

Strategy The Logic Of War And Peace Revised And Enlarged Edition

Enables readers to think strategically about American foreign policy.

In this book, the distinguished writer Edward Luttwak presents the grand strategy of the eastern Roman empire we know as Byzantine, which lasted more than twice as long as the more familiar western Roman empire. The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire is a broad, interpretive account of Byzantine strategy, intelligence, and diplomacy over the course of eight centuries that will appeal to scholars, classicists, military history buffs, and professional soldiers.

"What kind of nuclear strategy and posture does the United States need to defend itself and its allies? Contrary to conventional wisdom, this book explains why a robust nuclear posture, above and beyond a mere second-strike capability, contributes to a state's national security goals" (ed.).

A major contribution to our understanding of contemporary warfare and strategy by one of the world's leading military historians. At the height of its power, the Roman Empire encompassed the entire Mediterranean basin, extending much beyond it from Britain to Mesopotamia, from the Rhine to the Black Sea. Rome prospered for centuries while successfully resisting attack, fending off everything from overnight robbery raids to full-scale invasion attempts by entire nations on the move. How were troops able to defend the Empire's vast territories from constant attacks? And how did they do so at such moderate cost that their treasury could pay for an immensity of highways, aqueducts, amphitheaters, city baths, and magnificent temples? In *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, seasoned defense analyst Edward N. Luttwak reveals how the Romans were able to combine military strength, diplomacy, and fortifications to effectively respond to changing threats. Rome's secret was not ceaseless fighting, but comprehensive strategies that unified force, diplomacy, and an immense infrastructure of roads, forts, walls, and barriers. Initially relying on client states to buffer attacks, Rome moved to a permanent frontier defense around 117 CE. Finally, as barbarians began to penetrate the empire, Rome fielded large armies in a strategy of "defense-in-depth," allowing invaders to pierce Rome's borders. This updated edition has been extensively revised to incorporate recent scholarship and archeological findings. A new preface explores Roman imperial statecraft. This illuminating book remains essential to both ancient historians and students of modern strategy.

For the United States, asymmetric warfare has emerged as the "new normal." The large-scale conventional campaigns that typified U.S. military engagements for much of the 20th Century are increasingly things of the past. Instead, the quarter-century since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the U.S.-Soviet balance of power has seen irregular war truly come of age, with more and more hostile nations pursuing asymmetric means in order to secure the strategic advantage vis-à-vis the United States. In this volume, a group of leading national security practitioners and subject matter experts comes together to analyze the asymmetric strategies being pursued today by America's main state-based adversaries—Russia, China, Iran and North Korea—and to explore how U.S. policymakers can respond more effectively to them.

As the rest of the world worries about what a future might look like under Chinese supremacy, Luttwak worries about China's own future prospects. Applying the logic of strategy for which he is well known, he argues that the world's second largest economy may be headed for a fall unless China's leaders check their military ambitions.

"If you want peace, prepare for war." "A buildup of offensive weapons can be purely defensive." "The worst road may be the best route to battle." Strategy is made of such seemingly self-contradictory propositions, Edward Luttwak shows—they exemplify the paradoxical logic that pervades the entire realm of conflict. In this widely acclaimed work, now revised and expanded, Luttwak unveils the peculiar logic of strategy level by level, from grand strategy down to combat tactics. Having participated in its planning, Luttwak examines the role of air power in the 1991 Gulf War, then detects the emergence of "post-heroic" war in Kosovo in 1999—an American war in which not a single American soldier was killed. In the tradition of Carl von Clausewitz, Strategy goes beyond paradox to expose the dynamics of reversal at work in the crucible of conflict. As victory is turned into defeat by over-extension, as war brings peace by exhaustion, ordinary linear logic is overthrown. Citing examples from ancient Rome to our own days, from Barbarossa and Pearl Harbor down to minor combat affrays, from the strategy of peace to the latest operational methods of war, this book by one of the world's foremost authorities reveals the ultimate logic of military failure and success, of war and peace.

