

Defense Through Insurrection: A Simple Model of Swiss Concepts (1815–1989)¹

Christian Bühlmann

Colonel GS. Senior Advisor, Swiss Armed Forces Staff

Since 2001, Counter Insurgency (COIN) has become, once again, a major research topic within the field of security studies.^{1 2} Researchers are mostly trying to identify ways and means to defeat an insurrection. Understanding how to use non-regulated warfare to gain political leverage is not a priority. However, it had also been envisioned as a form of Territorial Defense, mostly for small states.³ This article uses Swiss historic reflections on defense through insurrection to support a simple strategic model of conflicts.⁴ This simple model allows for a simple and fast evaluation of “the kind of war on which one is embarking,”⁵ not only for regular conflict types, but also irregular ones.

Based on an understanding of military strategy as the use of coercion for

1 This contribution is an improved version of a presentation given at the 2010 Centre d’Histoire et de Prospective Militaire Symposium in Pully. The author wishes to thank Colonel GS Alain Vuitel, Pierre Streit, and Dr. Sandrine Monnerat-Picaud for their insightful comments of a previous version of this document. The usual disclaimer applies.

2 Martin van Creveld’s dictum should dissuade even the bravest to provide much more than a slight overview of the bibliography on the subject: “The first, and absolutely indispensable, thing to do is to throw overboard 99 percent of the literature on counterinsurgency, counter guerrilla, counterterrorism, and the like. Since most of it has been written by the losing side, it is of little value.” Van Creveld, Martin, *The Changing Face of War: Combat from the Marne to Iraq*, Presidio, Novato, 2006, p. 268. Still, to get a grasp of the current literature on counterinsurgency, see Professor Ed Moise list on Iraq insurgency, <http://www.clemson.edu/caah/history/facultypages/EdMoise/iraqbib.html#insurg>.

3 See Roberts, Adam, *Nations in Arms: The Theory and Practice of Territorial Defense*, 2nd ed. Houndsmills Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1986.

4 This article does not follow the strict distinction drawn by Elinor Ostrom between frameworks (relationship between variables), theories (defining more consistence and determination between those variables), and models (more focused, precise and explicit). See Elinor, Ostrom, “Institutional Rational Choice : An Assessment of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework”, *Theories of the Policy Process*, ed. Paul Sabatier Boulder, Westview Press, 1999, p.39-41. We rather use the term to depict connections between variables.

5 According to Carl von Clausewitz, often repeated, yet not always applied mantra,

“The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.”: Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War*, eds. Michael Howard and Peter Paret Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1976, p.88-89.

conflict resolution, this contribution suggests linking (1) the elements of physical, military, constraint; (2) armed forces capabilities and (3) actors' strategic doctrines. By analyzing military culture as a choice between means of coercion, as well as a choice between forms of symmetry, dissymmetry or asymmetry, it becomes possible to identify perennial lines in the strategic discourse. Specifically, this contribution explores modern Swiss (military) strategic culture as "a consistent and persistent set of ideas pertaining to the use of armed force and the role of military institutions, specific to a given socio-historical context, that a community nurtures."⁶ Within the context of insurrection and the use of its armed force, modern Switzerland has experienced a perennial dialectic between two perspectives: the first one understands the military as a counter-insurgency instrument or, more generally, as a counter-rioting device against violent non-state actors, including, in some cases, part of its own population. The second angle considers insurrection as a military instrument for defense; thus defense through insurrection is nothing more than a small war waged by partisans, and parts of the army, which oppose a foreign military occupation force. Therefore, it shall not be considered under the lens of a revolutionary war, intending to win the hearts and minds of the population: the Swiss strategists had assumed that they would blend with the army against the invader.

This article is comprised of three parts: (1) the succinct presentation of three Swiss historical military conceptions, incorporating elements of guerrilla warfare, developed between 1815 and 2005; (2) the introduction of a simple model to analyze military options; (3) the application of this model to the three cases described above.

In the spirit of Carl von Clausewitz, a conflict may be understood as the use of force in time and space.⁷ For the military thinker, time and space (Kantian) forms do not need further clarification.⁸ Force, or coercion, however, requires an operationalization. To this goal, we suggest a framework defined by the late Swiss military thinker and historian, colonel GS Daniel Reichel (1925–1991), which describes military force as a combination of Shock, Fire, and Maneuver.⁹ As it will be later described, this framework has also been refined and integrated in the current Swiss operational level regulation. We beforehand present the three case studies.

6 Roussel, Stéphane and Morin David, "Les multiples incarnations de la culture stratégique et les débats qu'elles suscitent," *Culture Stratégique Et Politique De Défense - L'expérience Canadienne*, Athena Editions, Outremont, 2007, p. 17-42.

7 Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War*, Op. Cit. p. 205-209.

8 Kant, Emmanuel, "Critique de la raison pure, nouvelle traduction française avec notes par Tremeaygues, A. et Pacaud, B., Felix Alcan," Paris, 1905, p. 65-66.

9 Daniel Reichel (1925-1991), former director of the Swiss Military Library (Bibliothèque militaire fédérale suisse) and Head of the Swiss Defense Historical Studies Group. (Service Historique de l'Armée Suisse). Reichel is also the founder of the Centre d'Histoire et de Prospective Militaires (CHPM). See Langendorf, Jean-Jacques, Bühlmann, Christian and Vuitel, Alain, *Le Feu Et La Plume, Hommage À Daniel Reichel*, Cabédita, Bière, 2010.

