

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-51997-7 - Military Effectiveness, Volume 1

Edited by Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray

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PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION OF *MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS*

Military Effectiveness is a first-rate historical analysis and commentary on the performance of nations at war in the most violent half-century in recorded human history. Drawing upon the considerable talents of such historians as Paul Kennedy, Holger H. Herwig, John Gooch, Earl F. Ziemke, Robert A. Doughty, Ronald Spector, Alvin D. Coox, MacGregor Knox, and Russell F. Weigley, *Military Effectiveness* offers a host of compelling ... insights as to why ‘some military forces succeed, while others fail.’”

– Jeffrey Record, *Parameters*

“This is an ambitious project that seeks to examine the military effectiveness of Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Japan during the two world wars and in the interwar period. ... The essays ... provide a multitude of valuable insights and analyses, particularly on questions such as manpower and budgetary allocations that are sometimes overlooked in studies that deal mainly with operations. Much information is packed into this work that would require extensive reading in unfamiliar sources to obtain elsewhere. ... It is impossible in a short review to do justice to the subtlety and complexity of all of the essays. They are of a uniformly high standard.”

– Paul G. Halpern, *The American Historical Review*

Military Effectiveness addresses its theme in a comprehensive framework. ... The familiar reviewer’s complaint about collective works, that they lack focus, can scarcely be applied here. These three volumes move toward their goal with the serried precision of the Queen’s Birthday Review. The coherence of *Military Effectiveness* is not achieved at the expense of individual contributions. Their overall quality is high enough that workaday scholars are as likely to consult specific essays as to make use of the work’s general lines of argument.”

– Dennis E. Showalter, *The Journal of Military History*

“As one can quickly determine from the scope, [this] is a work of great magnitude and potential. ... Academics using these studies will benefit from the explicit inclusion of the political level, while military professionals will profit from incorporation of the operational level rather than the former strategic-tactical construct of military studies. It is not often that one work can appeal to both audiences, and the editors are to be congratulated for adopting this schema. ... Its main value is that it represents the only single source of comparative studies that examine both the conduct of and preparation for war across seven cultures and over three decades that profoundly influenced the twentieth century. ... For the serious student of military affairs who wishes to tackle the entire series, the rewards will be in the insights gained from the almost limitless combinations one can use to structure the data.”

– Harold R. Winton, *The Journal of Military History*

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MILITARY
EFFECTIVENESS
VOLUME 1:
THE FIRST WORLD WAR
NEW EDITION

This three-volume study examines the questions raised by the performance of the military institutions of France, Germany, Russia, the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Italy in the period from 1914 to 1945. Leading military historians deal with the different national approaches to war and military power at the tactical, operational, strategic, and political levels. They form the basis for a fundamental reexamination of how military organizations performed in the first half of the twentieth century. Volume 1 covers World War I. The other two volumes address the interwar period and World War II, respectively.

Now in a new edition, with a new introduction by the editors, these classic volumes will remain invaluable for military historians and social scientists in their examination of national security and military issues. They will also be essential reading for future military leaders at staff and war colleges.

Allan R. Millett is a specialist in the history of American military policy and twentieth-century wars. He is the founder of the internationally renowned military history program at The Ohio State University, where he is Mason Professor of History Emeritus. Millett currently directs the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans, where he is the Ambrose Professor of History and serves as the Senior Military Advisor for the National World War II Museum. He is the author or co-author of eight books and co-editor of five others.

Williamson Murray is Professor Emeritus of History at The Ohio State University. At present he is a defense consultant and commentator on historical and military subjects in Washington. He is co-editor of *The Making of Peace* (with Jim Lacey); *The Past as Prologue* (with Richard Hart Sinnreich); *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050* (with MacGregor Knox); *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (with Allan R. Millett), and *The Making of Strategy* (with Alvin Bernstein and MacGregor Knox). He has edited, along with Richard Sinnreich and Jim Lacey, a volume entitled *Grand Strategy* to be published by Cambridge in early 2011.

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Preface to the First Edition

We began this study on the effectiveness of military institutions in the belief that historians have an obligation to examine the issues involved in why some military forces succeed, while others fail. If we have not succeeded fully in our goal, we believe that the essays in this volume have at least suggested the dimensions of the issues. There are *no* easy answers, *no* quick fixes, *no* simple formulas for the achievement of military effectiveness. While one of the authors of the summarizing essays in Volume 3 suggests that ‘one can doubt whether any other profession [than the military] in these seven nations during the same period would have received such poor ratings by similarly competent outside observers,’ these studies also suggest how intractable, complex, and resistant to analysis and calculation are the problems raised by war.