This book is an analysis of President Bush's Regional Defense Strategy first unveiled in Aspen, Colorado, on August 2, 1990. This strategy involves a mix of active, reserve, and reconstitutable forces, and General Colin Powell's Base Force. If implemented, the new strategy and force structure would return significant U.S. ground and air forces to the continental United States where most would be demobilized. In the event of a major crisis, the United States would rely on active and reserve forces for a contingency response, much as was done for Operation Desert Storm. The new national security strategy is based upon the 25 percent budget cut negotiated with Congress, a greatly depleted Russian threat, and a new international security environment that assumes two-years' warning of a European-centered global war with the former USSR. There are four major critical factors upon which the new strategy depends: (1) the continued decline of the Russians as a threat to world stability; (2) the ability of the intelligence community to meet new challenges; (3) the behavior of the allies and Congress; and (4) the ability of industry to meet new demands. The new strategy is not simply an adjustment to existing defense doctrine or strategy, but rather a fundamental revision of the way the United States has approached defense since 1945. Students and scholars interested in politico-military strategy and government policy will find this book of great interest.

Is America's alliance system so quietly effective that politicians and voters fail to appreciate its importance in delivering the security they take for granted? For the first century and a half of its existence, the United States had just one alliance—a valuable but highly controversial military arrangement with France. Largely out of deference to George Washington's warnings against the dangers of "entangling alliances," subsequent American presidents did not consider entering another until the Second World War. Then everything suddenly changed. Between 1948 and 1955, US leaders extended defensive security guarantees to twenty-three countries in Europe and Asia. Seventy years later, the United States had allied with thirty-seven. In *Shields of the Republic*, Mira Rapp-Hooper reveals the remarkable success of America's unprecedented system of alliances. During the Cold War, a grand strategy focused on allied defense, deterrence, and assurance helped to keep the peace at far lower material and political costs than its critics allege. When the Soviet Union collapsed, however, the United States lost the adversary the system was designed to combat. Its alliances remained without a core strategic logic, leaving them newly vulnerable. Today the alliance system is threatened from without and within. China and Russia seek to break America's alliances through conflict and non-military erosion. Meanwhile, US politicians and voters are increasingly skeptical of alliances' costs and benefits and believe we may be better off without them. But what if the alliance system is a victim of its own quiet success? Rapp-Hooper argues that America's national security requires alliances that deter and defend against military and non-military conflict alike. The alliance system is past due for a

post-Cold War overhaul, but it remains critical to the country's safety and prosperity in the 21st century.

Based on the premise that proper understanding of international conflict - a necessary prerequisite for achieving peace - can come only from logic and evidence, not from opinion and anecdote, this groundbreaking book introduces students to international conflict's key theories and empirical research. Throughout the text, Stephen L. Quackenbush gives examples that enable readers to see the theory in real-world events, and provides the data from the most recent research. Covering the entire process of interstate war, from causes of conflict to escalation, conduct, resolution, and recurrence, the book provides readers with a fascinating, thorough study that will help them understand how international conflict works.

In this monograph, Dr. Lukas Milevski examines the logic of grand strategy in practice, defined by its most basic building block—combining military and non-military power in war. He lays out competing visions of how to define grand strategy and why the aforementioned building block is the most fundamental. The monograph establishes the essential logic of military power through annihilation and exhaustion or attrition as well as through control of the opponent's freedom of action. This baseline understanding of strategic action and effect in war allows an exploration of how the utility and meaning of non-military instruments change between peacetime and wartime and how they may contribute to the strategic effort and includes discussion of specific examples such as the U.S. interwar war plans and the Stuxnet cyberattack on Iranian nuclear facilities. The author also links this combination to present-day Russian and Chinese attempts at mixing military and non-military power.

From the author of the classic *The Wizards of Armageddon* and Pulitzer Prize finalist comes the definitive history of American policy on nuclear war—and Presidents' actions in nuclear crises—from Truman to Trump. Fred Kaplan, hailed by *The New York Times* as "a rare combination of defense intellectual and pugnacious reporter," takes us into the White House Situation Room, the Joint Chiefs of Staff's "Tank" in the Pentagon, and the vast chambers of Strategic Command to bring us the untold stories—based on exclusive interviews and previously classified documents—of how America's presidents and generals have thought about, threatened, broached, and just barely avoided nuclear war from the dawn of the atomic age until today. Kaplan's historical research and deep reporting will stand as the permanent record of politics. Discussing theories that have dominated nightmare scenarios from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Kaplan presents the unthinkable in terms of mass destruction and demonstrates how the nuclear war reality will not go away, regardless of the dire consequences.

