

Principles of War: Time for Reread

P K Mallick



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Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief : Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd)
Managing Editor : Dr N Manoharan
Copy Editor : Ms Rehana Mishra

**Centre for Land Warfare Studies**

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi 110010
Phone: +91.11.25691308 Fax: +91.11.25692347
email: landwarfare@gmail.com website: www.claws.in

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), New Delhi, is an autonomous think-tank dealing with national security and conceptual aspects of land warfare, including conventional and sub-conventional conflicts and terrorism. CLAWS conducts research that is futuristic in outlook and policy oriented in approach.

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Phone: +91.11.23263498 / 43528107
email: mail@kwpub.in / knowledgeworld@vsnl.net
MUMBAI: 15 Jay Kay Industrial Estate, Linking Road Extn., Santacruz (W), Mumbai 400054
Phone: +91.22.26614110 / 26613505
email: mumbai@kwpub.in

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Principles of War: Time for Relook

Many years ago, as a cadet, hoping some day to be an officer, I was poring over “The principles of war” listed in the Old Field Service Regulations, when the Sergeant Major came upon me. He surveyed me with kindly amusement. “Don’t bother your head about all these things, my lad,” he said. “There’s only one principle of war and that’s this. Hit the other fellow as quick as you can and as hard as you can, where it hurts him most, when he ain’t looking.”

— Field Marshal Sir William Slim

Introduction

For centuries, many military organisations subscribed to the idea that there exists a set of guiding principles or ideas that guide the conduct and study of war. These guiding principles are known as the Principles of War. There has never been universal agreement on one common list of principles. Most nations have their own list of principles, based on their military culture, experience and heritage. Principles of War are a guide to actions concerning the application of combat power, rather than an unquestioned truth with universal application to every single operation.

Principles are not substitutes for professional understanding, experience and education. They help provide a better understanding of warfare but these are only guidelines and not a prescription, formula, recipe or checklist for success: as John Boyd once said, “If you drop your checklist, your brains are below your feet.”

The Principles of War were developed over time and reflect the manner in which we fought and planned to fight during the 20th century industrial age.

With the present global security environment of the 21st century, exponential growth of Information Technology in the information age, introduction of nuclear weapons in the Indian subcontinent and China, increased influence of asymmetric warfare, proxy war and non-state actors and other changes have caused some to question the values of existing Principles of War.

The foremost military thinker of our age, John Keegan, wrote during the second decade of the Cold War, “One of the purposes behind the principles has been to make new and strange circumstances comprehensible, to draw a thread from one war to another, to force events into a mold and to make conflicts obey the dramatic.... A point is reached in the development of weapon systems beyond which one cannot compare the present and the past.” He said that the principles implied “maximisation of means” and, therefore, they were not applicable to limited nuclear war or low intensity conflicts. These demanded “subtle response, patience, self-control, firmness but not ruthlessness and an ability to settle for something less than total victory.” These qualities were not supported by the existing Principles of War. There are arguments at the other end of the spectra, which say that the principles have universal application and were a collection of concise rules for warfare intended to aid battle leaders, from the low ranking officer to the general.

The value of the Principles of War as a guide to commanders will depend on the understanding of the individual commander, his knowledge of operational art and his skill in applying the principles within a particular operational scenario. The Principles of War are important elements of the art and science of warfare, but the understanding and mastery of this art requires a depth of knowledge far beyond mere principles.

Historical Evolution

The Principles of War are the principles expressing the rules of military thought and actions that serve as the permanent basis for combat doctrine. The application of the Principles of War differs at different levels and for different operations. Their relative importance can be expected to vary from event to event. The list of principles is a methodological tool that differs from army to army and from era to era. While the principles remain the same, the list morphs according to time and place, with application always dependent on context.

The Principles of War have evolved over a long period of time. The evolution can be categorised into three stages:

- Pre-BC to Napoleonic war era.
- Napoleonic era to end of World War II.
- Post-World War II era.

Pre-BC to Napoleonic War Era

Kautilya: Two remarkable treatises in the pre-BC era form Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is the oldest treatise known to exist which throws some light on the ancient Indian strategic culture. Kautilya enunciated the following factors involved in planning a campaign:

- Power in terms of strength of fighting forces, enthusiasm and energy.
- Place of operation, type of terrain and selection of ground of own choosing.
- Time of military engagement.
- Season for marching towards the battleground.
- When to mobilise different types of forces.
- Possibility of revolts and rebellions in the rear.
- Likely losses, expenses and gains.
- Likely dangers.

Sun Tzu: Around 500 BC, Sun Tzu in his book, *The Art of War*, captured how military operations are influenced by uncontrollable factors. The major guidelines that Sun Tzu used to explain how military operations should be conducted are: deception, intelligence, initiative, manoeuvre, logistics, leadership and morale.

Niccolo Machiavelli: Niccolo Machiavelli published his book, *The Art of War*, in 1521. Machiavelli puts forth what he calls general rules for military discipline. Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from his rules are: the importance of morale, security, surprise, discipline, need for reserves, know yourself and know your enemy, use of terrain, logistics, intelligence and objective.

Maurice de Saxe: Maurice de Saxe was one of the most successful and colourful military leaders in Europe. The theory of Saxe is found in his book *Reveries*, which was published in 1757. Saxe did not present a list of principles, rules or maxims in his work. But in his short book he provided clear instructions. Saxe placed emphasis on the need of administration, logistics, morale, deception, initiative, leadership and discipline.

Frederick the Great: One man who learned from the theories of Saxe was Frederick the Great. Frederick's book, *Instructions for the Generals*, is the theory of a great military commander. Though he offered no list of principles, Frederick's book does offer maxims for success. The aspects that Frederick the Great stressed in his work are: logistics, manoeuvre, security, cultural awareness, morale, initiative and leadership.