This study involves seven nations over three distinct time periods: the First World War (Volume 1), the interwar period (Volume 2), and the Second World War (Volume 3). We have asked each one of the historians examining these twenty-one case studies to follow the direction provided in a guidance essay (the first chapter in Volume 1). That essay asked our historians to examine what we believe to be the four distinct levels of war: the political, the strategic, the operational, and the tactical from the point of view of their national case studies. Thus, there are consistent themes running through all of the essays. In addition, we asked three of the scholars in the project to write summarizing essays on each of the distinct time periods, looking for common themes and common problems. These essays appear as the final chapters in each volume. Finally, in Volume 3 we have asked an eminent military historian and a senior retired US Army general to comment on the whole study.

There have been numerous individuals involved in the working up of these volumes. Therefore, we can thank only a very few of them. We would particularly like to thank Mr. Andrew Marshall, Director of the Office of Net Assessment, for the funding and for his consistently intelligent guidance. Mr. Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense, provided funding and support in the creation of this project. At Ohio State, Kenneth Watman, Charles Munnell, and Don Lair have provided the administrative support and footwork necessary to keep the project running smoothly. The Program in International Security and Military Affairs at the Mershon Center provided a solid base for the administration of the project. Joni Wood-Ward and Allison Hoffman provided the typing support and administrative backup required. Finally, we would like to thank our wives for their help and understanding throughout the four years needed to complete this project.

Introduction

Military Effectiveness Twenty Years After

WILLIAMSON MURRAY AND ALLAN R. MILLETT

Ultimately a real understanding of history means that we face *nothing* new under the sun. For all the 'Fourth Generation of War' intellectuals running around today saying that the fundamental nature of war has fundamentally changed, the tactics are wholly new, etc., I must respectfully say: 'Not really.' Alexander the Great would not be in the least perplexed by the enemy we face right now in Iraq, and our leaders going into this fight do their troops a disservice by not studying (studying, *vice* just reading) the men who have gone before us. We have been fighting on this planet for 5,000 years and we should take advantage of their experience. 'Winging it' and filling body bags as we sort out what works reminds us of the moral dictates and the cost of competence in our profession.¹

More than a quarter of a century ago in the spring of 1982, the two of us wrote Andrew Marshall, the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, that we believed that a comparative, historical case study of the effectiveness of military institutions in the first half of the twentieth century would contribute considerably to an understanding of the problems the American military confronted in the 1980s.² We also believed that a transnational analysis of the world's most powerful armed forces would reveal certain persistent problems in the creation and employment of them.

Our belief, and the argument in our letter, was that historians, if provided a clear, unambiguous framework within which to write their case studies of the military institutions of various nations, could provide insightful and accurate discussions of the factors that contributed to or detracted from military effectiveness. Moreover, by doing comparative essays across time periods the proposed project could provide insights into what worked and why as well as the causes of failure.

In particular, we believed that it was not only essential to get the historical analysis correct, but to place the case studies within a coherent framework that provided reasonable, recurring criteria for comparison. Too many works we

¹ Email from General James Mattis to a professor at the National Defense University, 2003. Quoted with permission of General Mattis.

² Our decision to write to Dr. Marshall resulted from the late Professor Ernest May's conference at Harvard in the summer of 1980 on intelligence estimates before the two world wars. That conference resulted in the edited, multivolume study published by Princeton University Press: Ernest May, *Knowing One's Enemies, Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars* (Princeton, NJ, 1986).

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knew by political scientists had distorted and misinterpreted history in attempts to prove some pet theory or model, while historians had tended to write monographs that made no effort to make military history relevant to policy makers or serving officers. By providing direction to our authors through a guidance essay that established the conceptual framework for the case studies, we believed that such an effort could provide a more coherent and consistent historical guide to military effectiveness than had been true in the past.

