Strategy and Tactics in Warfighting (WS 2019/20)

Synopsis

A Introduction

1. Struggling with “strategy”...
   1.1. ... “Strategy is for flag officers only” (not attributed)
   1.2. ... “Strategy is political will” (not attributed)

2. Strategy and tactics, or “stratagēma” and “tactica”: definitions and origins

3. “Navies don’t purchase and possess real estate” (Hughes)

4. (Navy-oriented) foreword: “Tactics is the soul of our profession.” (Cebrowski)

5. First “results”
   5.1. Littoral warfare: “A ship’s a fool that fights a fort.” (Nelson)
   5.2. “Fire effectively first!” (Mahan; Hughes)

B Early (Mostly Naval) Tactics

6. Chase-Fiske-Lanchester Models
   6.1. (Pre 1775 infantry) Linear combat
   6.2. Fighting sail tactics: ships-of-the-line, columns, shirkers, crossing the T, raking
   6.3. Why (mathematical) models? Game theory and war games
   6.4. The Fiske (1905) salvo model: tables, difference equations and tactical implications
      6.4.1. Concentrating fire?
      6.4.2. Massing matters!
      6.4.3. Surprise! (i.e. “Fire effectively first!”)
      6.4.4. Isolating enemy forces!
      6.4.5. ... and a strategic implication: quantity over quality!
   6.5. The Lanchester (1916) (originally aerial combat) square law for continuous fire
      6.5.1. Solving the model
      6.5.2. Fiske’s tactical/strategic implications?
      6.5.3. Anecdotal evidence or empirical studies? Fighting sail; ground combat; COIN; aerial combat (“Flying Tigers”; Thach Weave; RAF doctrine)
   6.6. Lanchester’s law, the prequel: The Chase (1902) square law

C WWII Naval Tactics

7. Formations: a primer
   7.1. Foxhall Parker
   7.2. Column or line?
   7.3. Turn or corpen?

8. U.S. Navy tactics at a crossroad
   8.1. The advent of the aircraft carrier: a prelude to the missile age
8.2. U.S. Naval War College war games
8.3. “Fleet Problems”
8.4. The circular formation

9. Early WWII carrier warfare
9.1. The early WWII Hughes carrier warfare model
9.2. Screening and surprise: “Fire effectively first!” yet again
9.3. The first four Pacific carrier battles
   9.3.1 Coral Sea: American tactical defeat ... but strategic victory (May 6-7, 1942)
   9.3.2. “AF” and Midway (June 4-6, 1942)
   9.3.3. Eastern Solomons (August 24, 1942)
   9.3.4 Santa Cruz (October 26, 1942)
9.4. War studies I: Battle of Midway (June 4, 1942)
9.5. Anvil tactics

10. The development of U.S. and Japanese naval doctrine
11. WWII carrier warfare from 1944 onwards
11.1. War studies II: Battle of the Philippine Sea (“Marianas Turkey Shoot”, June 19-20, 1944)
11.2. Air support begins to matter: “Combat Air Patrol” and fighter escorts
11.3. The late WWII Hughes carrier warfare model
11.4. War studies III: Battle(s) of Leyte (October 23-25, 1944)

12.1. Guadalcanal: “Cactus” and the “Tokyo Express”
12.2. A reminiscence of fighting sail: long columns and crossing the T
12.3. “Command and Control” (C² problems
12.4. The Battle of Cape Esperance (October 11/12, 1942)
12.5. Lessons learned: “training, training and TRAINING” (Nimitz)

13. Night surface action in the Solomons: Phase Two (July 1943 – November 1943)
13.1. Destroyer divisions and “hit and move”
13.2. The Battle of Vella Gulf (November 6/7, 1943)
13.3. The Solomons: a conclusion

D  Constants and Trends

14. The processes of combat
14.1. Fire power and counterforce
   14.1.1 Survivability (staying power) since WWII
   14.1.2. Attack and defense. from fighting sail to the missile age
   14.1.3. War studies IV: HMS Ambuscade and SS Atlantic Conveyor (May 25, 1982)
14.2. Scouting and anti-scouting
   14.2.1. Scouting and surprise: from fighting sail to missile age
   14.2.2. War studies V: USS Chesapeake v HMS Leopard (June 22, 1807)
   14.2.3. 24/7 “General Quarters” ...
   14.2.4. The changing roles of platforms: destroyers as picket stations
   14.2.6. HMS Bulwark at the London Olympics 2012
14.3. C² and C²CM

15. Kinetic warfare, cyber warfare, lawfare
16. Actionable intelligence: to act or not to act?
16.1. The Battle of Samar
16.2. Ultra
16.3. Firing solutions in submarine warfare
17. Success in war: the preemptive (counter-)strike as (the only reasonable) defense
   17.1. “Fire effectively first!” ... yet again
   17.2. Curtis LeMay and the Strategic Air Command in the 1950s: “Winning Armageddon”?

