Doctrine

MG (ret) Kees Homan

"I am tempted to declare that whatever doctrine the Armed Forces are working on, they have got it wrong. I am also tempted to declare that it does not matter that they have got it wrong. What does matter is their capacity to get it right quickly when the moment arrives. It is the task of military science in an age of peace to prevent the doctrine being too badly wrong."

Sir Michael Howard

"The Army has doctrine, the Navy has tradition, and the Air Force is new."

"With 2.000 years of examples there is no excuse for not fighting a war well."

T.E. Lawrence

Introduction

Although not perhaps as old as war itself, military doctrine has a long historical pedigree. In his classic work *The Art of War*, probably written in the fourth century BC, Sun Tzu identifies it as one of the five 'fundamental factors' of war, along with moral influence, weather, terrain and command. The roots of military doctrine can be found in two important developments in late eighteenth century Europe: the identification and study of tactics as a branch of war, and the founding of military academies to give candidate-officers a formal education which would fit them to their craft. By the end of the nineteenth century, the armies of all the major powers were devoting much time and attention to it, and since then interest has sharpened.

The evolution of military doctrine has long been a staple of military history. As the history of war has broadened its perspectives, our understanding of the roots and the nature of doctrine has likewise expanded. Doctrine is the product of a complex process in which many different influences combine to produce a 'standard operating procedure'.

Doctrine has many functions. Its first function is to provide a tempered analysis of experience and a determination of beliefs. Its second function is to teach those beliefs to each succeeding generation. Its third function is to provide a common basis of knowledge and understanding that can provide guidance for actions. All three of these functions come to fruition in doctrine's relationship to strategy decisions.

Military doctrine

In the dictionary, doctrine is defined as 'teachings', or in other words, something that is taught. It is a body of knowledge and understanding that is primarily derived from study and analysis of practical experience. In that sense, military doctrine defines the most effective way of using military assets on the basis of practical experience. Perhaps the best definition, one that is accurate, concise, and yet retains the vitality befitting doctrine's importance, is also one of the simplest: "Military doctrine is what we believe about the best way to conduct

military affairs". Even more briefly, doctrine is what we believe about the best way to do things. Doctrine is thus not dogmatic, but is intended to guide and advise. New experiences and equipment might necessitate amendments to the doctrine.

In a healthy military the crafting of a doctrine should be a creative process born of experience but addressing the needs and possibilities of the present and short term future. It should not, however, be prepared in isolation from military strategy. It must be coherent with strategy and in part derived from it.

Doctrine must not be allowed to become dogmatic and must not lead to unimaginative and rigid thought. Doctrine represents an amalgam of collective and accepted advice on the way to employ military forces. The behaviour of forces at the operational, tactical and procedural levels is governed to a large extent by doctrine and culture.

Operational level doctrine may conversely influence the development of strategy in that it is in the development of operational level doctrine that options for a strategic concept may be revealed. And the strategic level can not demand what is not possible at the operational level. Nonetheless, the operational doctrine of a nation's forces will draw much of its character from the nation's military strategic concept. It is unlikely that two nations will have similar military doctrines unless there is some alignment of strategic concepts.

Doctrine is usually expressed in the form of principles, tenets and guidelines. The expressions 'tactics', 'techniques' and 'procedures'(TTP) may be used for the mechanisms that allow for the practical application of doctrine. NATO fulfils an important role in the standardization of TTP. Doctrine requires judgment in application. TTP imply regularity of behaviour. It is not surprising, therefore that TTP become more important at the Procedural or Technical Level of War where there is less scope for judgment and where correct techniques and procedures are essential to the proper use of equipment.

The span of strategic concepts and doctrines is as wide within Europe as across the Atlantic. France and the UK have expeditionary concepts entailing the ability to wage extended high combat at a distance, as does the United States. The militaries of some other European nations are permitted to venture abroad reluctantly and only in a constabulary or humanitarian role.