To our astonishment, Dr. Marshall not only immediately replied to our proposal but then proceeded to provide us with a substantial contract to put together a team of historians to examine the issues involved in military effectiveness in the twentieth century. Having had Dr. Marshall commit his support, the first question was what historical periods and armed forces the study should select. After considerable thought we decided that there were three distinct periods that needed to be addressed: the First World War, the interwar period, and the Second World War. Our selection of those three periods very much reflected the nature of the strategic environment in 1982 and 1983, a period when the United States and its NATO allies confronted what appeared to be a formidable Warsaw Pact with its massive array of conventional and nuclear forces. If deterrence represented the main mission of those allied forces, their military effectiveness in large-scale conventional or nuclear combat seemed the most relevant issue. Thus, the two world wars seemed the most appropriate historical domain to examine. In the cause of consistency and comparability, we decided to study the seven major belligerents with a common experience in the world wars: the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia—the Soviet Union, and Japan.

Today, of course, given an enormously different strategic environment, our selection of periods and national case studies appears somewhat dated, considering the extent of the problems the U.S. military confronts today. Nevertheless, while we would fully support a broader-based, more embracing study of military effectiveness since World War II, we believe that our critical study in these three volumes represents an important baseline for thinking about how to improve the performances of military institutions in the twenty-first century.

Once we had determined the time periods of what our historians, including ourselves, would examine, then came the knotty problem of writing the guidance essay that would determine the direction, context, and intellectual framework of the case studies.³ We found that to be a challenging task, because we had no clear model in mind when we began the study.⁴ And the more we debated

³ This essay is the initial chapter in the first volume following this introduction.

⁴ This approach was one that we were to use in a number of further studies that we edited either together as co-project directors or with other collaborators in the editing processes. See Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, eds., *Calculations: Net Assessment and the Coming of World War II* (New York, 1992); Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, eds., *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge, 1996); Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge, 1994); Williamson Murray and MacGregor Knox, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050* (Cambridge, 2000); Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge, 2004); and Williamson Murray and Jim Lacey, eds., *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge, 2009).

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and discussed the problems involved in how military institutions perform, the more we were forced to recognize that they confronted crucial problems at a number of different levels ranging from the political and strategic levels down to the conduct of extended operational and tactical performance on the battlefield. Moreover, excellence in one area did not necessarily translate into excellence at another level. For example, the Germans' tactical brilliance only served to ensure that the Reich's defeat in two world wars would be that much more catastrophic and destructive. German battlefield superiority only served to encourage the appalling strategic myopia that characterized Germany's military leaders in the first half of the twentieth century. Combat (or tactical) superiority became rationalized as the way to make any strategy work.

When we began our project, we were not sure how well our historians would react to our efforts to provide them with strict guidance in the writing of their national case studies. In fact, most of them found little difficulty addressing the problems we dictated within our conceptual framework. When they pleaded that they needed to address specific cultural factors, we approved such requests. Thus, we believe there is a coherence in *Military Effectiveness* that still provides considerable insights into military organizational behavior in spite of the enormous changes that have taken place in the strategic and operational environments in the twenty-one years since these volumes appeared.

Nevertheless, there are a number of areas that our guidance essay and the essays in general failed to address or that received inadequate attention. These questions and issues we now see as being essential factors in judging the effectiveness of military institutions. These range from the problems of innovation in peacetime and adaptation in wartime to the core sources of military effectiveness, namely the national cultural and intellectual framework that shapes armed forces in war and peace. How do the imperatives of military functionalism mix with particularistic non-military social values? Many of these were issues that the three volumes addressed tangentially, but that deserved greater or more specific focus. In other words, the military effectiveness study barely scratched the surface of what turned out to be a set of difficult and multifaceted issues, problems that, moreover, could differ considerably from one country to another.

One of the issues that deserved greater attention is the fact that military institutions that innovate in peacetime do so with considerable uncertainty and ambiguity about the nature and context of the next major conflict. Admittedly, they may have considerable periods of time in which to learn the lessons of the immediate past. Nevertheless, technological change in weapons and society, an increasingly important factor throughout the twentieth century, presented enormous challenges to the military institutions of that era. It is simply impossible to predict the full value of innovations in the complex arena of strategic and operational uncertainty, ambiguity, and friction that characterizes modern warfare. What is certain is that wrong choices and irrelevant investments will occur and will be hard to correct.

Moreover, as the American military discovered in the 1990s, it is difficult in many cases to predict against whom one may fight and within what political-strategic context the next war will occur. After all, who forecast in 1989 that the United States would fight a major war against Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist

regime, when the great enemy of the decade had been Iran? Or who would have predicted in 2000 that within a year U.S. forces would launch a major campaign that would overthrow the Taliban regime in rugged, isolated Afghanistan as part of a campaign against a loose terrorist coalition led by al-Qaeda?

The interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s placed military institutions in the position of having to innovate while being largely uncertain about when, where, or under what conditions they would have to employ new weapons and tactics, or particularly under what political and strategic constraints they would find themselves operating. None of these issues became clear until World War II was well underway. As Michael Howard has suggested about the military profession:

There are two great difficulties for which the professional soldier, sailor, or airman has to contend in equipping himself as commander. First, his profession is almost unique in that he may have to exercise it only once in a lifetime, if indeed that often. It is as if a surgeon had to practise throughout his life on dummies for one real operation; or a barrister appeared only once or twice in court towards the close of his career; or a professional swimmer had to spend his life practising on dry land for an Olympic championship on which the fortunes of his entire nation depended. Second, the complex problem of running an army at all is liable to occupy his mind and skill so completely that it is very easy to forget what it is being run *for*.⁵

The issue of innovation in peacetime became of particular interest in the 1990s when the Pentagon embraced what Soviet thinkers had termed “the military technical revolution” in the 1980s.⁶ The Gulf War seemingly validated the new obsession with technology. The Office of Net Assessment, however, saw the problem in far broader terms than technological innovation. Dr. Marshall asked us to undertake a broad-based, comparative study of how to identify the factors that produced successful innovation between the two world wars. We would have to include technology in the innovation case studies, but the focus of the study would be on organizational behavior, not scientific-engineering discoveries in the laboratory and arsenal. It is also worth noting that Dr. Marshall sponsored a number of other studies. We were delighted to participate in the Net Assessment innovation studies campaign.

Our work on innovation in the interwar period helped clarify some of the unfinished business in *Military Effectiveness*. One conclusion was that peacetime innovation moved along only as fast as organizational concerns influenced the process. Only external political intervention could speed the process, usually by appointing military zealots to key positions and providing greater financial resources. Armed forces, however, accepted innovation only if it was tied to clear strategic challenges, organizational enhancement, and operational clarity.

⁵ Michael Howard, “The Use and Abuse of Military History,” in Michael Howard, *The Causes of War* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), p. 194.

⁶ See the interview with Marshal of the Soviet Union N. V. Ogarkov, “The Defense of Socialism: Experience of History and the Present Day,” *Krasnaya zvezda*, 1st ed., 9 May 1984, pp. 2–3.

Interservice cooperation seldom occurred; transnational same-service cooperation did. We also came to appreciate the role of innovators, disciples, and the importance of field test bed units. We also found few “silver bullet” technological breakthroughs, but rather cycles of testing and retesting that produced technological modifications of new capabilities, for example, the all-metal monoplane with a radial engine. In this study we did return to wartime, because we could not avoid emphasizing the influence of peacetime military cultures on wartime performance, or contrasting peacetime innovation with wartime adaptation.

Part of the effectiveness of military forces must be their ability to adapt to the actual conditions of combat.⁷ There are some continuities with peacetime, as the armed forces that prepare themselves rigorously and honestly before a war generally adapt more effectively to the entirely new conditions that war presents. All military organizations get the next war wrong to a certain extent. The more effective are those that recognize the flaws in their vision of future war and adapt to the actual conditions they confront. Unfortunately that does not appear to be the normal pattern. The historical record suggests the opposite; instead of adapting their doctrine and approach to reality, for the most part military leaders and their organizations have attempted to make reality fit their preconceived notions until they and their forces fail or face obvious failure.

That there was a disastrous first raid on Schweinfurt by the Eighth Air Force in August 1943 is neither surprising nor necessarily avoidable. But what should have been avoidable was the follow-on raid in October 1943, which proved even more costly and repeated the errors of the first raid in nearly every way. Nevertheless, the Eighth Air Force, after five months of dreadful slaughter of its bombers, still held to its doctrinal belief that large formations of B-17s, unescorted by fighters, could fly deep into Germany, do massive damage to specific targets, and suffer what the U.S. Army Air Forces’ theoreticians had termed “acceptable losses” in the process.