"Cyber war is coming," announced a land-mark RAND report in 1993. In 2005, the U.S. Air Force boasted it would now fly, fight, and win in cyberspace, the "fifth domain" of warfare. This book takes stock, twenty years on: is cyber war really coming? Has war indeed entered the fifth domain? *Cyber War Will Not Take Place* cuts through the hype and takes a fresh look at cyber security. Thomas Rid argues that the focus on war and winning distracts from the real challenge of cyberspace: non-violent confrontation that may rival or even replace violence in surprising ways. The threat consists of three different vectors: espionage, sabotage, and subversion. The author traces the most significant hacks and attacks, exploring the full spectrum of case studies from the shadowy world of computer espionage and weaponised code. With a mix of technical detail and rigorous political analysis, the book explores some key questions: What are cyber weapons? How have they changed the meaning of violence? How likely and how dangerous is crowd-sourced subversive activity? Why has there never been a lethal cyber attack against a country's critical infrastructure? How serious is the threat of "pure" cyber espionage, of exfiltrating data without infiltrating humans first? And who is most vulnerable: which countries, industries, individuals?

The Improbable War explains why conflict between the USA and China cannot be ruled out. In 1914 war between the Great Powers was considered unlikely, yet it happened. We learn only from history, and popular though the First World War analogy is, the lessons we draw from its outbreak are usually mistaken. Among these errors is the tendency to over-estimate human rationality. All major conflicts of the past 300 years have been about the norms and rules of the international system. In China and the US the world confronts two 'exceptional' powers whose values differ markedly, with China bidding to challenge the current order. The 'Thucydidean Trap' - when a conservative status quo power confronts a rising new one - may also play its part in precipitating hostilities. To avoid stumbling into an avoidable war both Beijing and Washington need a coherent strategy, which neither of them has. History also reveals that war evolves continually. The next global conflict is likely to be played out in cyberspace and outer space and like all previous wars it will have devastating consequences. Such a war between the United States and China may seem improbable, but it is all too possible, which is why we need to discuss it now.

The essays in this volume analyze war, its strategic characteristics and its political and social functions, over the past five centuries. The diversity of its themes and the broad perspectives applied to them make the book a work of general history as much as a history of the theory and practice of war from the Renaissance to the present. *Makers of Modern Strategy* from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age takes the first part of its title from an earlier collection of essays, published by Princeton University Press in 1943, which became a classic of historical scholarship. Three essays are repinted from the earlier book; four others have been extensively revised. The rest--twenty-two essays--are new. The subjects addressed range from major theorists and political and military leaders to impersonal forces. Machiavelli, Clausewitz, and Marx and Engels are discussed, as are Napoleon, Churchill, and Mao. Other essays trace the interaction of theory and experience over generations--the evolution of American strategy, for instance, or the emergence of revolutionary war in the modern world. Still others analyze the strategy of particular conflicts--the First and Second World Wars--or the relationship between technology, policy, and war in the nuclear age. Whatever its theme, each essay places the specifics of military thought and action in their political, social, and economic environment. Together the contributors have produced a book that reinterprets and illuminates war, one of the most powerful forces in history and one that cannot be controlled in the future without an understanding of its past.

Why and how America's defense strategy must change in light of China's power and ambition Elbridge A. Colby was the lead architect of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, the most significant revision of U.S. defense strategy in a generation. Here he lays out how America's defense must change to address China's growing power and ambition. Based firmly in the realist tradition but deeply engaged in current policy, this book offers a clear framework for what America's goals in confronting China must be, how its military strategy must change, and how it must prioritize these goals over its lesser interests. The most informed and in-depth reappraisal of America's defense strategy in decades, this book outlines a rigorous but practical approach, showing how the United States can prepare to win a war with China that we cannot afford to lose—precisely in order to deter that war from happening.

Uses an abundant variety of historical examples to examine the true nature of strategy and demonstrates the failure of commonsense logic in particular strategic concepts

One of America's most thoughtful and provocative strategists exposes the economic and cultural assumptions that have driven the U.S. to the brink of social and financial collapse. Edward Luttwak reveals a forceful new policy that can reverse America's decline.

Antulio J. Echevarria II reveals how successive generations of American strategic theorists have thought about war. Analyzing the work of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Billy Mitchell, Bernard Brodie, Robert Osgood, Thomas Schelling, Herman Kahn, Henry Eccles, Joseph Wiley, Harry Summers, John Boyd, William Lind, and John Warden, he uncovers the logic that underpinned each theorist's critical concepts, core principles, and basic assumptions about the nature and character of war. In so doing, he identifies four paradigms of war's nature - traditional, modern, political, and materialist - that have shaped American strategic thought. If war's logic is political, as Carl von Clausewitz said, then so too is thinking about war.