Case Studies

As previously stated, in the course of Switzerland's modern history, strategists have not only theorized insurrection and the use of the armed force as a last recourse to restore order.¹⁰ Many thinkers have also theorized partisan warfare - or guerrilla warfare - as the answer to military attacks. The first task is common to most European states and will only be briefly mentioned below. The armed forces twin missions of defense against external threats and the contribution to internal security, arise from the fact that Switzerland, a federal state, manages the domestic security at the canton level. Thus, there is no federal police force in charge of riot control such as the French CRS or the Italian *Carabinieri*. Therefore, when the local police are overwhelmed by the magnitude of an uprising, the cantons may ask the Federal Council for an army intervention to their support. In Swiss parlance, this is called *service d'ordre*.¹¹ The main problem brought by this situation is that citizen soldiers may have to use force against fellow citizens. Moreover, the riot control training of the militia soldiers has not always been up to the required level. The November 1932 recruit intervention in Geneva, because of its inadequate management, caused the deaths of thirteen civilians, caused more than 60 casualties, and led therefore to a political and military taboo against such practices. Nonetheless, until the late thirties of the twentieth century, Swiss army units have been used on numerous occasions to prevent or slash people's riots. Director of the Federal Military Library, Jürg Stüssi-Lauterburg, notes that, between 1890 and 1935, more than a riot control mission per year had been carried out by the troops.¹²

In practice, most post war engagements of the Swiss Armed Forces were designed to protect civilian infrastructure, such as airports, against terrorist threats. Nowadays, with the decline of major interstate war in Europe, the reinforcement of civilian security forces is the main priority of the Swiss

10 On this subject in its historical dimension, see Conca-Pulli, Pälvi, *Soldats au service de l'ordre public - La politique du maintien de l'ordre intérieur au moyen de l'armée en Suisse entre 1914 et 1949*, Cahiers de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, 2003; De Weck, Hervé, "Aspects du maintien de l'ordre par l'armée (1830-1970)," Association suisse d'histoire et de sciences militaires, Berne, 1997, p. 67-106 (especially p. 168-170); Greminger, Thomas, *Ordnungstruppen in Zurich, Der Einsatz Von Armee, Polizei Und Stadtwehr Ende November 1918 Bis August 1919*, Helbing & Lichtenhahn, Basel, 1990; The use of the armed force against the population, mainly the working class, has been a standing critic against the Swiss Army from left wing movements. See Frisch, Max, *Suisse Sans Armée, Un Palabre*, ed. Bernard Campiche, Yvonand, 1989; more specifically, Heimberg, Charles, *Pour une histoire sans trous de mémoire : 60 Ans après la fusillade du 9 novembre à Genève*, Groupe pour une Suisse sans armée, Genève, 1992.

11 See Loi fédérale sur l'armée et l'administration militaire, "Service d'ordre, 1995, Art. 83; www.admin.ch/ch/f/RS/510-10/index.html.

12 Stüssi-Lauterburg, Jürg, "Résumé Historique Sur Le Thème Du Service D'ordre (Documentation Pour La Presse Du 30 Septembre 1996)," Available: <http://www.admin.ch/cp/f/1996Nov1.090334.6823@idz.bfi.admin.ch.html>.

Army,¹³ yet the use of the army units against Swiss citizens is not considered an option.

The rest of this chapter now deals with the use of insurrection as defense.

Defending Switzerland

Defending the state against a foreign military threat is the traditional task of an army. Switzerland, lying at the heart of European historical fault lines, namely between France and the Dual Monarchy, and later between France and Germany, has always found itself in a military situation that can be defined as “from the weak to the strong.” Two threats were feared: first, one of the Swiss neighbors might use the Swiss territory to direct a flanking attack on its opponent,¹⁴ dodging its fortified borders. Secondly, an enemy might intend to take over the part or whole of Switzerland.¹⁵ Thus, from 1815 to the end of the Cold War, Swiss military thinkers as well as army staffs have designed comprehensive defense plans, several of them favoring a strategy based on insurgency. Until the beginning of the Cold War, the military aspects of these designs have always been at the forefront, without much thought about integrating societal areas: political and military planners generally took the support of the people for granted. Winning hearts and minds was therefore not required. In the sixties, however, *Défense civile* (Civil Defense),¹⁶ an official and very controversial pamphlet, was distributed to all households by the federal government, seeking to inform the population on total defense plans. One of the most debated parts described the scenario of “an occupation of Switzerland, betrayed by its own children.”¹⁷ At that time, the fear of “subversion” by a communist fifth column was strongly felt and found its way into the booklet.

In this next part, I will succinctly describe three cases: Swiss defense plans during the first part of the nineteenth century, World War II’s “National Redoubt,” and the national defense concepts developed during the Cold War.

Military Historian Rudolf Jaun has asserted the paradoxical characteristic

13 See *Rapport du Conseil fédéral à L’assemblée fédérale sur la politique de sécurité de la Suisse Du 23 Juin 2010, Feuille Fédérale*, Centre des Publications Officielles, Berne, 2010, p. 4722-4725.

14 The use of Switzerland’s axes by Napoleon’s armies during the Italian Wars, notably the Alpine passes of Grand Saint-Bernard, Simplon, and Sankt-Gotthard was an example of the perceived threat.

15 See Ernst, Alfred, *Die Konzeption der schweizerischen Landesverteidigung 1815 bis 1966*, Huber, Frauenfeld and Stuttgart, 1971, p. 69-70.

Chevallaz, Georges-André, *Les plans italiens face à la Suisse en 1938-1943*, Centre d’histoire et de prospective militaires, Pully, 1988.

16 Bachmann, Alfred and Georges Grosjean, *Défense civile*, Éditions Miles pour le compte du Département fédéral de justice et police, Aarau, 1969.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

of the Swiss armed forces. They are based on militia, which means a non-permanent army, fully mobilized in case of conflict only, and conscription; one might therefore expect that such forces would only follow a simple doctrine as well as rustic forms of combat (such as guerilla and partisan warfare.) However, the doctrine of the Swiss Army has more than often drawn on the much more complex models of the major powers' professional and standing armies.¹⁸

The Military Context 1815–1848

After 1815, Switzerland stood on a major European fault line, laid between France and Austria. Like Belgium and the German Principalities, it formed a buffer state, part of a no man's land between France, potentially suspect of fermenting new revolutions, and the Dual Monarchy. Until then, Swiss neutrality had been mostly justified by domestic rationales: first by religious reasons, to prevent the breakup of the Confederation according to religious boundaries if it had not balanced between the major powers and, second, neutrality, allowing the export of mercenaries to all warring European powers, which the source of substantial profits for the economy of the old Confederation. Later, at the end of the Napoleonic wars, neutrality had become an instrument of foreign and security policy: the European Powers required Switzerland to prevent any country to use its territory for warring purposes.¹⁹ Moreover, using a realist perspective of international relations,²⁰ Switzerland's neighbors being of relatively equal strength, it would not have been possible to choose an ally (bandwagoning) before the start of hostilities, or to partner with the weaker against the stronger (balancing) without the risk of choosing the wrong side. Through neutrality, the Swiss government could try to avoid being drawn in war. Should this course of action fail, Switzerland could pick its ally (either the attacker's foe, or in a more strategic and Machiavellian way, join the attacker against its foe.)²¹ Because of its small and relatively poor state, with much weaker military means than its neighbors, Switzerland had to determine a conception of defense ensuring its survival until its rescue by a possible ally.²²

18 Jaun, Rudolf, "Die Konzeption der Militärischen Landesverteidigung vom 6.6.66 - Verortung und Bewertung in historischer Perspektive," *La conception du 6.6.66 - 40 Ans Après*, ed. Planungsstab der Armee Militärdoktrin Berne, 2007, p. 80.

