Information Warfare

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Chapter 2

KNOW YOUR STRATEGIC SITUATION

It seems obvious that you need to understand your strategic position and the strategic situation. Modern and ancient history, however, is full of examples of leaders who failed to do so.

Consider these questions when assessing your strategic situation:
- What is happening in the theater of operations?
- What dynamics drive the strategic situation?
- Who has the momentum and why?
- Where is the momentum headed?
- What is your narrative, story theme, and message?
- Who are the target audiences?
- What language should be used to express the above?
- What channels and messengers should be used?

Historical Examples

Malaysian Emergency of 1948–60. During the 1950s, Sir Robert Thompson, who served on the staff of the British director of operations, helped defeat an anticolonial-driven insurgency led by the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), the military arm of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). A key to Britain’s successful communication strategy lay in the recognition that Malays wanted independence from Britain. Thompson’s campaign recognized that and promised Malays their independence. The decision proved a decisive factor in a sophisticated strategy that separated insurgents from the population as part of a successful counterinsurgency conflict.¹

Lesson: Successful strategy aligns messages with an understanding of culture, national aims, and popular aspirations. The British understood what the population desired and tailored their campaign strategy to meet those desires.

Battle of the Little Bighorn. General George Armstrong Custer’s ill-fated battle on 25–26 June 1876 against the Sioux and Cheyenne in eastern Montana has inspired an avalanche of books, art, and commentary. In addition to its relevance to modern information strategy as a demonstration of the failure to understand an adversary’s culture and a strategic situation, this historical tragedy is also used today by adversaries such as al-Qaeda in their propaganda to discredit the United States in its efforts to counter violent extremism.² Little Bighorn illustrates important lessons.
Lessons:

1. Recognize when circumstances mandate that an enemy will fight. The historian Evan S. Connell has remarked that Custer’s Last Stand at Little Bighorn “has been resurrected so often that General Custer is beginning to rival Lazarus.”

Perceptions differ on how the U.S. troops expected the tribes to respond. Historian Nathaniel Philbrick was writing about American Indians, not Iraq, but his point applies to both cultures. Philbrick points out that the U.S. government misjudged how Native American tribes would respond to the destruction of their buffalo herds, upon which they depended for food and sustenance, and to demands that tribes give up their lands and move to reservations so that Americans could exploit the discovery of gold in the Black Hills. The loss of buffalo and the land they roamed posed an existential threat to tribes’ survival. That many white pioneers and settlers simply butchered buffalo for the fun of it intensified the tribes’ volatility.

It was a dark chapter in U.S. history. The government entered into 354 treaties with Native American tribes, and it broke every one. Civil War icons such as Philip H. Sheridan declared, “The only good Indians I ever saw were dead,” a statement later made famous in the epigram that “the only good Indian is a dead Indian.” He did not stand alone. General William Tecumseh Sherman also called for the extermination of indigenous peoples. Newspapers echoed the sentiment. President Ulysses S. Grant turned a blind eye to the slaughter. Why would any U.S. officer or soldier expect the native tribes to perceive them or the federal government as anything except deeply hostile to their future? Ironically, that was arguably not Custer’s view, but he did not make policy. Custer opposed extermination, although he favored opening up the Black Hills for prospecting and extinguishing the Sioux’s title to the land granted by an 1868 treaty.

Compare lack of understanding of Native American tribes’ concerns to Paul Bremer’s failure to grasp that disbanding the Iraqi Army and banning even many school teachers from the ability to earn a livelihood and feed their families would alienate them and help foster insurrection. It is a mistake repeated time and again. Japanese Imperial Navy admiral Isoroku Yamamoto made it in supporting the attack on Pearl Harbor. General Douglas MacArthur made it in failing to anticipate that the Chinese would intervene in Korea.

2. Ensure that a communication strategy is rooted in realistic expectations. The federal government wanted the Sioux to become farmers, despite the fact that the tribe had no agricultural tradition. That ignorance echoed that which Rajiv Chandrasekaran attributed to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan. USAID ignored savvy counsel that one could move farmers off poppy into cotton, which would grow in Afghan soil and be profitable. Instead, USAID pigheadedly insisted they grow other crops. But the terrain was wholly unsuited and economic prospects were limited. Not surprisingly, farmers refused, and USAID efforts failed. Key lesson: target audience analysis will provide insight into what the audience wants and will motivate it to behave
in a manner that helps achieve a desired objective or outcome.

