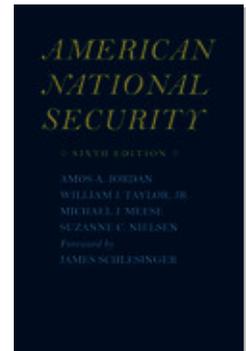




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Military Power

Although the diplomatic, information, and economic instruments of national power are important—particularly the economic one, which underpins the others—the military instrument of power has the greatest potential to be decisive. Because the use of military force always brings associated and sometimes significant costs, however, resorting to force should always be a weighty decision considered very carefully by national security policy makers. As many policy makers have learned to their sorrow, going to war is often much easier than disengaging from one on satisfactory terms. Further, it is important to recognize that even when military power is employed, the likelihood of an acceptable outcome will usually be increased through the simultaneous, coordinated application of other U.S. instruments of power.

Strategic Logic: The Use of Force for the Purposes of the State

When one considers the use of force, a number of basic propositions from classic works in military theory hold enduring value. This section draws on two of those classics: Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* and Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*. Because of the enduring nature of their contributions and the power of their insights, it is useful to cite these authors on key points using their own words. Both theorists note that the decision to go to war has significant consequences. From Sun Tzu: "War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin."¹ Similarly, Clausewitz writes that war is "no place for irresponsible enthusiasts" but rather "a serious means to a serious end."² These cautionary notes are the best places to start when thinking about employing the military instrument of power.

Clausewitz's famous statement that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means" has significant implications for those who must make decisions relating to the use of force.³ It is clear from the context of this passage that Clausewitz is writing against a contemporary view that, when war begins, the role of politics and political leaders recedes and perhaps even vanishes until peace is once again achieved. Clausewitz finds this dichotomous view of peace and war to be "thoroughly mistaken."⁴ Politics and diplomacy do not cease when states resort to force; instead, political leaders have just added one more instrument of power to the means that they are applying to achieve their purposes.

Clausewitz argues that war is a unique human activity, inevitably shaped by danger, chance, uncertainty, and such human elements as physical courage, moral courage, and endurance.⁵ Its unpredictability also stems from interaction with a living adversary. To Clausewitz, war is neither an art nor a science, but rather a form of human interaction, such as commerce or politics, where the outcome depends on the thinking activities of all participants.⁶ Though war takes place in a unique environment, it is also a completely subordinate phenomenon to the political purposes that give it meaning. In Clausewitz's metaphor, war has its own grammar but not its own logic. When those who think about war seek to abstract from its political factors, they are "left with something pointless and devoid of sense."⁷

These insights provide a powerful basis for strategic thinking. First, they clarify that the political end being sought—the politically desired peace that will follow any use of force—must govern all planning. As Clausewitz says, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."⁸ This way of approaching potential uses of force requires careful consideration and specification of the desired end state. Clarity about the desired end state will make it more likely that appropriate means (military and other instruments of power) and ways (concepts for the application of those means) will be brought to bear: "The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose."⁹

Sound strategic thinking also reveals that, in some cases, means and ways will have implications for the ends being sought. Although Clausewitz argues that political purposes must govern, they must not "be a tyrant."¹⁰ There may be instances where the strategic planning process reveals costs and risks associated with a particular course of action that political leaders then determine to be unacceptable, or even that the pursuit of a particular political goal is infeasible. One example is President John F. Kennedy's decision not to seek to destroy Soviet missiles in Cuba in 1962 after he was made aware of the scale of the required air strikes and the uncertainty that would characterize their results. Under circumstances such as these, the most rational approach may be to modify the goals themselves. To properly support strategic decision making, senior military leaders must therefore be able to appreciate political purposes while also bringing to bear their expertise in the grammar of war: "On the one hand, he [the general] is aware of the entire political situation; on the other, he knows exactly how much he can achieve with the

means at his disposal.”¹¹ The senior general (or admiral) in charge of a theater of operations “is simultaneously a statesman.”¹²

According to Clausewitz, the nature of war depends on the characteristics of a particular era, characteristics of involved states and peoples, relations among the belligerents, and the scale of the political purposes at stake. Of course, given the importance of strategic interaction, the political purposes of all involved must be taken into account.¹³ Though one side in a conflict may have strictly limited interests at stake and therefore prefer to devote only limited means, an opponent may view the conflict as a struggle for existence:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.¹⁴

Recognizing that the history of warfare includes conflicts of all degrees of intensity, Clausewitz posits that the future of conflict will see similarly diverse wars. They will likely vary along a spectrum that ranges all the way from mere armed standoffs to extremely intense struggles for national survival. If a very limited application of force is most in line with a government’s limited political purposes in a particular situation, the military commander’s “main concern will be to make sure the delicate balance is not suddenly upset in the enemy’s favor and the half-hearted war does not become a real war after all.”¹⁵

The emphasis of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu on careful planning and calculation is tempered by their recognition of the uncertainty that pervades war.¹⁶ Sun Tzu emphasizes the fluidity of war and the importance of being able to act with boldness according to the situation. Clausewitz recognizes that political purposes can change during the course of a war due to new diplomatic, political, economic, or military developments. For Clausewitz, this means that close and constant communication between political leaders and generals is required. The influence of policy must be pervasive: “Policy, then, will permeate all military operations, and, in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuous influence on them.”¹⁷

The uncertainty of war could cause military planners to seek to apply maximum military means, even if the political purposes are strictly limited. However, this approach would ignore costs. Book II of Sun Tzu’s classic focuses on the human and material expense of war, arguing for swift rather than prolonged operations to manage costs.¹⁸ Clausewitz describes a somewhat more timeless basis for estimating required resources:

To discover how much of our resources must be mobilized for war, we must first examine our own political aim and that of the enemy. We must gauge the character and ability of its government and people and do the same with regard to our own. Finally, we must evaluate the political sympathies of other states and the effect the war may have on them. To assess these things in all their ramifications and diversity is plainly a colossal task.¹⁹

Estimating costs may be difficult, but it is also necessary. To apply unlimited means regardless of these calculations “would often result in strength being

wasted, which is contrary to other principles of statecraft,” and would also be likely to cause domestic political problems, because the means would be disproportionate to the ends being pursued.²⁰ A population would be less likely to support an expensive war for a cause not deemed worthy of such sacrifice. The U.S. war in Vietnam may be a case in point.

