

that the comparison somewhat understated his accomplishment. "The Chin emperor put only 463 scholars to death," he said. "I have put 463 *thousand* scholars to death."

That was, for a modern totalitarian dictator, a strikingly candid statement to make. One of the few political advances that has been made in the past century is the incorporation of the Lie. While the Chin emperor was never afraid to say what he was up to, Mao Zedong and other modern despots, rare moments of candor aside, either say nothing about what they are doing or disguise it by ideology.

Mao's other improvement on the archaic despotism of the Chin emperor came in the realm of thought control. While Mao, like the Chin emperor, was

in the habit of simply murdering those who engaged in seditious acts, he was less harsh towards those who merely thought or spoke them. Instead of ordering their execution, he required them to attend struggle sessions, at which they publicly recanted their political sins. Thus humiliated, they thereafter seldom posed political problems for the authorities.

The Chinese Emperor is a book that deserves to be read twice, once as a fast-paced tale of intrigue, adventure, and power, and once more as a chilling harbinger of the second Chin emperor to come.

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that as a routine matter turns strength into weakness, safety into peril, victory into defeat, and even war into peace.

Luttwak illustrates this point with numerous cases, some historical, some generic and hypothetical. Consider, for example, a general who is pondering which of two possible routes to use in sending his forces to attack the enemy. One road is well paved and capacious, the other rocky and narrow. The poor road, if used, will exact significant losses—disabled vehicles, fatigued troops, and delayed movement. It stands to reason, then, that an advance over the good road is preferable; but this falls into the trap of linear logic, for the defender will surely realize the superiority of the good road and block it. By the paradoxical logic of conflict, the "good" road can become the "bad" road and vice versa.

This simple example even leads to a new grasp of the elusive concept of surprise. One achieves surprise, partial or total, essentially by shooting oneself in the foot, by doing things the hard way: attacking at night or in bad weather, moving without proper preparations, taking the difficult route instead of the easy. What is more, the *costs* of surprise are now made plain: they are the losses of fighting power implied by choosing the unexpected approach.

Luttwak goes on to show that paradoxical logic underlies the battle of measures and countermeasures surrounding technical innovations in warfare; the advances and retreats of victors and vanquished in continental wars; the quest for cheap, narrowly specialized means of combat that will defeat expensive, general-purpose forces; the dangers of a territorial defense that is too successful; and even the ways in which peace can carry the seeds of war. In every instance, linear logic fails, because the presence of an active opponent, with a will of his own, falsifies the assumptions underlying that logic.

The book does not stop with its explication of the role of paradox but instead shows how nonlinear reasoning plays itself out on the different levels of conflict: technical, tactical, operational, theater, and grand strategic. The illustrative example of this discussion is an issue of more than academic interest to the peoples of the free world, namely, the prospects for nonnuclear defense of NATO

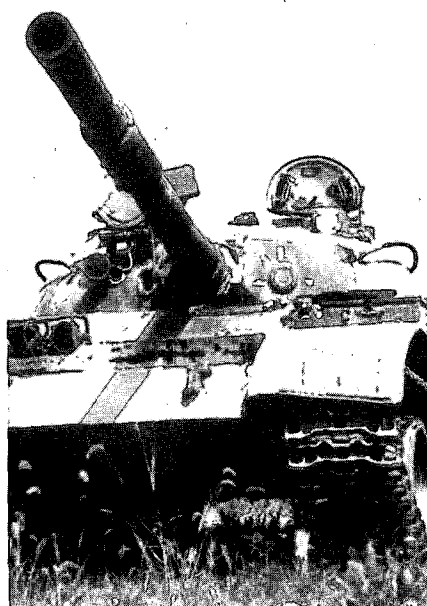
The Paradoxes of War

By Steven R. Postrel

Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace, by Edward Luttwak
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 283 pages, \$20.00

Edward Luttwak is frequently lumped in with the "military reform" movement. His popular essays and books like *The Pentagon and the Art of War*, which focus on topical questions of policy, organization, doctrine, and tactics, lead many casual readers (and journalists) to see him as one more talking head in the military debate. Among "defense intellectuals" Luttwak is seen as a kind of temperamental virtuoso. His complex and lucid analyses of policy combine acid exposure of folly, careful exposition of pertinent historical examples, and a probing mind that moves in web-like patterns.

With *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace*, Luttwak aspires to provide a framework for understanding the dynamics of conflict, a framework so general that it encompasses and integrates every instance and aspect of war. The goal is nothing less than to "uncover the universal logic that conditions all forms of war as well as the adversarial dealings of nations in peacetime." He acknowledges the "inordinate ambition" inherent in such a project; if judged successful, future scholars will set this work alongside Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and Clausewitz's *On War*.



The main thesis of *Strategy* is that adversarial relations cannot be analyzed successfully by applying "linear" logic, the kind of commonsense reasoning that searches for the most direct and obvious solution to a problem. Rather, a "paradoxical" logic underlies conflict, a logic

against a Soviet conventional attack.

Luttwak focuses on the many proposals to counter the Warsaw Pact's huge advantage in armored units by deploying large numbers of relatively cheap infantry armed with precision-guided antitank missiles. His analysis shows convincingly that while antitank missiles look like cheap and deadly "wonder weapons" at the narrowly technical level, once our vision opens up to the tactical effects of terrain, weather, artillery, and morale, this impression is dispelled.

