Political Science 211Z
Victory and Defeat: How States Win Wars
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Announcements
1. Midterm: returned next Tuesday.

Review: Theories of Victory
1. Balance of power
2. Balance of interests
3. Strategic interaction
4. Punishment versus denial

Does technology matter?
“Technological advances...will increase the combat power available for use against selected objectives, resulting in enhanced economy of force and a higher tempo of operations.”
Agenda

1. Does the offense or defense benefit more from technological advancements?
2. Does it matter who innovates first?
3. Discussion: Benjamin Schiller
   • Are we on the verge of a revolution in military affairs?

1. Offense, defense, and technology

Taxonomy of Military Technology

- Firepower
- Mobility
- Cover
- Concealment
- Sensor
- Communications
- Production

Firepower appears to favor the defense…

1. Threatens offensive force concentrations.
2. Forces attacker to take cover, reducing attacker mobility.
3. Forces attacker to employ suppressive fire, slowing the advance.

(Allegedly) clear effects on the offense/defense balance
Effects more ambiguous
Nuclear weapons are primarily defensive weapons.

...but firepower also aids the offense.

1. Suppressive fire neutralizes the defense.
2. Preparatory artillery barrages “soften” the defense.
3. Firepower forces the defense to disperse, making breakthroughs easier.

Offensive firepower precipitated the fall of Constantinople (1453).

Mobility appears to favor the offense...

- Blitzkrieg
- Railroad
- Tank
…but mobility also aids the defense.

1. Permits defender to trade space for time.
2. Critical to reinforcing weak points.

Defensive Mobility: Railroad

Defensive Mobility: Tanks

2. Does it matter who innovates first?

$328.7B

14% to R&D

$53.5B

Is innovation decisive?

German Panzer tank

Is innovation possible?

- Clausewitz: “fog of war”

1917 U-Boat attack against a British merchant ship
Enemies may adapt to innovations.

Iraqi Scud missile launcher

Is innovation possible?

- Clausewitz: “fog of war”
- Sun Tzu: “know your enemy”
- U.S. government: ?

Review

1. Do technological advancements clearly favor the attacker or defender?
   (Probably not)

2. Are technological innovations decisive?
   (Not without tactical innovations)

3. Are we on the verge of a revolution in military affairs?
   (Discussion question)

3. Discussion: Benjamin Schiller