Given that wars have varying degrees of importance and intensity, Clausewitz recognizes that it may appear that some wars are more political than others. In a relatively unlimited war, such as World War II, where the goal was either national survival or the complete overthrow of the enemy, the political end and military objectives align relatively naturally, and the requirement for detailed political guidance is less. On the other hand, when political leaders seek to use force to achieve specific and also limited purposes, political influence may be more pressing, as the political impact of each military move must be carefully calibrated. For example, U.S. participation in the Korean War became limited to restoring the division of Korea near the 38th parallel because there was no political will to unify Korea, especially as such an expansion of the war would have involved a broader conflict with China and the Soviet Union. In some cases, finding an appropriate military objective to support a particular political goal may be difficult—such as when the United States sought to prevent Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic from continuing the ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo in 1999—and a proxy must be sought. In these cases, there are times when a chosen “substitute must be a good deal more important” to get an opponent to yield.²¹ To return to the Kosovo example, to coerce Milosevic into changing his policy in Kosovo, it was apparently necessary to threaten the survival of his regime. In any event, “while policy is apparently effaced in the one kind of war and yet is strongly evident in the other, both kinds are equally political.”²² Their meaning lies in the political purposes they serve.

Giving a stark warning about the potential consequences associated with the use of force, Sun Tzu says:

If not in the interests of the state, do not act. If you cannot succeed, do not use troops. If you are not in danger, do not fight. A sovereign cannot raise an army because he is enraged, nor can a general fight because he is resentful. For while an angered man may again be happy, and a resentful man again be pleased, a state that has perished cannot be restored, nor can the dead be brought back to life.²³

Strategic planners should keep in mind the ends pursued, the significance of strategic interaction, the prevalence of uncertainty, and the costs associated with even limited uses of force.

The military instrument of power is obviously a key tool for U.S. national security policy makers. As discussed in Chapter 8, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) not only is America’s largest corporation, but as of late 2007 military spending also accounts for more than half of all discretionary spending in the U.S. federal budget (see also Chapter 9). Simply due to its sheer size and claim on national resources, the military instrument of national power is of great significance. Prospects for its successful use would undoubtedly be enhanced if key decision makers engaged in rigorous strategic thinking, carefully reconciling

ends, ways, and means, while leveraging all instruments of power relevant to a particular situation.

The military theory discussed in this section also has implications for the patterns of U.S. civil-military relations that are discussed in Chapter 8. In the twentieth century, the U.S. military went from peacetime noninvolvement in national security policy making to extensive and continuous involvement during the Cold War and beyond. The pattern of civil-military interaction in wartime has also changed over time. In World War II, for example, U.S. military leaders often enjoyed tremendous autonomy. The potential difficulties with this degree of autonomy in a more limited conflict were fully revealed as President Harry S. Truman found it necessary to relieve his theater commander, General Douglas MacArthur, during the Korean War for not adhering to his policies. At the other end of the spectrum, the perception of many in the U.S. military was that political leaders granted their military commanders too little autonomy during the Vietnam War—as these leaders engaged in such activities as specific target selection for strategic bombing. More recently, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld decided to remove specific forces from the “Time-Phased Force Deployment List” for the Iraq campaign before the Iraq War in 2003, which has been widely criticized as inappropriate meddling in the specific expertise of military leaders (see Chapter 8). Neither political leaders’ noninvolvement nor their micromanagement is desirable. Prospects for strategic success are generally enhanced when the political leaders of a government retain overall direction and remain involved, but their interactions with their military commanders are characterized by vigorous dialogue and an open, two-way exchange of information regarding relevant diplomatic, political, economic, and military developments.

Military Power

Chapter 1 argues that power is one of the most important concepts in international politics, yet it is also difficult to define precisely for a variety of reasons. To enable measurements and comparison, some scholars, such as international relations theorist Kenneth Waltz, have focused on measurable capabilities. Waltz’s definition includes seven elements: size of population, territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability, and competence.²⁴ Of these, military strength may be the most obvious, yet it is also one of the most difficult to estimate accurately.

As already noted, military strength has as its basic rationale the contribution to a state’s national security and the attainment of its political purposes. Practically every major sovereign state has sought such strength. Indeed, until Japan became an exception by minimizing its military forces after World War II, the significance of a country on the world scene had tended to be correlated directly with its armed strength: “No ‘great power’ in the present or past has failed to maintain a large military establishment, and those states which aspire to great power status allocate a large portion of their resources to developing an impressive military machine.”²⁵

Despite its intrinsic importance, the link between armed forces and foreign policy objectives is not the only explanation for building military forces. A military

establishment has always been one of the trappings of sovereignty, and heads of state may feel compelled to maintain one as a status symbol. For some developing nations, the maintenance of a military establishment to influence external political relations may appear to be an irrational allocation of scarce resources that could otherwise be devoted to internal development. In other less-developed countries, however, the military has been instrumental in preserving internal political order and in fostering economic development.²⁶ Though interesting and not to be underestimated in an international context, these latter purposes—regional status and influence, internal security, and economic development—are peripheral to the focus here on the role of military force in U.S. national security.

The Nature of Military Power. It is a fundamental error to characterize military power in the abstract. To observe that the United States is the most militarily powerful state in the world means that, compared to every other country, the United States has the strongest military forces. But that statement is misleading; the United States might be powerless to achieve specific objectives, in certain situations, despite its great military strength. Barry Posen has argued, for example, that the U.S. military in the early twenty-first century enjoys tremendous military advantages in the “global commons”—in space, in the air above thirty thousand feet, and at sea beyond the littoral regions—but does not enjoy comparable advantages in “contested zones,” such as littoral and urban areas.²⁷ It is dangerous to jump from general characterizations of military capabilities to estimates of the prospects of success in any particular application of military power.