3. Do not allow pride to drive your strategy. Custer’s decision to divide his forces has been debated. The debate about military strategy lies in a different venue; it is his communication strategy that is relevant here, as it was integral to his view on warfare. He boasted that “his regiment could whip and defeat every Indian on the plains.”

Custer’s main tactic was the cavalry charge. Many believe that charging blindly into the fray was rooted in a vain belief that he was lucky, coupled with sheer bravado. Nathaniel Philbrick comments that charging a large village such as the one at Little Bighorn “makes no logical sense. But cavalry charges are not about logic; they are about audacity, about using panic and fear to convince the enemy that you are stronger than they are, even if that is not even close to being the case.”

Music accompanied this display of bravado. Custer always brought a band along with him into combat. As the cavalry charged, the band struck up “Garry Owen”—his version of shock and awe.

Apparantly, Custer did not expect the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne warriors to stand and fight, ignoring stern warnings from his scouts. Driven by hubris and failing to think things through, he got himself and his entire troop—approximately 220 soldiers (the exact number is not clear)—killed.

Similarly, the U.S. decision to wage the first battle for Fallujah was driven by the hubris that ignored sage advice from U.S. Marines who knew the score, rather than by a cohesive strategy that prepared and shaped the battlefield, enabled victory, and looked ahead to what seizure of the city would achieve.

4. Do not be seduced by myths of heroism or invincibility. Errol Flynn’s movie version of Custer’s Last Stand and most paintings that memorialize the event falsely portray the battle and its participants. Little Bighorn was a debacle built on a policy of ethnic extermination, and Custer was a disgrace, not a hero.

Our enemies are ruthless in distorting the truth about the United States and its values. But the facts support criticism over the treatment of the tribes—a sentiment perhaps voiced most vehemently by the tribes themselves.

5. Understand what the enemy is saying. Custer did not grasp the realities of communication with an adversary. He had smoked a peace pipe with Cheyenne warriors led by Medicine Arrow and Little Robe and promised he had come in peace. A skeptical Medicine Arrow warned Custer that they would kill him should he break his word. Lesson: it pays not merely to hear but also to listen.

Historian Nathaniel Philbrick argues that while Sitting Bull was renowned for his strength and desire to resist the settlers, “at the Little Bighorn, he [Sitting Bull] did not want to fight. He wanted to talk. . . . As he recognized . . . our children are best served not by a self-destructive blaze of glory, but by the hardest path of all: survival and accommodation.” Custer did not grasp that, nor did the other generals involved in the campaign. They made no effort to try. Some may dispute Philbrick’s conclusion, but if he is correct, Custer made a tragic, avoidable, and costly mistake. The point is not whether Philbrick is correct, however; historians
may argue about that. It is the questions he poses: What is the enemy’s real intent, and can we achieve our objectives without kinetic engagement? Mao Zedong was right. Politics is war without bloodshed. Why fight if it can be avoided and goals still can be achieved?

The Little Bighorn and the slaughter of tribes and their food sources have special relevance today. Al-Qaeda propaganda frequently cites what U.S. policy did to its own indigenous peoples to discredit U.S. efforts to counter the organization’s violent extremism. Knowing our own history is critical in enabling us to deal with some of its darker aspects.22

Americans tend to focus on recent and current events. For others, what happened hundreds or more than a thousand years ago may hold emotionally explosive contemporary relevance. That held true in Bosnia, where different parties laid claim to land based upon dominance over it at different periods of history.23 It is true for China.24 It is true in Arab cultures, where the Crusades resonate as if they happened yesterday. It is true in Iran, which views its relations with the West through the lens of more than a century of troubled interactions.25

Battle of the Teutoburg Forest. In 9 CE, Rome suffered one of its worst defeats when Germanic tribes massacred three of Rome’s 28 legions. Rome was all-powerful in its world, but had a small army—between 125,000 and 150,000 soldiers. Rome did not replace the legions until Tiberius became Emperor six years later.26 The debacle occurred when provincial governor Publius Quinctilius Varus allowed an ambitious German leader, Arminius—whom he supposed an ally—to trick him into leading the legions and the civilians accompanying them deep into the Teutoburg Forest. Aside from simply misjudging the enemy, Varus failed to understand the strategic situation he had entered, presuming he was governing a peaceful province.