Napoleonic Era to World War II

Napoleon: The successes of Frederick the Great were dwarfed by the man some call the greatest military leader of all time. Napoleon fought more battles than Alexander, Hannibal and Caesar combined. His methods revolutionised warfare and dominated military thinking for most of the 19th century. The military exploits of Napoleon contributed greatly to the evolution of the Principles of War. Napoleon never wrote his theories of war, but his maxims were recorded and provide some insights to his genius, Napoleon's maxims clearly illustrate what he thought to be important for victory in war. Napoleon points to discipline, leadership, momentum, manoeuvre, mass, firepower, logistics, intelligence, morale, security, initiative, objective and unity of command.

Jomini: The most important theorist to interpret the successes of Napoleon was Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779-1869). Jomini perhaps did more for the Principles of War than any theorist before him and he certainly became the catalyst for those who would follow. Jomini, born in Switzerland, joined the French Army under Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon recognised Jomini and, in admiration of his brilliant mind, awarded him with a regular Colonel's Commission. However, he was denied promotion as a result of the treachery of Berthier, Napoleon's Chief of Staff and his arch rival. Jomini resigned

from the French Army and accepted a commission as full general in the Russian Army under Alexander. He founded the Nicholas Military Academy in Moscow in 1832.

Before his death at the age of 90, Jomini wrote 27 volumes on the subject of military history and theory. Jomini wrote a summary of the *Art of War*. He defined the principles in four maxims:

- How men should be directed at decisive points against enemy lines of communication while protecting your own.
- Manoeuvre with strength against enemy weakness.
- Throw the mass of force onto the enemy's decisive point.
- Mass force so it is not only used against the decisive point, but at the proper time with the proper amount of force.

Carl von Clausewitz: Carl Von Clausewitz, 1780-1831, a prolific writer on strategy of the same period, produced *On War* and *The Principles of War*. Jomini and Clausewitz disagreed over the question of whether war is a science or an art. Yet, in many aspects, they were in striking agreement with each other. Carl von Clausewitz was outspoken in his arguments against Jomini's works. Clausewitz viewed Jomini's theory as being "one-sided" and strove to provide a more complete, well-rounded approach to the theory of warfare through the creation of numerous works. *On War* achieved widespread acclaim and was probably his greatest work.

However, while Clausewitz is today considered as an outstanding theorist of war, his works are complex and difficult to read, with his true meaning often obscure. In contrast, Jomini's lucid and prescriptive works, in particular, his exposition of the fundamental Principles of War, have brought both clarity to military planning and operations, and a valuable, well-used framework for the study and teaching of warfare. Clausewitz may be more significant for scholars, but for two centuries, Jomini has proved of more use to practical military professionals.

Ferdinand Foch: Foch struggled with the morale and material factors of war and attempted to explain them by combining the two. Foch's ideas reflect the work of another great French soldier, Ardant du Pieq, who wrote about the influence of morale and the human element in war. Foch's ideas are

credited by some historians to be the birth of the modern list of principles. Foch was able to combine the ideas from both sides of the debate over the Principles of War into his theory, which he insisted to first consist of a number of principles. Foch never claimed how many principles there were, but he listed four: economy of force, freedom of action, free disposition of forces, and security.

World War I forced every country to review its doctrine in the light of the costly lessons learned in the war. The Principles of War again became the subject of debate in most major militaries. Great Britain appointed a committee to review the Principles of War and what role they should have in doctrine. The committee was formed in 1919 and among the invited guests to address the committee was J F C Fuller. Fuller urged the committee to consider the inclusion of the principles in the British military doctrine. Fuller definitely influenced the committee on the need to include the principles into doctrine and perhaps what form they should take.

Principles of War, Great Britain, 1920

In 1920, the British Army published what they claimed to be the “Principles of War.” The eight principles included a title and a brief definition. They closely resembled Fuller’s principles of strategy. The difference was that the list was titled the Principles of War, not of strategy or tactics. The titles of the eight principles were:

- Maintenance of the Objective.
- Offensive Action.
- Surprise.
- Concentration.
- Economy of Force.
- Security.
- Mobility.
- Cooperation.

This was not the origin of the Principles of War, just as Fuller’s article was not the origin, but a definite mutation along their long evolutionary path. It was the emergence of the Principles of War into accepted operational terminology, no longer just in theory, but doctrine. In the

years that followed, many militaries, including of the United States, would adopt the Principles of War into doctrine, but it was the British who did it first.

The United States Army published the Principles of War in a doctrine barely a year after the British Army. Like the British Army, the United States Army was also influenced by the work of J F C Fuller. Unlike the British, who expanded on the list of Fuller, the United States adopted Fuller's list completely, with only one exception: adding the principle of simplicity.

During World War II, one of the most famous leaders in the British Army was Field Marshal Bernard I Montgomery. During the war, Montgomery published several pamphlets for his forces. In one pamphlet, he listed eight Principles of War significantly different from those published at the time. Montgomery introduced air power, administration, and morale to the modern list; he also adopted the principle of simplicity. After the war, Montgomery led the way to change the Principles of War in the British doctrine. The British adopted ten principles which have remained very similar to this day.

Post-World War II Era

In 1949, the Principles of War that were adapted to the US doctrine were:

- The Objective.
- Simplicity.
- Unity of Command.
- The Offensive.
- Manoeuvre.
- Mass.
- Economy of Forces.
- Surprise.
- Security.

Subsequently, the US Army doctrine, Operation Field Manual FM 100 – 5, has been revised number of times. However, the basic Principles of War remain the same. It is by and large true for all the other armed forces of the world.

Analysis of the Present Principles of War

British Defence Doctrine Joint Warfare publication 0-01 (JWP 0-01) dated October 2001 gives the Principles of War as:

- Selection and Maintenance of the Aim.
- Maintenance of Morale.
- Offensive Action.
- Security.
- Surprise.
- Concentration of Force.
- Economy of Effort.
- Flexibility.
- Cooperation.
- Sustainability.

