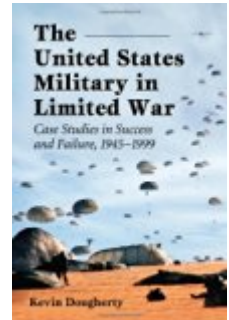


Kevin Dougherty. *The United States Military in Limited War: Case Studies in Success and Failure, 1945-1999.* Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2012. 235 pp. \$40.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-7864-7231-4.



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The purpose of military theory is to create a set of principles that will achieve the ultimate goal of war—victory. The processes of building up a force, its organization, military doctrine, and other issues are derived from military theory. As Azar Gat has shown in his book, *A History of Military Thought*, military theoreticians strongly debate whether, on the basis of historical observation, a universal military theory is identifiable that can be applied in planning a war and can lead to victory.[1] In this context, three schools of thought may be identified, each of which takes a different approach to this issue of whether a list of universal principles can be created. In effect, the discussion revolves around the ability to cancel or lessen the phenomenon of friction in war. One school argues that it is possible to find a universal theory with the aid of scientific and technological developments, just as theories/paradigms are found in the areas of the exact sciences. The roots of this school lie in the basic assumption of the Enlightenment movement, which held that every question has an answer and, with the help of

scientific investigation, it is possible to reveal its ultimate theory. A second school posits that the phenomenon of friction will remain forever. This school is clearly influenced by Carl von Clausewitz's discussion of the friction phenomenon and its influence on war.[2] The third school claims that through the study of military history, it is possible to refine a system of universal principles of war that will assist in lessening the friction phenomenon but not cancel it entirely. This approach, which accelerated in the course of the nineteenth century following the Napoleonic Wars, led various armies to create a system of war principles.

Kevin Dougherty begins his book with the argument that the American principles of war served its military well from the moment they were defined. After the Cold War, however, the military establishment realized that it had entered a period defined by new strategic aspects. This period was characterized (and, in effect, still is) by military missions that are not in the framework of a total war and that necessarily changed the American army's patterns of action. This

change appeared in the 1993 edition of the *FM 100-5 Operations*, which clearly refers to the political and strategic changes that stemmed from the breakup of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War. The document devotes a chapter to those drastic changes, the new military essence termed OOTW (Operations Other Than War). One of the important statements in this edition of the manual is that OOTW has a system of principles that needs to guide those who operate in this type of campaign. There may be no escaping the traditional principles of war, but other principles must be added to them. *FM 100-5* emphasizes three other principles: restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy.

Dougherty states that from the end of World War II to 1999, the United States conducted eighty-one OOTW, his book concentrating on eight of these operations. Four were successful, but in four the United States failed. The four successful test cases were the civil war in Greece (1947-49), Lebanon (1958), the Dominican Republic (1965-66), and the intervention in Nicaragua and Honduras (1980-90). The four failures test cases, in Dougherty's view, were Vietnam (1967-73), Lebanon (1982-83), Somalia (1992-95), and Haiti (1993). Insofar as Vietnam is concerned, Dougherty's discussion begins in 1967 because in that year Washington set up "the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) ... in an effort to coordinate all pacification efforts" (p. 11).

Through these eight test cases, which occurred in the course of the Cold War and after it, Dougherty demonstrates the importance in relating to the special OOTW principles "as planning and analytical tools" (p. 10). In other words, this book follows the theoretical and historical basis of the chapter on OOTW in the 1993 edition of the *FM 100-5 Operations* manual. It should be noted that a system of war principles complementing the traditional principles had already been published in a field manual dealing with operations at a low-intensity level (*FM 7-98: Operations in Low*

Intensity Conflict [LIC], 1992). There, too, the intention of the principles was not to make a distinction between low-intensity fighting and high-intensity war and so to define an alternative set of principles, but to add to the classic principles. The difference between the two forms of confrontation, according to the American viewpoint, stems from the perception that there is no exclusivity of military action in LIC but there is a need to integrate into the campaign or operation political, economic, and social acts, as well. Uniting the two manuals, we can create the following list, which, it should be mentioned again and Dougherty does so a number of times, only adds, and does not subtract. In effect, the common thread that wends its way through the eight test cases is that success or failure is a direct result of the actions that were undertaken in relation to these principles.

First, it should be stated that Dougherty integrates in the list of principles special to OOTW the "objective" principle and the "security" principle. However, from a reading of Dougherty's explanation, as well as *FM 100-5 Operations*, these two principles do not differ from those on the traditional list. In other words, every commander in every field command aspires to achieve the goals assigned him while doing everything that is required in order to protect his troops. Therefore, the first principle that is special to OOTW is "political dominance." The political level at a time of limited confrontation has greater influence on low levels of war. In limited confrontation, the traditional hierarchy breaks down, in which the political level does not intervene in military decisions at the strategic level and decision making, and sending forces into action remain the exclusive responsibility and command authority of the theater commanders.[3] We can find that the political ranks intervene in decision making at the tactical level, as well, and even at the techno-tactical level in limited confrontations. The limitations that the political level imposes on military actions lie at the basis of the definition of limited warfare. [4] The officer corps, at all war levels, must under-

stand the political objectives and the effect of military operations on those objectives. In a limited confrontation, the action of a small group of soldiers can have a much more decisive influence than can a similar order of forces in high-intensity conflicts. Therefore, the planning for the military assignment must relate to political factors and stipulations. The military ranks have to adopt operational methods that support the principles laid down by the political level even if this means effecting new methods of operation.