19 *Déclaration des Puissances portant reconnaissance et garantie de la neutralité perpétuelle de la Suisse et de l'inviolabilité de son territoire*, signed in Paris on the 20th of November 1815, <http://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ch1815n.htm>.

20 See Walz, Kenneth, *Theory of International Politics* Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1979, p.125-126.; Elman, Miriam Fendius "The Foreign Policies of Small States, Challenging Neorealism in Its Own Backyard," *British Journal of Political Science* 25, 2, 1995, p. 50-51.

21 Finland's strategy under Marshall Mannerheim during the Second World War can be seen as an example of this manoeuvre.

22 Ernst, Alfred, *Die Konzeption der Schweizerischen Landesverteidigung 1815 Bis 1966*, Op. Cit. p. 76-85; Note, however, that Genevan citizen and diplomat Charles Pictet-Rochemont, the Swiss negociator at the Congress of Vienna, had much more stronger views on the neutrality, asserting that an unrequested foreign military help against an violation of Switzerland's neutrality be considered a second attack, requiring the opening of a second defen-

Until 1848, Switzerland, organized as a confederation of cantons, pondered how to respond to potential threats from its neighbors. Overall, three schools of thought could be distinguished:²³

First, a Republican, romantic school, supported by liberal and radical politicians; according to their views, the feats of the ancient Confederate had demonstrated the existence of a distinct Swiss military fiber. It would awaken once again in the event of aggression against Swiss territory. The ideology of “republican values and patriotism” would be sufficient to fill gaps in preparedness and military equipment. Therefore, the design of military operations should be based on those national talents. Some authors, including Heinrich Zschokke (1771–1848), a German-born, but naturalized Swiss writer and pedagogue, as well as Bernese writer Emanuel Rudolf von Tavel (1788–1840), proposed a defense based on the Spanish guerrilla model.

The second group, consisting of officers who had served in the Foreign Service, such as the Guillaume Henri Dufour,²⁴ valued a distinctive Swiss national military doctrine as ludicrous. Nothing else than the contemporary references of the era, such as Napoleon Bonaparte or Antoine–Henri Jomini, could represent a credible source of inspiration. It would therefore be necessary to fight a potential enemy with a regular army using standard, Napoleonic doctrine. The guerrillas, however, could merely provide a method of last resort.

Between those alternatives the reflections of Colonel Johann Heinrich Wieland, an officer in the French First Empire Army and a veteran of the Spanish War, stands out.²⁵ Inspired by foreign experiences and theories, he however clearly saw their limits for Switzerland. In the words of his biographer, Eric Mettler, Wieland doctrine can be summarized as follows: “*Let us avoid collisions with the artificial means of the enemy, and learn to fight with weapons of our own, not wanting to stop him by those arms with which it can overwhelm us.*”²⁶ To several of his contemporaries, he epitomized the prolongation of the fourteenth century Swiss military tradition.

sive front. See Chaudet, Paul, *Conduire ou subir*, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue de Lausanne, Lausanne, 1967, p. 103-104.

23 Chaudet, Paul, *Conduire ou subir*, *Op. Cit.* p. 169-172.

24 Genevan citizen and Officer Guillaume Henri Dufour (1787-1875) had fought on the French side during the First Empire. He was later promoted several times to commanding general of the Swiss armed forces. See Langendorf, Jean-Jacques, *Guillaume Henri Dufour ou la passion du juste milieu* Editions René Coeckelberghs, Lucerne, Lausanne, 1987.

25 Colonel Johannes Wieland (1791-1832), a native of Basel, had fought in Spain under the French between 1807 and 1815. See Brüderlin, R., “Wieland, Johannes,” *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 1898, p. 501-509.

26 Mettler, Eric, *Oberst Johannes Wieland, 1791-1832, Ein Baumeister am eidg. Wehrwesen*, A. Francke, Bern, 1944, p. 158, in Ernst, Alfred, *Konzeption*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 170.

Interestingly, during the Sonderbund of 1847, Switzerland's first and only civil war, the numerically and materially inferior catholic Sonderbund army did not utilize a guerrilla warfare based strategy to counter the federal army. Inversely, in the preceding years, the protestant side had directed a guerilla campaign, such attacks on the catholic cantons capitals, using *Freischärlers* (Freicorps.) Why did the Sonderbund prefer a regular fight? The strategic culture of the major actors, based on their experiences from the foreign service - Sonderbund commanding General, Johann Ulrich von Salis-Soglio, had made a military career in the Bavarian Light Cavalry, in the Swiss regiment in the service of Holland, then in the Dutch national army where he was promoted to Major General in 1839²⁷ – and the speed of General Henri Dufour's maneuver (the campaign was over in less than a month) are plausible explanations for this decision.

The National Redoubt (1940–1945)

Defending Switzerland from a central, fortified, base of operations had been posited as a valid option in the nineteenth century. Many military thinkers, such as Johann Conrad Finsler (1765–1839), Guillaume–Henri Dufour, Emil Rothpletz (1824–1897) or Alphons Pfyffer von Altishofen (1834–1890) had suggested such schemes.²⁸

In late 1940, this concept became once again an issue. The original plan of the commander in chief of the Swiss armed forces, General Henri Guisan (1874–1961) was to defend Switzerland against a potential German attack using a linear “army position” along the banks of the Limmat river.²⁹ The most dangerous perceived threat, shared with the French military, was a German thrust across northern Switzerland in order to circumvent the Maginot Line. The Swiss line of defense was therefore an extension of the French fortification, moving from Basel to Sargans via Zurich. Because of limited numbers of the army, the Basel region would have been reinforced by French troops after the outbreak of hostilities.³⁰ The success of the German attack through the Ardennes left this strategy useless.

The French *déroute* of June 1940 had a shocking effect on the Swiss population and government, which, like most witnesses, were surprised by the swiftness and the significance of the French defeat. The original linear defense was no

27 Collenberg, Adolf, “Salis, Johann Ulrich Von (Soglio),” *Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, 2010.

28 Kuster, Matthias, “Verteidigung und Verteidigungspläne der Schweiz, Eine Analyse,” *Allgemeine schweizerische Militärzeitschrift (ASMZ)*, 2004, p. 26.

