Introduction: What Makes a Winning Information Warfare Campaign?

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Communication strategy and information warfare are about shaping and changing behavior and managing expectations using language, action, images, or symbols to achieve a desired effect or end state. Academics spend a lot of time defining information warfare.¹ This fixation and lack of consensus on definitions should not obstruct the clear thinking required for effective information warfare strategy development.

Joseph S. Nye Jr., former dean of Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, has observed that in today’s threat environment, stories—not kinetic action—may decide who wins conflicts.² The current Ukraine conflict, ongoing at time of publication, illustrates that point. Russia and Ukraine have each used kinetic action to support their respective narratives, not vice versa. Moscow has pushed the narrative that pro-democracy revolutions lead to chaos and civil war; Kiev argues that separatism leads to misery. Journalist Peter Pomerantsev observes that “what actually happened on the ground was almost irrelevant—the two governments just needed enough footage to back their respective stories. Propaganda has always accompanied war, usually as a handmaiden to the actual fighting. But the information age means that this equation has been flipped: military operations are now handmaidens to the more important information effect.”³

The 2006 Lebanon War offers an earlier example. The Palestinians combined kinetic activity with effective strategic communication that discredited Israeli action within the international community. Always quick on the rebound, Israel applied the lessons learned to achieve success in subsequent engagements with Palestinians.⁴

Carl von Clausewitz famously declared that “war is merely the continuation of politics by other means.”⁵ From ancient times, information warfare has played a key role in armed conflict. Roman politician Scipio Africanus the Younger (a.k.a. Scipio Aemilianus) used it through brutal action to subdue Spanish dissent.⁶ Napoleon Bonaparte’s Italian campaign can be viewed as an exercise in strategic communication, which he exploited to gain power in France. Napoleon capitalized on the power of newspapers and social networks, art, poetry, personal appearances, and other information tactics to gain power as first consul.⁷ George Washington used false propaganda during the American Revolutionary War to discredit the British.⁸ In the twentieth century, Vladimir Lenin used movies on freight trains to shore up his revolution. William J. Donovan’s Office of Strategic Services (OSS) operatives...
adroitly used information warfare in carrying out their missions. Information warfare played a key role in the Vietnam War, as well, and it has been a characteristic of the recent conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan.

Kinetic or traditional military operations have driven conventional strategy, operations, and tactics. Strategic communication has bolstered the use of military force, but force has traditionally determined victors and losers. The current era presents a different threat environment characterized by new challenges. Evolving, proliferating technology renders the nature of our age radically different from past eras. As author Joshua Cooper Ramo puts it, in forging goals and strategies, and understanding the dynamics that shape success, context matters. Even if you think you have solved a specific problem, context endures. Incorrectly interpreting the context of a problem will produce incorrect solutions.

The internet has transformed the use of communication, blurring the boundaries between war and politics and elevating the importance of information. But technology is only one aspect of information warfare. Every form of traditional communication—personal, broadcast, print—as well as actions may come into play. What is different is that in a highly connected world, information can play a role equal to or superior to that of kinetic action.

Networks and connectivity define the nature of the current era. Successful strategy requires understanding the power of networks and how to capitalize on them. Connections expand our ability to communicate and to create new links with people, groups, organizations, and movements. Networks form when nodes—which can comprise people, computers, mobile devices, drones, or any connective object—emerge. Professor Manuel Castells describes networks as a set of interconnected nodes; or, quoting his academic articulation, “that specific form of enterprise whose system of means is constituted by the intersection of segments of autonomous systems of goals.” Networks are complex, distribute power, and consist of complicated pieces. Connectivity enables small pieces to combine into powerful ones. Castells observes that network-based social structures form a highly dynamic, open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance. He argues that crises and conflicts that characterize this century require an understanding of economy, culture, and society. A “shift from traditional mass media to a system of horizontal communication networks organized around the Internet” have produced radical changes in the communication of information. Digital networking technologies power new social and organizational networks that transcend geographic sovereignty and form a global system.

