History of Islands* and *Simulations in Political Science: Games without Frontiers.* Dr. Meeks also serves as the Book Review Editor for the *International Journal of Naval History* and has participated in multiple classified wargames. Dr. Meeks

received his Ph.D. in History from Florida State University, is a member of the Society for Military History, and a recipient of the Civilian Service Achievement Medal from the Naval War College.

Lieutenant Colonel Brendan R. Neagle, U.S. Marine Corps, is an Infantry Officer. His operational experience includes two tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, seven Marine Expeditionary Unit deployments to the European, African, Central, and Indo-Pacific theaters, and one deployment on the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Crisis Response – Africa. He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy, an M.A. in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College, an A.A. in Korean from the Defense Language Institute, and is a graduate of the Joint Forces Staff College and the Korean Joint Forces Military University.

Colonel Matthew P. Nischwitz, U.S. Army joined the U.S. Naval War College in 2020 as a member of the Strategy and Policy Department. He commanded at the battalion level and served in various staff positions. His past assignments included the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve, U.S. Army Transportation School, 17th Field Artillery Brigade and U.S. Military Academy. He received his B.S. from Indiana University and an M.A. from Columbia University and the United States Naval War College.

Michelle D. Paranzino is the T.C. Sass Chair in Maritime Irregular Warfare, Director of the Latin America Studies Group, and an Associate Professor in the Strategy & Policy Department. Her research areas include US foreign policy, Latin America, Soviet foreign policy, and the international Cold War. She is the author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War: A Short History with Documents* (Hackett, 2018), and her work has appeared in several edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals such as *Diplomatic History*, the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, and the *International History Review*. Before joining the Naval War College, she was a Dickey Center and Dean of the Faculty Postdoctoral Fellow in International Security and US Foreign Policy at Dartmouth College and a Summer Research Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Kennan Institute. She earned a Ph.D. in History at the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. in History at California State University Northridge, and a B.A. in History at University of California Santa Cruz. She is currently writing a book about Ronald Reagan and the War on Drugs.

Michael F. Pavković is the William Ledyard Rodgers Professor of Naval History at the College and also serves as Senior Historian for the John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research. He received his BA in history and classics from Pennsylvania State University and his PhD in History from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Before joining the Naval War College, he served as an Associate Professor of History at Hawai‘i Pacific University, where he also coordinated graduate and undergraduate programs in Diplomacy and Military Studies. He has published a number of articles, book chapters, and reviews on topics relating to ancient, early modern, and Napoleonic military history. He is co-author of *What is Military History?* which is now in its 3rd edition. He is currently completing a book on sea power in the ancient world.

Captain Joseph A. Pommerer, U.S. Navy, graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a BA in Systems Engineering and the U.S. Naval War College with an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies. A career Naval Flight Officer, he has over 2,750 flight hours and 600 carrier-arrested landings in the F-14D Tomcat and F/A-18F Super Hornet. His operational tours include multiple deployments to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf with Fighter Squadron THREE ONE (VF-31), as Operations and Safety Officer with Strike Fighter Squadron ONE ZERO THREE (VFA-103), and as Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of Strike Fighter Squadron NINE FOUR (VFA-94) flying combat missions in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR), and Operation FREEDOM SENTINEL (OFS). Other assignments include flight instructor at Strike Fighter Squadron ONE ZERO SIX (VFA-106), assistant operations officer at Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN (CVW-17) where he deployed in support of JTF-Haiti during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE and Operation SOUTHERN SEAS 2010, as Strike Syndicate Lead for Carrier Strike Group FIFTEEN (CSG-15), and as operations officer and prospective commanding officer course lead at the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center.

Commander Daniel Post, **U.S. Navy**, joined the Strategy and Policy department in the fall of 2021 as a Permanent Military Professor. He is also the Co-Director of the Perspectives on Modern War (PMW) course. He received a B.S. in Mathematics from the United States Naval Academy (with Honors), an MA in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College (with Highest Distinction), an MA in Political Science from Brown University, and his PhD in Political Science (International Relations) from Brown University. His research focuses on nuclear strategy and policy, deterrence, escalation dynamics, limited nuclear war, and conflict termination. This includes studies of past wargaming and military exercises to explore potential escalation dynamics in limited nuclear wars. Additionally, he conducts experimental survey work and interview-based research centered on nuclear deterrence strategies and escalation dynamics. He is a former Navy Helicopter Pilot, and his most recent assignment was as Nuclear Strike Advisor and the Chief of Strike Advisor Training, Global Operations Center at U.S. Strategic Command.

