

US MILITARY POWER

17.482-3

Tuesdays, 1.00pm-3.00 pm

Room E25-117

Discussion sections: TBA

Professor Posen, office in E38-634

Teaching Assistant: Caitlin Talmadge

Office hours by appointment

Posen's phone ex. 3-8088 or 8-7608

Spring 2007

Overview

The purpose of this course is to acquaint the student with the missions, capabilities, and costs of the largely non-nuclear forces that make up the bulk of the US military establishment. The course will also introduce the student to basic techniques for the assessment of relative military capabilities between adversaries in given theaters of military action. Central to the course will be an examination of historical cases of military action that shed light on current defense issues. Many of these cases are recent.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of one paper (50%) a mid-term (15%) a final exam (25%). The paper will consist of an analysis of a current conventional forces problem. The paper will be due one week before the last day of class. This means that you should begin working on the paper at the beginning of the semester. Some eligible topics are listed at the end of this syllabus. There will be an undergraduate discussion section (10%). There will be a graduate discussion section. Attendance for the discussion section and lectures is mandatory.

The mid-term is an open-note, sit-down, one hour in-class exam. The final exam is an open note, sit-down exam during the examination period. Study questions will be distributed before the final exam. These questions will be closely related but not identical to those asked on the actual exam. The TA will conduct a review session before the exam, during the final class meeting. The purpose of the exercise is to encourage one last overall review of the main points of the semester. Though the structure appears friendly, it is not a piece of cake.

Required readings will be available through the Stellar web site for this class.
<http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/17/sp07/17.482/>

Topic List

February 6	Introduction: The Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Force Structure
February 13	U.S. Grand Strategy
February 20	No Class - Monday Class Schedule to compensate for President's Day
February 27	The Fundamentals of Campaign Analysis
March 6	History and Role of Airpower
March 13	The last fair fight?: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944
March 20	Mid-Term Intelligence and Military Operations
March 27	No Class - Spring break
April 3	The Nuclear Age, Nuclear Proliferation, and the Global War on Terror
April 10	The New U.S. Way of War: Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom
April 17	No Class -Patriot's Day
April 24	Power Projection: The US Navy, the USMC, Airlift, and Airborne (and the case of Afghanistan?)
May 1	Counter-Insurgency in Iraq: An Old Problem Returns
May 8	"Humanitarian Military Intervention" The War for Kosovo
May 15	Review Session

Week 1, Feb. 6 - Introduction: The Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Force Structure

Please do not be alarmed at the aridity and opacity of the readings for this week. They are background materials that simply summarize the composition and costs of the non-nuclear forces of the U.S. at this moment.

“Long-Term Implications of Current Defense Plans: Summary Update for Fiscal Year 2007,” October 2006.

Available at: <http://www.cbo.gov/showdoc.cfm?index=7671&sequence=0>

Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 2006: pages 1-8, 19-20, 41-62.

Available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/>

Annual Defense Department Report, 2005, p.i-iii, and Appendices A,B,C

http://www.defenselink.mil/execsec/adr_intro.html

Reference Note: Students should get to know both the Pentagon and Congressional Budget Office websites. Both are important sources of information for this course.

Week 2, Feb. 13 - US Grand Strategy

Barry R. Posen and Andrew Ross, "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy," *International Security*, Vol 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996-97), pp. 5-53.

Barry R. Posen, "The Struggle Against Terrorism: Grand Strategy, Strategy, and Tactics," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Winter 2001/02), pp. 39-55.

National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006

Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>

The National Military Strategy of the U.S.A., 2004, pp. 1-38

<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>

Week 3, February 20 – no class (Monday class schedule to compensate for President's Day)

Week 4, Feb 27- The Fundamentals of Campaign Analysis

John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Summer 1982) pp.139-175.

Barry R. Posen, "The Balance of Ground Forces on the Central Front," Chapter 3, from *Inadvertent Escalation*, pp. 68-128.

For a critique of this literature students should read Eliot Cohen, "Toward Better Net Assessment," *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Summer 1988) pp. 176-215.

For responses to this critique, and Cohen's defense, you may wish to review the "Correspondence" in *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 4, (Spring 1989).

Stephen Biddle, Military Power: Explaining victory and Defeat in Modern Battle, (Princeton University Press, 2004) chapter 3, pp. 28-51.

