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Number 3

American Relationship at War: The Anglo-American Relationship during the Korean War Antelligence and the Problem of Strategic Qurprise Equipment within NATO Collaborative Production of Defense **Books Received Book Reviews** e Decision Costs in the Intelligence Cycle 0 Michael I. Handel Loch K. Johnson Jan Feldman Ra Jong-Yil 318 356 336 301 282 229

> Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise*

Michael I. Handel

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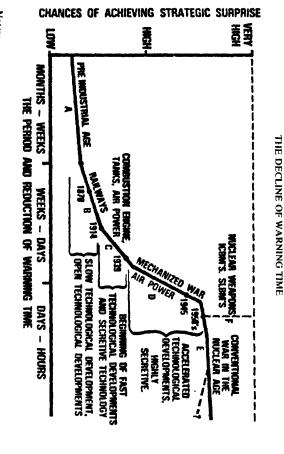
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STRATEGIC SURPRISE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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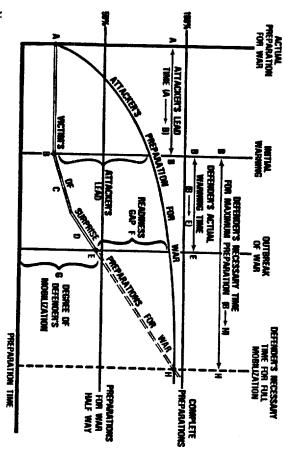
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THE NORMAL WARNING AND PREPARATION GAP BETWEEN THE ATTACKER AND DEFENDER (THIS CHART EMPIRICALLY REFLECTS MOST CASES OF STRATEGIC SURPRISE ATTACKS)



- A. Attacker starts preparations for war.
- Defender issues initial warning, but is uncertain of the real probability of war Due to uncertainty the initial phase of preparation proceeds relatively slowly.
- As the probability of war increases and becomes more certain the defender accelerates preparations.
- War breaks out (e.g. surprise attack). Defender's preparations incomplete and lag behind the attacker.
- The readiness gap favoring the attacker.
- $\pm \circ \pm$ The degree of mobilization completed by the defenders at the time of attack (E)
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THE PROBLEM OF STRATEGIC SURPRISE

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allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and launch a preemptive surprise attack of their own. 5

3. INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES

All information gathered by intelligence concerns either the adventary's The second exception occurs in prolonged crisis situations when one is the first to mobilize fully but then decides to delay his attack opponent may then catch up and perhaps reach the point where the launch his attack first. This type of proposes the proposes attack is at the point where the launch his attack first. the First World War, and again when Egypt mobilized first in May 1867 but launch his attack first. This type of scenario occurred before the outbreak of can The side

extremely intricate and time-consuming process which involves onany actual sorting, evaluation, and corroboration of the information an reaction of other mistakes, causing potentially serious analytical distortions. interrelated steps. An error of judgment in one phase may set off archain intentions or his capabilities. 6 Although this sounds simple enough,

while neglecting the less precise, non-material ones. conceal. Non-material capabilities such as the quality of organization, be avoided at all costs is concentrating on the measurable and quantifiable although considerable knowledge about them can be obtained. A pitfall to morale, and military doctrine are more difficult to evaluate in a precise way, weapons, their performance specifications, and quantities are not easy to collection and analysis of the two types of information. Needless to sax, it is Capabilities can be material or non-material. Material capabilities, that is, lar simpler to obtain information about capabilities than about intergeons. Perhaps the most fundamental problem concerns the difference on the

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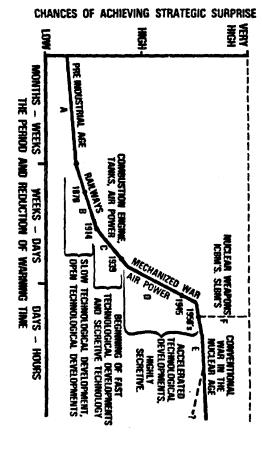
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FIGURE I
STRATEGIC SURPRISE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:
THE DECLINE OF WARNING TIME



Notes:

 A. Pre-industrial age. Slow mobility, limited fire power. Chances of a successful strategic surprise very low.(1870)

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F. Improvements in conventional mobility and fire power. Increased importance of air power. High chances of success for strategic surprise – but slowed increase given the technical developments of reconnaissance (air photography, satellites, electronic intelligence). Potential for surprise is somewhat leveled off by reconnaissance and familiarity with tactics of blitzkrieg. Yet, despite all the technological improvements that may help the defense, the basic problems of anticipating an attack are perceptual and psychological and remain without a satisfactory solution.