Divergences in practice

For different reasons there is a divergence in practice between France and the UK on the one hand and the United States on the other for peace support operations and responses to complex emergencies generally. The United States puts a higher premium on force protection and is less inclined to place its forces at risk in situations in which the purpose is to reassure and protect third parties as well as to deter potential aggressors. The vaunted 'warrior ethos' of the US Army in particular is at odds with the pragmatic approach of the British Army, honed after decades or perhaps centuries of counter-insurgency operations and imperial policing in which coercive capability is held in the offing and forces on the ground give a more benign impression. It is not the case that French and British forces are potentially less aggressive but that for them aggression is not the primary tool in mastering violence.

The French and British approach is different from what has been called inaccurately the 'Scandinavian' school of peacekeeping. However it is more easily integrated than the US

approach with that of nations who possess no more than gendarmerie capability and whose doctrines avoid coercion as a part of the problem rather than the solution to the 'cycle' or 'spiral' of violence.

Input factors

Doctrine is driven by the following input factors:

- *The National Interest and National Military Objectives*. What is it that the government wishes the military to achieve? Such objectives will be bounded by the resources available for defence and the strategic aim in the event of a conflict.
- *The Perceived Threat*. Doctrine depends on having a clear and concise assessment of the threat which forces are expected to face. In particular, a change in the intent and/or capability of a potential enemy could have a profound effect on current doctrine and could well demand a rapid reassessment and change to doctrine.
- *Politics/Policies*. The wishes of the government are paramount for a society in which the armed forces are under democratic control. Changes to political structures, security policies and specifically the defence policy of a government will all have an influence on doctrine.
- *Experience*. The lessons from history are a fundamental ingredient in the formulation of doctrine.
- *Theory*. The writings of strategists and theorists continue to influence doctrine. For example, study of the writings of Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini remain useful in any study of conflict. This does not mean that one theory fits all scenarios; history shows that every conflict will be different and hence offers different lessons for the future.
- *Education*. Study of conflict makes for better commanders in conflict and war. All involved with the command, planning and execution of military operations should continue this personal preparation.

Once doctrine has been formulated, it will have a continuous effect and impact on the routine operations of all forces. The output of doctrine can be divided into four separate categories:

- *Organization*. The defence organization must be a clear reflection of national military objectives and how those objectives will be achieved.
- *Force Structure*. Force structure is best defined as the mix of people, weapons, associated systems and equipment allocated to execute given tasks.
- *Training Requirements*. Training and exercises must be an accurate reflection of current doctrine and incorporate lessons identified into the formulation of future doctrine.
- *Plans*. Plans are the most specific output of the doctrine process and should reflect current doctrine, but may have to change to cater for variation in context and scenario.

Level of operations

There are five levels in the conduct of military operations: grand strategy, military-strategic, operational, tactical and technical. It is impossible to draw a clear line between the levels; there is usually a gradual overlap between the successive levels.

The Grand Strategic Level

Grand strategy is to do with the full range of issues associated with the maintenance of political independence and territorial integrity and the pursuit of wider national interests. It is about the co-ordinated use of the three principal instruments of national power: economic, diplomatic and military. Grand strategy is the art and science of employing national power under all circumstances to exert desired degrees and types of control over the opposition through threats, force, indirect pressures, diplomacy, subterfuge, and other imaginative means, thereby satisfying national security interests and objectives. The aim of a grand strategy is to provide guidance and cohesion for the use of all instruments of power available to a country or alliance and coalitions to which a country is party. It is as much concerned with the avoidance of war as with its conduct. In short, the grand strategy defines the context of objectives against which governments indicate what must be achieved. Grand strategy is the responsibility of the government, regardless of whether it is operating autonomously or acting in conjunction with other governments in a security organization such as the UN, in an alliance as NATO or in an *ad hoc* coalition.

The Military Strategic Level

Military strategy is the military component of grand strategy. It is the art of developing and employing military forces consistent with grand strategic objectives. It represents opinions on the use of military force for achieving the government's or alliance's objectives when safeguarding its (their) external security. In addition, national, multinational or Allied military-strategic authorities, are responsible for setting out the requirement for military assets. Part of this military-strategic authority is also responsible for the deployment of military means of power in any given operation.

