US MILITARY POWER
17.482-3

Professor Barry R. Posen

Tuesdays, 1.00pm-3.00 pm
Room E25-117
Discussion sections: TBA

Professor Posen’s office is in E40
Email: posen@mit.edu
Posen’s phone ex. 3-8088 or 8-7608

Teaching Assistants: Sameer Lalwani and Miranda Priebe
Office hours by appointment
Emails: slalwani@mit.edu and mlpriebe@mit.edu

Spring 2012

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 at the beginning of class, one week before the last day of class. Late paper policy: Extensions will only be granted in the event of documented medical or personal emergencies. Late papers will be penalized one third a grade per day late (e.g., A to A-). 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. 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/sp12/17.482/
# Topic List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Introduction: The Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Force Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>U.S. Grand Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td><strong>No Class - Monday class schedule to compensate for President's Day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>The Fundamentals of Campaign Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Paper Topic Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>History and Role of Airpower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>The last fair fight?: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Preliminary Paper Outline Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intelligence and Military Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td><strong>No Class - Spring break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Guest Lecture by Cindy Williams: Budgeting for National Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Naval Power and Power Projection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Detailed Paper Outline Due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td><strong>No Class - Patriot’s Day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>The New U.S. Way of War: Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Counter-Insurgency &amp; Iraq: An Old Problem Returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>&quot;Humanitarian Military Intervention&quot; The War for Kosovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Campaign Analysis Paper due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>The Nuclear Age, Nuclear Proliferation, and the Global War on Terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17 (or independently scheduled by TAs)</td>
<td>Review Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 1, February 7 - Introduction: The Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Force Structure

Required: Please review these materials before the first lecture

Introduction

Context of American Defense Planning

2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report:

Shifts since the 2010 QDR

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

http://www.cbo.gov
http://www.defense.gov/
Week 2, February 14 - US Grand Strategy

Required:


For your own benefit, please create a tally, list, or some kind of notes on the similarities and differences between the 2006 and 2010 Strategies.


Recommended:

Also potentially “Chapter 12: Epilogue: Containment After the Cold War”

Week 3, February 21 - No class (Monday class schedule)

Week 4, February 28 – The Fundamentals of Campaign Analysis

Required:

[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. Many military acronyms can be found at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/]


For responses to this critique, and Cohen's defense, you may wish to review the "Correspondence" in International Security, Vol. 15, No. 4, (Spring 1989).


Recommended: These are examples of military analysis that you may find useful as you begin your papers. You should review at least one of these this week, nothing the approach and the types of sources they use.


Also see examples in next week’s recommended list


For ground campaigns see,


For counter insurgency campaigns: Sameer Lalwani, Pakistani Capabilities for a Counterinsurgency Campaign, New America Foundation Policy Paper, September 2009


For applications outside the United States, see:


Though not a campaign analysis, this article is a good example of analyzing the capabilities of other states: Walter C. Ladwig, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” International Security 32 (3), Winter 2007/08, pp. 158-190.

Other recommended readings:


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

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

Required:

History


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

**Modern Applications**


**Recommended:**


For a sample air campaign done by professionals in the business, see:


For the use of airpower by non-great powers, students may also want to look at:

Students interested in ballistic missiles should consult the following for a very preliminary introduction to the issues involved:


Week 6, March 13 - The Last Fair Fight?: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944

Required:

Background


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

The Battle


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

Recommended:


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

Background (Skim the following):


Required:


Stephen Budiansky, Battle of Wits: The Complete Story of Codebreaking in World War


Recommended:


Paul R. Pillar, “Intelligence, policy, and the war in Iraq,” Foreign Affairs, (March/April 2006)


Week 8, March 27 – no class - Spring Break

Week 9, April 3 – Guest Lecture, Dr. Cindy Williams, Readings TBD

Week 10, April 10 – Naval Power and Power Projection

Required:

Strategy:


Naval Operations: The Nexus of Air and Surface Warfare


*Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW):*


**Week 11, April 17 – No Class – Patriot’s Day Vacation**

**Week 12, April 24 – The New American Way of War?: Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom**

*Required:*

**Gulf War I**


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

**Gulf War II**


**Lessons from Israel/Lebanon War 2006**

Recommended:
“On Point” – *the United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*. Chapters 3-6. Skim these pages to get a sense of how the campaign unfolded. Also review maps and other graphics in these sections.


