

# THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR

First Year Seminar, Fall 2024  
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Tuesdays & Thursdays, 09:30 to 10:50,  
Scott Hall 212—The War Room  
This syllabus is available at [www.willreno.org](http://www.willreno.org)

## OVERVIEW

This course traces the development of American military strategy in the pursuit of political objectives. The course begins with the War for Independence when US forces waged a guerrilla war campaign to defeat a far superior British force and compel Britain's political leaders to recognize American political autonomy. The US Civil War turned the tables: Victory followed a military strategy of applying overwhelming force to defeat separatists and compel them to submit to the US government's political will. As during the War for Independence, the weaker force resorted to selective use of guerrilla tactics. But that weaker force failed to achieve its objective. The application of overwhelming force to annihilate an adversary shaped US involvement in the First and Second World Wars. Resort to overwhelming force remains a vital influence on strategic thinking that continues to shape the organization and the culture of our armed forces.

This historical legacy and its influence on American strategic thinking confronts serious challenges that this course will consider: What is the utility of force in our nuclear age when its use against a nuclear-armed adversary seems only to promise massive retaliation and mutual annihilation? The Iraq War of 2003-2011 and the 20-year US military operation in Afghanistan to 2021 raise a host of questions about the utility of force when seemingly weaker adversaries prevail against all that might. The overall picture of these conflicts has been an inability to accomplish the strategic aim of bending far weaker guerrilla forces to American political will despite notable tactical successes. Yet the campaign against the Islamic State from 2014 to 2019 appears to show how the selective application of superior US military force can play an important role in annihilating an adversary.

Our attention then turns to contemporary American military strategy and attendant debates. How are national interests defined in an increasingly competitive global environment and what is the role of the US military as a tool of American power and influence in the world? How do rivals and potential adversaries respond to US power and influence? We consider the continued expansion of domains of warfare, such as the weaponization of information, of societies against themselves.

We then consider significant challenges these new conditions and an array of technological developments pose to the American military strategy. This section of the course considers plans to integrate AI into warfighting and debates about trust and reliance at the warfighter—the AI-human interface. Autonomous weapons are considered, as is the changing role of private and society-based resources in US military strategy. Finally, the course ends with attention to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in an increasingly competitive world and its meaning for the maintenance of deterrence—a key national interest and foundation of US military strategy, and a broader consideration of the future of warfare and US efforts to address related challenges.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Students need to complete the reading assignments listed under each meeting before the actual class meeting. Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- **Attendance and Participation (10%):** Every student is expected to attend every class meeting and be prepared to engage with required reading material and with fellow students. Questions are provided with each meeting's reading assignment to provide a basis for discussion. Students are most welcome to pose other questions and issues.
- **Reflection Comments (40%):** Beginning with the second week (i.e., in preparation for class on Tuesday, 26 September) each student will (1) provide a brief one to two paragraph reflection on one of the assigned readings, and (2) respond to reflections of other students.

The class will be divided into two teams, **Team Red**, and **Team Blue**. **Team Red** will lead off as each team member submits reflections by Monday evening so that **Blue Team** members can respond to these reflections in time for the Tuesday class meeting. Then teams switch places. On Wednesday evening each **Blue Team** member will post reflections so that **Red Team** members can respond to these posts by Thursday's class. Reflections should be posted on the **course Canvas site**.

- **Review Essay (25%):** Each student will write an essay of about four pages [double-space] that presents the argument of an author of a reading assigned for this course. The aim in this essay is to highlight the main idea of an author, then explain how that idea is in dialogue (or in contention) with other readings for this course. This assignment is due before class on **Thursday, 14 November**. We will discuss what a good review essay looks like and how to write essays before this assignment is due.
- **Advisor's Memo (25%):** Each student will write a memo of about four pages [double-space] in which the writer offers advice about how to address a dilemma of US military strategy. Your essay should take a position in a debate about one dilemma (of the many covered in this course) while taking account of contending positions in a debate. This memo is due by the end of the final class meeting day, **Tuesday, 26 November**.

## BOOK & OTHER READING MATERIAL

Russell Weigley. 1973. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. Indiana University Press (ISBN: 978-0-253-28029-9)

- ➔ This book is available via your favorite book seller & via the course Canvas site.
- ➔ Other reading materials are available through links on the electronic syllabus and / or the password-protected Canvas site for this course.