The Operational Level

The operational level is the level of war at which campaigns are planned. Operational art – the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organization, integration and conduct of campaigns or major operations – links military strategy to tactics. It does this by establishing operational objectives, initiating actions and applying resources to ensure the success of the campaign. These activities are the responsibility of the Joint Commander, and of the Joint Task Force Commander once deployed to the Joint Operations Area where the campaigns take place.

There is a clear distinction between the operational level and the military-strategic level. The operational commander, who will theoretically be situated in the area of operations, commands the formation and units assigned to him in order to carry out his own plan. By implementing this plan, he will achieve the necessary effects to realize his objectives. In this way he contributes to the strategic aims. The military-strategic authority, which leads the operations in or near the area of operations, allocates targets and equipment and, in consultation with the politicians, imposes restrictions on the deployment thereof, without getting involved in the finer details of implementation.

The Tactical Level

This is the level at which warfighting actually takes place. Tactics is the art of disposing maritime, land, air and special forces for battle, and logistics for direct support of those engaged in combat to achieve success in battle. Units also operate tactically during crisis management operations. There may also be fighting during such operations, although this will be on a relatively small scale in most cases. In contrast to the operational level, at tactical level units are deployed directly for combat. In a joint operation, the highest tactical commanders are the Component Commanders working directly to the Joint Task Force

Commander. Below them are the formation and unit commanders and other subordinate commanders whose task is to engage in direct combat with the enemy.

Technical or Procedural Level
At the technical or procedural level choices of courses of action are dictated by the requirement to operate equipment effectively. It determines the way in which small units, sometimes even individual personnel or weapon systems, are deployed and operate in order to achieve the tactical objective of a battle or other type of tactical activity, in a particular arrangement and sequence. The technical level deals with the actual execution of combat actions, usually with a specific weapon system. The technical level also deals with the actual execution of other tasks in support of combat actions in the broadest sense. Examples are equipment repairs, keeping a radio station operational, supplies at sea, air-to-air refuelling or a staff function.

The significance of the levels of war

The levels of war provide a general framework for the command and control of operations and a useful tool for the analysis of politico-military activity, before, during and after the conduct of military operations. An understanding of them – and of their limitations – is vital to a commander's grasp of the conduct of war.

The levels of war provide a means of achieving the coherent application of force in different ways at different levels in pursuit of strategic objectives. It is quite possible, for example, to apply force offensively at one level, while being defensive at another, both being entirely consistent with a campaign's ultimate objective.

The essence of planning at each level is to identify the desired end, the ways in which it is to be achieved, and adequate means of achieving it. If this can not be done at any particular level, the issue needs to be balanced at the next level above. Thus, planning at the different levels is very closely linked and interdependent. In practice the levels overlap and the distinctions between them will rarely be tidy.

Legal, constitutional and customary factors

National legislation and constitutional arrangements may limit how military forces of that nation can be employed. Limitations may relate to missions on which a nation's forces might be employed. For instance the extent to which German forces may be used for tasks other than national defence is a subject of internal debate. There are legal limitations on the use of armed forces of many nations in internal security roles. There may also be restrictions on the transfer of a nation's forces to multinational command or to the command of another nation. Where no formal legal or constitutional constraints exist, there may be customary limitations. As a result a government may not feel that it could achieve political support for certain uses of its forces. There are also legal provisions that affect technical interoperability, in particular where classified information is to be transferred between nations.

A crucial determinant of the national preconditions for participation in military missions is the relationship between government and parliament. In some countries participation in international peace support operations has escaped parliamentary control. In others, parliamentary involvement has increased over the decades of a country's involvement in international peace support operations. For instance, in the Netherlands the formal

responsibility for decisions to participate in international peace support operations lies with the government. In the decision-making procedure the government informs parliament as soon as it receives a formal request for participation in an international peace support operation, by sending a so-called Art. 100 (Constitution) letter to Parliament signed by the Minister of Defence and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the debate on participation in the UN operation in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE) in 2000, Parliament demanded that the Dutch contribution should also include Apache helicopters for force protection. Although the Minister of Defence, as well as the Chief of Defence Staff and the Military Advisor of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared to Parliament that from an operational perspective those helicopters were not necessary, at the end the government agreed, simply to secure enough parliamentary support for the deployment.