The military problem posed by an adversary can be assessed two different ways: by analyzing its *capabilities* or by analyzing its *intentions*. The latter course is often taken by those who believe that potential adversaries have no aggressive intentions or who have strong reasons for wishing to cut defense budgets and forces. Certainly, if there are but a few relatively minor differences of interest with a potential opponent, intentions analysis is an enticing way to proceed. A more cautious (and more expensive) approach is to consider what an opponent is capable of doing. Intentions can change for the worse for a variety of reasons and in a relatively short time, and thus capability analysis is appropriate. Elements of the U.S. government are continually involved in military capability analysis and in providing the supporting data and estimates on the military forces of other states. But a military capability analysis, like a theater ticket, is useful at one time and at one place only. This is so because, as in the case of national power discussed in Chapter 1, the factors involved are *dynamic*—susceptible to constant, and sometimes dramatic, change. Further, factors are *situational*, varying not only with the given time period but also with the particularities of situation and geography. Finally, all factors considered in capability analysis are *relative* to other states’ capacities to employ military means directed to the same or related objectives.

A classic example of the dynamic, situational, and relative nature of military capability is the Korean War. At the outbreak of that conflict in the summer of 1950, the United States enjoyed a virtual monopoly of nuclear weapons. One would think that American military capability was almost unlimited. If two

atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki could end World War II with such finality, why not a repeat performance in Korea?

The reason is that the two cases were drastically different. First, the nature of the threat had changed. By 1945, the United States and its Allies had defeated all other enemies except Japan. In 1950, however, the Soviet Union—an ally of North Korea—was becoming an increasingly threatening Cold War enemy. It maintained powerful conventional forces and had its own fledgling atomic force. In fact, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) felt that the Korean War might well be a Soviet diversion and that America needed to save its small arsenal of nuclear weapons for the possibility of a main Soviet attack in Europe. Second, nuclear weapons were not particularly appropriate for the Korean War, where the targets inside North Korea were essentially bridges and troop concentrations rather than cities like Nagasaki. Leveling Chinese cities after China's "volunteers" intervened massively in Korea would have generated all-out war with the People's Republic of China and perhaps with the Soviet Union as well. Third, America's allies, especially the British, and substantial numbers of Americans were strongly opposed to the use of nuclear weapons.²⁸ Obviously, the United States did not have in 1950 the same freedom to use nuclear weapons that it had in 1945; military capability had changed significantly, because the overall situation had changed fundamentally.

Capability analysis is complex, requiring multivariate analysis. However, the following factors, illustrated at a high level of generalization, must normally be considered:

- *Force size/structure.* How large are the relevant military establishments in terms of forces-in-being and trained reserves? How many people under arms are at the disposal of the various services (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines), in how many active and reserve units are they deployed, and how are the units structured and equipped? How well do the branches of each military service operate together, as well as the different land, air, and sea services that make up a country's armed forces?
- *Weapons systems.* How many weapons systems and of what types are at the disposal of the opposing forces? What is the potential of these weapons in terms of range, accuracy, lethality, survivability, and reliability?
- *Mobility.* What are the locations of units and weapons systems? How quickly and by what means could they be moved to strategically and tactically important locations? How much airlift and sealift are available for overseas operations?
- *Logistics (supply).* Because military units can carry only so much equipment with them and must be resupplied if they are to remain in action for more than a few days, how efficient and vulnerable are systems of resupply?
- *Strategic, operational, and tactical doctrines.* What are the nature and the quality of the doctrines of force deployment and military engagement that fundamentally control the employment of military units?
- *Training.* What is the level of training of forces-in-being and reserve units? How proficient are soldiers in employing their weapons under varying conditions? How skilled are forces in combined operations?

- *Military leadership.* How effective are the officers and noncommissioned officers in the chain of command through which orders are issued and carried out?
- *Morale.* A function of many variables and absolutely vital to success in combat, what are the levels of unit morale? Especially important for the armed forces of democratic nations, what would be the level of popular support for the employment of force in various contexts?
- *Industry.* What is the industrial capacity of a given nation to produce military equipment of the types and in the amounts likely to be required for sustained, long-term combat? How quickly can the nation switch from production of civilian goods to war material?
- *Technology.* What is the level of technological capability and integration of existing weapons systems and command, control, communications, and intelligence (C³I) systems? What is the status of technology of weapons and C³I at various stages of progress in a nation's military research, development, test, and evaluation processes?
- *Intelligence.* How effective are technical and human intelligence-gathering means? What is the level of competence and speed in analyzing raw intelligence data and producing and disseminating estimates useful to decision makers?
- *Popular will.* How prepared would the population be to sustain the domestic deprivations (conscription, rationing of various types, and so forth) that would result from sustained, large-scale wartime activities or a drawn-out war of attrition?
- *National leadership.* What are the levels of resolve and skill of a nation's leaders? How effective is the leadership in maintaining national unity and at ensuring coordination between military strategy and operations and political purposes? How effective is the national leadership at leveraging national resources toward wartime needs?²⁹
- *Alliances and coalitions.* What is the status of alliances and potential coalitions that can change opposing force ratios significantly? What is the quality of alliance and coalition commitments under various conditions, in terms of military units, weapons systems, bases, and supplies likely to be made available?

Taken together, weighed, and blended, these factors can produce a sound judgment of military capability. The judgment process needs to be continuous, for there is insufficient time available in varying crisis situations to gather anew all required data. Ideally, such capability analysis results in a series of cost/risk calculations, which, when coupled with a political assessment of an adversary's intentions, can form the basis for decisions about the preparation and use of the military instrument. Major policy choices confronting decision makers inevitably involve *costs*—material and nonmaterial, domestic and international—arising from the impacts of those choices. *Risk*, in terms of the probabilities of success or failure, is also inherent in virtually all major policy decisions. Military capability analysis aids the policy maker in judging what costs and risks are acceptable

relative to the value of the objective sought. The more important the objective, the higher the costs and risks the policy maker is likely to judge acceptable.

The Functions of Force. Assuming that conflict will continue to mark international life, what are the most suitable means for pursuing or controlling conflict, and how should those means be used? As discussed above, the military instrument is only one such means, albeit the most violent and potentially conclusive one.