29 Lovisa, Maurice, Andreas Steigmeier and Walter Lüem, *Die Limmatstellung im Zweiten Weltkrieg* Baden, Baden-Verlag, 1997.

30 Barbey, Bernard, *Aller et Retour: Mon journal pendant et après la “drôle de guerre” 1939-1940*, Editions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1967.

longer adequate; since the German forces had pushed through France, the Western border was left open: Switzerland could have been attacked sideways through the Jura Mountains. Devoid of tanks and armor piercing weapons, the army would not have been able to oppose the maneuver and shock of the *Blitzkrieg* in the open terrain of the Plateau. The threat therefore turned into an existential peril, heading towards a possible occupation of Switzerland, later even potentially dismembered between Germany and Italy. For the Axis countries, the passes across the Swiss Alps were a key transit route for their economy and strategic shipping. The Swiss High Command recognized this importance and articulated his concept around these axes. Lacking forces to create an all-round defense of the territory, Guisan had to consider innovative solutions. The chosen strategy represents an interesting case of dissymmetrical operational design.

Faced with a risk of defeatism and alignment with Nazi policy, Guisan decided to keep essential parts of the armed forces mobilized. He quickly moved his major units in the Alpine area and had a powerful network of fortifications dug in the mountains. His goal was, first, to be able to fight in a strong infantry terrain, not conducive to the armored unit's maneuver and, second, to keep the Alpine passes under his control. To deter any attack, he could threaten the Axis Powers with the destruction of the roadways and railways itineraries between Italy and Germany. This would have led to potentially long lasting interruption of the Alpine transit, a strong blow to the Axis powers' war fighting capabilities. This strategy was called the "National Redoubt."³¹ Over time, it changed from a tactical defense concept to a strategy of deterrence.³²

Faced with German armored shock and maneuver, which he could not withstand in the most populated part of Switzerland, Guisan chose a protection-based strategy, using fortifications and their artillery fire, the destruction of roadways, canalizing the maneuver in Alpine valleys, which would counter a *Blitzkrieg* campaign through a multitude of tactical infantry fights, seeking a local decision through close-range combat and shock in a strong terrain. After the War, the emergence of the Cold War changed once again the setting.

31 On the National Redoubt, see Gautschi, Willi, *Le Général Guisan - Le commandement de L'armée suisse pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, Payot, Lausanne, 1991.

Senn, Hans, *Anfänge Einer Dissuasionsstrategie Während Des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Helbing & Lichtenhahn, Basel, 1995.

Barbey, Bernard, P.C. *Du Général: Journal du chef de l'état-major particulier du Général Guisan, 1940-1945*, Éditions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1948.

32 Senn, Hans, *Anfänge einer Dissuasionsstrategie während des Zweiten Weltkriegs*, Op. Cit.

Cold War

From 1948 on, Switzerland, like its neighbors, believed in the risk of Soviet invasion of Western Europe. It sought to define a strategy to counter such an attack. Neutrality, as well as the perceived weakness of NATO in the fifties, barred Switzerland to join the Atlantic Alliance. The new situation, and the will as well to avoid a return to a National Redoubt strategy, led to a long standing dispute about strategic defense conceptions (*Konzeptionstreit*), which would last for nearly twenty years.³³

The Swiss General Staff sensed the threat of the Warsaw Pact as consisting mainly of several second echelons of armored divisions, with the possible use of tactical nuclear weapons.³⁴ Three options against those threats were elaborated upon during of the fifties:

1. Walter Allgöwers, a regular officer and later National Councilor, proposed that Switzerland be defended by an army of partisans, yet also be equipped with a high-tech military corps, further armed with nuclear weapons in order to deter a possible aggressor.³⁵

2. A republican conception, supported mainly by Alfred Ernst (later commander of the 2nd Field Army Corps) called for a defense inspired by NATO's area defense.³⁶ Based on static infantry forces, fighting from fortified positions, it sought to block the thrust of tanks in strong terrains and to force the adversary's mechanized infantry to disembark, and subdue them at short distance.³⁷

Finally, the third alternative, proposed by Alfred and Georg Züblin, was based on NATO's mobile defense.³⁸ They intended to fight the enemy with tanks, emphasizing maneuver, fire and shock, in a mainly symmetric conception.³⁹

In 1961, the Federal Council decided in favor of the latter approach. However,

33 Braun, Peter, *Von der Reduitstrategie Zur Abwehr, die Militärische Landesverteidigung des Schweiz im Kalten Krieg 1945-1966, Hier und Jetzt*, Baden, 2006. This book presents the state of the art of the historical research on this topic.

34 See de Weck, Hervé and Maurer, Pierre, "Swiss National Defense Policy Revisited," *Swiss Neutrality and Security – Armed Forces, National Defence and Foreign Policy*, eds. Marko Milivojevic and Pierre Maurer Bew York, Berg, 1990.

35 Braun, Peter, *Von der Reduitstrategie Zur Abwehr*, Op. Cit. p. 157-158.

36 "The area defense is a type of defensive operation that concentrates on denying enemy forces access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright." *Fm 3-0 Operations* Washington DC, Department of the Army, 2001, p. 8-6. This is an anachronism, yet simple enough to describe the intended effect.

37 Braun, Peter, *Von der Reduitstrategie Zur Abwehr*, Op. Cit. p. 374-380, 504-508.

38 "The mobile defense is a type of defensive operation that concentrates on the destruction or defeat of the enemy through a decisive attack by a striking force," *Fm 3-0 Operations*, Op. Cit. p. 8-4. See the remark on note 36.

39 Braun, Peter, *Von der Reduitstrategie Zur Abwehr*, Op. Cit. p. 391-399, 450-462.

problems with implementation, especially cost overruns during the acquisition of the French *Mirage* fighter plane, required a return to a much less expensive area defense concept.⁴⁰ This form of fighting remained in force until the mid-nineties.

