

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
STRATEGY

★
VOLUME II

From the Napoleonic Wars to the Present

Volume II of *The Cambridge History of Strategy* focuses on the practice of strategy from 1800 to the present day. A team of eminent scholars examine how leaders of states, empires and non-state groups (such as guerrilla forces, rebel groups and terrorists) have attempted to practise strategy in the modern period. With a focus on the actual ‘doing’ of strategy, the volume aims to understand real-world experiences when ideas about conflict are carried out against a responding and proactive opponent. The case studies and material presented in the volume form an invitation to rethink dominant perspectives in the field of strategic studies. As the case studies demonstrate, strategy is most often not a stylised, premeditated and wilful phenomenon. Rather, it is a product of circumstance and opportunity, both structural and agential, leading to a view of strategy as an ad hoc, if not chaotic, enterprise.

ISABELLE DUYVESTEYN is Professor of International Studies/Global History at the Institute of History at Leiden University. Between 2012 and 2017 she held the Special Chair in Strategic Studies at the Political Science Institute of Leiden University. Between 2008 and 2020 she was a member of the national Advisory Council on International Affairs assigned to advise the Netherlands government on issues of peace and security, and between 2012 and 2021 she was a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Netherlands Defence Academy.

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF STRATEGY

The Cambridge History of Strategy presents a global history exploring how leaders of social groups, civilisations, empires and states have practised strategy over the course of the past three millennia. With contributions from leading experts in each subject, these volumes analyse a series of notable case studies to reflect on the formulation and application of strategy rather than on theory. Transcending the traditional Western focus and modern-state-based framework of strategic studies, this Cambridge History offers the inclusion of a wider range of political actors and cases from parts of the world hitherto largely excluded from the literature. This leads to a discussion of whether central claims in the field of strategic studies that the practice of strategy exhibits universal features which apply always hold up against empirical evidence from different centuries and cases beyond the West.

VOLUME I

From Antiquity to the American War of Independence

EDITED BY ISABELLE DUYVESTEYN AND BEATRICE HEUSER

VOLUME II

From the Napoleonic Wars to the Present

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VOLUME II
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This book is dedicated to the past and present victims of war

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The ambition of this two-part series, *The Cambridge History of Strategy*, has been to focus on the practice of strategy across time and place. In Volume I we looked at a diversity of civilisations, empires and states which engaged in strategy. The picture that emerged was one of a messy practice, with luck and opportunity playing a major role. This is in contrast to the highly stylised representation in much of the strategic studies literature. While the theorisation to date has been mostly based on Western and recent historical case material, our main ambition has been to broaden this scope and press the question of the universality claims made in strategic studies. In the Conclusion to this volume we tackle this question directly.

In this second volume the focus will be on the modern period, and we will continue with our global history of strategy by discussing an array of cases from around the world, ranging from the Americas to southern Africa, the Russian Empire and China, and lots in between. This volume had the benefit of looking at strategy while the word gained widespread recognition, although its use was not consistent in either meaning or practice. The justification for our choices in this volume will be presented in the opening chapter.

The premise of the series of offering overviews for non-specialists, based on the state of the art, is continued here in this volume. This allows us to compare these cases. These comparisons will help us to consider further both the specific and the general aspects of doing strategy in practice. Only by emphasising what is generalisable can we benefit from history to help make sense of today and hopefully of what lies ahead.

As with the first volume, our primary indebtedness is to the authors of the individual chapters. Without their inspired contributions, this series would not have seen the light of day. Editing a series of this size is a challenging task. What kept us going, during the difficult times of a global pandemic, were the thought-provoking chapters and the many moments we felt we learned

Preface and Acknowledgements

something new. Simply by asking the same set of questions of different case material, from different parts of the world and in distant times, we hoped to achieve our ambition of a consistent overview of the history of strategy. We look back on a very enriching experience.

A word of thanks also needs to be extended to Cambridge University Press's Michael Watson, who saw great merit in our original idea of a global approach to the history of strategy. Moreover, we would like to thank the team at Cambridge University Press, Emily Plater and Lisa Carter, and the copy-editors, John Gaunt and Llinos Edwards, as well as Preethika Ramalingam at Integra.

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