The second principle is “unity of effort.” The military system in a given theater must integrate its efforts with military bodies of other countries, as well as with government agencies and non-governmental organizations, foreign and American, for the purpose of achieving a decisive victory. The military plans must define how the military steps will contribute to political and economic practices. In effect, the principle of unity of effort sets an activity framework for interagency operations. The military ranks can find themselves operating under a civilian agency that is not the Defense Department, but perhaps the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), or even agencies concerned with internal security, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), or customs and immigration authorities.[5] Similarly a situation is possible in which the army will operate the resources of civilian agencies, and the latter will be under the command authority of the military.

The third principle is “adaptability,” which effectively sums up the ability and the desire to change or to adapt structures and methods of operation in order to further various and changing scenarios. This principle demands a cautious analysis of the assignment, superior intelligence abilities, and an understanding of the theater of action politically, economically, and culturally. Becoming accustomed not only refers to flexibility in operating well-known techniques under changing

conditions, but also requires the development of new activity methods for every operative reality.

The fourth principle is “legitimacy,” that is, the legal right of all agencies to become involved in a certain confrontation. This principle is divided into three parts. First is the country’s public opinion in permitting the government to send military forces, and any other type of intervention, to the trouble spot. Second is world public opinion, particularly if the acts of intervention involve international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN). Third is public opinion in the target country; the local population must agree to foreign intervention, for foreign intervention can become entangled in an extensive popular uprising without such agreement and escalate to confrontation.

The fifth principle is “perseverance.” Limited confrontation has no beginning and no clear end that may be marked as decisive military actions. It is by nature a long struggle, and therefore perseverance, without any attempt to take decisive action, is critical for success. Cautious analysis of the information is required in order to select the correct time and place for action. Perseverance aids the commander to avoid small successes in a small space of time and to aspire to achieve long-range objectives.

The sixth principle is “restraint.” The intention here is very careful adherence at all levels of the war to the rules of engagement. The reasons for this is that uncontrolled (or unrestrained) action by the military force and fire power, even if at the tactical level, can cause strategic damage and even political harm; in other words, legitimacy can be adversely affected. Nevertheless, fulfilling this principle is very problematic, since there is a clear order here for the selective use of fire power, which can prevent attaining the goal and also harm the security of the forces in action.

If we examine, for instance, the actions of the Task Force Ranger that operated in Somalia (Operation Gothic Serpent) in August-October 1993, we can find the gradual violation of a number of

principles, which in turn damaged the general operation of the task force, up to the action that took place on October 3-4, 1993. Thus, the task force operated independently without cooperating with the military forces in the UN framework and also without cooperating with civilian agencies. The special forces of Task Force Ranger were on Somali territory to achieve one goal: the capture of General Mohamed Farah Aideed. This assignment, though in line with the policy of the UN secretary-general, caused great harm to humanitarian efforts and the desire to reconstruct the Somali state. At the strategic level, UN Resolution 837 of June 6, 1993, constituted a declaration of war by the United Nations against Aideed's militia. The resolution, along with the raids by American forces in general and the Task Force Ranger in particular, led to many casualties among noncombatants in Mogadishu in the course of the summer in 1993. These acts in effect negated the legitimacy of the UN presence, and that of the United States, in Somalia.[6]

An additional principle may possibly be added to the list—"intelligence." Although it is not defined as one of the principles of war, intelligence can influence them. Exact, reliable intelligence supports the classic principles of attack and surprise. Knowledge of the enemy's ability supports the principle of economy of forces, and knowledge of its intentions supports the principle of security. Alvin and Heidi Toffler have argued that in the course of the Cold War, American intelligence agencies emphasized the intelligence produced by electronic means. This tendency led to a deviation from human sources of information gathering (Human Intelligence--HUMINT), and therefore the emphasis focused on the enemy's military capabilities, but not on its intentions.[7] All the components and characteristics of LIC and OOTW necessitate information produced by human sources; that is, a transition from quantitative to qualitative intelligence. Terror, guerrilla, and organized crime are compartmentalized organizations with a low electronic signature or are

absent such signature. It is difficult to follow a small band of terrorists if the body fighting them does not know where they came from, what their intentions are, and where they plan to strike. For this information, human intelligence is needed.

Intelligence is the cornerstone of the success of every military campaign. Its importance intensifies in the framework of military activity in the area of OOTW.[8] Intelligence needs to supply information that is not always important in a war conducted between two regular armies. Great importance attaches to the political, economic, and cultural characteristics of the population in the war zone. The reason is that a campaign is essentially conducted among the local population, and so it is important to know its intentions, as well as its strength and military capabilities.[9] Again, an example may be taken from the actions of the Task Force Ranger as a test case.