What happened in the skies over the Reich did not even approach “acceptable losses” in either of the Schweinfurt raids. In the second raid, more than a quarter of the bombers failed to return and virtually all of the surviving B-17s that flew that mission were damaged. The disaster of the second Schweinfurt raid in late October 1943 finally disabused the Eighth Air Force and the USAAF leaders of their prewar notions of self-defending bomber formations, but far too late for the crews and their aircraft scattered over the German countryside in burning wreckage.

One of the major insights from the *Military Effectiveness* study is the extraordinary difficulty that political leaders and their generals and admirals have in assessing strategic issues. That much is clear from the case studies. Geography, culture (both general and military-organizational), political systems, and the availability of resources shape military institutions in quite different ways. One of the major issues in assessing the effectiveness of military institutions

⁷ One of us (Williamson Murray) is completing a book-length manuscript on the problems involved in military adaptation for the Office of Net Assessment. After approval from that office, the author intends to submit it to Cambridge University Press for publication, most probably sometime in 2010 or 2011.

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must always deal with how general cultural values enhance or retard military effectiveness. Only a few historians have been willing to address this challenging issue.⁸

What then are the other lessons that one might draw from these volumes today? Perhaps the most important lesson is the absolute necessity of “getting it right” at the level of grand strategy and in reconciling war aims with military means. In an article summing up what we thought *Military Effectiveness* offered of lasting value, we noted the following:

No amount of operational [or tactical] virtuosity . . . redeemed fundamental flaws in political judgment. Whether policy shaped strategy or strategic imperatives drove policy was irrelevant. Miscalculations in both led to defeat, and any combination of politico-strategic errors had disastrous results, even for some nations that ended the war as members of the victorious coalition. Even the effective mobilization of national will, manpower, industrial might, national wealth, and technological know-how did not save the belligerents from reaping the bitter fruit of severe mistakes [at this level]. This is because it is more important to make correct decisions at the political and strategic level than it is at the operational or tactical level. Mistakes in operations and tactics can be corrected [admittedly at a cost]. But political and strategic mistakes live forever.⁹

If that insight remains true for the period between 1914 and 1945, it has proven equally true over the past quarter century in a quite different environment. Perhaps the most discouraging insight, however, is the dismal record that military institutions have made in dealing with the difficulties that war creates. Admittedly, as Michael Howard has suggested on a number of occasions, the military profession is not only the most challenging of all the professions physically, but it is also the most challenging intellectually. In this regard the American armed forces prepared themselves for the Second World War better than any of the other major nations that were involved in the conflict, even though their actual military capabilities until 1943 could not match those of the Axis.

Yet the record of military institutions in the period covered by these volumes was less than impressive. As one of the authors, Lt. Gen. John H. Cushman, U.S. Army Retired, suggested in his essay at the end of Volume 3:

Thus, in the spheres of operations and tactics, where military competence would seem to be a nation’s rightful due, the twenty-one “auditors’ reports” suggest for the most part less than general professional military competence and sometimes abysmal incompetence. One can doubt whether any other profession in these

⁸ Among the few examples of such efforts to examine military culture is Brian Bond’s *British Military Policy between Two World Wars* (Oxford, 1980) and, more recently, Isabel Hull’s *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY, 2006). Even more recently, there is an outstanding dissertation that has just been completed at the London School of Economics: Gil-li Vardi, “The Enigma of German Operational Theory: The Evolution of Military Thought in Germany, 1919–1938,” December 2008.

⁹ Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, “Lessons of War,” *The National Interest* (Winter 1988).

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seven nations during the same periods would have received such poor ratings by similarly competent outside observers. . . .

Leaving aside whether effectiveness in operations and tactics is essential for victory, it is clear that first-rate operational and tactical performance is a *virtue to be sought by those who are responsible for military forces*.¹⁰

There is nothing in military history since 1945 to suggest that General Cushman's criticism of military institutions is dated. Admittedly, since the Vietnam War, there has been a far more coherent and effective effort within the American military to learn the lessons of the past at the tactical and operational levels by rigorous programs of training. Yet, it is the strategic and political framework of war that matters, and without the guiding framework of strategic judgment, all the tactical and operational expertise may well count for naught. As a North Vietnamese officer commented to the late Colonel Harry Summers, the United States may well have won all the important battles in the war, but those tactical successes hardly mattered in determining the final result.

