

Nuova Antologia Militare
STRATEGIC HISTORY

In Europe, the study of strategy, understood as the link between political objectives and military means, emerged as an autonomous field between the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic Wars. It first developed as an intellectual by-product of growing military professionalism and later provided the "scientific" foundations that general staffs claimed in government and statecraft. This evolution mirrored a broader European trend toward the rationalization and systematization of warfare, in which strategic knowledge progressively freed itself from purely operational or tactical concerns. The First and Second World Wars marked a decisive turning point: they exploited scientific and technological expertise on an unprecedented scale, not only amplifying kinetic combat power but also expanding the capacity to wage war through crucial contributions of non-military specialists, demonstrating that modern warfare had become a total enterprise of knowledge.

In the early Cold War era, the study of strategy shifted its emphasis from battlefield victory to broader security through nuclear deterrence, enlarging the disciplinary scope and tools. As part of this evolution, a new multidisciplinary subject called "war studies" was established, integrating strategy, history, political science, diplomacy, and technology into a unified field of study. The same period saw the publication of a significant corpus of strategic historical literature grounded in primary sources and methodological rigour. The official histories commissioned by governments stood as reference points for war studies. Nevertheless, over the years, political science scholars increasingly "colonized" the field, redefining the study of strategy as a subfield of security studies, itself considered a subdivision of international relations. This taxonomy, which soon widely spread throughout Western academia, affected the field's epistemological boundaries, marginalising historiography and its methodology as core elements. Only over the last two decades the concept of strategic history has gradually resurfaced, while often still lacking a consistent historical methodology.

Today, within the literature on strategic affairs, the boundaries between political science and history remain uncertain, with the latter often reduced to the role of empirical evidence supporting theoretical constructs. Yet, it was Carl Von Clausewitz himself, the most influential strategist, who warned against the risk of using history superficially in his seminal work *On War* (II, 6). Further complexity has arisen from the emergence of "critical" security studies, the interplay between strategy as science and strategy as practice, and the appropriation of strategic concepts by business and management studies. These overlapping perspectives can enrich the field but also fragment it, dispersing debate across numerous disciplines and hindering mutual engagement. As a consequence, all of this underscores the urgent need for renewed dialogue among scholars.

In light of these factors, *Nuova Antologia Militare* aims to promote interdisciplinary conversation by exploring the epistemological, thematic, and methodological dimensions of strategic history within the wider field of war studies and strategic studies. The General Editors, with the approval of NAM Boards, have launched a permanent annual issue dedicated to Strategic History. This research and editorial project, under the scholarly responsibility of the Scientific Coordinator and Editor, engages an international network of scholars and authors. The initiative aims particularly to:

- Define strategic history, its scope and boundaries.
- Outline the methodological evolution and topics of strategic history.
- Map the historiography, authors and institutions involved in defining strategic history.
- Apply strategic history to explain war and peace in national and international contexts.

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