A contemporary Roman historian, Velleius Paterculus, recorded the Roman governor’s naïveté:

When given the German command, he [Varus] went out with the quaint preconception that here was a subhuman people which would somehow prove responsive to Roman law even where it had not responded to the Roman sword. He therefore breezed in—right into the heart of Germany—as if on a picnic. . . . Meantime the Germans, a race combining maximum ferocity with supreme guile (and being born liars besides) fawned upon Varus . . . marveling at his jurisprudence and flattering him regarding his civilizing mission.27

Two thousand years later, the 2003 Iraq conflict offered a parallel lesson. Larry Diamond, advisor to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, quoted one diplomat’s impression about the Americans in Baghdad’s Green Zone: “What struck me about the palace was the completely self-referential character of it. It was all about us, not about them [the Iraqis]. People would walk around the palace with a mixture of venal and idealistic motives. None of them knew Iraq.”28

Lessons:

1. Know your enemy. Varus misjudged the interests, cultural values, aspirations, and desire for independence among the Germanic tribes. Their rebellion and fatal ambush of his legions came as a total surprise. Target audience analysis is a persistent requirement for influence operations. One lesson applicable
today is that populations are not monolithic. An analyst’s insight is vital to understanding the demographic differences among target audiences so that messaging may be calibrated to each audience segment.

2. **Presume nothing about the loyalty of ostensibly peaceful populations and calibrate communication strategy accordingly.** Varus thought that the Germanic people could be ruled as subjects of Rome. His actions taken in that misperception inspired deep hostility and motivated the people to action. He had no strategy for winning them over or keeping them peaceful. Not surprisingly, they rose up against him when his policies became rooted in oppressive rule. They lulled Varus into letting down his guard.

Varus lived 2,000 years ago, but the lesson that applied to him also applies, in its own way, to Afghanistan, where, as author Bing West points out, villages that seemed friendly and grateful one minute could turn on U.S. troops in a flash.

3. **Communication strategy requires dependable intelligence about what the enemy is up to.** Varus failed to achieve this goal from the outset. He did not consider the Germanic people his enemy. He made foolish assumptions about the population, instead of viewing his situation with an open but skeptical perspective.

A different analogy applied in Iraq. West’s study of the battles for Fallujah revealed that the insurgents lacked the command-and-control hierarchy that, for example, the Viet Cong had. They wore no uniforms, operated from their homes, and had a lack of military communications that (at least initially) could be intercepted, “yet they all know one another.” He analogized as well to the American Indian tribes, bonded by common hatred of an enemy but launching different raids at different times for different reasons. Communication strategy must anticipate such challenges.

**Modern Examples**

**Iraq.** Nathaniel Philbrick stated the following critical question: How will a society facing changes that produce inescapable catastrophe deal with it? Fear of the future is critical to people on the verge of cataclysm. It can imbue even the most trivial incident with overwhelming significance. In Iraq, the minority population of Sunnis had long controlled the country. Ousted from control as Coalition forces toppled Saddam Hussein, Shiites violently targeted Sunnis. At the same time, Coalition Provisional Authority head Paul Bremer had banned many Sunnis from earning a living. Failure to grasp that Sunnis perceived an existential threat to their existence nearly produced military defeat for Coalition forces. Only effective Coalition outreach, commencing in al-Anbar Province, persuaded Sunnis that al-Qaeda was an unacceptable alternative and reversed the situation.

**Lesson:** Iraq is full of lessons. A critical one is to recognize how people in other societies and cultures will perceive how actions and events affect their well-being, prosperity, cultural integrity, or survival and how they will respond.

**Afghanistan.** Afghan politics are driven by a very complex tribal structure. Special operations veterans like Major Jim Gant have offered a cogent argument, worth studying, for why success in that culture requires winning “one tribe at a time.” Linda Robinson has catalogued concrete examples...
of how understanding the ethnographics, tribes, villages, and key players at the local level can spell the difference between success and failure, and how achieving that was key to special operations teams successes. Former U.S. speaker of the House Thomas Phillip “Tip” O’Neill once said that all politics is local.

**Example:** Special operations operators who this author interviewed all held the view that understanding the political and military dynamics of Afghanistan required a nuanced, subtle, detailed knowledge of the provinces, villages, tribes, clans, families, and key individuals who comprise a decentralized culture.

**Philippines, 2013.** U.S. special operations forces have played a key role in providing useful advice to the Philippine military in countering violent Islamic extremism in the southern part of the nation. Recognizing that a smaller footprint serves the interests of the United States and our Filipino partner, U.S. special operations forces have calibrated the assistance. That decision is integral to a communication strategy. It has cut off the ability of violent extremists to credibly argue that the United States occupies the country or controls the government.