date information were not of paramount importance, because the behavior and strength of one's adversary did not change very frequently. The shape of each war differed only marginally from that of earlier wars. This is *not* the case in a world of rapid technological change, where each new weapon and the continuously changing rates of military industrial production may give the innovator a critical unilateral advantage almost overnight. For the first time in history, intelligence itself has become a major defensive weapon. Furthermore, most of the technological innovations and preparations for

war continue in peacetime, indicating that intelligence work has become as

enough, made little progress is that of anticipating surprise attack. The able aspect of military performance, the one area in which it has, ironically important in peacetime as it is in war. still based upon the human factor. As it is labor-intensive, intelligence work toring equipment, high-powered computers, and satellites, to name a few, is so, mainly because intelligence work, despite its access to electronic monithe past and still favors the offense over the defense. This will continue to be warning gap between the attacker and defender has remained as wide as in quality of the decisions made will be most heavily influenced by the human ethnocentric biases; perception and misperception of reality; conflicting are problems of: human psychology and politics; wishful thinking; defy technological (or for that matter, any other) solutions. Among these lar depends upon finding solutions to human problems which sometimes results achieved in the world of intelligence and strategic warning in particumust reflect human nature, not technological excellence. The quality of factor, the complexities of which can be explained but not done away with interests; political competition over scarce resources; organizational biases. As long as men interact with machines in the decision-making process, the Although military technology has revolutionized almost every conceiv-

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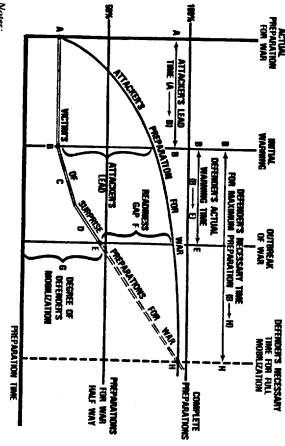
Like Clausewitz's war in practice, the real world of intelligence is the with political friction and contradictions, an environment in which uncertainty is the only certain thing.

Intelligence work can be divided into three distinct levels: acquisition (the collection of information); analysis (its evaluation); and acceptance (the readiness of politicians to make use of intelligence in the formulation of their policies).* As suggested earlier, past failures in avoiding surprise cannot be blamed on a dearth of information and warning signals. Consequently, one must look to the levels of analysis and acceptance for an answer.

The major problems stemming from these two levels can be discussed under three principal categories, two of which are primarily related to the analytical process. These are, first, the methodological dilemmas inherent in intelligence work and problems of perception and second, explanations

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The second exception occurs in prolonged crisis situations when one side is the first to mobilize fully but then decides to delay his attack. The opponent may then catch up and perhaps reach the point where he can be the control of the catch his attack first. launch his attack first. This type of scenario occurred before the outbreak of the First World War, and again when Egypt mobilized first in May 1967 Sout allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations and allowed the Israelis eventually to exceed Egypt's own preparations are allowed the Israelis eventually the exceed Egypt's own preparations are allowed the Israelis eventually the exceed Egypt's own preparations are allowed the Israelis eventually the Israelis eventually the Israelis eventually eventually the Israelis eventually eventu launch a preemptive surprise attack of their own.15 se 2005/

3. INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES

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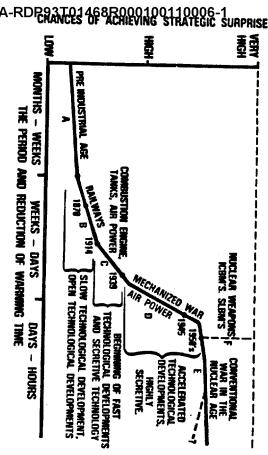
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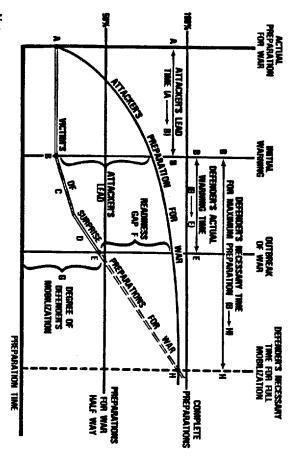
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The readiness gap favoring the attacker.