These developments impact the nature of information warfare today. The Islamic State has exploited networks and connectivity using social media campaigns to recruit, mobilize, and influence. During the 2003 Iraq War, al-Qaeda and the al-Anbar Province tribes used networks to advance their interests. The U.S. military has exploited expertise in networks and connectivity to enhance its own capabilities. The ability to identify and penetrate insurgent networks proved vital to Coalition success in Iraq, especially after 2007. China’s Three Warfares concept is rooted in identifying, understanding, and exploiting networks.

The existence of networks is not new. Leaders from Julius Caesar to Martin Luther to Napoleon and modern leaders have tapped into networks to exert influence. Technology has revolutionized...
the speed at which we receive, digest, process, and project information. Events that a century ago may have afforded the time to think and make a measured decision today require instant action. Knowledge that used to require months or years to acquire can be learned in hours or days. The ability to move faster than the competition can afford a cutting edge. These critically affect strategic thinking today. Those who master networks and connections can gain a decisive edge in competition for influence.16

This is increasingly true as engagements and conflicts occur on terrain or in areas shared by civilian and fighting forces and changes expectations of what laws of armed conflict, rules of engagement, and related actions are tolerable to the United States’ values and laws, as well as to the international community. Commanders and operators need to tailor strategies, operations, and tactics. No precise and consistent formula governs what will work for strategic communication and information warfare, as each new situation mandates a tailored response.

Generally, information warfare is an element of warfare.17 But warfare connotes violence. China’s approach eschews the use of kinetic action, although its initiatives are backed by military force. Commanders need to understand the parameters within which they can forge and execute information warfare—and how to use nonmilitary means to achieve desired goals or end-states.

A sophisticated, actionable approach to information warfare is vital in carrying out the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NDS acknowledges an increasingly complex global security environment characterized by overt challenges to the free and open international order and the reemergence of long-term, strategic competition between nations. The NDS adopts the view that China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea pose competitive challenges to U.S. prosperity and security in an ever more lethal and disruptive battlefield combined across domains, and that they do so with increasing speed and reach. In meeting the new challenges, the U.S. military must build capacity and expertise to conduct information warfare.

This book examines how to forge strategies, operations, and tactics using strategic communication as a tool of information warfare to exert influence and gain advantage in this competitive threat environment.

The Fallujah Illustration

In 2004, two battles led by U.S. Marines were fought in the city of Fallujah, Iraq. Each offers key insights into the nature and importance of strategic communication and information warfare.

The first battle took place in April, after insurgents murdered and mutilated four civilian contractors employed by Blackwater USA who were motoring through the city, as well as five U.S. soldiers in Habbaniyah. President George W. Bush saw the photos of the slain contractors and ordered immediate retaliation.19 On 3 April 2004, the Joint Task Force ordered I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), commanded by Lieutenant General James T. Conway, to attack and reestablish security in the city. Marine commanders on the ground objected to immediate action. They wanted time to prepare the battlefield and to ensure they had adequate forces and firepower; they had two battalions but wanted three.20 Higher authority ignored the recommendations of ground commanders and ordered the Marines into action.

In Operation Vigilant Resolve (First Battle of Fallujah), which commenced on 4 April, the Marines achieved military success in battling insur-
gents holed up within the city. Unfortunately, civilians as well as insurgent fighters became casualties. As of 2019, Al Jazeera had evolved into a sophisticated, professional news operation. In 2004, however, the reverse was true. Al Jazeera reporter Ahmed Mansour and his cameraman Laith Mushtaq, the only two nonembedded journalists, supplied footage. It depicted faked and distorted images of children and helpless civilians as victims of cavalier U.S. firepower and tactics. Some images were faked by photographing a doll on a pile of rubble to imply U.S. forces had killed children, for example, while other images were taken from previous conflicts and used to misrepresent the current conflict. Al Jazeera neglected to report that insurgents used civilians as human shields and fired from inside schools, mosques, and hospitals.

The insurgent propaganda strategy—a classic illustration of information warfare—worked. Iraqis watched Al Jazeera and became outraged. Iraqi Governing Council member Adnan Pachachi declared American operations “illegal and unacceptable.” The influential Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr warned the United States to withdraw or face a revolution, declaring that the Americans “will be fighting an entire nation—from south to north, from east to west.” Even Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a U.S. ally, was sharply critical. L. Paul Bremer III, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, came under sharp pressure to call off the offensive.

