

# The Art of Strategy

Written by Dan G. Cox and Bruce Stanley

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DAN G. COX AND BRUCE STANLEY, MAY 16 2017

In a world full of political, military, and geostrategic transitions, we feel that it is important to add two more voices to the chorus of those that intently observe world events and are concerned with the potential of future conflict. For these reasons, we will focus the blog on military and security strategy and issues related to strategic security issues. We have two decades of collective experience teaching military officers from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines at the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies. Bruce is also a retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel and Dan has served in the NATO Partnership for Peace program. By focusing on the most pressing current strategic security issues we will attempt to engender a lively discussion that will inform students, academics, practitioners, and, perhaps even strategic leaders as US foreign policymakers try to navigate a complex and chaotic international system.

We start the blog from a premise that is guided by emerging Joint Warfighting Doctrine from the U.S. Military that

Strategy is the art and science of determining a future state/conditions (ends), conveying it to your audience; establishing the procedures and authorities [(ways)]; identifying the resources to include time, forces, equipment, and money (means) necessary to reach the intended outcome (means-includes money, time, forces, equipment, etc.) while managing the associated risk. There are several types of strategy, all of which must be integrated in support of national policy” (Joint Planning, JP 5-0, 2017 Draft, p. 11).

Thus, we believe that strategic and operational planners must understand Strategic Art.

Following the Joint Warfighting doctrines definition, we agree that “Strategic Art is the ability to understand the political environment (relative to the operational area) and conceptualizing how the desired outcomes set forth in strategic guidance can be reached through the employment of military power” (Joint Planning, JP 5-0, 2017 Draft, p. 11). With this blog, we intend to take up the challenge to “understand the major international political and security challenges that impact on United States and its partner’s success, the potential options that the United States could employ as national power to attain desired ends, and visualizing how military operations can support and/or enable our national success” (Joint Planning, JP 5-0, 2017 Draft, p. 11). We believe that it is important to add to the discourse in “developing enduring, effective strategies for sustaining military efforts over the long-term, and where specific military operations are required” (Joint Planning, JP 5-0, 2017 Draft, p. 11). The emerging Joint Warfighting Doctrine challenges the strategist and military planners to develop “a range of options at the operational and strategic level.” Since the strategic environment is “dynamic and uncertain” we agree that “policy makers must retain maximum flexibility” since there is always “insufficient information, uncertainty about future resources, and developing political situations” (Joint Planning, JP 5-0, 2017 Draft, p. 11).

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### About the author:

**Dan G. Cox** is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has three published books: *Terrorism, Instability and Democracy in Asia and Africa*,

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*Population-Centric Counterinsurgency: A False Idol*, and *Stability Economics: The Economic Foundations of Security in Post-Conflict Environments*. He also regularly published in peer-reviewed journals and magazines. He has served as part of the NATO Partnership for Peace program helping to improve the professional military education system for the Republic of Armenia. He currently serves as the Reviews Editor for *Special Operations Journal* and on the Board of Executives for the Special Operations Research Association.

**Bruce Stanley** is an associate professor at the School of Advanced Military Studies with a PhD from Kansas State University in Security Studies. He is also the author of the book *Outsourcing Security, Private Military Contractors and US Foreign Policy*. He is a retired Infantry Officer with over 24 years of service in the Army.