Reference Note: TRADOC: OPFOR Worldwide Equipment Guide, 2001 is a U.S. Army guide to many kinds of weapons and other equipment that could turn up in the hands of potential adversaries.

Recommended:

Michael O'Hanlon, "Stopping a North Korean Invasion: Why Defending S. Korea is Easier than the Pentagon Thinks," 22/4 *International Security*, (Spring 1998) pp. 135-170.

Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "A Common Misapplication of the Lanchester Square Law," *International Security*, Summer, 1987, pp. 135-139.

John W. R. Lepingwell, "The Laws of Combat? Lanchester Reexamined," *International Security*, Summer, 1987, pp. 89-127.

Students interested in an alternative model may wish to consult Joshua Epstein, Strategy and Force Planning, (Brookings Institution: 1987)

For very basic background and definitions of some military terms with which you may be unfamiliar, see James F. Dunnigan, *How to Make War: a Comprehensive Guide to Modern Warfare in the 21st Century*, 2003. On reserve at Dewey library.

Week 5, March 6 - The History and Role of Airpower

W.A. Jacobs, "The Battle for France, 1944," from *Close Air Support*, Benjamin Franklin Cooling, Editor, Washington, DC: US Air Force (US Government Printing Office) 1990, pp. 237-293.

Robert Pape, "Coercive Air Power in the Vietnam War," *International Security*, Fall, 1990.

E. Cohen and T. Keaney, Chapter 3, "What did the Air Campaign Accomplish?," (GWAPS) pp. 55-119.

Daryl Press, "The Myth of Air Power in the Persian Gulf War and the Future of Warfare," *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 5-44.

Thomas A. Keaney, "The Linkage of Air and Ground Power in the Future of Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997) pp. 147-150.

Richard Andres, Craig Wills, Thomas Griffith, Jr., "Winning with Allies: the Strategic Value of the Afghan Model," *International Security*, winter 2005-6.

Stephen Biddle, "Allies, Airpower, and Modern Warfare: the Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq," *International Security*, winter 2005-6.

Whitney Raas and Austin Long, "Osirak Redux? Assessing Israeli Capabilities to Destroy Iranian Nuclear Facilities," *International Security*, forthcoming spring 2007. [not yet available]

Week 6 - March 13- The last fair fight?: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944

Hugh Cole, The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge, (Washington DC: US Army, 1994) pp. 52, 649-660, 685-686. CN

Charles B. MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets Chapters 6,12,13,14, p. 629

The Division—Combat organizations in World War II. (US Government charts)

Recommended Reading:

Charles MacDonald, A Time for Trumpets (NY: William Morrow, 1985) is recommended in its entirety for those interested in ground warfare when it does not go entirely right. Alternatively, students may wish to review Trevor Dupuy, Hitler's Last Gamble, The Battle of the Bulge, (NY: HarperCollins, 1996).

Week 7, March 20- Mid-Term; Intelligence and Military Operations

Primer on the Intelligence Community, appendix C

Steve Daggett, "Overview of the Intelligence Budget," Congressional Research Service, September 24, 2004.

Richard Russell, "Tug of War: The CIA's Uneasy Relationship with the Military" *SAIS Review* Vol 24 number 2

Thomas Mahnken, "War in the Information Age" *Joint Forces Quarterly* Winter 1995-1996

Richard Betts, "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," *World Politics* 31.1 (Oct. 1978): 61-89.

"Background Briefing on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles," DOD, October 31, 2001, pp. 1-19

See also Eric Labs, *Options for Enhancing the Dept. of Defense's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Programs*, Congressional Budget Office, September 1998, at www.cbo.gov

Week 8 - March 27 – no class - Spring Break

Week 9, April 3 – The Nuclear Age, Nuclear Proliferation, and the Global War on Terror

Kenneth N. Waltz, "Peace, Stability, and Nuclear Weapons," Chapter 22, pp. 357-371, from Art and Waltz, The Use of Force, fifth edition, 1999.

Scott Sagan, "The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1994).

Barry R. Posen, "U.S. Security Policy in a Nuclear Armed World" *Security Studies*, vol. 6, No. 3 (spring 1997), pp. 1-31 .

Barry Posen, "A Nuclear-Armed Iran: A Difficult But Not Impossible Policy Problem," 2006.

Daryl Press and Kier Lieber, "The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

Peter C.W. Flory, Keith Payne, Pavel Podvig, Alexei Arbatov, Keir Liever, Daryl Press, "Nuclear Exchange: Does Washington Really Have (or Want) Nuclear Primacy?" *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006.