Historically, the political purposes served by military force have included aggrandizement and defense, although the distinction between the two has sometimes been blurred. A third purpose has been the resolution of disputes, though such a use must consider the prospect that conflict may be escalated rather than resolved—a particularly dangerous development in an era of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In any event, in the international system as it exists today, states retain the ultimate right and capacity to resort to military force: “The legitimacy of force as an instrument of foreign policy, although often denounced by philosophers, historians, and reformers, has rarely been questioned by those responsible for foreign policy decisions of their nations.”³⁰

In a 1980 article, Robert Art sets forth a valuable framework for thinking about what he labels the four functions of military force. The first of these is the use of military power in a *defensive* role. Defense “is the deployment of military power so as to be able to do two things—to ward off an attack and to minimize damage to oneself if attacked.”³¹ Art argues that states will choose to develop the capability to defend themselves when possible, because a capacity for self-defense is the most reliable way to ensure one’s security. Within defense, Art includes the passive development of military capability as well as active uses of force, such as pre-emptive strikes.

Second, nuclear and conventional military forces can be employed in a *deterrent* role. Again from Art, deterrence “is the deployment of military power so as to be able to prevent an adversary from doing something that one does not want him to do and that he might otherwise be tempted to do by threatening him with unacceptable punishment if he does it.”³² At base, deterrence is a psychological phenomenon; its objective is to master the expectations of one’s actual or potential opponent. Yet deterrence must also rest on credible capability—the will and the clear, demonstrable ability to perform the threatened act if the necessity arises. The success of a deterrent approach depends on the deterrer’s ability to convince an adversary that an attempt to gain an objective would cost more than it is worth, and that the cost to the deterrer of applying the punishment would be less than conceding the objective.³³

Deterrence assumes a rational, informed opponent. An irrational (or ill-informed) opponent who will accept destruction or disproportionate loss as a consequence of a selected course of action cannot be deterred. Deterrence must also be considered in relation to the nature of the states, alliances, or groups that are to be deterred and the particular action that is to be deterred. For example, a threat of massive nuclear retaliation could hardly deter a terrorist group from planting bombs on aircraft. In addition to lacking credibility because of its disproportionate

nature, deterrence is problematic against an adversary who is difficult to communicate with, to identify, and to locate.

A third function of military force is *compellence*. Compellence is “the deployment of military power so as to be able either to stop an adversary from doing something that he has already undertaken or to get him to do something that he has not yet undertaken.”³⁴ The means of compulsion is the direct application or the threat of application of military force. The objective of compulsion is to cause an adversary to decide that further pursuit of its course of action would incur increasing costs incommensurate with any possible gain. If the application of force is tuned too finely, however, as was the case with the gradual and limited application of U.S. force in Vietnam, then the adversary may be able to take countermeasures that will mitigate the harm and avert compulsion.

Art’s final function is *swaggering*, which Art admits is in part “a residual category” in which “force is not aimed directly at dissuading another state from attacking, at repelling attacks, nor at compelling it to do something specific.”³⁵ This category serves as a reminder that military capabilities may not always be developed for purposes rationally connected to a country’s national security but instead can at times be pursued in the interest of international or domestic prestige of a particular regime or individual leader.

A fifth function, not clearly subsumed by the above categories, is *acquisitive*. Historically, military force has been an important tool for states seeking to seize the territory or resources of others for exploitation. Although a number of constraints exist for states seeking to employ force for this purpose, perhaps most profoundly demonstrated by the refusal of the United States and other countries to let Hussein retain Kuwait after his successful invasion of that country in 1990, there are conditions under which military conquest has indeed redounded to the material benefit of the conquering state.³⁶

Given the security challenges of globalization, transnational threats, and weak and failing states, it is useful to think about a sixth possible function of force: *providing order*. Such a function recognizes that military capabilities—even those developed primarily for other purposes—may help create a secure environment in an area, which is the basic precondition for political stability and economic activity. Such countries as the United States have in the past and will probably continue in the future to turn to the military instrument of power to enable immediate response to human rights catastrophes or other humanitarian disasters that occur either at home or abroad—such as the situation in Somalia in the early 1990s. However, as Art recognizes, “force can easily be used to maim and kill, but only with greater difficulty and with great expenditure of effort, to rule and pacify.”³⁷ Although the employment of military force to fulfill all the functions above may be made more effective when combined or supported by other instruments of national power, in the case of intervention within the territory of another state, military force alone will almost certainly be inadequate to the creation of a sustainable solution (see Chapter 16 for more on military intervention).

Louis XIV called military force “the last argument of kings” and so inscribed his cannons. The situations in which military force remains a final arbiter have

been somewhat circumscribed in the nuclear era, at least among nuclear powers and their allies. Accordingly, the employment of “gunboat diplomacy,” the diplomatic use of force as a coercive instrument, has dwindled in frequency. Still, the opposing capabilities of military forces do serve to limit and regulate claims among states with competing interests.³⁸

Constraints on the Military Instrument. The use of military force historically has been a “prerogative power,” reserved for the decisions of sovereigns. Since the rise of European mass nationalist movements in the Napoleonic era, however, the power bases of heads of state have rested increasingly upon the support of the populace from which the personnel and resources of mass warfare are drawn. Prior to the nineteenth century, battlefields were usually relatively restricted, for the most part touching only the lives of those directly involved in combat. The virtually total wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—that is, the Napoleonic wars, the American Civil War, and the two world wars—changed this situation, bringing the carnage and anguish of war into the lives and homes of entire populations.

The communication and information revolutions have further enhanced the involvement of the general population in warfare, leading to increased scrutiny of the use of military force. World opinion (or, more accurately, the opinion of leading democratic states) has for some time expressed abhorrence of unrestricted warfare, codifying “laws of war” and turning to definitions of “just war,” which had long been the province of theologians and philosophers. The League of Nations and United Nations (UN) attempted to frame distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate uses of military force. Although problems of agreed definition as well as uncertain enforcement plague international law, “aggression” is outlawed, and the use of military force for defense against aggression is “just.” The just war categories associated with the justice of a war, or *jus ad bellum* (just cause, competent authority, right intention, last resort, reasonable chance of success), and justice within a war, or *jus in bello* (discrimination between combatants and noncombatants, proportionality of each military action), have become important international law criteria in evaluating military action.³⁹ It should be noted, too, that though the force of international opinion can be a constraint, it can also serve as an impetus for action in cases of egregious human rights abuses or humanitarian disaster.⁴⁰

In addition to international law, constraints on the use of force also flow from advances in technology as well as changes in the distribution of power within the international system. Though nuclear weapons may have deterrent and prestige value, many analysts would argue that they are and should be unusable for any other purposes, including compellence and support to diplomacy.⁴¹ Further, although the United States may enjoy enhanced freedom of action in a world in which it is the only superpower, this distribution of power constrains others. As long as the United States maintains a powerful nuclear arsenal as well as a significant conventional power projection capability, and its national will and alliances remain strong, no other state can make a credible military threat against the United States or one of its allies.