In 1990, the US military introduced principles for “Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW)” as:

- Objective.
- Unity of Effort.
- Legitimacy.
- Perseverance.
- Restraint.
- Security.

This implied that there is a difference between war operations and other military operations. The US military has since recognised the fallacy of different Principles of War for MOOTW. In the Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States Joint Publications (JP-1) the original nine Principles of War (i.e. Objective, Offensive, Mass, Economy of Force, Manoeuvre, Unity of Command, Security, Surprise and Simplicity) are included and three unique Principles of MOOTW – Restraint, Perseverance and Legitimacy – have been added. These three additional Principles of War are explained below:

Perseverance: The purpose of perseverance is to ensure the commitment necessary to attain the national strategic end state. The patient, resolute and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives often is a requirement for

success. This will frequently involve diplomatic, economic and informational measures to supplement military efforts.

Legitimacy: The purpose of legitimacy is to develop and maintain the will necessary to attain the national strategic end state. Legitimacy is based on the legality, morality and rightness of the actions undertaken.

Restraint: The purpose of restraint is to limit collateral damage and prevent the unnecessary use of force. A single act could cause significant military and political consequences; therefore, judicious use of force is necessary. Restraint requires the careful and disciplined balancing of the need for security, the conduct of military operations and the national strategic end state.

Some of the Commonwealth countries have followed the British set of Principles of War. It is interesting to note that the German Army has not laid down any Principles of War. This has been done deliberately by them since they want to avoid the dangers of oversimplification and encapsulation of military concepts and principles. The Germans believe that only by an in-depth and continuing study of war can one develop the judgment to make good decisions in specific situations. They think that no simple set of rules or principles can substitute for a true understanding of the complexity of war. The Germans insist that their officers must develop an in-depth knowledge of military history. They could then apply the knowledge and thought processes developed in that study to the specific inevitably unique situation they faced.

A comparison of the Principles of War followed by various armies in the world is given at Appendix A.

Analysis of Indian Principles of War

The Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Force, published by Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, Ministry of Defence, June 2007, gives out the following Principles of War for the Indian armed forces:

- Selection and Maintenance of Aim.
- Maintenance of Morale.
- Offensive Action.

- Surprise.
- Concentration of Force.
- Economy of Effort.
- Security.
- Flexibility.
- Cooperation.
- Simplicity
- Administration.
- Intelligence.

The Indian Army Doctrine, published in October 2004, enunciated the same Principles of War. Intelligence was added to the widely accepted Principles of War because of its preeminence in any future conflict. The Sub-conventional Warfare Doctrine of the Indian Army does not give the Principles of War specifically.

In view of counter-insurgency operations (CI Ops)/proxy war, conventional war with weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) overhang, Kargil type of operations and information age operations with digitisation of the battlefield taking place in the 21st century, an analysis of the present Principles of War as applicable to the Indian Army in the above backdrop is carried out in the succeeding paragraphs.

Selection and Maintenance of Aim

The ultimate military purpose of war is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and will to fight. Strategic, operational and tactical objectives can be clearly identified and developed only when the political purpose has been determined and defined by the national government. Selection of the aim starts at the political and strategic levels. Every military operation must have a single, attainable and clearly defined aim which remains the focus of the operation and towards which all efforts are directed. We have to make the enemy's aim inappropriate or irrelevant to break his cohesion to defeat him in detail. In the information age revolution in military affairs (RMA), with its promise of the capability to render the enemy strategically paralysed in a relatively short period of time, the focus is less on the enemy's armed forces and more on his leadership, command and control (C2) structures and communication infrastructure.

In proxy war, the aim may be more difficult to define. The military objective should have the willing acceptance of a lawfully constituted agency, group or government elected by the population. In conventional operations, commanders take action for a swift victory whereas in proxy war, achieving the strategic aim would take a very long time. In a situation like proxy war, a number of agencies like the army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and police are operating. Each separate operation by different agencies must be integrated with the others to contribute to the ultimate strategic aim. The leaders of the unit, army or others, must understand the strategic aims, set appropriate objectives and ensure that they contribute to unity of effort with other agencies.

Maintenance of Morale

Morale is nurtured through good leadership, sound discipline, realistic training, confidence in equipment and sense of purpose. It is a condition, attitude or sense of spirit that is maintained. Morale is nurtured in a force during peace-time and is maintained and protected in conflict. In counter-insurgency operations, morale and fighting spirit are particularly tested because it is a long-term faith other than a one-time effort. The need to confront civilians in securing roadblocks or during aggressive operations in densely populated areas make the issue of morale and discipline even more complex. However, morale is not a Principle of War that is applied to campaign planning or conflict resolution. Morale may be considered to be included in the principle of administration.

Offensive Action

The purpose of an offensive action is to seize, retain and exploit the initiative. Traditionally, most have agreed with Clausewitz: "We must say that the defensive form of warfare is intrinsically stronger than the offensive." However, although it may sometimes be necessary to adopt a defensive posture, this position is only temporary until the necessary means are available to resume offensive operations. An offensive spirit must be inherent in the conduct of all defensive operations; the defence must be active, not passive. Offensive action is more important in counter-insurgency operations than in regular warfare in which large units operate and there is not always

room for uncoordinated local initiative. In CI operations, every junior officer must understand that the outcome of any action depends on him and what he does in seeking out and engaging the enemy whenever possible.

Seizing, exploiting and retaining the initiative will allow us to impose our will on the enemy, to make him react to our actions. Initiative applies to all three levels of conflict. Apart from traditional concepts of offensive action, it could also include such actions as diplomatic measures at the strategic level, information operations, psychological operations or computer network attacks at the operational and tactical levels. Retention and exploitation of the initiative will allow us to get inside the enemy's decision cycle and disrupt his plans and his ability to fight as a cohesive force. It has been suggested that the principle of offensive action is out of date and should be changed to seize, exploit and retain the initiative.