Ground commanders objected because they were close to victory. For unclear reasons, their views were not communicated to President Bush. Intimidated by Iraqi anger fueled by insurgent propaganda, Bremer and Lieutenant General Carlos Sanchez, the commander of U.S. ground forces in the country, caved to Iraqi pressure. On 9 April, Bremer announced that the United States would commence a unilateral ceasefire. The outcome represented a stunning setback for U.S. forces.

As U.S. commanders in Iraq took stock, one factor stood out: insurgents had won through the adroit use of information warfare. The Marines had acquitted themselves brilliantly in the actual fighting. They would have achieved their military objectives in a battle for which they had believed additional time and resources were prudent, but well-conceived and -executed enemy information warfare carried the day.

The Marines applied lessons learned on information warfare in November 2004, when Coalition forces launched a second, successful attack on Fallujah. The Coalition developed and executed a strategic communication plan that dominated media coverage and seized control of the narrative. It neutralized adversary efforts to characterize the fighting on their terms. It drove a credible message that the Coalition assault aimed to liberate Fallujah from violent extremists. As a tactical action, battling for local control of one city, the Coalition succeeded. They seized the city and drove out the insurgents. They won the shooting war and the information war—both were integral to victory.

A broader lesson emerged as well: a tactical victory had strategic effects. Iraqis watched with growing anger over the fierce firepower directed toward their fellow citizens. The two battles of Fallujah led to widened hostilities in 2005, arguably among the most difficult years in Iraq that Coalition forces experienced.

Looking to History

History provides important illustrations for how communication strategy made the difference in
whether the United States entered World War II
united or divided. Though President Franklin D. 
Roosevelt was caught off-guard by Japan’s at-
tack on Pearl Harbor, it played into his strategy
of portraying the United States as a peace-seeking
nation and a victim of Japanese aggression that
required a response. Roosevelt knew war was com-
ing. But he expected that Japanese action would
occur in the Far East, and he was actively pre-
paring for conflict with both Japan and Germany.
That Japan acted before Germany was ironic, as
Roosevelt’s major concern was Germany, not Ja-
pan—and while Japan had largely regional inter-
ests, Hitler wanted to conquer the world.29

Historian Richard M. Ketchum argues that
Roosevelt had no doubt that war with Japan
would break out, although “a cardinal principle
of the Roosevelt administration’s policy was to
put off that date as long as possible.”30

Americans were not psychologically prepared for war, mak-
ing Roosevelt very cautious as he maneuvered to
find unity in Congress and with the public.31

The key strategic moves involved no shooting.
They pivoted around Roosevelt’s communication
strategy. Roosevelt worried about antiwar senti-
ment. Views differ about the quality of Roosevelt’s
leadership leading into the war. Once declared,
he was resolute. Until then, his public actions wa-
vered. Inaction followed strong speeches. Most
historians agree he hoped not to lead the nation
into war.32

Roosevelt showed a masterful sense of stra-
tegic communication in conveying at every turn
the message that the United States wanted peace.
Nothing epitomized that desire more in the face
of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s
desperate pleas for the United States to enter the
war than their conference at Placentia Bay, off
Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, at which
cameras filmed a service showing Britons and
Americans praying together. While Churchill
hoped to depict the image of alliance for war, his-
torian Nigel Hamilton points out that Roosevelt
“was determined that the imagery reflect his joint
declaration of principles of peace—and how bet-
ter than by showing men worshiping God togeth-
er!”34

Roosevelt had his own camera team film the
service to ensure that it communicated the appro-
priate message.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson said, “The
question was how we should maneuver [Japan]
into the position of firing the first shot without al-
lowing too much danger to ourselves.”35

Ketchum emphasizes that Roosevelt believed victory re-
quired a united Congress. For that, he needed the
support of Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Hull
would give his support only if Japan initiated hos-
tilities.36

Roosevelt avoided giving Japan any pre-
text that it could cite as evidence that the United
States had provoked war. Roosevelt needed unity
in Congress.37

With Pearl Harbor, he got it; all but
one isolationist voted to declare war against Ja-
pan, Germany, and Italy.38