## **GOALS OF THIS COURSE**

The primary goal of this course is to lead students to their own understanding of theories and empirical evidence regarding historical and contemporary debates about US military strategy. This will require reading course material, discussing it in class, and writing essays based on readings, discussions and one's own analysis of core issues related to fighting wars. Additional goals include:

- Educate students regarding the nature and evolution of American warfighting strategies.
- Understand the substance of debates over American warfighting strategies.
- Examine questions that these warfighting strategies present to policy makers and citizens.
- Recognize the priorities and underlying assumptions of policy responses to conflicts.
- Promote critical analysis of the impact of technological innovations on warfighting.
- Gain an understanding of past and current norms concerning the conduct of war.
- Understand debates about the role of international law in the conduct of warfare.
- Promote student capacities to read social science research, and understand and be prepared to debate its approaches and findings,

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Have the capacity to distinguish among different warfighting strategies in their analysis of any conflict that they encounter.
- Evaluate the relative efficacy of different strategies in armed conflicts and understand why various actors in conflicts adopt specific strategies.
- Understand and explain why actors in some conflicts are more prone to certain kinds of violence against noncombatants.
- Understand and explain the role official policies (i.e., counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, et al.) play in contemporary conflicts.
- Make informed judgements about efficacy of policies and tradeoffs policy choices entail.
- Think about and discuss plausible directions in which US military strategy might evolve to address new challenges.
- Critically evaluate how social science theories can inform the public and government officials about the nature of warfighting generally and about specific contemporary conflicts.

In addition, College Seminars are designed to enable students to:

- Set and evaluate academic goals
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
- Study effectively
- Think critically
- Understand and meet Northwestern's standards of academic integrity
- Know when and how to ask for help

**AN ADDITIONAL NOTE:** Some materials for this course contain graphic imagery of war and references to such that some may find distressing. At various stages of the course videos will be shown. Students will be warned of content and provided with an accommodation, should they wish to refrain from exposure to such material.

## ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

*Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: [accessiblenu@northwestern.edu](mailto:accessiblenu@northwestern.edu); p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.*

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

*Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>*

## PROHIBITION OF RECORDING OF CLASS SESSIONS BY STUDENTS

*Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact AccessibleNU. Unauthorized use of classroom recordings - including distributing or posting them - is also prohibited. Under the University's Copyright Policy, faculty own the copyright to instructional materials - including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.*

## **SUPPORT FOR WELLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH**

*Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:*

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

## **UNDERGRADUATE POLICY ON IN\_PERSON ARRIVAL AND COURSE ENGAGEMENT**

*The start of the term is a crucial time for students to learn about course expectations and to familiarize themselves with the structure of their classes. It is also a valuable time to meet classmates and get to know instructors. In addition, early and regular course attendance is vital to achieving optimal learning outcomes.*

*Therefore, undergraduate students enrolled in courses with in-person class meetings are expected to be on campus and in attendance no later than the end of the first week of the quarter and must plan to remain until the end of the quarter. Note in some cases, students must attend the first class meeting to avoid being dropped. This will be clearly identified in CAESAR and the syllabus.*

*If exceptional circumstances arise during the quarter that require a student to be off campus for more than a week, students are expected to speak with their school adviser. Failure to meet these expectations may result in administrative withdrawal from a term or drop or withdrawal from individual course(s).*

## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

*Although Northwestern University does not as an institution observe religious holidays, the academic calendar is designed to avoid conflicts with observed holidays, such as Independence Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, and Christmas. Consistent with our commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, every reasonable effort should be made to accommodate members of the University community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. Academic accommodations for religious holidays are typically handled successfully by informal discussions among students, instructors and administrators when needed.*

*In particular:*

- *Students should not be penalized for class absences because of religious holiday observance.*
- *Instructors should provide course syllabi at the beginning of each term that specify dates of exams and due dates of assignments. Every effort should be made to avoid scheduling exams on religious holidays (a calendar of religious holidays is maintained on the [Religious & Spiritual Life](#) website).*
- *Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and for consulting instructors by the end of the second week of the term regarding conflicts due to religious holiday observances. If asked, students should provide information about the obligations entailed in their observance of that holiday.*
- *Note for undergraduates: If observance of a religious holiday conflicts with a [common midterm](#) (i.e., a midterm scheduled outside of the regular class meeting time) or [final exam](#), undergraduates should submit their request by filling out the [Office of the Provost's religious accommodation request form](#).*
- *Upon a timely accommodation request for observance of a religious holiday, instructors should consider rescheduling exams, adjusting deadlines, offering alternative assignments, or some other appropriate accommodation to address the conflict. In some cases, it may be advisable for a student to change sections or courses.*
- *Instructors should be allowed to reschedule class meetings that conflict with their religious holiday observance, assuring that appropriate advance notice is given to students and the department chair and/or dean.*