A final international constraint on the use of force lies in the repercussions of such use for a country's other national interests. In day-to-day diplomacy, international consensus against an act of military aggression usually represents more sound than fury. However, the longer-term impact may be quite different. As Princeton political scientist and government advisor Klaus Knorr has pointed out:

If a state flagrantly flouts an internationally sanctioned restraint on military aggression, it may, in the event of success, gain the object of aggression and in addition perhaps inspire increased respect for its military prowess; but it may also tarnish its nonmilitary reputation and provoke attitudes of suspicion and hostility that, over the longer run if not immediately, will become organized politically, and perhaps militarily as well. This amounts to saying that the respect a nation enjoys—respect for acting properly, with sensitivity to internationally widespread moral standards, and with sobriety and restraint in resorting to military power—is a precious asset in foreign affairs. It is an asset that assists in holding and gaining allies, and generally in promoting a favorable reception for its diplomatic initiatives.⁴²

One might argue that the widely respected status of Germany and Japan today disproves the thesis of adverse long-term effects of aggression. Yet Germany and Japan are watched especially carefully by neighboring states, Japan has rejected all but self-defense forces since World War II, and neither state now has—nor is likely to acquire—a military nuclear capability.⁴³

In addition to all these international constraints on the use of force, additional domestic constraints exist. Two of the most important of these are *domestic public opinion* and *cost*. In the United States, public opinion is likely to be initially supportive of decisive actions by the president in the area of national security—the “rally around the flag” effect.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, over time the degree of public support is likely to be shaped by a variety of factors, including perceptions of the stakes involved, costs in terms of lives and resources, prospects for success or failure, and even international approbation or disapproval. What world opinion cannot accomplish by direct impact upon the leadership of a democratic state, it may over time be able to effect indirectly by influencing public attitudes and national legislatures. Foreign opposition and criticism, for instance, had some impact upon American public attitudes during the U.S. involvement in Vietnam from 1965 to 1975 and even more impact during the U.S. war in Iraq after 2003. Domestic public opposition to the Vietnam conflict resulted in a disastrous congressional cutoff of military supplies to the beleaguered South Vietnamese government. As of 2009, the ultimate impact of domestic opposition to the Iraq War remains to be seen.

A second important domestic constraint on the use of force is cost, particularly for the more industrialized nations with advanced weapons. Technological sophistication has increased the costs of weapons systems enormously. Costs associated with personnel have also skyrocketed in the industrial democracies, particularly in the United States after the introduction of the all-volunteer force in 1973. In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the idea of cutting U.S. defense spending has not had political appeal for either of the country's two main political parties. Nevertheless, some politicians and analysts have sought to call attention to

what they see as a lack of discipline in U.S. defense spending, with one scholar advocating the rallying cry that “Half a trillion dollars is more than enough.”⁴⁵

Though these constraints all have the potential to influence U.S. national security policy, their weight varies over time. For example, President George H. W. Bush seemed highly sensitive to international constraints in advance of the 1991 Desert Storm offensive against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and began building a UN consensus to support the action even before taking the case before the U.S. Congress. Other U.S. presidents, including Bill Clinton with regard to Kosovo in 1999 and George W. Bush with regard to Iraq in 2003, made it clear that their actions would not be dependent on obtaining advance approval from the UN. Although the constraints listed here may not necessarily determine outcomes, they are relevant considerations as policy makers decide whether and how to use force.

Alliances and Military Power

The numerous American alliances, treaties of guarantee, and military base agreements around the world constitute a complex alliance structure that is cumulatively a response to the various perceived threats to U.S. foreign policy objectives that have arisen since World War II. In 1947, the United States signed the Rio Pact, breaking a one-hundred-fifty-year tradition of avoiding foreign entanglement. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance was concluded in 1949 as a direct result of the growing Soviet threat in Europe. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the United States began adding Asian allies. In relatively quick order, several alliances were formed: U.S.–Japan (1951), U.S.–Philippines (1951), Australia–New Zealand–U.S. (ANZUS; 1951), U.S.–South Korea (1953), Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO; 1954), and U.S.–Republic of China (1954), followed by limited participation in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO; 1956). Further bilateral defense treaties were signed with Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey in 1959. In support of these and subsequent commitments, the United States has dispersed military aid worth many billions of dollars to more than sixty countries around the world and has deployed millions of U.S. service members overseas.

Why Do States Join Alliances? An *alliance* is a contract that, like all other contracts, bestows rights and advantages but also places obligations and restrictions on the contracting parties. Unlike contracts in domestic law, however, states have no higher authority to which to appeal when there is a breach of contract. The primary consideration of national leaders contemplating an alliance is that the benefits of the prospective alliance outweigh the loss of flexibility incurred in becoming dependent upon acts of omission or commission by other states in the alliance. In this regard, Hans Morgenthau writes, “A nation will shun alliances if it believes that it is strong enough to hold its own unaided or that the burden of commitment resulting from an alliance is likely to outweigh the advantages to be expected.”⁴⁶

Faced with an international system best described as “semiorganized anarchy,” states seek various forms of cooperative behavior designed to generate strength

and reduce risk. They attempt to produce the type and degree of international order that best ensures their own interests. On issues of international peace and security, where power tends to be the common currency, “the question as to whose values or ends will prevail . . . is determined finally by the relative power positions of the [opposing] parties.”⁴⁷ Stephen Walt has stressed that alliances most often emerge not just in response to imbalances of power but more specifically in response to the perception of a hostile threat from an aggressive power.⁴⁸

Three motives for alliances spring from a focus on power, and all of them relate to a state’s attempts to meet its security needs. First, a state may join or create an alliance to aggregate the capabilities necessary to achieve a foreign policy goal (i.e., a state’s own means are insufficient for its ends). Second, a state may enter into an alliance to secure favorable treatment in the future; in short, states selectively join alliances to gain calculated advantages in the pursuit of future national goals.⁴⁹ Third, a state may join an alliance to reduce costs. This may be true if a state is seeking multiple objectives and does not want to commit all or an undue part of its capabilities to any one specific end. A second variant of this cost-reduction motive relates to defense economy. A good example of this is the establishment of the European Defense Agency as a subordinate organization of the European Union in July 2004. Its specific goals are to enhance Europe’s military capabilities and strengthen European defense industries while creating better value for European taxpayers by reducing the redundancy created by separate national defense programs.⁵⁰