**Lesson:** Think carefully about what degree of visibility aids or undercuts an operation. The low profile taken by U.S. special operations forces in the Philippines, ceding the lead to Filipinos, has worked well. It has insulated both parties from enemy propaganda that would undercut U.S. aid by decrying foreign intervention, and it has bolstered the strength of the Philippine government.

**Yemen.** Yemen’s president Ali Abdullah Saleh permitted the United States to strike at al-Qaeda operatives with General Atomics MQ-1 Predator drones inside Yemen, providing the United States kept quiet about it. In November 2002, U.S. military forces tracked down al-Qaeda leader Abu Ali al-Harethi in the northern province of Marib and killed him with AGM-114 Hellfire missiles. Arguably, al-Harethi was the mastermind behind the USS Cole (DDG 67) bombing. Unfortunately, a high-ranking U.S. defense official praised the strike on CNN. A furious Saleh felt this revelation made him look hypocritical. He ordered the United States to cease Predator operations. The failure to grasp the fragile, explosive, fluid state of Yemeni politics cost the United States eight years, until 2010, when Saleh lost power and the Predators swung back into action.

**Lesson:** Gear strategy to a realistic assessment of what an ally finds politically plausible. Saleh faced a complex political situation in Yemen. In his view, visible U.S. action lacked a political foundation among Yemenis and could prove destabilizing. He was understandably upset when a U.S. official breached a U.S. commitment to stay below radar. Do not ask political or military allies in another country to provide more support than is politically feasible. Control information as part of a strategic communication plan.

**Ethiopia, 2006.** The United States funded warlords in Somalia on the theory that they opposed al-Qaeda and could help keep it at bay. But the warlords themselves lacked credibility and aroused fierce hostility among Somalis.

**Lesson:** Be careful about the friends you choose. Backing the warlords complicated rather than solved the problem the United States needed to address.
Endnotes

1. See Sir Robert Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966). Thompson’s five basic principles of counterinsurgency have achieved the status of catechism. See also Nagl, Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife, which discusses various insurgencies, including Malaya.


4. At one point, 8 million buffalo roamed the prairies. They were hunted nearly to extinction before the federal government facilitated their comeback in the twentieth century.