*Individuals requiring assistance in requesting an academic accommodation for religious holidays should contact the Office of the Provost at [assoc-prov-undergrad@northwestern.edu](mailto:assoc-prov-undergrad@northwestern.edu). In the event that an individual feels they are being deprived of the opportunity to access their academic program due to the lack of a religious accommodation, the individual should report the matter to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance at [OCR@northwestern.edu](mailto:OCR@northwestern.edu). The University also maintains a [comprehensive accommodations policy \(pdf\)](#).*

*Holidays observed by many members of the university community include, but are not limited to: Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; Passover; Shavuot; 'Id al-Fitr; 'Id al-Adha, and Good Friday. Information (including dates of observance) about these holidays and others is available on the [web page maintained by Religious & Spiritual Life](#). In addition, the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion maintains a [page with religious holiday fact sheets](#) that offer more details such as common practices and celebrations. Please note that Jewish holidays begin at sundown the evening before the date listed.*

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## Part I: Attrition to Annihilation

**Tuesday, 24 September:** This session meets in the **Norris University Center's McCormick Auditorium** ([map](#)). The course instructor will present an NU Alumnae Association lecture, "Update on the War in Ukraine" based on the instructor's DoD-funded research on US and NATO partner training of Ukrainian forces, and from his observations in repeated visits to frontline areas eastern Ukraine. The aim of this research is to understand how Ukrainian soldiers innovate and adapt training to a new character of warfare so that US decision-makers can learn from their experiences, a theme that also informs this course on the American Way of War.



No assigned readings for this class meeting

**THIS CLASS SESSION MEETS IN THE MCCORMICK AUDITORIUM IN THE NORROS CENTER FOR A LECTURE, "UPDATE ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE"**

**Thursday, 26 September:** Waging war with limited resources and pursuit of a strategy of attrition. Winning by surviving was possible through the avoidance of enemy concentrations. Nathaniel Greene: Crafting a guerrilla warfare strategy that forced the dispersal of superior British forces and leveraged guerrilla relations with non-combatants. Guerrilla forces show how to make a strong army become weak as it fights the weak.

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 3-58

**Tuesday, 1 October:** The rise of a naval strategy oriented toward defense and the impact of steam powered warships. Winfield Scott applies Jomini's strategy in Mexico. Dennis Hart Mahan and Napoleon's strategy of annihilation The Civil War. The Confederacy's defensive strategy of winning through surviving, transformed under R.E. Lee to an offensive-defensive strategy to take battles to the North. Sherman's and Grant's use of indirect means informs a military strategy of mass and concentration to wage war against the adversary's economy and political system. What was the logic of terror campaigns against civilians, and did it work?

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 59-163.

**Thursday, 3 October:** Combatants and civilians in the Civil War. The identification problem: Who is a combatant and who is a non-combatant? What is the relationship between different uses of violence (discriminate versus indiscriminate) and non-combatant behavior? What is the role of international humanitarian law in the conduct of war, including in contemporary wars?

Clay Mountcastle. 2009. "Proving Ground for Punishment: Pope, Halleck and Schofield in Missouri," in his *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals*, (University of Kansas), 21-55.

Stephen Ash. 1995. "Rebels and Conquerors," in his *When the Yankees Came: Chaos and Violence in the Occupied South*, (University of North Carolina), 38-75.

**Tuesday, 8 October:** Sea power and Empire: Stephen B Luce and Alfred Thayer Mahan explain why the US needs a strong navy to project force and why this is in the national interest. The Great War experience supports arguments that mechanized forces are needed to break the defensive deadlock that leads to prolonged battles of attrition. Billy Mitchell argues for air power to regain and support offensive capabilities. Plan ORANGE develops a strategic approach to a Pacific Ocean war, a premonition of the US's World War Two military strategy

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 167-265

**Thursday, 10 October:** The strategic logic of A.T. Mahan. The argument for a focus on maritime dominance and the destruction of Japan's battle fleet. UK-US debate in the European war over envelopment versus concentration and mass strategy. The application of concentration and mass to destroy the German army. Strategic bombardment and debate over the appropriate target—German civilians (Douhet doctrine) or Germany's economy (daylight precision bombing)?