Roosevelt’s challenge paralleled the one con-
fronting President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln rec-
ognized that only if the South fired the first shot
could he persuade the North to fight. Far wiser
than Jefferson Davis, Lincoln baited Confederate
forces into acting at Fort Sumter, South Carolina,
then aggressively mobilized public support. Lin-
coln’s grasp of information strategy affected the
outcome of the American Civil War.39

Napoleon Bonaparte was equally adept in
his understanding of information warfare. He
amassed enormous power while nearly laying waste to Europe through continuous warfare from 1799 to 1815. But his path to power in France, made possible by the Italian campaigns, lay in his grasp of how to use propaganda. Napoleon was a genius at information warfare and strategic communication, using propaganda to portray himself as a hero in an era when the French sought heroes. His entire Italian campaign in 1796–97 was an exercise in building an image profile as a military genius and statesman as part of a calculated campaign to become first consul of France. He was the first leader to recognize how to exploit newspapers to glorify his achievements. He commissioned poems for fallen officers—and made sure they were broadly disseminated, which helped to show he cared about and honored those who served under him. He made himself visible at scientific meetings, the theater, and the opera, communicating the image of an enlightened intellectual. When he traveled to Egypt, he brought along 160 scholars to record his discoveries and other intellectual achievements.

Napoleon courted painters. They repaid him with paintings that made him look heroic. Poets wrote tributes. Sculptors made busts of his head. Playwrights dramatized his exploits. In case anyone failed to receive the message, artists such as Antoine-Jean Gros were on hand to mythologize his courage and the virtues of a military leader through romanticized portraits of him, such as Gros’s Bonaparte at the Pont d’Arcole. Depicting—a swashbuckling Bonaparte leading his troops to storm the bridge during the Battle of Arcole in 1796 near Verona, Italy, the portrait is a powerful vision of a conquering hero, fated by destiny and inflamed with passion, whose courage seizes victory. The painting was turned into engravings that achieved wide distribution. Napoleon thought about his image in military and political dimensions and recognized the impact that it could have in influencing the outcomes of conflicts.

The lesson for students of information warfare is that communicating that your leadership is uniquely outstanding builds credibility and clout. This is the point that Cathal J. Nolan makes in The Allure of Battle: in today’s world, a cult of leadership has emerged that places a false premium on the generals as the decisive factor in winning wars. Nolan’s well-argued book raises a valid point, but it seems naïve to believe that building and projecting the image of top-tier generals fails to boost morale on our side while intimidating or raising doubts among the enemy. Though they have both supporters and critics, during the periods General Stanley A. McChrystal and General David H. Petraeus led U.S. Army forces, they each projected the character of a strong, capable general. Their images bolstered U.S. efforts.

Forging a Communication Strategy for Information Warfare

Until recent times, warfare was largely decided by a combination of kinetic action and, arguably, attrition and will. Succeeding in current and future threat environments requires forging and articulating prevailing narratives that work in tandem with traditional military action. The rise of nonstate actors in conflicts and the shift in power from hierarchies or institutions to individuals and to networks is accelerating this development. In Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) showed, while it enjoyed battlefield success, the potential for “highly strategic types of evolutionary network advantages” that infuse warfighting with narratives. While ISIL suffered catastrophic defeats on the battlefield in 2017 and
2018, its actions demonstrated how conventional distinctions between the “tangible and intangible, lethal and non-lethal dimensions of operations” have changed. The U.S. military must not only match but exceed that capability.46

An earlier book by the author analyzed core components of strategic communications.47 General Stanley McChrystal, British Army Major General J. F. C. Fuller, B. H. Liddell Hart, Shimon Naveh, British Army General Rupert A. Smith, Carl von Clausewitz, David Kilcullen, and others have evaluated the operational military or political aspects of campaigns.48 Smith especially recognizes the importance of information warfare and communication strategy in the new threat environment, in which engagement and conflict will mostly occur in areas populated by civilians rather than on a conventional battlefield on which opposing armies face one another.

Steve Tatham and Andrew Mackay (with foreword by General McChrystal), on the other hand, have written astutely on the need to conduct influence operations to change behavior.49 Rand senior analyst Linda Robinson has written an important book, One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare, which describes how special operations forces (SOF) teams have operated in Afghanistan.50 While its focus is not explicitly on communication strategy, SOF teams’ work with Afghan villages offer numerous examples for applying the principles we discuss. The book is required reading for operators.