Charles Glaser and Steve Fetter, "Counterforce Revisited," *International Security*, Vol. 30, NO. 2, Fall 2005, pp. 84-126

"Nuclear Proliferation: Avoiding the 'Greatest Possible Danger'," *Strategic Survey* 2004/5 (Routledge: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005) pp. 37-50.

Review: Raas/Long article from week 5.

Week 10, April 10 – The New U.S. Way of War: Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom

Gulf War I

Gen. Bernard Trainor (USMC ret'd) and Michael Gordon, The Generals' War, chapters 18-20.

John Mueller, "The Perfect Enemy: Assessing the Gulf War," *Security Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (Autumn 1995) pp. 77-117.

Stephen Biddle, "Victory Misunderstood: What the Gulf War Tells Us about the Future of Conflict," *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Fall 1996) pp. 139-179.

Daryl Press, "Lessons from Ground Combat in the Gulf", *International Security*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall 1997) pp. 137-146.

Review: Cohen/Keaney and Press readings from week 5 on airpower in Gulf War.

Gulf War II

Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., "The Military-Technical Revolution: A Preliminary Assessment," Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2000, pp. 11-22.

Eliot Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare," *Foreign Affairs*, 75-2, March-April 1996, pp. 37-54.

"On Point" – *the United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Review these pages to get a sense of how the campaign unfolded. Also review maps and other graphics in these sections.

Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray, "Saddam's Delusions: the View from the Inside," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2006.

Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: the Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, chapters 13 ("Task Force Tarawa") and 14 ("Vampire 12").

Peter Maass, "Good Kills," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, April 20, 2003.

Important Desert Storm Books:

Rick Atkinson, Crusade

E. Cohen and T. Keaney, Gulf War Airpower Survey Summary Report (GWAPS)

US News Staff, Triumph Without Victory,

(These are moderately detailed overviews of the whole war; see also various participant memoirs.)

Week 11, April 17 – no class - Patriot's Day vacation

Week 12, April 24 - Power Projection: The US Navy, the USMC, Airlift, and Airborne

Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Summer 2003), pp. 5-46.

"Options for the Navy's Future Fleet," CBO study, May 2006.

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/72xx/doc7232/05-31-Navy.pdf>

Maj. David Kurle, "Bagram C-130s drop high-tech cargo delivery system," Air Mobility Command Public Affairs Document, available at

<http://www.amc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123026346>

"The Future of the Navy's Amphibious and Maritime Prepositioning Forces," Congressional Budget Office, November 2004. Please read Chapter 1, "Introduction" (pages 1-14) and page 25. Students contemplating Navy or Amphib. Papers should review the entire document.

Michael O'Hanlon, "Why China Cannot Conquer Taiwan," *International Security* (Fall 2000), pp. 51-86.

Recommended:

Military Transformation: Fielding of Army's Stryker Vehicles Is Under Way, but Expectations for Their Transportability by C-130 Aircraft Need to Be Clarified, GAO-04-925, August 2004. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04925.pdf>

Week 13, May 1 – Counter-Insurgency: An Old Problem Returns

James T. Quinnlivan, "Force Requirements in Stability Operations," *Parameters* (Winter 1995-96), pp. 59-69

D. Michael Shafer, Deadly Paradigms: The failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy, Princeton University Press, 1998, pp.115-132.

National Strategy for Victory in Iraq, November 2005, executive summary.

Ahmed Hashem, "Iraq's Chaos: Why the insurgency won't go away," *Boston Review*, (October/November 2004) <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR29.5/hashim.html>

Dexter Filkins, "In Falluja, Young Marines Saw the Savagery of an Urban War," *New York Times*, November 21, 2004.

John C. Moore, "Sadr City: The Armor Pure Assault in Urban Terrain," *Armor*, November-December 2004, pp. 32-37.

George Packer, "The Lesson of Tal Afar: Is it Too Late for the Administration to correct its course in Iraq?" *The New Yorker*, April 10, 2006.

John Burns, "U.S. and Iraqis are Wrangling over War Plans," *New York Times*, January 15, 2007.

Andrew Krepinevich, "How to Win in Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October 2005, pp. 87-104

FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency, Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, December 2006: forward, preface, plus pages 1-24 to 1-29

Iraq Strategy Review Highlights, National Security Council, summary briefing slides, January 2007.