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 269-359.

**Tuesday, 15 October:** Transformational technologies: How did atomic weapons lead to a strategic revolution? What is the impact of the strategy of deterrence on warfighting plans? Can combats be included in a viable nuclear strategy? Is discipline and restraint compatible with the maintenance of a military geared toward winning wars through the destruction of the enemy's armed forces?

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 363-440

**Thursday, 17 October:** Vietnam and the dilemma of applying a military strategy of annihilation and political strategy of limited objectives. Do wars of annihilation work in "struggles of national



liberation?” Are counterinsurgency and nation-building remedies? The Powell Doctrine and the return to the strategy of annihilation of the enemy’s forces. The start of US military’s three decades-plus engagement in Iraq. Is there a place for annihilation in US strategy?

Weigley. 1973. *American Way of War*, 441-477.

Joint Chiefs of Staff. 1992. [\*National Military Strategy of the United States\*](#). [The Powell Doctrine]

MAJ Frank Hoffman. 1994. [\*Decisive Force: The New American Way of War?\*](#) Naval War College, 156-193.

## Part II: Wars of Attrition and Strategic Confusion

**Tuesday, 22 October:** How does one fight wars of attrition with a military largely designed to fight a war of annihilation? How does counterinsurgency (COIN) define victory? Is COIN a strategy or a collection of tactics? Are lessons from guerilla warfare integrated in the development of COIN? Would those lessons be relevant or feasible in the contemporary context of warfare?

Max Boot. 2003. [“The New American Way of War,”](#) *Foreign Affairs*, 82: 4, (July / Aug), 41-58.

Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jr., John Horvath & John Nagl. 2006. [“Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency,”](#) *Military Review*, (March-April), 49-53.

Gian P. Gentile. 2009. [“A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army,”](#) *Parameters: Journal of the Army War College* (Autumn), 5-17.

Steven Metz. 2017. [“Abandoning Counterinsurgency: Revising Antiterrorism Strategy,”](#) *Parameters*, 13-23.

**Thursday, 24 October:** Is COIN feasible in states with partner governments that lack the basic political will and / or capacity to fight? What does counterinsurgency say about whether experience defines what we will, can, or must do in the future? What are the real “lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan” for US military strategy and do US military strategists take them to heart?

Karl Eikenberry. 2013. [“The Limits of Counterinsurgency Doctrine in Afghanistan: The Other Side of the COIN,”](#) *Foreign Affairs*, 59 (Sept/Oct), 59-74.

Mike Martin. 2014. “From the US Re-engagement: ‘Counterinsurgency’, 2009-12,” in his *An Intimate War: An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict*. Hurst & Co., 195-231.

Isaac Chotiner. 2021. "[David Petraeus on American Mistakes](#) in Afghanistan," *New Yorker*, 20 August.

**Tuesday, 29 October:** Going Big--Stabilization Operations - "Whole-of-government" goes to war. Is there a case of a successful stabilization operation within our lifetimes? Are stabilization operations new? What place, if any, is there for an emphasis on democratic governance?

Department of Defense. 2005 [Directive 3000.05: Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction \(SSTR\) Operations](#), 28 Nov. (These few pages save all but those with lots of time on their hands from the 250 page [Joint Publication 3-07, Stability](#).)

Jennifer Taw. 2012. "Explaining the Military Mission Revolution," in her *Mission Revolution: The U.S. Military and Stability Operations*, Columbia University Press, 109-140.

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. 2021. "Introduction," "Context," and "Monitoring and Evaluation" in [What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction](#). Arlington, VA; SIGAR, 1-8, 71-94.

\*\*\* Visit of LTC, US Army, CJ5- Operational Planner, Headquarters, ISAF Kabul (2009-2011) & Iraq, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne \*\*\*

### **PART IIL Present and Future Ways of War: Considering Challenges of Defining Threats and Determining the Utility of Force**

**Thursday, 31 October:** Defining national interests in a global environment of greater competition between Great Powers, the need to cooperate with others on major issues like climate change. How will the US military figure as a tool of American power and influence? How should that military be prepared for this era of competition?

White House. 2022. [National Security Strategy](#). (48pgs--skim for main points outlined in this [brief primer](#).)