Information Warfare acknowledges the precepts those important authors embrace. Its focus differs in providing a step-by-step guide for actually forging and executing a communication strategy to conduct information warfare. Commanders and operators need to understand what factors drive any strategy. That includes the policy that animates a strategy and what decisionmakers must know to forge and execute a winning information war. Strategy exists at the operational, tactical, and grand levels. The precepts set forth here apply at all of those levels.51

**What Is Communication Strategy?**

Communication strategy employs words, actions, symbols, or images to mold or shape and influence a target audience’s attitudes and opinions to achieve specific effects, objectives, or end states. It is about persuasion that changes behavior.

Key factors that frame strategic thinking for information warfare are:

1. A powerful idea or cause that drives strategy.
2. A clear vision for what constitutes winning or success (i.e., end states and outcomes).
3. Clear definitions of the obstacles to success.
4. An actionable strategy that employs operations and tactics designed to produce success.
5. Well-constructed, actionable plans.
6. Operations and tactics to execute strategy.
7. Metrics that measure the effectiveness of a strategy.52

Success in military campaigns usually requires both kinetic and communication strategies. No single formula leads to success. Sometimes kinetic activity takes precedence, while at others, information warfare is more pivotal.

**How This Book Is Organized**

First, the reader learns about the key steps for developing a communication strategy, centered around the military concept of operational art.53 Operational art thinks in terms of the environment, as understood from knowledge and experience;
the problems to be addressed, as informed by the external and internal factors that affect how one changes the state of affairs from the current one to achieving conditions that satisfy a desired end state; and the approach to be used in solving problems through iterative creative thinking. It is a sophisticated approach. The work draws on historical and current examples that offer deep insights and illustrate the environments, the problems to be addressed, and the approaches to be used.

Military commanders employ a different language than political or corporate actors. They desire strategies, operations, and tactics that carry out their intent to achieve conditions that satisfy a desired end state. This work’s approach incorporates the notions of operational art, although it may employ slightly plainer language to describe what to do and how. This instructional section is amply footnoted to provide tremendous depth.

Second, an easy-to-use workbook outlines a step-by-step methodology for creating and evaluating communication strategies. The reader is intended to address supplied questions about their developing communication strategy.

This text discusses counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT), which have both inspired fierce debate. This work expresses no opinion on the merits of that debate, but a communication strategist must understand the spectrum of ideas, theories, or notions that a commander may embrace for action. This book does not focus on public affairs; that is a separate subset of communication and lies largely outside the scope of this work.

Endnotes

2. As quoted in Information at War: From China’s Three Warfares to NATO’s Narratives, Beyond Propaganda series (London: Legatum Institute, 2015), 2.
arguably the most influential thinker about the rise of social networks.


13. In his preface to the 2010 edition of The Rise of the Network Society, the crises that Castells cites include the global financial crises; religious fundamentalism; national, ethnic and territorial cleavers; the widespread resort to violence as a way of protest and dominations; climate change; and the growing incapacity of political institutions based on the nation-state to handle global problems and local demands.


16. Romo defines paradoxes that define challenges the U.S. faces, including the mismatch between broad national interest and ever-narrowing traditional means, decline in trust in institutions, impact of innovation, massive impact small forces can have on larger ones. The Seventh Sense, 76.

17. The Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, Joint Publication (JP) 1, does not define information warfare. It describes but does not define either war or warfare. See Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, JP 1, incorporating change 1 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2017). The Department of Defense dictionary also does not define these terms. See Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, JP 1-02 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2007).


20. Robert Kaplan, “Five Days in Fallujah,” Atlantic, July/August 2004. Kaplan was on the ground during the April operation and bore firsthand witness.

21. The term insurgents is used here because al-Qaeda formed after the battle, although the man who emerged as its most famous leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, participated. He and his forces claimed responsibility for killing 27 American military personnel in and around Fallujah, according to Head, “The Battles of Al-Fallujah,” 38.

22. Head, “The Battles of Al-Fallujah.”


26. It is unclear why ground commanders’ views were not communicated to the president. The author speculates that this failure was due to a combination of the president not asking the right questions and Bremer arrogating all expertise to himself while suppressing views contrary to his own.