In addition to increasing power, Robert Osgood notes that alliances may serve the functions of preserving the internal security of members, restraining allies, or creating a degree of international order.⁵¹ The first of these functions, the preservation of internal security, may prove increasingly important in the future, as states seek to confront the increasing threats of international terrorism, drug trafficking, weapons proliferation, and cross-border refugee flows. The second purpose, restraining allies’ behavior, has been historically common; it is practiced by the larger, more powerful actors and the weaker, subordinate actors in an alliance. Finally, alliance structures can create predictable, regulated patterns of interaction that reduce sources of friction and conflict and enhance international order.

Alliances and U.S. National Security Policy. When thinking about the role of alliances in U.S. national security policy, recognizing the costs is as important as considering the benefits. As discussed in the preceding section, alliances entail commitments that reduce flexibility, and alliance structures can be used to restrain as well as support alliance members. Even when restraint is not the goal, the very existence of an alliance—as well as its decision-making procedures—can have that effect. For example, the existence of the 1991 Gulf War coalition is often cited as having shaped George H. W. Bush’s decision not to topple Hussein’s regime after expelling Iraq from Kuwait. Whether this was a wise strategic decision could be debated; that it was shaped by incentives created by the existence of a multinational coalition seems certain. Another example can be found in NATO operations against Serbia in 1999. Consensus-oriented procedures generated time-consuming

decision-making procedures and a tightly controlled—and therefore less flexible and responsive—strategic bombing campaign.⁵²

Within alliances, the power contributions of allies are not simply additive. Even within the well-developed and mature structure of NATO, the pace of technological advance enabled by significant U.S. investment has created interoperability issues between U.S. forces and those of its NATO allies (see Chapter 23). In addition, though operating in the context of an alliance may offer diplomatic and domestic political benefits, “alliance operations pose significant problems at the tactical, operational, and even the strategic level, which often make them less integrated, skillful, and responsive compared to unilateral operations.”⁵³

In the context of a superpower competition with the Soviet Union, it may have been relatively easy for U.S. policy makers to decide that the benefits associated with membership in formal alliances outweighed the costs. However, since the end of the Cold War, a growing debate has emerged over whether temporary, ad hoc “coalitions of the willing” or even unilateral approaches may be superior. Although many of the benefits of an alliance may be lost, by including burden sharing as well as interoperability, many of the constraints associated with alliances also disappear. Where one comes down on this debate is likely to be shaped by two factors: the importance one ascribes to the legitimacy of U.S. action abroad, and one’s perspective on how long the U.S. status as the world’s only superpower is likely to last.

An American Perspective on the Use of Force

In what was widely seen as a response to the lessons of the Vietnam War, in 1985, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger presented six major tests to be applied before employing U.S. combat forces:

1. The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to U.S. national interest or that of U.S. allies.
2. If the United States decides it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, it should do so wholeheartedly and with the clear intention of winning. If the country is unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve its objectives, it should not commit them at all. Of course, if the particular situation requires only limited force to win its objectives, then it should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly.
3. If the United States does decide to commit forces to combat overseas, it should have clearly defined political and military objectives, it should know precisely how U.S. forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives, it should have and send the forces needed to do just that.
4. The relationship between U.S. objectives and the forces committed—their size, composition, and disposition—must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then U.S. combat requirements must also change.

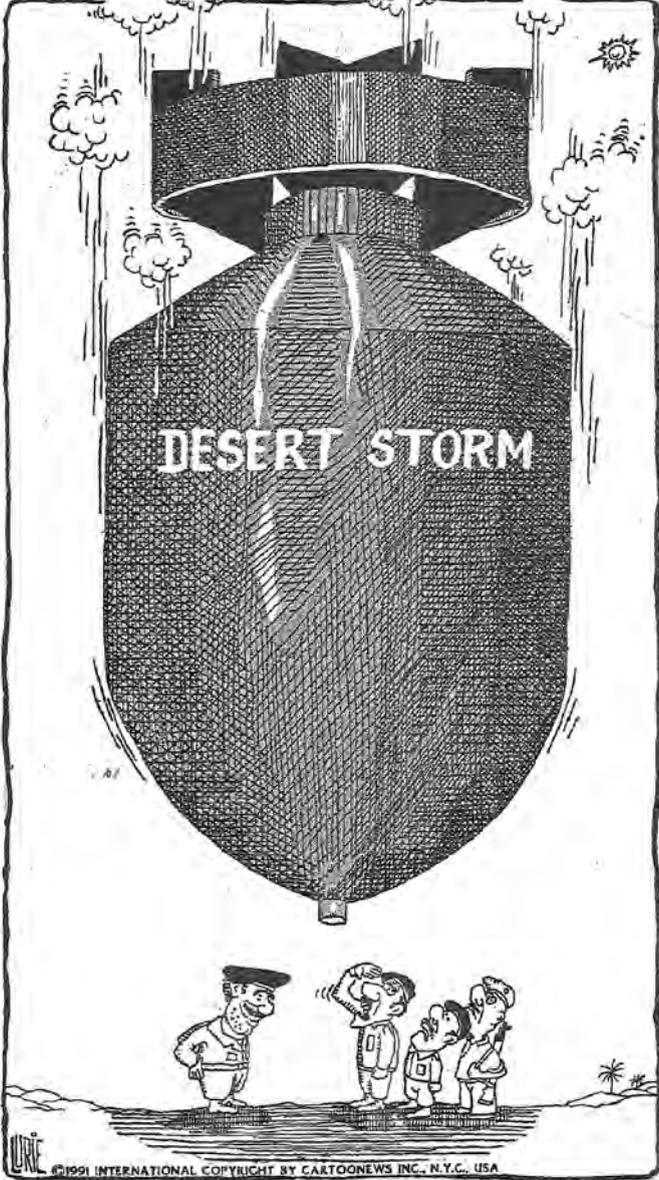
5. Before the United States commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance it will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.⁵⁴ This support cannot be achieved unless it is candid in making clear the threats it faces; the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation.
6. The commitment of U.S. forces to combat should be a last resort.⁵⁵

Later, Chairman of the JCS Colin Powell enunciated a briefer, but similar, standard for the employment of U.S. forces. Powell stressed the importance of clear political objectives and adequately sized and decisive means.⁵⁶ Like Weinberger's six tests, the Powell Doctrine aimed at keeping U.S. troops out of wars to which the nation was not fully committed.