These factors may also govern military actions during operations. National rules of engagement (ROE) may differ among the forces of nations contributing to a particular operation. Where a common set of ROE is agreed, there may be national differences in interpretation. For instance nations may have different interpretations of the concept of self-defence. Indeed the very process of agreeing a common set of ROE for a particular operation may be beset by the constraints applied by the various nations for reasons of law or custom. Very frequently nations will operate under two sets of ROE, coalition and national. In these cases national ROE may not necessarily be the more restrictive, for instance in establishing grounds for self-defence.

Recent developments

During the Cold War, the protection of national and allied (NATO) territory was central to the thinking behind operations. After the end of the Cold War, things began to change. Changes in the political situations and in political viewpoints had implications for military operations. As a consequence, doctrine development underwent a revival. The increased importance of crisis management operations and the intensification of the cooperation between the Services (joint) and between the armed forces of NATO, EU and Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries (multinational or combined), meant that the 'old' doctrine had to be revised and new doctrine developed.

NATO's doctrine

During the 1990s, NATO recognized the need to revise existing doctrine. On the basis of the American approach, a decision was made to create a hierarchy of doctrine publications, the Allied Joint Doctrine Hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy is a capstone publication, the Allied Joint Publication (AJP)-01, Allied Joint Doctrine, the general NATO doctrine. Immediately below that is a series of functional publications, the keystone publications, such as the AJP-2 Joint Intelligence and the AJP-3 Joint Operations. The capstone and keystone publications form the highest level of the hierarchy. The level below that comprises publications which support the conduct of joint and multinational operations. These publications describe the contribution of the various components (land, air and naval forces) and also the underlying activities, such as joint special operations, performed in support of joint and multinational operations. The lowest level consists of publications of which the overall content is not joint but parts of which would be relevant to joint operations, for example combat search and rescue. By ratifying the Allied publications, member-states can use those publications in part or in their entirety in the development of national doctrine.

Comprehensive approach

Recent experience has shown that peace support operations require the application of political, diplomatic, economic, financial, informational, social and commercial, as well as military power. To resolve conflicts or crises, NATO should adopt a Comprehensive Approach along the lines of that proposed by the UK's Development, Doctrine and Concepts Centre that would enable the collaborative engagement of all requisite civil and military elements of international power to end hostilities, restore order, commence reconstruction, and begin to address a conflict's root causes. NATO can provide the military element for a comprehensive approach. Many other, national, international, and nongovernmental actors can provide the civilian elements. What has become known as the NATO Comprehensive Approach, was formally put on the agenda of the Riga Summit in November 2006. The summit tasked relevant entities to begin work on elaborating an Action Plan for how the Alliance could incorporate a comprehensive approach into its work. Preparation of the Action Plan is still in progress.

Doctrines of the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom

The Czech Republic
The doctrine of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic (AFCR) represents a summary of principles for preparing and conducting operations in which the AFCR may be involved within a multinational framework or independently. It is a mutual doctrine of all AFCR forces. The AFCR doctrine creates the hierarchical framework and bases for AFCR doctrinal documents.

The Doctrine of the AFCR derives from the "Security Strategy of the Czech Republic" as a fundamental conceptual document of the state security policy, from the "Military Strategy of the Czech Republic", and from fundamental military-political and operational standards (military publications) of NATO regarding principles and fundamentals consistent with military security of the state and the North Atlantic Alliance. It generalizes experience gained from combat and peace operations and combined exercises with NATO armies in the past years. It answers the questions under what conditions will the AFCR act and operate, and under what conditions can the AFCR succeed. It applies to both combat and non-combat deployments. It provides basic theoretical grounds for practical application of the military use of force across the full spectrum of threats to the Czech Republic or NATO members. It interconnects state defence political-strategic control level and command and control of the AFCR with operational level (execution of concrete operations) and has an influence on principles of the use and activities of deployed operational formations.