Lieutenant Colonel Luis R. Rivera, U.S. Army, joined the Strategy and Policy Department in 2022. LTC Rivera has commanded at the company and battalion level. Additionally, he has served tours as a member of the general staff at the strategic, operational, and tactical level commands. His combat and operational deployments include Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Poland, and Germany whilst supporting U.S. Army and joint named operations throughout the Middle East. He is a graduate of the Sistema Universitario Ana G. Mendez (B.S. in Biology) and the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (M.S. in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management). LTC Rivera's professional military education includes the Combined Logistics Captain's Career Course, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the Command and General Staff School for Command Preparation – Battalion Pre-Command Course.

Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Romaneski, U.S. Army, is joining the US Naval War College's Strategy and Policy Department for the 2025-2026 academic year after completing battalion command in Fort Wainwright, Alaska. He is an Aviation officer whose previous command and staff positions include extensive time in Europe, the U.S. Military Academy, Fort Carson,

Colorado, and Fort Cavazos, Texas. He has a BA in history from James Madison University and a PhD in military history from the Ohio State University.

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes is a professor who earned a BA from the University of Texas. He has an M.A. from the University of Kentucky and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. All three degrees are in history. He has written seven books. His most recent is The Battle of Manila: Poisoned Victory in the Pacific War (2025).

George D. Satterfield is an Associate Professor who holds a PhD in history from the University of Illinois. Before joining the Naval War College, he served as an assistant professor at Morrisville State College, and as an associate professor at Hawaii Pacific University. Dr. Satterfield is the author of *Princes, Posts, and Partisans: The Army of Louis XIV and Partisan Warfare in the Netherlands, 1673-1678*, which received a distinguished book award from the Society for Military History. Dr. Satterfield is also the author of articles on several topics in military history, including irregular warfare and revolutions in military affairs.

Colonel Seth P. Schwesinger, U.S. Air Force, joined the Strategy and Policy Department as a Military Professor at the U.S. Naval War College in 2026. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a BS in Business Administration and holds master's degrees in National Security and Strategic Studies and Defense and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He is also a graduate of the Maritime Advanced Warfighting School (MAWS). Commissioned through Officer Training School in 2004, Colonel Schwesinger is a career mobility aviator with multiple operational, command, and staff positions. His staff tours include service at U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Most recently, he served as Deputy Commander, 317th Airlift Wing, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. A senior pilot with more than 3,100 flight hours, Colonel Schwesinger has deployed extensively in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM, IRAQI FREEDOM, and NEW DAWN, conducting combat airdrop, aeromedical evacuation, and airland missions. He has accumulated more than 1,100 combat flight hours in joint and coalition operations worldwide.

David R. Stone serves as the William E. Odom Professor of Russian Studies. He received his BA in history and mathematics from Wabash College and his PhD in history from Yale University. He taught at Hamilton College and at Kansas State University, where he served as director of the Institute for Military History. He was also a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. His first book *Hammer and Rifle: The Militarization of the Soviet Union, 1926-1933* won the Shulman Prize of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies and the Best First Book Prize of the Historical Society. He has also published *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*, and *The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917*. He edited *The Soviet Union at War, 1941-1945*; *The Russian Civil War: Campaigns and Operations*; and *The Russian Civil War: Military and Society*. He is the author of several dozen articles and book chapters on Russian / Soviet military history and foreign policy. Professor Stone also has two lecture series with The Great Courses on *Battlefield Europe: The Second World War* and *War in the Modern World*.

Anand Toprani is a Professor of Strategy and Policy specializing in diplomatic and military history, energy geopolitics, and political economy. Anand is a graduate of Cornell, Oxford, and Georgetown, and he has held fellowships at Yale and Harvard as well as from the Stanton and Smith Richardson foundations. He is the author of *Oil and the Great Powers: Britain and Germany, 1914-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2019), which received the 2020 Richard W. Leopold Prize from the Organization of American Historians, and *The Man in the Middle: John Lehman, Naval Power, and the End of the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 2027); the co-author with RADM Dave Oliver (USN-ret.) of *American Defense Reform: Lessons from Failure and Success in Navy History* (Georgetown University Press, 2022); and the co-editor with S.C.M. Paine of *The Strategy of Sanctions: From Antiquity to the 21st Century* (University of Michigan Press, 2026). Anand previously served as an historian at the U.S. Department of State, an intelligence analyst at U.S. Central Command, a Visiting Assistant/Associate Professor at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, a member of the Planning Board of the City of Newport, RI, and a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is currently a Life Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, and a contributor to the official histories of the 1939 Polish campaign and of U.S. Naval Intelligence (Project 2032).