The degree of mobilization completed by the defenders at the time of attack (E)

HO.F greater is B → H minus B ← → E the more intense is the impact of the surprise attack. At this point the defender may have reached his highest level of preparations. Line A←→B time; line B \to H represents the time the defender needs to complete his preparations. The represents the attacker's lead time; line B \cdots E represents the defender's actual warning

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THE PROBLEM OF STRATEGIC SURPRISE

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Intelligence and the Problem of Strategic Surprise*

Michael I. Handel

... The textbooks agree, of course, that we should only believe reliables intelligence, and should never cease to be suspicious, but what is the use of such feeble maxims? They belong to that wisdom which for wange of anything better scribblers of systems and compendia resort to whene they run out of ideas. (Clausewitz, On War, Book One, Ch. 689)

... the general unreliability of all information presents a special problem in war: all action takes place, so to speak, in a kind of twilight which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seems grotesque and larger than they really are.

Whatever is hidden from full view in this feeble light has to be guessed at by talent, or simply left to chance. So once again for lack of the problem is the grotesque and the problem in this feeble light has to be guessed at by talent, or simply left to chance.

objective knowledge one has to trust to talent or to luck.

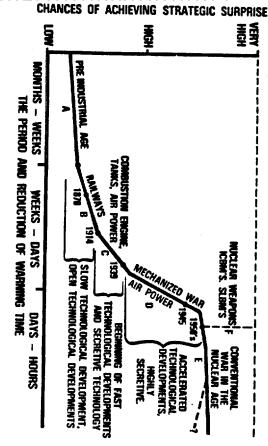
application to the real world, improved insight into the causes and pattern of strategic surprise has made only a negligible contribution to the search for ways to warn of a sudden attack in an accurate and timely fashion. It anything, the scrutiny of this phenomenon in recent years has chiefly served. (Clausewitz, On War, Book Two, Ch.2). The study of strategic surprise can be rather disappointing for those whose have always assumed that a better theoretical understanding of the subject are hand would logically lead to the discovery of more effective practical means to anticipate strategic surprise and alleviate its impact. Thus far in its to explain why surprise is almost always unavoidable – and will continue to-be so in the foreseeable future – despite all efforts to the contrary.

Strategic Surprise as a Force Multiplier

From a military point of view, the advantages to be derived from achieving strategic surprise are invaluable. A successful unanticipated attack wilk facilitate the destruction of scientific and the dest cally off balance, and hence temporarily reducing his resistance. In compencost to the attacker by throwing the inherently stronger defense psychologifacilitate the destruction of a sizable portion of the enemy's forces at a lower

conference on Intelligence and Politics. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the US Government. I would like to thank my wife, Jill Handel, for her editorial help and perceptive * An abbreviated version of this article has been presented at the US Air Force Academy's

STRATEGIC SURPRISE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: THE DECLINE OF WARNING TIME



CIA-RDP93T01468R000100110006-1 Notes:

A. Pre-industrial age. Slow mobility, limited fire power. Chances of a successful strategic surprise very low. (1870)
B. Railway age. Increased mobility, mobilization. Slow increases in fire power. Chances of a successful strategic surprise low but possible. (1870-1916)
C. Combustion engines, tracked vehicles and tanks, rise of air power and fire power. Mechanized warfare blitzkrieg. Chances of strategic surprise high. (1916-1939)
D. Further improvement in mobility and fire power. Chances of strategic surprise high – but

Further improvement in mobility and fire power. Chances of strategic surprise high - but also improvements to intelligence. (1939 to present)

minutes. (1945 to present) weapons of strategic surprise. War can be decided - theoretically and practically - in Development of nuclear weapons and later ICBM's and SLBM's par excellence the

Approved For Release of blitzkrieg. Yet, despite all the technological improvements that may help the defense, the basic problems of anticipating an attack are perceptual and psychological and remain Potential for surprise is somewhat leveled off by reconnaissance and familiarity with tactics Improvements in conventional mobility and fire power. Increased importance of air power without a satisfactory solution. developments of reconnaissance (air photography, satellites, electronic intelligence). High chances of success for strategic surprise - but slowed increase given the technical

Furthermore, most of the technological innovations and preparations for case in a world of rapid technological change, where each new weapon and each war differed only marginally from that of earlier wars. This is not the and strength of one's adversary did not change very frequently. The shape of date information were not of paramount importance, because the behavior the innovator a critical unilateral advantage almost overnight. For the first the continuously changing rates of military industrial production may give time in history, intelligence itself has become a major defensive weapon.