Fred Kagan, "Choosing Victory: A Plan for Success in Iraq, Phase 1 report," January 4, 2007.

Barry Posen, "Exit Strategy: How to Disengage from Iraq in 18 months," *Boston Review*, January/February 2006.

Stephen Biddle, "Seeing Baghdad, Thinking Saigon," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2006.

Recommended:

Melvin Laird, "Iraq: Learning the Lessons of Vietnam," *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 2005), pp.22-43

John Mueller, "The Iraq Syndrome," *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 2005), pp.44-54

Week 14, May 8 - "Humanitarian Military Intervention," The War for Kosovo

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment the Crime of Genocide

International Refugee Convention

Adam Roberts, "NATO's 'Humanitarian War' Over Kosovo," *Survival*, (Autumn 1999), pp. 102-123.

Barry R. Posen, "The War for Kosovo, Serbia's Political-Military Strategy," *International Security*, (Spring 2000), pp. 39-84.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen and CJSC Hugh Shelton, "Joint Statement on the Kosovo After Action Review," October 14, 1999

Timothy L. Thomas, "Kosovo and the Current Myth of Information Superiority," *Parameters* (Spring 2000), pp. 13-29.

Shashi Tharoor, "Should UN Peacekeeping Go Back to Basics?" *Survival* 37-4 (Winter 1995-96), pp. 52-64.

John Mearsheimer and Robert Pape, "The Answer, A partition plan for Bosnia," *The New Republic*, June 14, 1993, pp. 22-28.

Recommended:

Visit the website set up by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* based on a series of stories by Mark Bowden about the US military intervention in Somalia in 1993 <http://www.blackhawkdown.com>. Read the book, available in paperback, Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999) or see the movie.

Week 15, May 16 – Review Session

Suggested Paper Topics (If you do not like these, suggest another!)

The following list of topics was devised to develop your ability to analyze non-nuclear military competitions. Not all of these topics narrowly concern US military forces, but they all bear on future US military planning.

WARNING: These are complex tasks of research and analysis. If you do not know much about Dewey and Hayden Libraries, now is the time to learn.

You should discuss your paper topic with your TA in the early part of the term. A short proposal of a potential paper topic (or topics if you are deciding between a few) will be due in class on February 27. A preliminary outline and research plan will be due in class on March 13. A more comprehensive outline will be due in class on April 3. The final paper will be due in class on May 8.

Potential US contingencies:

Assess the air and ground campaigns that would attend a clash of arms on the Korean Peninsula. What might be the military objectives of each side? Could they achieve them? How might the fighting be terminated? Caution: Several analyses of a straightforward N. Korean attack on S. Korea have been published. One is in the syllabus. Please do not replicate these analyses. Look for a piece of the puzzle that has received insufficient attention, in your judgment.

The conventional wisdom among American defense experts is that China does not have sufficient military capability to conquer Taiwan. Is the conventional wisdom well founded? If so, is Taiwan's present security vis-a-vis China likely to erode in the foreseeable future? Alternatively, what are the current and future threats to Taiwan from a Chinese military blockade, or from a Chinese campaign of harassment, based on persistent conventional ballistic missile attacks.?

Suppose NATO had been forced to wage a ground campaign to take Kosovo from the Serbs in 1999. What might that campaign have looked like? What kinds of forces would NATO have needed to assure a reasonable probability of success. What might it have cost in terms of NATO, Serb, and Kosovar Albanian lives. What might have been the fate of the infrastructure of Kosovo during such a battle? You may assume, for purposes of analysis, that the Serbs were willing to fight, but you may constrain them to the forces now known to have been present in Kosovo and immediately across the border in Serbia.

Prior to the 2003 U.S. led war with Iraq, military planners and independent analysts worried about the possibility that Saddam Hussein would organize a last ditch defense in Baghdad, a major urban battle. Some analysts were optimistic about the course of such a battle and some were very pessimistic. In the actual event, it appears that Saddam did not make a major effort to fight in Baghdad. Suppose he had. How do you think the battle would have gone? What explains the disagreements among the pre-war analysts?

During the final days of the first phase of the Afghan War, it seems that Osama Bin Laden and many Al Qaida fighters were cornered near the Pakistan border, at a place called Tora Bora. Many appear to have escaped. How did this occur. What might the U.S. military reasonably have done to try to prevent this escape. What risks would have been assumed in the effort. Would it have been worth it? Why or Why not?