Understanding and creative application of the AFCR's doctrinal content rquires relevant knowledge of NATO operational standards, particularly Allied Joint Doctrine AJP-01 (B), December 2002, upon which the AFCR's doctrine is based.

Chapters:

1. General Remarks
2. Military Operations
3. Fundamentals of Preparation and Conduct of Operations

4. Fundamentals of Military Operations
5. Combat operations
6. Non-Combat Operations
7. Operations on the Czech Republic's Territory
8. AFCR's National Tasks in Preparation and Conduct of Operations

The doctrine concludes that the AFCR's doctrine gives instructions on how to effectively use the AFCR's forces and means during joint activities in current operations and when ensuring national defence tasks and state security. Its use has a periodical course: information from combat deployments and exercises, development of military thought, new technologies and a changing political environment require its continuous update and qualitative changes, even rewriting.

The Netherlands

Over the past few years, the need for an integrated defence doctrine for the Netherlands armed forces had increased. The Advisory Committee on a Joint High Commander stated that joint operations were fast becoming the norm and that close, internal cooperation in such operations was so vital that an overarching doctrine was required. In order to meet this recognized need, it was proposed that the doctrine be developed for all the main tasks of the Defence Ministry, using NATO's doctrine as a basis.

The structure of the Netherlands Defence Doctrine (NDD) is largely derived from the British Defence Doctrine. The British armed forces can pride themselves on extensive experience of military operations and on meticulously written doctrine publications. It is for that reason that a similar structure has been adopted in the NDD. This structure includes:

- Types of conflict
- International security organization
- Netherlands foreign and security policy
- Main and defence tasks of the Ddfence organization
- Operational execution of the main tasks

Chapters:

1. Military doctrine, strategy and types of conflict
2. Politico-strategic environment
3. Military operations
4. Operational execution of the armed forces' main tasks
5. Command and Control

The structure of the NDD is based on the following underlying principles. The planners opted for an approach from theoretical to practical, from international to national and from general security policy to military operations. First of all, the NDD clarifies terms that are normally used in doctrine documents. To do so, the NDD begins with a theoretical chapter (Chapter 1), drawn from the fields of international relations and strategy, which focuses on doctrine, strategy and conflicts. The theory is then applies to the prevailing national and international circumstances. The chapter on the politico-strategic environment (Chapter 2) outlines such aspects as the international security situation, the resulting Dutch foreign and security policy and the tasks they entail for the armed forces. Subsequently, a more in-depth look is taken at

military operations (Chapter 3), including elements such as the spectrum of force, the use of force, military capability and the fundamentals of military operations. These general aspects of military operations are then applied to the operational execution of the (main) tasks of the armed forces (Chapter 4), whereby a distinction is made between national and international deployment. Effective military action is impossible without unambiguous and efficient direction. The last chapter on command and control (Chapter 5) looks, therefore, at decision making and command, in terms of structures and processes, as well as the leadership provided by the commander.

Levels of operation	Doctrine Publications and Policy Documents
Grand strategy	Policy documents Minister of Defence
Military Strategic	Policy documents Commandant of the Armed Forces NDD
Operational	Maritime, Army and Air Power Doctrines

Importance of NDD for Netherlands security policy
A defence doctrine was the missing link in the hierarchy of Dutch defence policy papers and Service-specific doctrine publications. The NDD fills this gap. The NDD is a 'doctrinal basis' from which various doctrine publications, for instance for the individual Services, will be drawn and developed. Furthermore, the NDD includes the newest national and international doctrinal developments, for instance with regard to national security and the complexity of current operations. Moreover, the NDD serves a guide for operations by the armed forces as a whole and by the individual Services. The NDD is an important foundation for the training for and the planning and execution of joint military operations by the Netherlands armed forces in a national or international context. As a connection between defence policy and the conduct of military operations, the NDD highlights how the Defence organization contributes to Netherlands security policy.