A new way of looking at international relations from a leading expert in the field What makes for war or for a stable international system? Are

there general principles that should govern foreign policy? In *The Cold War and After*, Marc Trachtenberg, a leading historian of international relations, explores how historical work can throw light on these questions. The essays in this book deal with specific problems—with such matters as nuclear strategy and U.S.-European relations. But Trachtenberg's main goal is to show how in practice a certain type of scholarly work can be done. He demonstrates how, in studying international politics, the conceptual and empirical sides of the analysis can be made to connect with each other, and how historical, theoretical, and even policy issues can be tied together in an intellectually respectable way. These essays address a wide variety of topics, from theoretical and policy issues, such as the question of preventive war and the problem of international order, to more historical subjects—for example, American policy on Eastern Europe in 1945 and Franco-American relations during the Nixon-Pompidou period. But in each case the aim is to show how a theoretical perspective can be brought to bear on the analysis of historical issues, and how historical analysis can shed light on basic conceptual problems.

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By analytically decoupling war and violence, this book explores the causes and dynamics of violence in civil war. Against the prevailing view that such violence is an instance of impenetrable madness, the book demonstrates that there is logic to it and that it has much less to do with collective emotions, ideologies, and cultures than currently believed. Kalyvas specifies a novel theory of selective violence: it is jointly produced by political actors seeking information and individual civilians trying to avoid the worst but also grabbing what opportunities their predicament affords them. Violence, he finds, is never a simple reflection of the optimal strategy of its users; its profoundly interactive character defeats simple maximization logics while producing surprising outcomes, such as relative nonviolence in the 'frontlines' of civil war. Selected as a *Financial Times* Best Book of 2013 In *Strategy: A History*, Sir Lawrence Freedman, one of the world's leading authorities on war and international politics, captures the vast history of strategic thinking, in a consistently engaging and insightful account of how strategy came to pervade every aspect of our lives. The range of Freedman's narrative is extraordinary, moving from the surprisingly advanced strategy practiced in primate groups, to the opposing strategies of Achilles and Odysseus in *The Iliad*, the strategic advice of Sun Tzu and Machiavelli, the great military innovations of Baron Henri de Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz, the grounding of revolutionary strategy in class struggles by Marx, the insights into corporate strategy found in Peter Drucker and Alfred Sloan, and the contributions of the leading social scientists working on strategy today. The core issue at the heart of strategy, the author notes, is whether it is possible to manipulate and shape our environment rather than simply become the victim of forces beyond one's control. Time and again, Freedman demonstrates that the inherent unpredictability of this environment—subject to chance events, the efforts of opponents, the missteps of friends—provides strategy with its challenge and its drama. Armies or corporations or nations rarely move from one predictable state of affairs to another, but instead feel their way through a series of states, each one not quite what was anticipated, requiring a reappraisal of the original strategy, including its ultimate objective. Thus the picture of strategy that emerges in this book is one that is fluid and flexible, governed by the starting point, not the end point. A brilliant overview of the most prominent strategic theories in history, from David's use of deception against Goliath, to the modern use of game theory in economics, this masterful volume sums up a lifetime of reflection on strategy.

From Iraq to Bosnia to North Korea, the first question in American foreign policy debates is increasingly: Can air power alone do the job? Robert A. Pape provides a systematic answer. Analyzing the results of over thirty air campaigns, including a detailed reconstruction of the Gulf War, he argues that the key to success is attacking the enemy's military strategy, not its economy, people, or leaders. Coercive air power can succeed, but not as cheaply as air enthusiasts would like to believe. Pape examines the air raids on Germany, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq as well as those of Israel versus Egypt, providing details of bombing and governmental decision making. His detailed narratives of the strategic effectiveness of bombing range from the classical cases of World War II to an extraordinary reconstruction of airpower use in the Gulf War, based on recently declassified documents. In the first major book since the Vietnam War on the theory and practice of airpower and its political effects, Robert A. Pape helps policy makers judge the purpose of various air strategies, and helps general readers understand the policy debates.