From the beginning of the Cold War, especially after the 1956 invasion of Hungary, citizens concerned by the Soviet threat had begun to prepare for private acts of resistance in potentially occupied territories, as a complement to traditional military responses. The Swiss non-commissioned officers association (a private organization supported by the army) published a resistance manual, *Der totale Widerstand (Total Resistance)*, subtitled *Kleinkriegsanleitung für Jedermann* (which would be translated today as 'guerrilla warfare for dummies.'). Written by Major Hans von Dach, this book was very detailed, well-illustrated and very practical. It went to be a great publication success in Switzerland.⁴¹ It was also translated in English around 1965 and published in the United States.⁴² In the military and federal government circles, the need for an organization similar to the French Resistance was also envisaged early on. The Yugoslav partisans led by Tito, who had resisted the Nazi occupation on a secondary theater of operations, without significant support from the Allies until the end of 1943, also served as a model. The theorists wanted to ensure the survival of Switzerland in a possible post-war situation by keeping parts of the territory under national control and by demonstrating the people's will to continue the fight over time, using guerrilla warfare.

Défense Civile described a patriotic resistance force led by a Federal Council in exile; in the end, the fight would lead to the liberation of Switzerland...⁴³ In point of fact, a clandestine refuge for the Federal Council in Ireland, as well as a secret executive army known as P26, designed to lead an insurrection (in the event of the Swiss Army surrender) had been established.⁴⁴ It was not directly subordinated to the army and was organized independently of the political leadership, in order not to be bound by an armistice or a capitulation.⁴⁵ Its

40 *Ibid.*, p. 924-951.

See also Urio, Paolo, *L'affaire des Mirages: Décision administrative et contrôle parlementaire*, Éditions médecine et hygiène, Genève, 1972.

41 Von Dach, Hans, *Der Totale Widerstand - Kleinkriegsanleitung für jedermann*, Schweizerische Unteroffiziersverband, Biel, 1957.

42 Von Dach, Hans, *Total Resistance*, ed. translated by Hans Lienhard Boulder, Panther Publications, 1965.

43 Bachmann, Alfred and Grosjean, Georges, *Défense Civile, Op. Cit.* p. 273-300.

44 See Moser, Ruedi, *Schweizer Geheimarmee. Major Z.D. Ruedi Moser Ehemaliger Stabschef der Widerstandsorganisation erzählt und enthüllt im Gespräch mit Ralph De Mont-Fride*, Von Arx, Sumiswald, 1993; Ganser, Daniele, "The British Secret Service in Neutral Switzerland, an Unfinished Debate on Nato's Cold War Stay-Behind Armies," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2005, p. 553-580.

45 *Rapport de la Commission d'enquête parlementaire chargée de clarifier les faits d'une grande portée survenus au Département militaire fédéral*, Commission d'enquête parlementaire, Chancellerie fédérale, Berne, 1990, p. 218.

institutional control was almost nonexistent.⁴⁶ It was made known to the public in 1990⁴⁷ and ultimately disbanded in 1991.

These three cases are representative of the search for a typical Swiss design for national defense. The models applied during the 1870 War and the First World War, are closer to conventional, regular models. They are beyond the scope of this contribution.

An Analysis Framework for the Use of Force

In this chapter, we present an analytical model for the use of force derived from Reichel's work. We begin by defining *force* and its components based on the Swiss field manual *Operative Führung XXI*.⁴⁸ We then describe the relationships between the conflicting actors, further developing the notions of symmetry and asymmetry. Leaning on Andre Beaufre, we understand (military) strategy as "the art of the dialectic of willpowers using force to resolve their conflict."⁴⁹ Because of the limited scope of this article, we concentrate strictly on the military side of the matter and neglect the other dimensions of a comprehensive strategic approach, which would integrate military force within a broader comprehension of coercion, where economy, diplomacy and other instruments of political power would be combined in a whole of government approach.

The Components of Force

We define force as legitimate, physical coercion. *Operative Führung XXI* models force based on four components: (1) fire, (2) shock, (3) maneuver and (4) protection. This is inspired by Reichel, who presented the first three of these components in a set of five brochures⁵⁰ in search of "fundamental elements"⁵¹ for a 'pluridisciplinary study' of military history. Hervé Coutau-Bégarie shares this vision and describes them as the 'fundamental modes' of military strategy.⁵² Yet the use of this raster is not limited to historical critique. It may

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229-239.

⁴⁷ See *Ibid.*; Ganser, Daniele, *Nato's Secret Armies. Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe* London, Frank Cass, 2005.

⁴⁸ *Operative Führung XXI (OF XXI)*, "Chef Der Armee, Schweizer Armee, Bern, 2004.

⁴⁹ Beaufre, André, *Introduction À La Stratégie*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1963, p.16.

⁵⁰ Reichel, Daniel, *Le feu I*, Armée suisse, Service historique, Berne, 1982.

Reichel, Daniel, *Le feu II*, Armée suisse, Service historique, Berne, 1982.

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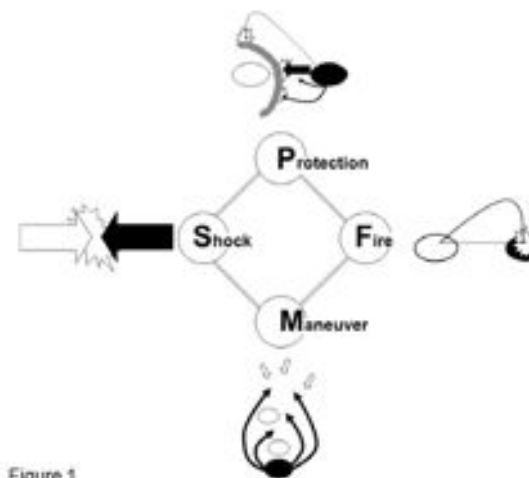
Reichel, Daniel, *La manœuvre et l'incertitude*, Armée suisse, Service historique, Berne, 1983.

⁵¹ Reichel, Daniel, *Le feu I*, *Op. Cit.* p.9.

⁵² Coutau-Bégarie, Hervé, *Traité de stratégie*, Economica, Paris, 2003, p. 399-414.

also aid doctrinal analysis. In this context, a new mode, *protection*, has been introduced in the Swiss military doctrine. It demonstrates the importance of the human factor and its safeguarding. It is coherent with Reichel's thinking, in particular with his concept of 'people's substance.'⁵³ Those modes can be defined as follows:

Figure 1: Force as modes of coercion



Shock, coming mainly from hand-to-hand and close-range combat, is the “the fundamental element of fighting.”⁵⁴ Hitting from a short distance, it encompasses a major psychological, sometimes decisive element.⁵⁵

Fire is shock from a distance. This notion combines not only kinetic effects but also, in a historical perspective, ranged weapon (such as spears, javelins, slings, bow and arrows or catapults); in the enlarged context of information operations, electronic warfare or computer network attacks (CNA) can be understood as fire also. Its psychological component is important, yet may be less influential than shock. The traditional U.S. inspired approach of warfare has made fire the decisive element.