6. McMurtry, Custer, 94.


8. In a letter to his brother, John Sherman, Gen Sherman declared: “The more Indians we can kill this year the fewer we will need to kill the next, because the more I see of the Indians the more convinced I am that they must either all be killed or maintained as a species of pauper.” William T. Sherman to John Sherman, 23 September 1868, Rachel Sherman Thorndike, ed., The Sherman Letters (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894), 321–22. Historian James Donovan had no doubt that Sheridan and Sherman favored extermination. See James Donovan, A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn—The Last Great Battle of the American West (New York: Little, Brown, 2008), 91. Sherman’s role in the Civil War is fraught with irony. His “march to the sea” dealt a lethal psychological blow to Southern hopes. No one disputes his remarkable ability. His strategy to conduct psychological warfare to break the will of the South and the operational and tactical imagination he employed to carry out his strategy mark him as perhaps the North’s top general, along with another master strategist, Ulysses S. Grant. See Hart, Strategy, 149–55; and Charles Royster, The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson and the Americans (New York: Vintage, 1993). However, Sherman’s tactic of conducting violent war on innocent civilians arguably satisfies the modern definition of terrorism—perpetrating violence on civilians for political aims. See Sherman’s letter to Henry W. Halleck declaring: “We are not only fighting armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies.” William T. Sherman to Henry W. Halleck, 24 December 1864, Civil War Era NC (website), accessed 24 May 2019; and Trotter, Silk Flags and Cold Steel, loc. 3362–3373 of 6371, Kindle. Sherman critics charge that Sherman did not believe in racial equality and refused to allow African Americans to serve as soldiers in his army. See Michael Fellman, “A White Man’s War,” Civil War Times Magazine, 19 November 2009; and Steven Hancock, “William T. Sherman: Hero or Villain?,” Civil War Diary (blog), 3 September 2011. But Stanley P. Hirshson, The White Tecumseh: A Biography of General William T. Sherman (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1997) disputes Fellman’s view and argues that he was not racist. Sherman’s champions argue that no matter what, his attitudes should be judged in the context of the times and that while wreaking physical destruction, Sherman’s campaign was relatively bloodless. Certainly, once hostilities were concluded, he was gracious toward Gen Joseph E. Johnston in offering terms that were rejected in Washington by Lincoln’s successors. See Royster, The Destructive War, and Noah Andre Trudeau, Southern Storm: Sherman’s March to the Sea (New York: Harper, 2008). Royster’s fine book offers a very sympathetic account of Sherman and his career. He notes that sentiment among many Northerners toward the South was harsh. An Ohio legislator proposed “one million dollars to pay for the scalps of rebels.” Royster, The Destructive War, 79, emphasis original. Senator John Sherman declared on 9 July 1862: “you cannot conduct warfare against savages unless you become half-savage yourself.” Royster, The Destructive War, 81. “Talk of regeneration,” Royster wrote, “included talk of extermination and depopulation.” Royster, The Destructive War, 81. In Royster’s view, a combination of Northern opinion and difficult fighting to take Vicksburg, MS, persuaded Sherman that breaking the South’s will to fight required harsh measures, although his “march to the sea” inflicted mainly damage on property, not civilian deaths. He justified war on civilians on the theory that all Southerners—civilians and military—bore a “collective responsibility” for the war. Royster, The Destructive War, 117. At the outset of the war, Sherman had been teaching in Louisiana. His objection to the Confederacy lay not in opposition to slavery (Royster, The Destructive War, 90, 109), but what he viewed as a treasonous desertion of the union. The weakness in Royster’s account is that he glosses over Sherman’s extremist views toward the Indian tribes. Trudeau argues that...
Sherman’s destruction has been exaggerated in a detailed account of a well-executed campaign and desire to restore postwar normality. Sherman’s brutally extremist views toward the tribes, however, seem evident. Grant was complicit in the war against the Native Americans, although excellent historians such as Jean Edward Smith make a strong case that he is vastly underrated. See Jean Edward Smith, *Grant* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), Kindle. Smith praises his “peace policy” toward American Indians (Grant, loc. 9936 of 21625, Kindle), and argues that he restrained Gens Sherman and Phil Sheridan and was conciliatory (Grant, loc. 10926–10937 of 21625, Kindle), putting a peace policy in place by 1869 (Grant, loc. 11087 of 21625, Kindle). Smith feels Custer’s battle and corruption in the Indian Service did much to undermine a humanitarian bent in Grant. Smith, *Grant*, loc. 11367 of 21625, Kindle.

9. Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, 241. Connell’s view is that whatever Custer’s opinions, he did not make policy. His job was to follow orders. A review of what Custer said and did makes it hard to take a benign view of him. He was cold-hearted and cruel to his own soldiers. Many of his colleagues disliked him. Gen Sheridan used him but did not trust him. His attack on Black Kettle in 1868 at Washita was particularly telling. He led a murderous assault on a Cheyenne camp, killing women and children, then he ordered the senseless slaughter of more than 700 horses. Philbrick quotes a Cheyenne woman as remembering the very “human cries of the ponies, many of which were disabled but not killed by the gunfire.” Philbrick, *The Last Stand*, 136. See also McMurtry, *Custer*, 64–65. Ironically, in 2013, the roles seem to reverse themselves, as American Indian leaders supported the slaughter of wild horses in New Mexico, while former Governor William B. Richardson and conservationists like Robert Redford battled to save them. See Fernanda Santos, “On Fate of Wild Horses, Stars and Indians Spar,” *New York Times*, 10 August 2013. As to Custer, the romantic aura ascribed to him in film does not survive scrutiny. His men shot deserters who tried to surrender, while Custer himself shot a Confederate officer during the Civil War who tried to surrender. Apparently, he wanted—and kept—the dead officer’s expensive saddle and sword and his fine thoroughbred horse. Philbrick, *The Last Stand*, 30–31. As with Sheridan and Sherman, a key quality that stands out about him is bloodlust.


14. Donovan, *A Terrible Glory*, 219. See also Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, 276. Connell poses the question of why Custer thought he could achieve with one regiment what an army would have difficulty accomplishing. He suggests that Custer trusted too much to luck.


19. See, for example, Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Bantam, 1972); and William S. E. Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). For a critical examination of how foreign publics may perceive the United States and its values, and the sense that American films and television not only transmit an ideology that may incite hostility, but are themselves ideology, see Ziauddin Sardar and Marryl Wyn Davie, *Why Do People Hate America?* (Cambridge, UK: Icon Books, 2003). The issue here is not whether one agrees with their views, but to comprehend and be able to address them, and to factor in criticisms of the United States, in forging communication strategy.