**Reference - Other 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 13, May 1 – Iraq, Afghanistan & Counter-Insurgency:
An Old Problem Returns

Required:

Theory and Strategy
Austin Long, The Other War: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research (RAND, 2006), Chapter 4-5, pp. 21-55.


The new army counterinsurgency manual

Critiques of the new field manual


IRAQ

The Evolution of the Insurgency in Iraq


Urban Combat in Counter-Insurgency

Assessing the decline in violence
AFGHANISTAN

Background and Evolution of Insurgency

Growing Problems and Calls for a Change in Strategy


Assessing the New Strategy


Counter Terrorism
Nicholas Schmidle, “Getting Bin Laden: What Happened that Night in Abbotobad,” The New Yorker, August 8, 2011. (Note – this is a disputed/controversial account. How credible do you find this article? Do you believe this kind of information should be kept secret?)

Recommended Reading:


Reference - Students interested in writing a COIN campaign analysis are encouraged to review past operations. Some useful sources are:

Iraq


Afghanistan
[PDF version: http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf]

Steve Simon and Jonathan Stevenson, "Afghanistan: How Much is Enough?" Survival 51, no. 5 (October-November 2009), pp. 47-67

Other Campaigns
Robert Komer, The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect (RAND, February 1972), Report R-957-ARPA


Week 14, May 8 – "Humanitarian Military Intervention":
The War for Kosovo and Related Applications

Required:

The Logic and Definition(s) of Humanitarian Intervention


Operation Allied Force


Libya

Recommended:
Review these key resources on international law relating to humanitarian operations

Treaty on the Prevention of Genocide

International Refugee Convention
http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html

Mass Atrocity Response Operations
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/maro/

Carr Center for Human Rights Policy
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/

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

**Reference** - *For other humanitarian operations, see:*


**Week 15, May 15 – The Nuclear Age, Nuclear Proliferation, and the Global War on Terror**


Evan Medeiros and Taylor Fravel, “China’s Search for Assured Retaliation,” *International Security* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 48-87


**Review**: Raas/Long article from week 5.

**Week 15, Review Session: TBD**
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. The papers should assess how a hypothetical future (or past) clash of two militaries might go (or have gone). 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 28. 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 10. 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.

One of the concerns about America’s drawdown in Iraq is that of all-out domestic and potentially regional conflict between Sunni, Shi’ites and Kurds for control of Iraqi territory will follow. Assess what this conflict might look like. What would an all-out fight between Iraq’s domestic factions looks like? What capabilities can they bring to the table and what are likely targets? Alternatively, suppose Saudi Arabia, Iran, and/or other states entered the fight to help domestic allies: what might be the military objectives of each side? What forces could each side field? Could they achieve their objectives?

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-à-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? Again, note that an existing analysis of this question is cited in the syllabus, so you should consider a new angle.

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?

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 press is full of accounts of the emergence of China’s capability to contest U.S. naval preeminence in the Western Pacific. Assess China’s present and near term capabilities vs the U.S. You will need to choose a contingency. For example, suppose the U.S. wants to assist an ally defending a claim in a dispute over an island or access to resources in the South China Sea. Could China deny the U.S. and/or one of its allies access to the area?

Assess a “counter proliferation” military campaign. For example, U.S. policy makers have been very concerned about North Korea’s apparent nuclear weapons program through the last four Administrations. The U.S. and its allies 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. Or, you could examine the potential for a U.S. counter proliferation strike on Iran. You might also conduct this analysis from the perspective of another country. For example you might put yourself in the position of an Indian military planner trying to develop and assess the feasibility of such a campaign versus Pakistan, or Israel vs Iran. 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.

Though the insurgency(ies) that the U.S. fought against in Iraq seem to have been suppressed, much violence does continue. What do you think explains how and why we have reached the present state. In light of what you can discover about counter-insurgency strategy and tactics, the insurgents, and Iraqi government capabilities, what is your projection for Iraq’s ability to manage the current insurgency on its own over the next several years? D you believe that those still fighting in Iraq are likely to be
vanquished or co-opted? Or does it seem more likely that some level of violence will continue?

Suppose that either internal political developments, or external action, were to produce a collapse of the government of Iran, North Korea, Pakistan. The argument would surely be advanced that someone has to introduce military forces into these countries to re-establish stability. Assess the requirements of military operations devised to bring about political stability in one of those countries.