E Modern Naval Tactics

   18.1. Lethality of missile combat: “Fire effectively first!, yet again
   18.2. Scouting efficiency and tactics: massed attack, dispersed attack or sequential attack?
   18.3. Hit probabilities and ship attributes: prototype values
   18.4. Planning with the salvo model: the importance of surprise and numbers
   18.5. The Ticonderoga/Aegis-type cruiser: how many do you need?

F Mission Planning

19. Mission planning with Hughes’s salvo model: a numerical example
20. Excursion: The “Nine [or any other integer ☺] Dash Line”
21. McRaven’s “six principles of special operations”
23. War studies VIII: Operation Lion’s Den, Haiphong Harbor (August 27, 1972)

G (Mostly Naval) Strategy

24. … and a final (?) attempt: definitions of strategy versus tactics
26. “Missions of the U.S. Navy” (and respective “tactics” and “tactical tools”)
   26.1. Warfighting missions
      26.1.1. Sea control
      26.1.2: Power projection ashore
   26.2. Deterrence
      26.2.1. Presence
      26.2.2. Strategic deterrence
27. Excursion: U.S. Navy presence during the Syrian invasion of Jordan (September 1970)
28. Excursion: Deception as a strategic tool, Operation Mincemeat (WWII 1942/43)

H Strategic Targets: “The temptations of total war” (Crane)

29. Choice of targets I: submarine warfare
   29.1. A short history of WWI blockade warfare
   29.2. International law on submarine warfare
   29.3. Pre-WWII U.S. submarine doctrine: fleet submarines
   29.4. “Day of infamy”: “EXECUTE AGAINST JAPAN UNRESTRICTED AIR AND SUBMARINE WARFARE”
   29.5. “Illegal but not immoral” (Holwitt)
   29.6. To target the enemy fleet or to target the enemy’s lines of communications?
30. Choice of targets II: strategic air war from WWI to Vietnam
   30.1. “Strength of resistance equals capacity times will.” (Clausewitz)
   30.2 Post WWI bomber doctrine: “Future wars may in the long run shed less blood.” (Douhet)
   30.3. RAF v USAF WWII doctrine … and capabilities
   30.4. Limited strategic bombing against North Korea (Korean War)
   30.5. How not to win a war: from Rolling Thunder (“Rolling Blunder”) to Linebacker II (Vietnam)
31. Choice of targets III: strategic air war since 1991
   31.2. Warden’s “Five Rings”
   31.4. Deptula’s “Effects-Based Operations”: control instead of annihilate
   31.5. How to do it: parallel attacks, precision bombing, stealth technology

I Strategic Planning

32. Post-Vietnam strategic blunders
   32.1 The Vietnam War? “The way to end this war is to win the damned thing.” (Olds)
   32.2. The Carter administration naval policy (1976-1980)
   32.3. Thatcher naval policy (1981): “The Royal Navy was to become a coast guard.” (Lehman)
   32.4. The UK 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review
   32.5. “You have the watches. We have the time.” (attributed to a captured Taliban fighter)

33. Political (aka “hybrid” aka “non-linear”) warfare: war by other means
   33.1. “Strategic culture in the West is characterized by a sharp distinction between ‘peace’ and ‘war’ with little scope for active conflict in between.” (Lucas, quoted by Carter)
   33.2. Examples: Wagner Group (Russia); Quds (Iran)
   33.3. International “law”?

34. “Is strategic planning obsolete?” (Stavridis) “Man plans, fate laughs …”

References

Introductory Texts and Seminal Contributions


Wayne P. Hughes (1992), The Value of Warship Attributes in Missile Combat, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA.


**Other Primary Sources**


Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet (1943), *Destroyer Torpedo Attack Instructions (Tentative)*, Destroyer Tactical Bulletin No. 4-43, DECLASSIFIED.

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Ronald L. Johnson (1989/89), *Lanchester’s Square Law in Theory and Practice*, School of Advanced Military Studies; United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth KS.


**Campaign and Battle Analyses, Battle Reports**


Recollections and Biographies


Thomas F. Jaras (2013), *In the Trough: Three Years on Ocean Station*, Bloomington IN: iUniverse.


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