The United Kingdom
The British Defence Doctrine (BDD) sits at the pinnacle of the UK's hierarchy of joint doctrine publications. Although it is focused primarily on the doctrinal component of the UK's military strategy, it conveys a message about the tone and nature of the British approach to military activity at all levels. That approach is flexible and pragmatic, attributes that are essential for the effective application of the manoeuvrist approach to operations. Doctrine is not, therefore, mandatory dogma to be applied in all circumstances; that is simply not the British Armed Forces' way of doing business. It is the distilled experience of many years – indeed generations – of making strategy and of mounting and conducting military operations.

Chapters:

1. Introducing Military Doctrine
2. The Strategic Context

3. The Essential Elements of British Doctrine
4. Fighting Power
5. Warfare and the Utility of Fighting Power
6. The Broader Utility of Fighting Power
7. The Philosophy of Command

The warfighting ethos
In comparison with the Czech and Netherlands doctrine, the British doctrine pays substantial attention to the 'warfighting ethos'. The need to prepare for and, if necessary, to fight and win in warfare is acknowledged as the most important function the British armed forces may have to perform.

> *"Every member of the armed forces must be prepared to fight and die for whatever legitimate cause the United Kingdom is pursuing through military endeavour. It follows also that doctrine must have at its core a warfighting ethos. War is a most bloody and destructive business. Essentially it is about the deliberate application of lethal violence, usually by two sides against each other but increasingly in more complex patterns. Because of the destructive nature of warfighting, those involved are forced to endure a constant threat to their lives and well-being. They will themselves be attempting to create the same fear in the minds of their enemy. The dynamic and destructive nature of this exchange produces massive uncertainty, confusion, chaos and an inevitable abandonnement of initial plans for the conduct of war. With both sides attempting to gain advantage, surprise and shock will be a constraint drain on resources, both physical and mental. For those who have not experienced it, it will be difficult to imagine just how demanding and frightening a process war is. No one can be sure how he or she will react to war. Fear is commonplace, even within the minds of those most conditioned to cope with challenges; courage and leadership coupled with unit cohesion and discipline are the best counters to that fear. The bravest men and women are frightened; it is their ability to carry on despite their fears that is the measure of courage. Importantly, by its very nature, military activity is about confronting risk and managing it. It is emphatically never about avoiding risk; the military profession is not for those who are risk averse".*

Some Comparative Observations

Defence policies

Defence policy principally addresses the military instrument. In the language of the levels of war, security policy is devised at the Grand Strategic Level; defence policy at the Military Strategic Level. Importantly defence policy should guide nations' defence programmes and force planning. A nation whose security and defence policies emphasize the importance of coalition operations can be expected to devote more resources to issues of technical interoperability than one whose policies favor autonomy of action.

Defence policy will also influence military doctrine but the relationship between policy and doctrine is usually a complex one. For instance the Services or arms of a nation may develop doctrine with a view to influencing defence policy. Doctrine is after all written by the military as the professional view as to how armed forces are best used. The military as a whole and individual armed services can use doctrine as a lever to influence allocation of resources.

National Military Strategic Concepts

Military Strategy is a Military Strategic Level Function. A robust strategy should contain at least two elements: a coherent set of objectives and a broad concept as to how the objectives are to be achieved. It may also address allocation of resources. Defence policy may be expressed as a strategy if it contains these elements. Indeed a nation's military strategy (if such a thing exists) should be viewed from the outside as a subset of the defence policy of that nation rather than a subordinate product.

National military strategic concepts for the future can be described in simple terms in a number of ways. First there is the commitment to defence of the territory of the homeland, which may range from none to the dominant national characteristic. Secondly, there is the intention to project forces at range from the homeland which can range from none to global projection. Thirdly there is the commitment to advanced technology and to leading edge military capability. No single nation is likely to pursue one of these choices to an extreme at the expense of the other two. However each nation's enduring military strategic concept can be described as a compromise among these choices.