In the Middle-East/Persian Gulf Region several possible new campaigns in the Bush Administration's "War on Terror" seem possible. These include military action of one kind or another vs Iran, Syria, or Lebanon. Assess the nature, difficulty, and resource requirements of a U.S. military campaign vs. one of these countries.

The U.S. Navy has, since the early 1990's become concerned with "littoral warfare"—naval combat close to adversary shores. The Pentagon is concerned about "access denial"—the possibility that other states could prevent U.S. military power from getting ashore in key areas of the world. Examine carefully the present and emerging littoral warfare capabilities of a medium sized country of interest to the U.S. in a key area of the world. This could be N. Korea or Iran. Estimate their ability to contest the ability of the U.S. to project power into local waters and across the shore.

The Bush administration (like the Clinton Administration before it), has been very concerned about North Korea's apparent nuclear weapons program. Both have tried diplomatic solutions to induce that country to dismantle the program. Suppose the current round of diplomacy fails. Assess the question of whether or not a limited military strike can be devised that would eliminate North Korea's ability to produce new nuclear weapons. Be sure to discuss your level of confidence in the plan's effectiveness. (You could examine Iran if you wished.) You could also conduct this analysis from the perspective of another country. For example you might put yourself in the position of an Indian or Pakistani military planner trying to develop and assess the feasibility of such a campaign vs one another.

The U.S. faces an insurgency of some kind in Iraq today. Assess the current conflict. In light of what you can discover about counter-insurgency strategy and tactics, the insurgents, U.S. capabilities, and U.S. policies, what is your projection for Iraq over the next two-three years? Do you believe current U.S. policies are likely to produce an outcome that looks like a "success." If so, why? If not, why not?

Suppose that either internal political developments, or external action, were to produce a collapse of the governments of Iran or Pakistan. The argument would surely be advanced that someone has to introduce military forces into these countries to reestablish stability. Assess the requirements of military operations devised to bring about political stability in either country.

Pakistan is a nuclear weapons state. It is also a politically unstable country. Suppose that a rapid political change in that country produces fears in the U.S. that its nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands. Assess the military problem of destroying, or securing those weapons.

Non-US Contingencies:

Evaluate the military balance in South Asia (India and Pakistan). What conventional military pressures, if any, are fueling the nuclear arms race on the subcontinent? Could conventional arms control ease these pressures?

Review Operation Allied Force, the 1999 NATO operation against Serbia prompted by the civil war in Kosovo. Many government officials on both sides of the Atlantic have suggested that the operation demonstrates the woeful backwardness of European military forces. What evidence is there to support this proposition. How backward do the Europeans seem to be. In what areas. Do current European defense programs hold much promise of remedying the inadequacies? When?

Examine possible humanitarian interventions by the European Union in the Republic of the Congo, Darfur in Sudan, or Zimbabwe,. What are the dimensions of the problem? What might be the objectives of the intervention? What kinds of capabilities would be necessary? Do the Europeans have the necessary capabilities?

Asian countries seem to fear the military potential of Japan. Assess Japanese military capabilities today. Do not merely enumerate holdings of weapons systems. Pick a notional campaign in Asia, and assess Japan's independent capability in that campaign. Note, the following examples are not chosen for their likelihood, but for their analytic utility. Examples:

- A Japanese effort to blockade China's seaborne trade.
- A Japanese effort to defend itself, by itself, from a dedicated Chinese submarine campaign against Japanese merchant shipping
- Japan's vulnerability to a dedicated Chinese conventional ballistic missile attack. (Note: Given that Japan has no ballistic missile defense capability, and will not have one anytime soon, this analysis would involve first an assessment of China's plausible conventional missile capability, and then an assessment of the inherent vulnerability of Japan's economic infrastructure, and its civil defense capability.).
- Japanese participation alongside the U.S. in a war with the China over Taiwan

One of the most frequently cited potential consequences of Iraqi partition or a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is that Saudi Arabia and Iran will move into Iraq and battle to control it. How plausible are these claims? What forms might Saudi or Iranian military action take? Conventional? Unconventional? What capabilities does each side possess to project power into Iraq, in particular to harm or to protect different sectarian factions? What would be the outcome of a Saudi-Iranian battles for control of Iraq?