These propositions have much in common with the strategic logic set forth above. Like Clausewitz, Weinberger emphasizes clear political objectives and the need to carefully and continuously reconcile ends, ways, and means. However, Weinberger also exceeds Clausewitz's logic in his effort to restrict the use of force to instances in which vital interests are at stake, force will be committed "wholeheartedly," public support is assured in advance, and force is used as a last resort. Weinberger's six tests evoked significant debate in Washington, with the most significant opposition coming from Secretary of State George Shultz. Given his repeated view that "force and diplomacy must always go together," Shultz rejected Weinberger's vital interest, last resort, and public support criteria, which he called "the Vietnam syndrome in spades . . . and a complete abdication of the duties of leadership."⁵⁷

Despite its critics, the Weinberger Doctrine has proven to have enduring influence in debates over U.S. national security policy and the use of force. In fact, it is associated in the minds of many with the success of the United States in the Persian Gulf War of 1990–1991 (see Chapter 20), as well as what some see as a beneficial military reluctance to engage in limited military operations in the 1990s, including Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Rwanda (see Chapter 8).⁵⁸ The Weinberger and Powell doctrines also appear to have been buttressed by the difficulties faced by the United States in Iraq after the successful 2003 invasion. To some extent, the initial campaign plan was informed by a concept called "Rapid Dominance," which would succeed through creating "Shock and Awe" rather than physically overwhelming an adversary. This concept was initially set out in 1996 in deliberate opposition to what analysts saw as the "Decisive Force" approach then prevailing in the Pentagon.⁵⁹ To the extent that this new approach contributed to inadequate U.S. resourcing of the requirements of post-invasion Iraq, the "decisive force" approach of Weinberger and Powell would appear to be validated.

Despite its influence, criticisms of the Weinberger Doctrine by Shultz and others retain merit. As discussed below, political leaders are likely to continue to face an international environment in which they find utility in actual or potential uses of force for less than vital interests, when public support is not guaranteed, and before it is a matter of last resort. Seeking limited purposes, they will seek to employ limited ways and means. Many military leaders, on the other hand, can be expected to continue to adhere to Powell's emphasis on decisive force and to



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**"You were right all along, President Hussein:
we'll NEVER leave Kuwait!"**

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want to use overwhelming means when force is applied.⁶⁰ This situation is likely to result in the persistence of tensions between U.S. policy makers regarding the use of force.

American Military Power Today

In the early years of the twenty-first century, the United States faces a complex and uncertain international strategic environment. As discussed in the concluding pages of Chapter 1, the U.S. position is characterized by important strengths. The United States has at its disposal an unrivaled concentration of political, economic, and military power and is able to pursue its national interests in an environment characterized by peace among major world powers. The strongest economic powers in the international system—such countries as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan—are also democracies. In relations among these countries and the United States, war has become inconceivable. Although important states, such as Russia and China, remain at least partially outside this group as they continue to pursue their own paths toward economic and political development, the prevalence of peace among the most advanced states is still an unusual situation in the history of international politics.⁶¹

At the same time, however, the powerful forces of globalization have increased the salience of numerous problems of global governance. Significant challenges include newly empowered nonstate actors as well as other transnational phenomena, such as large-scale immigration and environmental hazards. Increasingly powerful nonstate actors, such as transnational terrorist groups, are able to take advantage of the advances in communication and transportation that have underpinned globalization as well as advances in weapons technology, including WMDs, and therefore have an increased potential to do catastrophic harm to U.S. national interests. In this situation, state weakness or failure in any region of the world has the potential to negatively affect the security of the United States and its allies. Territory that is not under the control of any state can provide hostile groups and actors a safe haven in which they can organize and base their activities. In particular, the JCS have noted the concentration of hostile regimes, problems of state governance, and nonstate actors in an “‘arc of instability’ stretching from the Western Hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East and extending to Asia,” within which some areas serve as “breeding grounds for threats to [U.S.] interests.”⁶²

In response to these characteristics of the current international environment, U.S. defense planners have created a framework intended to portray the full range of contemporary threats to U.S. national security. As depicted in Figure 13.1, the four categories of challenges are *traditional*, *irregular*, *catastrophic*, and *disruptive*.⁶³ In its inclusion of traditional challenges, this framework acknowledges the continuing relevance of the potential threats posed by other states with more or less advanced military capabilities (the lower left quadrant of Figure 13.1). However, defense planners also recognize the need to examine challenges emerging—at least to some extent—as a reaction to U.S. relative strengths in traditional areas

FIG. 13.1 Challenges in the U.S. Security Environment

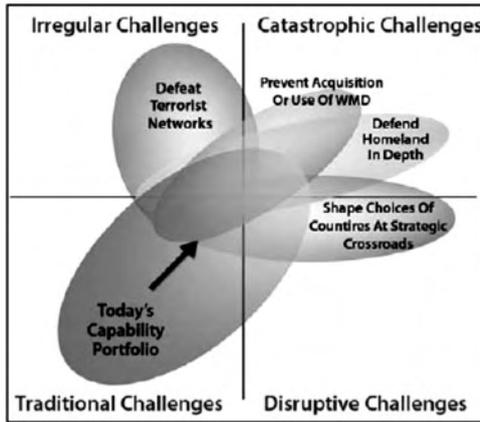
<p><u>Irregular</u></p> <p>Unconventional methods; often used to counter stronger state opponents: terrorism, insurgency, ethnic conflict, civil war, guerrilla warfare</p>	<p><u>Catastrophic</u></p> <p>Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or “WMD-like” attacks on U.S. interests or the U.S. homeland by state or non-state actors</p>
<p><u>Traditional</u></p> <p>State-based challenges to U.S. power using uniformed militaries and legacy nuclear forces</p>	<p><u>Disruptive</u></p> <p>Breakthrough, asymmetric counters to U.S. strengths; examples include cyberwar and anti-access strategies</p>

of military competition. To increase prospects of success when seeking to oppose the United States, adversaries can be expected to turn increasingly to activities reflected in the other quadrants in Figure 13.1 (proceeding clockwise beginning in the upper left quadrant): irregular forms of warfare to erode U.S. power; the use of WMDs to paralyze U.S. power; or disruptive capabilities, such as cyber warfare, directed energy weapons, biotechnology, or antispace systems, to marginalize U.S. power.⁶⁴