The US drawing down its forces in Afghanistan by 2014. Consider the new strategy associated with this decision. Analyze the possible evolution of a new US strategy given the lessons – positive and negative – of past COIN operations. What are likely military objectives in the current phase of the campaign? What can and will the US need to do to achieve these goals? Alternately, 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 Afghanistan 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?

Despite intense local opposition, the United States continues to station thousands of Marines and their associated equipment on the island of Okinawa. Suppose the United States found itself in some kind of combat scenario in East Asia (e.g., an air or sea contest with China, a ground war with North Korea). Assess the value of the Okinawa force to this mission. Compare the value with alternatives, e.g., deploying air or ground units from the United States. What is the utility of the Okinawa force relative to the alternatives? Is it militarily useful to keep the force in Japan?

Imagine the United States winds up in a shooting war with China over Taiwan, North Korea, or some related issue. Now suppose the United States wants to blockade Chinese ports to deny China access to global markets or prevent their navy from taking to sea. Analyze the requirements for this operation. Could – and if so, how – the United States undertake this operation? At what cost?

Non-US Contingencies:

Evaluate the military balance in South Asia (India and Pakistan). Imagine that another terrorist attack in India leads to strike targets in Pakistan. What might they choose? How might Pakistan respond? What would a limited or full-scale conventional conflict look like? Alternatively, how effective might India’s capabilities be against terrorist groups’ ability to operate out of Pakistan?

Pakistan is also now engaged in a fight against the Taliban and tribal supporters in the Northwest Frontier in which the Pakistani Army has taken heavy casualties. Evaluate the nature of this fight. Could Pakistan do more to suppress these non-state actors and, if so, what? What evidence is there that Pakistan lacks the political will, rather than the military capacity, to suppress internal opposition as some scholars have argued?
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?

How successful do you expect the African Union to be in suppressing/disarming Al Shabaab? Are sufficient forces devoted to the task? What do you think of the strategy based on past experiences?

Review the 2008 Georgia-Russian War. What were Russian and Georgian objectives in the conflict? Could the Georgians have defeated Russian forces and, if so, how? If Georgia joins NATO — as some policymakers advocate — what would NATO be able to contribute to a renewed Georgian-Russian conflict?

Israel invaded Lebanon during the summer of 2006 in an effort to root out Hizbollah forces. Anticipating an easy victory, they soon found themselves embroiled in a costly campaign. Since then, Israel has nominally endeavored to learn from its mistakes to better prepare its forces if and when a similar fight erupts in the future. Consider one of the following:

- Assess the nature of Israel’s shortcomings in 2006. Could Israel, with the forces and resources then at its disposal, have done a better job in attacking Hizbollah?
- What might a future campaign look like from the point of view of either 1) Israeli, or 2) Hizbollah strategy?

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: 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, its civil defense capability, and accounting for its nascent anti-ballistic missile defenses).
- Japanese participation alongside the U.S. in a war with the China over Taiwan

If Japan decides to begin a greater arming program, how might these scenarios change? What kinds of capabilities would affect the regional balance the most?

China’s growing military and economic capabilities have triggered profound security concerns in East Asia. In the process, much has been made of China’s growing air, missile, and naval assets. Pick a notional campaign in East Asia, and assess China’s capability for the campaign. For instance:

- A Chinese effort to blockade Japan or Taiwan
• A Chinese effort to deny the United States Navy access beyond the “first island chain”
• A Chinese effort to interdict U.S. carriers transiting to the Western Pacific
• A campaign to suppress Taiwanese air defenses in the prelude to an invasion
• A missile campaign to coerce Japan, Taiwan, etc

Drug violence in Mexico is on the rise. In what ways are Mexican operations like COIN? Will the current approach taken by the government help? What kinds of capabilities could the U.S. provide to help in the fight?

How might a NATO campaign in Syria unfold? How similar or different would be to the Libya experience?

There have been some border incidents between Venezuela and Columbia in recent years. Imagine tensions increase. Could any Columbia destroy Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known by its Spanish abbreviation, FARC) suspected camps? How would this affect FARC’s campaign? Or, consider how Venezuela might respond to such an attack.

Indian analysts have grown more concerned about China’s naval growth. What kind of conflict could result between the two rising powers? How might a naval conflict play out?

Imagine that NATO had not intervened in Libya. How might the rebels have fared on their own? Would Gaddafi have been able to carry out his threats of civilian massacre or suppress the rebellion?