Introduction of WMDs in the subcontinent necessitates a relook to the principle of offensive. Offensive operations under attack by enemy WMD or the threat of such an attack will be difficult to execute. How do we handle a religious zealot democratically elected, with a hand on the nuclear button, not afraid to use it even knowing the acknowledged superiority of the Indian Strategic Command? Initial offensive should render the enemy's ability to strike back with WMD inoperative. If it is not achieved, the end state of a conflict will be extremely risky. Will the enemy escalate at the end or will he be deterred from launching nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) fusillades as his regime goes down? Will he use some WMD and threaten further use in an attempt to achieve a better end war settlement? Or should we keep our forces out of range until enemy WMDs can be destroyed or until the enemy leadership is killed or replaced? There will be a temptation at the inception of any such conflict to target the enemy leaders to create disorganisation and a regime change. However, if it does not succeed, there is a great possibility that the enemy regime will counter with desperate measures that might include launching an NBC weapons attack even if they face a clearly superior Indian nuclear force. How do we achieve victory with such an enemy?

Surprise

Surprise by itself is neither good nor bad. Surprise can only be useful if the actor gains tangible benefit from its application. Factors contributing to

surprise include speed, effective intelligence, deception, and application of unexpected combat power, operating at night or during limited visibility, security, use of terrain that appears unfavourable, operational security, variation in tactics and methods of operations, information superiority and asymmetry. Surprise can be in tempo, size of force, direction or location of main effort, originality and timing. In the information age, stealth and speed will be the two key elements. In the 21st century, information warfare will see a constant battle between stealth and data fusion, between knowledge and ignorance and between truth and deception.

The Israeli Defence Forces are using the term “stratagem” in lieu of surprise. In Israeli terminology, surprise is an important and necessary component of stratagem, but not its essence. What is crucial is exploiting surprise to be able to strike the enemy’s weakest point and shatter his centre of gravity. Surprise is never the last step, rather, it is the first; the aim is to strike the decisive blow.

Surprise retains its importance in modern conflict. There is another school of thought which says that since it is an effect achieved by the application of other principles, it is no longer a principle unto itself. Surprise is achieved by the application of the principles of seizing, exploiting and retaining the initiative (offensive action), synchronisation of effort (cooperation), flexibility and security.

Concentration of Force

Concentration implies the massing of the effects of all pertinent capabilities, military and others: army assets (armour, artillery), joint support (intelligence, aviation, naval gunfire where applicable, missiles), special forces, psychological operations, electronic warfare and other means that could contribute to mission success. However, concentration of force is not always the best means to effectively employ forces. Economy of force is just as important.

Concentration does not imply that there should never be dispersion. A carefully organised distribution of troops and firepower, accompanied by feints and a convincing deception plan, helps to balance our own forces and confuse the enemy. Knowing when to concentrate and when to disperse is a matter of timing and judgment, depending on a careful appreciation of the situation. Today, with the advent of high-tech weapon systems, soldiers no

longer talk of massing forces, but of massing effects. It is no longer required to bring forces into the same geographical area to bring their effects to bear on the same target. In today's battlefield, it may be dangerous as well.

With the advent of the information age and availability of knowledge, information and truth in the battlefield, the commander should replace mass warfare or concentration with precision warfare: the accurate allocation of combat power to achieve a specific purpose. Tomorrow's fighting forces will include small, lethal units moving with great velocity and precision to attack through weakness towards critical vulnerabilities.

In combat with an adversary armed with WMD, concentration of own forces may give the enemy a lucrative target. Dispersing own forces can make the enemy WMDs less cost-effective.

Using the information, sensor and engagement grids of the networks, dispersed forces will mass effects by coordinating location, identification and targeting information from sensors to rapidly employ long range, precision fires using shared information from a common operational picture. Effect-based operation (EBO) is a fundamental part of the network-centric concept. However, many technological problems have to be overcome before network-centric warfare can exist as an operational capability.

Economy of Effort

Economy of force involves risks, requires astute strategic planning and judgment by political and military leaders, and places a premium on the need for flexibility of thought and action. Is it reciprocation of concentration of force or mass? It needs deliberation.

The Israelis call this principle optimal utilisation of forces. One of the main challenges in fighting a terrorist force is that a combination of many capabilities is necessary for success. If intelligence, army, special forces, police and air force, where applicable are not effectively utilised, terrorism cannot be overcome. In Operation Sarpvinash in the Hill Kaka region of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), this principle got manifested in an important way in which each component, including air, brought its unique capabilities, leading to a synergistic result that was far more than the sum of its parts.

The information-based RMA may require us to think differently about the concept of resources. In the future, planners must employ a systems thinking

process to evaluate and address a commander's minimum requirements. By this process, planners may sequence the effects of systems, platforms and weapons synergistically to produce the desired result with a minimum of destruction and casualties. The following comments of Gen Dennis Reimer, former Joint Chief of Staff of the US armed forces, help to illustrate this point,

We talk now about situational awareness..... if we can achieve that, we can change the way we operate. If you go to Ft Leavenworth, they teach in terms of operations when there is uncertainty and risk, and you keep a large reserve. Generally, most of the army students will tell you its two up and one back. That's the way it has been for a long time. But if you can take that risk out of there, you can get more of your combat systems in the fight.

The primary reason to keep forces in reserve is to preserve combat power to be able to counter the unpredictable nature of the enemy. If information dominance renders the enemy significantly more predictable, the logic for a reserve force becomes less valid. The result is that information-based RMA will allow commanders to employ forces in a more simultaneous than sequential manner, as well as employing more of the forces from the onset of hostilities.

The first high profile refutation of economy of force was spoken of by Gen Colin Powell, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War, during the run up to first Gulf War in 1991 when he proposed that America should, in the future, employ overwhelming force rather than a strictly economical force; and consider simultaneous attacks using cyber-warfare, information warfare, police raids, guerrilla warfare tactics, sabotage, and precision-guided munitions (PGM) against a terrorist network's computer systems, local support, criminal linkages, individual cell 'safe houses' and key leadership figures. Success in any one of these areas would likely be of little consequence, but over time, continued application of such pressure would likely result in successes being achieved against multiple targets.