Most wars between countries end quickly and at relatively low cost. The few in which high-intensity fighting continues for years bring about a disproportionate amount of death and suffering. What separates these few unusually long and intense wars from the many conflicts that are far less destructive? In *Logics of War*, Alex Weisiger tests three explanations for a nation's decision to go to war and continue fighting regardless of the costs. He combines sharp statistical analysis of interstate wars over the past two centuries with nine narrative case studies. He examines both well-known conflicts like World War II and the Persian Gulf War, as well as unfamiliar ones such as the 1864-1870 Paraguayan War (or the War of the Triple Alliance), which proportionally caused more deaths than any other war in modern history. When leaders go to war expecting easy victory, events usually correct their misperceptions quickly and with fairly low casualties, thereby setting the stage for a negotiated agreement. A second explanation involves motives born of domestic politics; as war becomes more intense, however, leaders are increasingly constrained in their ability to continue the fighting. Particularly destructive wars instead arise from mistrust of an opponent's intentions. Countries that launch preventive wars to forestall expected decline tend to have particularly ambitious war aims that they hold to even when fighting goes poorly. Moreover, in some cases, their opponents interpret the preventive attack as evidence of a dispositional commitment to aggression, resulting in the rejection of any form of negotiation and a demand for unconditional surrender. Weisiger's treatment of a topic of central concern to scholars of major wars will also be read with great interest by military historians, political psychologists, and sociologists.

Essays look at the arms race, nuclear strategy, treaty verification, military spending, Soviet-American relations, and disarmament

One of three volumes in honour of the teaching and scholarship of the late Michael I. Handel, this book details the universal logic of strategy and the ability of liberal-democratic governments to address this logic rationally. Treating war as an extension of politics, the diverse contributors (drawn from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Israel) explore the difficulties in matching strategy to policy, especially in free societies.

The most successful film franchise of all time, *Star Wars* thrillingly depicts an epic multigenerational conflict fought a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. But the *Star Wars* saga has as much to say about successful strategies and real-life warfare waged in our own time and place. *Strategy Strikes Back* brings together over thirty of today's top military and strategic experts, including generals, policy advisors, seasoned diplomats, counterinsurgency strategists, science fiction writers, war journalists, and ground-level military officers, to explain the strategy and the art of war by way of the *Star Wars* films. Each chapter of *Strategy Strikes Back* provides a relatable, outside-the-box way to simplify and clarify the complexities of modern military conflict. A chapter on the case for planet building on the forest moon of Endor by *World War Z* author Max Brooks offers a unique way to understand our own sustained engagement in war-ravaged societies such as Afghanistan. Another chapter on the counterinsurgency waged by Darth Vader against the Rebellion sheds light on the logic behind past military incursions in Iraq. Whether using the destruction of Alderaan as a means to explore the political implications of targeting civilians, examining the pivotal decisions made by Yoda and the Jedi Council to differentiate strategic leadership in theory and in practice, or considering the ruthlessness of Imperial leaders to explain the toxicity of top-down leadership in times of war and battle, *Strategy Strikes Back* gives fans of *Star Wars* and aspiring military minds alike an inspiring and entertaining means of understanding many facets of modern warfare. It is a book as captivating and enthralling as *Star Wars* itself.

After the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army considered counterinsurgency (COIN) a mistake to be avoided. Many found it surprising, then, when setbacks in recent conflicts led the same army to adopt a COIN doctrine. Scholarly debates have primarily employed existing theories of

military bureaucracy or culture to explain the army's re-embrace of COIN, but Peter Campbell advances a unique argument centering on military realism to explain the complex evolution of army doctrinal thinking from 1960 to 2008. In five case studies of U.S. Army doctrine, Campbell pits military realism against bureaucratic and cultural perspectives in three key areas—nuclear versus conventional warfare, preferences for offense versus defense, and COIN missions—and finds that the army has been more doctrinally flexible than those perspectives would predict. He demonstrates that decision makers, while vowing in the wake of Vietnam to avoid (COIN) missions, nonetheless found themselves adapting to the geopolitical realities of fighting “low intensity” conflicts. In essence, he demonstrates that pragmatism has won out over dogmatism. At a time when American policymakers remain similarly conflicted about future defense strategies, Campbell's work will undoubtedly shape and guide the debate.

