

# STRATEGY: CONTEXT & ADAPTATION

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## Overview

*Each chapter is an essay by a professor teaching at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies. The discussion of strategy is taken from its nebulous definition as an ever-adapting concept, to the study of strategy by the ancients, and finally to its use in modern land, sea, air, space, and cyber contexts. The discussion defines how strategy is differentiated from planning, and offers future directions on the nature of war.*

## Chapter 1. Seeking Strategy

by: Everett Carl Dolman

It is exceedingly difficult to pinpoint an exact definition of “strategy”. Any definition must realize that strategy needs to be constantly redefined and updated. One who seeks strategy does not want to fully define it and thus stifle it. That being said, there are some timeless truths. The “grand strategy” of a State is the highest goal: to achieve the welfare and security of its denizens. Such strategy leads to sub-strategies: military, economic, diplomatic, and informational.

Military strategy, specifically, aims to maximize the violence capable of being enacted within the constraints given by a legitimate government. The purpose of a military is not to go to war; it's to prepare for war in times of peace, and be ready in times of turmoil. To be able to either take territory for the State, or ensure an enemy does not take it. There are inherent paradoxes in discussion of war and strategy. For example, to have a long period of peace would prevent your military from being hardened. When encountering such paradoxes, one must simply accept them and move on.

Tactics, on the other hand, relate to achieving specific objectives and results, within the boundaries that the strategist defines. Tactics focuses on goals whereas strategy maximizes choices. Strategy aims to redefine how you think. Think of chess: a strategist would consider not just the rules of the game but also your chosen opponents and the types of competitions.

The tactician wishes to believe that the future can be calculated precisely. Such a tactician can simply study history and succeed. Yet the strategist realizes that the rules of the game can be changed, and sometimes seeks to change the rules of the game himself. He realizes that history only gives probabilities for the future. Quantum physics tells us that nature at its basic level doesn't contain certainties but rather probabilities. The thought experiment of “Schrödinger's cat” demonstrates that a cat can be both alive and dead simultaneously until you, the observer of the experiment, opens the box to check. In addition, light is both a wave and particle until you observe it – only then does it become a particle at a specific location.

“But enemy ships are real, concrete objects!” exclaims the tactician. The pragmatism of military strategy does not deny such truths; strategists, however, are more concerned with probabilistic situations like battles and policies. Proper strategists should entrust the commander and tactician to handle the micro situations. A strategist sees war as perpetual, and adapts to it as such. While a tactician might be frustrated and confused if a government withdraws from battle, the strategist realizes that the grand strategy includes economic and political context.

## Chapter 2. An Imperfect Jewel

by: Harold R. Winton

Strategic theorists throughout the ages have sought theories of strategy which are meant to be timeless. Theories should ideally connect the study of one field to other related fields (e.g. how Clausewitz related military strategy to politics). There are, however, too many variables in the real world (especially in war) for a theory to be perfect; therefore, our aim should be to simply make a theory *less imperfect*. Some will use theory to describe war, and others will use theory to predict and direct future actions. Doctrine is halfway between abstract theory and concrete actions, and is essentially “sanctioned theory.”