As recognized by the 2005 National Defense Strategy, these categories of challenges overlap:

Terrorist groups like al-Qa’ida are *irregular* threats but also actively seek *catastrophic* capabilities. North Korea at once poses *traditional*, *irregular*, and *catastrophic* challenges. Finally, in the future, the most capable opponents may seek to combine truly *disruptive* capacity with *traditional*, *irregular*, or *catastrophic* forms of warfare.⁶⁵

As an example of a “disruptive” challenge to U.S. national security, defense planners look to China as the most likely future peer competitor that is also pursuing ways to counter U.S. strengths through asymmetric anti-access and area-denial strategies (see Chapters 18 and 26). Additionally, China, Russia, and other potential competitors have emphasized cyber-warfare and counter-space operations that can degrade C⁴ISR capabilities, which are essential to the effectiveness of both U.S. military forces and economic networks. Notably, in the Russian conflict with Georgia in 2008 (discussed in more detail in chapter 22), there were several reports of a cyber-space offensive that complemented the military offensive in Georgia. These threats, if not effectively countered, has the potential to disrupt internet and other electronic communications, and significantly degrade U.S. capabilities.

FIG. 13.2 U.S. Military Capabilities and QDR Focus Areas

In the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), senior DoD leaders focused on “four priority areas for examination”:

- Defeating terrorist networks.
- Defending the homeland in depth.
- Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads.
- Preventing hostile states and nonstate actors from acquiring or using WMDs.⁶⁶

The 2006 QDR argues that the current U.S. portfolio of military capabilities is overoptimized against traditional challenges to U.S. national security as a legacy of the Cold War. While retaining the capability to counter traditional threats, the U.S. military must develop more robust capabilities to counter emerging challenges (see Figure 13.2).⁶⁷

In this text, the role of the U.S. military in homeland security is discussed in Chapter 6. Other applications of U.S. military power are discussed in the four chapters that follow this one. First, Chapter 14 discusses the irregular challenge of terrorism and the catastrophic threat of WMDs in its examination of the role of preemption in U.S. national security policy. Next, Chapter 15 looks at traditional and disruptive state-based challenges to U.S. national security with its examination of conventional warfare and the idea of a revolution in military affairs. Chapter 16 then focuses on forms of irregular warfare other than terrorism and uses of American military power to counter these challenges. Finally, the examination of U.S. nuclear policy in Chapter 17 has implications for traditional, disruptive, and catastrophic challenges to U.S. national security.

Relevant to all the U.S. military instruments of power are three central issues that are likely to be of enduring importance in U.S. defense policy. The first of

these is adapting to and implementing change. As discussed above, the 2006 QDR argues that the United States does not have a portfolio of capabilities that is optimized to meet current challenges. This message was reaffirmed when, shortly after the release of the QDR, George W. Bush announced a national change of strategy in Iraq and an initiative to increase the size of U.S. ground forces in January 2007.⁶⁸ A look at the historical relationship between strategy and structure in U.S. national security policy, such as that provided in Chapter 3, suggests that a mismatch between the two is not uncommon. Overcoming it will require supportive domestic political developments as well as a concerted effort to change large government bureaucracies, including those in the DoD. Although changing military organizations is always challenging, in this case the problem is further complicated by the broad and diverse range of capabilities being sought.

A second important issue relates to the specific nature of today's security threats and the cooperative approaches necessary to address them. The 2006 QDR notes that common to its four focus areas is

the imperative to work with other government agencies, allies and partners and, where appropriate, to help them increase their capacities and capabilities and the ability to work together. In all cases, the four focus areas require the application of multiple elements of national power and close cooperation with international allies and partners. The Department [of Defense] cannot solve these problems alone.⁶⁹

As just one example, the irregular challenge of terrorism is not solely—or even primarily—a military problem, and a successful strategy is likely to require diplomatic, informational, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement actions. As noted in Chapter 10, coordination across organizational lines does not come easily to government bureaucracies and can be similarly difficult among different governments. Success in making the already complex U.S. interagency process function more effectively is likely to require determined and sustained effort. Similarly, concentrated effort is needed to enable U.S. departments and agencies to work more effectively with partners abroad.

A final enduring issue relates to planning and budgeting. The United States will never be able to be perfectly secure; defense planners will always face the challenge of apportioning limited means to best manage risks. As discussed in Chapter 9, the challenge is even greater when all the instruments of national power are taken into account. The United States still lacks a national security apparatus with the capability to plan, manage, and control all national security-related spending. This situation is likely to complicate the ability of the United States to create and resource the interagency and international partnerships deemed so important to success against many current and emerging national security challenges.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Clausewitz mean in his famous statement that “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means”?
2. What would Clausewitz argue is the appropriate relationship between a political leader and military commander in decision making about the use of force?

3. How does Clausewitz describe the nature of war? Is this helpful in thinking about the use of force? If so, how?
4. What are the challenges associated with assessing military capability? What factors should be considered when making an assessment?
5. What are the functions of military force? What is *deterrence*, and what factors affect its success or failure?
6. What are important international and domestic constraints on the use of force in the current era? Under what conditions would you expect these constraints to be more or less powerful?
7. Why do states join alliances? In addition to aggregating power, what purposes can alliance membership serve?
8. Is it in the best interest of the United States today to belong to and to act in concert with formal alliances? Why or why not?
9. Is the Weinberger Doctrine a useful guide to U.S. thinking about the use of force? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
10. What challenges in the international security environment do U.S. defense policy makers see as requiring the actual or potential application of U.S. force? If U.S. military capabilities need to evolve in the early twenty-first century, in what areas do they need to become more capable?

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