29. Dr. Joseph Strange identified the challenges that presidents Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt confronted in maneuvering to place the North and the United States, respectively, into the Civil War and World War II conflicts. This aspect of the book you are holding draws on the ideas expressed in Strange’s outstanding work, Capital “W” War: A Case for Strategic Principles of War, Perspectives on Warfighting No. 6 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps War College, 1998). During the 11 months prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt made only four references to Japan, to keep the focus of the American public on Europe. Roosevelt always viewed Hitler, with his ambition for global domination compared to Japan’s regional aspirations, as by far the greater threat. See Steven Casey, Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40. See also Michel Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny: How Franklin D. Roosevelt and Five Extraordinary Men Took America into the War and into the World (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 10. Casey’s fascinating book makes the point that even after Pearl Harbor, Americans were reluctant to fight, and even then, it was to extract revenge against Japan. Casey, Cautious Crusade, 49. Indeed, newspaper coverage between December and March 1942 heavily outweighed coverage of the war against Germany, and many argued, to Roosevelt’s consternation, that Japan represented the more immediate danger. Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny, 48–49. Americans showed little interest in fighting the entire German nation, whom they—and Roosevelt—distinguished from Hitler and the Nazis. Fullilove, Rendezvous with Destiny, 58–302.

avoid war with Germany, Ketchum says that the isolationist America First policy supported a tough policy in the Pacific. Still, Roosevelt “was reluctant to put matters to the test.”

31. Casey, Cautious Crusade, 44. Casey argues that Roosevelt lacked strong support for formal involvement in war.

32. David Kaiser, No End Save Victory: How FDR Led the Nation into War (New York: Basic Books, 2014); and Nigel Hamilton, The Mantle of Command: FDR at War, 1941–1942 (New York: Houghton, Mifflin Harcourt, 2014). Kaiser also acknowledges that the White House, in Henry Stimson’s words, conducted its “diplomatic fencing . . . so as to be sure that Japan was put into the wrong and made the first bad move—over move.” Kaiser, No End Save Victory, 304. The need to prepare for war and not fight until the United States was ready is a theme of Kaiser’s book, but Hamilton affirms his view.

33. See Lynne Olson, Those Angry Days: Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and America’s Fight Over World War II, 1939–1941 (New York: Random House, 2013), 358, 400, 404, 406–7. Olson’s book offers a lucid account of Roosevelt’s struggle against isolationists. Olson, Those Angry Days, 395. Citing opinion polls, she argues that Roosevelt’s views lagged behind those of Americans, although a lot of his top military commanders, including Army Gen George C. Marshall, had hoped to avoid war. Once he saw war was inevitable, Marshall shifted course and pushed hard for war preparations. While Roosevelt held back from the political fracas in Congress, Marshall led the successful fight to extend the draft and prevent the effective dissolution of the 1.4-million-man army. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the extension by a single vote, 203 to 202. See also Susan Dunn, 1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler—the Election Amid the Storm (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), which focuses on the 1940 election and illuminates the divisions on the eve of World War II; and James P. Duffy, Lindbergh vs. Roosevelt: The Rivalry that Divided America (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2010). Duffy is more sympathetic to Charles Lindbergh.


35. Ketchum, The Borrowed Years, 697. Ketchum goes on to stress that the “question was how to arrange things so that the United States could intervene [in Japanese strikes in Thailand or Malaya] without somehow seeming to be the aggressor or the instigator of the hostilities.” Although polling showed Americans supported a strong stand against Japanese imperialism, there was “little enthusiasm” for going to war to defend European colonies in Southeast Asia. Ketchum, The Borrowed Years, 697. Historian Joseph E. Persico argues that Roosevelt did not want or necessarily expect war with Japan and that his attention was focused on Germany. Certainly, Pearl Harbor caught Roosevelt off-guard. He thought any conflict would surface in the Far East. See Joseph E. Persico, Roosevelt’s Centurions: FDR and the Commanders He Led to Victory in World War II (New York: Random House, 2013), 104–5.