Department of Defense. 2022. [National Defense Strategy of the United States](#). (24pgs)

**Tuesday, 5 November:** Going Small--Light Footprints - applying military force in countries with which America is not at war. The ascendancy of [Special Forces](#) and of foreign military training

operations: How & why does the US train foreign soldiers? Differences between Title 10 and Title 50 operations. What is the place of lethality in training, and what is its relation to other aspects of training? Why are US troops still in Syria and Western Iraq in 2024?

US Special Operations Command. 2018. [\*USASOC 2035\*](#).

Andrew Feickert. 2022. [\*US Special Operations Forces \(SOF\): Background and Issues for Congress\*](#). Congressional Research Service. (11pp.)

Lt. Col. Jahara Matissek & William Reno. 2019. "Getting [\*American Security Force Assistance\*](#) Right," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 92, 65-73.

Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress. 2024, [\*Operation Inherent Resolve and Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq and Syria\*](#), 30 June.

**Thursday, 7 November:** The expansion of domains: Is "hybrid warfare" old-fashioned political warfare with new tools? How does one know if one is at war? Consider the dilemma of distinguishing acceptable political activities from subversion. What is the significance of non-American views on hybrid warfare for defining US security and defense strategies?

George Kennan. "Policy Planning [\*Memorandum\*](#)," 4 May 1948, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 273, Records of the National Security Council, NSC 10/2.

Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, 1999. [\*Unrestricted Warfare\*](#), PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, especially 124-148.

Frank Hoffman. 2009. "[\*Hybrid Warfare\*](#) and Challenges," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 52, 34-39.

General Valery Gerasimov. 2013. "[\*The Value of Science in Prediction\*](#)," originally published in *Military-Industrial Kurier*, 27 February.

**Tuesday, 12 November:** Information warfare: Are cyber activities in warfare a transformation? What is the role of information operations in an offensive strategy? Is the offense–defense distinction applicable in the cyber realm? Schismogenesis ("the creation of division") to weaponize society. The challenge of social media warriors to internal defense. Is "fake news" equivalent to subversion? How can an open society defend itself?

Jahara Matissek & Buddhika Jayamaha. 2022. "Civil Society and the Contemporary Battlespace," and "New Battlespaces and Strategic Realities," in their *Old & New Battlespaces: Society, Military Power, and War*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 117-157.

Steven Lee Myers, et al. 2024. "[Russia Secretly Worms Its Way](#) Into America's Conservative Media," *New York Times*, 7 Sept. (The [indictment](#) for those interested.)

Will Reno & Lt.Col. Jesse Humpal. 2024. "[The World Is Not About Us](#): Information and Power in the Current Strategic Environment," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 114:3, 92-100.

\*\*\* Visit of LtCol Jesse Humpal (US Air Force), National Security Council White House Staff \*\*\*

#### **Part IV: The Rapidly Changing Character of Warfare: Successes and Failures of Learning, Innovation & Adaptation**

**Thursday, 14 November:** Tech challenges to military strategies: What are the roles and impacts on the American way of war of nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, human brain–machine interface and other technological innovations? [Force 2025 and Beyond](#), [Army Rapid Capabilities Office](#) &c. Will there be an AI arms race? What are the implications of AI for a strategy of annihilation? The super-interested may read the RAND Strategic Competition in the Age of AI [report](#).

US Government Accountability Office. 2022. [Artificial Intelligence: Status of Developing and Acquiring Capabilities for Weapons Systems](#). Report to the Committee on Armed Services, US Senate [55pp].

Zachary Davis. 2019. [Artificial Intelligence on the Battlefield: An Initial Survey of Potential Implications for Deterrence, Stability and Strategic Surprise](#). Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

COL Joshua Glonek. 2024. "The Coming [Military AI Revolution](#)," *Military Review*, (May-June), 88-99.

Sam Schechner & Daniel Michaels, "Ukraine Has Digitized Its Fighting Forces on a Shoestring," [Wall Street Journal](#), 3 Jan 2023.

**Review essay is due by the end of the day (23:59) – submission via Canvas**

**Tuesday, 19 November:** Autonomous weapons in military operations. The war in Ukraine accelerates battlefield innovation that uses AI in weapons. The problem of tech proliferation. Legal, moral, and ethical questions about autonomous weapons. How is a cumbersome bureaucracy like the US Department of Defense keeping up with cultures of innovation.