In addition, Singh identifies three distinct types of coup dynamics, each with a different probability of success, based on where within the organization each coup originated: coups from top military officers, coups from the middle ranks, and mutinous coups from low-level soldiers. For more than a century, from 1900 to 2006, campaigns of nonviolent resistance were more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts in achieving their stated goals. By attracting impressive support from citizens, whose activism takes the form of protests, boycotts, civil disobedience, and other forms of nonviolent noncooperation, these efforts help separate regimes from their main sources of power and produce remarkable results, even in Iran, Burma, the Philippines, and the Palestinian Territories. Combining statistical analysis with case studies of specific countries and territories, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan detail the factors enabling such campaigns to succeed and, sometimes, causing them to fail. They find that nonviolent resistance presents fewer obstacles to moral and physical involvement and commitment, and that higher levels of participation contribute to enhanced resilience, greater opportunities for tactical innovation and civic disruption (and therefore less incentive for a regime to maintain its status quo), and shifts in loyalty among opponents' erstwhile supporters, including members of the military establishment. Chenoweth and Stephan conclude that successful nonviolent resistance ushers in more durable and internally peaceful democracies, which are less likely to regress into civil war. Presenting a rich, evidentiary argument, they originally and systematically compare violent and nonviolent outcomes in different historical periods and geographical contexts, debunking the myth that violence occurs because of structural and environmental factors and that it is necessary to achieve certain political goals. Instead, the authors discover, violent insurgency is rarely justifiable on strategic grounds.

The Art of War is an enduring classic that holds a special place in the culture and history of East Asia. An ancient Chinese text on the philosophy and politics of warfare and military strategy, the treatise was written in 6th century B.C. by a warrior-philosopher now famous all over the world as Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu's teachings remain as relevant to leaders and strategists today as they were to rulers and military generals in ancient times. Divided into thirteen chapters and written succinctly, The Art of War is a must-read for anybody who works in a competitive environment.

“Shows how humans have brought us to the brink and how humanity can find solutions. I urge people to read with humility and the daring to act.” —Harpal Singh, former Chair, Save the Children, India, and former Vice Chair, Save the Children International In conversations with people all over the world, from government officials and business leaders to taxi drivers and schoolteachers, Blair Sheppard, global leader for strategy and leadership at PwC, discovered they all had surprisingly similar concerns. In this prescient and pragmatic book, he and his team sum up these concerns in what they call the ADAPT framework: Asymmetry of wealth; Disruption wrought by the unexpected and often problematic consequences of technology; Age disparities--stresses caused by very young or very old populations in developed and emerging countries; Polarization as a symptom of the breakdown in global and national consensus; and loss of Trust in the institutions that underpin and stabilize society. These concerns are in turn precipitating four crises: a crisis of prosperity, a crisis of technology, a crisis of institutional legitimacy, and a crisis of leadership. Sheppard and his team analyze the complex roots of these crises--but they also offer solutions, albeit often seemingly counterintuitive ones. For example, in an era of globalization, we need to place a much greater emphasis on developing self-sustaining local economies. And as technology permeates our lives, we need computer scientists and engineers conversant with sociology and psychology and poets who can code. The authors argue persuasively that we have only a decade to make headway on these problems. But if we tackle them now, thoughtfully, imaginatively, creatively, and energetically, in ten years we could be looking at a dawn instead of darkness.

This book is an analysis of terrorism, a summary of its historical evolution, and an evaluation of its contemporary character. The struggle against terrorism has taken on a military character, and a Clausewitz perspective is necessary to show how warfare subordinates use of force to political considerations.

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Why has America stopped winning wars? For nearly a century, up until the end of World War II in 1945, America enjoyed a Golden Age of decisive military triumphs. And then suddenly, we stopped winning wars. The decades since have been a Dark Age of failures and stalemates—in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan—exposing our inability to change course after battlefield setbacks. In this provocative book, award-winning scholar Dominic Tierney reveals how the United States has struggled to adapt to the new era of intractable guerrilla conflicts. As a result, most major American wars have turned into military fiascos. And when battlefield disaster strikes, Washington is unable to disengage from the quagmire, with grave consequences for thousands of U.S. troops and our allies. But there is a better way. Drawing on interviews with dozens of top generals and policymakers, Tierney shows how we can use three key steps—surge, talk, and leave—to stem the tide of losses and withdraw from unsuccessful campaigns without compromising our core values and interests. Weaving together compelling stories of military catastrophe and heroism, this is an unprecedented, timely, and essential guidebook for our new era of unwinnable conflicts. The Right Way to Lose a War illuminates not only how Washington can handle the toughest crisis of all—battlefield failure—but also how America can once again return to the path of victory.

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