When we move up another level, to operational considerations, our original view is completely reversed; the (Soviet) aggressor's ability to concentrate huge quantities of armor and mechanized infantry on narrow sectors of the defensive line allows his tanks to overwhelm the missile teams. From the theater-level vantage point, this concentration effect is magnified. The Soviet attackers choose the time and place for their armored thrusts, so all their forces have impact; the vast majority of the essentially static missile teams are deployed far from the actual zone of combat, powerless to affect the outcome.

This discussion serves as a springboard to consider wider issues: NATO's strategic predicament, nuclear deterrence, the role of deep interdiction strikes, and finally, the ultimate level of grand strategy—encompassing politics, economics, and culture, as well as geography and military force. Luttwak homes in on the fundamental difficulty in pursuing grand strategic designs—the tendency for common sense and linear logic, which in nondespotic societies are the correct guides for domestic conduct, to leak over into foreign policy. Thus, nations in search of security sometimes overdo military buildups to the point of provoking hostile responses, while earnest seekers of peace on occasion pursue disarmament and gestures of goodwill to the point of becoming irresistible prey for their rapacious neighbors.

Strategy is emphatically an effort at description, not prescription. The final chapter lists a host of caveats about trying to implement the book's theory. All too aware of the subtleties and complexities of practice, as opposed to the cleaner and simpler certitudes of theory, it is natural that Luttwak should affix a warning label to so theoretical a book.

Yet the weaknesses of *Strategy* lie not in its academic impracticality, as one re-

viewer has suggested, but rather in the failure to push its theoretical analysis far enough. Going back to the example of the general choosing a good or a bad road, we can imagine the attacker and defender each trying to guess the other's plan. And, assigning probabilities to various options, we can imagine an *equilibrium*, in the sense that even if each general learned the other's strategy, neither would change his behavior. Such equilibria, well known in modern game theory, lurk unseen behind many of Luttwak's discussions of paradoxical logic.

These equilibria would give his restless dynamic of reversals a conceptual point at which to settle down, thereby taking some of the mystery out of paradoxical logic. Analysis in terms of game theory, which has become the primary language of contemporary microeconomics, would also modify Luttwak's contention

that economic life is dominated solely by linear logic. In fact, most interesting phenomena in industrial organization—collusive pricing, entry deterrence, choice of technological standards—are driven by logic that is frequently paradoxical. Here, high costs may be more profitable than low costs, the irrational may outpace the sane, and truthful announcements of new products may reduce social welfare.

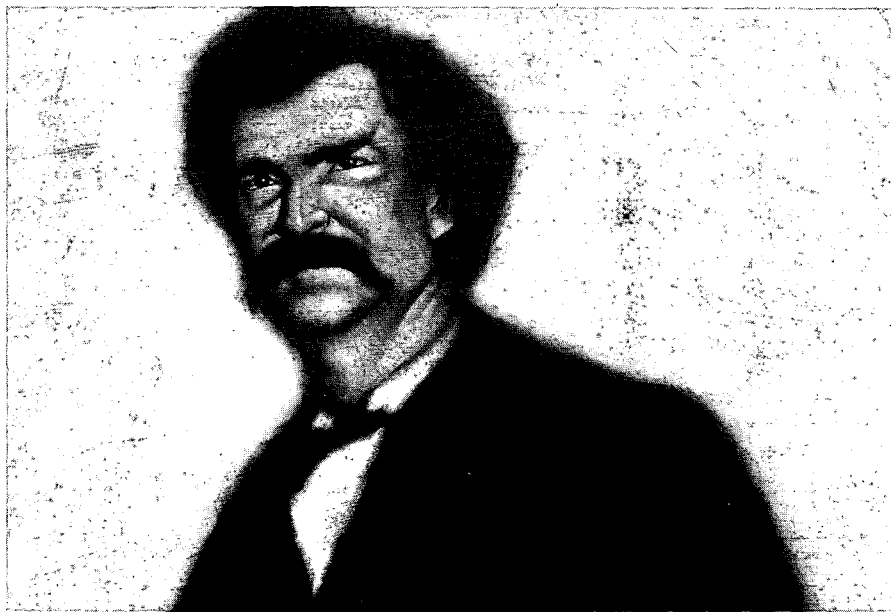
Setting aside these parochial quibbles, I believe that this book is destined to have a profound influence on the thinking of military and foreign policymakers as well as scholars. If its insights are absorbed by enough Americans, perhaps this nation's foreign policy debates can be raised to a level where wisdom is more common than folly.

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Mark Twain, Un-Disneyfied

By Jeff Rigenbach

The Outrageous Mark Twain, by Charles Neider
New York: Doubleday, 348 pages, \$16.95



Mississippi riverboats and boyhood idylls—that's the essence of the more-or-less official, Disneyfied Mark Twain. Judging from Disneyland, from the recent musical production of his best known novel, *The Adventures of Huckle-*

berry Finn, and from the uninspired adaptations of his stories about Huck and Tom Sawyer that show up these days on cable TV, you'd have to conclude that the essence of Twain's appeal lies in his nostalgic recreation of childhood when the world