Security

Security results from the measures taken by a command to protect itself from surprise, interference, sabotage, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance

(ISR) threat. Deception greatly enhances security. The threat of asymmetric action requires emphasis on security. In the 21st century, security will play an important part in the protection and guarding of military information systems.

Security is essential for fighting terrorism for commanders in the field fighting counter-insurgency/counter-terrorism (CI/CT) operations. One of the most problematic uncertainties concerns how much resources should be taken for attacking terrorists and how much should be allocated for securing the rear or the base and the civilian population. Another aspect of security is the plan to conceal the activities of forces so that the enemy does not discover them.

The internal dimensions of security include the protection of plans and intention – what is usually known as operational security – but also entail counter-intelligence, counter-deception, command, control, communication, intelligence (C3I) redundancy and defensive information warfare. The external dimensions include intelligence gathering and analysis, deception and offensive information warfare. One of the biggest challenges in the 21st century will be cyber security – protecting computers and the links between them. The notion of a cyber attack that shuts down power and/or communications in a major city in close coordination with the detonation of a ‘dirty bomb’ or similar WMD is no longer in the domain of imagination. The resulting tragedy would be devastating – not just in terms of the loss of human life, but with regard to the severe blow suffered by the economic and political systems of the country in which the event occurs. Technology has the potential to facilitate security, but no security system is foolproof. Concern about security must be balanced with the need for activity. Some think that security should be replaced by protection of the people in the CI environment. If we protect the people, security will come in due course.

Flexibility

Flexibility is modification of the principles of mobility or manoeuvre as practised by other countries. Today, it calls for the ability to react quickly to changing situations, in order to rapidly shift points of efforts to react to unforeseen opportunities or contingencies. Consistent with the manoeuvristic

approach to modern war-fighting, the principle of flexibility calls for flexibility of mind, rapid decision-making and a clear understanding of the commander's intent. It still demands the ability to rapidly and efficiently deploy forces to the correct time and place. It is felt that flexibility would be a preferable principle of war than manoeuvre. Networking would provide planners and decision-makers enhanced visibility of the battlespace due to timely information and intelligence. Some have advocated networking and flexibility as Principles of War in place of flexibility.

Cooperation

Cooperation may produce coordination, but giving a single commander the required authority unifies action. Unity of command means that a single commander directs and coordinates the actions of all the forces towards a common objective. In joint peacekeeping operations or in a CI environment, there are situations where the military commander does not directly control all the elements of combat. In the absence of command authority, commanders cooperate, negotiate and build consensus to achieve unity of effort.

In the CI environment, other government agencies may have the lead. Commanders may answer to a civilian chief like, say, the governor of a state, or may themselves employ the resources of an agency which is not part of the army. During Operation Rakshak in Punjab, the army was deliberately kept at a low key and the state police was given the upper hand and more media exposure. Command arrangements may be loosely defined, causing commanders to seek an atmosphere of cooperation rather than command authority to achieve unity of effort.

The information-based RMA will force our chain of command to function more like a network, resulting in a more flattened and responsive command structure.

Synchronisation, synergy of effect, integration, unity of command, unity of effort – all these terms are being used as Principles of War by different countries. There are subtle differences in these terminologies. But only one of them can be the Principle of War. In our context, where joint commands have not come into being except as a tentative experimental measure in the Andaman & Nicobar Command and Strategic Forces Command, cooperation will be the right choice.

Simplicity

A good simple plan with concise clear words minimises the chances of confusion. To seek the advantage over the enemy and to obviate a bloody attrition contest, we may need to develop plans that are inherently complicated. Complication is an unfortunate by-product of the search for advantage. There is a need for a balance between complexity and simplicity.

In CI operations, simplicity is extremely important. CI/CT operations are, by nature, complicated by the need to operate among the civilian population. Complex actions usually increase danger to the armed forces due to the involvement with the surroundings. Many actions have to be carried out at short notice. Without simplicity there would be too few operations and some would be undertaken too late because of the time necessary to complete preparations. When fighting an elusive enemy, simplicity is almost a *sine qua non*.

Administration

Successful conduct of military operations requires effective and efficient logistics and administrative support. Here administration includes logistics. The teeth of America's force racing across Iraq in 2003 were required to slow their pace of advance and wait for their logistics tail to catch up. A force in the field, no matter how well equipped or trained, is useless if it cannot be sustained. There is another school of thought that this principle should be changed to sustainability. In addition, administration includes such factors as the ability to endure and replace casualties and the ability to replace and maintain stocks of expensive precision munitions. It is recommended that the heading should be logistics and administration.

Intelligence

Even small forces can achieve significant victory by using intelligence based on painstaking reconnaissance and good information. Examination of current doctrines suggests that intelligence is a *de-facto* Principle of War. Most of the other Principles of War depend upon intelligence. Concentration of force and surprise rely upon the quality of intelligence that is available. Information and intelligence on the enemy's communication and power grids, transportation and public works infrastructure and even social structure, institutions and

political actors can and should be collected, analysed, disseminated and exploited when possible.

One of the necessary conditions for fighting CI/CT operations is intelligence without which it is impossible to fight them. In CI operations, effective operations must be shaped by timely, specific and reliable intelligence that is gathered, analysed and applied at the lowest possible level and disseminated throughout the force. However, there is a school of thought, including in Israel and the UK, that intelligence is a condition and not a Principle of War.

Is There Need for a Change?