> war continue in peacetime, indicating that intelligence work has become as important in peacetime as it is in war.

still based upon the human factor. As it is labor-intensive, intelligence work must reflect human nature, not technological excellence. The quality of results achieved in the world of intelligence and strategic warning in particular depends upon finding solutions to human problems which sometimes defy technological (or for that matter, any other) solutions. Among these are problems of: human psychology and politics; wishful thinking ethnocentric biases; perception and misperception of reality; conflicting interests; political competition over scarce resources; organizational biases. As long as men interact with machines in the decision-making process, the quality of the decisions made will be most heavily influenced by the human factor, the complexities of which can be explained but not done away with In the past, it has often (either explicitly or implicitly) been assumed that intelligence work can be pursued by professional, detached experts working. the past and still favors the offense over the defense. This will continue to be so, mainly because intelligence work, despite its access to electronic mone toring equipment, high-powered computers, and satellites, to name a few, warning gap between the attacker and defender has remained as wide as in enough, made little progress is that of anticipating surprise attack. The able aspect of military performance, the one area in which it has, ironically Although military technology has revolutionized almost every conceiv-

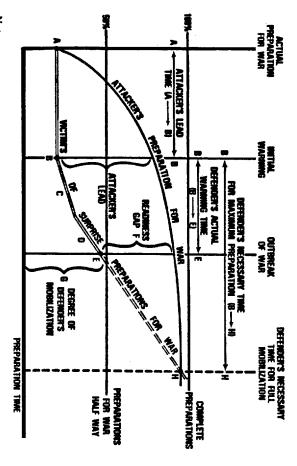
truth, as best they can determine it, to the policymakers. The policymakers in this scenario will of course recognize the quality and relevance of the datas provided them, and will use this information in the best interest of their country (as they identify it). This 'purely rational decision-making models and belief in the viability of a 'strictly professional intelligence process' is nothing but an idealized normative fiction. And yet many scholars and every some experienced intelligence experts continue to believe in the possibilities of creating – through the 'right' reform – the perfect intelligence community of Like Clausewitz's war in practice, the real world of intelligence is rife with within an objective environment, and that they will be able to present the

political friction and contradictions, an environment in which uncertainty is the only certain thing. the only certain thing.

Intelligence work can be divided into three distinct levels: acquisition (the collection of information); analysis (its evaluation); and acceptance (the readiness of politicians to make use of intelligence in the formulation). As suggested earlier, past failures in the formulation of a dearth of the collection of the must look to the levels of analysis and acceptance for an answer.

THE NORMAL WARNING AND PREPARATION GAP BETWEEN THE ATTACKER AND DEFENDER (THIS CHART EMPIRICALLY REFLECTS MOST CASES OF STRATEGIC SURPRISE ATTACKS)

FIGURE



Notes:

- Defender issues initial warning, but is uncertain of the real probability of war
- Due to uncertainty the initial phase of preparation proceeds relatively slowly.
- A. Attacker starts preparations for war.
 B. Defender issues initial warning, but i
 C. Due to uncertainty the initial phase o
 D. As the probability of war increases a preparations. As the probability of war increases and becomes more certain the defender accelerates
- Ή War breaks out (e.g. surprise attack). Defender's preparations incomplete and lag behind the attacker.
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All information gathered by intelligence concerns either the adversary's intentions or his capabilities. Although this sounds simple enough the actual sorting, evaluation, and corroboration of the information are extremely intricate and time-consuming process which involves many interrelated steps. An error of judgment in one phase may set off a chain

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conceal; only a handful of leaders, and at times a single leader (e.g., Hitler, Political and military intentions, on the other hand, are much simpler to

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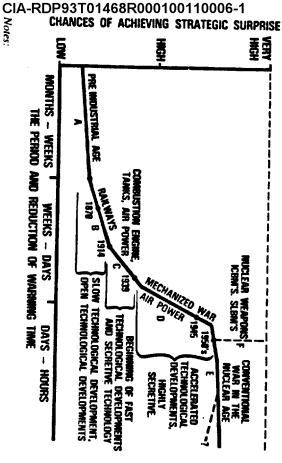
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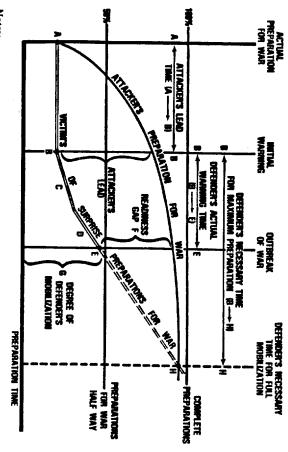
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