37. See Strange, Capital “W” War, 7. Strange provides an excellent description of Lincoln’s dilemma. He leans heavily on Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln: The War Years (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), 135, 205–6. See also Ronald C. White Jr., A. Lincoln: A Biography (New York: Random House, 2009), 407–9. White points out that in his inaugural address, Lincoln had declared: “The government will not assail you [emphasis original]. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors.” In deciding to resupply Fort Sumter, Lincoln had overruled his cabinet in full recognition of what lay ahead. White quotes Lincoln as telling his friend Orville H. Browning: “The plan succeeded. They attacked Sumter—it fell, and thus did more service than it otherwise could.” White, A. Lincoln, 408. For an excellent strategic analysis of the Civil War, see MajGen J. F. C. Fuller, The Conduct of War, 1789–1961 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961). Fuller disagrees with Strange’s argument that Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, was baited into allowing his forces to fire the first shot at Fort Sumter. Carl Sandburg concurred in his epic four-volume study of Lincoln, The War Years, that Davis ordered Gen P. G. T. Beauregard to fire the first shot, leaving the timing to his discretion. Indeed, Davis’ willingness to initiate hostilities was the decisive factor in his selection as president of the Confederacy over Alexander H. Stephens, who made clear he would never issue such an order. (Stephens became vice president.) Fuller’s incisive analysis of Jefferson’s strategic blunders—focused on a combination of ill-advised offensive action and defending Richmond, VA, instead of placing major forces in Tennessee, where the North might have been stymied—should be read by any student of strategy. Historian William Trotter is equally harsh on Davis for replacing Gen Joseph E. Johnston.
as commander of Confederate forces in the western theater. Johnston’s abilities are hotly debated. Trotter rates him as equal to Robert E. Lee, a brilliant tactician, who, as historian and politician Newt Gingrich has observed, employed speed, mobility, and ferocity to devastating effect. Arguably Johnston’s desired approach to dealing with Union Gen William T. Sherman—a Mao-like strategy of forcing a war of attrition on Sherman—might have stymied Sherman’s march to the sea. Extremely brilliant at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, Sherman recognized the challenge when he later met with Johnston to negotiate a peace. Perhaps fortunate for Sherman, he had to face Johnston in war for a limited period. Davis despised Johnston and replaced him with the ineffective LtGen John Bell Hood at a critical point on 17 July 1864. See William R. Trotter, *Silk Flags and Cold Steel: The Civil War in North Carolina*, vol. 1, *The Piedmont* (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1988; Kindle ed., 2013). An obvious lesson is that the quality of leadership can decide who wins or loses. After the war, Sherman and Johnston remained good friends for life.


43. See Nolan, *The Allure of Battle*. Nolan argues that too often people overlook the role of great commanders or “decisive” battles as determining the outcome of warfare. In his view, most wars represent a triumph of attrition over enemies, as well as superior resources and manpower.

44. See Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters*, 5. While many people share and have written about the view he expresses, he articulates this notion succinctly in his study of Twitter’s impact on conflict.


46. Venturelli, “Dynamic Innovation and Evolutionary Capabilities of ISIL,” 35. The entire document is an excellent commentary and required reading.

47. Farwell, *Persuasion and Power*.


51. What role does State Department public diplomacy and Broadcasting Board of Governors international broadcasting play in the ideas this book describes? The answer is that while in theory the State Department has the lead for strategic communication, in practice foreign service officers tend to be dismissive of it in favor of statecraft. Public diplomacy should be an important part of the department, but since the dissolution of the United States Information Agency in 1999, diplomacy plays a secondary role for career officers. The Global Engagement Center was established in 2016 to coordinate communication with the U.S. government, but thus far has enjoyed limited success, despite a hard-working and competent workforce, in part due to funding issues. In any event, this book focuses on the military’s role.

52. The focus is on those deemed most relevant to information warfare or communication strategy, but factors such as geography, ideology, and the organization of government and military institutions are important. See Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, “Introduction: On Strategy,” in *The Making of Strategy*, 1–24.

53. See *Art of Design, Student Text*, Version 2.0 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010). It lays out the U.S. Army’s notion of operational art, centered on eight topics: the objective; levels of war; operational factors (space, time, and force); the four questions pertaining to objectives and end states; sequences of action; resources; likely chance of success or failure; and theater geometry and center of gravity.