Jesse C. Tumblin is an Assistant Professor of Strategy and Policy specializing in political and military history, conceptions of security, and the current and former British world. He earned his PhD and MA from Boston College and his BA from the University of Tennessee. He is a past Fellow in International Security Studies at Yale University. He is the author of *The Quest for Security: Sovereignty, Race, and the Defense of the British Empire, 1898-1931*, as well as an article on Britain's attempts to secure its Indo-Pacific empire that won the Saki Ruth Dockrill Prize for International History from the Institute for Historical Research, University of London.

Lieutenant Colonel Dan "Cowboy" Wallace, U.S. Air Force, commissioned through Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Alabama after receiving his B.A. in Criminal Justice. He attended pilot training at Laughlin AFB, TX and was assigned to fly KC-135/Rs at Robins AFB, GA. He then volunteered for Air Force Special Operations Command and flew U-28/As. During this time, he completed his MA in International Relations from Troy University. His combat and operational deployments include UAE, Qatar, Afghanistan, and Djibouti. After his operational assignments, he has spent the last 15 years in various staff positions ranging from the Wing (1 SOW, 352 SOW) to Operational level (ACC, SOCCENT).

Robert P. Waller is the current Raymond A. Spruance Professor of National Security and Foreign Affairs at the Naval War College and the Senior State Department Faculty Advisor at the college. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor, he previously served as Political Minister Counselor at U.S. Embassy Rome. He was the U.S. Consul General in Erbil (2020-2021) and Dubai (2012-2015). In Washington, he served as Director of the Department of State's Office of Iraq Affairs and as Director for Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian Affairs at the National Security Council (2011-2012). His other overseas assignments include Geneva, Paris, Baghdad, Jerusalem, FSI Tunis, and Jeddah. In 2010 he received the State Department's James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence in mid-career officers. Mr. Waller holds a DPhil in Mediterranean Studies from King's College,

University of London, and a BA in Near Eastern Studies from Brigham Young University. His languages are Arabic, French, Spanish and Italian.

Lieutenant Colonel Chad M. Wharton, **U.S. Air Force**, joined the Strategy and Policy Department in 2026. He holds degrees from Texas State University, Chapman University, and Air University, and a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College. He is a 2025 Senior Executive Fellow of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a 2026 Senior Fellow of the Global Resilience and Security program in partnership with Stanford University, the Naval War College, and The George Washington University. A career Logistics Readiness Officer, Lt Col Wharton has served at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels spanning aerial port operation and logistics across four continents, and deployments in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Most recently, he served within the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's European Conventional Threats Directorate convening arms control activities under the Vienna Document and the Dayton Peace Accords in coordination with the Department of State, NATO, and the Joint Staff. He is married to his best friend Susan and has two clever daughters who remain blissfully unimpressed by his credentials.

Andrew R. Wilson is the John A. van Beuren Chair of Asia-Pacific Studies. After majoring in East Asian studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, he went on to earn a PhD in History and East Asian Languages from Harvard University. Before joining the War College faculty, Wilson taught courses in Chinese history and on the Chinese diaspora at both Harvard and at Wellesley College. He has lectured on Chinese history, Asian military affairs, and the classics of strategic theory at military schools and civilian universities across the U.S. and around the world and collaborated on curriculum with command and staff colleges in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. He has written several pieces on Chinese military history, Chinese sea power, and Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, including a new introduction to Lionel Giles' classic translation of Sun Tzu. His books include *Ambition and Identity: Chinese Merchant-Elites in Colonial Manila, 1885-1916*; *The Chinese in the Caribbean; War, Virtual War and Human Security*; *China's Future Nuclear Submarine Force*, and the forthcoming *Traversing the Belt and Road*. Professor Wilson is also featured on *The Great Courses* with lecture series including *Sun Tzu's Art of War, Masters of War: History's Greatest Strategic Thinkers, and Understanding Imperial China: Dynasties, Life, and Culture.*