Toward the end of *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz notes ironically that “[n]o 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.”¹¹ The harsh reality is that when statesmen and generals cross the murky zone between peace and war they are entering a world of enormous uncertainty. They may well find that the conditions of war are quite different from how they assumed at its outset, and it is their responsibility to adapt to the actual conditions that they confront. Unfortunately, history suggests that such adaptation occurs too slowly and invariably at a terrible cost to those who have to do the fighting.

When U.S. forces invaded Iraq in March 2003 they had prepared themselves brilliantly to destroy Saddam Hussein's broken and badly directed army. They did so as they had anticipated. So effectively did the U.S. campaign unfold that within a three-week period not only Saddam's military had collapsed, but so had the entire structure of his regime. Iraq fell to what was to all intents and purposes a two-division force – the Army's 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Division.¹²

And yet by summer 2003, three months after the great “victory,” an insurgency challenged the American effort to build a new Iraq. For those on the ground and some of the senior leaders, it was all too clear what was happening. The commanders of the two divisions that conducted the conventional campaign, Major General Buford Blount and Major General James Mattis, the former with Middle East experience and the latter a student of military history, recognized that things were rapidly getting out of hand. In summer 2003, the

¹⁰ Lieutenant General John H. Cushman, “Challenge and Response at the Operation and Tactical Levels, 1914–45,” ch. 9, vol 3.

¹¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ, 1976), p. 579.

¹² Backing up that two-division drive on Baghdad was the British division that took Basra and the 101st Airmobile and the 82nd Airborne divisions. The 4th Infantry Division, which was scheduled to invade northern Iraq, arrived in theater after the conflict was over.

new U.S. divisions and their troops on the ground that arrived to occupy Iraq saw a pattern of increasing insurgency. However, far too many senior officers – who took over occupation duties – with some considerable help from the civilian side of the house, failed to recognize the signs that a major insurgency was brewing.¹³ Both Iraq and the United States are still paying a terrible price for that inability to recognize the reality that was happening on the ground.

One of our former students, a brigade commander in the 1st Armored Division emailed us after his sixteen months on active operations in Baghdad in 2003–2004:

Too many leaders (both civilian and military) at the highest level [brigade commander and above] or those positioned at operational headquarters or in executive branch positions were excessively involved in what was happening in tactical units at the expense of developing a long-term strategy and operational concept to implement it. . . .

There was little conception of the operational art at CJTF-7 (Combined Joint Task Force 7). Units initially occupied zones that transcended local government boundaries. . . . Military units were more or less distributed evenly across Iraq, even though it soon became apparent that the heart of the insurgency lay in the Sunni triangle. . . . Shortages of forces, lack of vision, or lack of will prevented a more permanent presence in the area and an effective plan to deal with Fallujah until after it had become a symbol for the insurgency. . . . Movement of Coalition forces to consolidate bases should have been contingent upon the creation of effective local security forces. By leaving early, we ceded portions [of the countryside] to the insurgents.¹⁴

In many ways the mistakes made in the initial months of combat in Iraq replicated those that U.S. forces had made in Vietnam during the initial year of the American buildup, 1965–1966. In both cases, too many senior leaders failed to recognize the kind of war in which U.S. forces found themselves involved, an unconditional war of “national liberation” that mixed anti-foreign ire with urban and rural civil war among irreconcilable, ideological (and religious) factions. The Iraq insurgency was, for many of those who served in Vietnam or even many who had observed that conflict from afar, in the words of that great American philosopher Yogi Berra, “*déjà vu* all over again.”

¹³ They might have recognized those signs either through experience – several keen observers whom we had the opportunity to meet after their return from Iraq in summer 2003 who had served in the early days in Vietnam remarked how eerily similar the situation was to their experiences in Southeast Asia – or through the study of history. In the latter case, Major General Sir Aylmer L. Haldane’s memoir of his experiences in putting down the revolt in Iraq in 1920 presents a case study of events that U.S. forces almost exactly replicated in the period from summer 2003 on. See Lieutenant General Sir Aylmer L. Haldane, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia, 1920* (London, 1921).