20. Medicine Arrow famously kicked ash on Custer’s boots, signifying either a warning, contempt, or a curse—or all three. See Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, 202; and Philbrick, *The Last Stand*, 123.

21. Philbrick, *The Last Stand*, 312. In 1890, Sitting Bull was murdered by police at Wounded Knee, SD. Philbrick quotes Lakota tribe members from Sitting Bull’s village as stating years later that had Custer simply asked for a council instead of attacking, “he could have led them all into the agency [reservation] without a fight.” Philbrick, *The Last Stand*, 144.

22. Not helpful is the romantic myth that has grown up around Custer. Contemporary historians laud him as a hero. Bad poetry by Walt Whitman and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and paintings or illustrations by William Cory, John Mulvany, and F. Otto Becker inaccurately depicted a glorious last stand by bluecoats led by a gallant leader with flowing locks, portrayed by Errol Flynn in the 1941 movie *They Died with Their Boots On*. Actually, Custer’s hair, as Connell points out, was short; it was too hot to wear Army bluecoats; and the motley group he commanded “might be mistaken for a limping drunken mob of itinerant farmhands.” Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, 362. Instead, history is left with an image, as Connell puts it, of “fantastically painted redskins whirling in barbaric splendor around a disciplined unit of whites in uniform blue coats.” Connell, *Son of the Morning Star*, 356.

25. The history of the Iranian relations with the West is too complex for this book. Suffice to say the picture is more complicated than modern media suggests. One might start in 1872, when, “for a paltry sum, [baron Julius de Reuter] acquired the exclusive right to run [Iran’s] industries, irrigate its farmland, exploit its mineral resources, develop its railroad and streetcar lines, establish its national bank, and print its currency.” Stephen Kinzer, All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 31. George N. Curzon, then a member of British Parliament, described this as “the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamt of, much less accomplished, in history.” Honorable George N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1892), 480. One can examine the role of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOCH), formed in 1908, and its impact on Iranian culture and politics. See Kinzer, All the Shah’s Men, 48–49; and Kenneth M. Pollack, The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America (New York: Random House, 2004), 24. By 1914, the British government had control of APOCH, and left Iran with a small 16-percent royalty on net profits, which inspired deep bitterness. See Dr. Mohammad Malek, “Oil in Iran between the Two World Wars,” Iran Chamber Society (website), 10 July 2008. Iranians drew the lesson, continuing through the present, which in no way justifies its vicious hostility toward the existence of Israel, that the West would always treat Iran and its citizens as pawns to control oil while trampling on Iranian interests and sovereignty. World War II persuaded Iranians that the West would employ military force to abuse Iranian sovereignty—also a complicated issue, as Reza Shah Pahlavi had flirted with the Nazis, prompting the Allies to oust him. Iranians would argue he acted out of nationalism, not empathy for Germany. The U.S.-backed coup that ousted the only democratically elected leader of Iran in more than a hundred years, Mohammad Mosaddeq, directly led the 1979 revolution and its aftermath. See Kinzer, All the Shah’s Men, chapter 5; Pollack, The Persian Puzzle; and James A. Bill, The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988).
27. See Velleius Patérculus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti [Compendium of Roman History], trans. Frederick W. Shipley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 117–18. Shipley translates Patérculus in these words: “[H]e entered the heart of Germany as though he were going among a people enjoying the blessings of peace. . . . But the Germans who with their great ferocity combine great craft, to an extent scarcely credible to one who has had no experience with them, and are a race to lying born” trumped up various lawsuits and won Varus’s trust by feigning gratitude for his settlement of the fictitious disputes to blind him to the treachery that they planned and brutally executed. The battle was a catastrophe for Rome. It cost Rome a province and all of its garrisons. The Nazis revered what they viewed as the noble and heroic virtues of Arminius. Nazi propaganda cited his achievements, rooting the National Socialist Regime in Germany’s history and casting Arminius as a unifying hero. See Job Mestrom, “Arminius in National Socialism: How the Nazis Presented Antiquity in Propaganda” (master’s thesis, Raboud University 2016), 3–4.
30. West, No True Glory, 18.
31. Philbrick, The Last Stand, 64.
32. Israeli concern about Iran’s nuclear program raises similar concerns.
34. Robinson, One Hundred Victories. The book focuses on Afghanistan but her examples and the lessons to be drawn from them apply to other nations, societies, and cultures.