Over the years, the nature of war has not changed but the character of war has. The Principles of War were given to us by the past experts based on their history and experiences. The Principles of War as expressed in military doctrines were developed for a very different time and very different conflicts than those we face today. They were appropriate for the time when they were developed. They are not focussed on war, but on battle. The assumption seemed to be that if an army won enough battles, it must win the war. The Principles of War focus only on how to win a conventional battle without any serious consideration of the political, economic and social aspects of the conflict. The defeat of the army and surrender of the capital usually led directly to the surrender of the government. Unfortunately, as we have seen in Afghanistan and Iraq in recent times, this is no longer the case. In Nicaragua, Chechnya and Palestine, the insurgents never defeated the enemy's military strength, unlike the Napoleonic battles that led to decisive victory outlined in the Principles of War. They applied political power over time to directly attack their enemy's political will. In recent times, the wars that have led to decisive change have been political, protracted and, more recently, networked. Some analysts believe that the Principles of War really evolved as Principles of Battles regardless of their label, whether they were referred to as "truths, axioms, rules, laws, fundamentals, maxims or lessons." We need to review them based on the lessons of our past, present, and their applicability in the future, changes in threat perception, technological advancement and nuclear threats. There is a school of thought even from earlier days that the Principles of War did not exist. Mao Tse Tung, the founder of the People's Republic of China, insisted that each war is different

and it is a capital mistake to import lessons from a past war into a future one, because the factors conditioning each conflict are utterly different.

In recent times, well known British military historian Michael Howard had argued that the so-called Principles of War exist only as “a crutch for weak minds.” Bernard Brodie, a prominent writer on strategic matters in the nuclear age wrote,

Although Clausewitz himself speaks loosely of certain “principles” to be observed and followed, he specifically rejected the notion that there could be any well defined body of particular rules or principles that universally dictated one form of behaviours rather than another It was not until the twentieth century that various army field manuals would attempt to encapsulate centuries of experience and volumes of reflection into a few tersely worded and usually numbered “Principles of War”. Clausewitz would have been appalled at such attempts, and not surprised at some of the terrible blunders that have been made in the name of these principles.

Fourth Generation/sub-conventional/asymmetric warfare, whatever we may call it, may well be the dominant form of warfare for some years to come. But inter-state war with a nuclear overhang will also enjoy a healthy future. Wars have become so complex that no single set of Principles of War can apply to all variations of war. Time tested Principles of War may work for conventional warfare but a totally different set of principles may be required for CI operations, information warfare, operations under a nuclear backdrop or other forms of warfare, including cyber warfare. Conventional wars are focussed on the enemy’s military, and counter-insurgency operations are focussed on the population which is the centre of gravity. The two conflicts are completely different. Also, the principles serve the purpose of planning and commanding military campaigns on the battlefield and do not serve the purpose of resolving the conflict at the root of the military struggle. They do not relate to the important broader issues of war such as social, religious, political, economic, territorial and culture factors without which conflict and wars between nation or groups cannot be understood.

The Principles of War were derived from experiences and writings concerning warfare in the agrarian and early industrial ages. At that stage, in the development of military thought there was little or no distinction among the various levels of war viz strategic, operational and tactical levels of war. New threats are emerging from groups and people who are disconnected from the wave of globalisation and not connected to the core of emerging societies. This holds enormous implications for the Principles of War. Do the existing Principles of Warfare provide insights on strategy, operational art or only the tactical level of war? The Principles of War were enunciated long before the invention of flight. Can the Principles of War govern conflict at sea and in the air? Are all the Principles of War equal? What is the inter-relation among the principles? These are some of the issues which require close analysis.

One may say that no two situations are the same. Depending upon the situation and type of war, certain Principles of War would have predominance over the others and as such cannot be graded. Though the Principles of War were written for land warfare, experts believe that they are equally applicable for sea and air warfare and, hence, have been included in the doctrines for joint warfare all over the world. Conventional thinkers believe that the Principles of War can, more or less, be applied at all levels of war.

Tenets of War for CI/CT Operations

The traditional Principles of War work fine in a conflict between nations. It involves a clash between large, organised forces where we have clear centres of gravity and lines of operation that are tangible and can be destroyed. CI operations comprise a fight for the hearts and minds of the people. Would the same principles be equally relevant to such subversive, covert wars involving terrorism, military, insurgency, etc, or do we need to enumerate separate principles for them? This kind of warfare may take place in own territory and impose limitations on the applicability of the established principles. There is a strong feeling that a separate set of Principles of War be made for such undefined, complex and asymmetric war.

In the fall of 1946, in a Hanoi colonial office, a French general spoke with a Vietnamese guerrilla war leader. The French general was there to reclaim French sovereignty over Indochina from the Japanese after World War II. He asked the Vietnamese leader what Principles of War he used in his war

against the Japanese. The guerrilla said that his Bible had been TE Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

TE Lawrence's Principles of Counter-Insurgency

- Need to think like the insurgents – like raiders, not conventional forces.
- Need speed, shock, endurance (of logistics and will).
- Need unblinking eyes of persistence, surveillance and targeting.
- Present no obvious pattern or organisational structure.
- Strategy of inoculation – organise forces into small units to 'vaccinate' the local population.
- Separate the raiders from the local populace somehow.
- Remember that one dollar may equal ten bullets.
 - Most people actually can be bought for some fee.
 - Bribery can be a weapon.

David Galula's Principles

The treatise on *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* by David Galula on the French experience in Algeria is a must read for all students of CI operations and is extensively quoted nowadays in the US military circles. Galula proposed six principles of waging counter-insurgency. They were:

- Initiative.
- Full Utilisation of the Counter-insurgent's Assets.
- Economy of Force.
- Irreversibility.
- To Command is to Control.
- Simplicity.

Principles of COIN

In December 2006, the US Army published its latest Field Manual on Counter-Insurgency Field Manual FM – 3.24/Marine Corps War-Fighting publication MCWP 3-33.5. It is an extremely well researched and widely discussed document in contemporary warfare. This Field Manual enunciated a separate set of Principles of War for CI operations. They are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

Importance of Legitimacy: By definition, combatants on opposing sides of an internal war seek political power. Based on their own definition of legitimacy, the people of the contested region will decide upon the victor. All governments rule by a combination of consent and coercion and those defined as legitimate rely primarily on the consent of the governed. Counter-insurgents must aim to foster the development of effective governance by a legitimate government.