Maneuver brings fire and shock on the adversary's decisive points or centers of gravity. It also permits to avoid the enemy's fire, shock or maneuver. A cunning use of maneuver helps avoid the enemy's stronger points and strike on his weaker points, as with Basil Liddel Hart's indirect strategy.⁵⁶

⁵³ Bühlmann, Christian and Vuitel, Alain, “Penser la crise, méditer la guerre,” in Langendorf, Jean-Jacques, Bühlman, Christian, Vuitel, Alain, *Le feu et la plume*, Op. Cit., p. 9.

⁵⁴ Reichel, Daniel, *Le feu I*, Op. Cit. p. 5.

⁵⁵ Coutau-Bégarie, Hervé, *Traité de stratégie*, Op. Cit. p. 401-402.

⁵⁶ Lidell Hart, Basil, *Strategy*, Meridian, New York, 1991.

A main goal of maneuver is the destruction of the adversary's operational coherence. Maneuver happens at every level of warfare and in every space of the operational sphere.⁵⁷

Protection has the purpose of shielding one's own forces or the population. It follows the goal of economy of force and the principle of minimizing losses.⁵⁸

The modes for the use of force represent the strategist's toolbox. He combines them to impose his will. Their use allows also an ideal-typical analysis of the military and strategic culture.⁵⁹

Applied to those modes, the symmetry, asymmetry and dissymmetry relationship allows a better comparison of adversaries' strategies.

Relationships between Adversaries

The concepts of symmetry and asymmetry have been the subject of many studies. The numerous attempts to define these elusive notions have not been rewarded by a substantial elucidation.⁶⁰ Some authors have therefore proposed to jettison this concept.⁶¹ We think, however, that those notions bring a more pertinent clarification⁶² when applied to relations between actor's capacities as when they are used to describe a typology of conflicts.

57 Hubin, Guy, *Perspectives tactiques*, Economica, Paris, 2009, p. 85-59.

58 Operative Führung XXI (OF XXI), "Op. Cit." p. 17.

59 Traditionally, fire for the US, maneuver for the German and shock for the old Swiss.

60 See Phillips, Joan T., *Assymetric Warfare* Maxwell, Muir S. Fairchild Research Information Center, 2006.

61 See Freedman, Laurence, "The Third World War?," *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 4, 2001, p. 61-88.

Lambakis, Steven, James Kiras, Kristin Kolet, Kathleen Bailey, Colin Gray, Willis Stanley and Robert Turner, "Understanding 'Asymmetric' Threats to the United States," *Comparative Strategy*, 21, 4, 2002, p. 241-277.

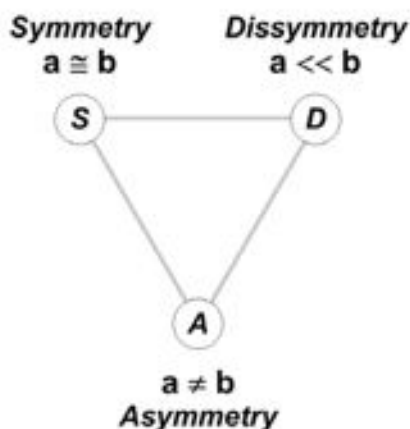
Blank, Stephen J., "Rethinking the Concept of Asymmetric Threats in U.S. Strategy," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 2004, p. 343-367.

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Gray, Colin, "Thinking Asymmetrically in Times of Terror," *Parameters*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2002, p. 5-14.

62 Bühlmann, Christian, "Asymmetric Strategies - a Concept to Better Understand Modern Conflicts?," *Military Power Revue der Schweizer Armee*, No.2, 2009, p. 8-21.

Figure 2: Symmetry, dissymmetry and asymmetry



Mobilizing Herfried Münkler's theory,⁶³ we can define a relationship as *symmetric* when an interstate conflict is regulated by the law of war, or moral principles. In spite of the possibility of a quick victory if one would not follow these rules, Münkler explains their permanence for political motives (avoiding a threat to the state itself, which could be subjected to implosion if it would use insurrection to defend itself) or morale rationales (The West has a long tradition of just war, using categories such as *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*).

The *symmetry's* ideal-type between two actors is the chivalrous duel. Both actors have similar equipment and follow strict rules, using fire or shock. Furthermore, not following the duel's rules would be considered a morally unacceptable fact, which would reinforce its symmetric nature. Symmetry represents therefore a relationship of similarity between forces and doctrines.

A *dissymmetric* relationship represents a particular type of symmetry: The conflict is regulated, but happens between the strong and the weak or between the weak and the strong. An adversary tries to use its strength – or its weakness – to confront its opponent's strength – or weakness. The dissymmetric relationship can be understood as a strong inequality relationship ($a \ll b$) between two antagonists' forces and doctrine.

In an *asymmetric* relationship, adversaries do not fight in a restricted or regulated way. It is particularly the case when one of them uses insurrection techniques. He tries to confront its adversary's physical, doctrinal, moral

63 Münkler, Herfried, *Der Wandel des Krieges, Von der Symmetrie zur Asymmetrie*, Velbrück Wiss, Weilerswist, 2006.

or cultural taboos. Asymmetry is therefore a discrepancy between forces, strategic cultures, norms, and doctrines.

By analyzing the way actors use force and symmetrical, dissymmetrical and asymmetrical relations between actors, one can better distinguish their strategies and strategic culture. Using this framework, guerilla warfare can be understood either as a dissymmetrical relationship between two states or an asymmetrical relationship between a state and, generally, a non-state actor.

Mao Tse Tung's 'Three Steps of protracted Warfare'⁶⁴ (1. Strategic defense through 'movement's warfare' – asymmetry; 2. Strategic stabilization / Partisan warfare – dissymmetry; 3. Confronting the regular forces – symmetry) further describes the progressive evolution of the relation between the rivals.

Application

In this section, the model is applied to the three cases described above: defensive options at the beginning of the 19th century, the National Redoubt and the Cold War. In each case, we present a simple typology of the approaches studied as well as an appreciation of the variants.

