

War's Logic

Antulio J. Echevarria II reveals how successive generations of American strategic theorists have thought about war. Analyzing the work of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Billy Mitchell, Bernard Brodie, Robert Osgood, Thomas Schelling, Herman Kahn, Henry Eccles, Joseph Wylie, Harry Summers, John Boyd, William Lind, and John Warden, he uncovers the logic that underpinned each theorist's critical concepts, core principles, and basic assumptions about the nature and character of war. In so doing, he identifies four paradigms of war's nature – traditional, modern, political, and materialist – that have shaped American strategic thought. If war's logic is political, as Carl von Clausewitz said, then so too is thinking about war.

Antulio J. Echevarria II is Professor at the US Army War College and former Elihu Root Chair of Military Studies.



CAMBRIDGE MILITARY HISTORIES

Edited by

HEW STRACHAN, Professor of International Relations, University of St Andrews and Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford

GEOFFREY WAWRO, Professor of Military History, and Director of the Military History Center, University of North Texas

The aim of this series is to publish outstanding works of research on warfare throughout the ages and throughout the world. Books in the series take a broad approach to military history, examining war in all its military, strategic, political and economic aspects. The series complements *Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare* by focusing on the 'hard' military history of armies, tactics, strategy and warfare. Books in the series consist mainly of single author works – academically rigorous and groundbreaking – which are accessible to both academics and the interested general reader.

A full list of titles in the series can be found at:

www.cambridge.org/militaryhistories



War's Logic

Strategic Thought and the American Way of War

Antulio J. Echevarria II US Army War College





CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107091979

DOI: 10.1017/9781316135730

© Antulio J. Echevarria II 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Echevarria, Antulio J., II, 1959- author.

Title: War's logic : strategic thought and the American way of war / Antulio J. Echevarria II.

Other titles: Strategic thought and the American way of war

Description: Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Cambridge military histories | Includes bibliographical references and index

Identifiers: LCCN 2020036434 (print) | LCCN 2020036435 (ebook) | ISBN 9781107091979 (hardback) | ISBN 9781107465015 (paperback) | ISBN 9781316135730 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Strategy–United States. | United States–Military policy. | Military planning–United States–History. | United States–History, Military. | Military art and science–United States–History.

Classification: LCC U162 .E36 2021 (print) | LCC U162 (ebook) | DDC 355.020973–dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020036434

LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020036435

ISBN 978-1-107-09197-9 Hardback ISBN 978-1-107-46501-5 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



To all those who have been, are now, or will be, part of the American way of war.





Contents

	Acknowledgments	page ix
	Introduction	1
Pa	art I First Principles and Modern War	11
1	Alfred Thayer Mahan and Sea Power	13
2	Billy Mitchell and Air Power	32
Pa	art II The Revolt of the Strategy Intellectuals	57
3	Bernard Brodie, Robert Osgood, and Limited War	59
4	Thomas Schelling and War as Bargaining and Coercion	82
5	Herman Kahn and Escalation	93
	art III The Counterrevolution of the illitary Intellectuals	111
6	Henry Eccles and the Reform of Strategic Theory	113
7	J. C. Wylie and Strategy as Control	130
8	Harry Summers and the Principles of War	143

vii



Select Bibliography

Index

viii Contents	
Part IV The Insurrection of the Operational Artists	167
9 John Boyd, William Lind, and Maneuver Theory	169
10 John Warden and Air Operational Art	193
Conclusion	207
Notes	228

267

294



Acknowledgments

This book could not have been completed without the inspiration and assistance of many people. My friends and colleagues at the US Army War College Library were incomparably diligent in finding the numerous obscure articles and speeches analyzed in this work: Chief of Research and Instruction Adria P. Olmi; Research Librarians Gail (Jenny) C. Silkett, Megan L. Casey, and Mona J. Kwon; Reference Historian Rodney C. Foytik; and Interlibrary Loan Administrators and Acquisitions Assistants Stephen M. Bye, Paul A. Huerta, and Shannon S. Schwaller. I am also indebted to several people who performed invaluable archival services for me: Julianna Jenkins, Library Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles; Abigail Gardner, Special Collections, Archives, and History, National Defense University; Stacie M. Parillo (Director), Elizabeth M. Delmage (Archivist), and Elysia Hamelin (Archives Technician), Naval Historical Collection Archives, Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research, US Naval War College; Julie Zecher, Reference Librarian, US Naval War College Library; Alisa M. Whitley, Branch Head and Archivist, US Marine Corps History Division; and James Stimpert, Senior Reference Archivist, Special Collections, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University.

Special thanks must go to professors Todd Greentree, Sarandis (Randy) Papadopoulos, and Wallace (Andy) Terrill for reading and commenting on select chapters of the draft manuscript. The time they invested surely contributed to a better final product, notwithstanding whatever imperfections might remain. I am also grateful to my students and colleagues at the US Army War College who, without necessarily knowing it, were sounding boards for some of the analyses in this work. Also Michael Watson and his editing team at Cambridge University Press deserve

ix



x Acknowledgments

immense credit for their patience and attention to detail throughout this project, which extended well beyond its anticipated timeline. Most of all, I am profoundly grateful to my wife, Laurie, and our four children: Rachel, Grace, Matthew, and James. Without their support and quiet sacrifices, this book simply could not have been written.