The Primacy of Political Factors: Rarely are counter-insurgents successful with purely military action. Usually, peace is restored with some sort of political solution that addresses the root causes of the insurgency or creates broad popular acceptance for the government. The political and military aspects of internal wars are inseparably bound and must always be evaluated in concert. Counter-insurgents must stay focussed on their vision for the political end state that will establish a legitimate government.

Unity of Effort: The consensus was that even though unity of command is ideal and preferred, it is also impossible to achieve in most CI operations. Military commanders will find a myriad players in their area of operations, ranging from government agencies like the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), units of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)/Border Security Force (BSF)/Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)/Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), State Police and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to non-governmental organisations. The chain of command will also be different. The elected government where CI/CT operations are in full swing makes the issues more complicated.

Understanding the Environment: Insurgents begin with a big advantage in local knowledge. Counter-insurgents must understand the power relationships, values and ideologies, attitudes, languages, customs, lifestyles, economics within the society in order to understand the nature and nuances of the existing conflict. Accordingly, CI operations require greater emphasis on skills such as language and cultural awareness. India is a vast, multi-cultural country. Especially in the Northeast, the nuance of each tribe has to be understood by the CI forces.

Intelligence-Driven Operations: Counter-insurgents need increased cultural understanding to gather, comprehend and apply intelligence essential for success in CI operations. Without timely and accurate intelligence, military actions may be ineffective at best and counter-productive at worst. Effective operations must be shaped by timely, specific and reliable intelligence that is gathered, analysed and applied at the lowest possible level and disseminated throughout the force. Properly conducted CI activities generate more important intelligence.

Isolating Insurgents from Their Cause and Support: It is much easier to cut off an insurgency from its support and let it wither than to kill or capture every insurgent. To achieve long-term success, skillful counter-insurgents must eliminate the source of an insurgency's recuperative power. Social, political, and economic grievances that fuel discontent must be addressed. Population control and border security can shut off physical support. In the 21st century, biometric identification cards will accomplish the same objectives with much less disruption to people's lives.

Security Under the Rule of Law: The ability to achieve security serves as a foundation of government legitimacy. Acting in accordance with a legal system established in line with the local culture and practices enhances the legitimacy of the government. But illegitimate acts by government officials or security forces can undermine any progress and help fuel the insurgency. These actions include unjustified or excessive use of force, unlawful detention, torture and punishment without trial. Insurgents often capitalise on abuses by police or soldiers.

Long-Term Commitment: Insurgencies are protracted by nature, designed to wear down opponents who have greater material assets. Resource intensive, CI operations always require considerable money, manpower and time. However, commanders should ensure that their conduct of operations does not make it harder for elected leaders to maintain public support and undermine public confidence.

Contemporary Imperatives of Counter-insurgency

Recent CI experiences have identified an important set of additional imperatives for success in the CI battlefield:

Manage Information and Expectations: Information and expectations are related; skillful counter-insurgents manage both. To limit discontent and build support, the government and any counter-insurgents assisting it create and maintain a realistic set of expectations among the populace. Information operations (including psychological operations and the related activities of public affairs and civil-military operations) are key tools to accomplish this.

Use Appropriate Level of Force: Any use of force generates a series of reactions. There may be times when overwhelming effort is necessary to destroy or intimidate an opponent and reassure the populace. Extremist insurgent combatants often have to be killed. In any case, counter-insurgents should calculate carefully the type and amount of force to be applied and who wields it for any operation. An operation that kills five insurgents is counter-productive if collateral damage leads to the recruitment of fifty more insurgents.

Learn and Adapt: An effective counter-insurgent force is a learning organisation. Insurgents constantly shift between military and political phases and tactics. In addition, networked insurgents regularly exchange information about their enemy's vulnerabilities. However, skillful counter-insurgents can adapt at least as fast as insurgents. Every unit needs to be able to make observations, draw and apply lessons, and assess results. Commanders must develop an effective system to circulate best practices throughout their command. Use of the Army Intranet, websites and blog sites like "Share Your Experience" in HQ Northern Command are excellent examples of learning and adapting in CI operations.

Empower the Lowest Levels: Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralised execution based upon mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Successful mission command results from subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the

commander's intent to accomplish missions. It requires an environment of trust and mutual understanding.

Continuity of Action: Insurgents/terrorists should not be allowed to rest, redeploy and plan their action. They should be under relentless, continuous pressure.

Principles of War in the Information Age

We have to make use of the advantages that new technologies offer. Some of the Principles of War are enhanced while others are put at risk by the implementation of the network-centric operations concept. The principles of selection and maintenance of aim, offensive, economy of effort, security and surprise ostensibly appear to be further strengthened by the employment of the network-centric forces, whereas, the principles of concentration, unity of command and simplicity can be at risk when employing these operational concepts. Unity of command can be seen as fostering a more centralised view of command and control whereas net-centricity can often be viewed as an attempt to decentralise to flow information downward to the tactical level, allowing local commanders on the scene to take more timely decisions. These paradoxes are not insoluble. Twenty-first century information operations are not sufficiently addressed by the existing Principles of War.

Additional Principles of War for Consideration

Some of the principles which may qualify as Principles of War and should be considered are given below:

Information Dominance: Conflict resolution in the 21st century will require increasing dependence on information. In addition to space, cyber space, a new dimension to the overall battlespace, accelerated pace of operations and the introduction of highly technological communications, situational awareness, sensor and weapon systems will only increase our dependence on computers and effective information management. Information dominance will enable forces to efficiently move and process the vast amounts of data, to synthesise it into information and, in turn, use that information to gain knowledge and understanding of ourselves, the enemy and the battlefield.

Information dominance will reduce the fog of war and give commanders and soldiers a more accurate understanding of their operating environment.