Notional illustrative military strategic concepts can be represented against these dimensions:

0. No Defence

1. Homeland Constabulary
Provision is only made for police and perhaps paramilitary forces for internal security and coastguard forces for the protection of territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone

2. Modest Territorial Defence
The priority is territorial defence of the homeland but the nation does not feel seriously threatened and a high level of military capability is not maintained. Contributions to peace support and humanitarian operations will be small and there will be no contribution to other forms of intervention.

3. Robust Territorial Defence
The priority is territorial defence of the homeland and the nation perceives its territorial integrity to be seriously threatened. Contributions to peace support and humanitarian operations will be small and there will be no contribution to other forms of intervention. (**Czech Republic**)

4. Modest expeditionary
There is a commitment to peace support and humanitarian operations as a national priority and forces are tailored appropriately. There will be only limited contribution to other forms of intervention as forces will be unsuitable for high intensity combat. (**Netherlands**)

5. Robust Expeditionary
There is a commitment to all forms of intervention that is limited principally by considerations of range and the affordability of equipment and large-scale forces. (**United Kingdom**)

6. Dominant Expeditionary

There is a commitment to all forms of intervention world-wide and to maintain the capability for military dominance in any foreseeable combat situation.

The Principles of War

Strategists and tacticians alike, who traffic in intangibles and imponderables, are guided – consciously or unconsciously by the Principles of War, a collection of basic considerations accumulated over the centuries. These serve to inform the language of doctrine formulation.

The Principles of War, according to Napoleon, are those which "have regulated the great captains whose deeds have been handed down to us by history: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Prince Eugene and Frederick the Great. The history of their campaigns, carefully written, would be a complete treatise on the art of war; the principles which ought to be followed in offensive and defensive war, would flow from it spontaneously."

The efficacy of any principles has long been in dispute. Some authorities, among them Liddell Hart, doubt their value (although he himself identifies several): "The modern tendency has been to search for principles which can be expressed in a single word – and then need several thousand words to explain them. Even so, these 'principles' are so abstract that they mean different things to different men, and, for any value, depend on their individual's own understanding of war. The longer one continues the search for such omnipotent abstractions, the more they do appear a mirage, neither attainable or useful – except as an intellectual exercise."