Despite the Americans' technological strength, the task force did not succeed in establishing a human infrastructure in Somalia that would supply information on Aideed's intentions and his militia forces. The problem began even prior to the arrival of UN troops and the Special Forces. With the evacuation of the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu in January 1991, the Americans effectively lost their information-gathering ability in the country, as well as their local contacts.[10] With the U.S. return to Somalia, a huge effort was made to reconstruct local intelligence-gathering abilities, but the great difficulty led to an ever-growing reliance on electronic intelligence. Use was made in Somalia of sophisticated intelligence-gathering and tracking technologies, some of which were being used operationally for the first time. Similarly the American forces benefited from the general national intelligence-gathering abilities, cooperating with civilian agencies.[11] However, all of the American technological advantage was unsuitable for a military reality that characterized Mogadishu at the time. The CIA did not succeed in building an information system

that was based on cooperation with Aideed's tribe, and it never managed to rehabilitate its spy network among his forces. In consequence, the American forces were forced to make do with partial intelligence based on hearsay testimonies and second- and even third-hand information from agents, whose reliability was in doubt.[12] The task force was compelled, therefore, to rely more and more on electronic intelligence in the area and against an enemy that almost lacked an electronic signature, which could be located by sophisticated means.

Dougherty's fascinating book can join a list of studies that examine the historical and theoretical dimensions of the principles of war in general and those of OOTW in particular.[13] The book is also important to those who are active today in the area of OOTW, this term having changed in the 1990s to MOOTW (Military Operations Other Than War), and then to SASO (Stability and Support Operations), and in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century a return to "counterinsurgency," the term used in the 1950s and 1960s. From a historiographical viewpoint, the book can be placed with those studies that examine the history of military thinking and U.S. theories of war.[14]

The work examines eight test cases that well demonstrate the book's arguments. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that other researchers would have selected different test cases even though Vietnam and Somalia would certainly have been included among these cases. Dougherty's research deals with the American military experience; it is very possible that presenting examples from the experiences of other armies that dealt with the strategic reality of OOTW would only have strengthened his arguments and demonstrated how the principles of war are indeed universal in time and space.

Dougherty's book, which is clearly written even for the reader who is not an expert in strategic and military studies, makes an admirable com-

bination of secondary literature and an analysis of various American doctrines. A full picture thus emerges of the historical framework that had an influence on shaping a list of the other war principles as defined in the *FM 100-5 Operations* (1993) manual. The book's big advantage is its ability to transmit clearly the technical writing in the doctrinal documents of the American army and to breathe life into those documents. Through a historical discussion, Dougherty succeeds in proving the claim that war principles are indeed universal, and in so doing he adds another layer to the rich historiography in the area of military thought in general and American military thinking in particular.

Notes

[1]. See Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 27-96. The comprehensive discussion on these pages covers French and German military thinking from the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War to the eve of the French Revolution (1648-1789). This period shaped the principles of Western military thinking for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[2]. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 119-121.

[3]. As an example, one can cite General Dwight D. Eisenhower's making the decisions in the course of World War II in the European theater. The U.S. general decided that despite Berlin's political importance, it did not constitute an important strategic objective, and its conquest would lead to tens of thousands of American casualties. The political level in the United States did not intervene in this theater commander's battle considerations. As a general rule in World War II, the political objective was clearly defined: decisive victory over the Axis. The method of achieving this goal was left in the hands of the different theater commanders.

- [4]. In effect, from the end of World War II, all the wars in which the United States was engaged were limited wars. (2002)
- [5]. This pattern of action takes place today in the war that the United States declared against Latin American drug smugglers. The Coast Guard, Air Force surveillance planes, and navy vessels can be found operating under the responsibility of the DEA. indeed
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- [6]. Lee S. Gingery, *Principles of Military Operations Other Than War as Applied to the United Nations Operation in Somalia II* (Newport: Naval War College, 1997), 8-9.
- [7]. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti War* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1993), 158. 81
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- [8]. Kenneth Allard, *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1995), 74. 19
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- [9]. See the chapter dealing with intelligence in Department of the Army, *FM 7-98, Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1992), chap. 6, sec. 4. 19
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- [10]. Valerie J. Lofland, "Somalia: U.S. Intervention and Operation Restored Hope," in *Case Studies in Policy & Implementation* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 2002), 54. 19
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- [11]. David C. Isby, *Leave No Man Behind* (London: Cassell, 2004), 266-267; and Allard, *Somalia Operations*, 74. M
- [12]. Isby, *Leave No Man Behind*, 298. -
- [13]. For example, Richard D. Downie, *Learning from Conflict: The U.S. Military in Vietnam, El Salvador and the Drug War* (Westport: Praeger, 1999); and Jennifer Morrison Taw, *Mission Revolution: The U.S. and Stability Operations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). O
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- [14]. For example, the comprehensive book by Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 2011). -
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