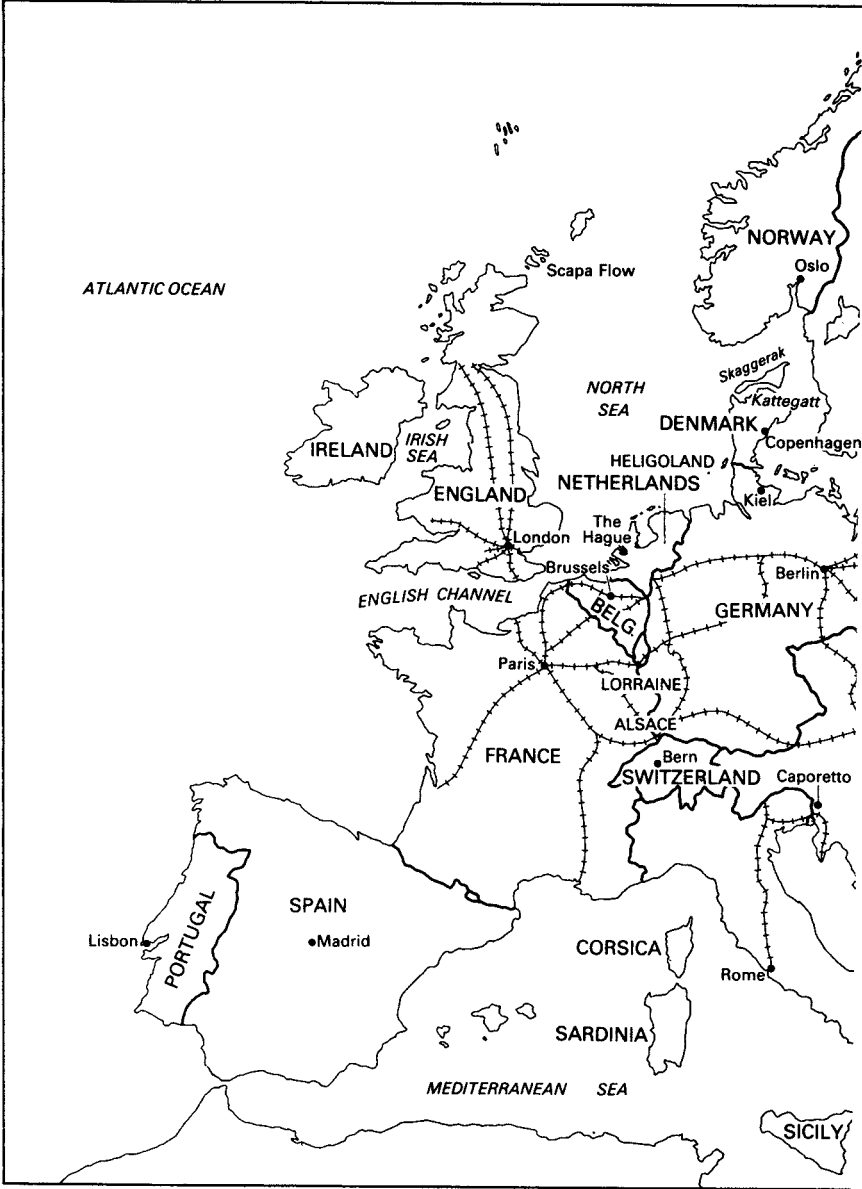
¹⁴ Colonel Peter Mansoor, email to the authors. Quoted with his permission. Colonel Mansoor is now the Mason Professor of Military History at The Ohio State University and the author of *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander’s War in Iraq* (New Haven, 2008).

At the present time the United States confronts a strategic environment that is not only the most complex, but one that is filled with uncertainties and ambiguities.¹⁵ What is clear is that the United States cannot afford to make the kinds of mistakes its leaders made in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. In any future case where the nation's political and military leaders feel it necessary to commit U.S. forces to combat, they will have a hard time making a case for intervention. America and its people are discovering that they no longer exist in a dream world of a "unipolar moment." The armed forces learned that long ago.

In the emerging strategic environment of the twenty-first century, the United States will use its military forces again, but its leaders must do so with a clear understanding of the fundamental nature of war and the derivative nature of strategy. In other words, they must understand the history of warfare, for an understanding of the past is the best way to understand the present. We offer this new edition of *Military Effectiveness* in the hope that it will guide the strategic and military discourse of the military leaders of the United States and its allies, who will have to make the grim decisions of the future. We wish our political leaders showed a similar interest in military affairs. Above all, we recognize that these volumes represent only a way to think seriously about the preparation of military forces for the challenges of the twenty-first century, *not unchallenged answers*. But at least they represent a start.

¹⁵ For a discussion of that uncertain strategic environment and the difficulties that may confront U.S. military forces in the future, see Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operational Environment* (Norfolk, 2008).

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