Public Opinion: In today's warfare, the factor of public/world opinion has acquired such significance that this is perhaps the most important consideration influencing the commencement, conduct and termination of any war. The Israelis have recommended image and legitimisation as a Principle of War. It is to make commanders of all ranks relate to both in planning the fighting and its execution. At every level, whoever plans and carries out an action in war, has to consider how it will be presented and appear in the media. Only China lists political mobilisation as one of the Principles of War.

Recommendations

Indian Principles of War are based on an opponent who was state-based homogeneous, rigid, hierarchical and resistant to change. But today's enemies are "dynamic, unpredictable, diverse, fluid, networked and constantly evolving." Such opponents do not lend themselves to an ingrained order of battle mentality. Our enemies play to their strengths not ours.

The Indian armed forces are the most battle hardened in the world in both conventional and CI operations. A large part of our army has been deployed in CI/CT operations in the Northern and Eastern Command for long. Analysis of these wars/conflicts does suggest that there may be a requirement of a separate set of Principles of War for CI operations. However, before any changes in the Principles of War are undertaken, a debate should be instituted. Accepting the idea that the Principles of War are changeable, and are changing now, suggests acceptance of the responsibility to think rigorously about those changes as well as the actions necessary to keep pace with them. The debate must extend beyond military theorists to include the leaders and operators who will be called to put these principles into practice.

As the traditional Principles of War are reviewed, some will be reaffirmed, others updated and a few may be discarded or replaced. In the process, there will be new thinking about the principles that will influence doctrine and guide the transformation of 21st century forces.

The objective should be clear – it is not to replace one set of principles, hostage to time and place, with another set equally constrained. There will be no perfect or easy answers, but the beginning can pose the right questions. Rethinking the Principles of War will help prepare military leaders to better understand the relationship of war to our nation's future as well as its past.

To facilitate thinking about the Principles of War, the effort should have three parts:

- A *national level seminar series* conducted over a six-month period. Seminar topics will address the changing character of war and potential changes in the Principles of War due to the changes in the threat, global societies, technologies and other factors.
- A *national essay contest to be conducted*, soliciting articles on potential changes to the traditional Principles of War. The contest would be sponsored by the HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) and United Service Institution (USI) working in partnership with the Army War College and its equivalents from the navy and air force. The prize money should be attractive enough, say, Rs one lakh for the winner. A similar contest in the USA offered prize money of \$15,000.
- A *bound volume of essays*, discussing the RMA, transformation and potential changes to the Principles of War to be published. It is intended that the volume serve as a definitive text for use in the Service academies, War Colleges and academia.

Conclusion

Every army has its own lists of the Principles of War. An analysis of the Principles of War of various nations reveals only a narrow range of divergence. Where change is necessary, we have to be cautious in effecting it. Radical change in military policy is extremely difficult to implement. Our current Principles of War are more reflective of the way we fought in the past than the manner in which we plan to fight today and in the future. The Principles of War must be updated to meet the challenges of the 21st century. No other army in the world has fought so many wars and carried out counter-insurgency/proxy war in such varied terrain and environment, including the nuclear backdrop, in the last 50 years. With so much rich first-

hand knowledge and experience, we must implement all the lessons learnt and move towards the future with our own concepts and not through the Field Manuals of other countries. Revision of the Principles of War should not be done in a hurry. Discussions/brainstorming should be organised and officers encouraged to challenge each principle about its applicability to the current and future methods of war-fighting in the Indian context. Only after due deliberations at all levels, should the Principles of War be formulated.

Laying down the Principles of War specifically in our doctrine does not mean the same would be applied by the military commanders. One cannot say that we followed the Principles of War except perhaps in the 1971 War with Pakistan. Lt Gen Y M Bammi, in his book *Kargil 1999: The Impregnable Conquered*, wrote:

The Kargil Conflict has brought out that most of India's senior commanders initially violated most of the Principles, specially Selection and Maintenance of Aim, Surprise and Deception, Administration and the Concentration of Force. Thus, initially, units were sent into battle without adequate intelligence, without preparation, inadequate fire support and unsatisfactory logistic backing. A few commanders also did not show flexibility, and had a rigid mindset of "Information" and "Counter-Insurgency operations," till end May 1999.

The conduct of war is best understood as both an art and science. As A T Mahan understood, art accepts the existence of principles and rules, but only as guides. It is for the commander to apply (or adjust) the principles and rules in each case, using what Mahan called "the greatest ingenuity in their application."

Appendix A

Comparison of Principles of War of Different Countries

Great Britain	Canada	Australia	India	USA	Israel	Former Soviet Union	France	China
Selection and Maintenance of Aim	Objective	Mission and Aim	-	-	Selection and Maintenance of Aim			
Offensive Action	Offensive Action	Offensive Action	Offensive Action	Offensive	Initiative and Offensive	Initiative	-	Offensive Action
Concentration of Force	Concentration of Force	Concentration of Effect	Concentration of Force	Mass	Concentration of Effort	Massing and Concentration of Force	Concentration of Effort	Concentration of Force
Economy of Force	Economy of Force	Economy of Effort	Economy of Force	Economy of Force	Optimum Utilisation of Forces	Economy and Sufficiency of Force	-	Mobility
Flexibility	Flexibility	Flexibility	Flexibility	Manoeuvre	Continuity of Action	Mobility and Tempo	-	Initiative and Flexibility
Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation	Cooperation	Unity of Command	Depth and Reserves	Interworking and Coordination	-	Coordination
Security	Security	Security	Security	Security	Security	-	-	Security
Surprise	Surprise	Surprise	Surprise	Surprise	Stratagem	Surprise	Surprise	Surprise
Logistics	Administration	Sustainment	Administration	Simplicity	Simplicity			
Maintenance of Morale	Morale	Morale	Maintenance of Morale	-	Maintenance of Morale and Fighting Spirit	Simultaneous Attack on All Levels and Preservation of Combat Effectiveness	Liberty of Action	Morale, Political Mobilisation and Freedom of Action

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