19th Century Approach

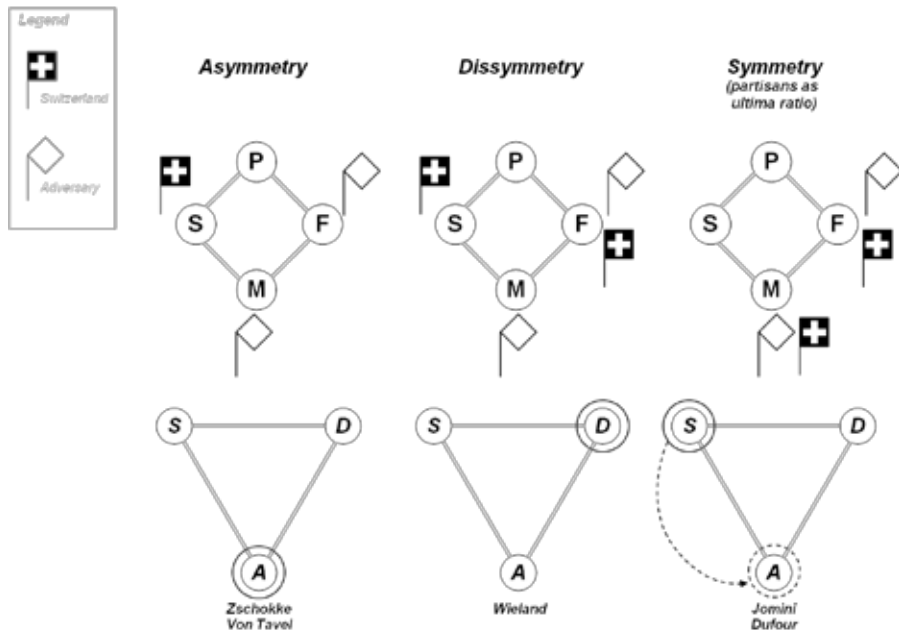
Zschokke and von Tavel's approach is asymmetric, based on the myth of shock and, to a certain extent, maneuver. It intends to tackle the adversary's maneuver and firepower through short range physical confrontation. Dufour's proposition is clearly symmetrical, however provisioning an asymmetrical counterpoint through guerilla tactics. Wieland describes a dissymmetric approach.

During the 19th Century, one observes threefold Swiss defense conception: (1) Zschokke and von Tavel's asymmetric conception, (2) a dissymmetric conception as well as (3) a mainstream, symmetric conception with an asymmetric component. In every case, the military thinkers have proposed to extend, when not replace, symmetric warfare with an approach that avoids a frontal action against the aggressor's strengths. Jaun discusses in depth the further development of those different worldviews and their influence on the Swiss defense policy prior to the First World War, as well as the victory of a mainstream Prussian model over Swiss republican concepts.⁶⁵

64 Tse-Toung, Mao, "De la guerre prolongée (Mai 1938)," *Œuvres choisies de Mao Tse-Toung, Tome II*, Pékin, 1967, p. 144-149.

65 Jaun, Rudolf, *Preussen Vor Augen: Das Schweizerische Offizierskorps im militärischen und gesellschaftlichen Wandel des Fin de Siècle*, Chronos Verlag, Zürich, 1999.

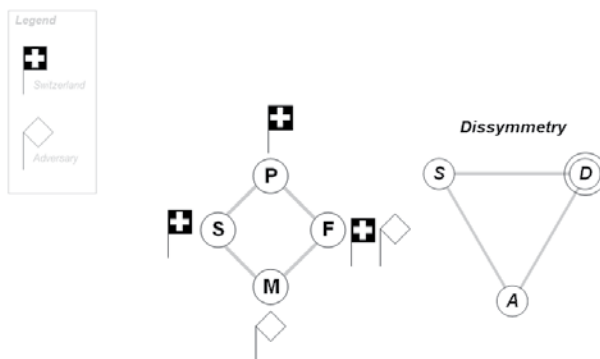
Figure 3: Typology of the 19th Century first concepts



National Redoubt

Faced with a threat understood as shock and maneuver (the *Blitzkrieg*), Switzerland developed a dissymmetric strategy, the national Redoubt, using the Alpine strong terrain, fire and protection to counter the perceived adversary (Figure 4.)

Figure 4: Typology of the National Redoubt's concept (ca. 1943)



This use of strong infantry terrain, fortresses built in the depth of Alpine itineraries, artillery fire striking troops stooped by prepared destructions remember the dissymmetric action of the Swiss warriors in Morgarten (1315)⁶⁶ and the permanence of dissymmetry in Swiss strategic concepts.

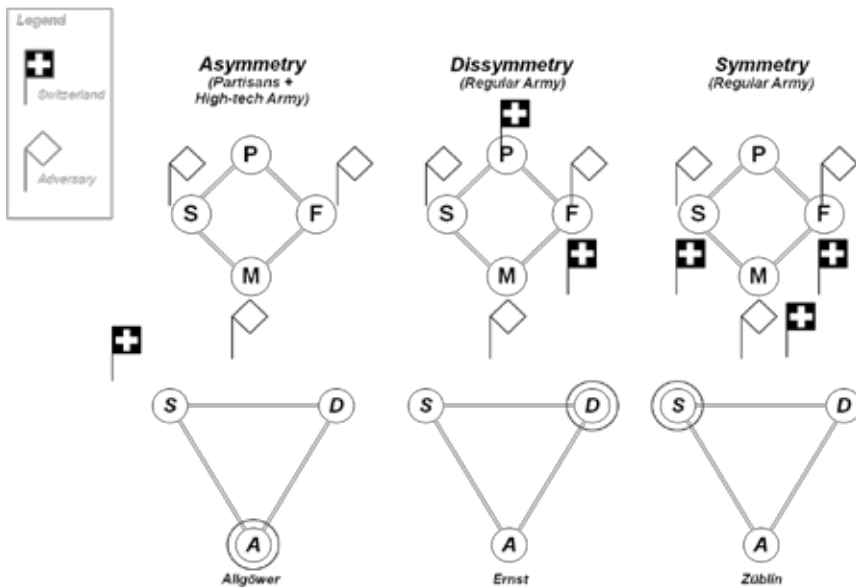
Cold War

As in the first part of the 19th Century, the Cold War conceptions proposed during the fifties can be represented as three different variants:

Allgöwer's variant is an asymmetric approach reinforced with a symmetric component, Ernst's area defense is mostly dissymmetric, while Züblin's mobile defense is mainly symmetric (Figure 6).