It is true that none of the principles are immutable, like some laws of physics, economics, and the natural sciences, with deal with certain conditions that create certain results. Nor are they hard-and-fast rules that inflict fines for minor infractions. Not every principle is appropriate for every occasion, and some seem antithetical. Nevertheless the Principles of War can be used as a practical checklist to assist sound judgments by the architects and appraisers of strategic theories, concepts, and plans, provided they are administered sensibly. Users shold simply recognize that no two situations are quite alike, and apply the principles accordingly.
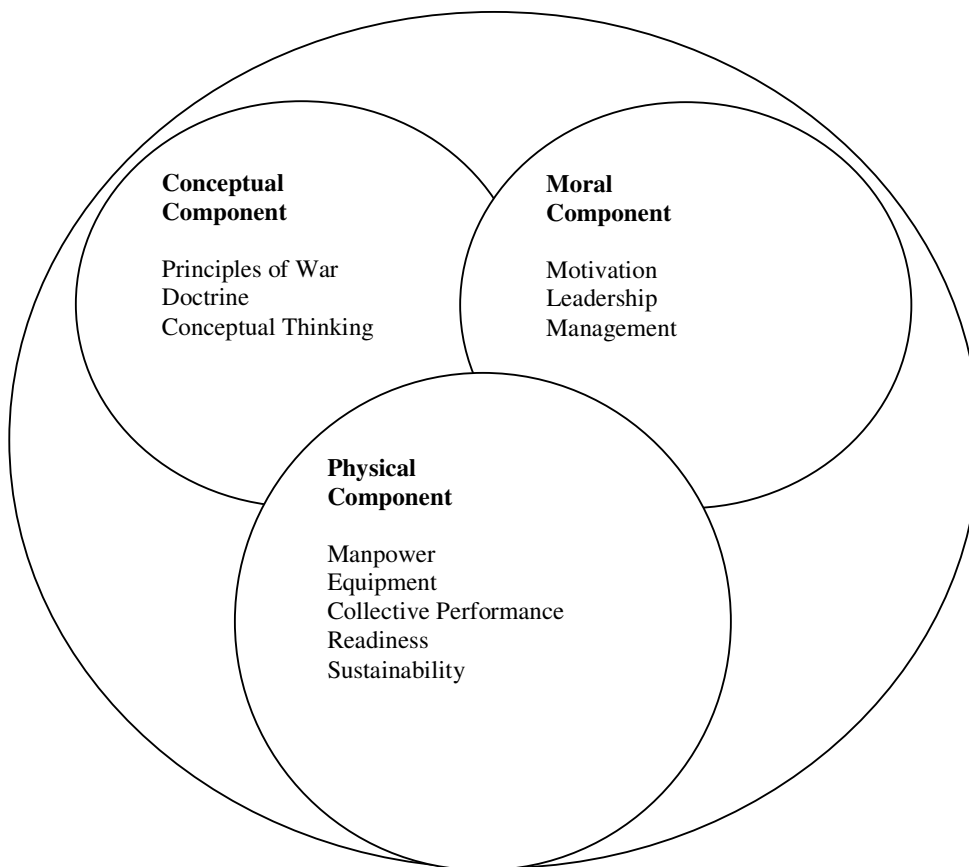
The principles of war differ slightly from country to country. The British subscribe to ten, the Netherlands to twelve and the Czech Republic to ten.

	United Kingdom	Netherlands	Czech Republic
The Selection and Maintenance of the Aim	x	x	x
Maintenance of Morale	x	x	x
Offensive Action	x	x	
Security	x	x	x
Surprise	x	x	Liberty of action
Concentration of Force	x	x	x

Economy of Effort	x	x	x
Flexibility	x	x	
Cooperation	x	Unity of effort	Unity of effort
Sustainability	x	x	x
Initiative		x	x
Simplicity		x	x

Military capability or fighting power

Military capability is the capacity for conducting military operations, and its components are similarly linked into the design, structure and posture of a country's armed forces . It consists of three interrelated components: conceptual, mental and physical. The conceptual component is made up of basic principles, doctrine and procedures. The mental component comprises three aspects: the motivation to perform the task as well as possible, effective leadership and the responsible organization of the deployment of all assets in terms of personnel and equipment. Lastly, the physical component is the operational capacity of these assets, referred to by the term combat power. The Components of Fighting Power as they are recognized by both the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are summarized diagrammatically below:

Conceptual Component

Principles of War
Doctrine
Conceptual Thinking

Moral Component

Motivation
Leadership
Management

Physical Component

Manpower
Equipment
Collective Performance
Readiness
Sustainability

Concluding remarks

As this chapter has shown, doctrine is the bridge between thought and action. Doctrine consists of a set of beliefs about the nature of war and the keys to success on the battlefield. As the history of war has broadened its perspectives, our understanding of the roots and nature of doctrine has likewise expanded. Doctrine can be divided into three components.

Doctrine in its purest form has a somewhat timeless, intellectual component. It draws principles of war from the experience of earlier successful armed forces and their commanders. Those principles remain relevant today.

Doctrine also has a practical and dynamic component in that it interprets the principles of war in the light of current circumstances, to ensure that the armed forces are properly trained in peace.

Doctrine has a predictive component. It analyses recent conflicts in order to learn from them. It looks into the future in order to identify how military force might be used and it reviews emerging technology to assess its military potential.

But we should always keep in mind that from a broader perspective, doctrine is also the product of a complex process of different influences. The ingredients of doctrine, which combine together differently in each and every case, include: the nature of weapons technology; the influence of formative experiences; organizational and institutional interests; ideology; national culture; and the political/strategic situation.