Congressional Research Service. 2023. [U.S. Policy on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems](#), 15 May.

Department of Defense. 2023. [DOD Directive 3000.09, Autonomy in Weapons Systems](#), 25 Jan. (24pgs)

Thomas X Hammes. 2023. "[Autonomous Weapons Are the Moral Choice](#)." *New Atlanticist*. 2 Nov.

2023. "Mykhailo Fedorov Is [Running Ukraine's War Like a Startup](#)," *Wired*, 25 July.

**Thursday, 21 November:** The persistence of the nuclear dilemmas: What does effective deterrence look like in a context of intensified competition among great and regional powers and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. What should one expect of crisis and wartime behavior in a world with multiple nuclear armed competitors? How can nuclear risks be mitigated?

Caitlin Talmadge. 2022. "Multipolar Deterrence in the Emerging Nuclear Era," 13-38 [and](#) Vipin Narang & Scott Sagan, "The Dangerous Nuclear Future," 230-250, both in Vipin Narang & Scott Sagan, eds. [The Fragile Balance of Terror: Deterrence in the New Nuclear Age](#). Cornell University Press.

NOTE: This entire book is available on an open-access basis.

**Tuesday, 26 November:** Doing our best to peer ahead. What does the future of warfare look like, and do development in Ukraine offer lessons for decisions about how to allocate resources and change organizational cultures? Can huge bureaucracies like those in the US defense establishment adapt to new ways of war?

LTC Jahara Matissek & Will Reno. 2023. "[Ukraine Can Point the Pentagon Toward a New Way of War](#)," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 May, and Jahara Matissek, William Reno & Sam Rosenberg. 2023. "More than a Hobby: [Informal Security Assistance to Ukraine](#)," *War on the Rocks*, 17 April.

Eric Schmidt. 2024. "[America Isn't Ready](#) for the Wars of the Future and They're Already Here," *Foreign Affairs*, (Sept / Oct),

**Review & Advise Essay is due – submission via Canvas by 23:59 & some change.**

**WCAS reading period begins, Monday, 2 December & Fall term examinations begin on Monday, 9 December. Have a great Winter Break!**

## **Additional Resources**

[War on the Rocks](#) provides what they call “experience-based commentary and analysis on national security affairs.” The site features commentary and analysis that brings together debates about policy and operations. It’s generally regarded among experts as among the more credible fact-based online venues of this sort. It attracts contributions from leading figures in the field.

[Strategy Bridge](#) publishes essays on strategy, national security, and military affairs. Its *Journal* focuses on ‘big picture’ topics and reviews of recent books. Its podcast series provides in-depth interviews with academic and policy experts on enduring issues that occupy the minds of people who think about strategy.

[Small Wars Journal](#) “facilitates the exchange of information among practitioners, thought leaders, and students of Small Wars, in order to advance knowledge and capabilities in the field.” It is run by a private foundation, and its editor-in-chief is a retired USMCR Intelligence and Counterintelligence / HUMINT officer. Contributions tend to be from diverse perspectives and are sourced to varying degrees of reliability.

[Lawfare](#) publishes essays at the intersection of law, legal institutions, and national security topics, which include (among many others), topics such as cybersecurity, targeted killing, and secrecy & leaks, etc. The site is generally regarded as having a moderate-liberal bias, is reliably sourced, and usually has more academic contributors than most other sites. Contributors include scholars, and military and civilian experts. The editor-in-chief is a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institute.

The [Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs](#) is a think-tank affiliated with Harvard University, a big school out East. I suspect that the more seasoned among you may already know it. This center’s mission includes advancing policy-relevant information about threats to U.S. national interests and international security threats. It is widely regarded as superior in terms of unbiased and well sourced factual reporting.

The [Center for a New American Security](#) is a Washington, D.C.-based think tank which specializes in U.S. national security issues. It strives to produce research that will inform bipartisan policy debate. The co-founders include a former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and a former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

[Defense One](#) is an online news site that reports primarily on matters relating to national defense and security and is owned by Atlantic Media. It reports on recent developments and provides analysis for a policy. It is regarded as reliably well-sourced and accurate among “security professionals” that include government officials, members of the military, and industry.

[Task & Purpose](#) provides news and analysis by and for the military community and the interested wider public. The site also covers general topics of military culture, history, opinion, and essays on post-military career advice. (For distinctive US military humor, try [Duffelblog](#).)