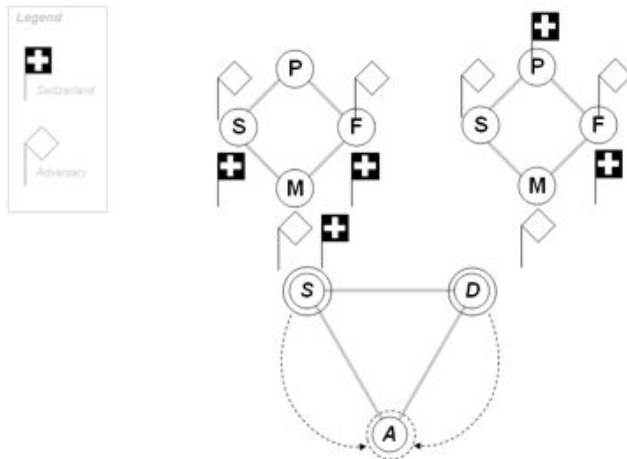
The variant finally chosen, area defense, evolved more and more towards a regular conception, intending to dissuade the adversary through similar capabilities (tanks and fighter airplanes,) however developing a strong dissymmetric component with the so called "organization of the terrain" (fortifications, prepared destructions) and with the use of infantry as the spine of the defense. In parallel, one should note the asymmetric component of guerilla warfare.

Figure 5: Typology of the initial Cold War operational concepts (ca. 1955)



66 Morgarten (15 Novembre 1315)", *Champs de bataille suisses* Berne, Cahiers d'histoire et de prospective militaire.

Figure 6: Typology of the final Cold War operational concept (ca. 1980)



Synthesis

These three brief case studies demonstrate the use of the model presented below. This simple framework allows for the comparison of the relationships between actors. From a historical perspective, it helps to show the components of a strategic culture. In the Swiss case, the permanence of dissymmetry and the intention to carry on fighting with guerilla emerge clearly.⁶⁷

Conclusions

This article has presented a rough sketch of Swiss army doctrinal thinking on insurrection and guerilla warfare and validated a simple model, based on Daniel Reichel's thinking, which can be used to study the relationship between actors. Two points can be made about (1) the Swiss defense concepts and (2) the model introduced before.

Applied to Swiss military doctrine between 1815 and 1989, the model has permitted the recognition of two points:

First, there is a gap between the military thinkers' models (which went from

⁶⁷ However, according to Professor Albert A. Stahel, while von Dach had been mandated to write a field manual on guerilla by Lieutenant General Paul Gygli, Chief of General Staff, his successor, Lieutenant General Jakob Vischer, had the printing destroyed, to von Dach disappointment. One possible explanation may be the fear of training average citizen soldiers with methods that they could have use to fight the State. See Stahel, Albert, "Widerstand der Besiegten - Guerillakrieg oder Knechtschaft von der Antike zur Al-Kaida," *Strategie und Konfliktforschung Band 12*, vdf Hochschulverlag AG an der ETH, Zürich, 2006, p. 142-157.

symmetric to guerilla) and reality. Still, guerilla warfare as last recourse is a constant element of Swiss military thought. While one can observe a tendency to mimic the foreign armed forces doctrines and structures, resources often impose a dissymmetric approach, based on fire and protection, which one could define as the approach “from the poor to the strong.” Switzerland has always been deficient in resources needed to realize a symmetric approach that could bring success.

Second, lacking resources, Switzerland eschewed to envision an overall strategic maneuver, because of the disjointed nature of Swiss terrain and because its implementation might turn out to be too complex for a non-permanent army. Also missing is an assessment on an operational maneuver, leading to a fight in the depth of the adversary’s defensive system.⁶⁸ Swiss military culture was marked by attrition tactics: the war cannot be won, yet one must pay a blood tribute in order to have the Nation raise again after the war.⁶⁹ The models of Yugoslavia and Finland during WWII come to the mind. Further, as asserted by Jaun, war is identified as a test of the strength of a national state, which defends its identity and sovereignty with its armed forces.⁷⁰

Regarding the model itself, a more developed and systematic analysis could be expanded. One could thus discover new approaches of guerillas, as well as define ways to counter them. To that goal, one could broaden the analysis beyond the modes of force to incorporate the factors of time and space. Moreover, current engagements are directed within a so called ‘comprehensive,’ or global, approach,⁷¹ integrating all the state’s instruments of coercion as extensions of the modeling of force. Using all instruments of power might allow us to study nonmilitary answers to irregular threats and to envision dissymmetric or asymmetric strategies utilizing *soft power*⁷² to counter the adversary’s brute force. This might bring an added value to counterinsurgency studies.

Beyond those historic and prospective reflections, the methodology and

68 On operational maneuver, see Naveh, Shimon, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence, the Evolution of Operational Theory* London, Cass, 1997.

69 Ernst, Alfred, *Die Konzeption der Schweizerischen Landesverteidigung 1815 bis 1966*, Op. Cit.

70 “Krieg [wird] als Prüfmodus des nationalstaatlich verfassten Staatsvolkes, welches mittels seiner Armee seine Existenz und Souveränität verteidigt, verstanden. Die Begriffe Krieg, Volk und Staat erscheinen hier vor dem Hintergrund der idealistischen Staatsrechtslehre und Geschichtsphilosophie. ... Gekämpft werden soll indessen für die kulturelle Errungenschaft der souveränen staatlichen Vergemeinschaftung des sich selbst regierenden Staatsvolkes und die Integrität des Staatsgebietes.” Jaun, Rudolf, *Die Konzeption der militärischen Landesverteidigung vom 6.6.66 - Verurteilung und Bewertung in historischer Perspektive*, Op. Cit. p. 78-79.

71 See The Comprehensive Approach: The Point of War Is Not Just to Win but to Make a Better Peace,” *House of Commons Defence Committee* London, The Stationery Office Limited, 2010.

72 Nye, Joseph Jr., “Soft Power - the Means to Success in World Politics,” *Public Affairs*, New York, 2004.

model presented here endorse the long lasting value of Daniel Reichel's original thinking. In his introduction to *Le feu*, he proposed to further analyses "initiative, energy, mass, space and time" as well as ideological and religious factors.⁷³ Illness preempted him to develop his work. This article represents a modest tribute to his instinct and indicates possible, broader developments.

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