

**HARLAN K. ULLMAN:
ANATOMY
OF FAILURE:
WHY AMERICA
LOSES EVERY
WAR WHICH
IT STARTS
(2017)**

**Avoiding
Black Holes**

The black holes of strategy: the world is getting ever more multipolar, tightly networked. It is easy to overlook important connections and therefore draw the wrong conclusions.

Watch out for black holes when evaluating Russian (and Chinese) motivations. Russia (and China) play according to their own criteria of success, having nothing to do with democracy and open society.

Avoid the black hole of a hollowed out military that has too many people and not enough money for innovation. What counts are not numbers of soldiers, ships or planes but effectiveness.

Beware of too liberal use of drones. The associated collateral damage often turns old friends into new enemies.

**New
strategic
approaches**

Start with thinking about the desired end results. Long term. Always ask the questions about what comes after attaining our goals?

The perspective must always be focused on the possibilities of the 21st century; The concepts of nations as adversary, established first through the Westphalian peace accord 1648 are no longer valid in many situations. Many new enemies don't identify themselves through nationhood as we have known it.

Strategy must be focused on "shock and awe" to overpower the enemy's will to fight. Our brains must overpower their brains, through superior innovation, ingenuity, resolve and speed.

The fundamental forces in the contest must be understood through (a) complete coordination of all own armed forces, (b) proper evaluation of the potential asymmetric/hybrid approaches of the enemy, (c) complete understanding of the enemy's geopolitical relationships that could affect the dynamics of the contest.

"Shock and Awe" the adversary through (1) detailed understanding and knowledge about the enemy at all levels, (2) brilliance in implementing the chosen strategies, (3) speed of executing, (4) sufficient control the local situation in all areas.

Create and run a 21st century version of Bletchley Park for military intelligence about the enemy's military intelligence (a war time version of the NSA?)

Finally, to overcome the IS, it must be understood that the fight is not against an organization but a movement.

**Solid
strategic
thinking &
judgment**

Winning is the only thing that counts. Vince Lombardi also right in warfare.

Decisions must be based first on the results which can be realistically expected. And they must identify the needed resources for winning.

Say farewell to having to focus only on China and Russia as potential adversaries. There are a lot more now. Everywhere. And they may be networked together in new ways.

MAD: No longer mutually assured destruction BUT mutually assured disruption through electronic means as well.

Analyse and identify and benefit from lessons learned from the experience of the last 70 years of conflicts.

**Pax
Americana**

Since 1776, the US stands for individual freedom, democracy and capitalism

Monroe Doctrine (1829) declared whole American continent to be independent

WW I & II established US role as effective force that secured world peace consistent with American values.

During Cold War, the US continued to guarantee peace for the "free" world.

US self understanding: the world needs a police force which protects the countries which are committed to individual freedom, democracy, capitalism. US so far has been willing to step up to this task.

21st century is a world without agreed upon order. Multiple players vie for influence. Need new thinking about keeping peace, protecting against war.

**Failed
Pax
Americana**

In spite of best intentions: until now, the US has lost all wars it started.

In Vietnam, the US under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon underestimated the tenacity of the adversary. Vietnam won because it stayed in the conflict longer than the US was willing to fight. Millions of victims and refugees.

In Afghanistan the US ignored the question of what the Mujaheddin would do with the US supplied weapons after the Russians had left the country.

In Afghanistan, from Reagan to Trump, the US never posed the question of what next. Perhaps it is only a question of time until the Taliban are in power again. In the meantime, millions of refugees and dead resulted.

In Yugoslavia, nobody inside the Clinton administration addressed the question of what kind of order was supposed to follow the Slobodan Milosevic regime after the heavy bombing campaign. This conflict is still unresolved. Only military control keeps the conflict from exploding.

The 1st Iraq war started by Hussein, won by Bush Sr. w/o destroying the regime. Before 2nd Iraq war, nobody inside the Bush Jr admin. asked what regime should follow Saddam Hussein. Chaos and violence since that time.

Obama's engagement in Libya & Syria plagued by the same shortsightedness: no question about what should come next. Millions of refugees, victims, strengthening of the IS, politicization of Islam. The whole world lost!

**Good
Intentions,
bad
conduct**

Too little strategic thinking, too much short term orientation about theatrics

Priority of political and election campaign reasons for/against the wars. 2nd Iraq war became a "Republican" war.

Ignorance about cultural specifics and idiosyncracies of the region.

Decisions for war actions based on false assumptions.

Insufficient and even downright false information about the situation on site.

Unwillingness to study and learn from the mistakes of past armed conflicts.

Too high hopes of what could be accomplished with war, e.g. democracy Iraq.

Groupthink: Too many Yesmen, too few skeptics on President's team: caused blindness to threats and opportunities

Last but not least: Most presidents lacked competence needed for success at war but probably thought otherwise. Elections are all about likeableness.