

# Man, Politics and War

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TITEL:

L'Homme, La Politique et la Guerre

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MULTIPLE PATHS INTERSECT in this book, which is original, scholarly and fertile, and escapes conventions and reverences to consider the methods of exercise of strategy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. First consider the career paths of the two authors: on the one hand, a PhD in history, keen on military technology and nuclear dialectics, broken by the current strategic balance of power; and on the other, a Swedish naval officer, former commander of surface units, accredited in Paris and Stockholm, military adviser to the diplomats of his country and head of the strategy office of the European Military Staff.

There is the well-marked track of modern history with the reminder of the ancient strategic grammar that establishes "Politics, State and War" (chapter 1) followed by a comprehensive and documented reflection on the strategy and the different modes, calculations and combinations that articulate "Politics, War and Strategy" (Chapter 2). "Military power yesterday and tomorrow" examines the complex relationship between the military institution and its constituents or interlocutors, political power, civil soci-

ety, and the people from whom are derived the methods of exercising the command of war and criteria for strategic effectiveness (Chapter 3).

This posed, then comes the heart, the royal way of this solid and didactic work; the approach of the War: a reflection on "the functions of the War" (chapter 4), a second on the "Morphology of the War" (chapter 5) and one on "the constituent parts of the War" (chapter 6). These three very dense chapters interweave conceptual data, military principles and recent operational experiences showing how warfare strategies are diversifying, intermingling and recomposing. How their goals recombine, their modalities feed everywhere, law, technology, passions or calculations. How much the ways and means chosen to take into account the costs and can lead to these infra-wars, hybrid, limited, those that General Poirier hesitated to name so.

These three chapters are to be meditated by all those who think like Napoleon that she is only a simple art and everything of execution, so much her various forms are here detailed almost with greed by the au-

thors. They suggest to all those who believe that the war, this chameleon, has genetically mutated and this, definitively, since the nuclear weapon led to the military scene in 1945 and then on the strategic scene a little later.

This is precisely the guideline that follows the book which then addresses a large study titled "Strategy and Nuclear Wars". This chapter 7 distinguishes two parts: the first, classical, which exposes the "general principles" and tells the strategic nuclear narrative as it presents itself today to the historian of the Cold War; the second more daring, which explores a theme of strategic repression under the title "known wars to conceivable wars" by exposing situations of military confrontation with or without direct or indirect nuclear weapons. The observation of the deterrent value preserved from the nuclear response remains, we are reassured.

Three chapters will then review a number of key but related areas. "Who makes war, with what armies" (chapter 8) which deals with the sociological evolution of the warrior, his progressive dehumanization, his possible robotization. Then "the domains of military strategy" (Chapter 9) which exposes the new fluid theatres of competitive confrontations where the forces are measured in games of go. And finally, "for a general theory of the political economy of modern war" (Chapter 9) which concludes on the military expenditure which is related to both the notion of strategic restraint and global saving to satisfy the second principle of the strategy of force economy.

To conclude this immense overview where there are so many tracks that illuminate the conflictuality of the past 50 years and illustrate the continued contribution of strategic theory to the regulation of tensions and the conduct of conflicts, we find a chapter 10 entitled "Facing the future" which ends this book which includes as many pages as the

year of days. This last reflection with prospective value shows how the world evolves and transforms into a new competition which we discover that the engine could be the demography that constantly modifies the human, economic and political cartography. We will follow the authors to point out that even if the various strategic superstructures that the planet has adopted for use (states, borders, alliances, regular armies, treaties, arbitrations, conflicts) are blurred or relativized, the interests of peoples who inhabit it always use the art of combinations with multiple effects to achieve their usual goals, to survive, to capture resources, to impose views. We therefore thank the authors for having shown us that the current metamorphoses of the war do not invalidate the strategy and retain its character as a fine discipline worthy of thorough study.

We regret, however, the insufficient exploration of three infra or trans-state domains that should have appeared more forcefully in this panorama of the conflictuality of modern times. The question of the criminalization of ordinary crime or even its militarization that now affects the advanced societies within them and creates a form of internal larval war: that of major clashes using the violence most often armed with "guerra" that are linked to the massive amplification of drug trafficking; between cross-cutting forces for the control of markets and territories; finally, that of cybernetic, monetary, economic, financial, cultural, ethical or religious control that hybrid non-state forces impose on advanced or emerging states to subjugate them to their interests. All three are too few on the radar of "politics and war".

It might also have been appreciated that the affirmation of the eternal character of the War should be better balanced by the recent and decisive change in its profound mutation in the atomic era, thus following

the path drawn by General Beaufre for whom "the great war and true peace died together". An eclectic bibliography reveals at the end of the book the beautiful and often recent sources to which the authors have been fed and a solid strategic culture that we would like to think is not only maintained in our military academies but supported by the high command of the armed forces and it continues to fuel the thinking of military researchers whose country needs more than ever. This fascinating book is to be recommended to all students, trainees, auditors of the Ecole Militaire, Paris and the capitals of the strategic world but also our universities, colleges and institutes, and companies struggling with a deregulated world competition.

The author is rear admiral, Ph D, chief editor of *La Vige* and a fellow of RSAWS.